

# Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice: Stronger Together

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## Contents

Scope and Acknowledgements .....	2
Executive summary .....	2
Background and history of the DACoP .....	4
Purpose of DACoP .....	4
Purpose of the research .....	4
Approach .....	4
What makes a good community of practice (the theory) .....	5
Insights from the research .....	6
Context .....	6
What is the wider context the DACoP is operating in? .....	6
What will/what makes the DACoP a good community of practice? .....	7
How does Dynamic Accountability relate to involvement in the DACoP? .....	7
Insights into the DACoP .....	8
Expectations and value add .....	8
Enablers and barriers to engagement .....	8
Deepening engagement .....	9
Growing and diversifying the membership .....	10
Governance .....	11
Catalysing action .....	11
Collective sense making about options for the way forward .....	11
Is the DACoP viable? .....	11
Ideas to explore .....	11
Providing multiple formats .....	11
What kind of space would the group like to maintain? .....	12
Governance and mandate .....	12
Investment .....	12
Growth .....	12
Recommendations .....	12
Annex 1: Research questions .....	13
Annex 2: Document review list .....	14
Annex 3: Insights from the Labstorm .....	14

Annex 4: Insights from the dialogue held during Accountable Now's AGM.....	15
Possible topics to cover.....	15
What format(s) are most useful and engaging/ follow up actions? .....	15

## Scope and Acknowledgements

*The Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice (DACoP) is a space for organisations and practitioners to come together to share practices and network on the issue of accountability. The group has been operating for over 3 years. This research aims to explore the understanding, enablers and barriers for community members participating in the DACoP. It also explores a range of ideas, options and recommendations for its future.*

*The report would not be possible without the generosity of members and non-members who willingly gave up time for interviews and to share resources. Thank you.*

*A note on terminology: Convening organisations refer to Accountable Now, CIVICUS and Restless Development, who have been responsible for convening and coordinating the DACoP. DACoP members refer to the wider group of people and organisations who have been involved in the discussions on Dynamic Accountability.*

## Executive summary

The Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice is a joint initiative by Restless Development, CIVICUS, Accountable Now as the Secretariat of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability Partnership (Global Standard), and formerly Keystone Accountability. The purpose of the DACoP is to provide a space where a wide range of civil society practitioners can come together to share good practice, grow knowledge, discover useful resources, build solidarity and learn from one another on the topic of Dynamic Accountability. Since its inception, DACoP convening organisations have provided a range of formats and options for engagement, and have explored the views of DACoP members to understand what does and doesn't work. There has been positive feedback but sustained engagement is still a challenge.

This research aims to explore options for the future of the DACoP by developing an iterative and adaptive approach and exploring a set of research questions on the purpose of the DACoP, the enablers and barriers to engagement and ideas for future options. The research was informed by interviews of DACoP members and non-members, two events, along with a review of key internal and external documents.

A collective sense making approach resulted in a set of insights and recommendations for next steps. The convening organisations and stakeholders interviewed agreed that the DACoP is viable but individual convening organisations need to explore the viability of their organisations to be able to dedicate time and resources to it. The convening organisations agree that they would like to continue to provide multiple options for member engagement, in both a flexible and structured space. However, they would also like to consider new options for governance, including inviting other members in and reviewing the coordination mandate. The possibility of being able to do this effectively will depend on resources and the group would like to explore options to making a case for investment.

The convening organisations agreed that recommendations from the research will need to be grouped into short, medium and long term options, taking into account resourcing constraints. These options are listed in the table below.

