



Regional Platform
for Communication and Coordination
on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
For Anglophone Africa

**MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PLATFORM FOR COMMUNICATION
AND COORDINATION FOR ANGLOPHONE AFRICA,
HOSTED BY EANNASO**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT



SERENA HOTEL, DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA
13th-14th January 2016



INTRODUCTION

This report presents a summary of the proceedings and issues raised in the first workshop of the Regional Platform for Communication and Coordination for Anglophone Africa held between 13th and 14th January, 2016, at the Serena Hotel in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The workshop was organized and hosted by the Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS Service Organizations (EANNASO) and funded by the Global Fund. The overall aim of the workshop was to exchange knowledge, experiences, challenges, best practices, and lessons and chart out the strategic direction for accessing, planning, implementing and assessing the Global Funder and strengthening communication, coordination, networking and collaborations among partners and grantees of Global Fund in the three programs namely HIV, Malaria and TB.

A total of 15 countries were represented from Southern, Western, and Eastern Africa. Participants ranged from civil societies organizations, key populations, community-based organizations, women's organizations, PLHIV networks, Technical Assistance (TA) providers, and Government of Tanzania representatives for each of the three disease components. Notably, were the EANNASO Board members, Secretariat and the local media for covering issues for public awareness. The participatory methodological approach was deployed throughout the workshop to catalyze active engagements and deepen understanding of the topics. The animated methods included the plenary presentations "talk shows", panelists, group work and question-and-answer sessions. Morning recapitulation and final evaluations forms were given to the participants as part of assessing the quality deliverables of the workshop.

At the conclusion of the two-day workshop, participants strategized on the way forward for the platform from the issues rose where the key deliberations and resolutions were to ensure close collaborations networking and technical support among platform stakeholders, documenting and sharing of the key interventions for best practices and lessons. Conducting advocacy through taking active engagements in decision making forums to address policy gaps in community interventions, to capitalize on the available resources for effective and efficiency delivery of our works, establish a data base and communication strategy, ensure evidence based concept note through conduction the situational analysis, always remaining timely and commitment to our work.

The overall assessment at the end of the workshop indicated that the workshop has achieved the intended outcomes through effective coordination by the EANNASO, highly skilled facilitation techniques deployed and experienced and knowledgeable panelists. Further, the presence of the EANNASO Board Members was very instrumental in understanding the issues from the platform but also in acquiring the necessary information for decision-making to support EANNASO as the Regional Platform host. Lastly the presence of the media throughout the workshop was a strategic information initiative, which provided an opportunity for public awareness of the platform (See local media coverage here: [How vulnerable communities miss out on Global Fund finances](#)).

