A Roadmap for Strengthening Community Engagement with Global Fund

Background

The Global Fund is the largest funder of HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria health programs in the world. Recognizing the critical role of communities in delivering impactful, equitable, and rights-based, and responsive programs, the Global Fund's 2023-2028 Strategy emphasizes "maximizing the engagement and leadership of most affected communities to leave no one behind." Ensuring that Global Fund delivers on this promise is a critical priority.

Evidence from the 2024 RISE study[1] revealed the importance of the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) as an important space for community engagement at the country level. However, the study also identified several barriers to meaningful participation, including challenges with CCM membership and participation in committees, difficulties accessing the financial support and information needed to plan and oversee Global Fund programs, and discrimination, stigma, and power differentials. These findings are echoed by a global consultation conducted by Women4GlobalFund and ICW in 2023, which found that among women[2] living with or most at risk of HIV, 27% had difficulties actively participating in CCM processes, 47% felt underrepresented and only 6% were involved in proposal writing. These respondents reported that their priorities were included in early drafts of country priority lists but were frequently excluded from the final Funding Request.

Addressing these barriers and ensuring equitable and fair opportunities for meaningful community engagement with Global Fund processes will take a multi-faceted approach, requiring the commitment and leadership of the Global Fund Secretariat, the Global Fund Board, public and private donors, and civil society. This roadmap aims to define the minimum set of policies, activities, and programs necessary to support this agenda.

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[1] The RISE study group. Community engagement in Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms: Findings from the RISE study. 22 April 2024.

[2] References women in all of their diversity, including heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, intersex, non-binary, transgender women, sex workers over 18 years old, and adolescents, girls, and young women.

Recommendations for Global Fund Secretariat

Recommendations for CCM Hub:

1. Ensure CCM Hub investments are contributing to strong multi-sectoral engagement by publishing the **CCM Funding Agreements**, including the CCM Funding Performance Frameworks and the Costed Work Plans, on the Global Fund's website.[3]

2. To engage all representatives in CCM strengthening, publish country-level data from the **Integrated Performance Framework** (IPF) for CCMs on the Global Fund's website on an annual basis[4].

3. The Country Coordinating Mechanism Funding Policy[5] should emphasize the use of CCM budgets for **one full-time CCM Secretariat salary** to support and coordinate the CCM's community delegation(s).

4. Support the development and dissemination of a **guide for costing community engagement** in CCM Funding Agreements budgets.

Recommendations for Community, Rights and Gender (CRG):

5. To support the sustained engagement of communities and resource mobilization for community priorities, publish the "**Funding Priorities of Civil Society** and Communities Most Affected by HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria" on the Global Fund's website. Greater visibility of this Funding Request annex will enable communities to continue tracking funding priorities and advocate for reprogramming throughout the three-year cycle[6]. Given its important role in community engagement, the Annex must be conserved in GC8.

6. Encourage the creation of explicit gender-sensitive and transformative policies within the framework of grant implementation, encourage the funding request to maximize gender equality and equity by tackling the underlying causes of gender inequality in health. These should include clear, measurable targets for integrating gender perspectives into HIV, TB, and Malaria comprehensive interventions. This involves **a mandatory gender analysis/assessment** ensuring that programmes reflect the findings in the activities and within the budget, with a gender-centered approach, considering and following an emphasis

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[3] The Global Fund's Operational Policy Manual (15 May 2024) indicates that "[f]or transparency purposes, the Global Fund reserves the right to publish the CCM Funding Agreements, including the CCM Funding Performance Frameworks and the Costed Work Plans, on its website" (pg. 69).

[4] The Integrated Performance Framework is used to conduct a comprehensive, annual assessment of the CCM eligibility requirements and performance objectives, which includes several metrics of engagement.