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capitalise on the energy of this process by following up with those who participated in the online consultation events and those who expressed an interest during the interviews. At first this can be through bilateral conversations and then possibly through a group discussion of interested members to understand who is willing to participate</li> <li>● Communicate via the googlegroup to share a summary of the research and a link to options for involvement, and encourage others to be involved. Follow this up with individual discussions and a survey for anyone who wasn't part of the research</li> <li>● Continue to meet as before, and start exploring the topics that have been recommended</li> <li>● Continue to provide a mix of deep listening, tools and training, and flexible discussion</li> <li>● Within the individual convening organisations agree on what is possible and viable and communicate that within the larger community</li> <li>● Develop a costing for the medium and long term ambitions</li> <li>● Consider how to match community members with each other based on common questions</li> <li>● Develop an induction format and pack of information</li> <li>● For future events, ensure there is a clear indication about the target audience (i.e. are you new to the DACoP or not) to address some of the imbalance that can come with an open event</li> </ul>
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a shared resourcing ask</li> <li>● Review the mandate, purpose and explanation of the DACoP and adjust these based on the insights (and to include a focus on utility of knowledge)</li> <li>● Review the make-up of the convening group members</li> <li>● Develop a mandate for shared community led coordination with clear expectations of time, start to formally ask members for representation</li> <li>● Formalise and communicate any changes in coordination to the community</li> <li>● Start to scope an influencing agenda with interested members focussed on influencing policies and practices of member organisations and donors</li> <li>● Develop an interim annual plan to explore the themes raised by this project and agree times for discussion</li> <li>● Start to actively scan the community for what knowledge products exist and can be shared, and explore the production of more knowledge products off the back of conversations or deep dives, these could be simple like blogs</li> </ul>
Long	<p>Assuming increasing resources has been successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a structured annual content and communications plan</li> <li>● Start to invest in regional groupings and platforms/networks that could be used to support these groups</li> <li>● Develop options for translation/regional COP chapters</li> <li>● Increased funding/time commitment for a full time or 50% post</li> </ul>

## Background and history of the DACoP

The Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice is a joint initiative by Restless Development, CIVICUS, Accountable Now as the Secretariat of the Global Standard Partnership, and formerly Keystone Accountability. The DACoP was formed following a discussion with civil society organisations in the margins of the International Civil Society Week in 2019.

### Purpose of DACoP

The purpose of the DACoP is to provide a space where a wide range of civil society practitioners can come together to share good practice, grow knowledge, discover useful resources, build solidarity and learn from one another on the topic of Dynamic Accountability. (see box 1).<sup>1</sup>

The DACoP aims to provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge, support relationship building, collaboration and shared learning. It aims to contribute to a sector wide understanding of Dynamic Accountability and a change in approach to shift power, organisational culture, centre community and ensure more responsible action.

**Box 1:** Dynamic Accountability is a systematic approach to civil society (CSO) accountability. It is grounded in processes of meaningful engagement with all stakeholders that are inclusive, participatory and continuously practiced. It is about creating a transformational relationship between a CSO and its stakeholders.

The DACoP is held together by a loose set of rules including respect, support, non-discrimination, safety and accountability.

Since its inception the convening members have tried and tested a variety of platforms and means of sharing and stimulating dialogue between members (see box 2). A number of lessons have been learnt ( [Failure “Flog” Post](#)) and the convening members are now moving into exploring options for the future of the community of practice. The convening group have implemented a loose and flexible governance structure which tries to respond to a variety of member needs and have changed and adapted in a flexible way. They have had limited capacity and resources and have held the group together in a semi-voluntary way.

### Purpose of the research

While there has been positive feedback on the DACoP and its activities, a key challenge remains; that there has been limited interaction from members. This assignment, therefore, aims **to explore what the options are for the future of the CoP**: including questions on how to take it forward in a sustainable member driven way, who could lead it, what resourcing would it require etc.

**Box 2:** The DACoP has trialled and tested the following activities:

- Regular newsletters
- Open dialogues
- Learning webinars
- A google group
- Community building activities such as profiling members
- Smaller discussion groups on priority topics

### Approach

The assignment has built on the principles of Dynamic Accountability and as such has been a flexible and iterative process with regular communications and ideation between the convening members and the consultant. It has incorporated the following key steps:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.csostandard.org/dacop/>

**Principles and ways of working:** Early on in the process the group named and intentionally recognised the role of the consultant as part of the process and ensured there was sufficient space to ensure an alignment of values. Ways of working were set up to encourage an emergent, open minded, friendly and empathetic approach; looking for answers but also leaving space for other insights to emerge. This has also included regular feedback and communication through a skype platform, and concerns and challenges have been raised and addressed as the process has evolved.

