



Report and Lessons Learned from GFAN Engagement at AIDS 2014

Overview

At the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne in July 2014, ICSS worked to bring together civil society advocates focused on the Global Fund to participate in a global strategy meeting and the GFAN networking zone advocacy and activities.

The GFAN global strategy meeting provided its members present in Melbourne an opportunity to meet with other GFAN members from across the globe and the Global Fund Secretariat, to discuss the new GFAN strategic directions in our joint advocacy effort to support the Global Fund - including regional and international activities - in order to address the current funding gap and prepare for the 5th Replenishment in mid-2016. Potential campaign activities were also presented and discussed.

The networking zone presented 20 sessions over the week and aimed to:

- provide a space for GFAN members to meet and coordinate campaigning activities at the IAC;
- provide an opportunity for people to actively coordinate and engage in activities around resource mobilization (through donors, private sector and domestic financing);
- engage new members;
- give an opportunity to all those engaged in GFAN to organize presentations and discussions in the zone;
- give visitors the opportunity to engage and debate with GF leadership, grant implementers, beneficiaries and researchers of GF programs; and
- provide a space for the 3 civil society delegations to the GF Board to meet with their delegation members and constituencies and engage in discussions.

Four advocacy partners also participated at AIDS 2014 with financing via ICSS:

- James Kamau, CEO, Kenya Treatment Access Movement (KETAM)
- Emmanuel Etim, Project Coordinator, African Union Youth Volunteer Corps
- Sydney Hushie, Advisory Council Member, Global Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS
- Robert Kasenene, Development Communication Consultant, UNA Tanzania (who replaced Thokozire Nkhoma Phiri, Project Coordinator, Malawi interfaith AIDS Association & Here I Am Ambassador)

In addition, ICSS, with the support of the Global Fund Secretariat, hosted a satellite session on domestic financing.

Activities

Strategy meeting



Almost 40 participants joined us for a day-long meeting to reflect on the last replenishment process and to focus on specific projects GFAN should work on in the coming year. Participants discussed domestic financing, the financial transaction tax, advocacy messaging and other related issues. This meeting was primarily forward-thinking, although it was also a culmination of three global and regional GFAN strategy meetings held throughout March and April in Amsterdam, Bangkok and Nairobi. At these meetings, GFAN members developed

regional action plans and discussed ways to move resource mobilization forward; these outcomes were presented and considered at the Melbourne strategy meeting.

Networking zone

The Global Fund Advocates Network was granted a 60 square meter Networking Zone (NWZ) in the Global Village as part of AIDS 2014, the biennial International AIDS Conference, held this time in Melbourne, Australia. The Global Village is open to conference participants as well as the general public. The Global Village is an incredibly energetic space at the conferences, and we were proud to offer the GFAN networking zone as a hub for networking and organizing.

ICSS developed the networking zone for meetings, presentations and information-sharing. A core program for the NWZ was created together with the Global Fund Secretariat, and GFAN members, through the GFAN mailing list, were invited to submit their own session proposals, provided they were related to the Global Fund.



The core program included daily sessions with Global Fund senior staff and its Board Leadership where the public was invited to question the presenters on issues such as grant management, the new funding model, resource mobilization and equality strategies. Global Fund Board NGO and community Delegations also presented their own sessions at the NWZ. The sessions presented over the week were well attended, with seating accommodating for over 30 participants. Facilitators and panelists came from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America.

The GFAN members who participated in organizing sessions included:

- Africa Civil Society Platform
- ASAP (AIDS Strategy Advocacy and Policy)
- Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations (APCASO)
- Communities Delegation to the Global Fund Board
- Developed Country NGO Delegation to the Global Fund Board
- Developing Country NGO Delegation to the Global Fund Board
- Friends of the Global Fight
- Global Coalition of TB Activists
- Global Health Advocates
- Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS & YouthFront
- Réseau Accès aux Médicaments Essentiels (RAME)
- RESULTS Australia
- STOPAIDS
- Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) Secretariat

Funded participants

Our four guests were nominated by the Africa Civil Society Platform, our organizing partner at the GFAN regional strategy meeting in Nairobi in April 2014. As a requirement of their attendance, they took part in or ran a NWZ session and took on 'host' capacities along with ICSS staff at the NWZ throughout the week.



