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ANALYSIS OF ROUND 8 PROPOSALS FINDS FEW WITH STRONG GENDER COMPONENTS

Only 2.6 percent of the 76 Round 8 HIV/AIDS proposals submitted for funding were gender transformative with respect to issues facing women and girls. Another 17.1 percent were gender sensitive, while 80.3 percent were gender neutral. These are among the findings of a report prepared by the Global Fund Secretariat, entitled “Gender Analysis of Round 8 HIV/AIDS Proposals.”

The Secretariat defined “gender transformative” as “Goals and objectives attempt to re-define women’s and men’s gender roles and relations.” It defined “gender sensitive” as “Goals and objectives attempt to redress existing gender inequalities”; and “gender neutral” as “Goals and objectives do not reinforce existing gender inequalities.”

The report also examined gender sensitivity with respect to men who have sex with men (MSM) and other sexual minorities. In this regard, none of the proposals were classified as gender transformative; 10.5 percent were classified as gender sensitive and 89.5 percent as gender neutral.

In its analysis, the Secretariat examined proposed interventions under nine broad categories: behaviour change communication (BCC), prevention services, supportive environment, treatment, health systems strengthening (HSS), care, female condom distribution, harm reduction, and social change communication. Just under half of the proposals had at least one intervention category that was deemed to be gender responsive (i.e., either gender transformative or gender sensitive) – an improvement over previous rounds of funding. Gender responsive interventions were most often found in three intervention categories: harm reduction, supportive environment and prevention services.

A proposal from Somalia was the only gender transformative proposal recommended

for funding. It was written from the perspective that gender inequality is a fundamental underlying factor fuelling the HIV epidemic. The proposal documented the constellation of factors that place women and girls at increased risk of HIV infection, including socio-economic and cultural vulnerability, sexual and gender-based violence and a failure to define and enforce the rights of women and children.

The report said that two proposals classified as gender sensitive, from Iran and Mozambique, “did an outstanding job documenting the range and interaction of factors that contribute to the inequality of women and girls and the mechanisms of their increased HIV/AIDS risk. However, the proposals as written were unable to translate a comprehensive understanding of the depth of gender issues into an approach that could be deemed gender transformative.”

Iran’s proposal focused on comprehensive harm reduction initiatives that included sexual health for women who inject drugs, while the proposal from Mozambique took a more global approach, aiming to change public opinion about factors that place women at risk, including gender-based violence, inheritance rights and income generating opportunities.

According to the report, 28 percent of the proposals stated that data disaggregated by sex would be collected.

Of the four proposals classified as gender sensitive with respect to MSM and sexual minorities, those from Belarus and Thailand highlighted the increasing HIV prevalence documented among MSM and the underlying social and gender inequalities faced by MSM in their access to prevention, treatment and care, as well as the high levels of stigma faced by this population. The application from Belarus proposed using the Internet to recruit and educate MSM. The proposal from Thailand recognised MSM as the fastest growing population of HIV-infected individuals and proposed interventions to target gender-based violence.

The Secretariat noted that discussion of gender issues was often confined to one section of the Round 8 proposal form (Section 4.5.4: Enhancing gender and social inequalities) and that the gender analysis in that section did not carry over to the rest of the proposal. Some applicants used the section to document the problems faced by women and girls without proposing any type of interventions, while others denied the existence of gender inequalities in their country or regional context.

The report concluded:

“Although many of the applicants are not yet successful in terms of linking intervention categories to gender issues or in recognizing gender responsive potential, the larger range of proposed intervention categories nevertheless represents an important step forward in terms of HIV programming. In particular, a notable expansion of the number of proposals that included structural/supportive environment interventions to address underlying societal contributions to the HIV epidemic was observed. Future technical assistance should be provided to assist applicants to make tangible and feasible linkages between structural interventions and measurable gender responsive indicators with the goal of increasing social and gender equity.”

The report, “Gender Analysis of Round 8 HIV/AIDS Proposals,” is available in English at www.theglobalfund.org/documents/rounds/9/CP_Analysis_R8_Gender%20Responsiveness_en.pdf.

Copies of individual proposals for all rounds of funding are available by going to the Global Fund home page at www.theglobalfund.org and selecting a country from the drop-down list under “Grant Portfolio.”

Aidspan has recently released a report on “Key Strengths of Rounds 8 and 9 Proposals to the Global Fund.” It provides several examples of Round 9 proposals with a strong gender component. The report is available at www.aidspan.org/aidspanpublications.

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