

Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction and Purpose

Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) is a movement that unites and mobilises activists to advance gender equality throughout all policies and processes of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), especially through the programmes funded at national level in implementing countries. Created and led by women, W4GF is the only space for women in all their diversity focusing on the Global Fund, and the impacts it has on the three diseases.

W4GF focuses primarily on educating and advocating. It uses both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ strategies in its efforts to raise awareness of and attention to critical issues for women (including adolescent girls and young women) within the overall Global Fund environment. This means that it works closely with the Global Fund Secretariat, including its Community, Rights and Gender (CRG) department, and also sometimes pushes the Secretariat or Board to do more and to do things differently – through letters, policy statements, activist manifestoes and participating in the formal structures and ‘machinery’ of the Global Fund.

W4GF has built a platform and framework for women to learn, share and advocate together for policies, approaches, programmes and funding that can in turn deliver access to the services that respond to the priority needs of women, girls, their families and their communities. Through such work, W4GF aims to make the Global Fund more accessible and practical to all women and girls, as well as more connected with women most in need of the programmes and services supported by the Global Fund, and to make these fit for purpose and relevant to women’s lives.

At the core of W4GF are nearly [200 community-based Advocates](#) from more than 50 countries. All Advocates have participated in at least one W4GF workshop or other training or educational initiative focusing on the Global Fund and gender, and many remain engaged regularly through the W4GF platform and take action at country and global levels.

2. History and evolution

W4GF’s triple role of prodding, monitoring and supporting the Global Fund – often at the same time – on all issues related to women and gender equity has been evident from the start. The movement was founded in June 2013 in response to a women-led evaluation (conducted in 2011–2012) of the Global Fund’s [Gender Equality Strategy \(GES\)](#), which had been endorsed by the Global Fund Board in 2008. The evaluation was conducted by AIDS Strategy, Advocacy and Policy ([ASAP](#)), an independent community-based consulting group, which was commissioned to carry out the work by the gender adviser at the Global Fund Secretariat and UN Women.

The main goal of ASAP’s evaluation was to understand the extent to which the GES had been implemented in the three years since it had been adopted, by documenting the depth and breadth of gender equality activities in Global Fund–supported programmes and services. Overall, ASAP’s main finding was that the progressive and far-sighted intentions of the GES were not realised in practice. The GES was not having the kind of reach and impact it should have – to the detriment of all people the Global Fund was supposed to serve, not just women.

Based on its findings, ASAP not only made several recommendations to the Global Fund and its key partners, but also decided to be part of the solution. The small team of women began reaching out to existing organisations and networks focusing on and led by women living with and affected by HIV, TB

and malaria – in an effort to mobilise action to respond to the lack of progress on the GES and broader gender-related issues throughout the Global Fund. W4GF is the result of that mobilisation work and was set up in direct response to the women’s input.

The first main activities underscored the ambition and breadth of the new initiative. With initial financial and organisational support from the Global Fund Secretariat and other multilateral and bilateral partners, ASAP helped to organise and arrange support for a series of 12 funded [workshops](#) over more than three years from July 2013. These workshops gathered together advocates working on or interested in the Global Fund’s work or women’s rights in countries implementing Global Fund grants worldwide. They were joined by representatives from the Global Fund Secretariat, technical partners, experts in gender and women’s rights, advocacy, campaigning and movement-building. The workshops focused on supporting advocates to understand the complexity and language of the Global Fund and the strategic entry points and opportunities within its structures and processes, - all of which - were in a state of massive transition at the time.

Since 2016, W4GF has shifted its approach slightly to become a more virtual learning and sharing platform for advocates to use and support. Currently, the W4GF movement’s educational, training and communications activities are primarily conducted virtually, through [webinars](#), teleconferences and listservs. These activities often include representatives of the Global Fund Secretariat who help to describe possible entry points for influence and engagement at global and national levels. This is an example of the close links that W4GF maintains with the Secretariat, particularly staff who focus on gender, human rights and the engagement of communities.

W4GFs’ advocacy work, meanwhile, includes advocacy statements and calls for action (all highlighted and promoted on its website) and the creation of a [W4GF Accountability Toolkit](#), which is being rolled out independently in handful in a handful of countries that have received focused funding and other resources to highlight the successes and challenges in Global Fund–supported programmes for adolescent girls and young women. The movement also brings into focus other key issues central to women’s lives that have often been neglected in programmes and services supported by the Global Fund, such as [cervical cancer](#) and its long-standing, but under-addressed, links to HIV.