Sydney and Robert ran the NWZ's flagship youth session, called RealTalk, which focused on youth engagement in the Global Fund. Their project, developed over the few months before the conference, was an initiative of YouthFront, in partnership with GFAN, to increase youth interest in the Global Fund and promote dialogue among young people in the work of the Global Fund, especially in Africa. YouthFront has been working with young advocates in Africa to influence international policy, especially at the African Union, and national policies to increase domestic funds for HIV, TB and malaria programmes and to support Global Fund advocacy for increased investments from donor countries. Prior to the NWZ session, the project ran a capacity building, messaging and social media strategy development workshop with a group of youth in Accra, Ghana, which included the participation of the Global Fund Secretariat,

and used social media to reach out to African youth and invited them to submit video impact stories. Their presentation in Melbourne featured a conversation with Christoph Benn, Director of External Relations, and included a video screen along with a live webcast.

Sydney also participated in a meeting with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the GF Secretariat and ICSS on the need for and opportunities and challenges related to building a global social movement in support of resource mobilization for the Global Fund. His contribution was extremely informative for the Gates Foundation and GF Secretariat with respect to the use of social media in campaigning in Africa.

Emmanuel, who was also the interim coordinator for GFAN's partner the Africa Civil Society Platform, was responsible for organizing a session at the GFAN networking zone on the topic "Progress at stake: Protect the target" with the involvement of the African Union Commission. He also presented at the Global MSM Forum pre-conference and in APCASO's session "Did we pitch the end of AIDS too early?" and took part in several side meetings with UNAIDS and IAS.

James, as an expert on domestic financing, was a panel member at GFAN's satellite session "Where is the Money? Challenges and opportunities in mobilizing increased domestic financing" and Africa Civil Society Platform's "Progress at stake: Protect the target" session.

Satellite Session



This session discussed challenges at country level in mobilizing appropriate levels of resources through domestic financing. Examples of new and innovative financing mechanisms, such as trust funds, and innovative collaboration (including with civil society and key populations) were presented.

It was moderated by Laurindo Garcia, B-Change/GFAN ambassador (Philippines) and included:

1. *The role of domestic resource mobilization* - Peter van Rooijen, Executive Director, International Civil Society Support (ICSS) (The Netherlands)
2. *Domestic financing of health: challenges and opportunities from a Global Fund perspective* - Dr Christoph Benn, Director of External Relations, Global Fund Secretariat (Switzerland)
3. *The establishment of an AIDS fund in Tanzania* - Ben'gi Issa, Director Finance and Administration, Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) (Tanzania)
4. *Expanding existing national insurance arrangements: the Vietnam perspective* - Dr. Khuat Thi Hai Oanh, Director, Center for Supporting Community Development Initiative (SCDI) (Vietnam)
5. *Preparing a Trust Fund: civil society experiences in Kenya* - James Kamau, Coordinator, Kenya Treatment Access Movement (Kenya)

Results Achieved

Strategy meeting

Participants left this meeting with a stronger sense of how GFAN can focus and move forward on key resource mobilization issues. Broader partnerships and different messaging will be further developed. One key step forward has been GFAN's continued support for financial transaction tax advocacy, which will expand over 2014 and hopefully broaden into regions outside of Europe. There was also much excitement about how RealTalk can be used in the future. Finally, GFAN's final 2014-2016 Strategy was drafted after this meeting.

Networking zone

GFAN's presence and its networking zone were great successes in reaching our expected outcomes of: increased awareness among visitors about the importance of the GF in the fight against HIV/AIDS (and links to TB); increased active engagement of new GFAN members recruited at the zone, at and after the conference; running multiple activities in and outside the

networking zone in support of a fully funded and effective GF; and increased engagement between and with the civil society Board delegations.

The GFAN NWZ also became the hub for Global Fund staff and information as there was no Global Fund booth at this year's event. We had available for visitors several Global Fund publications, including many of those on the new funding model, as well as USBs provided by the Global Fund with many key publications for reference.



As stated above, while there was no specific campaign at the NWZ, GFAN had the opportunity to become involved in small advocacy gestures. Thanks to the generous offer by ICASO, GFAN was able to place a postcard insert into all 12,000+ conference bags. Designed just ahead of the conference, the postcard declared “Fully Fund the Global Fund” and, on the back, it included a statement to decision-makers and a space for the participant’s information and own message (see

Annex 5). This image was also shared with the plenary speakers who were requested to add this as a final slide to their presentation, as some of them did. At our zone, visitors could also complete these postcards and pin them up on our board. All postcards gathered at the conference will be brought to the Global Fund board. However, our most popular item provided to conference participants at the NWZ was our pins, which mirrored the design on the postcards, with “Fully Fund the Global Fund” inscribed across them.



