

The Global Fund New Funding Model: Civil Society and Community Experiences in 4 countries of Asia



INTRODUCTION

The Global Fund New Funding Model (NFM) was introduced to achieve greater impact on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The NFM is designed to provide predictable funding, reward ambitious vision, set more flexible timings and enable a smoother, shorter application process that ensures a higher success rate of applications. The NFM focuses on funding proven and effective interventions, and is proactive in its approach. It also seeks to increase focus on human rights and gender, and build greater involvement of populations affected by the three diseases into programme design, implementation and evaluation.

With many countries in Asia and the Pacific having completed a country dialogue over the past 12 months, it is timely to reflect on experiences from civil society and community in the NFM.



BACKGROUND



Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations (APCASO), in partnership with Center for Supporting Community Development Initiatives Vietnam (SCDI) and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) under the Community Advocacy Initiative (CAI), with funding support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the French 5% Initiative, organised a civil society and community roundtable with participants from Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Viet Nam and regional Young Key Affected Populations (YKAP) networks.

The consultation aimed to facilitate discussion on the experiences of civil society and community during the country dialogue, concept note development and grant making processes.

The meeting also aimed to surface issues, take stock of lessons, and develop recommendations on civil society and community engagement with the NFM, particularly with regards to community, rights and gender (CRG).

The recommendations outlined below are based on discussion and inputs from the civil society and community representatives attending the regional roundtable. Due to budget constraints, a limited number of representatives were taken from 4 countries in the region, representing mainly HIV focused organisations with only a few participants also engaged in TB or malaria grants.

APCASO and AFAO hope additional reflection sessions to draw recommendations from a wider pool of civil society and community organisations will be possible in the future.

It is hoped these recommendations will feed into wider discussions and planning around the establishment of the GF Regional CRG TA platforms and CRG TA provision, and the new Global Fund strategy.

DISCUSSIONS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



During the regional round table, discussions were structured around key processes and themes. A full report will be prepared separately - the current document is a summary of the main points discussed.

NFM Processes



Country Dialogue

Civil society and community noted the NFM country dialogue has significantly increased their involvement, engagement and leadership in grant planning and design. Civil society reported ongoing closer working relationships with other civil society and KAP networks as well as other stakeholders as a result of the NFM approach. The NFM country dialogue worked better where there was pre-existing trust and relationships built between government and civil society. The precedent of having collaborated on the National Strategic Plan (NSP) was important, and also ensured the NSP was more robust and able inform the country dialogue. The increased number of civil society Primary Recipients (PR) and Sub-Recipients (SR) was noted as evidence of this increased involvement.

However, in some cases civil society involvement was initiated late in the country dialogue process, or was not as meaningful as it could have been. It important to prioritise and sustain investment in community systems, so meaningful engagement becomes inherent in the response. Barriers that impeded meaningful engagement included:

- limited understandings from stakeholders on the meaning and value of community, KAP and participation
- capacity of civil society
- literacy and language
- geographic barriers



Country Dialogue

continued

The ability (often due to other projects' or stakeholders' activities) for civil society to have early and independent consultations to gather community inputs and support advocacy was seen as an important factor in fostering ongoing civil society engagement in country dialogues. Technical discussions need to take place in the country dialogue ahead of the concept note development, and support to ensure civil society is able and prepared to participate in these discussions, and communicate information to its constituent communities should be provided.

The set envelope for grant budget forced dialogue and discussion about allocation of funds – which was a constructive process if the country dialogue was inclusive of civil society. However, mobilising life saving services is still challenging in many countries, and civil society is in a difficult position to request funding to be allocated for advocacy. The allocation method may not reflect the needs in country and consequently any requests from civil society are seen to take away from other essentials. Negotiating within this space is very challenging for civil society.



Recommendations

- Global Fund and other stakeholders should systematically support early and independent engagement of civil society and KAP (including young KAP) in the country dialogue. For subsequent rounds of country dialogues, civil society should be activated ahead of the country dialogue with broader stakeholders being initiated.
- Financial resources and technical support must be allocated to ensure civil society and KAP can meaningfully participate throughout the country dialogue process.
- Likewise, support for civil society in other national processes, such as National Strategic Plan development will build civil society and community capacity and relationships with government and sets a positive foundation for the country dialogue.
- Global Fund and CRG to monitor involvement of civil society, KAP and YKAP throughout the country dialogue until the finalisation of grant making. Feedback to be sourced locally, nationally and regionally.
- Civil society and KAP to also be involved in monitoring of country dialogue processes to ensure community issues are captured and followed up.
- Global Fund to ensure guidance outlining the intended objectives and methodology of each step of the country dialogue process to be accessible to civil society.
- FPM and country team to ensure that all stakeholders understand civil society engagement and dialogue should be a planned, recurring and regular occurrence across the country dialogue, not just the occasional meeting.



