

MOBILIZING FOR RH/HIV INTEGRATION

The Mobilizing for RH/HIV Integration Initiative (the Initiative) assists and supports Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the development and submission of proposals to the Global Fund that include reproductive health (RH) as a critical component of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

Building upon work conducted during Rounds 6 and 7 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a coalition of organizations came together, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to launch the Mobilizing for RH-HIV Integration Initiative (the Initiative) during Round 8 (1 March – 1 July 2008). The current coalition of organizations includes Friends of the Global Fund Africa, the Global AIDS Alliance, Interact Worldwide, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and IPPF Africa Regional Office (IPPF-ARO), and Population Action International (PAI).

During the Round 8 proposal process, the Initiative mobilized for successful proposals that integrated RH and HIV/AIDS, and to coordinate advocacy to expand the range of CSOs meaningfully engaged in Global Fund processes and grant implementation. In order to achieve these broad objectives, three goals were successfully pursued:

- Support in-country organizations in preparing proposals to the Global Fund's HIV/AIDS component that integrated RH and HIV/AIDS services, including RH supplies, and help to build capacity of RH organizations to access the Global Fund and its mechanisms.
- Persuade Global Fund actors and stakeholders at the national and global levels to prioritize RH/HIV integration as a critical component of scaling up access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care, and a cost-effective use of limited resources.
- Conduct global advocacy and support organizations to conduct in-country advocacy for accelerating country demand and Global Fund support for integrated RH/HIV programs and services, including the provision of RH supplies.

Key Successes in Round 8

The Initiative's efforts were highly successful, contributing to important progress. Key highlights include:

- Nine of ten focus countries submitted Round 8 proposals that feature RH/HIV integration to the Global Fund.
- Partners in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ghana, Madagascar, Namibia, and Nigeria were named PRs or SRs.
- Partners in Cameroon were elected as full members of their country's CCM.
- The Global Fund Secretariat took concerted steps toward establishing a robust and comprehensive gender strategy, including RH considerations, which will impact all levels of Global Fund processes.

Project approach and progress

The Initiative focused its efforts on **ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa** in which Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs) and/or civil society organisations had expressed interest in participating in this project and in working toward submission of a proposal that featured RH/HIV integration for Round 8: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. Technical assistance was provided to teams from these countries (which included CCM members, Ministry of Health officials, RH and HIV/AIDS service providers, and activist 'watchdog' organizations) in proposal development, organizational capacity building, and advocacy, and each country was provided a liaison person from among the Initiative's partner organizations to trouble-shoot, provide strategic interventions and link to other support provided by the Initiative before, during and after the proposal development process.

Two streams of **sub-grants** were provided to support local CSOs in the ten focus countries. These were provided to activist, advocacy and/or 'watchdog' organizations to further an enabling environment for RH/HIV integration, and also to support RH service providers to build capacity for implementation, with the ultimate goal of enabling civil society organizations to be Principle Recipients (PRs) or Sub-recipients (SRs) of Global Fund grants. Importantly, under-represented constituencies and people living with HIV/AIDS were strategically engaged and alliances among HIV/AIDS, women's rights, and RH activists were galvanized. Subgrants have been distributed to 26 organizations in the ten focus countries, approximately half each for CCM activation and for implementation support. While subgrant recipients have done a range of different activities, there have been particular successes in the areas of:

- increasing access to Global Fund decision-making processes;
- increasing proposal development skills and advocacy among civil society organizations; and
- increasing participation in/ access to CCMs.

Two regional **Technical Assistance (TA) hubs** were established based within Friends of the Global Fund Africa, Nigeria, and the IPPF Africa Regional Office in Kenya. The TA hubs established databases of national and regional consultants that were able to provide high-quality technical assistance to stakeholders of the ten focus countries, focusing on proposal development, particularly RH/HIV integration. In total, the hubs provided TA to seven of the ten focus countries. These TA hubs were also able to successfully coordinate with other providers of technical assistance, such as OSI; GTZ's BackUp Initiative; the Civil Society Action Team (CSAT); and the UNAIDS Technical Support Facilities (TSFs). There are several examples where these partners collaborated to compliment efforts and fill gaps, which ensured the 10 countries were able to access needed support and mobilized the Initiative's TA expertise in RH/HIV integration for other countries.

The Initiative pursued a robust **Advocacy Strategy** focused on engaging the Global Fund Secretariat and civil society delegations to the Global Fund Board in optimizing the creation and implementation of the Global Fund's forthcoming gender strategy. In addition, global advocates worked with national and regional advocates to address policy bottlenecks at the country level and help further an enabling environment for RH/HIV integration at the country level.

Looking ahead

During the course of the project, the Global Fund Board made an unprecedented decision to launch its next round of funding, Round 9, in the fall of 2008 rather than waiting until the spring of 2009. This shift to two rounds in 2008 is an ideal opportunity for the Initiative to apply lessons learned from Round 8, and facilitate a learning environment in which countries can quickly respond to an opportunity to revise their approach to the Global Fund. In this context, the Initiative will continue to provide support to the focus countries tailored to the rating given to each country's Round 8 proposal by the Technical Review Panel. We will continue to provide support to country teams via ongoing subgrants and the Country Liaison teams. The Technical Assistance hubs will scale up the amount and scope of local and regional technical assistance available to the focus countries. Global advocacy efforts will continue engagement in the civil society delegations to the Global Fund Board on the implementation of the Global Fund's gender strategy. Furthermore, the Initiative will be continuing its engagement in fora aiming to increase the amount and coordination of technical support for Global Fund proposal development and implementation including ongoing dialogue with the UNAIDS TSFs and the "70% success group", which aims to improve the scope, level and coordination of technical support for HIV component proposals to the Global Fund to increase the success rate of HIV proposals to 70%.

While the Initiative has seen the potential for representatives of multilateral and bilateral agencies to ensure transparent proposal development processes at country level, unfortunately, the ten focus countries highlighted some disappointing practices by some multilateral stakeholders, in particular. The Initiative hopes to enhance collaboration with multilateral and bilateral partners during Round 9 to ensure that their representatives are sources of evidence-based information and guidance, as well as fulfilling their role as mediators for meaningful civil society engagement and transparency.

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