

# **Community Engagement Strategic Initiative**

Update

June 2023



# Engaging in Grant Cycle 7

## New Strategy, New Expectations

The Global Fund Strategy 2023-2028 elevates the importance of community engagement. It contains a new objective to maximize the engagement and leadership of communities most affected by HIV, TB, and malaria to leave no one behind. This objective is operationalized in Grant Cycle 7 (GC7) in several ways, including three new minimum expectations that will increase transparency, accountability, and opportunities for community engagement across the grant life cycle.

In 2023, the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative is supporting countries to meet the first minimum expectation, which requires that funding request development includes transparent and inclusive consultations with populations most impacted by the three diseases. Countries are expected to develop engagement roadmaps and complete a new mandatory Annex to the funding request with the highest priority interventions identified by civil society and communities during country dialogue.

## GC7 Readiness Forums

Partners of the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative convened regional GC7 readiness forums (Table 1) to ensure that communities are well-informed about the new guidance and processes for GC7 and prepare them for funding request development. These forums gathered civil society and community representatives, technical and bilateral partners, and Global Fund’s Fund Portfolio Managers, Community, Rights and Gender (CRG) technical advisors, disease advisors and members of the Access to Funding Department.

**“Go back to your respective countries and organizations ready to contribute. Ensure that our communities and networks are part of this process because we have the resources.”**

**– GC7 Readiness Forum Participant, Anglophone Africa**

**TABLE 1.** GC7 Readiness Forums for Civil Society and Communities, convened by the Strategic Initiative.

REGION	FORUM LOCATION	DATES
Caribbean	Port au Prince, Trinidad	13–15 September 2022
Asia-Pacific	Hanoi, Vietnam	4-6 October 2022
Latin America	Lima, Peru	25–28 October 2022
Anglophone Africa	Stone Town, Zanzibar	7-9 December 2022
Middle East and North Africa	Marrakesh, Morocco	18-20 January 2023
Francophone Africa	Cotonou, Benin	25-27 January 2023
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Istanbul, Turkey	25-26 April 2023

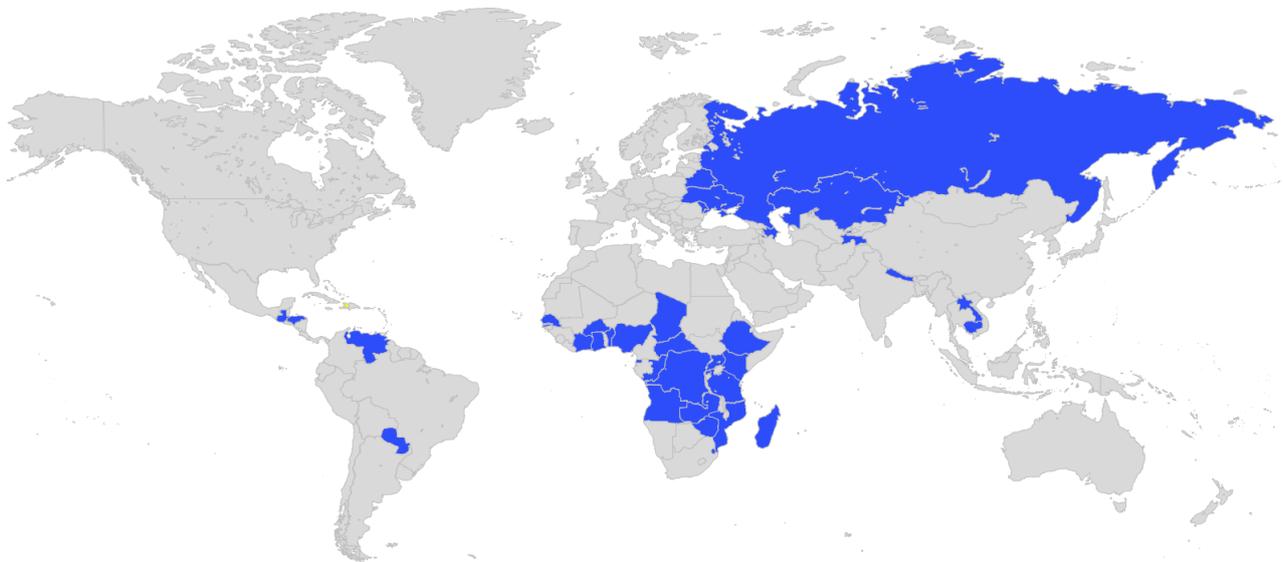
## Technical Assistance for Community Engagement

