

THE GLOBAL FUND to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

1. Objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is committed to ensuring equal and equitable access for women and men, girls and boys to prevention, treatment, care and support activities funded through its grants. Gender inequalities can be a strong driver of all three epidemics and close attention needs to be paid to how such inequalities might fuel the spread of disease in each country context. An initial review of the Global Fund portfolio shows that insufficient attention is being given to closely tracking the consequences of gender inequalities on the epidemics. The Global Fund is not able to adequately report on whether investments are being made in programs that benefit both sexes equally, nor where investments are specifically targeted to women and girls to reduce their vulnerability and prevent further infections and a greater burden on women in the future.

This Gender Equality Strategy is intended to address these gaps within the Global Fund model and to ensure appropriate attention is given to the different needs of women and men, girls and boys within Global Fund funded programs.

Statement of Intent: The Global Fund is undertaking a strategic review to ensure that the grants it funds appropriately ensure equal and equitable access to treatment and services for women and men, girls and boys,¹ and that proposals support services and interventions that appropriately target those most vulnerable and marginalized in society, including women, girls and sexual minorities.²

The Global Fund will champion activities that:

- ***take into account the different needs and vulnerabilities of women and men, girls and boys, and of sexual minorities;***
- ***target the structural issues that increase the vulnerability of women, girls, and sexual minorities, including legal, political and economic inequalities and discrimination;***
- ***reduce barriers that inhibit equitable access to treatment, care and support;***

¹ See Annex 1 for definitions of gender equality and equity and other useful definitions.

² A separate strategy addresses the specific needs of sexual minorities and references are made only in the context of a strategic approach on gender inequalities and inequities.

- **address factors that impose disproportionate burdens of care and support on women and put in place programmes to mitigate this burden;**
- **address and eliminate the risks and vulnerabilities that increase women's and girls susceptibility to infection by the three diseases, such as gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, early marriage, lack of access to education, wife inheritance, poverty, gendered division of labor and so on, and mitigate the impact for those already infected;**
- **focus on women most at risk or marginalised such as sex workers, injection drug users, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered women and emphasise empowerment of these groups so they can protect themselves, e.g. with improved negotiation skills on condom use or through female controlled protection measures such as the female condom;**
- **create enabling environments for prevention, treatment and care in the most vulnerable communities.**

To achieve this aim, the following five strategic objectives have been identified:

1. **Expand the Global Fund's investments** in programs focused on women and girls and those most at risk from the three diseases, such as sexual minorities, scaling up services and interventions that not only reduce risk and vulnerability to infection, and mitigate the impact of the three diseases, but address the root causes and inequalities that create such vulnerability and risk with the ultimate aim of eliminating these inequalities within the society and thereby removing them as risk factors to the spread of the epidemic;
2. **Ensure Global Fund's policies and procedures are facilitative and supportive** to create an enabling environment for programs that address gender inequalities, and actively promote programs and services for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria that focus on those most affected in society, most often women and girls;
3. **Establish a broad partnership environment** that supports the development and implementation of programs that address gender inequalities and reduce women's and girls' vulnerabilities and that prioritizes the provision of quality technical assistance and capacity building in country, including for those groups not currently participating in Global Fund processes;
4. **Develop a robust communications and advocacy strategy** to support the gender equality strategy, that actively promotes and encourages programming for women and girls and sexual minorities, and that appropriately communicates the Global Fund's intention to address the different needs of women and men, girls and boys and to target programs accordingly;
5. Model the strategy by reinforcing the Secretariat with sufficient technical capacity to catalyze progress on gender equality and on sexual minorities, **provide leadership and advocacy on the issue and live the values** of the strategy through creating a culture of respect, equity and equality throughout the Secretariat.