This critical learning, engagement and advocacy work has continued even as W4GF has moved from being hosted by ASAP to a series of community-based organizations. Since early 2019, [ICASO](#) (the International Coalition of AIDS Service Organizations) has served as W4GF’s fiscal agent and the movement has continued to grow and mobilise greater engagement from even more partners as well as individual advocates.

3. Membership

3.1 Composition

The Steering Group comprises of not more than nine (9) members. The individuals represent the community-based organisation (CBO) or civil society organisation (CSO) they are working for, and/or bring in additional expertise as individuals to the Steering Group. Steering Group members represent the country of domicile (and can represent the region or domicile). In such case the Steering Group member no longer represents the country of origin (where they might have moved from).

Criteria for membership:

- Individuals from organisations focused on issues of women and girls, as well as promoting gender equality in Global Fund funded countries; and
- Organisations working in HIV, tuberculosis and/or malaria.
- Individuals who relocate to another organisation/network are to communicate this to the W4GF Global Coordinator and will be invited to remain on the Steering Group on a case-by-case basis.

The Steering Group with the support of the W4GF Team will strive to ensure that the following is considered at all times with the composition of the group:

- Diversity in age, gender, sexual orientation and geography;
- Individuals living with and/or affected by HIV, TB and/or malaria;
- Expertise across the three diseases; and
- Expertise in issues affecting and impacting key affected women.

The Steering Group will work towards ensuring that the Steering Group align its geographical representation to align to the Global Fund's and include the following regional representation:

- East and Southern Africa
- West and Central Africa
- Middle East and North Africa
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- Eastern Mediterranean Region
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- South and South East Asia.

Less than half (i.e. four (4) or fewer) Steering Group members are from any individual region and no more than two Steering Group members from any individual country.

The Fiscal Agent representative(s) are observers participating to ensure a good understanding of the service they are providing. They are counted over and above the nine (9) Steering Group members. They do not have voting rights and they are not counted in terms of regional or country representation.

The Global Coordinator with the support of relevant W4GF Team member(s) manages the W4GF Team, and as such, the W4GF Global Coordinator will be an ex officio member of the Steering Group.

3.2 Nomination to the Steering Group

Steering Group Members will be identified by the W4GF Team based on the working relationships of the organisations with W4GF to-date and their involvement on women and girls, and advancing gender equality in Global Fund funded countries.

Whilst attendance at meetings in exceptional cases may be delegated to another individual in the same organisation on a case-by-case basis (see section 4.6), there will be no alternate to Steering Group Members.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the Steering Group represent the organisation in which they applied or are nominated from and/or the expertise as individuals they bring to the Steering Group, and are expected to liaise and gather input within their organisations and/or networks in order to provide guidance to W4GF.

Members of the Steering Group provide to W4GF:

- a. Advice on the development of the W4GF strategy and its activities;
- b. Guidance on working processes and activities within the W4GF workplan;
- c. Guidance and support to the W4GF Global Coordinator;
- d. Share/identify any potential donors with the W4GF Team; and
- e. Support in the creation and implementation of advocacy plans and activities.

Members of the Steering Group will commit themselves to functioning in a way that creates and extends opportunities to:

- a. Support advocacy towards advancing the rights and health of women and girls in their own organisation(s) as well as through Global Fund related processes;
- b. To facilitate and expand the membership of W4GF advocates by establishing, building and linking partnerships/organisations/networks with W4GF and national/regional/global levels;
- c. Initiate and support powerful action of W4GF advocates at national/regional/international levels; and
- d. Actively share relevant information/communication related areas of women and girls relevant to the Global Fund.

Members of the Steering Group commit to the following values of W4GF that frame the way W4GF operates:

- a. Accountability – observing due processes and being transparent about how decisions are made and what informs our decisions to ensure that the use of resources serve the mandate of W4GF;
- b. Women-centredness – recognising unequal power relationships between women and men, and informing our advocacy with nuanced and critical analysis of issues through a gender lens;
- c. Respecting Diversity and Fostering Solidarity – acknowledging diversity of women’s identities and lived realities while celebrating our shared commitment to women’s empowerment and gender equality, and working to expand and strengthen leadership among women across ages and continents;
- d. Collaboration and Partnership – working in open and inclusive ways with women-led and women-centred organisations, encouraging leadership, while at the same time allowing for different levels of participation;
- e. Commitment to Gender Equity – working not just for equality between women and men, but also in recognition of men’s greater access to resources and decision-making, equitably allocating resources and decision-making spaces for women; and
- f. Commitment to Gender-transformative approaches – working to address gender issues from its root causes through supporting challenging and changing of gender norms that create inequalities between women and men and promoting positions of influence for women.