As of March 2023, the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative deployed short-term technical assistance to strengthen community engagement for GC7 in 38 countries (Figure 1).

Technical experts supported communities to formulate their priorities for funding and complete the new mandatory Annex. In Kazakhstan, the technical assistance increased the participation of ex-prisoners and community organizations working with prisoners in the identification of priorities for GC7. In Nigeria, Ukraine, Uganda and Zimbabwe, people who use drugs were directly supported. In Honduras and Tanzania, malaria communities were the primary beneficiaries of the technical assistance.<sup>1</sup>

**“The high level of the consultants made the product more ‘competitive’ in the national dialogue for the funding request.”**

**– Technical Assistance Recipient, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Region**



**FIGURE 1.** Technical Assistance for Community Engagement in GC7 (as of March 2023)

<sup>1</sup> Angola, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Laos, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, Zambia, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe.





The Global Fund/John Rae

“The technical assistance we received led to increased awareness and participation of civil society and communities in the development of the Global Fund GC7 funding request. Four representatives were selected to be part of the writing team compared to previous years where it used to be two or less.”

– Tanzania TB Community Network (TTCN)

## Rapid Consultation Support

In 26 countries, Community Engagement Strategic Initiative partners complemented the short-term technical assistance by supporting community consultations and convening.

In a further 38 countries, rapid consultation support was provided directly to civil society and community organizations by key and vulnerable population networks and the CRG regional platforms. In the Gambia, the country dialogue had a specific focus on ensuring that Global Fund grants include social protection interventions for children, women and people with disabilities. In Sri Lanka, a community communications hub was established to share information with TB-affected communities about GC7 processes.

To date, the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative supported 76 countries to meet the Global Fund’s minimum expectations on community engagement during funding request development.

## Tools and Guidance for Communities

To support communities in setting their priorities for GC7, the Strategic Initiative commissioned the development of a Costing Guide and Tool, available in English, Russian, French and Spanish. The tool was used during technical assistance missions to help communities formulate specific and costed priorities for inclusion in the funding requests.

Other resources produced by partners of the Strategic Initiative include:

- A briefing on **Harm Reduction in GC7**.
- Guides on how **people who use drugs** and **transgender people** can influence the funding request process.

- A **policy brief** to help with prioritization and costing of GC7 interventions and a **guide** to conduct country dialogue consultations in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC region).
- An updated version of the **Community Engagement Toolbox** containing 131 resources in 13 languages. This full compendium of support materials from Strategic Initiative partners was updated in March 2023 and is available on the Global Fund's website.

Outside of the Strategic Initiative, partners **updated guidance** on how civil society and communities can engage in grant-making, and the Stop TB Partnership developed a **community support package** for inclusion of key TB interventions in GC7 funding requests.

## Evaluation of Community Engagement

In June 2022, the Global Fund's Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) conducted an evaluation of community engagement and community-led responses at the Global Fund.

The evaluation found that the introduction and evolution of the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative contributed to stronger engagement of communities in Global Fund processes and growing community leadership in national responses. The evaluation specifically noted the critical role of the CRG Regional Platforms in promoting and providing support for community engagement during the grant-making stage of the funding cycle.

