

# Global Fund Realities on the Ground

A survey of civil society engagement in Global Fund-related processes in the Asia-Pacific



## Table of content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	5
Background	5
Objective	6
METHODOLOGY	7
FINDINGS	8
CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS	20
Recommendations	21
ANNEX 1 - SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)	22

## Abbreviations

APCRG Platform	Asia-Pacific Community, Rights and Gender Platform
CCM	Country Coordination Mechanism
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CRG	Community, Rights and Gender
Global Fund	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
KP	Key Populations
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NFM	New Funding Model
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSP	National Strategic Plan
TA	Technical Assistance
TB	Tuberculosis
TRP	Technical Review Panel

## Executive Summary

---

The Global Fund to End HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria is a major actor in the fight against the three epidemics in the Asia-Pacific region, where it has invested about 20% of the resources raised during the Fifth replenishment cycle, representing about USD1.6 billion from 2017 to 2019. The Global Fund in Asia-Pacific strives to engage civil society and community in the design and implementation of its grants; however, a gap exists between this objective and the reality from the grounds. The present report aims at assessing the size of that gap in the current grants in the Asia-Pacific.

The objective of this report is to highlight the successes and gaps of Global Fund programmes and related mechanisms in the areas of civil society, affected communities and key populations engagement. Its content is informed primarily by a survey conducted by the Asia Pacific Community, Rights and Gender Communication and Coordination Platform (APCRG), hosted by APCASO, in September 2018 in seven Asia-Pacific countries (Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam). The survey received 305 responses and was followed by 7 key informant interviews. It also draws from a series of APCASO publications for background and context.

The report intends to build on a previous assessment of civil society and community engagement done by APCASO, the *Global Fund New Funding Model: CS and Community Experiences in Four (4) Countries of Asia Report* published in 2015, and also draws from two reports prepared in 2016, the *CRG Needs Assessment Report*, identifying TA needs among HIV, TB and Malaria community organizations and networks, and *Between the lines: Assessing the inclusion of CRG priorities in Global Fund concept notes in Asia and the Pacific*. The 2015 assessment had found three main barriers to civil society engagement under the New Funding Model (NFM): the lack of opportunity for preparatory meetings among CS and community stakeholders before the start of the country dialogue process, the low awareness among CS of the need to continue to engage throughout the NFM process, and the choice to use English as the primary language during key stages of the process, limiting the capacity of CS and community representatives to meaningfully engage in discussions during multi-stakeholders meetings.

The results presented in this report suggest that the situation has changed between 2015 and 2018 with regard to these barriers:

- *Lack of opportunity for preparatory meetings among CS and community stakeholders before the start of the country dialogue process*; efforts have been made for the issue to be addressed. In all the countries surveyed, civil society or community-led preparatory meetings were organized before the country dialogue and during the development of the country's national strategic plan (NSP) and Global Fund Funding Request, though how inclusive these meetings were varied from country to country.
- *Low awareness among CS of the need to continue to engage throughout the funding model, particularly during grant making, resulting in the defunding of community priority programs*; the survey results suggest that significant improvements have been made on this front. In all of the countries surveyed, respondents were aware of the importance of engaging during grant-making, and in fact specifically stressed it as a

priority. However, this stage also remains as the main bottleneck with regard to community engagement. In most countries, the legitimacy of civil society and community representatives to be involved on equal part with other stakeholders throughout the Global Fund process appears to be increasingly recognized, but there is still much room for improvements.

- *The choice to use English as the primary language during key stages of the process, limiting the capacity of CS and community representatives to meaningfully engage in discussions during multi-stakeholder meetings.* The issue appears to persist, with access to technical documents remaining low for grassroots organisations across the region. Some countries have taken special initiatives to tackle the problem, such as in Vietnam, where APCASO's country focal point, SCDI, holds community workshop to disseminate key information contained in technical documents. Such initiatives, however, represent significant investments and are a challenge to systematically replicate.

This report also highlights the lack of an institutional mechanism to ensure two-way communication and mutual accountability between CCM representatives and their constituency as an additional critical area of gap in CS and community engagement.

The overall trajectory since the last funding cycle in all of the countries surveyed indicates vary level of improvement in community and civil society engagement.

## Introduction

---

The objective of this report is to document civil society and communities' experience when engaging in the key stages of country dialogue process under the Global Fund 2017-2019 funding cycle. The country dialogue process is now a critical feature of Global Fund grants. Introduced as part of the Global Fund New Funding Model (NFM)<sup>1</sup> within the Global Fund Strategy 2012-2016, the country dialogue process represented a major shift in how Global Fund grants are to be designed, implemented, and monitored. **In the Global Fund's 2017-2022 Strategy, an operational objective to "Support meaningful engagement of key and vulnerable populations and networks in Global Fund-related processes" is included.** Specifically, it strives to be more inclusive and holistic in how the Fund engages with key stakeholders and partners, including key affected populations and people living with the diseases. Through the country dialogue process, communities and civil society are to be part of the decision-making on key drivers of the diseases and types of interventions to be implemented; they are also to play key roles on designing, implementation and monitoring of the Global Fund grants at the country level. This report aims to capture the community's engagement experience against this backdrop.

The content of this report is informed primarily by a survey conducted by the Asia Pacific Community, Rights and Gender Communication and Coordination Platform (APCRG), hosted by APCASO between August and October 2018 in seven Asian countries that received 305 responses and was followed with a series of seven key informant interviews. It also draws from a series of APCASO publications for context, in particular a 2015 multi-country consultation in Asia which resulted the *Global Fund New Funding Model: CS and Community Experiences in Four (4) Countries of Asia Report*. The common theme running across the sources used for this report is a focus on ground reality, on what are the local and practical outcomes of high-level policy decisions. It is only by getting down to that level of granularity that one can find evidence to determine whether the Global Fund policies to make decision-making on health policies more inclusive are having the intended effect.

## Background

---

In 2015, APCASO, as the host of APCRG, conducted a multi-country consultation to document the experiences of civil society and communities throughout the Global Fund country dialogue processes introduced under the NFM. The outcome of the consultation was shared through the *Global Fund New Funding Model: CS and Community Experiences in Four (4) Countries of Asia Report*<sup>2</sup>. The report concluded that the NFM had improved the level of civil

---

<sup>1</sup> The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, *The Global Fund's New Funding Model*, April 2014: [https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/1467/replenishment\\_2013newfundingmodel\\_report\\_en.pdf?u=63648680736000000](https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/1467/replenishment_2013newfundingmodel_report_en.pdf?u=63648680736000000)

<sup>2</sup> Global Fund New Funding Model: CS and Community Experiences in Four (4) Countries of Asia Report, APCASO: <https://apcaso.org/global-fund-new-funding-model-civil-society-and-community-experience-in-4-countries-of-asia/>

society and community engagements in Global Fund processes across the board but that there was room for improvement. Three key challenges were highlighted in the report:

- Lack of opportunity for preparatory meetings among CS and community stakeholders before the start of the country dialogue process
- Low awareness among CS of the need to continue to engage throughout the country dialogue process, particularly during the grant making stage, resulting in de-prioritization and defunding of community-led and -based interventions
- Limited capacity of CS and community representatives to meaningfully engage in discussions during multi-stakeholder meetings. English language capacity in particular was a key limiting factor to meaningful engagement.

