Civil Society and the Global Fund

The founding principles of the Global Fund guarantee civil society participation in all aspects of the partnership – from governance to implementation of programs. The Global Fund places civil society and people at greater risk of diseases front and center of all of our policies and operations.

The grassroots efforts of thousands of civil society groups around the world, advocating for increased resources for the response to HIV and AIDS, led to the creation of the Global Fund in 2002. Since that time, civil society - nongovernmental organizations, community and advocacy groups, networks of people living with the diseases, faith-based organizations – has played an active role at every level of our work.

Civil society organizations make a remarkable contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For SDG 3 – ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all – they serve a vital function to see that global health investments leave no one behind. The work of civil society is extensive: they advocate for additional resources for health, while implementing programs that reach communities, including people who are marginalized and often criminalized, and therefore extremely vulnerable to diseases.

Key Partners in Governance, Implementation and Advocacy

Using a human rights-based approach, the Global Fund works with civil society groups on many program activities such as:

- Improving patient support and adherence
- Finding missing cases of TB
- Advocating for access to medicines
- Improving sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Carrying out comprehensive sexuality education and services for young people.

The Global Fund also supports programs to identify human rights violations and remove barriers that limit access to health services. Civil society plays a vital role in improving access to health for key and vulnerable populations, such as adolescent girls and young women, men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, prisoners, and people who inject drugs.
Civil society organizations are key partners in the implementation of Global Fund grants. In 2017, more than 23 percent of the Global Fund’s principal recipients were civil society organizations, programming a total of US$984 million in grants. Civil society organizations also lead advocacy with governments regarding increased investments in health — both domestic and international. Their work is critical at the international, regional, country and community levels.

**International level**
Through meaningful participation in the Global Fund Board (three out of 20 voting seats are filled by civil society), civil society organizations champion the inclusion of the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities in shaping the direction of the Global Fund partnership. The participation of civil society in Global Fund governance is one of the unique pillars of the Global Fund partnership when compared to other multilateral agencies. Through the Board, civil society contributes to fundamental elements of Global Fund work: developing the organizational strategy, designing the funding approaches, assessing implementation of programs, and shaping policy.

**Regional level**
Civil society facilitates inclusive, cross-border collaboration, which serves as a support system for criminalized populations to meet and organize themselves. In countries where space for civil society is shrinking, regional partnerships enable civil society to voice their national issues and directly engage with government decision-makers.

**Country level**
Civil society organizations participate in the governance of grants through Country Coordinating Mechanisms, the national committees that design and oversee Global Fund-supported programs. They promote robust domestic engagement and investment in HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. As a result of their work, marginalized and vulnerable groups such as young women and girls, men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, prisoners, and people who inject drugs have a strong voice in setting the priorities of each country’s response to diseases, including determining where the funding goes.

**Community level**
Local groups are best placed to reach key populations and communities that are often not reached by formal health services. Faith-based organizations also contribute significantly to the provision of rural health care, especially in serving the poorest and the most vulnerable people in remote areas. In recognition of the unique ability of civil society organizations to reach key populations in the communities they serve, the Global Fund works with governments to promote social contracting mechanisms that allow the government to contract nongovernmental organizations to deliver services to vulnerable and marginalized populations.

**About the Global Fund**
The Global Fund is a 21st-century organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics. As a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases, the Global Fund mobilizes and invests nearly US$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in more than 100 countries. The Global Fund’s operating costs are approximately 2 percent of grants under management, reflecting an exceptionally high degree of efficiency. By challenging barriers and embracing innovative approaches, we are working together to better serve people affected by the diseases.

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