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Concept Note Development

Concept Note development under the NFM has been a more inclusive experience for civil society with higher levels of input and consultation compared to previous rounds of GF grant making. Civil society noted challenges however, in being able to be a part of the writing team. In some cases drafts were written by government or consultants and only shared later for civil society comment.

In some cases decision-making processes were not clear or transparent, and civil society was unsure whether comments would be taken up.

The capacity of civil society to engage as part of the writing team can be limited; the concepts, language and process involved are complex and require targeted attention to build the capacity of civil society in these areas. Limited capacity in budgeting and use of global fund budget templates was also a barrier to civil society involvement in the budget side of concept note development.

Civil society also noted that flexibility to amend programme targets to align with changing circumstances and emerging data should be considered, to prevent dis-incentivising civil society and other stakeholders to include ambitious targets. Targets may depend on incorrect or dated data and an inability to amend programmes once new data emerges, which reduces programme efficiency. To address this issue, community experience and observation, such as the life experience of KAP should be included as evidence along side more formally organized research and surveys.

It was also noted the PR and SR selection was conducted using a range of methods, and so standard and consultative processes for decision making in this regard should be put in place.



Recommendations

- Regular briefing, review and feedback from civil society and KAP to be planned into concept note drafting timelines. Mechanisms for decision-making and incorporation of civil society and KAP concerns, issues and suggestions to be agreed as part of grant making process.
- Civil society and KAP also supported to monitor and document inclusion of their inputs and recommendations into concept note drafts and budgets.
- Financial investment in civil society and KAP to better participate in the concept note writing team.
- Ensure decision making around PR and SR selection is standardised and transparent.
- Taking into account the differences between civil society and the government, ensure Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), templates and budget designs are used across PR and SR to aid overall grant coordination during concept note development, grant making and implementation.
- Ensure data used in programme rationales is robust and includes reference to community observation and experience to complement potentially poor formal data. Build in flexibility to respond to emerging or revised data in grant target commitments.



3

Grant Making

Civil society participation in the country dialogue process was seen to diminish during the grant making stage, due to issues of short turn-around times, limited civil society capacity to engage in re-drafting and re-budgeting, and fewer opportunities for civil society and community consultation. Ensuring priorities and suggestions from civil society are maintained from the Concept Note through to grant making for narrative, budget and targets was a significant concern for civil society.

The feedback from the Technical Review Panel (TRP) and the Grant Approvals Committee (GAC) are seen as hugely important references for civil society and KAP to advocate for inclusion of communities and KAP, rights and gender. This feedback, as coming from external and independent assessors, can motivate governments to allocate budget and activities in a way that is difficult for national civil society and KAP to advocate for alone. However, civil society felt the information provided by TRP and GAC in previous rounds had been more detailed, and so more useful, in this respect.

An additional concern was that civil society in many cases were not aware how significantly a concept note and budget could change during grant making, and had not realised the need to monitor revisions closely all the way through this stage.



Recommendations

- Monitor levels of civil society and KAP engagement in grant making to prevent a drop off.
- Technical support to civil society and KAP is needed at this stage as the process tends to accelerate. Despite deadline pressures, civil society needs time to consult with community in grant making. Support could include mentoring and use of new communication media, e.g. social media, to assist consultation with community constituencies and enable broader civil society participation in grant making as a process of engagement rather than one off consultation.
- More comprehensive and detailed TRP and GAC feedback, particularly in terms of priority interventions for community and KAP focus, community systems strengthening, rights and gender is important. It is critical to have CRG feedback at the GAC 1 in these areas.
- TRP and GAC feedback should be translated into local language, and community consultations on the feedback facilitated.
- Moving towards implementation stage, mechanisms to include KAP in implementation, and to monitor implementation should be explored.