Finally, the evaluation found that the **Community Engagement Toolbox** is a good example of the proliferation of strong new technical guidance which has supported community engagement and community-led responses.

**"The provision of technical assistance by partners, as well as through the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative, has also contributed to success, for example in generating necessary data to inform decisions, ensuring broader community engagement in country dialogues and funding request development, as well as in strengthening capacity of key organizations and networks."**

**– TERG Evaluation on Community Engagement and Community-led Responses**



The Global Fund and SCDI/Lê Văn Kién



## A Focus on Safety and Security

In recent months, the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative has dedicated resources on the safety and security of key and vulnerable populations in the implementation of Global Fund grants. This follows heightened concerns in several countries, including Guatemala where a transgender CCM member was murdered, and Uganda where the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 was recently enacted.

Partners in the LAC region developed a new **Safety and Security Toolkit for organizations working with key and vulnerable populations to strengthen HIV programs**. The toolkit was piloted in Guatemala and is currently being rolled out in the Dominican Republic and Belize.

Partners also convened a webinar to disseminate a similar security toolkit on **Protecting implementers and improving program outcomes: Guidance and tools to strengthen security in Global Fund supported key population programs**, which speaks to the African context

Lastly, a new training on Safety, Security and Wellbeing for Activists was successfully rolled out in Tanzania, Ukraine, Uganda, and Zambia. This training is available through the **eLearning Institute**.

In 2022, Community Engagement Strategic Initiative partners piloted a new Safety and Security Toolkit in Guatemala, working with the Principal Recipient, five community-based and community-led sub-recipients, and 25 peer educators from key population programs.

During the pilot, communities generated solutions to security challenges. These included creating an interactive map of high-risk areas, having a security specialist do an audit of physical locations, and providing a letter from the Ministry of Health authorizing items in the peer educators' backpacks.

# Supporting CCM Elections

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The CCM Evolution Strategic Initiative has leveraged partners of the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative as technical assistance providers to support CCM elections for community constituencies. To date, five partners have provided technical support to CCM elections in 11 countries<sup>2</sup>. Our partners also documented the process of CCM elections in Colombia and Kyrgyzstan (forthcoming).

Community Engagement Strategic Initiative partners also provided direct support for the elections of community CCM members. In Mongolia, our partners supported the election of a new young key populations representative who will serve on the CCM from 2022-2024. This success follows a recent situation analysis on **Youth Engagement in CCMs in Asia-Pacific, which highlighted major barriers to youth representation and participation.**

In Nigeria, our partners supported a CCM Youth Election and Youth Convention, which resulted in two young people being elected to the CCM (as representative and alternate).

In Côte d'Ivoire, our partners worked through the Key Population Network to support the election of a sex worker as an alternate CCM member. In three years' time, the seat will be for a sex worker as a full CCM member.

In Kyrgyzstan, our partners participate in all CCM meetings and recently gained an additional seat for a transgender person.

In Ukraine, our partners supported the development of regulations for the representation of organizations working with transgender people. In December 2022, they secured a seat for the trans community in the CCM.

The CCM Evolution Strategic Initiative has levered our partners as technical assistance providers. To date, five of our partners have supported CCM election processes for community representatives in 11 countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh, Congo, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, and Uzbekistan.

# Major Advocacy Outcomes

The Community Engagement Strategic Initiative supports key and vulnerable population networks to engage in Global Fund-related advocacy at country level. In 2022, this investment contributed to several major outcomes:



Approval and introduction of opioid agonist therapy (OAT) in **Pakistan**. This followed the completion of an OAT feasibility study, and many years of advocacy by our partners.



Collection of gender-disaggregated data in OAT programs in **Ukraine**.



Removal of limitations on the provision of HIV treatment, which was previously restricted to state and communal medical institutions in **Ukraine**. This was achieved through an amendment to the Law on Combating the Spread of Diseases Caused by HIV and Legal and Social Protection of People Living with HIV.



