



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

INTEGRATING A GENDER FOCUS INTO ROUND 8 PROPOSALS

At a meeting in New York in late January, a group of gender experts and other Global Fund stakeholders discussed how best to implement the Fund's November 2007 board decision that gender issues, particularly regarding the vulnerabilities of women and girls and sexual minorities, must be more substantially integrated into the Fund's policies and operations.

The meeting, hosted by the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Institute, also discussed what gender-related changes should be made to the Round 8 application form and guidelines which will be released on March 1.

Meeting participants discussed whether the Fund should "require" applicants to incorporate a gender focus in their proposals, or merely "encourage" it. Although some countries may be weary of the Fund making "requirements" regarding how they should handle proposals, there was a general consensus that without explicit direction from the Fund, not much progress is likely to be made on this front. In any case, most countries have already signed up to strongly worded declarations to improve the lives of women. The participants felt that these countries should be held accountable to their declarations.

On the other hand, it was recognized that the Fund is just a financing mechanism, and cannot dictate national policy to implementing countries. The Fund's greatest chance of having impact in the gender arena will come if it can catalyze a genuine desire for gender-responsive programming within implementing countries.

Representatives of the Fund attending the New York meeting said that:

- The Fund will develop a strong communication strategy regarding its evolving gender strategy, aimed especially at grassroots stakeholders such as women's groups that face challenges in

becoming Global Fund sub-recipients.

- Round 8 applicants may be required to include targets and indicators that are disaggregated by sex and age.
- Round 8 applicants may be asked to incorporate interventions for women and girls, or to explain why this has not been done.
- CCMs may be encouraged to show how they will develop their gender expertise, based either on integrating such initiatives into their proposals or by working closely with technical partners.
- CCMs may be encouraged to show how they will develop their gender expertise, based on integrating such initiatives into their proposals, on working closely with technical partners, or on increasing the representation of women's groups and/or gender experts in the CCM.
- Applicants may be provided with a gender fact sheet that offers some clear examples of "gender-sensitive" programmatic activities.
- Later this year, the M&E Toolkit will be modified to reflect changes related to the evolving gender strategy.
- The Fund has a lot of grant-related data that has yet to be fully organized and analyzed. The likely requirement to include gender-disaggregated data in future proposals and grant reporting will only make this work harder. Therefore, the Fund may, later this year, consider developing a universal reporting template that will align reporting systems used through the entire proposal/grant lifecycle.
- Various measures will be implemented to strengthen the gender expertise of the Global Fund Secretariat, the Technical Review Panel (TRP) and, possibly, the Board.

[Note: This article is based on input from Angela Kageni (kageni@aidspan.org). Angela, based in Nairobi, is Programme Coordinator of Aidspan, publisher of GFO. She participated in the meeting in New York, and is the author of "Do Global Fund Grants Work for Women? An Aidspan Assessment of the Gender Responsiveness of Global Fund-Financed Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa," due out in April.]

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