HOW ACCOUNTABLE ARE CIVICUS' RESOURCING PRACTICES?

PART 2: GIVING ACCOUNT

Uganda's Vijana Corps used Solidarity Fund resources to strengthen the digital media capacities of young people, and produced a short film – The Activist.

This instalment looks at how we are informing our constituents (members and partners) why we fund, what and who we fund, and how we do it. Overall, using new approaches and formats to do this across our programmes represents important progress, however we still need to be more consistent and double down on making this information even more accessible.

On the **positive** front:

- The various formats we use include videos on how past Solidarity Fund members have used these resources and how to apply for them, along with illustrated outcome stories from Youth Action Lab activists.

- In some cases, partnering with grassroots activists has also helped us make the information more accessible and reach beyond the 'usual suspects' to secure a more diverse pool of applicants.

- We hold webinars to help potential applicants understand the process and create spaces where unsuccessful applicants can learn how to improve their proposals.

- Our Crisis Response Fund offers unsuccessful applicants a follow up conversation to discuss alternative places they could access help, such as support programmes from our allies.

- Looking internally, all resourcing programmes have used the likes of written, infographic-based and video updates and learning workshops to inform and inspire wider colleagues across CIVICUS about a more constituent-driven approach.

- Our Solidarity Fund and Youth Action Lab programmes are designed to provide flexibility, giving participants space to test, fail, learn and grow in cohorts together. Many of these constituents are often more used to prioritising deliverables, deadlines and demonstrating impact, so this different approach is continually encouraged in all our communications.

But there are definitely **areas for further improvement**:

- We unintentionally (but inherently) give preference to more formal organisations that are more able to 'speak our language' and meet our administrative requirements.

- This links to a risk checklist which we use to vet most constituents we provide financial resources to. The contents of this checklist ensure we comply with our different donor and legal requirements. However, because we use the same checklist for all of our resourcing programmes (except for the solidarity fund, as this money comes directly from our membership), it means that we end up applying the rules created for 'stricter' donors to money we redistribute from those with less stringent requirements.

- We're still encountering many applicants whose expectations don't match with what we're able to provide. This suggests that we need to more widely and consistently apply the full range of 'giving account' practices across all CIVICUS resourcing programmes.

- We can also improve how we communicate and support partners to comply with our administrative requirements. For example, the vocabulary in our agreements could be further simplified and available in more accessible languages and formats. And we could replicate the Youth Action Lab team's pledge to personally run through the sub-grant agreement with each participant, including in a group setting for larger cohorts of sub-grantees.

- But if we are serious about shifting more power to our constituents through our resourcing, then what's most important is that we become better listeners (more on this in the next part). And in turn, use member perspectives to drive negotiations with our donors, so that we can adapt our rules to better suit the realities of our constituents.