**Defining the questions:** Early on in the process the consultant and convening members spent time defining and redefining the research questions that would inform the assignment. The questions explored the purpose and space of the DACoP, the enablers and barriers to engagement, ideas for how to create more diverse and quality engagement, ideas for governance, and catalysing action. The detailed questions are included in annex 1.

**Data collection:** All documents relating to the DACoP have been reviewed, along with external documents on communities of practice. For a full list please see annex 2. Aside from the documents, data collection was through the medium of interviews. 27 interviews were conducted with a mix<sup>2</sup> of people familiar with the DACoP or external to it but with expertise on communities of practice or Dynamic Accountability. Over half of these interviewees were from the global south. Interviewees were given the option of contributing through an online interview, written contribution or voice notes.

**Collective sense making and dialogue:** All data was collected and coded according to the key themes in the questions and an initial set of observations were documented. The convening group then met with the consultant to review initial findings, ask questions and share ideas. This was a 3-stage process including 2 meetings and written responses to questions based on the insights. The final table of options was developed and agreed collectively in these meetings.

**Validation events:** There were two moments during the process where the convening organisations were able to validate findings and explore new ideas. One was during a Labstorm held by Feedback Labs on 19<sup>th</sup> May and the second was during a dialogue at Accountable Now's AGM, held on 25 May. The insights from both events have fed into the final conclusions. Notes from these events are in annexes.

### What makes a good community of practice (the theory)<sup>3</sup>

Communities of practice (CoP) are formed by people who share a concern or passion for something that they do. COPs are important because they help practitioners to gain knowledge and make connections. There are three important characteristics:

- People agreeing to come together as a community around a particulate topic of interest
- The community regularly engaging in discussion, joint activities and sharing of information on the topic of interest

#### Box 3: Communities of practice typically do the following things:

- Problem solve
- Share and request information
- Seek experiences
- Grow confidence
- Coordinate on strategy
- Discuss developments
- Document projects
- Map knowledge and identify gaps

<sup>2</sup> There were 27 interviews in total and 29 people interviewed. Two interviews had two people participating. 16 interviews were of DACoP members and 13 were of non DACoP members

<sup>3</sup> The background theory is taken from a number of influential resources on communities of practice all listed in annex 2.

- A focus on practice not theory, members are practitioners

Communities of practice come in a variety of forms; large, small, often with a core group and many peripheral members; local or global; they meet online or face to face. They have been around for as long as humans have been (at home, work, in our hobbies etc), hence they are a familiar experience. They are a dynamic learning space. They are not limited by formal structures.

Communities of practice are often voluntary and self- governing in nature. While there is no 'one size fits all' approach for a community of practice there is a general set of observations about what makes a community of practice thrive or fail, this is determined by:

- Leadership: the dedication, skill and time of people who take the initiative to drive the community
- Identification: the shared energy and passion for the subject area and the ability to go back to the heart of why the community is gathering
- Time: the ability to ensure high value for the time put in
- Communication: consistent, efficient communication that allows members to share practice, provide feedback and know what is going on
- Growth: as communities of practice become large, intense interactions will be more difficult, and often the community will tend to spawn smaller subgroups based on specialised interest or geographic proximity. There is no limit to the number of people who can be involved as long as there is an active core group which sustains engagement
- Participation: communities of practice are not a person's main job and levels of participation will reflect this. There will always be more engaged participants and passive observers. This is not a problem unless it reflects distinctions between members eg. Language, geography, size of organisation

Success will also be determined by governance, trust, recognition for contribution, value add.