4

Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM)

Civil society noted that under the NFM the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) have generally been reformed and there is now an improved space for civil society. A transparent, inclusive, informed, accountable and representative CCM was closely aligned with civil society satisfaction with the NFM process.

Civil society suggested representation on the CCM could be improved by allocating a space for all KAP (including YKAP) to enable strong KAP voice on the CCM, and technical support provided for individual representatives once they have been elected to the position. CCM representatives for civil society and KAP need to have commensurate capacity to contribute, to engage and to lead. They need to feel empowered and confident within the CCM space. There is also a key need for capacity building and resources to enable community and KAP representatives to consult with their constituencies and gather feedback to share to the CCM – especially where there are geographic or other challenges to community consultation. Civil society reported having to compete for limited community and KAP places on the CCM, which resulted in feeling dis-engaged. Support to empower community and KAP representatives in the CCM is important to ensure meaningful engagement.

There are still gaps in understanding among broader CCM on the meaning and value of civil society, KAP and meaningful engagement. In some instances even consultation and dialogue are not well understood by all members. Accordingly, in some instances CCM remain exclusive and closed, lacking in transparency and act as a gatekeeper aligned with government interests. A civil society or KAP representative on the CCM with the exclusive role as advisor on civil society and KAP perspectives to other members of the CCM was one idea discussed to address this gap.

The operating language of the CCM (usually English) is an ongoing challenge. Translations of key documents are often late coming and interpreters rarely used during CCM meetings. Some strong KAP or community advocates are unable to participate in the CCM due to this barrier.

Overall, civil society felt CCM have not yet fully met their potential role in fostering an inclusive and transparent country dialogue process, and further support in this area is required.



Recommendations

- **CCM should be required to include representatives from each disease and each KAP as relevant to the respective country.**
- **The selection process for KAP representatives to the CCM must be transparent. There must be strict compliance with the GF Guidelines.**
- **A designated seat for YKAP on the CCM should be required in all countries where the epidemic is observed among YKAP.**
- **Capacity building of CCM (and secretariats) to ensure they are competent, transparent and accountable. This should include sensitisation around meaningful engagement and KAP, as well as gender and human rights programming perspectives.**
- **Ensure interpreters and timely translation of key documents for CCM meetings and GF feedback (e.g. TRP and GAC comments).**
- **CCM technical working groups could be better utilised to facilitate wider community and KAP input into CCM processes.**



5

Country Teams & Fund Portfolio Managers

Civil society highlighted that the Fund Portfolio Manager (FPM) and country team play a key role in the NFM. Building relationships with the FPM and team was important in civil society overcoming domestic challenges during negotiations. The civil society relationship with FPM and country team was important in seeking responses to civil society queries and concerns, and at key intervals where civil society needed to engage with key stakeholders (i.e. TRP and GAC).

In some instances the FPM was critical to support reform of the CCM to enable greater community and KAP representation. In other cases the role of the FPM was not clear or strong, and communication with civil society was limited. Changing the FPM during the country dialogue causes disruption to the process.



Recommendations

- There must be open channels of communication between civil society and the FPM and country team to ensure concerns can be noted and queries answered in a timely manner. CRG may be well placed to assist with such communications.
- During all country visits FPM should allocate time (1-2 days) for civil society and KAP only consultations. Consultation should extend beyond civil society and KAP representatives on the CCM, and should include other leading civil society and KAP organisations and networks.
- FPM and country team to communicate broadly with civil society at key intervals in the country dialogue process to ensure opportunities and responsibilities are understood – particularly around the TRP and GAC feedback. In countries where civil society is nascent, additional care and detail may be required.
- Portfolio managers to have experience (or reasonable induction) in country and with civil society.



Community, Rights, and Gender

For civil society and KAP, human rights and gender interventions are core issues - and are central to an effective response. NFM language and prioritization of interventions and budget allocation needs to reflect the importance of these two aspects in the response.

Human rights and gender are ongoing challenges for civil society in the region. In some countries human rights are not easily discussed and gender issues are not fully acknowledged or understood. Global Fund can play a role in such contexts to open discussions and identify potential interventions to improve the enabling environment.

Civil society noted the commitment to Community Systems Strengthening (CSS) under the NFM and has found this to be a significant benefit. Civil society also note CSS is more wide ranging than health alone (e.g. legal advocacy) and this consideration should continue to be acknowledged in the future GF strategy.

