

Webinar Notes: Community Reflections from Global Fund Window 2: How much progress are we making on gender equity?

1. Introduction

On 27 July 2020, 41 participants joined the Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) webinar to highlight community reflections from Window 2 and to review progress on gender equality. The Technical Review Panel (TRP) report and observations on the funding requests submitted to the Global Fund, identifying key trends, lessons learned, and recommendations for HIV, TB and Malaria and for resilient and sustainable systems for health, for human rights and gender, and for strategic investments and sustainable finance. The TRPs most recent [report](#) that shows that despite some progress not enough is happening especially beyond the 13 countries that are tracking work around adolescent girls and young women. This is a worrying trend that W4GF is concerned about as we start to focus on the next Global Fund Strategy.

The speakers - engaged at national levels to advocate for women and girls - shared their experiences and leadership. This discussion will be helpful for those currently in the process of grant writing and submitting in window 3. The invited speakers included:

- Carol Nyirenda (Zambia), Executive Director at CITAM+. Carol was involved coordinating civil society engagement in the last country dialogue process through TA from the community, rights and gender and with support from EANNASO – To see these slides click [here](#)
- Daxa Patel (India) has been engaged at the national level for many years and has been on the CCM for two terms representing people living with HIV
- Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga (Bolivia) is a long standing activist and woman living with HIV and a member of the Latin American Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (REDLA) - Violeta is also on the Bolivian CCM representing people living with HIV
- Nancy Bolima (Cameroon), Founder/CEO of the Health Development Consultancy Service focused on health and development and the 1st Vice President of CCM Cameroon and also heads the Civil Society Delegation of the CCM in Cameroon. To see these slides click [here](#).

These notes summaries key points. To listen to the webinar recording, click [here](#)

2. Discussions

Carol Nyirenda (Zambia) This funding request cycle civil society were organised and worked together from mid-2019 through a consultative approach and used community led evidence to back up their requests.

Participants included: Albertina Nyatsi, Baby Rivona, Bohang Tau, Carole Nyirenda, Clotilda Andiensa, Daxa Patel, Edinah, Emily Miki, Evelynne, Gemma Oberth, Gracia Violeta Ross, Hopei, J. Gatsi, Joyce Ouma, Kitty Grant, Kristine Yakhama, Kyasiimire Rose, Lesley Odendal, M. Mundia, Martha Tholanah, Mauro Sitoe, Nalwanga Resty, Nana Gleeson, Nancy Bolima, Olive Mumba, Onesmus Mlewa, Paul, Pertulla Ezigha, Relebohile, Sah Denise Mbakop, Shaaban Haji, Tariro Kutadza, Taty, Tebi Honouine, Visolela Namises, Wim Vandevelde, Yvonne Kahimbura. The Global Fund Secretariat was represented by Ed Ngoksin and Hyeyoung Lim and the W4GF Team included Lucy Wanjiku Njenga; and Sophie Dilmitis.

Finances came from EANNASO through GIZ to support civil society CCM members through a project called CCM+ to ensure civil society in the CCMs engaged meaningfully by creating an independent civil society advisory committee. This committee was made up of appointed people with expertise in: finance; community systems strengthening experience; supply chain and procurement among other areas. They also had writing teams that were recommended by the constituency to act as leads. Additional technical assistance (TA) was provided through the Global Fund Community, Rights and Gender Department to develop a priority issues charter to inform the funding request process. All of this work took place in collaboration with the CCM and kept a birds eye view on the current grant and on what PEPFAR was funding

to avoid duplication. The mid-term reviews also informed their advocacy. All of this was done virtually due to COVID-19. The TA enabled smaller in person meetings with the advisory committee to develop the charter. The group advocated for investment in Community-led Response Coordination Centres to provide oversight over Community ART Access Points to strengthen and enhance linkages to services, retention in care, ensure coverage of LTFU cases in HIV and TB and monitor pharmacovigilance of HIV patients accessing services from Community ART Access Points.

