



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Latin CSO PRs Call for More Funding for Key Affected Populations

Some civil society principal recipients (PRs) have expressed concern about the lack of funding for community-based organisations (CBOs) representing key affected populations (KAPs) such as men who have sex with men, sex workers and transgender people.

In May 2013, 12 civil society PRs from Central and South America and Dominican Republic gathered in a workshop in Mexico City to exchange good practices on specific issues related to the implementation of Global Fund grants. One of the goals of the workshop was to strengthen the dialogue between civil society PRs and the Global Fund.

The workshop was organised by Hivos, an international development organisation, with the support of the Global Fund, UNAIDS, the Health Secretariat of Mexico and FUNSALUD, a health foundation. The workshop was inspired by a similar one that had taken place earlier in Bolivia involving PRs supported by Hivos in Central America and the Andean Region of South America.

According to information presented at the workshop, although KAPs are disproportionately affected by HIV, in 2010 and 2011 only 4% of the donor funding for HIV in the region went to programmes targeting these populations. Workshop participants pointed out that CBOs serving these populations have considerable expertise in designing and implementing prevention, care and outreach programmes.

Workshop participants stressed the importance of strengthening the role of civil society to ensure the sustainability of the response to HIV. For them, this means three things: (1) civil society must continue to have a strong advocacy voice; (2) the technical and management capacities of civil society organisations (CSOs) need to be strengthened; and (3) more CSOs need to get involved. Participants said that investing in CSOs is good value for money because CSOs have a communications and advocacy role that goes beyond their responsibilities as implementers of grants.

Participants said that programmes will succeed and be sustainable only if they include a strong human rights component and a gender perspective.

According to the participants, it is a mistake to see civil society PRs as merely administrators. They play a particular role in the response to HIV, participants said, have a strong relationship with other CSOs and community based organisations, maintain a constant focus on advocacy and the defence of human rights of KAPs, and possess a deep knowledge of what the political context of the country is.

The issues raised by the workshop participants were recorded in a document entitled “Consensus on Commitments and Recommendations”, which was prepared in Spanish shortly after the meeting (see [here](#)), sent to the Global Fund Secretariat and posted on listservs in the region. An English version of the consensus document was recently made available.

In a written response to the issues raised in the consensus document, the Global Fund Secretariat said that human rights should be mainstreamed, in the sense that all national disease programmes should include activities designed to protect and promote the human rights of KAPs.

The workshop included a discussion of the new funding model (NFM). Participants said that the role of technical partners in the country dialogue and in the preparation of the concept note should be clarified. The participants also said that PRs should be involved in the early stages of the concept note preparation, and that it should be mandatory for proposals to include a community systems strengthening (CSS) component.

The workshop also included a discussion of the role of local fund agents (LFAs). Participants said that LFAs in their region have generated different interpretations about the risk that a civil society PR should assume and have exercised what they called “excessive control.” Participants said that they find the role of LFAs to be confusing, and that LFAs are sometimes presented as auditor, sometimes as evaluator and sometimes as a “controlling office” of the Global Fund.

The Global Fund Secretariat responded that the role of the LFA is evolving, and that the Global Fund is currently adopting a more flexible policy with regard to LFA reviews of progress reports from the PR (in countries where there is not excessive risk).

Hivos is preparing a final report on the workshop, and also plans to publish a summary of good practices presented at the workshop.

Encouraged by the success of the workshop, Hivos said that it is planning to organise a similar workshop in Asia.

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