
November 2021



COMMUNITY FORUM GUIDE





The Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) is a network for people living with HIV, run by people living with HIV. Our work is grounded in local experiences and priorities and engages with and supports national and regional networks of people living with HIV.

Through our Community-Led Accountability, Influence and Monitoring programme (CLAIM) we enable people living with HIV to fully *claim* their space in Global Fund processes and *claim* their role in ensuring that Global Fund grants are developed, implemented and monitored in ways that are effective and inclusive.

The programme is a collaboration between GNP+ and networks of people living with HIV in six countries: Positive Women Together in Action (PWTA) Eswatini, Jaringan Indonesia Positif (JIP), Malawi Network of People Living with HIV (MANET+), Positive Initiative Moldova, Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN) and the Association of People Living with HIV (APLHIV) Pakistan. It is supported by the Global Fund Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative.

November 2021



Introduction



Through our CLAIM project, GNP+ supports Community Forums to facilitate communication and coordination among people living with HIV. The main purpose of the Community Forum is to develop a shared advocacy agenda with clear priorities and recommendations that can be used to influence HIV and health-related processes, in particular those connected to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

This guide was developed by GNP+ to help networks to organise effective Community Forums for people living with HIV, in all their diversity. It is based on our experiences and best practices collected since 2017. It should be adapted to meet the unique conditions in each country setting and is not meant to be a definitive guide.





What is a Community Forum?



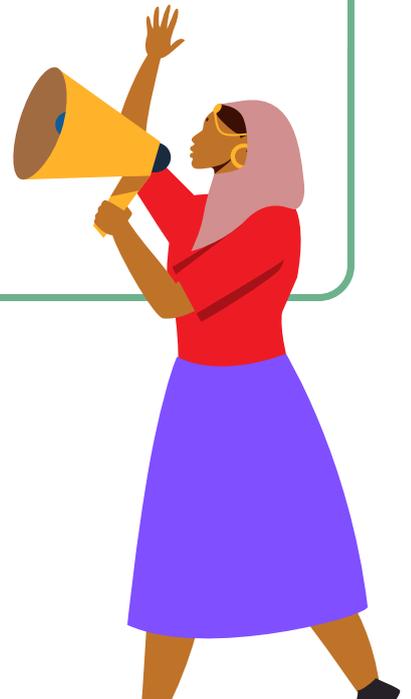
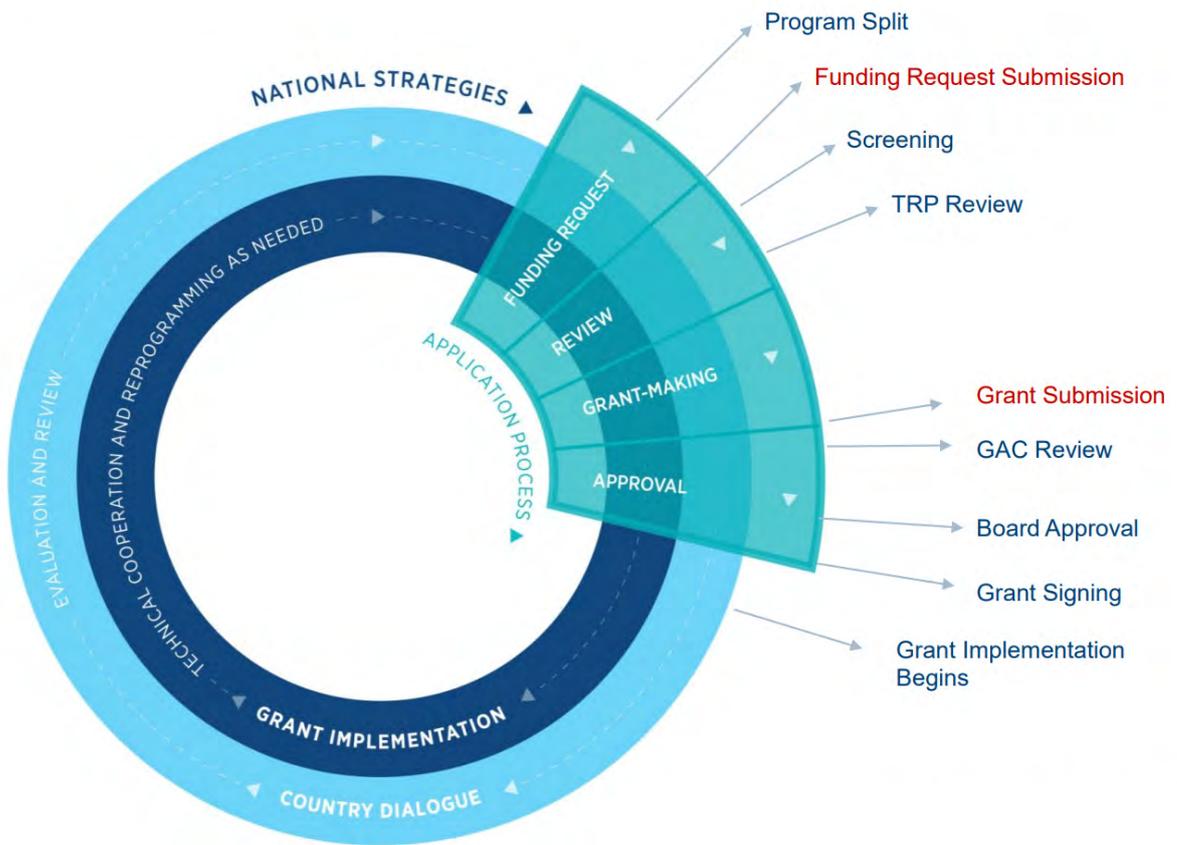
A Community Forum is a public meeting where members of the community of people living with HIV come together in one place and share their ideas, concerns, priorities and recommendations for the design and roll out of Global Fund grants. Community Forums provide a vital space to exchange information, discuss emerging issues and strategize collectively. A Community Forum can have several aims although the most important is to input into the drafting of the Global Fund funding request. During each allocation period, the Global Fund sends letters to the Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM)¹ confirming: how much money they will be allocated over a three-year grant cycle; how much funding is allocated for each disease (disease split); the funding available to scale-up community-led programming for key populations; and co-financing requirements.