The APCASO report was further complemented by two additional reports developed by APCRG in 2016: the *CRG Needs Assessment Report*, identifying TA needs among HIV, TB and Malaria community organizations and networks, and *Between the lines: Assessing the inclusion of CRG priorities in Global Fund concept notes in Asia and the Pacific*. The 2016 reports looked at the situation in each country at the end of the 2014-2016 funding cycle. The reports showed that barriers of CS engagement were specific to each country and each disease, indicating that the main barriers are rooted in the implementation of policies rather than in the policies themselves. This conclusion in particular motivated the decision to prepare the present report and collect further information on the details of implementation of Global Fund policies across the region.

As part of APCRG's continuing effort to strengthen community engagements in the Global Fund country dialogue process, a second follow-up documentation was initiated and carried out in 2018 as the region moved into funding cycle 2017-2019, the results of which are presented in the present report.

## Objective

---

This report has a dual objective:

- To assess whether the barriers documented during the last funding cycle have been successfully addressed.
- To document the remaining or emerging barriers to meaningful civil society engagement in the current funding cycle.

Though we hope that the report will be relevant to Asia in general, the core of the information provided in this report applies to the following 7 countries where the APCRG survey was disseminated:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| • Cambodia  | • Pakistan  |
| • India     | • Sri Lanka |
| • Indonesia | • Vietnam   |
| • Lao PDR   |             |

## Methodology

---

This report was prepared using information collected through a survey and series of key informant interviews.

### Survey

An online survey with quantitative and qualitative elements was prepared by the APCRG team and can be found in Annex of this report.

The survey requested respondents to discuss their experience of engagement in Global Fund processes since October 2016. It was anonymous, and was disseminated using APCRG's mailing list and through APCRG key country partners. In two of the countries surveyed the use of an online survey was seen as inadequate by the country partners and the methodology tailor to ensure adequate data collection. In Pakistan, the results were collected face-to-face during a meeting organised by APCRG's Pakistani country partner, and in Sri Lanka, APCRG partner called respondents and completed the survey with them through phone interviews.

Our partners who supported the translation and dissemination of this survey were:

- Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA) in Cambodia
- National Coalition Of People Living with HIV in India
- SPIRITIA in Indonesia
- Lao Positive Health Association (Lao PHA) in Lao PDR
- Association of People Living with HIV-Pakistan (APLHIV-Pakistan) in Pakistan
- Youth Voices Count (YVC) in Sri Lanka
- Supporting Community Development Initiatives (SCDI) in Vietnam

The survey was translated into 7 languages: Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Khmer, Sinhala, Lao, Urdu and Vietnamese. The translations were developed by APCRG key country partner in each country. In both Cambodia and India, the survey in English was disseminated alongside with the survey in local language. Responses to the survey in languages other than English were collected on an Excel spreadsheet and translated back into English by the partners. The responses to the survey were then analysed by the APCRG team on the basis of these translations.

### Key informant interviews

An initial analysis of the data collected through the survey was used to prepare summary country reports. These documents were shared with country partners, and discussed during an interview with an APCRG staff. These interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, with the exception of the interview with the country partner in Indonesia, which was significantly shorter. The interviewee considered they had little to add to the initial conclusions based on the survey, and hence the analysis presented on that country is based nearly exclusively on the survey data. In Cambodia, Vietnam and Pakistan, two staffs from the country partner organisations joined the call.

The objective of the key informant interviews was to validate the initial interpretations of the survey data, add to the narrative any key element that would have been missed by the



survey, and more broadly add qualitative depth and context to the quantitative data. The finalized country reports were then shared with country partners for final validation.

## Limitations

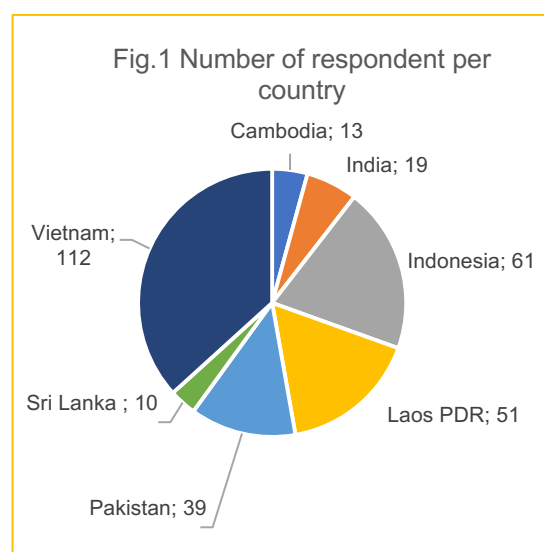
The translation of the answers to the survey was both time and resource intensive. Hence, only a sample of countries in the Asia-Pacific region could be included in our sample. The countries were selected among countries with large epidemics and large Global Fund grant, and taking into account the capacity of APCASO country partners at the time of the survey to take on the assignment. The results presented in this report are therefore representative of these 7 countries and might not be generalizable to the entire region, and especially not to smaller countries with smaller grants where Global Fund engagement is lower. Moreover the results should not be generalized to Pacific Islands since none were included in the sample.

Another limitation comes from the different size of the sample in each country surveyed, from 10 in Sri Lanka to 112 in Vietnam. The results presented below are

The recourse to translation, though it allowed the survey to reach groups typically missed in such data collection efforts because of the language barrier, also created an additional layer between the survey designers and the respondents. The tone or connotation of certain questions might have been changed in the process of translation, potentially losing or distorting some of the originally intended meaning. This seems to have been a particular problem with regard to some technical terminologies; in particular the difference between NGO, CBO and KP Network that did not appear to map well onto the organisational category of some of the countries. Finally, the wealth of meaning in some of the qualitative answers given by respondents in their language appeared to have been blunted through the translation process.

## Findings

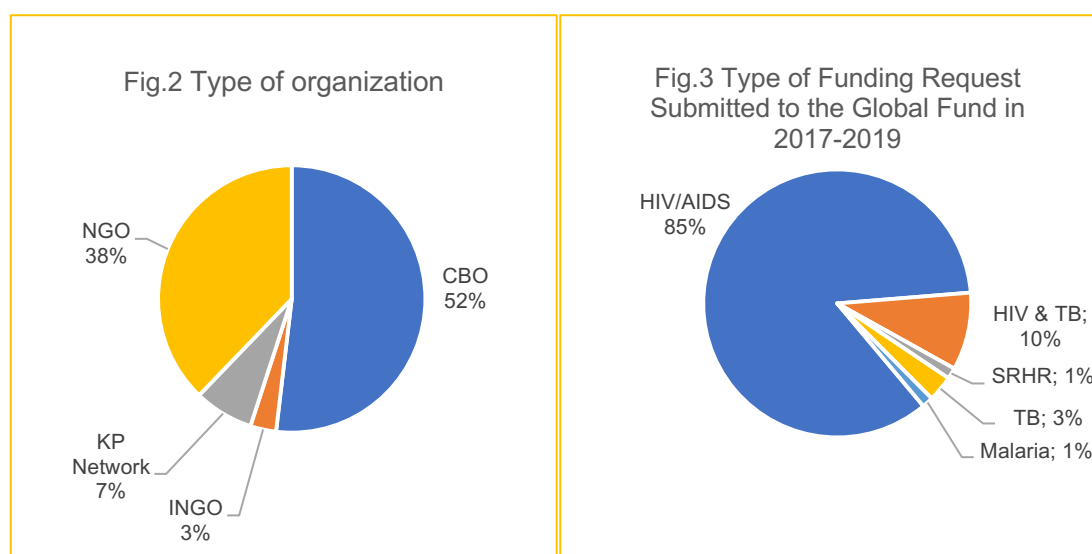
### Background of the respondents





The number of respondents from each country varied from 112 in Vietnam to 10 in Sri Lanka (Fig.1). Countries where the survey was disseminated roughly fell into two groups. In the first group, composed of Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan and Lao PDR, there were more than 50 respondents, making us confident that the opinions expressed are broadly representative of the CSOs and CBOs working on HIV in these countries. In the second group, composed of Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka, the number of respondents was significantly lower, between 10 and 20 in each country, which could raise issue regarding representativeness.