[5] The Funding Policy currently specifies that CCM funding may be used for the salaries of CCM secretariat staff (but not for the salary of CCM members) and CCM consultancy fees (such as for civil society participation)

[6] In Grant Cycle 7 (GC7), Global Fund only publishes the Funding Request Form; Programmatic Gap Table; Funding Landscape Table; RSSH Gaps and Priorities; the Performance Framework; and the Essential Data Tables. Documents that are not published include the Detailed Budget; Prioritized Above Allocation Request; Health Product Management Template; the Country Dialogue Narrative; Implementation Arrangements Mapping; the Risk Assessment Tool for Sexual Exploitation; Abuse and Harassment; CCM Eligibility Requirements Documentation; and the Co-financing Commitment Letter.

on Adolescents, Girls, Young women (AGYW) guidance and differentiated services according to intersections, e.g., transgender women, sex workers, human mobility, indigenous populations, women with disabilities, women that use drugs, women living in humanitarian crises, among others.

Joint recommendations for the Secretariat:

7. Create a **standing CCM Advisory Body** to provide support to the CCM Hub and recommend strategies that will enable the strengthening of CCMs to reach higher maturity levels. The CCM Advisory Body should report to the Strategy Committee (SC) and the Ethics and Governance Committee (EGC), and include SC and EGC members and independent technical experts such as CCM Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members, as well as technical assistance funders and providers.

8. Support the development of a "**Community Guide for CCM Engagement,**" a one-stop resource about the rights and responsibilities of CCM members and communities engaged with Global Fund, written in clear and plain-language. Facilitate webinars, implemented by the Learning Hubs and other civil society partners, on this guide for the Learning Hubs and all Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CE SI) technical assistance providers, for use in their work. Webinar should be complemented by other dissemination strategies, including information sessions, advocacy campaigns, and workshops.

9. Define and implement strategies to promote the Global Fund Office of the Inspector General (OIG) "**I Speak Out Now**" reporting mechanism, with an emphasis placed on protection against retaliation and disclosure and ensuring that the platform is accessible to all community representatives[7].

10. Support a **convening of all public and private donors** supporting community engagement with Global Fund. This support would facilitate the alignment of application timelines, processes, and strategies for funding community engagement and technical assistance.

11. In advance of Grant Cycle 8 (GC8), **strengthen minimum expectations** for community input and mechanisms for addressing governance challenges[8]. These should include:
    a. In keeping with the country ownership evinced in the Funding Request stage, the Principal Recipient(s) must produce the **signatures of all CCM members** in cases when Grant budget lines deviate from the approved Funding Request by more than 30%.

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[7] While "I Speak Out Now" is an indispensable mechanism for addressing fraud and abuse, evidence from the RISE study suggests communities are either not aware of the mechanism or do not use it out of fear of retaliation and disclosure.

[8] Since GC7, the Global Fund has promoted three "minimum expectations" for community engagement, including that Funding Request development must include a transparent and inclusive consultation process resulting in an annex of community priorities and that communities must have timely access to information on the status of Grant Making and Implementation.

b. The Grant Management Department (GMD) must develop a strategy for **directly funding community organizations**. These novel granting modalities are key for ensuring that trusted, local partners are eligible and able to be paid for their work. They must also go beyond the current case-by-case management model, by proposing standardized, clear, accessible, and fair procedures applicable to all organizations. New funding mechanisms must be light touch, to reduce administrative burden on small organizations, and must provide support for organizational administrative costs.

c. To facilitate **CCM engagement in reprogramming** and to create opportunities for strategic reinvestment, the Global Fund Secretariat must notify the full CCM in cases of (1) Portfolio Optimization rounds and/or (2) in-country savings and efficiencies equivalent to 30% of the signed intervention budget, as reported in the Progress Update and Disbursement Request (PU/DR).

d. To support the Global Fund's localization agenda[9], the **Implementation Arrangement Map(s)** must be published on the Global Fund's website of Funding Request documents. In parallel, the Secretariat should emphasize more complete tracking of **Sub-recipients and Sub-sub-recipients** implementing programs, such as through strengthening data collection through Local Fund Agents' (LFA) Implementation Readiness Assessments, to facilitate improved understanding of grant implementation by community-led organizations.