### Insights from the research

The research insights are grouped in two parts. First, the underlying context which supports an understanding of the wider context the DACoP is operating in and how that might impact on participation. Second, specific insights into the DACoP on its value add, content and expectations from members.

It was clear from speaking with the convening members and reviewing the documents, that the group has already done a lot of work to understand the community and how to cater for it. There may be some new insights in this research but a lot of it will validate what the group already knows.

### Context

#### What is the wider context the DACoP is operating in?

The international development sector appears to be at a critical crossroads. It is not the first time. The imperatives for power shifting and transformation have existed for a long time, and there is some frustration that the participatory approaches written about by experts like Robert Chambers<sup>4</sup> have not been implemented or changed much. But more recently with the advent of the Black Lives

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<sup>4</sup> <https://youthdevelopmentvoice.wordpress.com/2011/09/30/participation-people-power-by-putting-the-first-last-robert-chambers/>

Matter movement<sup>5</sup> and the #Aidtoo movement<sup>6</sup> (to name a few) there is increased attention being paid to power, powershifting and accountability.

Added to this is the reality of working on accountability within organisations. Often colleagues who work on accountability are side-lined, unless there is a leader who is committed and there is a clear mandate and budget from the board. The extent of support can have an impact on how much time is available to participate in external discussions, but it also means that some interviewees expressed a need to have a safe space to discuss challenges.

This presents groups like the DACoP with a lot of opportunity to support colleagues across the sector to come together, to create knowledge and share what works in the area of accountability.

However, the group is operating in a period of post pandemic digital exhaustion. Most colleagues are tired after an intense period online throughout the pandemic and are suffering from information overload. The result is that engagement can be low and this is not unique to the DACoP.

#### What will/what makes the DACoP a good community of practice?

While the theory is useful, the interviewees gave their own perspectives on what makes a good community of practice:

- A space for professional growth; where members have access to development, mentorship and a network
- Clear purpose; where everyone has a shared understanding and motivation for joining. Along with a continuous reminder of that purpose
- Intentionality; it is set up in a thoughtful way, recognises power and allows people to connect as people
- Structure; clarity on how it will work, what people can expect, when they can feed in
- Content; useful content which is practical and available in different language and formats
- Facilitation; it is well facilitated by someone who is respected and trusted, and who can nudge the conversation along, ask questions and is constantly scanning the environment for trends
- Administration; there is good communication and a platform or format that everyone understands and can use

#### How does Dynamic Accountability relate to involvement in the DACoP?

The research explored the importance of Dynamic Accountability to members of the DACoP to understand whether this would impact on involvement or contribution. Most interviewees shared that Dynamic Accountability was important for quality, sustainability and a resilient civic space. However, there was a concern expressed about the disconnect between rhetoric and action with some interviewees suggesting that there is a lot of virtue signalling within the sector. Most agreed that this work takes a long time to do well.

Language was raised as an issue. The language of accountability which does not always feel accessible or even possible across all languages and contexts. This is not a new question but some interviewees suggested that the sector needs to find a new language with one interviewee saying ***‘the accountability narrative has been hijacked by Governments, we don’t want to speak that same narrative’***. The second issue was the language in which the DACoP operates, many interviewees suggested that alternative language options need to be provided and that it was too Eurocentric (both in terms of the focus on English but also the focus on accountability as a concept not always being easy to translate).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://twitter.com/hashtag/aidtoo?src=hashtag\\_click](https://twitter.com/hashtag/aidtoo?src=hashtag_click)

Other challenges raised included culture and time to do it properly in organisations, a lack of trust and knowledge about accountability and a concern that donors do not enable true constituent accountability.

The underlying factors of what makes a good community of practice, the wider external context and the importance and understanding of dynamic accountability will all impact on the DACoP's ability to sustain deep engagement. Many of these factors are out of the control of the convening members but they can help to guide thinking and approach, and also acceptance of what is realistic and possible.