In Cambodia, despite the large number of organisations working on health generally and HIV more specifically, the uptake of the survey was really low. Though the information presented in the following pages regarding that country was extensively discussed with the country partners to limit the chance of misrepresentation, it's quite likely that some parts of the picture were missed. In India, the number of respondents was also low, reflecting in part the fact that a lot of CSOs and CBOs in the country are local rather than national organisations, a logical consequence of the country's size and cultural diversity, and the caveats expressed above regarding Cambodia also appears to apply. Sri Lanka, though having the fewest number of respondents, is in a different situation. The country partner in Sri Lanka covered most CSOs, CBOs and KP networks in the country and that the low number reflected the smaller size of the civil society involved with the HIV response.



The majority of the respondents worked for community organisations, with the second largest group working for NGOs (Fig.2). As mentioned in the methodology section, there appears to have been issues regarding the translation of some of terminology regarding the nature of the respondent's organisations, with many CBOs identifying as NGOs because of their legal status. Hence, the main takeaway from these figures should be that somewhere between 52% and 90% of respondents work for CBOs, 3% for INGO, more than 7% for KP networks and less than 38% for NGOs.

A majority of respondents (95%) received fundings through the HIV funding requests (Fig.3) or a joint HIV and TB funding request, 3% of respondents with TB funding requests, and 1% of

respondents with malaria funding requests. The high representation of HIV civil society among respondents reflects the long-standing civil society and community mobilizations and engagements on the issue of HIV – as compared to TB and malaria.

## Enabling environment

### *The CCM*

Fig. 4 Access to the CS and KP CCM representatives

	Knows Representative	Knows how to contact
Cambodia	85%	69%
India	32%	32%
Indonesia	74%	66%
Lao PDR	63%	61%
Pakistan	79%	69%
Sri Lanka	100%	100%
Vietnam	68%	70%
Overall	71%	67%

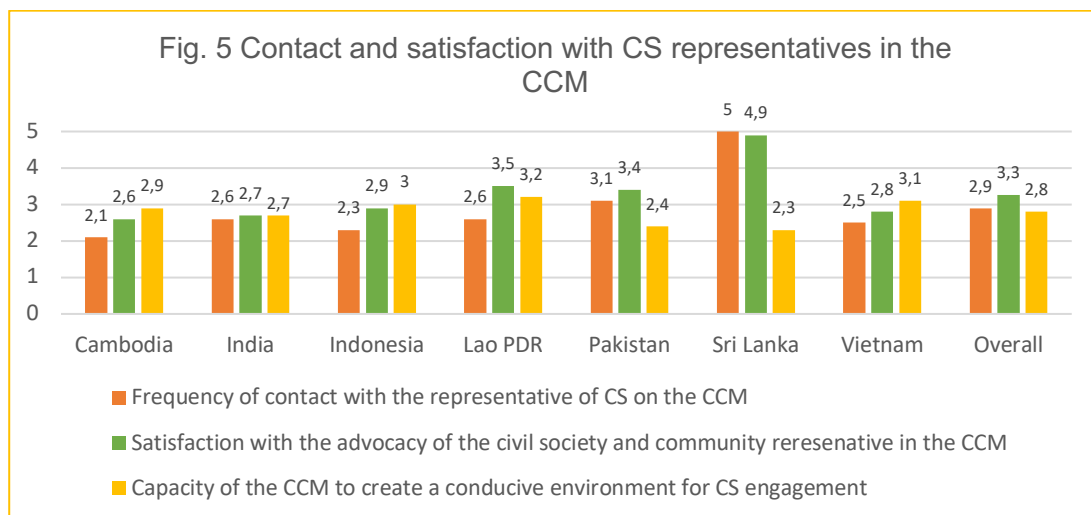
Fostering an enabling environment for the engagement of civil society is the responsibility of each country's CCM, as such, the survey included five questions aimed to assess the level of CS and community CCM engagement. Four questions focused on the roles of CS, community and key populations representatives on the CCM, whom are expected to play key roles in reflecting the priorities, challenges and needs of their constituencies in the context of the country's Global Fund grants. Specifically, three of the four questions looked at constituencies access to their respective representative, and a question sought to gather constituencies satisfaction level of their respective representatives. Finally, one question looked at the overall performance of the CCM.

The results of the survey stressed both important achievements and shortcomings of the CCMs' capacity to engage civil society and communities. On the one hand, in all countries surveyed (except for India), a majority of respondents declared knowing who the civil society, community or key population representatives on their CCM were, and knowing how to contact them (Fig. 4). In India, the key explanation for the lower levels of familiarity of respondents with the CCM brought forward during the key informant interview was the combination of the size and diversity of a country, with different regions speaking different languages and civil society activists belonging to different social networks. On the other hand, with regard to the frequency of contact, a majority of respondents said that they communicated with their CCM representatives less often than they needed to (Fig. 5). The only major exception in that regard

was Sri Lanka, where all respondents indicated that they were in contact with their representatives as often as they needed to. In the case of Sri Lanka, the relatively small size of HIV civil society and KP-led organizations as well as the recent (at the time of the survey) election of the CCM KP and CS representatives could potentially account for the high rate of awareness and contacts between the CS and KP CCM representatives and their constituencies.

On average, respondents rated their satisfaction with the advocacy of the CS and community representatives on the CCM at 3.3 out of 5, with scores per country varying from 2.6 in Cambodia to 4.9 in Sri Lanka.

Respondents did not express strong negative feelings regarding the capacity of their representatives on the CCM to advocate on their behalf (Fig. 5), despite the infrequency of their communication, which suggests that they are less upset with who their representatives are than unaware of most of what they do.



With regard to the capacity of the CCM overall to create an environment more conducive to civil society, community and key population engagement, results vary from one country to another. In Sri Lanka and in Pakistan, respondents expressed an overall scepticism with regard to the achievements of the CCM. These two countries also happen to be the ones with the most challenging environment to key populations engagement among the countries surveyed. In Cambodia and Vietnam, in contrast, the performance of the CCM was highly rated. The key informant interview in Cambodia stressed that the number might be mostly a consequence of the small sample size, though APCRG partners also noted that the diminishing funds made available in the country, combined to poor communication, had led to tensions between CBOs, KP Networks and their CCM representatives. In Vietnam, the key informant interview stressed that organisations receiving funds from the Global Fund were overall satisfied with the performance of the CCM with regard to addressing issues on time, but less with regard to its capacity to be a platform for broader advocacy.