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4. Areas for Strategic Intervention

1. Role of the Country Coordinating Mechanism

The Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) will clearly play a key role in ensuring gender sensitive approaches are taken at the country level. Their role in oversight of existing programs and in prioritizing and submitting new requests for funding is pivotal in shaping the country response. Making sure that the CCMs approach their work with a gender perspective is therefore critical and presents an opportunity to influence programming at the source. The Global Fund's existing CCM Guidelines³ reference the need for appropriate programming for women and girls, as well as encouraging the appropriate representation of women's groups and networks amongst the civil society membership of the CCM. The guidelines also note that a gender balance in membership is desirable and that a gender perspective should be integrated into their activities and proposal preparation. However, evidence shows that there is limited implementation of this approach. Most CCMs are still dominated by male membership (63% men to 31% women) and leadership (Chair: 76% men to 19% women; Vice Chair: 69% men to 28% women), and very few access gender expertise on a regular basis.⁴

In reviewing the role of the CCM it is important to take into account the country context. In many countries the UN system plays an active role in promoting a gender equality approach, usually led by UNDP, and the UN partners need to play an active role in ensuring these approaches are integrated into proposal preparation. To this end, for example, ensuring a gender perspective is integrated into the national disease strategy should be a prerequisite to making progress.

The UN and other bilateral partners can also support women's groups and networks through capacity building so that they are better able to voice their concerns and needs through CCM structures. To this end, representation of women's groups on CCMs should ensure they stay connected to grassroots concerns by establishing representation mechanisms that support them and give them legitimacy, as well as empower them in a situation where the government control of the CCM process can often be intimidating. It is also important that women's representation beyond the health sector is included in the CCM in order to influence the priorities set during proposal preparation. There is often a need for partners to support these processes (e.g. for the election of representatives and establishment of reportback and consultation mechanisms) to ensure that the most vulnerable groups, e.g. sex workers, or rural women's networks, are given a voice.

It is tempting to assume that gender equality issues at the country level can be solved through ensuring more civil society representatives come from women's groups and

³ "Guidelines on the Purpose, Structure, Composition and Funding of Country Coordinating Mechanisms and Requirements for Grant Eligibility" (available at www.theglobalfund.org)

⁴ The Round 8 guidelines have asked CCMs to identify the current level of experience in gender issues amongst their membership. The results of this request will be available in the next months and will enable a focused analysis.

networks, or include gender experts. The Global Fund wants to guard against assuming that the gender equality issue is only a concern for NGOs. Political leadership and commitment is critical. The government must also take responsibility for progress in this area. It is therefore important that government departments that work on gender, such as Ministries for Women or Gender or Social Services, should have access to CCM deliberations and be involved in proposal preparation, which is not always the case.

It may be that these country level activities by partners and key actors will be the most influential in ensuring action on gender equality. But The Global Fund also needs to consider whether the current system of incentives and rules within the CCM Guidelines is sufficient to ensure appropriate action on gender equality at the country level. The requirement that all CCMs show membership of people living with or affected by the three diseases has been very effective in ensuring that these affected communities are included in the membership, although there have been problems of tokenism in this regard. Therefore, if more gender balance on the CCM is seen as essential to ensuring that gender equality is effectively integrated into programming, then making improved gender balance a requirement could be considered. This may challenge the country ownership principle that the Global Fund espouses and could be very burdensome for some CCMs. It may also make no difference in terms of appropriate gender sensitive programming for the diseases. This is one of the key strategic questions for this area.

It may be more effective to influence CCM membership and access to gender perspectives through incentives; most clearly through the channel of CCM funding. CCM funding could be made available to support CCMs in activities which will enable them to reach the goal of 50% gender parity amongst CCM membership or to support entities that could bring a good perspective on gender issues but which would not normally have the resources to participate on the CCM. To encourage this the CCMs could be required to declare their capacity in gender as part of the application process (modeled on the conflict of interest statement). In this context, training and sensitization of CCMs on gender issues could be effective and partners should use their existing tools to brief CCMs on their responsibilities in this area and build a common understanding of what needs to be done. Partners can also help by ensuring high quality gender expertise is accessed as part of broader technical assistance plans.⁵

The most effective way to get CCMs to consider gender equality as a key factor in addressing their epidemics will be through the requirements of the proposal guidelines, since this will force CCMs to explain how they have addressed the gender component of their epidemic and what expertise they have accessed in order to ensure their approach is appropriate.