Provision for multi-month dispensing, use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and community-based HIV testing, following two legal changes in **Indonesia**.



Implementation of needle and syringe programs in two states in **Nigeria** (Gombe and Oyo) in the fourth quarter of 2022.



Inclusion of marginalized populations, such as internally displaced people in the far north of **Cameroon** and other unreached populations, in the distribution of long-lasting insecticide treated nets.



Increased numbers of health personnel in the district primary health centers and mass distribution of long-lasting insecticide treated nets in **Nigeria**.



Four new indicators to measure the level of engagement of communities in the National TB response included in the new TB Action Plan for the World Health Organization **European Region** for 2023–2030. These will be reported by at least three pilot countries in 2023 through our partner's advocacy work.

# Ongoing Technical Assistance for Community Engagement in Global Fund Grants

In addition to the technical assistance that focuses on GC7, the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative continues to deploy technical assistance throughout the grant life cycle.

In 2021 and 2022, the Strategic Initiative provided technical assistance in 47 countries and nine multicountry grants. As of 15 May 2023, a total of 76 assignments have been completed and another 41 are ongoing.

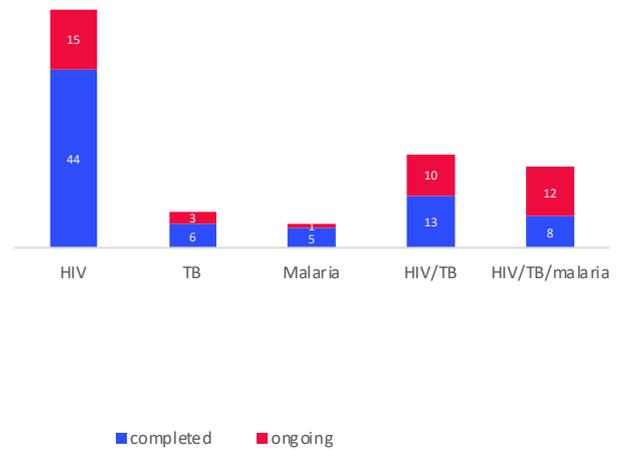
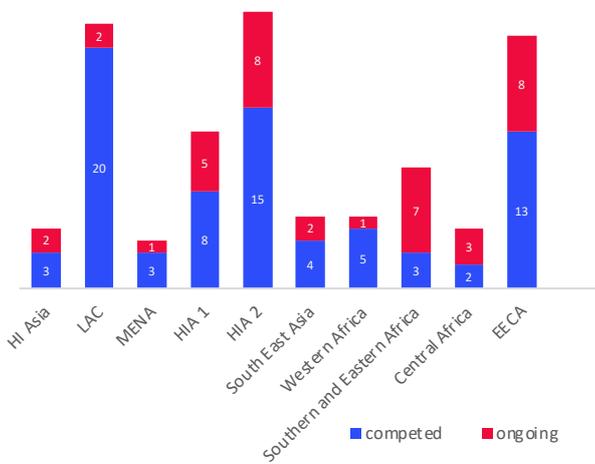


