



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Gender advocates push women and girls to center of NFM concept notes

Advocates at the national and community level across Global Fund-eligible implementing countries are working closely with gender experts within the Secretariat to ensure that women and girls are at the center of countries' planning and concept note development under the new funding model (NFM). This is in line with a new Gender Equality Strategy implementation plan being promoted with increased vigor by the Secretariat.

The Women4GF group held a virtual debriefing session on 25 March following the 31st Board meeting in Jakarta to assess progress towards a number of strategic commitments made by the Secretariat to the GES that was first adopted in 2008 but never fully implemented.

The importance of integrating gender equality into all Global Fund-supported programs from the outset rather than as an after-market add-on received a high-profile boost during remarks from Board chair Nafsiah Mboi during the 6-7 March meeting.

"I am convinced that the Global Fund will have more impact if transformative gender-informed work is integrated, where men, husbands, fathers, brothers are made core supporters for access to healthcare services by their women and girls," she said.

The GES seeks to:

- ensure that the Global Fund's policies, procedures and structures effectively support programs that address gender inequalities
- establish and strengthen partnerships for effective support of development and implementation of

- programs addressing gender inequalities and reducing women's and girls' vulnerabilities
- disseminate a robust communications and advocacy strategy to promote the GES
- provide leadership to support and advance the GES

Among the commitments made by the Secretariat's executive director, Mark Dybul, to fulfilling these objectives are the adoption of sex disaggregated grant data, better highlighting of gender-responsive programs during discussions by the Grants Approval Committee and improved training of country teams within the Secretariat on gender equality, with support from regional gender focal points and the Community, Rights and Gender Department (CRGD) where needed.

Whether gender-responsiveness can be integrated into a performance measurement framework for country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs) remains under review.

"We must work with each other as donors, technical agencies, experts and country-level partners to ensure that engagement during country dialogue processes proves valuable to the gender agenda or ensure that discourse on the gender responsiveness of National Strategic Plans (NSPs) is informed and well intentioned" said Kate Thomson, who leads the CRGD.

"NSPs will govern what can (or can't) get into country requests for money from the Global Fund, and stronger more focused arguments backed by evidence-informed gender analyses will make an impact into what makes it into country dialogues."

Members of the Women4GF movement are working to be more involved in country processes. Already, HIV-positive women who were previously excluded from discussions with CCM members in Malawi have been approved to join the CCM. Gender equality advocates are also taking prominent positions in Board delegations, including the civil society and communities teams.

Other progress by the Global Fund includes ensuring that meaningful engagement of women in country dialogue is required for any country to apply for funding. UN agencies and other bilateral partners are providing technical assistance on how to better integrate gender components into grants.

The Women4GF platform is now trying to turn strategic ambitions into action, by encouraging the inclusion of a gender component into the mandatory assessment of NSPs that is required under the NFM.

[Read More](#)