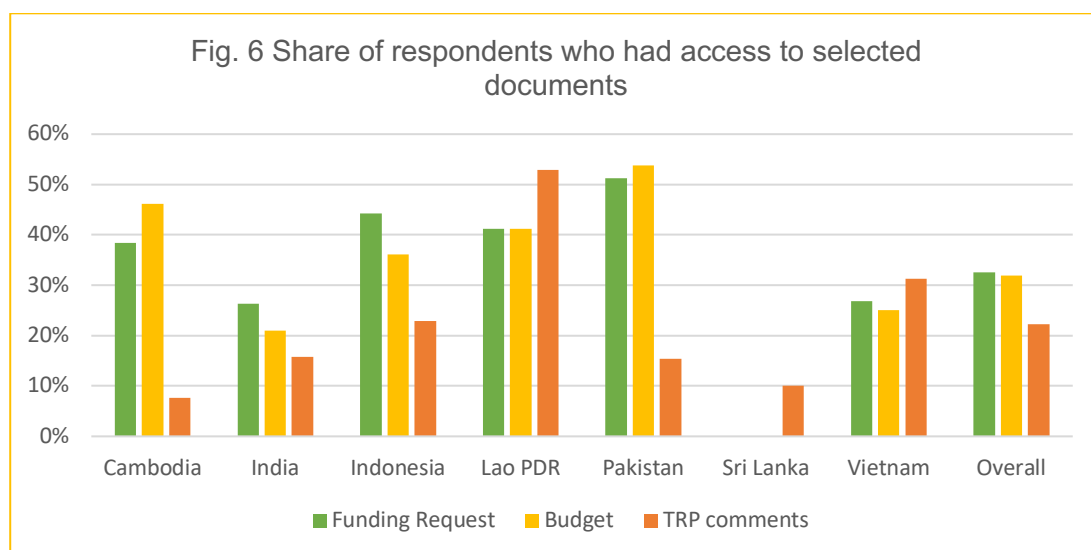
These findings should be replaced in the context of the CCM Evolution Process. The gaps in CCM engagement that have been pointed out in the past and in the result of the survey are at the centre of the efforts deployed by the Global Fund to reform CCMs as to strengthen community engagement. As part of the CCM evolution, a baseline assessment was done, which included a community engagement metric. The CCMs evaluated through the baseline were

given scores on a 1 to 4 scale from “working toward functional” to “strategic”. Among the countries included in the baseline assessment, a tenth were found to fall into the lowest category (“working toward functional”), three quarter in the second lowest (“functional”), one fifth in the second highest (“engaged”) and none in the highest. The conclusion of the baseline therefore paint a picture not dissimilar to that of the present survey; the CCMs are in place and mostly fulfil their role, but remain lacking when it comes to meaningful engagement.

The lack of effective communication mechanisms and strategies between civil society, community and key population representatives on the CCM and their constituency was a common concern raised by many of the key informants. With the exception of Sri Lanka, the communication challenges identified were similar: though interviewees welcomed the fact that someone was on the CCM to speak on their behalf, the absence of an effective two-way communication channel undermined the legitimacy of their representatives, who often had few ways to know what was the stance of their constituents on specific issues. From the interviews, it was found that most staff in grassroot organisations have a limited knowledge of the CCM and are not kept informed by their representatives.

### *Access to information*

The survey included a number of questions regarding access of civil society representatives to information essential to allow for their meaningful engagement in Global Funds processes; the finalized funding request, the finalized budget and the TRP comments for their respective countries.



The result of the survey show two things with regard to these documents (Fig. 6):

- On average, only a third of respondents had access to the finalized funding request and budget, and only a fifth to the TRP comments. Despite some exceptions, namely the TRP comments in Lao PDR and the funding request and budget in Pakistan that a majority of respondents had access to, these figures show that access to key technical documents is problematic across these countries.
- These averages mask to an extent the diversity of situations across countries. Which documents are easier or harder to access varies from country to country. The fact

that the situation can differ so much across our sample stresses the needs for the Global Fund to set clear guidelines with regard to the dissemination of essential information to the relevant public.

Sri Lanka stands out in this aspect, where neither the finalized funding request nor the budget had been made available to anyone outside the government representatives; not even to members of the CCM. This created major challenges for community representatives, who had no way of knowing whether any given activity or intervention, for example a needle exchange program, was even included in the concept note submitted.

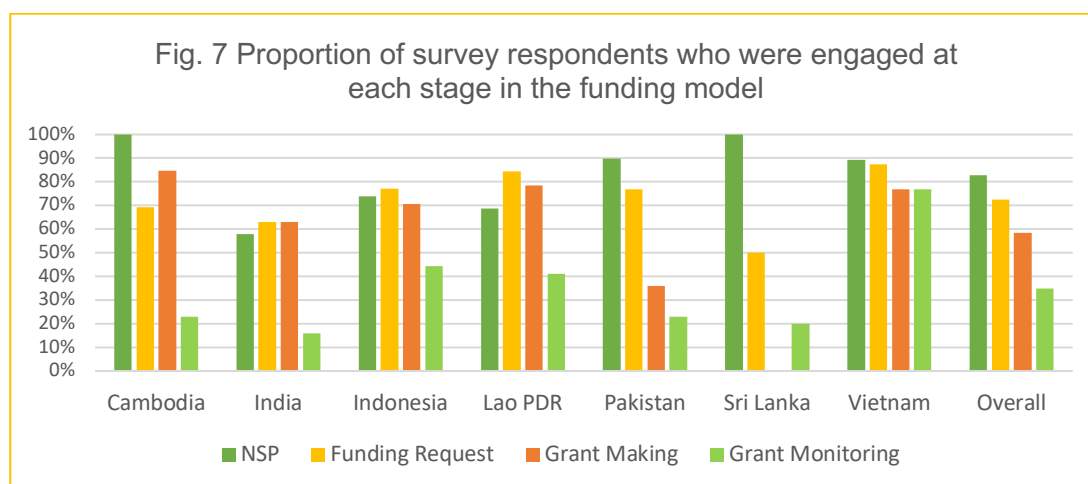
### Civil Society Engagement

The country dialogue process created opportunities for civil society and community engagement throughout the key stages of the Global Fund processes: the preparation of the National Strategic Plan (NSP), national stakeholders' consultation meetings, the drafting and finalisation of the Funding Request, the grant making negotiations, and the monitoring of grant implementation. In its 2015 report *Global Fund NFM: Civil Society and Community Experiences in Four Countries of Asia*, APCASO stressed that grant making was a key bottleneck for civil society and community engagement. When it came time to allocate budget, institutional stakeholders were less open to suggestion coming from the grassroots, and programmes prioritized by civil society tended to be the first activities cut from the budget.

