

RESEARCH REPORT

**CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN THE GLOBAL FUND TO
FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA: WHAT
DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IN LESOTHO?**

By

Derick Akoku, MPH

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CCM	Country Coordination Mechanism
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSS	Community Systems Strengthening
GFCU	Global Fund Coordinating Unit
Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria
HIV	Human Immuno-Virus
LENASO	Lesotho Network of AIDS Service Organisations
LFA	Local Fund Agent
M& E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PLWHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PR	Principal Recipient
SR	Sub-Recipient
TB	Tuberculosis
TOR	Terms of Reference

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Correspondence to the author: Derick Akoku, Consultant & Technical Advisor, Lesotho Network of AIDS Service Organisations, PO Box 166 Maseru, Lesotho. Tel/Fax: + 26622316063, Email: derickakoku@gmail.com

*Lesotho Network of AIDS Service Organisations is the umbrella body mandated by the National AIDS Commission to manage and coordinate the activities of civil society organisations implementing HIV and AIDS interventions in the country

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Global Fund is a unique global public-private partnership dedicated to attracting and disbursing additional resources to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which emphasizes the principle of country ownership in the design and implementation of grants. At country level, the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) is the core mechanism in the Global Fund model of multi-stakeholder partnership. It brings together stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector to coordinate the development of country proposals and exercises oversight of grant implementation. For such a partnership to work effectively and in an accountable manner, processes must be open and transparent and conducted in accordance with agreed-upon rules or procedures.

Although civil society organisations have been involved in Global Fund programs in Lesotho, there is a lack of information and proper documentation on their level of participation within the CCM. The main purpose of the study was therefore to assess the role of civil society organisations in Global Fund governance and decision-making processes in Lesotho. This study therefore explored the level of involvement and representation of civil society organisations within the Country Coordination Mechanism, their participation in decision-making, in proposal development and in grant implementation. Data for this study was gathered through extensive one-on-one interviews and consultations with key informants and stakeholders involved in Global Fund processes in the country.

Key Findings

Representation of the civil society sector within the CCM was adequate; as membership exceeds the 40 percent required by the Global Fund. Most respondents reported that the issue was not about adequate representation but for CSOs who are represented in the CCM to more active and participatory when CCM meetings are taking place. Although some respondents indicated that the selection process for representatives from the civil society was transparent, others called for an improvement in the selection process. Lesotho request funding for only HIV/AIDS and TB programmes; there is a representation of groups of people living with HIV/AIDS within the CCM but no representation for groups of people living with TB. It was observed that there was no consideration for gender balance during the selection of CCM representatives.

Since membership within the CCM is centralized (all members are from the capital), civil society organisations represented in the CCM are requested to hold regular consultations with their constituencies, including those at the districts. There have been limited consultations held in the past. Almost all the respondents agreed that there was no proper system or procedures established for civil society representatives to use for reporting back to their constituencies. Respondents from the civil society expressed concern about the quality of their representation within the CCM and their level of familiarity with Global Fund procedures. Some of them indicated that they often did not fully understand the technical language used within the CCM. The CCM Secretariat has tried to address this issue by sending representatives from the CCM to trainings as well as by inviting consultants from the Regional Technical Support Facility, to conduct orientations for CCM members; however attendance at these events by civil society representatives has been poor. Most respondents reported being involved in the

decision-making process and that they were treated as equals partners within the CCM. There was however mixed reaction towards transparency regarding decision-making as instances were cited where decisions seem to have been made before CCM meetings. Some respondents indicated this to the lack of understanding of the role of the different bodies within the CCM.

All respondents reported taking part in the proposal development process. There was however dissatisfaction on the conduct of announcement for concept papers and proposals which precedes the development of the country proposal. Respondents indicated that the announcements do not include detailed guideline on how to structure submissions for concept papers and too little notice is given to allow time for the preparation of quality concept papers. Furthermore civil society organisations not represented within the CCM don't understand what "call-for-proposals" means. This highlights an apparent lack of detail or guidance in these announcements and also justifies the fact that CSOs represented within the CCM don't hold regular consultations with their constituents to inform them on Global Fund issues. Oversight of Global Fund grants is expected to be the responsibility of the CCM Secretariat; however this role is provided by the Global Fund Coordinating Unit, a semi-autonomous body housed in the Ministry of Finance, which has historically been the sole Principal Recipient.

Civil society organisations have supported grant implementation of projects supported by the Global Fund, acting as Sub-recipients. There was mixed opinion by most respondents on the grant implementation process. For the first time, there will be two Principal Recipients to implement grants for Round 8; one will be from the government and the other from the civil society. Most respondents indicated that the nomination of a civil society entity to be one of the PRs will test the readiness and extent of leadership of civil society organizations to implement Global Fund grants in the country.