Members of the Steering Group commit to the following principles of W4GF that informs W4GF practice:

- a. Women’s rights are human rights – The rights and needs of women are equally important as men’s. The human rights of all women are important, regardless of our health status, sexual orientation and gender identity, age, race, class, caste, work, lifestyle, and other statuses. W4GF will work to ensure that these principles are reflected in Global Fund and related decision-making;
- b. Women have the legitimate right to equitably benefit from HIV, TB and malaria resources – W4GF will work to ensure that resources are spent efficiently, effectively and with the right communities and reach women in all their diversity. In particular, W4GF will work to ensure

that there are sufficient mechanisms, spaces and opportunities for women to participate and lead;

- c. Women are agents of change – Women are not merely beneficiaries or passive recipients of Global Fund programmes. Women have played, and will continue to play critical roles in advocacy and delivery of rights-based HIV, TB and malaria responses; and
- d. Women are diverse – As a community, women are not homogeneous and different communities of women face multiple layers of stigma and discrimination in their lives. W4GF will work to ensure that this principle is reflected in the Global Fund and its policies and programmes respond to this diversity.

5. W4GF Steering Group Procedures

5.1 Frequency and Timing

The Steering Group will meet face-to-face at least once a year if funds allow, with regular communication via teleconferences every quarter. More frequent communication may be needed around key events and activities.

Face-to-face meetings will be organized by W4GF, and W4GF will seek co-funding of face-to-face meetings from Steering Group Members. Where possible, Steering Group Members are expected to co-fund their own participation.

5.2 Term of Membership

A term should be two years and with good performance an additional year. A review of the composition of the Steering Group will be conducted every two years to ensure that a diverse range of individuals/organisations working in advancing the rights of women and girls in Global Fund funded countries are involved in advancing the goal and objectives of W4GF. For effectiveness and continuity, membership on the Steering Group is staggered so that there will always be institutional memory amongst the members of the Steering Group. No more than five (5) members step down at any one time and if there are two people from one region then both should not change at the same time.

5.3 Communications

Communications of the Steering Group will be conducted through:

- a. Virtual meetings – through a web-based communications platform;
- b. Emails communications through a dedicated listserv set up for the purpose and for institutional memory; and
- c. A shared Dropbox folder where core documents can be shared with the Steering Group Members.

5.4 Decision Making

Decisions will be made by consensus, and if necessary, decisions will be made with the agreement of two-thirds majority vote within the Steering Group. Decision-making must be made by at least four Members including the ex officio Member of the Steering Group.

5.5 Minutes and Agenda

Meeting notes and/or reports will be taken and distributed by the W4GF Team. The W4GF Team will organise the agendas prior to each call/meeting with the input of Steering Group Members.

5.6 Delegation of Attendance

In exceptional instances where the Steering Group Members are unable to attend the face-to-face meetings or virtual meetings, they are able to delegate attendance/representation. This should be communicated to the W4GF Global Coordinator and accepted on a case-by-case basis.

5.7 Confidentiality

Steering Group Members will operate in an accountable manner and uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour and respect principles of transparency, while safeguarding confidentiality as and when required.

In addition, members of Steering Group are expected to maintain confidentiality on specific documentation that is shared from the Global Fund Secretariat for inputs where necessary. This will be communicated clearly in communications if required.

5.8 Conflict of Interest

Steering Group Members are obliged to declare any conflicts of interests in a timely manner to the W4GF Team, and are expected to recuse from such conversations and/or decision-making processes.

Examples of this include when a W4GF Steering Group member:

- a. Receives financial or other significant benefit as a result of their position or decision-making;
- b. Has opportunity to influence funding directions, administrative, or other material decisions in a manner that leads to personal gain or advantage; and/or
- c. Has an existing or potential financial or other significant interest that impairs or might appear to impair the individual's judgment in decision-making.

5.9 Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the W4GF Steering Group will be reviewed from time-to-time as necessary, and at least once every three years.

6. Operating Language

The operating language will be in English.

7. Cessation of Members of the Steering Group

The following will be cause for the cessation of the term of a Steering Group Member:

- a. If a member is absent for three consecutive meetings (either in-person or via teleconference) without notice or justifiable reason;
- b. The individual resigns from the Steering Group;
- c. If a conflict of interest is declared that makes it untenable for the individual to fulfil the duties; and
- d. There is clear evidence of the violation of W4GF values and principles.

The W4GF Team will review the membership and make a recommendation of action to the Steering Group. The W4GF Team will implement the recommendation in consultation with the W4GF Steering Group Members and terminate the member's term if required.

8. Time Commitment and Compensation

Steering Group members will be expected to devote approximately 2 hours per week. Depending on commitments, during the year around Global Fund decision-making processes, the time might increase accordingly. Membership is on a volunteer, unpaid basis.