

Draw the line against Malaria by strengthening gender-related data Women4GlobalFund World Malaria Day Statement

This World Malaria Day (25 April 2021), Women4Global Fund (W4GF) stresses urgency for the **Global Fund to do more to promote and support the collection and use of gender-related data on malaria in all its investments.**

Whilst all people exposed can be affected by malaria we know that gender plays a major role in determining risk and impact. Pregnant women and children are especially vulnerable for epidemiological reasons, and all women in most countries where malaria persists have unique challenges in access to prevention and treatment services due to social, economic and cultural factors that disadvantage and harm them.¹

Over the past year, the situation has gotten worse. COVID-19 has drawn into sharp focus and exacerbated already existing inequities and vulnerabilities that affect the health and lives of women and girls daily. The pandemic has also placed extra burden on health and community systems in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for more than 90% of global malaria cases and deaths, and diverted attention and resources from malaria responses.

Although a relatively new field, there are some examples of best practices focused on gendered aspects of malaria. They include those outlined in recent papers including the [Global Fund's Technical Brief on Malaria, Gender and Human Rights \(2019\)](#) as well as the [Gates Foundation Gender and Malaria Evidence Review \(2020\)](#), which states that *addressing gender inequalities in malaria endemic settings has the potential to accelerate burden reduction and disease elimination.*

We need to do better and we can do better – starting with a clearer and more consistent understanding of what and where the gaps are in reaching more women with the critical malaria services they need. Today, many influential global reports, including the [World Malaria Report 2020](#), do not report on sex-disaggregated data. This World Malaria Day, Women4Global Fund (W4GF) stresses the urgency of all **to promote and support the collection and use of gender-related data on malaria in all its investments.** This is a critical starting point for more extensive work on gender and malaria at national, regional and global levels that can help to improve overall responses and hasten progress to malaria elimination.

Data- and gender-related gaps in Global Fund-supported programming for malaria are well-known. W4GF highlights comments from the Technical Review Panel (TRP) made in Windows 1 of the current funding cycle, including: *The TRP is still reviewing a number of gender-blind funding requests, with limited attention to the gendered dimensions of malaria in particular, and inadequate use of sex- and age-disaggregated data. For malaria requests, applicants should access TA to translate analysis into solid programming based on contextually-grounded evidence about inequities in access to services.*

A key recommendation made by the TRP is that *HRG [human rights and gender] modular activities, based on a best practice review, should be included in the Modular Framework Handbook, and integrated into each of the malaria modules with relevant indicators, disaggregated by gender and age.*

¹ Technical Brief Malaria, Gender and Human Rights, 4 November 2019, https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/5536/core_malariagenderhumanrights_technicalbrief_en.pdf



In addition to following through on that technical recommendation, W4GF on this World Malaria Day affirms all the work being done by our partners to address malaria and we reiterate many of our longstanding calls for the Global Fund to:

- Ensure the development of gender indicators and support programmes to address gender inequality, gender disparities and gaps in the malaria response.
- Strengthen the ability of countries to collect and report more robust age and sex-disaggregated and gender-specific data (beyond data for pregnant women), at national levels. It is disaggregated gender-specific data in health systems that must inform prevention and treatment interventions.
- Invest in implementation of key tools. The [Malaria Matchbox Toolkit](#) was a welcome tool, its implementation should be scaled up while other tools and innovative approaches are developed that guide gender integration into malaria policy and programme approaches.
- Ensure more malaria community representation on Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs) in malaria-endemic countries, with particular attention to women's engagement.

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W4GF is a dynamic global platform of women and gender equality advocates who share a deep commitment to ensuring that Global Fund programmes are gender-transformative to meet the rights and priorities of women and girls in all our diversity. For more information, please contact Sophie Dilmitis, Global Coordinator, Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) [EMAIL](#) | [WEB](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#)

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