From the outcomes of a recent ITPC meeting, a group of advocates, including ICSS, quickly put together ahead of the conference a campaign called “AIDS will only end when...”, which acted as a counterpoint to messages on the end of AIDS by reminding conference participants about the rights of marginalized populations, resource needs, etc. GFAN provided the design and printing of hundreds of posters and signs that included several tag lines, such as “AIDS will only end when the Global Fund is fully

funded” and “AIDS will only end when we end HIV stigma”, including ones with blank space for advocates’ own messages. The posters were distributed and the larger signs were used in various protests during the week (some which gained significant [media coverage](#)) and during the Mobilization March. The GFAN NWZ was a hub throughout the week for this large group of advocates to meet and discuss strategy. ICSS also offered to host an ad hoc meeting for this group on the Saturday evening before the conference; almost 50 advocates joined us to share



ideas and plan the week ahead. These posters are available for download on the GFAN website for any GFAN member's own use in advocacy work.

Funded participants

Quote from Sydney Hushie:

“Participating in international AIDS conferences have become a difficult exercise due to the size of the meeting and challenge in making meaningful impact. However, participation in Melbourne and the GFAN activities provided clear and measurable objectives to achieve to achieve. The youth activities and the RealTalk materials provided life to the GFAN booth which was exciting. All the strategic meetings with partners were also relevant for work. All in all Melbourne as a success.”

(Read more about Sydney's experience in the [Global Fund News Flash](#).)

The youth session was well patronized and took questions from participants at the venue and other young people via Twitter. Participants shared recommendations on how the Global Fund can actively engage with young people with these recommendations informing follow up plans for the project. As part of the session, all 52 participants received t-shirts with the “RealTalk Sense” messages.

Quote from Emmanuel Etim:

“Overall, the conference presented more than a gathering. It allowed for knowledge sharing, and for me, this was important as I was in the middle of counseling a suicidal young man, who found he was HIV positive. This diagnosis threatened his closeted lifestyle as a gay man, who would be aggressively excommunication from the Christian community he served as a leader and role model.

One key take home for me and the work we do on the Global Fund has been ‘AIDS will only end when’ and this is now a full-fledged campaign for the platform in its advocacy work on domestic financing. It will also be a sub-title for the evaluation report we are doing for the Africa Union on its review of the implementation of the Abuja commitment on 15% of national budget spending on health.”

Challenges

Unfortunately, while we did plan to have Africa-based Here I Am Ambassadors present in Melbourne, one was busy at the time of the conference and the other, at the last minute, was unable to attend due to a passport delay. However, because of this, we were able to provide assistance instead to Sydney's colleague, Robert Kasenene, who attended to support the RealTalk project.

While GFAN had hoped to have a campaign launch at AIDS 2014, given the timeline and results of the meetings earlier in the year, a campaign did not seem convenient at this point. However,



GFAN was highly engaged with other organizations in small campaigns and demonstrations of advocacy.

Lessons Learned: Looking forward to AIDS2016

Feedback was positive for the Global Village networking zone at AIDS 2014. There is a definite need for a zone dedicated to the Global Fund at future AIDS conferences, and if possible, as suggested by the Global Fund Secretariat, at further international and regional conferences, particularly if the Global Fund itself continues not to host booths. Christoph Benn noted he was happy with the GFAN space and thinks that it's better to support something like this than for the Global Fund to have its own booth, which creates a separate atmosphere.

Foot traffic throughout the Global Village varied daily and hourly, which affected the level of popularity of the sessions, but there was strong turnout for the "Meet the Global Fund" sessions and for those hosted by organizations that maintain strong networks and included many well-known advocates on their panels. However, while larger audiences would have been preferred, in the end the bulk of the promotional work needs to be done by those who are leading the sessions. Perhaps for the next conference the GFAN Secretariat should look into ways that will make it easier for organizers to produce promotional materials quickly and easily for their own distribution.

Further, more traffic could be generated by hosting launches for reports, etc.; there was no 'big moment' at the GFAN zone this year that could have offered promotional value. In Washington at AIDS 2012, the zone included a video booth which added value and atmosphere. Interactive campaign elements, but not necessarily the time- and money-consuming medium of video, should be considered for 2016.

Overall, hosting booths/zones that offer space for sessions is good for branding and recognition. However, GFAN should still be cautious about at which conferences it manages booths and/or sessions, as was demonstrated with the very low interest in and traffic by the GFAN booth and sessions at ICAAP 2013 in Bangkok; in this case, the goal of regional network outreach could have been accomplished through providing just one interactive session and using the rest of the time for attending relevant sessions to learn about regional priorities and organizing side meetings with potential partners instead of using this time to manage a booth space. Particularly given that ICSS has a small staff, the top goals and priorities must be considered before each conference and only then should booths and sessions be considered within these parameters. Yet, with the positive experiences over the past two international AIDS conferences, GFAN should continue to manage spaces there if possible.