The CCM is responsible for drafting the

funding request and to do so, they must show that they have collected input from all relevant stakeholders including people living with and affected by the three diseases. The graph below summarises the funding cycle:

Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) is a national committee that submits funding applications to the Global Fund and oversees grants for their country. It includes representatives of all sectors involved in the response to the three diseases: academic institutions, civil society, faith-based organisations, government, multilateral and bilateral agencies, nongovernmental organisations, people living with the diseases, the private sector and technical agencies.

¹ To read more about Country Coordinating Mechanisms visit the Global Fund website: <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/country-coordinating-mechanism>



The Global Fund Funding Cycle for the 2020-2022 Allocation period:



How do I organise a Community Forum?



1. Select a date and time

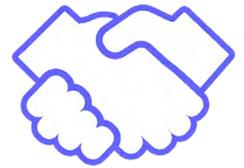
- Ensure that the time does not clash with major events or work commitments.
- Develop your promotional material (flyers, newsletters) to market via WhatsApp, email etc.
- Prepare an agenda. It is helpful to have a simple agenda for participants and a more detailed one with discussion questions to guide the facilitators. Examples of each can be found in Annex 1 below.

2. Identify your participants



- Reach out to support groups and partner organisations of people living with or affected by HIV, TB or malaria and ask them to help you mobilise participants for your Community Forum. Keep in mind that the

participants must be knowledgeable about the issues that you are discussing.



- Keep an eye out for diversity. This means ensuring a broad cross section of participants with multiple identities such as young women, people with disabilities, people who use drugs, sex workers, transgender people, migrants, people in rural areas, indigenous people etc.
- Make sure that key population and civil society representatives on the CCM and members of the drafting team who will be writing the funding request (if applicable) are also invited to participate as they will act as a key liaison to ensure your priorities are included.

Tip:

Make sure that the information you share before and during forums is tailored to your audience. They may have limited literacy skills and may find very technical information too complex to understand. Take time to build everyone's capacity.



3. Select a venue

- Select a venue that is easily accessible and will provide a safe space for participants to express themselves freely. Avoid choosing a space where community members may feel stigmatised or where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- If funds allow, provide a stipend to allow participants to travel to/from remote areas.
- Ensure that the area is well ventilated and sanitation protocols are observed.