e. In order to fill information and capacity gaps and retain institutional memory, ensure that GC8 community engagement support mechanisms promote and include **peer mentorship** of current community CCM representatives by former representatives. CRG mechanisms should continue its localization of technical assistance, including that international consultants are partnered with locally-based consultants.

f. To reinforce impactful and fit-for-purpose technical assistance, formalize a process for the beneficiaries of Global Fund-supported capacity building to be able to **evaluate and rate the consultants** delivering services.

g. To track key measures of community engagement, the **Integrated Performance Framework** (IPF) for measuring CCM eligibility and performance should include measures of the number of full-time community staff supported, tracking of the independence of CCM Secretariats from governments and Principal Recipients, and community-led reporting of their participation throughout the cycle.

h. To ensure a truly comprehensive approach, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the existing gender gaps in upholding gender equality in program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The **Gender Equality Marker**, as a measuring tool, must not remain a mere and simple indicator but should be a guiding

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[9] The Global Fund's 2023-2028 Strategy emphasized building government capacity to engage and contract non-public actors, particularly community organizations for the implementation of programs for key and vulnerable populations.

principle, and thus formally evaluated not only in quantitative terms but also in a qualitative manner that can represent the vision, perceptions and experiences of women in all of their diversity. This requires proactive steps to ensure that gender equality isn't an afterthought but an integral component in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all projects and programmes funded by the Global Fund.

Recommendations for communities and civil society

1. Create a civil society-led **global platform for community CCM members** and Global Fund advocates to engage with each other and to facilitate peer-to-peer learnings. The platform should include the launch of a community-led whistleblowing mechanism to support the escalation of programmatic challenges to the Global Fund OIG and to track trends in challenges with CCM governance engagement. This space would feature discussions and peer-to-peer learnings about key topics, such as engagement strategies, electing strong representatives, oversight functions, and building community power.
2. Develop a **report measuring the evolution of Global Fund program funding** from Funding Request stage to the signed Grant and including advocacy messages about the need for transparency and the meaningful engagement of communities during the Grant Making stage of the cycle.
3. Develop a **publicly-accessible CCM Dashboard** with Global Fund data on grant funding and performance, designed for use by CCM members and community advocates.
4. Develop a **platform for tracking the priorities of the Community Annex**, their funding status in the Grant, and to help communities advocate for reprogramming of unfunded activities in the Unfunded Quality Demand.
5. Conduct a research study of **Global Fund funding for community-led organizations** and spending on programs for communities and key and vulnerable populations.

Recommendations for donors

1. To address the finding that CCM funding is difficult to access and disbursed, launch a **coordinated financing mechanism for CCM advocacy** and capacity building work. In addition to supporting community participation in CCMs, this funding stream should additionally support engagement with National Strategic Plan (NSP) development.
2. Develop, enhance, and promote sustained funding mechanisms that engage previous community CCM members to serve as **peer mentors for current community members**.
3. Support the development and expansion of the **CCM Dashboard** to make grant data accessible to CCM members and community advocates.

Sign-ons

1   Action for Children in Conflict (Kenya)

2   Anti Drug Abuse Association of Lesotho

3   Arms To Lean On (ATLO) (Kenya)

4   Bacha Re Bacha Youth Forum (Lesotho)

5   BONELA (Botswana)

6   Bramwel Waka (Kenya)

7   Care for Basotho (Lesotho)

8   Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights (Ghana)

9   Centre for the Development of People (Malawi)

10   César Mufanequico (Mozambique)

11   Coalition Plus

12   Coalition of Women living with HIV and AIDS (Malawi)

13   COLTMR CI (Collectif des Organisations de lutte contre la tuberculose et les Maladies Respiratoires, en Côte d'Ivoire)