## Insights into the DACoP

### Expectations and value add

Interviewees expressed that the DACoP should be an engaging space where participants have an opportunity to share and gain knowledge, and access practical knowledge products that can be shared within their organisations.

Interviewees involved in the DACoP mostly felt that they could shape the agenda and were complimentary of the team for creating this environment. However, at least 5 interviewees who are part of the DACoP couldn't recall what it was about or remember any of the content. Despite this, most agreed that the DACoP is providing a lot of flexibility to cater for different needs and a range of content including newsletters, workshops, dialogue, learning groups, showcasing, presentations and deep dive topics.

Previous research shows that community members prefer working groups, webinars and open conversations, so the convening members already have a good idea of what has worked and what hasn't.

One aspect which was explored is the extent to which the DACoP provides a flexible space for discussion or a more structured and planned approach. The former is, perhaps, less resource intensive, but the latter might encourage more sustained engagement. This is confirmed by the external research.

**Questions for consideration:** Does the DACoP continue to provide multiple formats for multiple needs? Does the DACoP focus more or less on a loose or structured approach? What are the resource and time implications?

### Enablers and barriers to engagement

When the DACoP is working well and enabling participation it is as a result of a clear purpose, practical outputs, an inclusive process and good content. Other enablers include organisation, coordination and governance, a clear plan, a shared vision, good induction and ensuring the DACoP convenors close the loop on topics by creating knowledge products, sharing notes and feeding back conversations into the group. Some of this is working well within the DACoP and some of it could be part of a medium-term strengthening plan if the convenors are able to secure resources.

Good content is important, but it isn't always enough to sustain engagement. Sustained engagement is driven by a facilitator (with time) constantly feeding the community, reaching out to encourage others to feed content into the community and connecting issues to what is happening across the sector.

There were a number of barriers to engagement. Time, technology constraints and providing options for different time zones was raised as an important issue, along with the provision of multiple language formats and a need to unpack accountability terminology. It is very English and Eurocentric.

Some interviewees expressed a concern over power imbalances between larger and smaller organisations, with smaller organisations feeling less confident or able to claim the space. Another concern raised was that many of the accountability mechanisms felt relevant for organisations with more resources. There is a need and opportunity to understand how to implement accountability in organisations with few to no resources to do it and within different civic spaces and cultural contexts where it may not be acceptable to use the language of accountability, due to repressive governments.

Funding is a barrier with smaller organisations having a lot less time to dedicate to the DACoP, financial support for participation would be welcomed from these smaller organisations.

Some feedback suggested that communication could be a barrier at times. Participants would like to see more user-friendly communications which are short and clickable, they need to be more focussed and relevant with more communication on what the DACoP is for and the value add.

Lastly, some interviewees expressed that the barrier to engagement was down to interest and maturity in accountability. This relates back to earlier points about virtue signalling on accountability rather than genuine implementation and prioritisation.

These insights suggest that the DACoP can't assume members will participate in an active way because there is good content and because it's an important conversation, there also needs to be practical and administrative drivers behind engagement.

**Questions for consideration:** While there are good suggestions on language, time, funding and knowledge management what is realistic and achievable given resource constraints?

### Deepening engagement

Previous consultations with the DACoP have revealed that some members want flexible dialogue and some need a more structured space. The group has tried to do this by providing an unstructured conversation and learning groups which are more structured.

To encourage quality engagement, interviewees suggested that the DACoP should focus on good communication, keep abreast of member needs and continue to adjust topics accordingly. There needs to be a mix of content and trust building, and there is a desire for deep dive topics which result in knowledge products. Where possible (and safe, in restricted spaces) these knowledge products should show appreciation for those who have contributed to them.

Facilitation of the process to recognise the power imbalance between different contributors, sending discussion questions in advance, capturing the discussion and agreeing next steps while people are engaged are also important.

Some interviewees noted that professional development is important, and that the group should explore ways to support this. Giving members a role in the delivery of the DACoP will keep it relevant.