⁵ Gender Expertise could be defined as having:

- Familiarity with the determinants of girls' and women's vulnerability to the three diseases;
- Expert knowledge of and experience in using methodologies to assess sex and risk differentials in disease burdens and their consequences, and in access to and utilization of prevention, treatment, care and support programs; and
- Expert knowledge of policies and programs to reduce girls' and women's vulnerability and secure their health.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

1. How can CCMs be encouraged to ensure meaningful representation of women with skills and voice amongst membership and leadership, including those from beyond the health sector?

2. How can the Global Fund build the capacity of CCMs so that gender equality issues are understood and appropriately managed within the proposal development process through access to high quality gender expertise?

2. Guidelines for Proposals and Technical Review Panel

Guidelines for Proposals:

The Round 8 Guidelines were significantly adapted to take into account the new emphasis on gender equality. For example, in explaining what The Global Fund will fund the guidelines state:

Recognizing a broadly held desire to scale-up gender sensitive responses to the diseases, applicants are encouraged to consider how the diseases differently affect key affected populations, In particular, how women and girls are affected compared to boys and men, and what actions are being taken or proposed through the Round 8 proposal to reduce these differences.

There was also a specific Fact Sheet on *"The Global Fund's Round 8 approach to encouraging gender sensitive proposals"*. How successful this emphasis was remains to be seen, but additional focus on these issues can be considered for the Round 10 Guidelines.⁶ The fact sheet will be updated for Round 9 based on early feedback from a questionnaire of applicants and other stakeholders on the quality and helpfulness of the Round 8 materials.

The Global Fund's Proposal Guidelines are not intended to provide an exhaustive list of appropriate interventions based on the presumption that a key role of our partners (especially WHO, UNAIDS and its co-sponsors, as well as RBM and Stop TB) is to provide guidance and communicate best practice. It is possible that the Guidelines could be more explicit on the parameters for operational research which is an area where Global Fund investment could make a significant contribution. The outcomes of

⁶ Round 9 will use the same guidelines as Round 8.

Round 8 and the portfolio review planned for the third quarter of 2008 is expected to provide detailed information on what is currently being included by applicants in their proposals and then what is being translated into grant agreements, and this could then guide further changes to the emphasis on gender issues in the Global Fund's documents and tools. Certainly, additional fact sheets should be considered, for example, on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), Gender-based violence, legal support etc.

The key entry point in the guidelines will be the narrative description of the epidemic and the need to provide a proper gender analysis of the situation in the country (related to the specific disease and in the context of the health system). It is in this area where the Global Fund should consider introducing a mandatory requirement for a gender analysis over time. Proposals should then include an appropriate response to that analysis with activities followed through with matching budget lines.

The link between the Guidelines and M&E toolkit is also vital and future iterations of both documents will need to take into account the direction set by the strategy. Since, for example, gender and age disaggregated data are essential to a proper response to the epidemics it would be useful to move towards *requiring* gender disaggregated data in the proposal rather than *requesting* it. Where this is not currently available, The Global Fund could suggest modalities whereby the country could apply for funding to support the development of appropriate data systems in order to capture this information.

Technical Review Panel:

Clearly the guidelines for proposal are only the first part of the process towards funding and the Technical Review Panel (TRP) plays a very important role in recommending what gets funded. The TRP bases its review on the technical quality of the proposal according to criteria approved by the Board, and based on accepted, evidence-based interventions which are proven to be effective against the diseases. Over Rounds 6 to 8, the proportion of women as members of the TRP as approved by the Board has increased from 25% to 43%⁷. The Terms of Reference suggest a 'significant number' of women should be selected 'all other matters being equal'.⁸ Recognizing the importance of the TRP membership being 'gender aware' rather than there being a specific gender expert, the TRP undertook a recent internal self-assessment of their overall gender knowledge and experience based on criterion suggested by our partners as important. The TRP reported to the Portfolio Committee that approximately 60% of TRP members (with higher proportions in the HIV and tuberculosis expert groups than malaria) considered that they were gender aware in terms of programming for, and responding to, gender issues. The question arises whether gender should become a more important criterion in selection of TRP members, both in terms of gender balance on the panel and in terms of gender knowledge in relation to the three diseases and what this means in terms of skills and experience.