A number of challenges were identified as hindering the meaningful engagement of civil society organisations within the CCM. These include lack of understanding by the civil society representatives of Global Fund issues, inadequate capacity building programmes for civil society organizations, financial and other resource constraints, poor communication and absence of information sharing among the civil society, the attitude of moving from one institution to another within the civil society(changing jobs), lack of alliances and partnership.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

- ***Establish an Independent CCM Secretariat:*** The setting up of an independent CCM Secretariat that is protected from possible bias and capable of providing much needed support to CSOs and other CCM members and properly coordinate CCM meetings will be paramount. It is also important to promote and encourage the use of the website that has just been developed which will also facilitate easy access to Global Fund documents and other relevant materials pertaining to CSOs.
- ***Invest in Capacity Building "In-Country Technical Support Facility":*** Funding should be solicited from international donors, bilateral and multilateral agencies to establish a Technical Support Facility in the country. The establishment of an in-country technical support facility will be very useful as it will strengthen a wide range of technical skills and capacities among the civil society. This

facility could also serve as a reference point where civil society organisations could request for technical assistance not only for Global Fund programs but for other service delivery areas as a whole.

- ***Organize Exchange Visits:*** Experience has shown that learning from best practices enormously contribute towards effective program delivery. The CCM Secretariat should consider organizing yearly exchange programs where civil society representatives can undertake a tour to neighbouring countries. Through such visits, civil society representatives will learn how their counterparts operate within their respective CCMs. This will create an opportunity for these civil society representatives to transfer such best practices in Lesotho.
- ***Promote the Holding of meetings with constituents:*** Representatives from the civil society who are in the CCM should be made more accountable for serving the interest of their constituents. They should be reminded to hold regular consultations with their constituents. These representatives should have a terms-of-reference addressing their responsibilities within the CCM. Furthermore, their roles in the CCM should be monitored and made known of what they asked, what they contributed in the meetings and how they served the interests of their constituents.
- ***Review Criteria for Selection and Nomination of CCM members:*** These criteria will enable the right people to represent the civil society and other sectors as well. Among the civil society, those nominated should be people who are knowledgeable about Global Fund processes and can freely discuss these processes in any CCM forum. Those representing various sectors should not necessarily be the head of their respective organizations as these individuals may not have the time to fully commit to active membership and participation in CCM meetings, committees and trainings. Such establishments should designate a focal person who will be a point-of-contact for Global Fund & CCM issues and will report back to his/her head of establishment and their respective constituency on the proceedings of Global Fund issues in Lesotho.
- ***Scale-up Communication of Global Fund Issues to the Wider Public:*** People who are outside the CCM don't understand what the Global Fund is doing for them. The CCM Secretariat should intensify and broaden the communication of Global Fund issues to enable the population to better understand how the Global Fund is working to improve their lives. Newsletters should be widely circulated right to the grass root level.
- ***Ensure that Call for Proposals carry detailed Information:*** The CCM Secretariat should ensure that announcements and calls for proposals should carry detailed information that will enable CSOs in the country as a whole to be able to develop concept proposals such that their concerns could be properly incorporated in the country proposal.
- ***Develop a clear guideline of responsibilities of CCM members:*** The CCM Secretariat should come with a guideline on the roles and responsibilities of its members as this will enhance performance within the CCM.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) is an international financing institution which was established in 2002 to support large scale prevention, treatment and care programs against these three diseases. The fund enables countries to strengthen their health systems and provides training for those who deliver them. Since its creation the Global Fund has established its self as an important player towards global health financing and has been the main source of finance for programs to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria with approved funding to date of US \$ 14.9 billion in 140 countries across the globe.¹ Around the world, millions of people affected by these three diseases have benefited enormously from grants supported by the Global Fund.

The Global Fund encourages the principle of country ownership in the design and implementation of grants. This is meant to ensure that local needs are identified by local actors and that programs and strategies are designed at national and local levels to reflect those needs accordingly. It emphasizes issues of participation and accountability as critical elements necessary for effective grant implementation. Participation within the Global Fund necessitates a multi-stakeholder partnership. For such a partnership to work effectively processes must be open and transparent and be conducted in accordance with agreed rules and procedures.² The Global Fund finances programmes that focus on the creation, development and expansion of partnerships among all relevant stakeholders including governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), multilateral and bilateral agencies and the private sector. It also aims to strengthen the participation of communities and people particularly those affected by AIDS, TB and malaria.³

At national level, the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) are central to the Global Fund's commitment to local ownership and participatory decision-making. As the Global Fund's board at the headquarters represents a public-private partnership, so are CCMs also expected to represent a public-private partnership. CCMs brings together representatives from the public and private sectors, including multilateral or bilateral agencies, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, businesses and people living with these diseases.⁴ Each of these representatives brings together a number of actors, each with unique skills, background and experience. These country level partnerships develop and submit grant proposal to the Global Fund headquarters based on country needs.