A more structured annual content and communications plan could support deeper engagement, as participants will know what is coming.

Encouraging safe spaces for discussion was recognised as an important factor for deepening engagement. These are discussion spaces where members can be honest, vulnerable and authentic. To do this effectively, facilitators need to design activities which encourage self-reflection on power, focus on trust building, and agree on principles and ground rules.

#### Box 4: Possible conversations to take forward

- Accountability jargon
- Accountability in resource poor environments
- Redefining the purpose and vision of DACoP
- Accountability in restricted civic spaces

#### Possible ideas to action

- Creation of knowledge products
- Resourcing for smaller organisations
- Inductions for new members

Questions for consideration: What are you not already doing?

These insights reflect the theory of what a good CoP looks like and many of the ideas have already been tried before within the community. One that might need more consideration is the flexible versus structured approach.

#### Box 5: Tips for facilitating a safe space

- Encourage self-reflection on power
- Trust building exercises
- Don't record people
- Agree on the principles and ground rules
- Consider restricted civic space
- Deliberate facilitation
- Recognise the difference between organisations from the global north and global south
- Don't name people
- Vet participants
- Agree on confidentiality
- Onboard effectively
- Allow for feedback

#### Growing and diversifying the membership

Most interviewees agreed that the group can diversify the membership by utilising existing networks. There are a number of DACoP members who work within networks and would be willing to reach out to their networks. On diversifying the membership, the DACoP need to be deliberate about why they are doing this and what they are trying to achieve. One participant said **'you need to go beyond diversity and look at inclusion, decolonising and intersectionality'**.

A greater membership will require increased resources for engagement, communication and more flexible formats. It could also exacerbate power dynamics between large and small organisations. An alternative option is that the group does not focus on growth but rather focuses on deeper engagement and lets it grow organically.

Questions for consideration: Why do you want to grow? How can you use your existing relationships to grow? Is growth where you want to put limited resources?

## Governance

Many ideas on governance have already been addressed in other sections. Options for governance will depend on resources and the DACoP's decision about whether to opt for a formalised space and/or a more flexible space for discussion. While at least one interviewee said the group should not have a more formal structure a number of interviewees expressed the need for a more coordinated governance system.

There could be a middle ground which consists of a coordination group with a refreshed mandate, purpose and principles. This can include members on a rotational basis. There is also interest in a decentralised model with more regional groups emerging. However, all of these options will depend on resources. There was consensus that smaller organisations should receive some financial support (for time to come to meetings and participate in the development of knowledge products and other conversations) otherwise their involvement will not be possible. Resources for the coordination group are also critical, so that more time can be dedicated to keeping a regular stream of communication, inducting new comers and reaching out to individuals to feed the group with content.

## Catalysing action

Catalysing action is the process of influencing for greater accountability and power shifting. To do this the DACoP needs to create a space where participants are able to map out an influencing agenda for that purpose. This needs to have a clear sense of what needs disrupting, a shared vision and underlying evidence. Not all interviewees were convinced that the DACoP was the space to do this, but some suggestions were to coordinate on influencing, develop shared calls to action, seek funding, and support young people to challenge the status quo. A logical next step would be to convene interested members to explore options for influencing within their organisations and across the sector, linking up to other movements.

## Collective sense making about options for the way forward

The research insights are, in part, a validation of what the DACoP convening group already knows. Once complete the coordinating group reviewed them and discussed the following ideas as part of a collective sense making exercise:

### Is the DACoP viable?

There is agreement that the DACoP is viable and can continue to be a space where members can access information. The strong engagement in the research has been reassuring and the group can capitalise on this energy if there is a quick follow up. However, it is clear that founding members may not be able to invest in the same way going forward and will need to consider what is viable for them individually.

### Ideas to explore

The process revealed some interesting ideas which can be followed up, particularly on the language of accountability, how to support professional development and individual struggles within organisations. There is also a desire to work on shared influencing to catalyse change. These ideas can be brought into any future planning.