The current TRP reviews proposals based on three key criteria:

1. Soundness of approach;

⁷ Actual TRP membership for Round 8 may vary because of availability of members.

⁸ Terms of Reference of the Technical Review Panel (www.theglobalfund.org)

2. Feasibility; and
3. Potential for sustainability and impact.

The TRP undertakes its review ensuring that each of the review criteria are equally considered (no one criterion overweighting any other) and by taking a 'know your epidemic' approach. The criteria are defined in an attachment and include references to gender equality although consideration could be given to strengthening these definitions; whether the gender criterion would outweigh others is a matter for discussion. For example, could a proposal that does not evidence a proper gender analysis be considered for funding? It could be that in reviewing 'soundness of approach' the TRP would consider a proper gender analysis as a key component as well as an explanation of how the proposal would reach vulnerable groups (as relevant depending on the context).⁹ The possibility that Global Fund architecture may be adapted to allow a more iterative process for proposals (with shorter gaps between submission times) allows for the option that proposals that are rejected on the grounds of insufficient attention to issues of gender equality could be quickly adjusted and resubmitted without undue delay. The TRP should therefore consider sending proposals back to the countries if they did not pay sufficient attention to gender issues, either as part of the clarification process, or indeed for a resubmission.

In order to ensure the TRP is properly informed of the latest evidence with regard to interventions aimed at addressing gender equality issues, technical partners will be asked to strengthen their substantive briefings to the TRP on gender issues. In an innovation this year, these briefings will be provided electronically through a portal that facilitates greater opportunity for TRP members to review updates on strategies in advance of the TRP meeting. In turn, this ensures that the TRP can use its first day of meeting to ensure consensus of understanding across its membership base on key topics such as gender. UNAIDS and WHO have been asked to coordinate this input, with a particular focus on briefing the TRP on what partners are encouraging countries to include in their proposals, and what is an appropriate intervention for specific epidemiological contexts.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- 1. Should gender and age disaggregated data be required in the epidemiological background provided by applicants in proposals to the Global Fund??***
- 2. How should the Global Fund ensure that the TRP is appropriately resourced with recognized gender expertise?***
- 4. Should the TRP review criteria be revised to put more emphasis on gender equality elements of programs and interventions?***
- 5. What should be the consequences for a proposal that does not sufficiently address gender, but in all other respects is 'technically sound'?***

⁹ WHO has developed a gender assessment tool which is used in the 'mock TRP' process which could be a useful tool for the TRP itself.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit and Reporting system

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework creates a good opportunity to integrate better monitoring of gender equality and equity within programming and provides the basis for tracking whether interventions are appropriately reaching the most vulnerable populations and those most at risk. The M&E framework creates the parameters within which grants are measured and therefore provides a good indication to countries on what activities they should be including in their proposals. There is then a very direct relationship between program design and how it will be measured. The M&E framework is therefore an excellent tool for integrating gender equality aspects into programs. A balance needs to be struck between getting relevant information in order to track program performance on a gender sensitive basis, and not overburdening countries with cumbersome reporting requirements which are not harmonized with other donors.

The Global Fund works together with international partners on a joint Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit and the process to update that toolkit is currently underway. In this context a review is underway with the specific purpose of finding opportunities to better integrate gender sensitive monitoring and reporting mechanisms into the toolkit.

