

Global Fund 101: Reinforcing gender equality Strengthening the Engagement Of Women Living with HIV-led Networks

BACKGROUND

Promoting and protecting human rights and gender equality is an objective of the Global Fund Strategy 2017 – 2022 and should provide robust opportunities for community advocates addressing gender inequality in HIV, TB and malaria to participate and access resources. However, a recent report commissioned by UNAIDS on the Prioritization in Global Fund Grants: revealed that out of 46 funding requests submitted in the 2020-2022 allocation cycle indicated that only 1 had utilized a gender assessment in its funding prioritization process. The Grant Cycle 7 (GC7) added the **Gender Equality Marker** that must accompany all grant funding submissions with the expectation of a gender assessment in all three components, this to systematically assess, strengthen and report on the extent to which the funding is working to advance gender equality.

However, after discussions with networks of women living with HIV , many networks who were engaging in Global Fund processes remained uninformed about the requirements or benefits of the gender assessments and reported not being involved in the gender assessment. Women living with HIV reported a lack of support for their engagement in Global Fund processes and persistent challenges ensuring their priorities were well represented in the proposal development processes.

ICW and Women4GlobalFund in collaboration with Via Libre / LAC Platform sought to strengthen the ability of f of networks to utilize the the gender assessment tool and how this can support countries as they assess HIV epidemics, contexts, and responses through a gender lens to achieve gender transformative responses, that are equitable and rights based. Gender assessments can play an important role in supporting changes during the review of national strategic plans (NSPs) and inform funding requests submitted to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the capacity and engagement of women living with HIV utilizing evidence -based advocacy from networks of women living with HIV to ensure gender equity in Global Fund processes including the development of country proposals and funding prioritization.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS: 5 Key Takeaways

1. Networks of women living with HIV can demand to be engaged in the development of the required Gender Assessments. The process must reflect the lived realities and priorities as identified by women living with HIV in their diversity
2. Gender Assessments reveal how well gendered concerns are integrated across the HIV response, where responses are gender transformative and where there are gaps in gender responsive programming.
3. Gender Assessments should be a baseline for investments in gender equity, they should not limit or constrain community demands for additional priorities for gender equitable interventions.
4. More space for participation, information and knowledge sharing should be created for women's networks that are beginning the work of participating in the Global Fund's grant cycles, accessible in different languages.
5. Women with HIV must have financial, political and technical support to have a sustained involvement in consultative processes, priority identification and proposal writing in order to work on all interventions related to women and girls in the three diseases.

PANELIST

Making the Global Fund more accessible to women and girls

Immaculate Owomugisha

ICW Global

- Inclusivity at policy level at starting point
 - We need to ensure when the process starts, what policies we have, and what interventions and policies are driving. This means understanding what areas the countries are focusing on around gender equality and center on the needs of women and girls. Assessing what are the laws, policies and practices that support women and girls living with HIV, this way we also understand the gaps we need to address them.
 - When you start the process of writing, you need to know the bases of the country. What evidence do you have for determining that these are the needs of women and girls?
- Community mobilization and Consultative sessions with women and girls at all levels
 - As a community and women, think how well are you mobilizing, you need to start the consultations as early as possible and identify your priority areas. All consultations must ensure the participation of women and girls.
 - Identify key women and girls that can participate in the program application and ensure that the grant addresses the needs of women and girls in all their diversity, after the consultation these issues are tabled in the national dialogues. If they are not engaged at the national level, then we lose from the start.
 - Articulate how much of the grant actually addresses the fight of women and girls across the three diseases.
 - To successfully engage in the complex and sustained Global Fund proposal development processes networks of women must be engaged from the start and financially supported to have robust participation in the room and to prepare evidenced and well written documents to present to the national working group.
- Strengthening partnership and innovation collaboration
 - Guidance from the GF is specific and clear that all proposals must have interventions for sex workers, transgender, general population where WLHIV fits but those are not interventions for people with disabilities, hence we need to think how to strategize to have representative of PLHIV in all their diversity on the table that can easily articulate the issues.
- Women and girls representative of the CCM
 - We need women and girls specific seats at CCM, however the challenges are that there is not funding to support their participation

We need to ensure that advocacy continues throughout the concept writing process, and we have a lot of back and forth with the government and key writers. The technical assistance we have is from the government, not a specific consultant to help communities articulate their issues.