¹ Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Available at <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/> (Accessed on 26th March 2009).

² Country Coordination Mechanisms. Governance and Civil Society Participation. Global Fund Implementers Series. November 2008.

³ The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. A Report on the Country Coordination Mechanism Model. The Global Fund Implementers Series. August 2008

⁴ Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, The Country Coordination Mechanism. Available at <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/ccm/> (Accessed on 26th March 2009)

The CCM is therefore aimed to function as a national consensus group to promote true partnership in the development and implementation of Global Fund supported programmes that are truly transparent throughout the decision-making process. As a matter of fact, the CCM should be as inclusive as possible promoting gender balance and representation at the highest level across the various sectors.⁵

Across several countries, non-governmental organisations and community groups play a very crucial role in responding to HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. Civil society organisations can bring urgency to planning and resource mobilisation, inform program development, give voices to vulnerable population, deliver community-based services and hold policy makers accountable for concrete results.⁶ In Lesotho, civil society organisations are part of the governance processes within the CCM. Yet, there is lack of adequate information on the role of civil society representatives within the CCM, no information whether these individuals truly represent their constituents at the grass root level. Furthermore, a lot remains to be known on the challenges that they were facing for them to be fully engaged in all aspects of the Global Fund in the country. An ineffective civil society within the CCM may result in the country proposal not addressing the concerns of community-based organisations and inadequate service delivery upon approval of funds at community level. The present study was therefore conducted to provide light on the extent of engagement of CSOs within the CCM in Lesotho.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess the role of civil society organizations in the Global Fund governance and decision-making processes within the CCM in Lesotho. Specifically, the study sought to explore the areas of civil society involvement and representation within the CCM, their participation in decision-making, participation in proposal development and grant implementation and to identify the factors that are hindering the meaningful engagement of the civil society organisations within the CCM; in order to come up with policy recommendations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design and Data Collection

The study was a qualitative study designed to obtain the views, feelings and perceptions of stakeholders on the level of engagement of civil society organisations within the CCM. Furthermore the study was formulated to assess how the core principles underpinned by the Global Fund Framework document (national ownership, multi-stakeholder participation, transparency and accountability) were being conceptualized and practiced within the CCM in Lesotho.

Data was collected through an internet search and review of Global Fund documents and other country related documents as well as other consultative mechanisms in which CSOs have been engaged. There was also a review of CCM documents of Lesotho such

⁵ Supporting Community Action on AIDS. National Civil Society Consultation on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. New Delhi, India. April 2005

⁶ Making Global Fund Country Coordination Mechanisms work through engagement of civil society. CCM Advocacy Report. The International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC). October 2008

as CCM by-laws, minutes of CCM meetings, CCM sub-committee minutes, progress reports and other documentation from the website⁷ of the Global Fund Coordinating Unit. Interviews and consultations were conducted with key stakeholders in Lesotho with the help of an interview guide developed. The key stakeholders included representatives of the Global Fund Coordinating Unit⁸ (GFCU), the government and international organisations who were members of the CCM, civil society organisations who are represented in the CCM, CSOs who are not represented in the CCM, the Principal Recipient and observers who had attended CCM meetings.

2.2 Data Analysis

Interview responses and notes collected were immediately developed electronically after each interview. All responses were then organized and the completed data was carefully reviewed. The data was then coded, organizing it into similar categories. Patterns, tendencies and themes were later identified, through which the data was later analyzed by content.

2.3 Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of limitations. The CCM defines civil society as national and international NGOs, private sector, academia and network of people living with these diseases. Firstly, according to this report, civil society organisations refers to national NGOs/FBOs, private sector, academia and network of people living with these diseases and does not include international NGOs. Secondly, the findings outlined in this report are generally the perceptions and feelings reported by the stakeholders who were interviewed. The author did not attend any CCM meeting to validate the responses given by the stakeholders. Thirdly, this study was conducted at a time when some stakeholders had busy schedules and so the amount of time allotted for interviews was short, there was therefore not enough time for the researcher to probe responses to get an in-depth understanding of the issues facing civil society organisations within the CCM. Fourthly, the subject matter for the study may have been considered by some stakeholders as being politically sensitive since Global Fund at country level involves the government; as a result there might have been some response bias.