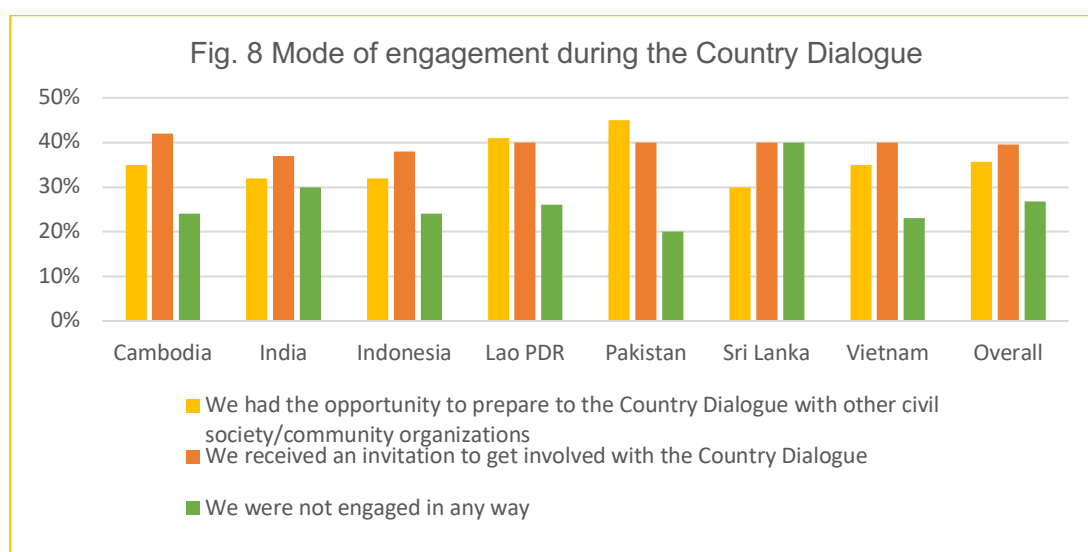
#### *Opportunities to engage*

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they were involved at the various stages of the country dialogue process, and the nature of their involvement. Before discussing the way in which CS and community were engaged, it is important to stress that as Fig. 7 shows, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they had been involved at some stage of the process. This suggests that CS and community engagement is the norm.

Based on the survey results, representatives of CS and affected communities were present in each stages of the Global Fund country dialogue process in six of the seven countries. CS participation was highest during the NSP and funding request development stages, with more than 70% of the respondents answering they had taken part in either of them. The level of CS engagement dropped as the process moved into the grant making stage, with the most significant gap appearing at the grant monitoring stage.



The lack of opportunities for civil society, community and key population groups to meet and strategize prior to the national consultation meetings with governments and stakeholders during the concept note development process was highlighted as a barrier to meaningful engagement by APCASO in its 2015 report. This survey hence tried to assess the situation on that front (Fig. 8), and found that across the countries surveyed, between 30% and 45% of respondents indicated having had the opportunity to prepare for the country dialogue/national consultation meetings with other CS and community organisations through platforms such as civil society preparatory meetings. In addition, an average of 40% of the respondents had the opportunity to attend the country dialogue/national consultation meetings.



### Meaningful engagement and satisfaction

To measure whether the situation had changed during the 2017-19 Funding Cycle, the survey asked respondents to rate their level of engagement during the first three key stages of the Global Fund country dialogue process: NSP development, funding request development, and grant making stage. The respondents were asked to respond with a score, from 1 to 5, to the questions “How much were you engaged throughout [the NSP/the Funding Request/Grant-Making]?”, based on the following scale: from 1 “Not engaged at all” to 5 “Meaningfully engaged throughout the process”. For each stage, they were also asked to indicate whether the outcome was aligned with the priorities of their constituents, and to also provide a score of 1 to 5. This design allowed us to have a relative measure of the actual opportunities for engagement at each stage and identify whether one stood out as a bottleneck.



The survey results indicated a correlation between the level of engagement in the country dialogue process and the satisfaction of the respondents (Fig. 9).<sup>3</sup> This finding aligns with other similar research findings on CS and community engagements<sup>4</sup> – specifically, the more civil society and communities are engaged, the more they benefit from the outcome.

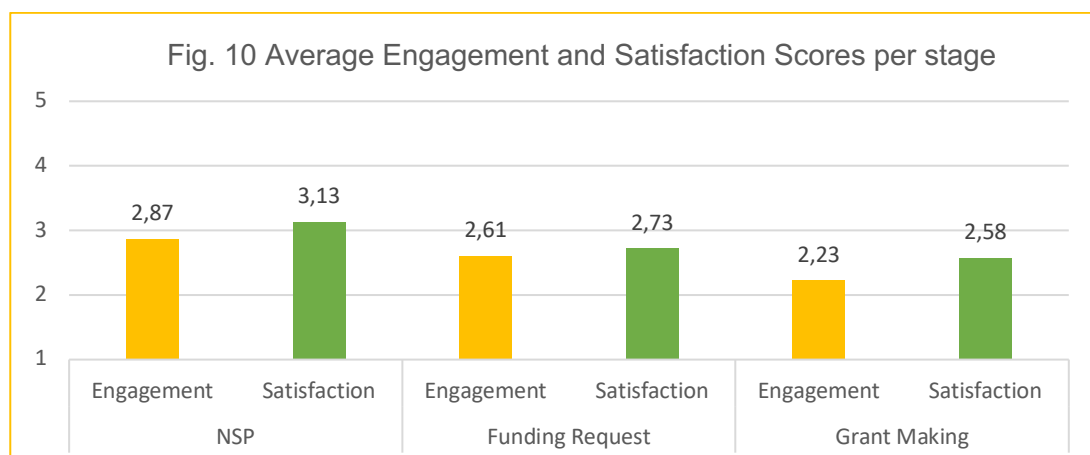
During this funding cycle both engagement and satisfaction with the outcome appear to have decreased throughout the cycle, with on average highest levels of participation and engagement at the beginning of the process (NSP) and lowest at the end (Grant Making), as seen in Fig. 7 and Fig. 10. This trend is consistent among all the countries surveyed, with the exception of Lao PDR, and it echoes the conclusion of APCASO’s 2015 report: as the process moves along and decisions focus on resource allocation, there is increasing resistance against engagement of non-traditional stakeholders, especially civil society and community representatives. The results of the survey also highlight that the decline in engagement and satisfaction of civil society actors throughout the process is, in most countries, small. In other words, the situation has changed. In 2015 our assessment concluded that meaningful

<sup>3</sup> Fig. 9 plots on the X-axis the average level of engagement of each respondent (average of the 1-to-5 score given to the question of engagement for NSP, Funding Request and Grant-Making) and on the Y-axis the average level of satisfaction with the process (average of the 1-to-5 score given to the question of satisfaction with the outcome of NSP, Funding Request and Grant-Making). The equation at the bottom indicate that for every extra mark on the engagement score, respondent gave on average half an extra mark on the satisfaction score.

<sup>4</sup> See for a review of recent literature on the topic in the context of HIV in Asia: Sarkar, S., 2010. Community engagement in HIV prevention in Asia: going from 'for the community' to 'by the community' - must we wait for more evidence?. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 86, p.i2.



engagement of civil society stopped before grant making. In 2018, it appears that engagement does gradually drop as the process moves forward, but grant making does not constitute a major turning point, and some engagement remains until the end. This suggests that CS and community representatives are seen as increasingly legitimate stakeholders in decisions spaces, and that things might be moving in the right direction in this regard; that is, in all countries surveyed except Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In both these countries, the decline in engagement and satisfaction is significant during grant making. In Pakistan, key informants stressed that despite an overall improvement, and willingness of the government to consult, certain key populations did not have representatives in most official forums, leading to a less inclusive process and resulting in some of the affected populations feeling left out. The situation was different in Sri Lanka, where inclusion of civil society has yet to be institutionalised; furthermore, ongoing efforts in dialoguing and engaging with all stakeholders on inclusion of civil society will need to continue.



### *Modes of engagement*

The survey also looked at ways in which CS and community representatives were able to engage during the NSP review and funding request development process, and throughout grant making stage (Fig. 11a, 11b, 11c). The results show clear national patterns with regard to which channels are open for meaningful engagement of civil society and community representatives, but little uniformity across countries. In other words, in each country, different channels are offered or preferred, and they tend to remain the same across different stages. There is no obvious link between specific channels of engagement and higher or lower levels of meaningful engagement, but the key informant interview in all countries stressed the importance of physical meetings held in local languages to ensure adequate dissemination of relevant information to the grassroots, which echoes the comments reported in APCASO's 2015 report.

