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NEW FUND TO BE LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN GLOBAL FUND AND NATIONAL PROCESSES

The Global Fund will invest \$500,000 over the next year to bolster meaningful engagement of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) groups and networks in Global Fund–related processes and in national processes in 13 focus countries. The funding will be made available to countries via a new venture, the HER Voice Fund, which is set to be launched later this month. The HER Voice Fund will be administered by SHRH Africa Trust (SAT) and Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS Service Organizations (EANNASO).

The 13 focus countries are in Southern and Eastern Africa where HIV infection is disproportionately higher among AGYW as compared to males of the same age group. The countries are: Botswana, Cameroon, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. These countries have both higher HIV incidence rates and a higher number of new HIV infections among 15-24-year-old females as compared to their male peers.

The HER Voice Fund will provide small grants to applicants to address some of the day-to-day administrative and logistical barriers that impede meaningful participation of AGYW in Global Fund–related processes (including program design, proposal development, grant-making and monitoring of programs), and also their participation in national processes such as policy-making forums and the development of national strategic plans.

The fund will have three funding streams:

- Policy – i.e. Projects that aim to influence frameworks, strategies, policies and guidelines related to

the health and well-being of AGYW.

- Program – i.e. Projects that aim to support the participation of AGYW in the funding request development process to ensure that the requests have an appropriate focus on interventions that respond to the needs of AGYW.
- Performance – i.e. Projects that aim to monitor the implementation of Global Fund grants to ensure that resources allocated to AGYW interventions are used effectively.

The HER Voice Fund is part of the Community Rights and Gender (CRG) Strategic Initiative 2017-2019 (see [GFO article](#)). The initiative aims to strengthen the meaningful engagement of community and civil society groups in Global Fund–related processes. The initiative has a stronger focus on AGYW issues, in line with the Global Fund Strategy 2017-2022, as compared to its predecessor, the similarly named CRG Special Initiative 2014-2016.

The HER Voice Fund is supported under the capacity-building stream of the CRG Strategic Initiative. Rukia Mannikko, Gender Technical Advisor at the Secretariat, told Aidspace that the HER Voice Fund will complement and closely link with the other CRG Strategic Initiative streams, such as short- and long-term technical assistance as well as the regional coordination and communication platforms.

According to Ms Mannikko, the HER Voice Fund will provide support to community-based and grassroots groups, networks and organizations of AGYW working on any of the three diseases, on sexual and reproductive health and on broader adolescent health.

Currently, the Global Fund, SAT and EANNASO are holding consultations with partners and stakeholders to help finalize the methodology of the HER Voice Fund. SAT and EANNASO have initiated a mapping exercise of existing AGYW organizations and community groups in the 13 countries. Through this mapping exercise, SAT and EANNASO will develop a database of networks and organizations, and also understand what activities these entities are engaged in.

The work of setting up the HER Voice Fund is still ongoing. The process began with consultations between the Global Fund and women’s organizations in November 2016. In April 2017, the Global Fund launched a call for proposals for organizations interested in managing the fund – a call which concluded with the selection of SAT and EANNASO in September, mainly because of their complementary work, presence in the focus countries, and strong links to community groups.

Applications will be through a call for proposals in the 13 countries. Applicants will be expected to submit a short 1-2-page narrative indicating the funding stream they are applying under; proposed activities; and a summary budget. Applicants will have the opportunity to apply for small grants in more than one funding stream, multiple times. Further details will be forthcoming.

The HER Voice Fund is slated to run for a period of 12 months. However, Ms Mannikko explained that the Global Fund is hoping to raise additional funds to extend the project beyond the 12 months.

The information for this article comes from presentations in a webinar organized by the Women 4 Global Fund and its partners, held on 13 October 2017; information on the Global Fund website; and discussions with the Secretariat.

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