Although this was a good process a key challenge remained that the funding request had insufficient gender and human rights modules as the state claimed this was embedded in the disease modules. The MoH on the funding request writing team insisted that it was enough that some human rights and gender interventions were embedded in the disease modules. In terms of the inclusiveness of the writing process itself, the constituency lead for gender had very limited involvement in the process despite repeated invitations. The process was documented to demonstrate that having an independent civil society community worked. **Key recommendation:** We could have done more to consult with women’s groups and networks. A key recommendation should be that the country requests TA to conduct a gender mapping to lay the ground work to ensure that the funding request addressed gender. Inviting women to engage is not enough to build a case with states that are not cognisant and sensitive to gender matters.

Daxa Patel (India) The previous funding request was similar to this process. There is work to be done on grant allocations as the government underutilised the grant. The current grant on the TB allocation was increased as the India Prime Minister committed in the UN Assembly that India would eliminate TB in India by 2025. There has been progress around how gender is being integrated into TB programmes but overall the engagement of civil society in TB is limited compared to that around HIV programmes. The TB response is still very medicalised and India has a hierarchical structure that makes it challenging for women to engage on the CCM. Within the CCM key allies are UN colleagues, especially UNAIDS, that enable women to engage in the process and ensure communities are taken seriously. **Recommendations:**

- . UN agencies to step up more and support women and gender equality champions.
- . No serious change will happen at the national level until there is a revision of Conflict of Interest policy and related issues around representation on the CCM. This policy excludes certain communities from the CCM and this needs to be addressed as it is a real barrier to having good representation on the CCM
- . At the global level we need to closely monitor national CCMs and ensure community dialogue actually happens
- . The Global Fund needs to make sure that countries (as grantees) ensure community engagement actually happens and is part of the funding request.

Nancy Bolima (Cameroon) The CCM members and the civil society created a core group that worked to ensure all the constituencies provided inputs, especially adolescent girls and young women from internally displaced and sex worker communities. They had 144 young people directly involved in the discussions to develop the funding request. **Recommendations:**

- . The TRP report/s should be used as advocacy to make the case around adolescent girls and young women in each window
- . Advocacy and asks should be grounded in evidence – without this it will be hard to make the case.
- . Ensure TA is organised with and for adolescent girls and young women
- . Solicit data and inputs from the national strategic plans, national dialogue and other technical partners for health

- . A disaggregated approach for adolescent girls and young women is essential that takes into account: age, education, training, engagement in sex workers or transactional sex to inform the process
- . Provide more capacity building for adolescent girls and young women so that they are more organised and have the information they need.

Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga (Bolivia) Global Fund national processes in Bolivia have not been a space for women and girls as we are not defined as a key population. This is the case across most of Latin America where the epidemic is concentrated amongst men who have sex with men and the funding request mainly responds to this. **Recommendations:**

- . If we only use this epidemiological perspective it will continue to perpetuate the fact that many countries continue to be unresponsive to gender inequality. Women and girls are being left behind in Latin America
- . The Global Fund tracks its progress by capturing quantitative data but we are not considering how this intersects with poverty and gender based violence (GBV) as major issues for women that are not factored in when it comes to programmes. COVID-19 highlights these key vulnerabilities that have not been addressed
- . We MUST document and create the evidence base and the Global Fund needs to help us break this cycle and we need funding to do this.
- . We need to rethink how countries will transition out of the Global Fund in the context of COVID-19 and we must not forget our lessons from the HIV movement as we move into this age of COVID-19.
- . Consider regional proposals which can include support for networks of women living with HIV and networks of key population. This might be a good example to replicate in other countries.

3. Final Reflections

- . For window 3 we have to ensure that the TA is well planned, coordinated and early.
- . Civil society and communities must be able to connect with the right people: the writing teams; the country teams to strategically advocate to ensure that gender and human rights
- . We need to focus on getting the right scale of programmes that make a difference and to ensure these are flagged in the prioritised above allocation request (PAAR) when they can't go into the main allocation
- . COVID-19 should be leveraged to address issues around GBV and thus should be applied across the Global Fund portfolio and not just in the 13 adolescent girls and young women focus countries
- . CSS needs to be part of supporting women's groups and networks to strengthen their leadership.
- . Gender is not well integrated into human rights work and this needs to change.
- . The more evidence we have the better we can influence Global Fund national processes – If there are issues these can be flagged with the Office of the Inspector General so that we can start to see what are individual country issues and what are more systematic issues. It is important to document lessons learnt in the funding cycle and the recommendations. W4GF have created a tool to support Advocates to document their engagement - this can be found [here](#).