Fig. 11a Mode of engagement NSP

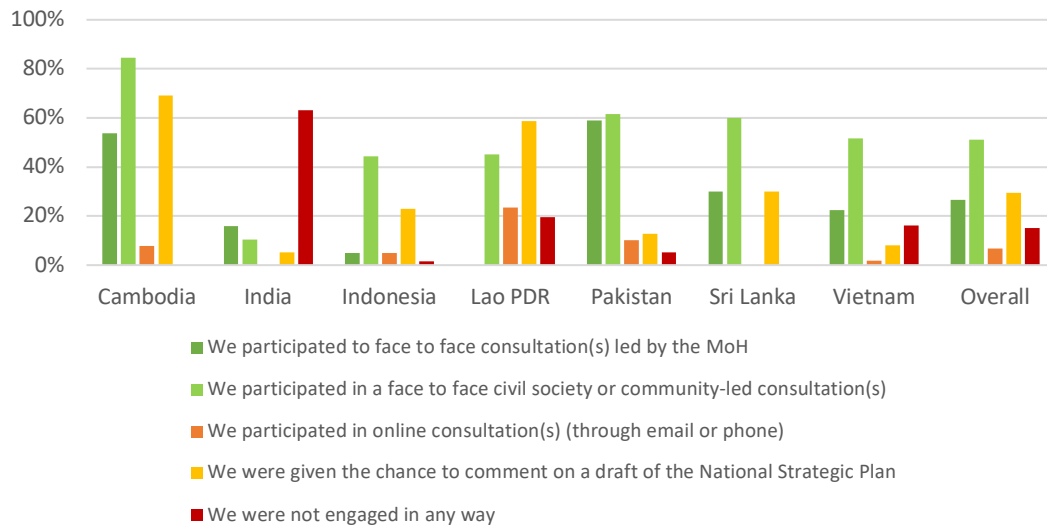
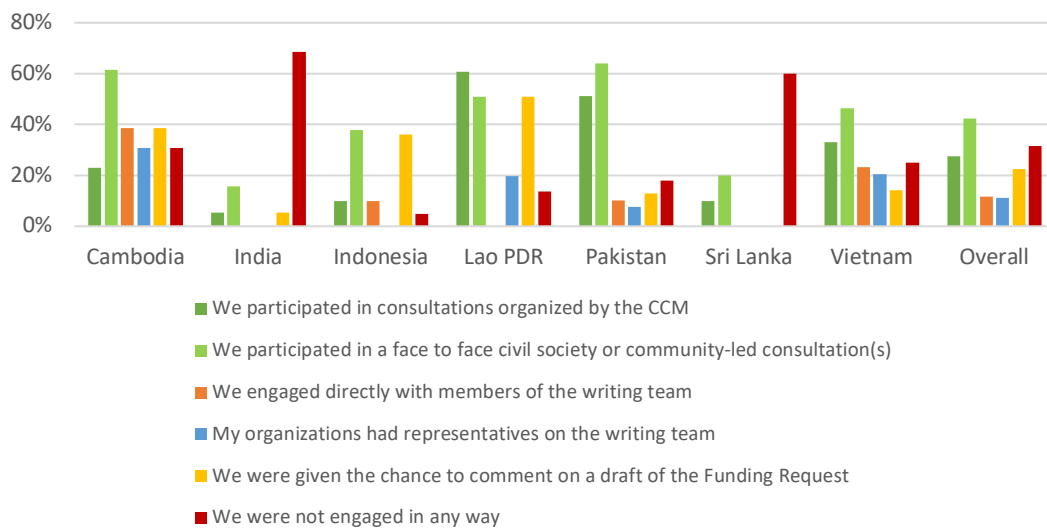
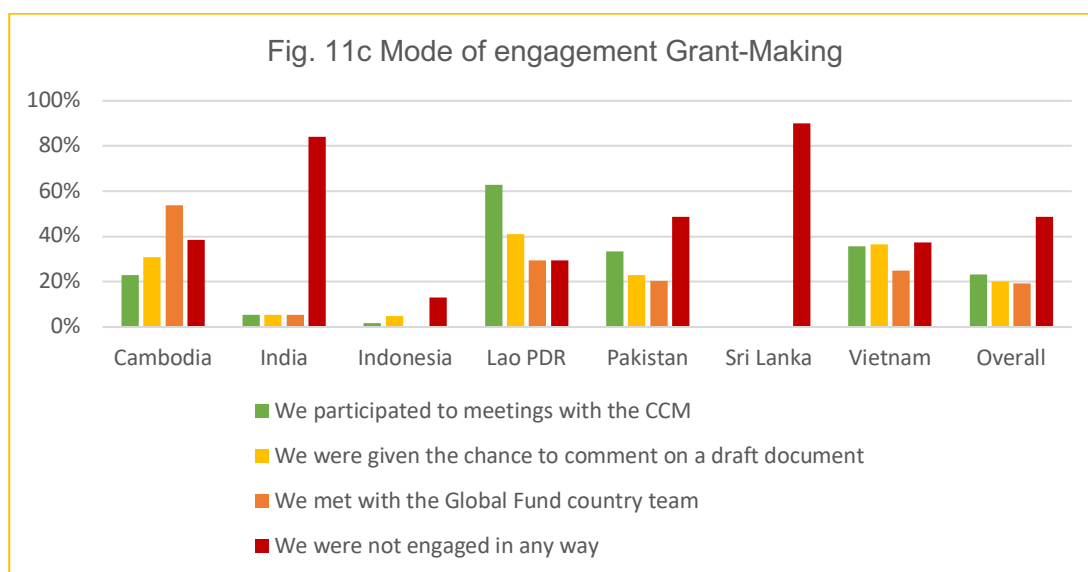


Fig. 11b Mode of engagement Funding Request





During the NSP review and the funding request development stages, community-led consultations was the most common approach for facilitating greater CS and community engagement in all countries except in Lao PDR. In Lao PDR, during the NSP, the most common means of engagement was commenting on a draft plan, suggesting that efficient channels of diffusion existed for the draft. The fact that there were opportunities to hold civil society and community consultations in all countries is evidence that some of the earlier reported gaps in the country dialogue process are being addressed in these countries, though with uneven progress. Another encouraging sign is the fact that in several countries, namely Cambodia, India and Pakistan, government or CCM led consultations appeared to have been nearly as inclusive as community-led ones, indicating that in these countries at least the legitimacy of non-traditional stakeholders is somewhat recognized.

Access to key documents, however, appears to be an issue in a number of countries. Though consultations and meetings are signs that things are moving in the right direction, the lack of access to draft documents is problematic and limits the effectiveness of strategizing, as fewer people have the opportunity to review and contribute meaningfully to these documents. The key informant interviews stressed that across the region, language remains as a key barrier. The issue then is not solely on access per se, but on meaningful access, i.e. access in a language that is most widely understood by the grassroots.

### Opportunities for interventions

The survey included open-ended questions to give respondents a chance to identify key barriers to their engagement that might have been missed in the rest of the survey. The most thorough answers were given in response to the question “Overall, what are the key factors that have enabled or hindered your capacity to engage in Global Fund processes during this grant cycle?”.