How to engage with TA providers (consultant) on the gender assessment

Archana Partkar

UNAIDS

- UNAIDS have completed about 16 gender assessments (GA) in the last two years and ongoing 6 for 2023.
 - Morocco conducts a gender assessment to bring this recommendations to the GF proposal and national strategic plans, understanding which are the key areas for integration for recommendation
 - Ministries of health are open and ready to listen if we engage with them with GA which reflect practical and real experiences across key populations and networks of women and girls. Joint conversation with adolescent girls and boys were carried out, despite not very enabling consent laws for access treatment but the key was to ensure a non confrontational discussion and recognize the dynamics of the epidemic by acknowledging and listening.
 - We must ensure that voices that matters and the tables are listening in a non confrontational way, it open the doors to partnerships
 - The Sierra Leone government was very engaged with the issues around women and girls with all the partners from different ministries dedicated to different kinds of disabilities, bringing this group together helped open the doors to understand the avenue of how to work together.
- The GA will help us identify gaps that may not be reached. As well as the opportunities and recommendations that need to be realities and must also look at incentives to tackle this.

Gender Assessments: Moving to gender responsive and transformative approaches

Angela Leon Caceres

W4GF

- Gender Assessments enable countries to better understand how gender inequality shapes their HIV response, which of the gender-related barriers hinder access to HIV services, and how well national HIV responses are addressing this inequality to meet the needs of women and girls especially those from key and vulnerable populations
 - It seeks to redefine and transform gender norms and relations to redress existing inequalities to promote shared power, the control of resources, decision-making and support for women's empowerment
- The gender assessment process requires preparation, knowledge of national HIV and TB epidemics, identification of national HIV and TB responses, analysis and use of GA findings for gender responsive and transformative HIV and TB and lastly, development of cost national action plans to mitigate and overcome identified gender-related barriers.
- The gender assessment outcomes will support lobbying for gender centred recommendations in Global Fund concept notes and their allocations. As well mobilize additional financial resources. Women

advocates can leverage the gender assessments to influence changes during the review of national strategic plans (NSP) and they can support advocacy to inform funding requests submitted to the Global Fund

Useful documents and resources:

If you want to know more about the gender assessments read the W4GF information note in English and French or watch our video if you prefer listening.

→ **UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool:**

https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/unaids-gender-assessment-tool_en.pdf

→ **Technical Brief Gender Equality - Allocation Period 2023-2025**

https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/5728/core_gender_infonote_en.pdf

Gender Equality Marker

Thea Willis

The Global Fund

- The Gender Equality Marker (GEM) is one part of a whole range of initiatives to encourage and strengthen gender equality in the grant cycle. What shifted is that the Global Fund is recognizing that we are not going to achieve gender inequality unless we prioritize it.
- The Global Fund strategy aims to maximize health equity, gender equality and human rights, this as a recognition that gender inequality needs to be embedded in everything we do
- GEM tools assess how well we are doing at integrated gender lens across our funding but also give powerful information to prove about where countries and grants are considered addressing gender inequality - and also where are the gaps. It estimates how much of the Global Fund's overall investment is being targeted toward programs that are gender transformative.
 - To evaluate, a 3 point scoring system and criteria is used. The process is to ensure the countries submitting in line with all the requirement goes to an independent technical review panel and they have a scoring and how much percentage of the funding will go towards advancing gender equality
- It brings us engagement opportunities to raise awareness. GF is going to be assigned all funding request, engage in GA developed fully by women in their diversity

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https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/5728/core_gender_infonote_en.pdf

→ **UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool: Towards a gender-transformative HIV response**

https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/unaids-gender-assessment-tool_en.pdf

Short-term NFM4 related TA

Ganna Dovbakh

CE-SI Platforms

- The main objective of the Strategic Initiative on Community Engagement (CE-SI) is to strengthen the involvement of civil society and communities in the work of the Global Fund and related processes at the national level - important source of technical support for preparing proposal and assessment
 - Out of the three components of the CE-SI, the third one belongs to the CRG Regional Platforms for communication and coordination.
 - Its TA has prioritized tractsTA tracts and sub-activities for GC7 consisting of
 - Situational analysis and needs assessment to organize the scope of work of the consultant
 - Engagement in NMF4 country dialogue processes
 - Other support needed (eg. costing, mentoring)
 - Please apply for NFM4 related CA TA at least 6 months before your country's NFM4 funding request submission windows
 - To receive the TA request form please approach your Regional CRG Platform or send a request to crhta@theglobalfund.org
- Resources:

Useful documents and resources:

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→ **Strategic Initiative on Community Engagement (CE-SI) website**

<https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/funding-model/throughout-the-cycle/community-engagement/>

→ **Strategic Initiative on Community Engagement (CE-SI) explanation video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJdK3qOVJuY&t=2s>

→ **Video instruction how to apply for technical support**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOK2kPzjA3A&t=22s>