

HOW ACCOUNTABLE ARE CIVICUS' RESOURCING PRACTICES?

PART 5: SUPPORTING ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICE



Part of our responsibility as a funding intermediary is to help the actors we resource to enhance the ways that they themselves give, take, and are held to account. To paraphrase the [Feedback Incentives Learning Group](#), it's critical that this isn't simply another reporting burden we place on their shoulders, but rather an opportunity to provide the space and support our constituents need to meaningfully engage, listen and respond to the people they exist to serve.

In terms of providing this space:

- Each of our resourcing programmes asks applicants how their proposal will support a particular community or group, along with how sub-grantees plan to engage these constituents to ensure that their needs and experiences directly inform the project.
- When a [Solidarity Fund](#) supported member is part of a social movement, the check-ins they have with the team directly involve wider members of their community so that their voices can be heard.
- At the reporting stage, we usually (but not always) ask how the resourced partner has engaged their constituents to help assess the impact of their funded activities and what they have learned. The [Youth Action Lab](#) asks that community members who engage with participating activists share testimonies, which are used to assess community recognition and value of the participating activist's work – a critical indicator of success.



However, while we ask the members and partners we resource to tell us about how they are practicing constituent accountability, we don't provide much active support to them on this issue:

- Some are signposted to [Resilient Roots'](#) constituent accountability strengthening tools, however we know that this alone will not suffice. We are therefore exploring a specific training opportunity for all members - something Resilient Roots hopes to facilitate via a new [online course](#) being piloted in early 2022.
- Similarly, the ways in which we ask our constituents to report back with insights

from the communities they work with aren't really helping them to think critically about how successful their engagement strategies are. This means we may simply be awarding resources to those who know how to answer this sort of question, while leaving those who do not, behind.

- To help with this, the Lab team aims to build more constituent accountability activities into the programme right from the start, including via templates which will help participants to more systematically gather and assess the quality of feedback.

So, how accountable is CIVICUS as a resourcing intermediary? If we use the Fund for Shared Insight's [Listening & Feedback: Funder Action Menu](#) as our guide, the answer is seemingly "not bad", overall. And while this doesn't include much on being directly 'held to account', we can certainly consider many of our programmes to be pretty constituent-driven.

However, we still have lots to do in terms of applying our most innovative and inclusive practices more consistently and widely across our programmes. Plus we will be required to make some tough decisions about who we accept money from and our internal policies if we are serious about shifting more power to the actors we resource.

We hope you will join us on this journey, starting with letting us know what you thought of this mini-series and how else you think we could improve! Please contact resilientroots@civicus.org