Three common issues were observed based on the respondents’ answers:

- **Information:** Many respondents indicated that lack of information as a key barrier, noting that they “lack information” or that “channels for information exchange are ineffective”. These remarks echo comments made throughout the key informant

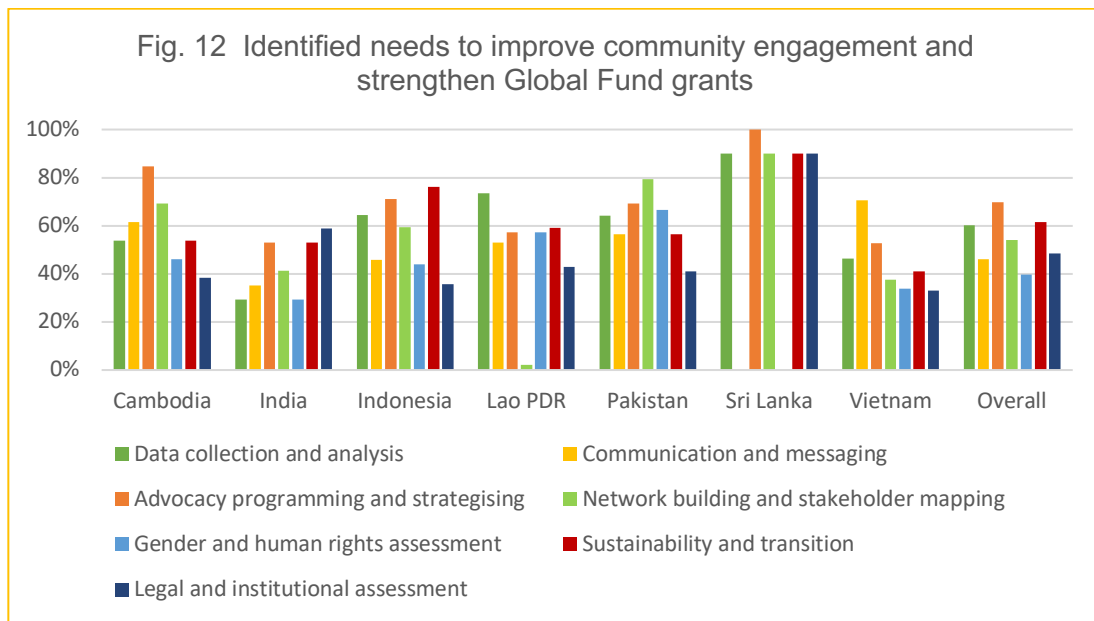
interviews, which in all countries noted the lack of effective channels of communication between grassroots organisations, the CCM and the Global Fund country teams.

- **Support from the CCM:** The responses stressed the pivotal role of the CCM in enabling meaningful engagement; respondents for example wrote that they could engage because “there are community representatives on the CCM” or that they struggled to engage because “[the] CCM is not very active” or “[the] CCM is ineffective”. In other words, a well-functioning CCM with active community members is key in enabling meaningful engagement, but a closed CCM lacking a connection to the grassroots is a hindrance.
- **The M&E requirements of the Global Fund:** Remarks regarding the challenges in meeting Global Fund standards touched upon the issue of access to Global Fund funding more generally, but were all too common among the respondents. The fact that local organizations struggled to access funding and, and even when they did feel that they were not valued and listened to was illustrated with remarks such as “as an organisation in a small district, we are not a priority”, or “our group is in a remote area, so we are hardly involved.”

A number of other factors were mentioned less often by respondents but are nevertheless useful to consider:

- Access to data was mentioned as a positive factor, and a number of respondents stressed that they believed they could be more meaningfully engaged if only they had better access to data
- The destabilizing influence of Global Fund funding, which create competition among organizations and gets in the way of creating coalitions
- Unequal relationships among the civil society, with local grassroots organisations only involved in implementation, and SR and PR who alone have access to decision spaces and a chance to input on the overall design of programs
- Support from national PLHIV and KP networks, as a positive factor and a way to get access to information

The survey also enquired about what themes or issues did the respondents need the most support with. Fig. 11 gives a breakdown of the answers, and shows that out of the options proposed, advocacy programming and strategizing was considered most important, followed in close order by data collection and analysis, and sustainability and transition. The interest for transition capacity building is especially significant as the 2015 APCASO report noted a lack of awareness among grassroots organisation on the issue of transition and its consequences for the region; the fact that support around that issue is now among the most requested indicates that awareness has increased.



## Conclusion & Recommendations

In 2015, the APCASO's *Global Fund New Funding Model: CS and Community Experiences in Four (4) Countries of Asia* report identified three key barriers to civil society and community engagement. The result of the survey presented in the report allow us to update the state of these barriers.

- *Lack of opportunity for preparatory meetings among CS and community stakeholders before the start of the country dialogue process*; efforts have been made for the issue to be addressed. In all the countries surveyed, civil society or community-led preparatory meetings were organized before the country dialogue and during the development of the country's NSP and Funding Request, though how inclusive these meetings were varied from country to country.
- *Low awareness among CS of the need to continue to engage throughout the NFM process, particularly during grant making, resulting in the defunding of community priority programs*; the survey results suggest that significant improvements have been made on this front. In all of the countries surveyed, respondents were aware of the importance of engaging during grant making, and in fact specifically stressed it as a priority. However, this stage also remains as the main bottleneck with regard to community engagement. In most countries, the legitimacy of civil society and community representatives to be involved on equal part with other stakeholders throughout the Global Fund process appears to be increasingly recognized, but there is still much room for improvements.
- *The choice to use English as the primary language during key stages of the process, limiting the capacity of CS and community representatives to meaningfully engage in discussions during multi-stakeholder meetings*. The issue appears to persist, with access to technical documents remaining low for grassroots organisations across the region. Some countries have taken special initiatives to tackle the problem, such as in Vietnam where APCASO's country focal point, SCDI, holds community workshop to disseminate

key information contained in technical documents. Such initiatives however represent significant investments and are a challenge to systematically replicate.

The key emerging issue identified through the survey is the lack of institutional mechanism to ensure a functional two-way channel of communication between CCM representatives and their constituency. Though there has been varied level of progress on the inclusiveness of the CCMs across the region since the last funding cycle, grassroot organisations in most countries continue to feel little ownership for the decisions taken within the CCM. In situations where their respective representatives were able to input, community's sense of ownership on the decisions remains low because they are not directly consulted and are often unaware of the decisions made on their behalf. Initiatives in certain countries suggest that this situation can be improved through greater coordination between CCM members and the groups and populations they represent, which would require minimal investments, like in Cambodia where the NGO representative on the CCM is supported through a national NGO platform.

The overall trajectory in all the country surveyed, with the exception of Sri Lanka, is nevertheless positive. When asked "What changes have you seen (in terms of progress or deterioration) in how civil society is engaged during this funding cycle?", respondents are overwhelmingly reporting improvements, both regarding the impact of the programs and their level of meaningful engagement. Overall, our findings appear to support these general sentiments. Many of the positive reforms on community engagement that were introduced with the NFM in the 2014-2016 cycle appear to have been intensified and sustained in the 2017-2019 funding cycle, making a significant difference in terms of the level of engagement of civil society and community in the design and implementation of Global Fund grants. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in terms of community-based monitoring, and additional efforts are necessary in specific countries. The 2020-2022 funding cycle presents a significant opportunity to improve community engagement, towards ending the epidemics.