While there was evidence of practical steps toward gender equity on the CCM, the more strategic place of human rights and gender in programming requires more attention. Civil society noted that in some countries inclusion of gender and human rights issues are in their infancy and are resisted by governments.

There is a need to build human rights literacy among community and civil society and linking it to concept note drafting. To be effective both need to be well understood, but such linked technical support is uncommon. Capacity building in human rights among community needs to be prioritised to complement high-level legal human rights expertise.

Inclusion of CSS and 'removing legal barriers' in the GF HIV Modular Template facilitates greater attention to these areas, however, the omission of gender creates difficulties for incorporation of gender interventions within the budget. Under 'removing legal barriers', concept note templates should include options for 'other' in order to ensure flexibility and the ability for the required interventions to be captured in the template.



Recommendations

- In contexts where discussion of human rights is challenging, there should be further work by the FPM and country team to review what is required to improve the enabling environment and recommend activities to work towards decriminalisation and legal protections in relation to MSM, transgender people, sex work and drug use.
- CRG should provide guidelines and suggestions on possible community, rights and gender interventions for discussion during country dialogue processes.
- Develop a detailed civil society and KAP focused guidance note to accompany the GF materials on CSS options for use in difficult working environments, to highlight interventions that have been endorsed and effective in other contexts. CRG, as well as national and regional stakeholders should be consulted to identify key CSS activities in countries where civil society is still in its infancy and unlikely to be able to advocate adequately for their own capacity building.
- Provision of human rights training linked with concept note development to build community expertise as a foundation for community engagement around human rights in the NFM.
- Ensure inclusion of Community, Rights and Gender components in concept notes is properly reviewed and covered in feedback as part of TRP and GAC review for all 3 diseases and all GF grants.



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Community, Rights, and Gender

continued



Recommendations

- Global Fund should also work to identify why human rights inclusion in concept note submissions are lower than expected.
- The CCM, PR and SR to receive standardised training in human rights and gender - the completion of which indicates a baseline competence in these subjects.
- A gender-focused module should be included in the GF Modular Templates.
- There should also be further additions under 'removing legal barriers' to include further human rights focused interventions and further understanding of the barriers to programmatic uptake in the human rights space. The lack of CRG indicators under this module is suggested as a barrier to acceptability of 'removing legal barriers' programming.

7

Youth

Youth issues were often missed or addressed in only an ad hoc manner. YKAP are a significant proportion of the HIV epidemic in Asia and the Pacific, and they must be central to the response. Ensuring YKAP focused programmes, targets and budgets would go a significant way to improving the YKAP response in the region.

The need for an increased role of YKAP throughout the NFM was discussed, with acknowledgement of the limited number of CCM including dedicated youth representation. Lack of youth participation in the TRP was also seen as an issue to be addressed.



Recommendations

- Dedicated youth representation on the CCM would ensure greater youth input and review of concept notes and grant making. Youth representatives would require targeted technical support to ensure their capacity to be meaningfully involved.
- TRP and GAC should consider appointment of YKAP expert representatives for concept note review processes, inclusion of YKAP specific targets and provision of YKAP specific feedback.



8

Technical Support Issues and Needs

It was seen that the provision of technical support around the NFM was variable across countries. A key theme was a lack of a central coordinating stakeholder or over-arching plan for technical support to civil society. Although the CCM should take a lead role in this aspect of the NFM, if the CCM is also lacking in understanding or support for civil society and KAP, then this is clearly an obstacle to coordinated technical support.

There are also challenges witnessed in civil society ability to articulate and request technical support. This was seen as a key issue in the request for the technical support available from CRG. Civil society coming late to the country dialogue process was also a factor in feeling unable or unsure about what support to request. There were also issues around not wishing to delay the country dialogue. Due to technical support needs being identified late in the process, even where support is provided it can have only little impact on the process. Earlier identification of needs is crucial to timely provision of technical support.

For these reasons, it was seen as important for technical support to be proactive (i.e. anticipating needs of civil society and working to ensure standard minimum levels of capacity and awareness on NFM) rather than being only reactive and dependent on civil society requests, or issues that arise. FPM and country teams can play a role in this regard, however it is clear there is a need for a dedicated stakeholder to coordinate technical support, and for technical support to be delivered based on a longer term plan rather than just ad hoc assignments.

