



Stepping towards gender equity in the Global Fund: Experiences and lessons learned from 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Advancing Gender Equality in Global Fund

Despite increased commitments, there are still challenges in realizing gender equity in Global Fund processes. Only one funding request in the 2020-2022 allocation cycle used a gender assessment in its prioritization process.

- ICW and W4GF utilized a multifaceted approach to collect information from women living with HIV interested in participating in GC7 processes.
- The process encompassed technical assistance projects, interviews, and an online survey specifically tailored for women living with HIV.



**Engaging in
THE GLOBAL FUND**

Strengthening the Engagement Of Women Living with HIV-led Networks Series

Welcome and thank you for taking time out to respond to this very brief survey.

ICW, with the support of W4GF, has developed a series of webinars for Strengthening the Engagement Of Women Living with HIV-led Networks, the first focusing on strengthening gender equality for meaningful participation in the GC7 funding application process and increasing gender equity in prioritization. In this second installment, we propose to create space for Knowledge Sharing on gender-specific interventions in communities for prioritization in the funding request.

Your participation in this survey is very crucial in the analysis of the GC7.

Kindly note that your response to every question is required. Feel free to reach brenda@women4gf.org if you are facing any challenges in responding to the questions please.

- ICW and W4GF utilized a multifaceted approach to collect information from women living with HIV interested in participating in GC7 processes.
- The process encompassed technical assistance projects, interviews, and an online survey specifically tailored for women living with HIV.
- By July 13, 2023, a total of 81 responses were gathered from women residing in 23 countries across nine distinct regions.



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Virtual consultations:

- Data was collected from 53 respondents in 10 sub Saharan African countries including Cameroon, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- The survey explored four areas: gender assessments, engagement in country processes, achieving women's priorities, and implementation of gender transformative programmes



Gender Assessments

- Gender assessments are a critical tool for promoting gender equity in the Global Fund process.
- However, they are underutilized and often lack meaningful engagement of women living with HIV.
- Only 37.74% of respondents in our survey confirmed that gender analysis had been utilized during their Global Fund proposal prioritization.
- Where gender assessments have been implemented, they have not consistently translated into program design improvements.

Engagement in the GC7 and Country Processes

- Challenges persist for women living with HIV in their involvement within the GF country processes.
- 45.28% of respondents felt they were not as involved as they wanted to be in the GC7 process.
- Only 24.53% of respondents expressed being very involved in country-level dialogues, and only 9.43% stated they were part of the proposal writing team.
- Some of the challenges reported included lack of clarity and transparency of the CCMs, accessibility issues, financial limitations, and difficulty in advocating for increased participation of women and girls.

Achieving Women's Priorities

- Women's priorities were often not included in the final proposals, but nevertheless women made progress despite the challenges.
- An early consultation led by ICW revealed common challenges among local networks, including limited engagement with required gender assessments and lack of coordination among women's efforts.
- Women's engagement in Nigeria led to the inclusion of PMTCT/EMPOWERMENT and AGYW components in the proposal, albeit with limited involvement in the writing process.
- In Eswatini, women have actively participated in proposal writing and engaged in country-level dialogues, benefiting from technical assistance provided by the CRG.

Advancing Women-Led Responses in Global Fund Program Implementation

- Networks of women living with HIV also reported challenges being considered as recipients of funds and in competing to implement GF funded programming.
- ICW Malawi highlighted the need for improved data, gender analysis, and organizational strengthening.
- ICW Mozambique requests support for women's consultation and collaboration to address these issues, along with technical assistance for Gender Analysis review and priority formulation.

Conclusions :

The Global Fund has made powerful commitments to gender equity,

- However, It is more urgent than ever to **prioritize women's needs within the Global Fund framework**, given the rising tide of misogyny and concerns about transparency, accessibility, and representation.
- Clear and **transparent decision-making procedures**, enhanced accessibility for all, and broader representation across all stages of engagement are essential to ensure effective participation and to elevate women's perspectives.
- We must address the cycle where the **lack of influence or accountability in prioritization processes has led to underfunding** or deprioritization of women's programs, low rates of program implementation led by women-led responses and projects, and limited funding to prevention of vertical transmission services only.

Recommendations :

- Ensure meaningful participation of women living with HIV in all stages of the Global Fund process. This includes gender assessments, priority setting, proposal development, and implementation.
- Empower networks of women living with HIV to utilize gender assessment findings to inform priority interventions and support gender-transformative initiatives.
- Strengthen women's representation and voice within the Global Fund's country processes. This includes addressing barriers such as language constraints, limited internet access, and financial constraints.
- More research is needed in the active participation of women living with hiv in the GF processes.



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