### Providing multiple formats

Ideally the group would like to continue providing different formats but recognise that these need to be well planned for deep learning and may require additional resources.

### What kind of space would the group like to maintain?

The group would like to maintain a mix between a flexible space and a slightly more formalised structure (with resources and time) and a possible move to more networked and regional options.

### Governance and mandate

The coordination group would like to invite members into a governance committee, perhaps on a rotational basis, and also considering age, region, gender and size of organisation. If they are able to do this, then there needs to be a review of the mandate for members ensuring clarity on commitments, expectations and a commitment to decolonising and shifting power. If the group decides to do this there are some good examples from the CIVICUS DIGNA group which could provide inspiration.

### Investment

There is a desire to support community organisations and secure investment for a range of ideas including knowledge products, language, more dedicated time, one to one conversations and planning days. This will come down to commitments from organisations and investment. An option is to develop a costing and shared funding ask.

### Growth

Most interviewees and members are willing to support increased membership through their organisations. But there are mixed conclusions about growth. One option is to invest more time into quality and moving passive actors to be more active. If this works then the group can focus limited resources on growth.

### Recommendations

In the research there are recommendations on what the group can start, stop and continue. Alongside these there are 2 fundamental questions; how does the group want to structure the DACoP? And is it possible to increase investment? Aside from these, one cannot ignore the wider contextual factors which may mean that the group does a lot differently and nothing changes.

The research, sense making and events all landed on a set of options for possible next steps. These are set out below in a table which takes into account the immediate resource constraints. The next steps will be for the convening members to discuss and agree together what they would like to take forward.

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Capitalise on the energy of this process by following up with those who participated in the online consultation events and those who expressed an interest during the interviews. At first this can be through bilateral conversations and then possibly through a group discussion of interested members to understand who is willing to participate</li><li>● Communicate via the googlegroup to share a summary of the research and a link to options for involvement, and encourage others to be involved. Follow this up with individual discussions and a survey for anyone who wasn't part of the research</li><li>● Continue to meet as before, and start exploring the topics that have been recommended</li><li>● Continue to provide a mix of deep listening, tools and training, and flexible discussion</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the individual convening organisations agree on what is possible and viable and communicate that within the larger community</li> <li>• Develop a costing for the medium and long term ambitions</li> <li>• Consider how to match community members with each other based on common questions</li> <li>• Develop an induction format and pack of information</li> <li>• For future events, ensure there is a clear indication about the target audience (i.e. are you new to the DACoP or not) to address some of the imbalance that can come with an open event</li> </ul>
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a shared resourcing ask</li> <li>• Review the mandate, purpose and explanation of the DACoP and adjust these based on the insights (and to include a focus on utility of knowledge)</li> <li>• Review the make-up of the convening group members</li> <li>• Develop a mandate for shared community led coordination with clear expectations of time, start to formally ask members for representation</li> <li>• Formalise and communicate any changes in coordination to the community</li> <li>• Start to scope an influencing agenda with interested members focussed on influencing policies and practices of member organisations and donors</li> <li>• Develop an interim annual plan to explore the themes raised by this project and agree times for discussion</li> <li>• Start to actively scan the community for what knowledge products exist and can be shared, and explore the production of more knowledge products off the back of conversations or deep dives, these could be simple like blogs</li> </ul>
Long	<p>Assuming increasing resources has been successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a structured annual content and communications plan</li> <li>• Start to invest in regional groupings and platforms/networks that could be used to support these groups</li> <li>• Develop options for translation/regional COP chapters</li> <li>• Increased funding/time commitment for a full time or 50% post</li> </ul>