4. Invite your guest speakers



- Your community members need to have the most up to date information to make informed recommendations. Invite speakers from key partner agencies such as the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organisation and technical partners to present an overview of the data and relevant strategic information.

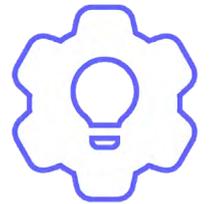
5. Assign your roles

- Select a facilitator. This person should have good knowledge on the topic, be a neutral

party and have strong listening skills so they can summarise information quickly and keep the meeting moving.

- Identify meeting rapporteurs. This person will capture comments and draft the report that will explain what was agreed upon during the meeting.

6. Share any relevant Global Fund-related information



- This could include documents such as the Global Fund Strategy, the allocation letter, technical briefs and previous proposals, if available. This will help to guide the discussion and ensure that any priorities that are agreed fit within the Global Fund's guidance. The documents should be reviewed at the start of the meeting. Ask your participants to come to the meeting with data, evidence and statistics that can support their asks.

Tip:

During the COVID-19 outbreak, keep everyone safe by asking participants to wear masks, keep their distance and wash and/or sanitise their hands frequently.



What happens during the Community Forum?



1. Find out who is in the room

- Have a sign-up sheet that allows you to collect information from attendees and ask if they want to be included in future communications. This could include name, organisation they are affiliated with, mobile number, email address, and where they are coming from.

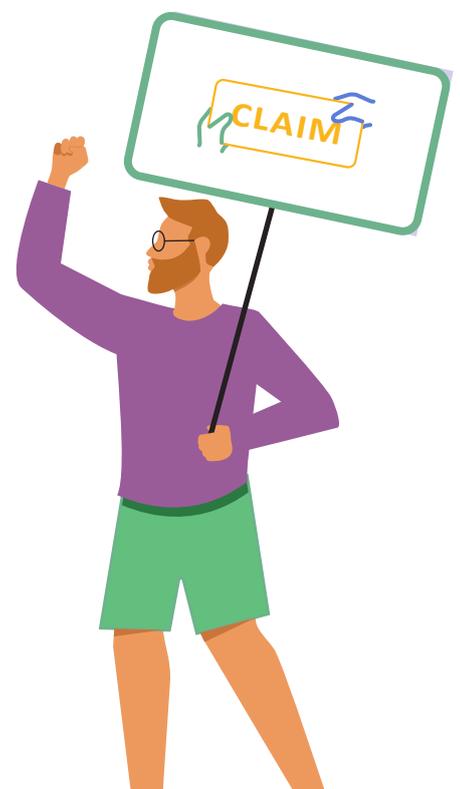
2. Conduct rules

- At the start of the meeting, go through the agenda and set the ground rules. E.g. staying respectful while communicating disagreements, stepping outside to take phone calls.

3. Serve refreshments, if budget permits.

4. Set the context

- Review and present the relevant Global Fund documents shared in advance of the meeting.





How do we set priorities?



1. Assign breakout groups

- Breakout groups are an effective way to hear from a variety of voices. Some people are less willing to express themselves in plenary and may be more comfortable sharing their thoughts in smaller groups.

- Depending on the topic, you may want to assign participants randomly to groups or you may choose to ask them to come together by sub-population group.

- Ask each breakout group to appoint a rapporteur who will take notes and report back in plenary and a facilitator who will keep the group on time and on task.

2. Prioritise the issues/ recommendations



- In plenary, ask each group to briefly summarise the outcome of their discussions.

- Take note of all the priorities on a

whiteboard and identify priorities that are mentioned by multiple groups. These will be your first set of priorities.

- Look at the remaining issues and ask the breakout groups to reconvene and select their top 3-4 priorities.

- Come back to the plenary and vote on the remaining priorities. You will now have a succinct list of priorities from your Community Forum.



3. Identify any key groups or stakeholders that are not represented

- Assign point persons to follow up with these groups and ensure their input is asked for and included.



What happens after the event?



- Develop a meeting report with the draft asks. See Annex 2 for an example.
- Assign one focal point from each partner organisation. Ask them to share the report with their members/constituency and provide feedback.
- Review the feedback to make sure it is included in the final draft and share with the CCM.





How can you influence?