A comprehensive technical support plan preferably beginning prior to the initiation of country dialogue process with broader stakeholders is seen as important to produce an effective NFM. The plan should focus on strengthening community systems, the ability of all KAP (including YKAP) and civil society to engage in the NFM, while also strengthening capacity of stakeholders and CCM.

It was suggested that technical support should continue into the grant implementation stage – particularly for new civil society PR and SR to successfully play their roles in implementation. Supporting greater civil society and KAP engagement in NSP development would also have benefits for future country dialogues processes.

Many countries note the important role of UN agencies and other development partners in providing initial technical support which promoted more meaningful engagement continuing on into later stages of the country dialogue.

Civil society also noted a major challenge in identifying and articulating when and what capacity building was required. Civil society suggested further work from the CRG TA Platforms to promote and coordinate technical support would be beneficial. A strategic partnership between a consistent technical support provider and civil society throughout the country dialogue process and beyond was seen as a way to facilitate more meaningful participation and robust country dialogue processes.



8

Technical Support Issues and Needs

continued



Recommendations

- CRG, in collaboration with FPM and country teams, CCM and Regional CRG TA Platforms to increase promotion and communication of CRG TA opportunities. Technical support should be proactive as well as reactive. CRG or the Regional CRG TA platforms to take a lead role in coordinating and designing technical support for civil society in countries where civil society may not be developed enough to apply and articulate required support on their own.
- Technical support should be designed and delivered by individuals, organisations or networks that have strong relationships with civil society in the country and are familiar with the operating environment and context. Fly-in-fly-out ad hoc assignments are not well regarded by civil society who find that the lack of understanding and relationships inhibit the quality and relevance of the support provided.
- A comprehensive technical support plan should be developed and agreed by civil society in each country at the start of the country dialogue. This technical support plan will help civil society to be engaged, advocate for priority concerns, and nominate for PR or SR roles. The plan should be monitored by the FPM and country team.
- CRG, Regional CRG TA Platforms, or UN agencies and other development partners to facilitate civil society and community preparation ahead of the country dialogue.
- Technical support should not only build the capacity of civil society and KAP, but of other stakeholders (e.g. CCM) to create an enabling environment for effective civil society engagement in the response to the three diseases.
- Provision of specific technical support to community and KAP representatives on the CCM following their election to ensure they are informed and engaged.
- Technical support should continue into grant implementation, particularly for civil society PR and SR to fulfill their roles.



**Australian Federation
of AIDS Organisations**



Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations (APCASO) is a regional civil society network of community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on HIV, health and social justice, with a focus on advocacy and community capacity development in Asia Pacific. APCASO supports and promotes the role of CBOs and NGOs – particularly those representing communities most affected ('key populations' - namely people living with HIV, sex workers, people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, migrant workers and mobile populations, including young people and women within these communities) – in advancing a rights-based social development and health agenda.

The Center for Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI) is a leading HIV advocacy NGO based in Viet Nam. SCDI has helped establish and support national networks representing people who use drugs, sex workers, trans-people and men who have sex with men. SCDI also convenes the Viet Nam Civil Society Partnership Platform on AIDS (VCSPA), the largest civil society grouping of Community Based Organisations, key populations affected by HIV, and non-government organisations working in HIV in Viet Nam.

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) is the national federation for the community response to HIV in Australia. It provides leadership, coordination and support to the country's policy, advocacy and health promotion on HIV. AFAO's International Programme is based in Bangkok and contributes to the development of effective policy and programmatic responses among civil society, particularly in Asia Pacific. It has supported community-based responses to HIV across the region for over two decades.

The Community Advocacy Initiative (CAI) is a partnership programme, which aims to strengthen the advocacy capacity of HIV civil society groups and networks in the Asia and Pacific region. The first phase of CAI (2008-2012) was implemented through partnerships between APCASO, AFAO, and in-country civil society organisations and networks in Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam. From October 2012 to June 2014, CAI embarked on a second phase, with the aim of facilitating civil society advocacy, engagement with and leadership for the Investment Framework (IF). The second phase is being implemented regionally and at country-level in Cambodia, China, Laos, and Vietnam. Driving the second phase are programme partners APCASO, AFAO, China HIV/AIDS Information Network (CHAIN), HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee (HACC) in Cambodia, Lao Positive Health Association (LaoPHA) and SCDI in Viet Nam. A third phase of CAI was approved for the period 01 July 2014 – 30 September 2015.

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