The Global Fund is working proactively to include gender issues in the toolkit and is strongly recommending age and sex disaggregation of all relevant service data. It will also include gender related service delivery areas where recommended (this would first be submitted to the relevant disease Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Groups – MERG - for harmonization), and include sections to provide better guidance on and refer to resources on gender and sexual minority issues. This will need to include service delivery areas and indicators drawn from all relevant sectors which may reach beyond disease specific areas. In addition, a process is being initiated to include data disaggregated by relevant group (gender or sexual minorities) as a material element of performance reviews, for example, by including a compulsory information section in Phase 2 reviews.

There are some limitations to country reporting systems, and this will require increased investments and work with partners over time. The Global Fund is also considering including a more detailed evaluation every 1-2 years which will look at the quality of implementation including gender equality. This will require additional resources, but may prevent routine reporting being overloaded with indicators and data requests. It would also need to be well harmonized with country and partner efforts.

Given the complexities of reprogramming it is not recommended that a comprehensive reprogramming exercise be undertaken across the portfolio, however it could be possible to build into the Phase 2 review more detailed tracking of interventions (for example, by introducing sex and age disaggregated data, the compilation of which may need to be supported by an additional funding line). The Rolling Continuation Channel

(RCC) presents another opportunity for countries to introduce more gender sensitive approaches, especially to data collection.

Countries should be encouraged to undertake operational research in the area of programming for gender equality and equity in order to build up the knowledge base on what works. Many countries do not request the maximum allocation of 10% of their grant budget for M&E; there should be greater focus on building up this area of capacity in country and considering more direct earmarking of M&E resources to support this capacity building.

Role of the Local Fund Agent:

The Local Fund Agents (LFAs) use, as a basis for their review, the agreed targets and measures in the grant agreement. They therefore depend on the M&E toolkit, as well as the objectives and targets of the program to define what they assess. If gender sensitive activities are defined in the grant workplan with associated budget lines, the LFA can track and report on that throughout the grant lifecycle. There are several opportunities which would strengthen the LFAs role and capacity in assessing programs for gender equality criteria.

The LFA Manual and toolkit should be adjusted to reflect a gender perspective. The LFA reporting tools and guidelines for the assessment of the principle recipient and for Phase 2 would need to be reworked to take into account gender sensitivity. Onsite verification should have a gender component rather than just the data quality review.

Capacity for gender sensitive assessment was not a criterion in the recent LFA tender so mechanisms would need to be introduced to ensure LFAs could access appropriate gender expertise if necessary. Gender sensitive assessment training would need to be integrated into the ongoing training and briefing of LFAs.

Role of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group:

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) has already showed a willingness to take on the gender equality issue in the Five Year Evaluation with several aspects of the evaluation including a gender sensitivity review (e.g. CCM membership and knowledge of the issues). The TERG could consider a specific evaluation on the implementation of the gender equality strategy in two years to evaluate its progress in achieving objectives and its effect on the portfolio.

Gender balance is a criterion for TERG membership. Current membership stands at 50% men/women.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

- 1. What gender equality service delivery areas should become available for Global Fund grants (e.g. gender-based violence, micro-finance etc)?**
- 2. Should the Global Fund require reporting of sex and age disaggregated data for its key indicators?**
- 3. How can country reporting systems be best supported to include better gender and age evaluation and analysis (role of partners, evaluations, operational research agenda)?**
- 4. Should the Board provide an extra funding line for countries to access at Phase 2 in order to improve the gender equality orientation of existing grants?**

4. Partners and Networks

The Global Fund is a financing institution and as such does not have a role in providing normative guidance, technical assistance nor implementation support. It is therefore essential to establish a broad, functional partnership network to support Global Fund processes and to ensure that the additional funding provided to countries actually achieves impact in the fight against the three diseases. As part of the wider development of a partnership strategy for the Global Fund attention must be given to building a network specifically focused on gender sensitive activities. Many actors are currently engaged in work of this nature, including the UN multilaterals, donor's bilateral agencies, private foundations, the private sector and civil society, including communities affected by the diseases; the Global Fund, however, can play a catalytic role by providing resources which were previously unavailable. There are a number of important opportunities for partners to explore in order to support gender sensitive programming and a greater focus on equitable allocation of resources to the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, for example:

- *Capacity building, including for dual track financing and community systems strengthening and in the preparation of national strategies*
 - preparing women's organizations and networks to be sub-recipients or principle recipients, and also supporting government gender or social affairs departments to integrate better with health departments and other processes in preparing national strategies
- *Technical assistance (TA)*

- both for proposal development (identifying appropriate interventions) but also for implementation, especially on management and financial skills, M&E and procurement where there are often gaps
- harmonize TA efforts between all providers (e.g. donors, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society, especially international NGOs) to provide a more coherent approach in each country
- *Normative guidance and capturing what works*
 - the UN family has a key role here to develop user friendly guidance for country based actors as well as briefing the TRP on new developments but many other actors can help in developing appropriate programming, e.g. on SRH and HIV integration
 - roles and responsibilities could be more clearly defined to achieve this in a more coherent way
- *Supporting advocacy work to ensure gender sensitive approaches are taken into account in programming*
 - e.g. issues of unequal access to services need to be publicized
 - need for country level 'watchdog' organizations to provide evidence for advocacy outreach
 - country partners can also influence CCM membership and functioning
- *Co-financing or other investment in implementation capacity that would broaden the base of activities focused on gender sensitive interventions*
 - Coordination would be very important in this area and the introduction of joint reviews between co-funders
- *Establishing a clear evidence base through pure and operational research on what works*
 - Providing guidance and assistance to country actors to capture their experience using more rigorous methodology
- *Developing and making available on a large scale, new technologies with a particular focus on women and girls*
 - There is a need to find ways to implement some new technologies on a large scale with effective programs (e.g. the female condom and male circumcision).

At the global level and as part of the efforts on the partnership strategy the Global Fund will be exploring mutual accountability agreements (e.g. memoranda of understanding - MOUs) with partners to strengthen this engagement; these will need to include clearly articulated gender components. It will be important to map out what each stakeholder is doing on the issue and identify the gaps. The Global Fund can play an important catalytic role in bringing together the many actors to ensure concrete outcomes in country. The Global Fund can also be instrumental in introducing some performance indicators with partners to measure the success of the supportive interventions (e.g. number of successful proposals that have incorporated gender equality activities, etc).

The Global Fund will work with partners to energize global coordination on gender equality issues related to the three diseases. Partners can then look carefully at mapping

their involvement across regions and across issues and ensure that all gaps are covered and that their work is harmonized.

The in-country partnerships are even more crucial to ensuring action; all partners need to work together to ensure that entities that could greatly contribute towards better programming with a gender perspective and focused on women and girls, are included in the CCM and in country implementation processes. This means actively working to ensure women's groups and networks are properly represented on the CCM (not through token appointments) and also that government gender/social affairs and women's departments are included in planning processes with the health departments and National AIDS Commissions (NAC). Appropriate involvement of the country or regional presences of the Global Fund's global partners, i.e. multi- and bilateral organizations, foundations, the private sector and civil society organizations operating internationally or regionally, in the discussion processes at the proposal development and implementation stages would further add to ensuring that interventions are gender-sensitive and the necessary capacities put in place.

Partners could also play a role in supporting in-country watchdogs, usually from civil society, who can play a role outside of the proposals preparation and implementation process to hold implementers accountable for the commitments they have made and the appropriate allocation of resources.

An important element for the conception and implementation of a gender equality strategy for the Global Fund has been alignment with the gender activities of other partners, especially funding mechanisms. The Global Fund will continue to work closely with these partners to ensure a harmonized approach, especially on monitoring, evaluation and reporting where the biggest burden can be for countries.

For an ambitious partnership agenda such as this to succeed it will need strong collaboration and commitment across the Secretariat involving all key actors: the Gender Champion will take the lead but Fund Portfolio managers and those who work with the stakeholders (the Partnerships Unit, LFA team, Proposals team, Strategy and Policy Cluster) all have key responsibilities. There will also be a need for strong executive level commitment and messaging.