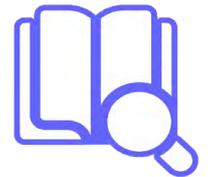
CCMs provide an entry point for civil society organisations to engage with policy and decision makers, but the ability of the sector to have an influence is also shaped by people and structures beyond the CCM. A successful advocacy strategy ensures that all key stakeholders are primed to receive and act on your input.

Power mapping and relationship building

- Build relationships with key gatekeepers and influencers. This includes CCM members, country disease programmes and the health minister. You can invite your CCM civil society and community representatives to come to your meeting and report back on the input that was received and how it was used.
- Identify and build relationships with other champions especially members of the drafting team and consultants involved in the proposal writing. Make sure they know your key messages.

Provide constructive feedback

- No one likes to be criticised but there are many issues that communities are uniquely qualified to comment on.



Back it up with evidence

- Wherever possible, strengthen your position by providing data or evidence. Strategic information about marginalised and criminalised groups can be difficult to find. Needs assessments can be a particularly helpful way of working out priorities.

Coordinate with other community groups and key and vulnerable population networks



- In many countries, large Principal Recipients² such as government and international civil society organisations tend to dominate CCMs. For this reason, it is critical to ensure that different civil society groups support each other and that people living with HIV reinforce the issues raised by other key population groups and people affected by TB and malaria. Reach out to key population networks to exchange messaging and coordinate joint messaging wherever

² Principal Recipient/sub-recipients – the Principal Recipient accepts financial and programmatic responsibility for the implementation of the grant. It may carry out its own programmes and activities but may also give funds to other organisations known as “sub-recipients”. Examples of PRs include Ministry of Health, international nongovernmental organisations, local nongovernmental organisations and United Nations agencies.



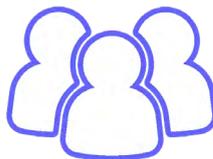
relevant and appropriate. Participate in regular calls with groups/networks beyond people living with HIV.

Examples of community forums delivered by GNP+ Partners:



In Uganda, three youth representatives have been democratically elected to represent the interests of young people by coordinating and consulting with youth constituency members before the CCM committee meetings and on an ongoing basis. The youth representatives ensure that the aspirations, interests and needs of young people are addressed and included in CCM and Global Fund programming, planning and decision-making processes.

In Jamaica, a forum was held to educate people living with HIV on a proposal submitted by the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on the criminalisation of wilful and reckless transmission of HIV as well as to update people on the Jamaican government's U=U campaign (undetectable equals untransmittable). At the same time, the meeting educated participants about CCMs and nominated and elected people living with HIV representatives to sit



on the Jamaica CCM Committee.

In Pakistan, the National Coordinator of the network of people living with HIV organised a forum to help build awareness on Global Fund country grant implementation and to provide a platform for dialogue between the community representatives at the CCM and their constituents. Through this forum, community members, including the community representative on the CCM, alternate member and potential members were given information about the function, roles and responsibilities of the CCM community representative.

TOP TAKEAWAYS:

- 1. Invite diverse members of the community of people living with HIV and make sure all voices are heard.*
- 2. Capture the discussion and priorities in a written report.*
- 3. Create opportunities to report back to the community that you consulted so they know how their input was used and what was the outcome.*



Useful links



[Frequently Asked Questions – 2020-2022 Funding Cycle - June 2021](#)

[The Global Fund Strategy 2017-2022](#)

[The Funding Model](#)

[HIV Information Note](#)

[The Modular Framework Handbook – October 2019](#)

[iLearn Online Learning](#)





Annex: 1

Sample agendas for participants and facilitators

These are meant as tools for guidance and should be adapted for your purposes.

Agenda for Civil Society to input into their country's application to the Global Fund for HIV programmes.

Agenda For Participants	Timings
Welcome And Introductions	9:00 - 9:15
Presentation On Global Fund Funding Model	9:15 - 9:45
Group Work: What Problems Need To Be Addressed?	9:45 - 10:30
<i>Break</i>	10:30 - 10:50
Identifying Interventions That Work	10:50 - 11:30
Group Work: Identify Your Key Priorities For Funding	11:30 - 13:00
<i>Lunch</i>	13:00 - 14:00
Prioritisation	14:00 - 15:15
Next Steps	15:15 - 15:45
Closing Remarks	15:45 - 16:00



