



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Global Fund Can Reduce Human Rights Abuses Linked to HIV Testing, Report Says

Given current pressures to scale up HIV testing, and the likelihood that more and more proposals to the Global Fund will include mass HIV testing campaigns, the Global Fund has an opportunity to contribute significantly to the reduction of human rights abuses linked to HIV testing.

This is one of the observations in a report on human rights and the Global Fund recently released by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and the Open Society Foundations (OSF).

Over the years, Global Fund grants have financed HIV testing services on a large scale in many countries. These countries have widely varying policies on HIV testing, many of which are not respectful of human rights. The report said that although there are agreed international standards for human rights protections in HIV testing, it is not evident from Global Fund proposals and grant agreements that CCMs are informed of human rights protections in HIV testing, that CCMs are proposing such protections, or that human rights protections are a central element of programme evaluations or proposal reviews by the Technical Review Panel (TRP).

Currently, there is considerable interest in global HIV circles about using universal testing and treating programmes as a way of dramatically reducing HIV transmission. The authors of the report said that interest in this approach is contributing to pressure to expand HIV testing dramatically, not only through health facilities but also through community-based campaigns, door-to-door programmes, mobile units, and so on.

The Legal Network and the OSF recommended that the Global Fund Secretariat produce an information note summarising the key human rights elements of existing international guidelines on HIV testing, and

reiterating the importance of human rights protections for sustainable scale-up of HIV testing and counselling and effective linking of testing to treatment.

The authors also recommended that the TRP be briefed on the importance of human rights protections, and that the TRP be provided with the tools to evaluate HIV testing proposals according to human rights standards. In addition, the report said, the Global Fund should consider requiring applicants seeking support for HIV testing to include information on consent procedures and confidentiality protections – as well as on how counselling will be done, how information will be disseminated, and how the various elements of the programme will be monitored.

“Human rights and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria” is available on the OSF website [here](#). GFO previously wrote about this report in GFO 144 ([here](#) and [here](#)) and GFO 145 ([here](#)).

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