

CONCEPT NOTE: SPOTLIGHT 7

Mutual transparency and accountability in multi-stakeholder partnerships, including philanthropy and private social investment

13 December 2022, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM CET

Background:

The context of the global partnership and its four effectiveness principles remain a global yardstick. While problems have many stakeholders, solutions also require multi-stakeholder engagement. Cultivating mutual transparency and accountability processes and prioritising honesty and data-based assessment of results will enable learnings about how transparency and accountability can facilitate cross-sector cooperation in development.

The [Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles](#) asserts that “CSOs are effective as development actors when they demonstrate a sustained organisational commitment to transparency, multiple accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.” The four effectiveness principles as agreed in the [Nairobi Declaration](#) (ownership of development priorities by developing countries, a focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability) are interlinked.

The need for transparency in collecting national data to track performance and promote accountability is a unique aspect of the Global Partnership’s drive to create inclusive national conversations based on trust and facts and not impressions. Accountability without transparency or evidence of impact does not contribute to building trust.

Effective coordination on development. The question of coordination is critical because it clearly links transparency efforts with the effectiveness of development cooperation. The absence of effective coordination causes misalignment between development partners, and philanthropy’s lack of integration into the policy setting at the country level hinders its effectiveness. For instance, the lack of a dialogue platform among private, government and foundations can result in duplication of activities, making development partners’ contribution to the country inefficient. This question will be raised throughout the session by the moderator, either through questions or an explicit intervention to make the point.

Participation is linked to transparency and accountability, especially paired with the need for trust building. Transparency – if it only means publishing data about funders and project – often cannot build a lasting relationship of trust. Rather, it is being clear, honest and mutually understood about mutual participation in the setting of objectives of any development project, the methodology to be used, and the targets to be achieved. Participation and engagement between stakeholders can build trust, even when a project fails to deliver impact.

Civic space. As the UN has documented, sometimes the complexity of national law and regulation slows the progress of philanthropists in engaging with local governments due to the time-consuming process of understanding the regulations. And in a few countries, strict regulation can hamper philanthropic foundations’ ability to exist and to receive and provide funds, resulting in resource constraints in civil society and internal inadequacies. Particularly in narrowed civil society spaces,

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philanthropic governance is under pressure and can limit the progress of a transparency culture in philanthropy, resulting in a low level of trust, which is counter to enabling collaboration.

Transparent and mutually accountable philanthropy. Being transparent, open and accountable, especially towards those served by philanthropy will be a key theme of the session. Transparency also means sharing relevant information to the maximum extent possible to enable all stakeholders to make informed decisions on development interventions. Providers of funds tend to think about accountability and transparency in terms of the people, such as the private funders who contribute to the funds that are disbursed. In order to effectively and ethically support social change efforts, providers should also think of themselves as being accountable and transparent to the organisations and communities that they seek to assist, and to the general public. Nonetheless, accountability can overburden both providers and recipients and it is in the best interest of both to streamline their processes while maintaining healthy due diligence.

Purpose of the Session

This Spotlight Session will examine the role of mutual transparency, accountability and multistakeholder participation in building trust between all partners in development for an enabling environment and effective multistakeholder actions.

Participants in the session will represent multistakeholder diversity, presenting their perspectives on transparency and mutual accountability, as well as examples of “what works” in their sector in promoting greater ambition to open and accountable operations.

The discussion will be interactive, with participants bringing questions and challenges to the other sectoral participants, as well as explaining their own learnings on transparency and mutual accountability.

The goal of the event is to have a spirited, informed public debate about transparency and accountability – even (and especially) when it is critical – and set a foundation for stakeholders to communicate openly and often and seek regular feedback.

The main takeaway from the session, in view of our current challenges (climate, political, social, and economic), is about the need to reassess accountability processes with focus on inclusion and equity. We face global problems, but we need to shape local solutions and learn from each other. We can only make progress if we find what unites us. Transparency and accountability is one “unifier”. Governments at national and local level, business sector and civil society need to find how they can work together, which is only possible if there is some level of trust. Transparency alone does not build trust, all the contrary, this is why it needs to go hand in hand with accountability mechanisms. We need to shift the way we all work. Not just *for* communities but *with* communities, including local voices at the table and being accountable to local needs.

Objectives:

- Highlight key issues, concepts, and practices that each sector has developed on transparency and accountability; with participants contributing illustrations
- Soft launch of WINGS’ refreshed toolkit “Transparency and accountability in philanthropy and private social investment”

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Deliverables

- Announcement of revitalised call to governments to engage with philanthropy as a mobiliser of domestic giving in the context of lagging resources for localisation in implementation of the SDGs
- Statement of commitment from philanthropy on mutual accountability and transparency

Guiding Questions:

- *How have transparency and accountability tools helped in building trust and resource mobilisation?*
- *Does transparency and accountability influence the willingness to give?*
- *Can online technology facilitate accountability processes?*
- *What are good examples of the implementation of transparency and accountability, and what have been the main challenges and opportunities to watch in your sector?*
- *What indicators of success are used in grant-making to ensure activities answer local needs and measure impact fairly?*
- *How have accountability mechanisms been used to ensure local voices are heard?*
- *Does this discussion address calls for a “Just Transition” to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind?*

Session Focal Point:

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