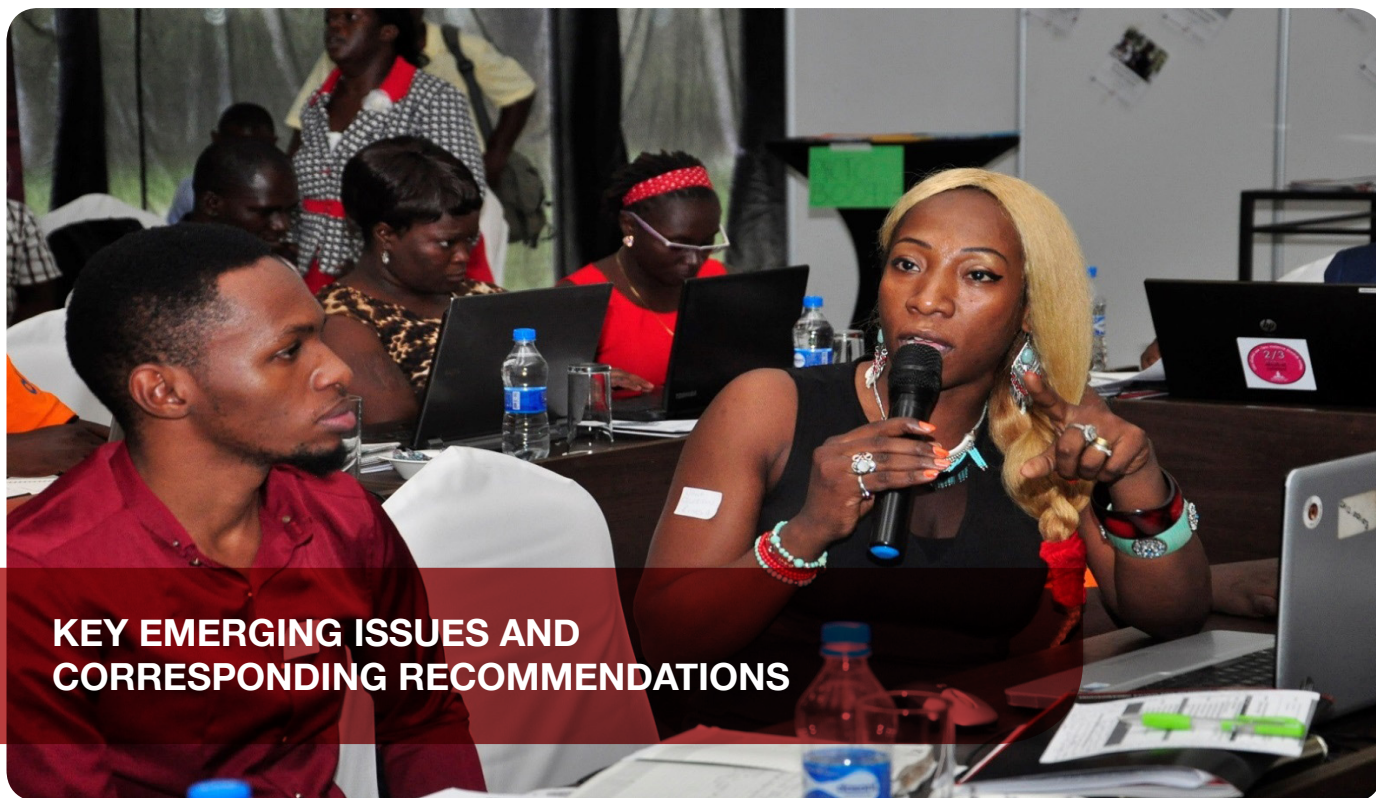
WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- I. Introduce the EANNASO CRG TA Regional Coordination and Communication Platform (clarify the objectives and scope of its work), to civil society, community groups, stakeholders and other technical partners in Anglophone Africa with the aim of developing a longer term strategy on strengthening CSO and community groups' engagement in GF processes;
- II. To share experiences of CSOs engagement in the (New) Funding Model with the aim of identifying needs, tools, guidelines and information requirements that will facilitate CS and CG engagement in the next funding cycle;
- III. To provide dialogue space for community representative on their respective CCMs to share experiences aiming at identifying areas and needs that EANNASO could support in strengthening community engagement on CCMs; and,
- IV. Explore challenges and opportunities of community recipients in accessing TA and identify TA opportunities to build synergies between the platform and other TA providers and programs within the region.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of **15 Countries** participated in the workshop. From Southern Africa, participants were from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. From Eastern Africa, there were delegates from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar. From Western Africa, representatives from Nigeria and Ghana joined the Platform meeting. The country delegations consisted of a mix of people from representatives from civil society networks and organizations, representatives of key affected populations across the region, civil society, people living with and affected by HIV, TB and malaria, CCM members, civil society and community implementers (PRs and SRs and SSRs); civil society TA providers and development partners. The media fraternity (mostly from the host country) was also present to cover the important discussions and debates.





KEY EMERGING ISSUES AND CORRESPONDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Issues

In order to gain a better understanding of the knowledge and experience needs, the Regional Platform conducted a formal survey of meeting participants. The results have been analyzed as a situation analysis (publication forthcoming). The survey was deemed both a strategic research initiative for the Regional Platform and its partners as well as a necessary baseline assessment to guide the Platform's work going forward. This section summarizes some of the key findings from that survey, and how they will shape the Platform's activities:

Country Dialogue and Concept Note Development

Issue: 56% (n=18) of survey respondents said concept note development was the most open part about the New Funding Model for civil society organizations and community groups, followed by 41% (n=13) who said National Strategic Plan and Investment Case development was the most open. At the other end, 50% (n=15) said grant/making was the most closed part about the New Funding Model for civil society and community groups, followed by 20% (n=6) who said grant implementation was most closed.



Recommendation: Given that participants indicated grant-making and implementation as being the most closed stages of the NFM, the Platform will endeavor to link civil society and community groups to TA for these initiatives in particular, as well as create spaces for civil society and communities to participate more meaningfully in these elements. This will include a strategic research initiative later in the year to encourage and support shadow reporting of grant implementation conducted by civil society.

CCM Representation

Issue: 62% (n=18) said that the biggest benefit of having civil society organizations as CCM members is making sure community voices inform Global Fund decision-making. However, 63% (n=19) of survey respondents said the biggest challenge for civil society and community CCM members is constituency consultation and feedback of information. 30% (n=9) said having their voices heard in meetings was the biggest challenge.