⁷The Global Fund Coordinating Unit of Lesotho developed a website that went operational in October 2008. It could be accessed at <http://www.gfcu.org.ls>

⁸In this report, CCM Secretariat and Global Fund Coordinating Unit are used interchangeably. They virtually refers to the same entity.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Civil Society Representation and Involvement within the CCM

“The Global Fund recognizes the importance of national contexts, customs and traditions and therefore does not intent to prescribe CCM compositions. However in accordance with its guiding principles, the Global Fund expects CCMs to be broadly representative of all national stakeholders in the fight against the three diseases. In particular the fund encourages CCM to aim at gender balanced composition. The CCM should be inclusive as possible and seek representation in the highest possible level of various sectors” Global Fund CCM guidelines.

The composition of the CCM is Lesotho consist of 25 members as follows:

- 7 representatives from the government sector
- 3 private sector representatives
- 7 representatives from civil society organisations
- 2 representatives from groups of PLWHA
- 1 representative from the academic sector
- 5 representatives from the multilateral/bilateral agencies

Global Fund guidelines recommend that a minimum of 40 percent of total CCM membership should come from NGOs. Civil society organisations within the CCM in Lesotho are considered to be national and international organisations, private sector, academia and network of people living with these diseases. By this definition, civil society represents 52 percent of membership within the CCM, which entails that representation is satisfactory. All respondents agreed that the number of representatives from the civil society was adequate for the moment. However there were serious doubts as to their participation (national NGOs in this context) as well their quality of representation. Most respondents indicated that the issue was not about representation but for civil society organisations to raise their voices during CCM deliberations. The CCM ensures that the process of selecting members representing the civil society is transparent. Wider meeting are organized through which members are selected. Minutes of such meetings are documented to ensure that the selection process was transparent. Legitimacy of the selection process was questioned by a few respondents from the civil society. Satisfaction on the selection process among respondents varied; although most said the selection process was transparent, some called for the improvement in the selection process. Respondents cited instances where a particular sector in the civil society had more representation. Although the Global Fund has outlined rules about the selection of representatives from different sectors, this is impractical in Lesotho due to the lack of sectors. Some respondents recognized the need for the improvement of the selection process particularly among CSOs, in order to ensure broader and more active participants who can fully advocate for the concerns of civil society.

Lesotho doesn't request funding from the Global Fund for malaria programs (malaria is not endemic in the country). Funding is only requested for HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB). There is representation for groups of people living with HIV/AIDS but none for groups of people living with TB. The presence of PLWHA in the CCM (due to existence of a national network of PLWHA in the country) has relatively improved acceptance of this group of persons. There was a mixed opinion by respondents about representation of people suffering from these diseases. Some argued that since people

with HIV usually suffer from TB they should be considered under the same group. Other respondents reported that despite HIV-TB co-infection, there are people in Lesotho who are sick only of TB and have no HIV infection. This group of people also needed to be represented in the CCM as well. The main difficulty expressed by many was the lack of organisation within local group of people living with TB. Broadly speaking most sectors represented in the CCM work in the area of HIV/AIDS except TB programs taken care by the government. There is therefore dominance of HIV/AIDS issues over TB during CCM deliberations, reported some respondents.

Another issue of concern expressed by respondents from the civil society was that they were not very familiar with Global Fund processes due to their complexity. Some respondents said they only learn these processes when they attend CCM meetings, “learning by attending meetings”. Some indicated that the language within the CCM was too “technical” (most especially in TB discussions) and so they some times found it difficult to follow deliberations. *“Sometimes I hear PR, LFA, SR, I need to understand what these acronyms stand for”*, reported one respondent. Orientation meetings have been organized for CSOs to be trained on Global Fund issues. However most respondents from the civil society said these orientation workshops organized are usually short for them to learn all the processes which they have to know. The reality is that despite the fact that such meetings are organized, attendance to orientation workshops is discouraging. Some members from CSOs who are expected to come for these orientations sometimes don’t show up, this was a major concern raised by other CCM members.

Gender equality is also recommended by the Global Fund within the CCM especially during the selection process. It was observed that during this process, there is no consideration for gender balance. More women than men were reported in the CCM of Lesotho. This was explained by the uniqueness of the country’s demography, where women make up a majority of the population, are more educated and therefore occupy most positions within institutions in the country.

CCMs are encouraged to include representation from the sub-national level (states/provinces/districts), either through direct geographical representation in national CCMs or through mechanisms such as a sub-national CCM or state/ province-level committees. Obtaining true representation can be difficult for a country like Lesotho due its geography and landscape. Membership within the CCM is centralized as all members are from the capital. As a result, civil society organisations represented in the CCM are requested to hold regular consultations with their constituencies (including those in the districts and communities) not only to ensure that their views and concerns are expressed within the CCM, but that they are kept abreast about how the CCM is proceeding. The reality is that these consultations do not happen regularly. Almost all respondents agreed that there was no proper system or procedures established for civil society representatives to use for reporting back to their constituencies. Most respondents identified difficulties in holding such consultations with their constituents, citing financial difficulties, lack of time and difficult communication facilities.

Documents from the Secretariat are made available and information is circulated to CCM members. A few respondents indicated that these documents are shared to members only a few days to CCM meetings and so due to the short time frame, they usually do not have time to read through these documents in preparation for CCM

meetings. In addition, most respondents from the civil society expressed concerned that CCM documents are so bulky and complex to read and understand. Furthermore instances of lack of resources were indicated to access CCM documents, especially in printing the documents.

3.2 Civil Society Participation in Decision-making within the CCM

According to CCM guidelines, all members should be treated as equal partners with full rights to participation, expression and involvement in decision-making in line with their areas of expertise. The guidelines also state that it is essential that all relevant partners be involved in planning, decision-making and implementation.

In Lesotho, most respondents reported being involved the decision-making processes of the CCM. They reported being treated as equal partners within the CCM especially with regards to personal relationships. Although differences exist in terms of technical knowledge, respondents acknowledged a cordial and friendly relationship during CCM deliberations. The views of CSOs are taken into consideration when decisions are being made. A few respondents from the civil society reported that although the development partners dominate discussions within the CCM, from time to time they challenge the views of the development partners and the government. One particular concern expressed by some respondents was that representatives from the civil society sometimes just validate decisions which are taken due to their lack of contribution during the deliberation of the issues. Some respondents said this was due to their lack of knowledge of Global Fund processes and issues being discussed and therefore contribute little during deliberations. A few respondents from the civil society said sometimes they were like “watch dogs” as a result of their silence during meetings. Furthermore, a few respondents also expressed the fact that in CCM meetings, people want things to be done fast due to the short duration of the meeting; consequently there is not enough time for deliberation before decisions are taken. Transparency towards decision-making was reported in 80 percent of the time within the CCM. A few questioned the extent of transparency in decision-making, as there are times where decisions are already taken prior to CCM meetings, and therefore brought in just for endorsement. *“There was a time when I was asked to sign a decision made whereas I was not involved when the decision was made. In addition to the fact that I realized that there was a lot of personal interests within the CCM and not for those who were suffering from these diseases, I had to stop attending CCM meetings, asking my alternate to be attending.”* said a respondent from the civil society.

3.3 Involvement in Proposal development

Lesotho has been quite successful in its proposals submitted to the Global Fund headquarters in Geneva. Its proposal have been successful for Round 2 (HIV and TB) in 2003, Round 5 (HIV) in 2005, Round 6 (TB) in 2006, Round 7(HIV) in 2007 and most recently Round 8(HIV) in 2009. Civil society organisations are involved in the proposal development process. Their participation in Round 8 was very commendable as the process was truly participatory and inclusive, reported some respondents.

Proposal development commences with announcement from the CCM Secretariat where requests for concept papers from all sectors of the country are made. Most respondents raised concern on the conduct of announcements during call for concept papers. Respondents indicated that during announcements there is no detailed guideline given to

CSOs on how to structure their concept papers and also the short time frame given for submission. Some respondents indicated that in other countries, call for concept proposals carry detailed information on how these concept proposals should be structured. In such a situation, many reported that international organisations represented in the CCM will have the advantage of submitting proposals in time and in a concise format, since they have a broad experience in proposal writing and are more familiar with Global Fund processes. Some civil society respondents also expressed concern for the fact that when they send in concept proposals, they don't receive replies from the CCM secretariat, even in situations where their concept papers were not selected. Respondents expressed the need for such replies, which will indicate what was lacking in their proposal such that they could use that information to improve subsequent proposals which they will develop for the next round. Feedbacks are reportedly sent only to those civil society organisations whose concept papers are successful.

There was a lack of understanding regarding call for proposals among civil society organisations interviewed who are not represented in the CCM. They reported that their understanding was that during such announcements, the CCM Secretariat was soliciting proposals that would result in the Global Fund providing funding for them. They don't understand that during this process, these concept papers and proposals are meant to be incorporated into the country proposal which is to be submitted to the Global Fund headquarters. This also justifies the absence of proper information sent out during these announcements and also highlights the fact that CSOs represented within the CCM don't hold consultations with their constituents to inform them about CCM issues and procedures. Most respondents said writing of concept papers and proposals was a problem for CSOs as most of them find it difficult to design logframes which occupies a significant part of the country proposal. Most respondents from the civil society agreed that by establishing partnership with international organizations they may benefit from more effective proposal development.

3.4. Involvement in Grant Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Grant oversight is one of the most critical governance roles played by CCMs. The Global Fund guidelines specify that: CCMs are responsible for the oversight of grant implementation; CCMs are required to carry out a full analysis of implementation before the end of the first two years, and to submit a request for the second phase of grant allocation; PRs must report to CCMs on implementation progress.

In Lesotho grant oversight is coordinated by a body called the Global Fund Coordinating Unit (GFCU). It is a semi-autonomous body within the Ministry of Finance, which has historically been the sole Principal Recipient (PR). The GFCU presently acts as the CCM Secretariat. It has established internal systems for monitoring day-to-day grant performance and measuring it against targets and reports to the CCM. Based on the CCM partnership model, civil society organisations, through its representatives both inside and outside the CCM, plays a meaningful role implementing grants acting as Sub-Recipients (SR). Deficiencies in oversight seriously affect the CCM's ability to ensure good governance in the use of the resources provided by the Global Fund. During grant implementation, technical support is provided to those CSOs that are implementing Global Fund grants. However there was mixed opinion about grant implementation, while some respondents said the government was

implementing most of Global Fund grants, others said the international organisations had the advantage in implementing Global Fund grants because they have the right capacity, systems, procedures and policies in place.

Round 8(HIV) grant implementation, which will focus on Community Systems Strengthening⁹ (CSS), will be the first time that there will be two PRs (in accordance with the dual track financing facility recently adopted by the Board of the Global Fund); one from the government sector and the other from the civil society sector. Most respondents indicated that the nomination of a civil society entity to be a PR for the first time will serve as a test to evaluate the readiness and extent of leadership on which civil society organisations can implement Global Fund grants in Lesotho. Programs that civil society had been implemented in the past were being monitored with support from the GFCU which then prepares a progress report on grant implementation for sharing to the CCM. It was reported that the Local Fund Agent (LFA) conducts quarterly programmatic audits of grant implementation considering that Global Fund grants are performance-based. Some respondents were however concerned of the fact that there were some service delivery areas that were not paid much attention in the past grants which were implemented.

3.5 Challenges facing the Civil Society for Meaningful Participation within the CCM.

Respondents from the civil society were asked to identify the challenges that they were facing for their meaningful participation within the CCM. The following aspects were identified as impeding their effective participation within the CCM.

- **Lack of Understanding on Global Fund issues**
Lack of knowledge on Global Fund processes was among the key challenges highlighted by all respondents. Inadequate understanding of these processes was greatly hindering their meaningful participation.
- **Inadequate Capacity Building Activities**
Although new members are oriented through workshops organized, most respondents said the duration for these training was too short for them to fully understand these processes. In addition, they identified lack of capacity within their institutions as a major obstacle not only for Global Fund programs but for other programs which they were implementing.
- **Financial and Resource Constraints**
Most civil society organisations lack the necessary financial resources to fully carry out their work. Some CCM members reported that printing of large documents from the CCM Secretariat was a big problem for some CSOs. Lack of resources also impedes them to engage and hold regular consultations with their constituents. Respondents also indicated that as a result of lack of finances, they could not properly communicate with their constituents.

⁹ The Community Systems Strengthening is designed to give the opportunity for affected countries to strengthen the essential work of community based organisations to effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in affected countries. The Global Fund has approved a grant worth US\$ 35,626,151 under the CSS to Lesotho for the first phase of Round 8.

- **Poor Communication and Information Sharing among civil society organisations.**

Respondents reported that there was poor information flow among civil society both within and outside the CCM. This has resulted in a gap in communication about CCM issues among civil society organisations. In this situation, CSOs do not share and learn from each other. Most respondents recognized that communication and information sharing was necessary among themselves, such that it enable them also form alliances and partnership so as to confront CCM procedures.

- **Tendency of Changing Jobs within the Civil Society**

It was reported that individuals who occupy positions within civil society organisations (and who are sometimes made CCM representatives) have a tendency of resigning from their positions to move to another institution. In this situation there is a “gap in continuity” Although the alternate member can fill in this gap, initially a vacuum is created. It will take time for this alternate member to fully integrate his/herself within the CCM and to fully understand and participate meaningfully in the CCM.

- **Absence of Alliances and Partnership among CSOs**

There is an observable lack of alliances and partnership among civil society organisations in the CCM and outside the CCM. CSOs haven’t understood the importance of partnership for effective service delivery. Most respondents from the civil society indicated that the lack of partnership amongst them was greatly hindering their effective participation in Global Fund programs and other areas of health service delivery.

5. CONCLUSION

The involvement of civil society organisations within the CCM has been a welcome initiative to ensure that development programmes are planned and implemented by all relevant actors, sharing the views and concerns of every one in the country. The Global Fund has just been in existence for a few years and its procedures, policies are still new in the eyes of civil society organisations. Although some work has been undertaken in Lesotho to empower civil society organisations, much remains to be done to ensure that civil society organisations occupy leadership positions within the Global Fund processes in the country. Despite the fact that civil society organisations in the country felt that they were not given central stage in the implementation of Global Fund grants, the reality is that these organisations need a lot of support to attain this level. The lack of capacity within these civil society organisations needs to be addressed at both institutional and organisational level. For most civil society organisations, participation within the Country Coordination Mechanism is an on-going learning process and therefore as time progresses, their level of meaningful engagement will certainly improve.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- **Establish an Independent CCM Secretariat**

CCM meetings are key within the Global Fund issues at country level. It is therefore important that all representatives of the CCM have the necessary information and documentation well in advance to prepare and consult with their constituents. The establishment of an independent CCM Secretariat will ensure that meetings are well facilitated in a manner that all members actively participate, deliberations properly recorded in minutes which are circulated to members and most especially that decisions made during meetings are followed-up with verified implementation. This secretariat should have a documentation section that has all relevant documents, reports, previous proposals, grantee reports, and minutes of CCM meetings. This will enable easy access of these documents to CSOs and CCM members. In addition the CCM Secretariat should encourage CCM members, the wider civil society and the population as a whole to make good use of the website that has been developed for easy access to relevant documentation, Global Fund news and other relevant links.

- **Invest in Capacity Building “In-Country Technical Support Facility”**

Orientation and training of new members should be conducted regularly as this will enable CSOs to be more knowledgeable about CCM issues. Investing in capacity building which is continuous is paramount for enable CSOs to increase their capacity, effectiveness and viability of CSOs delivering services. The CCM need to identify the capacity gaps within CSOs represented in the CCM because these representatives will need technical assistance before they can have a firm command of Global Fund governance and processes. The establishment of an in-country technical support facility would be very useful as it will strengthen a wide range of technical skills and capacities. Actions that may be required to enable CSOs to effectively manage Global Fund grants include, but not limited to strengthening their institutional capacity; management capacity (especially financial management systems, procurements, logistics and personnel), strengthen their technical capacity (especially in areas of proposal development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting). Setting up such an in-country technical support facility may be costly, but resources could be sourced from many agencies that may be willing to support as long as it will be beneficial to addressing the capacity gap in the country. Civil society organisations can readily request support from this facility at any time. This mechanism will enable civil society organisations not only to be strengthened on Global Fund issues but to other service delivery programmes as a whole.

- **Organize Exchange Visits**

Lessons learnt from other countries can help the civil society to properly engage in the CCM. The CCM should organize annual visits for selected representatives from the civil society to visit other CCMs in neighbouring countries such as Swaziland, South Africa, and Namibia. Through this civil society representatives will understand how their counterparts in these countries operate

and learn best practices. It is understood that organizing such an initiative may demand financial costs, but there are many agencies that will be willing to finance this initiative as long as it is going to improve the understanding and increase civil society participation in the governance structures within the CCM.

- **Promote the Holding of meetings with constituents**

CSOs should be reminded and encouraged to consult their constituents before and after CCM meetings. The CCM should remind members for the need to hold regular consultations with their constituents. Members should understand that frequent consultations with their constituents are a requirement for being a member of the CCM. Those representing the civil society should have a terms-of-reference on their responsibilities within the CCM. The TOR should address what is expected of them from their constituencies, define how they should be able to report on what happened during the meeting, what they contributed and commented during the meeting and how they served the interest of the organisation.

- **Review Criteria for Selection and Nomination of CCM members**

The CCM should come up with selection criteria on how CCM members are selected, among both the civil society and probably among other sectors as well. Although Global Fund processes are still new, members to represent the civil society should have a basic knowledge of Global Fund procedures. Again representatives from the civil society should be people who can articulate and discuss Global Fund issues freely in any fora and who have a commitment to see that the views of the wider civil society are taken into concern. It is also important to strengthen the representation of vulnerable populations within the CCM. In other sectors, representatives should not necessarily be heads of establishments as these individuals already have a lot of work on their desks to accomplish and might not be able to fully commit time in attending meetings. A staff within such establishments could be designated for Global Fund issues, who attends meetings regularly and reports back to his/her head of establishment on proceedings of Global Fund issues.

- **Scale-up Communication of Global Fund Issues to the Wider Public**

The public which the CCM serves has little information about Global Fund services in the country. People who are outside the CCM should be able to have a basic idea about what the Global Fund is all about? What services are they providing? Which communities in the country are benefiting from Global Fund projects? etc. Most people in the communities believe that all the services provided to them come from the government, whereas that is not always the case. It is important to intensify the disseminating of information using media channels such as radio, television and regular slots on newspapers in the local language. Information dissemination to the public could also serve as a tool in which the CCM ensures transparency and accountability, not only among its members but to the country as a whole. The CCM Secretariat should also ensure that its newsletters¹⁰ are widely distributed to the grass roots and not only to major partners.

¹⁰ The Newsletter of the Global Fund Coordination Unit is known as “Share”. It is a not-for-sale quarterly newsletter with its first issue published in January 2009.

- **Ensure that Call for Proposals carry detailed Information**

The CCM secretariat should ensure that announcement for call for proposals should carry detailed information that will enable CSOs in the country as a whole to be able to develop concept proposals such that their concerns could be incorporated in the country proposals. The Secretariat should consider early advertisement to allow time for CSOs to properly develop their proposals. Furthermore, rejected proposals from CSOs should be sent a written rejection with reasons for rejection.

- **Develop a clear guideline of responsibilities of CCM members.**

The CCM Secretariat should come with a guideline on the roles and responsibilities of its members as this will enhance performance within the CCM. Members should bear in mind that they are responsible to ensure the smooth delivery of services to the target population. Accountability should be enhanced to ensure both upward and downward accountability.

ANNEX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Civil Society Involvement in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria: What Difference does it make in Lesotho?

Guide used for interviews and consultations with stakeholders.

Part One: Civil Society Involvement and Representation within the CCM.

1. How are CSOs selected to represent the CCM. Is the selection process transparent? Is there a term limit for membership? Who usually sets these criteria? Is there need for improvement in the selection process?
2. Are CSOs adequately represented within the CCM? How do you assess their level of representation? Is there consideration for gender balance during the selection process?
3. Are there groups living with HIV/AIDS and TB represented in the CCM? Is there a dominance of HIV over TB in CCM deliberations?
4. Are CSOs familiar with Global Fund processes? Do they receive trainings of Global Fund procedures?
5. Has there been any meeting organized by the CCM with the wider CSOs to discuss about funding mechanism of the Global Fund?
6. Do civil society members in the CCM seek input from and regularly report back to their constituencies on CCM issues?
7. In your opinion, do CSOs in the CCM act on the interest of people needing services to address these three diseases?
8. Do you receive information on time from the Secretariat to prepare for CCM meetings? Do you have difficulties in accessing CCM documents?
9. How frequently is information shared? Are there any barriers to proper dissemination of information to regular CCM members?

Part Two: Participation in Decision-Making

1. Are CSOs treated as equal partners within the CCM? Do they take part in decision making within the CCM? What are some of the difficulties CSOs have in fully taking part in decision making within the CCM?
2. Are the views of CSOs taken into consideration? Does the CSOs sometimes challenge the views of other CCM members?
3. Do you believe that decision-making within the CCM is transparent? How?

4. What are some of the issues that you believe should be address/improved with respect to transparency in decision making?

Part Three: Participation in Proposal Development

1. Are CSOs involved in proposal development? Do CSOs submit concept papers for the Country Proposal Development?

2. What are some difficulties towards concept paper submission? Do the CSOs receive replies or feedback from the secretariat on their proposals they submit? Is there need for improvement on this process?

3. Why do you believe international organisations have the advantage in proposal development?

4. What are some difficulties facing CSOs in the proposal development processes?

Part Four: Grant Implementation

1. Who is responsible for grant oversight? What role does the CCM undertake in this process?

2. How do you assess the role of the PR and SR in grant implementation? Does the selection of the PR and SR transparent?

3. What role do the CSOs play in grant implementation, monitoring and evaluation? Are they provided with technical support during grant implementation?

4. Are members of the CCM updated on the progress of grant implementation? Any need for improvements?

Part Five: Challenges facing the civil society

1. What are the challenges that are hampering the effective participation of civil society organisations within the CCM?