



Advisory / Accountability Group Survey: Experiences with Accountability Structures

Introduction

This survey aims to understand the experiences of people who have been part of advisory boards, accountability structures, or participatory decision-making structures in philanthropy, funding and civil society organizations. At this critical time when our sector is experiencing significant funding shifts and constraints, interrogating and recommitting to genuine solidarity and accountability is key. Your insights will help improve accountability practices and develop resources for the field. All personal information will be kept confidential and anonymous in any public reporting unless explicit permission is granted.

Definition of Accountability Mechanisms:

We define accountability structures as the formal and informal structures, processes, and practices that funding organizations use to:

1. ensure transparency in decision-making
2. share or distribute power with the communities they aim to serve
3. hold themselves responsible for their actions, commitments, and impact
4. respond to feedback from their stakeholders

Examples include advisory committees, participatory grantmaking processes, community review panels, and feedback systems that influence organizational decisions.

All participants will be entered into a draw for a goody bag worth over \$100 containing Curiosa Cards for shared leadership, a beautiful print, a book and an extra surprise. Participants of this survey will also be invited to express interest in participating in a 2-hour financially compensated workshop.

Estimated completion time is 15-20 minutes. Please complete this survey by 9 May 2025.



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SECTION 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Contact Person Details

* 1. Your name

* 2. Your email

* 3. Your age group

- ☐ Under 10
- ☐ 10-14
- ☐ 15-19
- ☐ 20-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35 or over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. What country or territory are you from?

5. In what country do you live?

* 6. Your gender identity

- ☐ Girl/Woman
- ☐ Boy/Man
- ☐ Non-binary/third gender

☐ Prefer not to say

Other (please specify)

* 7. Your movement/community affiliation(s)

☐ Feminist movement

☐ Youth-led groups, network or organization ☐

Children's rights

☐ Environmental justice ☐

Indigenous rights

☐ LGBTQIA+ movement ☐

Disability justice

☐ Racial justice

☐ Economic justice

☐ I'm not formally affiliated with a movement ☐

Other (please specify)

* 8. Would you be willing to have your name and quotes attributed in research outputs?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Please check with me first



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SECTION 2: ACCOUNTABILITY ROLE EXPERIENCE

Note: This can refer to advisors, steering committees, panelists etc.

* 9. What type(s) of accountability structures have you been part of? (Select all that apply)

☐ Advisory committee/council

☐ Board of directors/trustees

☐ Grant review panel

☐ Child/youth/feminist advisory

☐ Community advisory board

☐ Participatory grantmaking committee ☐

Movement accountability group

☐ Temporary/project-related advisory /panel Other

☐

(please specify)

* 10. In what types of organizations? (Select all that apply)

☐ Private foundation

☐ Public foundation ☐

Women's fund

☐ Community foundation

☐ International NGO

☐ UN agency

☐ Government agency ☐

Other (please specify)

11. How many different advisory or accountability structures have you been part of in the past 3 years?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5 or more

For the remaining questions, if you've been part of multiple accountability structures, please focus on your most significant or recent experience. If your experiences vary dramatically across different roles, feel free to elaborate in the open-ended comment boxes.

12. How did you join these roles? (Select all that apply)

☐ Direct invitation from organization ☐

Open call/application

☐ Nominated by movement/community

☐ Nominated by an existing advisor ☐

Other (please specify)

* 13. How long have you been/were you in your most recent role?

☐ Less than 6 months

☐ 6 months - 1 year

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 2-5 years

☐ More than 5 years



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SECTION 3: POWER & COMPENSATION

14. What areas did you advise on? (Select all that apply)

☐ Grantmaking decisions

☐ Strategy development ☐

Program design

☐ Organizational/operational strategy (governance, staffing, policies) ☐

Monitoring, evaluation, learning and research

☐

Budget allocation or financial decisions Other

☐

(please specify)

15. What level of decision-making power did you have within the accountability structure of which you were part?

For example, did you have full decision-making power in certain areas, shared decision-making with staff/board, serve in a consultative capacity only, or did your authority vary depending on the type of decision? Feel free to provide specific examples that illustrate how your input influenced the organization's decisions.

* 16. Rate your agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Some what agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My voice was heard and respected	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I could influence meaningful decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had access to the information needed to participate effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The organization was transparent about limitations to my influence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I could challenge organizational practices or decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt tokenized or instrumentalized	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Would you like to elaborate further on your experience with power and decision-making?

* 18. Did you receive financial compensation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Varied by role/ organization

19. If yes, what type(s) of financial compensation did you receive?

☐ Regular stipend

☐ Per-meeting honorarium

☐ Expense for travel costs, etc. ☐

☐ Professional development funds

☐ Other (please specify)

20. Was the compensation adequate for the time and work required?

☐ Adequate

☐ Somewhat adequate

☐ Not adequate

☐ Other (please specify)

21. What non-financial support did you receive?

☐ Orientation/training

☐ Ongoing mentorship

☐ Language and other forms of accessibility support ☐

Technical assistance

☐ Wellbeing/mental health support

☐ Networking opportunities

☐ Resources for community consultation ☐

Professional development

☐ No support was provided Other

☐

(please specify)

22. What additional support would have improved your experience in this role?



SECTION 5: CHALLENGES & IMPACT

* 23. What were your top challenges in your advisory role? (Select up to 3 options)

☐ Burden of representation ☐

Time management

☐ Power dynamics ☐

Language barriers

☐ Access to technology

☐ Consulting with constituency ☐

Managing competing interests ☐

Personal safety/security

☐ Inadequate support to consult and share back with my group/movement ☐ Other

(please specify)

* 24. Did the demands on your time and labor match your expectations?

☐ Much more than expected

☐ Somewhat more than expected ☐

About what I expected

☐ Less than expected

* 25. What positive impacts resulted from your role? (Select all that apply)

☐ Changed organizational practices ☐

Influenced resource allocation ☐ Built

relationships with funders

☐ Strengthened movement connections ☐

Led to professional opportunities

☐ Increased confidence and self-esteem ☐

☐ New skills/experiences

Other (please specify)

26. Please share a specific example of impact that resulted from your advisory role



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SECTION 5: ACCOUNTABILITY REFLECTIONS

27. In a few words or sentences, what does meaningful accountability look like?

* 28. From your experience, what is the most important practice that helps maintain genuine accountability during difficult transitions?

☐ Transparent communication about challenges ☐

Continued power-sharing despite constraints

☐ Equitable compensation that respects people's time

☐ Building authentic relationships beyond transactional engagement ☐

Including advisors in difficult decisions about priorities or cuts

☐ Other (please specify)

29. Have you encountered accountability approaches from outside philanthropy (e.g., from community organizing, social movements, or other sectors) that might be valuable for funders to learn from?

* 30. Would you be interested in: (Select all that apply)

☐ Participating in a workshop about accountability practices (compensated) ☐

Receiving the research findings

☐ Being interviewed about your experiences (with compensation)

☐ Contributing to developing accountability resources for the field (compensated) ☐

Co-writing a thought piece or case study (compensated)

☐ None of the above Other

☐

(please specify)