---

## Recommendations

---

The results of the survey call suggest a number of relevant policy interventions that would have a beneficial impact on the meaningful engagement of Civil Society and community in Global Fund processes:

1. Take a proactive approach to the diffusion of key documents relative to the funding request development process (draft and finalized funding request, budget, and the TRP comments): translate them in local languages, promote the circulation of short and understandable executive summaries, and support of launch meetings for stakeholders, civil society and communities.
2. Support opportunities for civil society and communities to organize in-person strategic meetings ahead of consultations.
3. Promote the use of local languages through the funding request development process.
4. Promote the development of mechanisms to ensure the continuous engagement of CCM representatives with their constituencies, including regular in-person meetings.

## Annex 1 - Survey Questionnaire (English)

---

### Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to answer our survey.

### Background of this survey:

In 2015, APCASO conducted a multi-country consultation with the aim of documenting the experience of civil society (CS) and communities throughout the Global Fund (GF) New Funding Model (NFM) process. Titled GF NFM: CS and Community Experiences in Four (4) Countries of Asia, the consultation report concluded that the NFM had improved the level of CS and community engagements in Global Fund processes across the board but that there was room for improvement in the implementation of the guidelines and policies.

Most country in Asia Pacific are now entering the implementation phase of the 2017-2019 funding cycle. The objective of this survey is for APCASO as host of the APCRG Platform to assess whether engagement of civil society and community in Global Fund processes has improved since the last cycle.

This survey is anonymous. It will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete, and questions or sections irrelevant to your situation can be skipped.

### Where do you work?

Which funding request have you been involved with during the 2017-19 funding cycle? (if more than one, fill another questionnaire for each)

HIV/AIDS

HIV & TB

TB

Malaria

RSSH

Other:

### Type of organization

NGO

International NGO

Community Organization

Key Population Network

### The National Strategic Plan (NSP)



The National Strategic Plan is a document prepared by a country's government that details how the country will respond to HIV, TB and or malaria. It is request by the Global Fund and is the basis for the country's Funding Request.

#### **How was your organization engaged in the preparation of your country's NSP?**

We participated to face to face consultation(s) led by the MoH

We participated in a face to face civil society or community-led consultation(s)

We participated in online consultation(s) (through email or phone)

We were given the chance to comment on a draft of the National Strategic Plan

We were not engaged in any way

Other:

#### **How much were you engaged throughout the preparation the NSP?**

1 Not engaged at all

5 Meaningfully engaged throughout

#### **Why? What factors influenced your level of engagement?**

How much do you feel that the NSP inclusive of the priorities of your constituency?

1 The NSP does not include our priorities at all

5 The NSP includes all of our priorities

#### **The Country Dialogue**

The Country Dialogue is organized by the CCM. It is a requirement of the Global Fund, and meant to be an open and inclusive conversation between different groups of people who respond to and are affected by the diseases in a particular country.

#### **How was your organization engaged during the Country Dialogue?**

We had the opportunity to prepare to the Country Dialogue with other civil society/community organizations

We received an invitation to get involved with the Country Dialogue

We were not engaged in any way

Other:

#### **How satisfied are you with the inclusiveness of civil society and community perspectives during the Country Dialogue?**

1 The country dialogue was not inclusive.

5 The country dialogue was very inclusive.

#### **The Funding Request**

**How was your organization involved in the preparation of the Funding Request?**

- We participated in consultations organized by the CCM
- We participated in a face to face civil society or community-led consultation(s)
- We engaged directly with members of the writing team
- My organizations had representatives on the writing team
- We were given the chance to comment on a draft of the Funding Request
- We were not engaged in any way
- Other:

**How much were you engaged throughout the preparation of the Funding Request?**

- 1 Not engaged at all
- 5 Meaningful engaged throughout

**Why? What factor influenced your level of engagement?**

**Did you have access to the finalized Funding Request?**

- Yes
- No

**Did you have access to the finalized budget?**

- Yes
- No

**If you had access to the Funding Request and to the budget, who gave you access?**

**How much do you feel that the Funding Request is inclusive of your priorities and that of your constituency?**

- 1 The Funding Request does not include our priorities at all.
- 5 The Funding request includes almost all of our priorities.

**The Comments of the Technical Review Panel (TRP)**

The Funding Request is reviewed by the Global Fund's Technical Review Panel (TRP), an independent body that assesses the quality of the application and releases its comments on the document. These comments can touch on Community, Right and Gender issues with the Funding Request

**Are you aware that the TRP Comments are available for your Funding Request?**

- Yes

No

**Are you aware that Community, Right and Gender issues are within the scope of the Technical review Panel?**

Yes

No

**Have you had access to the comments of the Technical Review Panel on the Funding Request?**

Yes

No

Other:

**How much did the Technical Review Panel look at Community, Right and Gender (CRG) related issues in the Funding Request?**

1 The TRP comments did not address any CRG issues in the Funding Request

5 The comments addressed all the CRG related issues in the funding request

### **Grant-Making**

**How was your organization involved during Grant-Making?**

We participated to meetings with the CCM

We were given the chance to comment on a draft document

We met with the Global Fund country team

We were not engaged in any way

Other:

**How much were you engaged throughout the Grant-Making process?**

1 Not engaged at all

5 Meaningfully engaged throughout

**Why? What factors influenced your level of engagement?**

**How adequate was the funding allocated to your priority activities?**

1 The funds allocated to our priority activities are not sufficient.

5 The funds allocated to our priority activities are sufficient

### **Monitoring Grant Implementation**

**Have you been involved in the monitoring of grant implementation?**

Yes

No

**How?**

**Transition**

Many countries in the region will in the incoming year will stop receiving grants from the Global Fund or will see their grant greatly reduced. This process, linked to the increasing wealth of countries in Asia Pacific, is called transition.

**Are you aware of the issue of transition, and of its potential consequences in your country?**

Yes

No

**If yes, how has your organization been engaged for transition planning?**

We have taken part in meetings/consultations on transition led by the government

We have taken part in on transition led by civil society

We have taken part to a transition readiness assessment

We have been involved in the development of a transition work plan

We are involved in the monitoring of the implementation of transition work plans

We have not been engaged in any way

**Civil Society and Key Population representatives on the CCM**

**Do you know who are the Civil Society and Key population representatives on your CCM?**

Yes

No

**Do you know how to contact the Civil Society and Key Population representatives on your CCM?**

Yes

No

**How often are you in contact with your CCM representatives?**

1 Never

2 Every time we need to

**How effective are your representatives on the CCM at advocating on behalf of your community?**

1 Not effective

5 Very effective

## Moving ahead

These questions are meant to give you a chance to express your overall opinion regarding community engagement in Global Fund processes in your country.

**Overall, what are the key factors that have enabled or hindered your capacity to engage in Global Fund processes during this grant cycle?**

**How successful has the CCM been in creating an environment conducive to community and civil society engagement in your country?**

- 1 The current environment is not conducive to community and civil society engagement
- 5 The CCM has played a key role in improving the environment

**What changes have you seen (in terms of progress or deterioration) in how civil society is engaged during this funding cycle?**

**What skills does your organization need to develop in order to better engage during Global Fund processes?**

- Data collection and analysis
- Communication and messaging
- Advocacy programming and strategizing
- Network building and stakeholder mapping
- Gender and human rights assessment
- Sustainability and transition
- Legal and institutional assessment
- Other: