# The Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative

Update | June 2021

The Global Fund

## Ensuring Meaningful Engagement in the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM)

Leveraging the CRG SI infrastructure and partnerships, C19RM Centrally Managed Funds were provided to Strategic Initiative partners in April 2021. Partners moved quickly to develop informational resources on C19RM in multiple languages, including a toolkit for consulting communities and setting priorities for C19RM funding requests.

After the first round of C19RM funding requests in 2020, a Global Fund survey revealed that 24% of civil society CCM members did not have timely and relevant information on C19RM, 32% did not see the final version of the funding request, and 51% said their priorities were not included in the grants.

For the second round of C19RM, the Global Fund intensified support for civil society and community engagement. In May and June 2021, fast-track short-term technical assistance (TA) is available for up to 60 countries. This TA supports civil society and communities to conduct rapid needs assessments or convene community consultations to inform the C19RM requests. The Strategic Initiative is also leveraged to provide dedicated TA to support women and girls in their diversity to engage in C19RM.

Additionally, key and vulnerable population networks and CRG Regional Platforms are providing strategic support at the country level to ensure communities identify and articulate their priorities for C19RM funding as well as advocate for their inclusion in requests. By early May 2021, CRG SI partners identified civil society and community groups in 70 countries to receive direct C19RM engagement support.

## Improved Coordination with Other Initiatives

The CRG SI Coordination Mechanism ensures that its efforts create additionality and compliment the investments of the Global Fund's other Strategic Initiatives and those of the Global Fund's technical partners.

Members of the CRG SI Coordination Mechanism include:
- The Community, Rights and Gender Department
- Grant Management Division
- Technical Advice and Partnership (TAP) Department
- The Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) Hub
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), BACKUP Health
- Expertise France L'Initiative
- The World Health Organization
- The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Stop TB Partnership
- Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership
- The Community-led Monitoring Strategic Initiative (CLM SI)
- The Human Rights Strategic Initiative
- The Sustainability, Transition and Efficiency Strategic Initiative (STE SI)

Starting in January 2021, the CRG SI Coordination Mechanism began integrated tracking of all Global Fund-related technical assistance that members provide to civil society organizations and community groups. The tracking is updated on a monthly basis. The aim is to streamline demand and reduce duplication of efforts. To date, the dashboard contains information on more than 150 assignments delivered through 30 technical assistance providers.

## What's New for the 2020-2022 Cycle

In November 2019, the Global Fund Board approved $16 million for the CRG Strategic Initiative, to be implemented from January 2021 to December 2023. Now in its eighth year, the CRG Strategic Initiative continues to evolve and grow. The updated monitoring, evaluation and learning framework maintains the three components and refines seven corresponding sub-objectives. In the 2020-2022 cycle, the CRG Strategic Initiative has a greater focus on country-level outcomes.


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### Operational and Strategic Model of the Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative 2020-2022

**Sub-objective 3.1:** To enhance community knowledge of the Global Fund and its processes, through the regular bi-directional sharing of tailored and targeted information to a diverse audience

**Sub-objective 3.2:** To strengthen the capacity and coordination of communities to engage in national and regional Global Fund grants and related processes
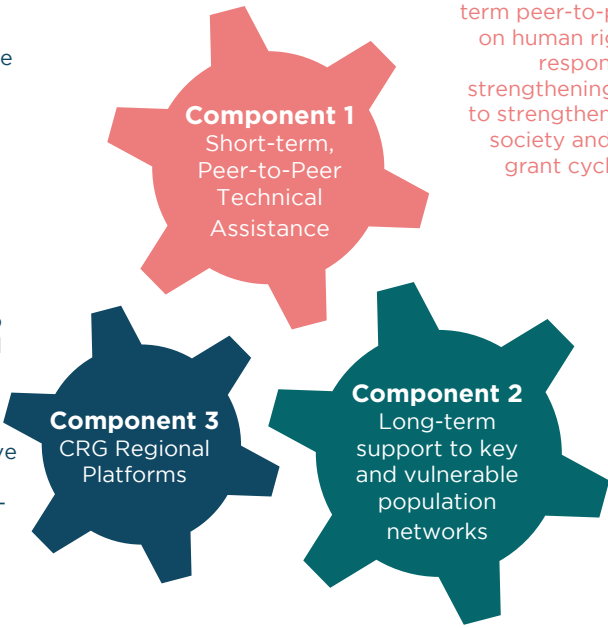
**Sub-objective 3.3:** To improve community access to technical assistance through information-sharing, linkage to appropriate providers, support developing requests, and strengthening TA provider capacity and coordination

**Sub-objective 2.3:** To empower populations most vulnerable to and affected by HIV/TB/malaria, to generate and use data to monitor program coverage and quality and national commitments to end the three epidemics and to utilize the evidence generated for advocacy and programmatic action
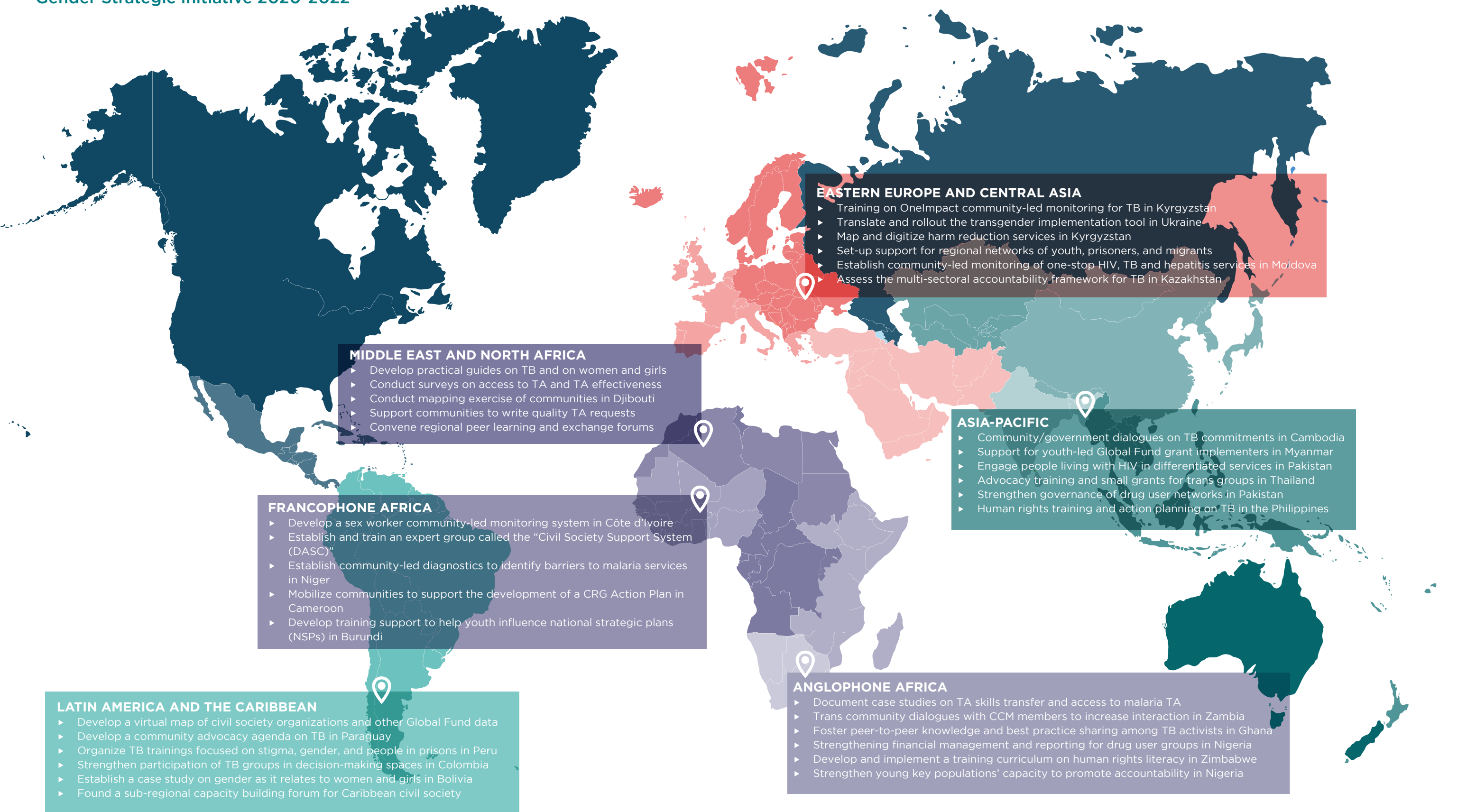
**Component 1**
Short-term, Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance

**Component 3**
CRG Regional Platforms

**Component 2**
Long-term support to key and vulnerable population networks

**Sub-objective 1.1:** To provide short-term peer-to-peer technical assistance on human rights, gender, community responses, community systems strengthening and other related areas to strengthen the engagement of civil society and communities across the grant cycle and priorities in Global Fund-related processes

**Sub-objective 2.1:** Amplify the participation and voice of key and vulnerable population communities in policy and decision-making forums and in governance and stewardship of the response to the three diseases

**Sub-objective 2.2:** To strengthen the influence of populations most vulnerable to and affected by HIV/TB/malaria on the design and implementation of national strategies and costed plans, so that they adequately reflect and respond to the realities and needs associated with human rights, gender, community responses and the strengthening of community systems.

# Upcoming Activities for the Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative 2020-2022

**EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**
- ▸ Training on OneImpact community-led monitoring for TB in Kyrgyzstan
- ▸ Translate and rollout the transgender implementation tool in Ukraine
- ▸ Map and digitize harm reduction services in Kyrgyzstan
- ▸ Set-up support for regional networks of youth, prisoners, and migrants
- ▸ Establish community-led monitoring of one-stop HIV, TB and hepatitis services in Moldova
- ▸ Assess the multi-sectoral accountability framework for TB in Kazakhstan

**MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**
- ▸ Develop practical guides on TB and on women and girls
- ▸ Conduct surveys on access to TA and TA effectiveness
- ▸ Conduct mapping exercise of communities in Djibouti
- ▸ Support communities to write quality TA requests
- ▸ Convene regional peer learning and exchange forums

**ASIA-PACIFIC**
- ▸ Community/government dialogues on TB commitments in Cambodia
- ▸ Support for youth-led Global Fund grant implementers in Myanmar
- ▸ Engage people living with HIV in differentiated services in Pakistan
- ▸ Advocacy training and small grants for trans groups in Thailand
- ▸ Strengthen governance of drug user networks in Pakistan
- ▸ Human rights training and action planning on TB in the Philippines

**FRANCOPHONE AFRICA**
- ▸ Develop a sex worker community-led monitoring system in Côte d'Ivoire
- ▸ Establish and train an expert group called the "Civil Society Support System (DASC)"
- ▸ Establish community-led diagnostics to identify barriers to malaria services in Niger
- ▸ Mobilize communities to support the development of a CRG Action Plan in Cameroon
- ▸ Develop training support to help youth influence national strategic plans (NSPs) in Burundi

**ANGLOPHONE AFRICA**
- ▸ Document case studies on TA skills transfer and access to malaria TA
- ▸ Trans community dialogues with CCM members to increase interaction in Zambia
- ▸ Foster peer-to-peer knowledge and best practice sharing among TB activists in Ghana
- ▸ Strengthening financial management and reporting for drug user groups in Nigeria
- ▸ Develop and implement a training curriculum on human rights literacy in Zimbabwe
- ▸ Strengthen young key populations' capacity to promote accountability in Nigeria

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**
- ▸ Develop a virtual map of civil society organizations and other Global Fund data
- ▸ Develop a community advocacy agenda on TB in Paraguay
- ▸ Organize TB trainings focused on stigma, gender, and people in prisons in Peru
- ▸ Strengthen participation of TB groups in decision-making spaces in Colombia
- ▸ Establish a case study on gender as it relates to women and girls in Bolivia
- ▸ Found a sub-regional capacity building forum for Caribbean civil society

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## Partners of the Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative 2020-2022

The CRG Strategic Initiative is working with several new partners this cycle and continuing its relationship with many existing ones.

Half of the 26 prequalified technical assistance providers are new to the CRG Strategic Initiative, offering additional expertise to the work in harm reduction and in West and Central Africa.

The CRG Strategic Initiative is expanding its support for long-term capacity development of TB activists, with significant additional investments in regional TB networks and organizations. Building on the success of HER Voice Fund, a new private sector fund has been established — Voix EssentiELLES — to support the engagement of women and girls in their diversity in West and Central Africa.

The Strategic Initiative continues to work with the same hosts of the six CRG Regional Platforms, building on successes to date.

### 26 Technical Assistance Providers

▶ AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)*
▶ AIDS Strategy Advocacy and Policy (ASAP)*
▶ Alliance Consultancy*
▶ APCOM Foundation*
▶ Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV (APN+)
▶ Center for Health Policies and Studies
▶ Coact
▶ Coalition PLUS
▶ Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM)*
▶ Frontline AIDS*
▶ HIV, Accelerated, Real-time, Versatile, Equitable, Safe response, and TB response – Technical Advisory (HARVEST-TA) consortium[1]
▶ HIV Legal Network*
▶ Hivos*
▶ Harm Reduction International
▶ International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA)
▶ Initiatives Conseil International- Santé (ICI-Santé)[2]
▶ International Council of Aids Service Organizations (ICASO)*
▶ Kenya NGO Alliance Against Malaria (KeNAAM)*
▶ Moldova Institute for Human Rights (IDOM)*
▶ Mainline Foundation
▶ Community-led Assistance for Peer Engagement (CAPE)*[3]
▶ PATA, Y+ Global and UNYPA[4]
▶ PATH*
▶ Partners in Health
▶ Resource Group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH)
▶ Stichting TB Europe Coalition

*TA provider during the CRG SI 2017-2019*

1 The HARVEST-TA consortium is led by SAfAIDS in collaboration with the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), the African Youth and Adolescent Network (AfriYAN) and Halcyon Consulting

2 ICI- Santé in collaboration with the Civil Society Institute for HIV & Health in West & Central Africa (CSIH-WCA).

3 The CAPE coalition is led by MPact Global in collaboration with African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHeR), the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN), Affirmative Action inCameroon, Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), Alliance Global in Ukraine, Lighthouse Social Enterprise in Viet Nam, and the Sexual Rights Centre (SRC) in Zimbabwe.

4 Collaboration between Paediatric-Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA), Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) and Uganda Network of Young People Living With HIV/AIDS (UNYPA).

### 13 Key and Vulnerable Population Networks, Organizations and Funds

**6 Networks of HIV Key Populations:**
▶ The Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)
▶ Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)
▶ Global Action for Trans* Equality (GATE)
▶ Mpact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights
▶ International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD)
▶ Youth LEAD Asia Pacific Network of Young Key Populations (Youth Consortium)

**4 Networks of TB Activists:**
▶ Asia-Pacific Coalition of TB Activists (ACT! AP)
▶ African Coalition on TB (ACT Africa)
▶ The TB Europe Coalition (TBEC)
▶ Socios en Salud (SES)

**1 Malaria CSO Network:**
▶ Civil Society for Malaria Elimination (CS4ME)

**1 Engagement Fund for adolescent girls and young women, with a focus on East and Southern Africa**
▶ HER Voice Fund (implemented by Y+ Global and supported by ViiV Healthcare Positive Action in partnership with the Global Fund)

**1 Engagement Fund for women and girls in their diversity, with a focus on West and Central Africa**
▶ Voix EssentiELLES (implementer to be selected and supported by Fondation Chanel in partnership with the Global Fund)

### 6 CRG Regional Platforms

**Anglophone Africa** ▶ hosted by the Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS and Health Organizations (EANNASO)

**Asia-Pacific** ▶ hosted by APCASO Foundation

**Eastern Europe and Central Asia** ▶ hosted by the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)

**Francophone Africa** ▶ hosted by Réseau Accès aux Médicaments Essentiels (RAME)

**Latin America and the Caribbean** ▶ hosted by Via Libre
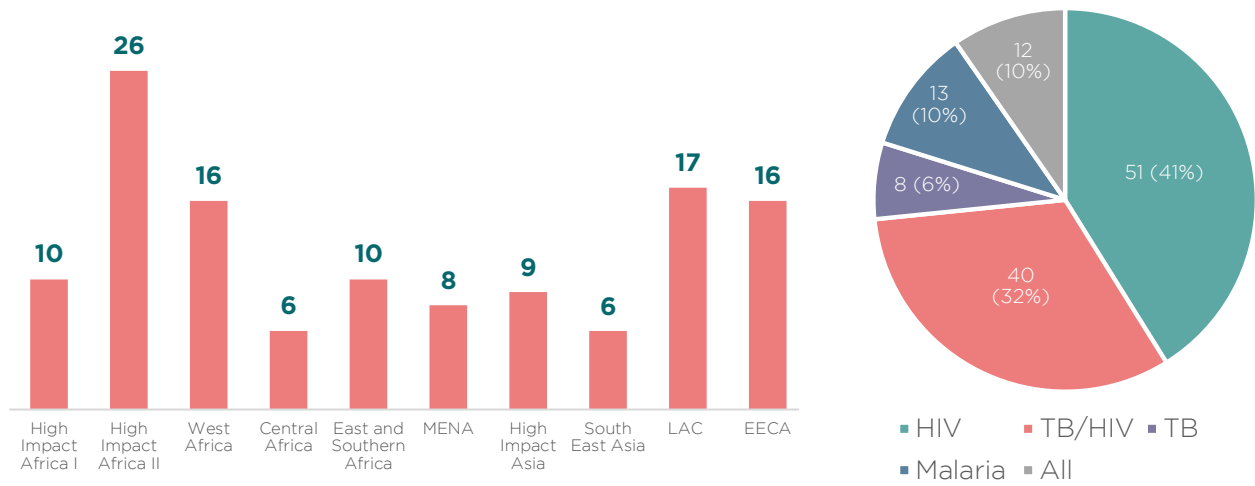
**Middle East and North Africa** ▶ hosted by the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC-MENA)

## Community Engagement Support in the 2017-2019 Cycle Yields Results

December 2020 marked the end of the second implementation period for the Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative (CRG SI). The CRG SI achieved significant equity gains across disease components and geographies. Compared to the previous funding cycle, the number of eligible technical assistance (TA) requests increased by 185% (from 65 to 185), and the number of countries that received TA increased by 192% (from 24 to 70). The Strategic Initiative made new investments in the long-term capacity strengthening of TB communities, civil society organizations working on malaria elimination, and a small grants fund to support the engagement of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW).

### Key Achievements of the CRG SI 2017-2019:

**$15 million invested** in meaningful community engagement in Global Fund-related processes.[5]

**38 months of sustained support** for civil society organizations and community groups' engagement.

**6 Regional Platforms** provided communication and coordination support to 32,500 contacts.

**185 eligible technical assistance requests** received, more than 60% via the Regional Platforms.

**Technical assistance** delivered in **70 countries,** including 18 challenging operating environments

**Networks of key and vulnerable populations** implemented long-term capacity strengthening. activities in 66 countries for HIV, 19 countries for TB, and 8 countries for malaria.

**HER Voice Fund** awarded **183 grants** to support engagement of AGYW in 13 African countries.

**Malaria Equity Assessment Tool** (Malaria Matchbox) developed and implemented.[6]

[5] Excludes $2.2 million bridge funding approved for 2020

[6] The Matchbox tool was handed over to RBM Partnership to lead going forward

## Community, Rights and Gender Technical Assistance Provision, March 2017 - December 2020
### Number of Assignments Delivered, by region and by disease Component



## Change Stories – Evidence of Improved Community Engagement in Global Fund-related Processes

### Short-term technical assistance helped women living with HIV in Zimbabwe influence the funding request for improved viral load monitoring

In 2019, the CRG Strategic Initiative provided technical assistance to a network of women living with HIV in Zimbabwe, to assess the quality of HIV services received by their community. The CRG Regional Platform for Anglophone Africa helped the network to conceptualize and draft the request. The assignment enabled the network to better understand barriers to access faced by women living with HIV. Women interviewed in the study said their viral load results take 4-6 months to be returned, if at all. The study found that the main impediments to effective viral load monitoring are knowledge gaps among service providers and clients, sub-optimal functionality of viral load testing machines, and weak transportation systems. Women living with HIV used the study results to influence the treatment, care and support priorities in Zimbabwe's March 2020 Global Fund funding request, which constituted $293 million (or 62% of the entire request). The study was presented by women living with HIV at the national country dialogue meeting in January 2020, and ultimately referenced in the funding request itself. Based on the study's findings, the funding request prioritized leveraging existing community structures such as community ART refill groups and community adolescent treatment supporters to create demand for viral load testing. It also included funding for health worker training on viral load and external quality assurance of viral load testing machines.

### Long-term capacity strengthening secured effective representation on Country Coordinating Mechanisms for sex workers and people who use drugs

Capacity-building programs supported by the CRG Strategic Initiative enabled sex worker-led organizations to make remarkable progress in engaging and contributing to Global Fund national processes. In Asia-Pacific, sex worker leaders were elected as CCM representatives in Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam. In Papua New Guinea, 2019 marked the first time a sex worker was elected to serve on the CCM. In Nepal, the sex worker representative has a regularly allocated time on CCM meeting agendas to voice sex workers' issues and priorities, whereas previously sex workers did not have a voice in CCM meetings. A key success factor in securing sex worker representation on CCMs was the consistent, reliable, and informed technical support provided by global and regional sex worker-led networks and regional community experts.

In India, for the first time in 2020, the community of people who use drugs became a member of the Key Affected Populations Committee which is a formal part of the Indian CCM. Through this alliance, sex workers, the transgender community, and people living with HIV came together with the community of people who use drugs to submit a proposal to the CCM and subsequently secure funding for the Global Fund CR19RM grant. The process of coming together and forming consensus around priority needs and issues also enabled a better understanding of Global Fund processes.

For more information, check out the full case studies:
"Making the Global Fund Work for Sex Workers"
"From Invisibility to Influence: The evolution of participation of people who use drugs in the Global Fund"

## Improved coordination in sustainability processes ensured the inclusion of costed community priorities in Tajikistan's Transition Plan

In November 2019, the CRG Regional Platform for Eastern Europe and Central Asia supported the coordination of civil society, communities, government, and technical partners in the process to develop Tajikistan's Transition Plan from Global Fund support. The platform convened a transition planning workshop, including the CCM Secretariat, UNDP, UNAIDS, the Principal Recipient of the Global Fund grant, Curatio Foundation, and 21 civil society and community representatives including 8 CCM members. The workshop was approved at the level of the President's Administration.

Civil society and community representatives were informed about which national transition-related processes were completed, which were on-going, and what they had planned for the future. They had an opportunity to review the content of the draft Transition Plan and provide their feedback, comments, and suggestions, paying particular attention to priority issues for key populations. As a result of the CRG Regional Platform's support, a community representative was appointed to join the writing team for the Transition Plan. Next, the expert responsible for the development of the Transition Plan included all the suggested and relevant activities into the draft Plan before submitting its final version to the CCM's Working Group for review and approval.

Following the workshop, The CRG Regional Platform provided ongoing support to communities in Tajikistan to help them access technical assistance for continued engagement in transition planning. In 2020, workshop participants received technical support from the CRG Strategic Initiative to define minimum, basic and optimal packages of HIV care for people living with HIV, and to budget for the community activities that were included in the country's Transition Plan.

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"The Youth Constituency was well organized throughout the process; we effectively agreed on core priorities and positioned the best choice of members to represent us in the writing process."

**– CCM Youth Representative, Uganda**

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"I don't know how we would do our work without the CRG Regional Platforms."

**– Communications Focal Point for the Developing Country NGO Delegation to the Global Fund Board**

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"In Tanzania, key populations influenced the Principal Recipient to add an indicator on safety and security and to establish a crisis response system."

**– CRG Strategic Initiative Partner**

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"Technical assistance made a huge difference to our country dialogue in Moldova. The support from CRG SI enabled us to make valuable improvements to our funding request."

**– Key Affected Populations Platform, Moldova**

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"Many of the good practices identified at community level were enabled by specific investments in local level community engagement and consultation, and joint capacity building of community and health sector workers. [...] Facilitating the sharing of experiences between locations for instance through training, communication and exchanges can also support this process."

– Global Fund Thematic Review on Community Health (January 2021)

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"The TRP notes significant improvements by several countries paying critical attention to key and priority population programming. There has been an increasing focus and attention to priority populations, especially adolescent girls and young women."

– TRP Lessons Learned from Review Window 2 2020-2022 Funding Cycle (June 2020)

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"Several good practices could be leveraged across the Global Fund portfolio for partnership engagement and management of technical assistance and capacity building investments. [...] For Strategic Initiatives, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework is in place for the Community, Rights and Gender initiative. This facilitates regular and systematic assessments and reporting for measuring the impact of technical assistance investments, including TA deployed under the initiative."

– OIG Audit of Global Fund Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (April 2020)

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"Over 90% of all applicants responded positively when asked if those coordinating country dialogue actively reached out to civil society. [...] Community, Rights & Gender TA played an important role in bringing the communities views in the frontline. [...] Country dialogue participants, particularly from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Latin America and the Caribbean, regions expressed that the country dialogue was sufficiently participatory (a sentiment felt across constituency groups) and that they were thankful for sufficient engagement despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic."

– Findings from the Applicant Survey from Window 1 of the 2020-2022 Funding Cycle (December 2020)

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"The evolution of the Strategic Initiative, as measured against the recommendations from the 2014-2016 Special Initiative's final evaluation, has been significant, noting most recommendations completely fulfilled. [...] The 2017-2019 CRG Strategic Initiative has achieved remarkable growth and maturation, expanding its remit across the grant cycle and solidly into malaria and TB, expanding geographic reach, and building a complex supportive relationship between Components 1 and 3 in building demand for and delivering TA."

– Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative 2017-2019: Independent Evaluation (June 2020)

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**Visit the Global Fund's Community Engagement Website to Learn More**
https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/funding-model/throughout-the-cycle/community-engagement/