## Annex 1: Research questions

Themes	Questions
Purpose, space and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the space useful and accessible?</li> <li>• Is the content useful and accessible? What other content issues should be explored?</li> <li>• Do community members see the potential, purpose and value add?</li> <li>• Is Dynamic accountability still an important driver for the work of the members?</li> </ul>
Community barriers to engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main factors that inhibit engagement?</li> <li>• What prevents community members from being able to commit time?</li> <li>• What are the solutions?</li> </ul>
A more diverse and quality engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does quality engagement look like and how could this be achieved?</li> <li>• How can the membership be increased and what audience would it be pitched at?</li> <li>• How do we encourage a broader range of participants and ensure it feels safe and equitable?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities could achieve greater and deeper engagement?</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the alternative options and appetite for a member led governance model (with greater co-ownership and connections)?</li> <li>• What implications do these options have for the coordinating team?</li> </ul>
A CoP which catalyses action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it possible to make the DACoP a more disruptive and challenging space which leads to self-reflection and action?</li> <li>• Can the DACoP be connected to wider movements on accountability and power shifting?</li> <li>• What makes a good community of practice?</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Document review list

- Original COP rationale
- Concept note for the DACoP
- Objectives for the DACoP
- Pre-pilot DACOP survey
- Pilot flog
- DACop 2020 summary
- DACoP strategic planning notes from January 2021
- Member surveys from 2021
- 2021 Summary
- Past newsletters
- Resilience roots documents
- Reading on what makes a good community of practice:
  - <https://wenger-trayner.com/about-2/>
  - <https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>
  - [FAQs | Wenger-Trayner](#)
  - [https://www.communityofpractice.ca/background/what-is-a-community-of-practice/#:~:text=A%20community%20of%20practice%20\(CoP,both%20individual%20and%20group%20goals.](https://www.communityofpractice.ca/background/what-is-a-community-of-practice/#:~:text=A%20community%20of%20practice%20(CoP,both%20individual%20and%20group%20goals.)
  - <https://hbr.org/2000/01/communities-of-practice-the-organizational-frontier>
  - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0018726716661040>
  - <https://www.nicole-brown.co.uk/communities-of-practice/>
  - [cop online version light.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

## Annex 3: Insights from the Labstorm

- **Making learning relevant:** so that participants can take it back to their own organisations.
- **Platforms:** look into platforms which can be customised to see how people engage with content. Also consider platforms that can pair people for discussion, like donuts.
- **A role for members:** give members a formal role to drive conversations and content. They will create a cadence that others will get onboard with. Do some social engineering and reach out to people individually to share.
- **Language and time zones:** explore options for providing alternative languages and time zones.
- **Smaller groups:** get people into smaller discussion groups.
- **Relationship/trust building:** continue to focus on relationship and trust building. When people know each other and have confidence in a group it's easier to speak ideas.

- **Understanding why people engage:** try to understand the specific benefits that members of the community are receiving/want to receive, and how that can drive greater participation.
- **Power:** have clear guidelines about how to engage with each other and utilise direct moderation.
- **Structure/organic:** a combination of both.
- **Shared principles and values:** ensure there are shared values and principles and how you operationalise them. Perhaps there is an opportunity to refresh and reshare these.
- **Joy:** finding moments for celebration, hope and joy is important. Sometimes communities of practice focus on the challenges of the work, rather than the successes. Looking for opportunities to highlight success stories from smaller organisations may help balance power dynamics. It could also help identify action items and encourage member engagement.

#### Annex 4: Insights from the dialogue held during Accountable Now's AGM

##### Possible topics to cover

- Fragile states where shifting power has a very different context
- Financial flows and the link to power
- How to enable communities
- Research into community accountability
- What does Dynamic Accountability mean and look like and how has it changed?
- How can we engage the private sector in Dynamic Accountability?
- Explore how we demonstrate accountability to constituents and governments
- Training on the basics and the tools
- Share success stories from members
- How to approach failure
- Develop influencing strategies
- How to measure accountability

##### What format(s) are most useful and engaging/ follow up actions?

- Identify everyone's top three priority issues and then collectively work on solutions, in a challenge and sprint format
- Regional convening
- Continue non-formal spaces for those who want them
- Have discussions in smaller groups adjusting to time zones
- Offer more languages