Recommendation: Based on these results, the Platform will prioritize supporting civil society CCM members to access TA to consult their constituencies more regularly, and provide strategic capacity building support to enable better representation. EANNASO's CCM representation guidelines, as well as its new video toolkit on how to influence decision-

making about health will be employed as user-friendly and easy-to-engage with materials for communities.

Regional Programs/Grants

Issue: During the meeting, respondents indicated that their knowledge improved the least about Regional Concept notes. 24% (n=8) of respondents said their understanding about regional concept notes was still their biggest knowledge gap. This is knowledge gap is compounded by limited engagement in the process, evident from the fact that 70% of respondents (n=23) participated in the country dialogue process compared to 48% (n=16) who participated in a regional dialogue. Indeed, 55% (n=17) said they thought country dialogues were more open spaces for civil society and community groups than regional dialogues.

Recommendation: For this reason, the Regional Platform will prioritize information sharing about regional programs so that civil society and community groups in Anglophone Africa can gain a better understand of how regional grants work, where they exist and how they can meaningfully participate in those programs. The Platform will be requesting a reprogramming of funds to do a strategic research initiative on regional grants, rather than on the country dialogue process at national level (as was initially proposed). Responding to survey results, country dialogue is not significant knowledge gap, but regional programs are.

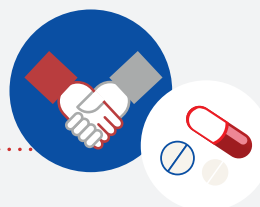
Technical Assistance

Issue: 60% (n=18) said the biggest benefit of having Global Fund TA available is making sure that civil society organizations and communities participate fully in Global Fund processes. This was followed by 33% (n=10) who said the biggest benefit is that it builds their capacity. However, 53% (n=17) said the biggest challenge with Global Fund TA was that it often ends at after the concept note submission, and that there needs to be more TA to support watchdogging of implementation. Most respondents who had accessed TA before had received it from the German Back-Up Initiative (GIZ) (11 respondents) and UNAIDS Technical Support Facility (11 respondents) as providers. Global Fund CRG followed closely with 9 respondents accessing TA from there. 7 respondents accessed TA from Stop TB Partnership and 5 respondents accessed it from AIDSpan.

Recommendation: The fact that TA often ends after concept note submission was a key challenge, raised not only in the survey as the biggest barrier to accessing effective TA, but also raised repeatedly throughout the two-day meeting. The Regional Platform intends to respond to this gap by identifying TA opportunities which exist during grant-making and grant implementation from partners such as WHO, UNAIDS and Stop TB. The Platform will also seek to diversify the TA providers that are linked with requests from communities so that civil society can be aware of and experience different kinds of TA for different needs and at different stages of Global Fund engagement.

Important Discussions During the Meeting:

1. At the institutional level, lack of capacity in meeting the concept note criteria is still a big challenge for CSOs to access the funds. While at the same time, CSOs are reluctant in capitalizing the local resources and experiences which has already being acquired by their counterpart and hence facing this challenge of accessing fund
2. The meeting agreed that effective CSO engagement should translate and mean country programs should respond to the needs of CS and community groups. Engagement does not mean just being on decision making processes or being part of the
3. It was informed that most of the concept note lacks concrete evidence of the situation and analysis from the ground to inform the problem statements particularly at the community level. This has denied access of funding to most CSOs as their concepts note is not informed by the situation on the ground.
4. Lack of enabling environment in reaching out to the Key Populations in most countries need to be effectively addressed. Each country has specific policy gaps which need to be addressed at the local level to enable penetration to the community. Moreover, there is a culture of silent in talking of key issues revolving KPs at a country level which is catalyzed by pro poor policies and the commitments of the government in various instruments at the local and global level is still a desire
5. The participation of the CSO has been limited at the concept note development rather than engaging from





the strategic plan. This could explain the reasons why CSOs keep on complaining that the funds are always not sufficient partly because they only engage in concept note while the strategic plan is the key document which provides the justification of the proposal.