Collaboration on this issue will require strong involvement and direction setting from the Global Fund Board where all stakeholders are represented.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

1. Are there mechanisms other than MOUs and agreements with which to hold partners accountable for their role in supporting programmes that address gender inequalities in Global Fund grants?

5. Advocacy and Communications

The Global Fund wants to take a strong advocacy role in ensuring that issues related to equal and equitable approaches for women and men, girls and boys are taken into account in preparing and implementing interventions related to HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. To this end the Global Fund is committed to clear communications with countries on expectations in this regard. The Global Fund's communication strategy¹⁰ will take this into account and will integrate gender messaging wherever possible into general messaging about the Global Fund.

A key challenge at the country level is the multiple voices that speak authoritatively, but not always accurately, about Global Fund policies. The Global Fund must provide easily accessible tools to these partners to ensure coherence of message and accuracy of information.

The Global Fund will need to coordinate this strategy with partners and reinforce other messages and communications, where appropriate taking the lead from others who have normative authority on the issues. It is unlikely the Global Fund will initiate communication campaigns on particular issues (like SRH or gender-based violence) but rather will take a comprehensive approach to integrating a gender perspective into all communications, positioning it as a key factor in 'who we are'. To this end, the internal guidelines on 'branding'¹¹ will be an important tool in ensuring internal consistency of message on this issue and as reference material for staff who communicate externally.

The communications strategy should take into account the communication needs in-country and should ensure that messages and information flows easily to all stakeholders in implementing countries. This would be an excellent vehicle for messaging on gender equality issues and in reinforcing and communicating the Global Fund's gender equality strategy.

Being gender sensitive should be one of the values communicated by the organization. The emphasis should primarily be on 'knowing your epidemic' and talking openly about all the factors that need to be addressed in controlling it. To this end the Global Fund can have a transformative effect by consistently using a range of images in communications, not only just of women and girls but also including, for example, sex workers, or transgenders or MSM¹². This could be controversial in some contexts and the Global Fund will need to make a conscious decision on the extent to which it wants its communications messaging to always be culturally sensitive to context or whether it wants to communicate its core set of values regardless of cultural context and rather be guided rather by the epidemiology, the evidence base and the recognized priorities in that region or country.

¹⁰ The Global Fund is in the process of developing a revised communications strategy which will integrate gender communication into its approach.

¹¹ Branding refers to the process of identifying and differentiating the Global Fund as a particular entity – it positions the Global Fund within the broader health and development architecture and is an attempt to define and describe 'who we are'.

¹² MSM are Men who have Sex with Men

The Global Fund, because of its significant investment portfolio, can be very influential in sending messages regarding what could be expected to be covered in a proposal. There are many entry points for such messaging:

- Through global messages from leadership (such as the Chair of the Board, the Executive Director)
- In publications, media work and on the website (ensuring a gender perspective is integrated into all public communication)
- Through the choice of spokespeople or celebrities and their messages
- Through use of visual media in communications
- Through communication in-country by Fund Portfolio managers and others
- In communication tools and briefings provided to partners
- On the web, e-Fora and MyGlobalFund.org.

It is therefore important to look for all opportunities to use all communications as potential advocacy vehicles.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

1. Should the Global Fund communicate all messages on gender sensitive programming at all times and play a strong advocacy role or should it adjust its message to different political and social contexts and stick closely to a country led principle?

6. Role and Capacity of the Secretariat

Ensuring that the Global Fund's response to the need for a more gender sensitive approach to funding of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria programs is robust would require two main activities from the Secretariat:

1. The assurance of technical capacity at the Secretariat
2. Living the values: ensuring the culture of the Secretariat is supportive.

Technical capacity

The Global Fund has strengthened its technical capacity by recruiting a Gender Champion at the senior level. This position will be reinforced with an additional post focused on sexual minorities. In addition, a position in the Program Effectiveness Team will look at issues of impact and review data on program effectiveness and results. All three positions will be located in the Strategy, Policy and Performance cluster.