Agenda Items	Timings	Notes For Facilitators / Organisers
Welcome And Introductions	9:00 - 9:15	
Presentation On Global Fund Funding Model	9:15 - 9:45	- What is the Global Fund funding model? - Why is community engagement so important? Allow time for questions / clarifications
Group Work: What Problems Need To Be Addressed?	9:45 - 10:30	What problems are not addressed by current programmes? Are any specific groups of people being left behind in the HIV / malaria / TB response in your country? What impact has COVID-19 had on programmes to fight HIV, TB and Malaria in your country? (Your GF Country Team might be able to give you data on this too) Bring participants back together to share their key points and allow time for discussion / clarification.
<i>Break</i>	10:30 - 10:50	
Identifying Interventions That Work	10:50 - 11:30	Ask participants to share their examples of interventions that they know are helping to address HIV – emphasise that they should discuss interventions that: - Balance both HIV treatment and HIV prevention. - Prioritise interventions at sufficient coverage and scale. - Address populations with greatest HIV needs. - Scale-up of new medicines and technologies, as recommended by the WHO.
Group Work: Identify Your Key Priorities For Funding	11:30 - 13:00	Separate the participants into small groups, if there are enough participants you could separate them by the population they represent e.g. one group could focus on sex workers, another on women and girls, another on people living with HIV, one on malaria etc. If needed, you could combine some groups. Ask each group to draw up a list of the top 3 interventions that they would like to see funded by the Global Fund. It is important that they can give evidence of why these interventions are needed – what problem will they address and what will they achieve? They should also consider at what scale the intervention is needed and what it will cost. They should only choose interventions where it is possible to measure the impact / outcomes. Bring the groups back together and ask them to share their priorities. Draw up a complete list with everyone's priorities on.
<i>Lunch</i>	13:00 - 14:00	
Prioritisation	14:00 - 15:15	With all the participants together discuss how to prioritise these interventions so that you have a list of agreed advocacy demands. You will not be able to include everything. Also consider if any group (e.g. people living with disabilities, migrants) is not represented in the meeting- are their concerns reflected in your demands? Remember to look at the "The Modular Framework" to make sure that your demands are the type of interventions that the Global Fund will fund.
Next Steps	15:15 - 15:45	How will you share your recommendations with other civil society groups / community representatives before they are finalised? Who will write up the report outlining your demands? At this stage detail will need to be included of the evidence showing why the intervention is needed, what scale is needed, as well as how it will be possible to measure the success / impact of the intervention and importantly the potential costs. Who will do the rest of the follow up? – engage with the Country Coordinating Mechanism, the Global Fund Country Team, technical partners. Are you aware of the deadlines for the process in your country?
Closing Remarks	15:45 - 16:00	



Annex: 2

Example of prioritised interventions from a COVID-19 response mechanism proposal

Below is a format that you can use to capture your priorities. It has been filled in to provide guidance on how you may want to present the information but it is just meant as an example.

CSO Priority interventions for addressing human rights related barriers to service provision

Priority Activity/ Intervention	Targeted reach/outcome	Comments
<p>1. Rapid assessments of safety and security of key population programme clients and implementers given COVID-19 restrictions, and support to adjust programme delivery based on such findings;</p>		
<p>1.1. Conduct a 5-day rapid assessment in 10 sampled districts (6 people per district) on safety and security of key populations and implementers in view of COVID-19 restrictions</p>	<p>300 people from key populations interviewed</p>	<p>The aim of the assessment is to understand the impact of COVID-19 on key populations and how the COVID-19 restrictions have affected their safety and security at different levels.</p>
<p>1.2. Conduct a 5-day workshop (30 people) to develop COVID-19 prevention information for minorities to improve access to health services. Followed by pretesting of the COVID-19 prevention information for minorities in 3 selected districts (1 in each region, including a city).</p>	<p>COVID-19 prevention information package for key populations developed and pre-tested</p>	<p>As efforts are currently going to provide COVID-19 information to different communities, it is important to ensure the messages that are being developed and shared are tailored to the needs of different individuals in line with human centred design approach. This activity is therefore meant to develop specific messages for key populations followed by a pretesting exercise in selected districts</p>
<p>1.3. Conduct 30 national and district level meetings to distribute COVID-19 prevention information for minorities to improve access to health services</p>	<p>COVID-19 prevention messages distributed to key populations</p>	<p>After developing and pretesting the messages, 30 dissemination meetings will be conducted in selected districts</p>