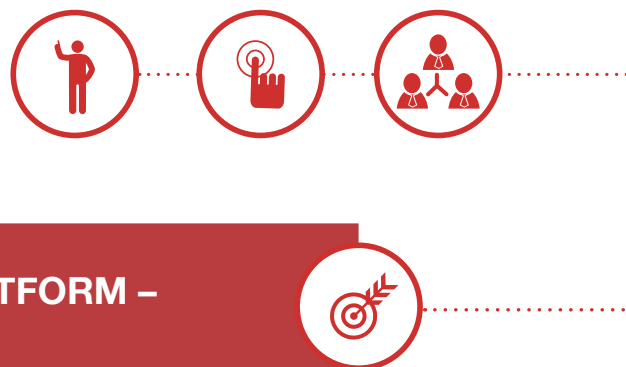
6. There are no criteria set for CCMs composition, engagement and participation at country level in most countries, this has caused a number of challenges including the conflict of interests and CSOs not properly represented.
7. CSOs lack enough resources which limits their access to technical assistance and effectively engagement in CCMs. However, the workshop noted that the resources are within members reach should they strategies on sharing technical skills and resources they have within the platform. The appeal was advanced that EANNASO should keep on providing TA support
8. Documentation and Research is a continuous [process within CSOs for capturing the evidences, key success lesson and challenges and hence draw the solutions to sustain the project and share the best practices



Recommendations

1. Enhancing capacity at the institutional level is key in ensuring that CSOs are competent in accessing GF Fund. This can be done through sharing and exchange of skills, knowledge and experiences amongst CS and community groups. Moreover, a TOT and pools of expert may be encouraged within EANNASO. At this point the need for having common tools and guidelines for capacity building is highly recommended for harmonization of skills.
2. The fact that funding plays a role in supporting the capacities of CSOs is also noted, it is hereby recommended that a resource mobilization strategy among CS and community groups be developed in order to ensure the sustainability even after GF is over
3. In addressing issues within the platform, the recommendation is to have a loose memorandum which will provide for communication and coordination mechanism and set criteria for engagement not only in CCMs but in all avenues pertaining to the platform
4. In addressing the policy gaps, it is hereby advised to have an advocacy strategy which will inform the policy analysis, the situation on the ground and strategic approaches towards the gaps.
5. A need for platform members to conduct a needs assessment at country level is highly recommended without which the concept note will not be competent

6. For ensuring effective documentation and researching, A need for IT system and monitoring and evaluation framework for data base management across the region for result orientations, resource mobilization and feedback mechanism
7. To enhance effective networking and collaboration, there is a need to engage other regional bodies such as the African Union, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) as they have been instrumental not only in mainstreaming KP agenda but also in ensuring accountability within their member states. This can be done through a thorough analysis and mapping of key stakeholder and coming up with a stakeholders' framework of engagement and come up with communication strategy.
8. There is a need for technical assistance across platform members so as to be able to effectively engage in Global Fund processes across the continuum of the new funding model – “from NSP to M&E”.
9. A need for dual track financing at the regional level of significance important.
10. Develop a gender mainstreaming strategy to be shared among platform members to ensure that the concept and interventions are informed by a gender lens



ANGLOPHONE AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM – THE WAY FORWARD

In an interactive activity to close the workshop, the participants played a game called “Need to Know...Where to Go” in which the Regional Platform was able to scaffold the most significant knowledge gaps and encourage the participants to design solutions and make requests of the Platform. Participants had placards in which they could indicate whether a certain topic was a “need to know” (red) or an “already know” (green) (see image below).

As in the survey cited above, regional grants emerged as the biggest “need to know” from the participants. By contrast, CCM representation and country dialogue areas emerged as comparably better understood by the room. Preliminary priorities setting by the participants suggests that participants want to know “how regional programs create opportunities for civil society and communities” and “support civil society with the information and understanding of the regional program grants and set priorities to engage.” Further, one group identified the key gap as needing to know which regional programs exist.



-
- ▶ They requested that the Platform create effective communication channels to provide information to CSOs about what is taking place at the regional level.

In addition, knowledge gaps on civil society and community PRs, SRs and SSRs emerged during the “need to know” activity. The top priority identified by the room was for the Regional Platform to support the building of capacity for civil society and community groups to be SRs and PRs. This is linked with the most commonly cited challenge for civil society implementers as captured in the survey. 37% (n=11) said that the biggest challenge with civil society organizations as implementers is that they are often sub-sub-recipients and receive very little money. This was followed closely by 33% (n=10) of people who said civil society organizations do not always have the capacity to implement large grants.



CONTACT THE REGIONAL PLATFORM

Regional Platform for Communication and Coordination for Anglophone Africa

Hosted by EANNASO

Arusha, Tanzania

Tel: +255 737 210598

Email: eannaso@eannaso.org | Website: www.eannaso.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/eannaso.org

Twitter: @eannas