FIGURE 2. Number of assignments, by region

FIGURE 3. Number of assignments, by disease

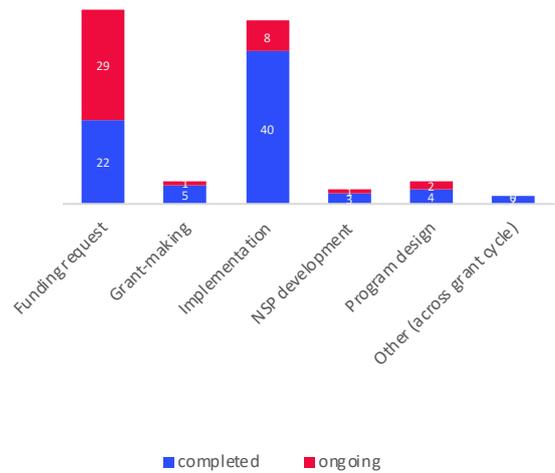
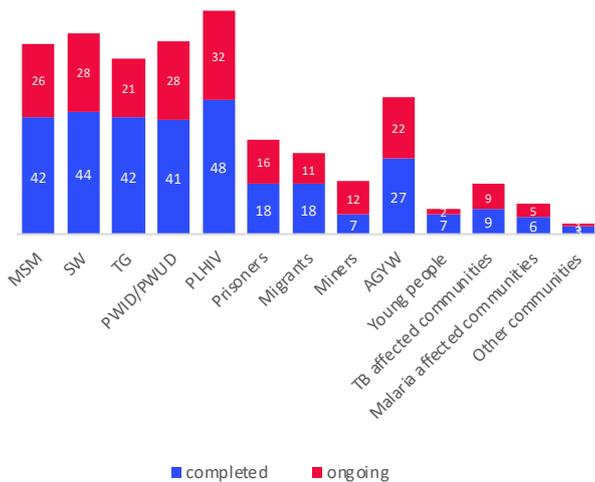


FIGURE 4. Number of assignments, by population

FIGURE 5. Number of assignments, by cycle stage

The Community Engagement Strategic Initiative supports the Global Fund Strategy’s sub-objective to promote the engagement of communities as providers of technical support.

In 2021 and 2022, we deployed community experts from a key or vulnerable population group in nearly two thirds (63%) of technical assistance assignments.

# Mid-term Evaluation of the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative

The Strategic Initiative recently completed a mid-term review, assessing the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022.

The evaluation found that the Strategic Initiative is largely achieving its objectives. Key and vulnerable population (KVP) networks supported by the Strategic Initiative have achieved impactful outcomes at the country level. KVP networks expressed that without Strategic Initiative funding, it would be extremely difficult for them, especially criminalized groups, to be funded for capacity strengthening work.

**“Compared with other programs, this technical assistance moves fast; it is much more straightforward in terms of what we are trying to achieve. Part of the technical assistance program’s success is its design oriented toward results.”**

**– Community Engagement Strategic Initiative Technical Assistance Provider**

**“The Community Engagement Strategic Initiative team have worked extraordinarily hard to make this an effective funding stream. If we didn’t have the strategic initiative for community engagement, we don’t have anything.”**

**– Community Engagement Strategic Initiative Mid-term Evaluation**

In addition, the evaluation conclude that this Strategic Initiative has achieved value for money, with astute increases in investment in TB networks resulting in adoption of essential policy changes and improvement of program design in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and advocacy planning in Africa. Robust community engagement in the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM), as well as equipping communities with situational analyses that allowed for better engagement in Global Fund-related processes, also contributed to this conclusion.

Going forward, the evaluation recommends furthering evolving the Strategic Initiative, in line with the new Global Fund Strategy 2023-2028. Emerging opportunities therein include community engagement in pandemic preparedness and the use of Global Fund’s ‘diplomatic voice’ to challenge laws, policies and practices that restrict the work of community-based and community-led and civil society organizations.

The Global Fund/Vincent Becker



## Selected Key Performance Indicators

INDICATOR	RESULT (DECEMBER 2022)
Number and percentage of assignments utilizing experts who are from the country or region receiving the technical assistance.	<b>100%</b>
Number of countries with at least one key and vulnerable population community reports successfully influencing program funding and/or design.	<b>28</b>
Number of people accessing and using timely and relevant Global Fund-related information that is shared by the Regional Platforms.	<b>98,301</b>
Number of countries where communities report or demonstrate their ability to more efficiently and effectively engage in national and regional Global Fund-related processes as a result of Regional Platform capacity strengthening and coordination support.	<b>93</b>
Number of technical assistance requests generated and submitted to a wide range of Global Fund technical assistance providers, as a result of Regional Platform support to communities.	<b>162</b>