It will also be necessary to reinforce current staffing skills by mandatory gender awareness training throughout the organization, with specialized training for key personnel categories, such as Fund Portfolio Managers, as well as strong emphasis on

this issue within the leadership and management training. This training could be enhanced by a seminar series bringing in women from the frontline to speak and discuss with Global Fund staff. An in-house seminar series could also be held on the gender aspects of each disease.¹³

The Secretariat already has a rich stream of gender competence within the current staff; to ensure the organization benefits from this expertise, a gender section of the Secretariat skills bank should be developed so that staff with specific skills, such as knowledge and experience with SRH or MSM, can be easily accessed to provide specialist input.

Living the values

The Global Fund is in the process of defining the human resources policy framework and detailed policies on all issues in preparation for the organization becoming independent. This provides a very good opportunity to integrate gender sensitivity into all aspects of staff management and culture. Gender sensitivity and awareness should be part of the organization's values and culture and become a key component of 'the way we work here'.

Certain categories of staff should have gender sensitivity criteria and capabilities built into their job descriptions. In addition, the performance management system will need to hold people accountable for performance against gender sensitive objectives, especially in management. In addition to specific gender awareness training mentioned above, all induction and training programs should integrate gender sensitivity into their curricula.

A periodic staff survey on attitudes and competencies on gender issues could help inform a process of active staff engagement on the issue, in identifying gaps in knowledge and behavior and help define training needs. A baseline survey should be initiated as soon as possible so that progress over time can be measured.

Policies on recruitment should ensure that equal opportunities are provided to male and female candidates and interview and recruitment processes should not discriminate against any gender. This means careful vetting of interview questions and styles, gender parity on interview panels wherever possible and clear and concrete position requirements with no hidden criteria (e.g. people with children need not apply). The recruitment process should value the development of a broad range of gender expertise throughout the Secretariat, including knowledge on issues of SRH, gender-based violence, MSM, etc and see this as an advantage in recruitment processes.

The current gender balance of the Secretariat is 58% women to 42% men. In the management categories (P5 and above) the ratio changes to 71% men to 29% women¹⁴.

By ensuring gender balance and diversity, including sexual minorities, in staffing and public representation of the Fund, the values of the organization will be clearly

¹³ This would complement the existing seminar series which has highlighted issues such as the interface of SRH and HIV for example.

¹⁴ As at...date... **THIS NEEDS TO BE UPDATED WITH LATEST STATS**

conveyed. This includes ensuring it at management levels and not just in overall staffing.

Internal staff management policies should equally reflect these values ensuring equal opportunities at all times and ensuring parity in the application policies. Establishing a tolerant working environment that accommodates family-friendly work practices and non-traditional notions of family and partners will be an important part of this. Employment packages must also take into account the likely support systems within the local environment and adjust benefits accordingly to ensure recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. Flexibilities inherent in the better use of technology should be exploited to ensure a productive workforce that takes into account work-life balance.

Living the values relies on the leadership setting the example and this will be an important factor in the implementation of the new policies.

7. Global Fund Governance Structures

All Global Fund governance structures should make it their priority to ensure that sufficient attention is given to gender equality principles in their operations. The Board and its committees should strive for a gender balance in all leadership appointments. Achieving a gender balance in membership is challenging because of the representative nature of the Board, but the Board and its committees should ensure they have access to appropriate gender expertise when necessary. There is an important leadership and advocacy role for the Board, and particularly the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, and the Partnership Forum to play by highlighting gender equality issues in their activities and through living the values in the manner in which they operate. Board decisions, and the emphasis put on issues such as gender equality by the Board can be dramatically catalytic at the country level and should be used strategically. Regular strategic sessions at the Board dedicated to gender equality issues in the portfolio would be important to keep a focus on the issue and track progress. The Board should nominate a committee to maintain regular oversight on the issue.

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