14   COMMUNITY RESILIENCE ORGANIZATION (Tanzania)

15   CONAMENT (Tanzania)

16   Consolation East Africa (Kenya)

17   DECISIVE MINDS (Zambia)

18   Dream Up Association (Cameroon)

19   EATHAN - East Africa Trans Network (Kenya)

20   El khammas Mohammed (Morocco)

21   EmpowerCare Youths Network Solution (Zambia)

22   Espoir et Vie Cameroun (EVICAM)

23   EX TB Gambia

24   Fogue Foguito (Cameroon)

25   Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN)

26   Godwin Simfukwe (Zambia)

27   Health and Rights Education Program (Malawi)

28   Impact Community Based Organisation Meru (Kenya)

29   IMPACT SANTE AFRIQUE (Cameroon)

30   IMRO Rwanda

31 Ishtar MSM (Kenya)

32 Jessie Ossavou

33 Jonglei Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (South Sudan)

34 Julius Kachidza (Zambia)

35 Kenya Network Of People Who Use Drugs (KeNPUD)

36 Khanyisile Ntshalintshali (Eswatini)

37 KVP FORUM TANZANIA

38 La Maison des Enfants et des Jeunes (MEJ) (Cameroun)

39 L'association de lutte contre le sida (ALCS) (Morocco)

40 Malawi Network of People living with HIV

41 MATRAM (Mozambique)

42 Mavis Falala-Banda (Zimbabwe)

43 Men For Positive Living Support Community Based Organization (MOPLS) (Kenya)

44 Molise Foso (Lesotho)

45 Mpumalanga Zwane (Eswatini)

46 Mu-Utra Health Foundation (Uganda)

47 My Age Zimbabwe

48 National Council of People Living with HIV Tanzania (NACOPHA)

49 Network Of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) (Malawi)

50 Network of Young Key Populations (Ghana)

51 Ojiego Emmanuel Chidi (Nigeria)

52 Omar Kora (Gambia)

53 ONG AWA

54 ONG REVS PLUS (Burkina Faso)

55 Opiyo (Kenya)

56 Pauline Long Entrepreneurship Foundation (Malawi)

57 Peter Njane (Kenya)

58 Plateforme des réseaux et faîtière de lutte contre le sida et les autres pandémies en Côte d'Ivoire

59 POSITIVE-GENERATION (Cameroon)

60 Rare Disease Lesotho Association

61 RELESS NSONGON (Cameroun)

62 Responsive Action for Sustainable Empowerment Initiative (RASE) (Nigeria)

63 Rhoda Lewa (Kenya)

64 Rose Meku

65 Sadiq Lawal Muhammad (Nigeria)

66 Samwel Msimbe (Tanzania)

67 Sex Workers Investment Movement (SWIM) (Zimbabwe)

68 Sibongile Tshabalala (South Africa)

69 Sister Agness Lungu (Zambia)

70 Sisters Ability & Right Support Initiative (SARSI) (Nigeria)

71 Sisters Against HIV and Cancer Initiative (SACHI) (Nigeria)

72 Solidarity Women Network in Uganda

73 Southern Africa Miners Association (SAMA) (Eswatini)

74 Take Care of Human Being (TAHBE)

75 Tanzania Community Health Information and Support (TaCHIS)

76 Tariro Kutadza (Zimbabwe)

77 The Health Advocacy & Activists Trust (Zimbabwe)

78 Traditional Medical Practitioners Council Zimbabwe

79 Tranz Network Uganda

80 Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) (South Africa)

81 Tugutuke Jamii Organization (Kenya)

82 Uganda Young Positives

83 Une Page Blanche Pour Ton Histoire

84 Vena Daniel (Nigeria)

85 WEKESWA (Kenya)

86 Wiv-hr ASBL (Burundi)

87 Women 4 Global Fund (W4GF)

88 Women In Health Meeting Point Uganda

89 Women With A Mission (WWM) (Uganda)

90 Wote Youth Development Projects CBO (Kenya)

91 Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+)