

**Successes and Next Steps in Engaging Men Who Have Sex with Men and
Other Key Populations:
MSMGF Report Back from the Windhoek PEPFAR COP Review**

June 18, 2015

During the week of June 8th, the Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) attended the PEPFAR Country Operational Plan (COP) Review held in Windhoek, Namibia, where COPs for 6 [PEPFAR recipient countries](#) – Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and Uganda – were reviewed. For three days, PEPFAR country teams met behind closed doors with U.S. Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) staff, reviewing COP proposals for budgets and programs for the 2016-2017 fiscal year (April 2016-March 2017). On days four and five, OGAC invited external stakeholders to participate in the reviews, including global civil society such as MSMGF, AVAC, and Health Gap, multilateral representatives from the Global Fund, UNAIDS, and the WHO, and in-country government officials and civil society.

MSMGF, working closely with the Cameroonian NGO Affirmative Action, attended the Cameroon COP review and **raised major concerns with the draft COP proposal**, including: 1) Insufficient clarity on security protections for community organizations working with key populations, 2) Weak key populations data, compounded by proposed underfunding of integrated bio-behavioral surveillance (IBBS) studies of men who have sex with men and female sex workers, 3) Unambitious national prevention coverage targets, and 4) Uncertainty over how program funds would reach community-based organizations rather than large international NGOs.

MSMGF also advised civil society advocates attending the Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and Uganda reviews, raising concerns with the key population-related components of their draft country proposals.

By week's end, **MSMGF and its civil society partners received commitments from OGAC and the PEPFAR teams that programming for key populations would be strengthened in the final approved COPs**. In Cameroon, the PEPFAR team declared their intent to work with the Global Fund to ensure adequate funding for IBBS of men who have sex with men and female sex workers, and claimed that prevention coverage targets for key populations would be more than doubled from initially proposed levels. OGAC also agreed to review the blocking by the local Ministry of Health of the release of IBBS data conducted with men who have sex with men and female sex workers in Namibia.

In addition, we learned that **OGAC is seeking input from global and local civil society** to:

- 1.) Provide revisions to the global COP guidance for 2016

- 2.) Provide rules of engagement for the PEPFAR civil society quarterly reviews set to begin in September
- 3.) Make changes to the format and content of future COP reviews

MSMGF will be working with its partners to provide OGAC with case studies of PEPFAR countries that document successes and challenges in engaging communities of men who have sex with men and other key populations. In addition, MSMGF will advocate that OGAC formalize a call to civil society for substantive feedback on draft COPs prior to reviews, and that time be set aside during reviews for civil society to collaborate across countries.

As the 2015 COP review cycle comes to a close next week in Dar es Salaam^{*}, we remind our civil society partners of the **crucial and urgent need** to:

- 1.) Ensure that you receive a final version of your country's approved COP, either once OGAC makes it publicly available on the [PEPFAR website](#), or directly from your PEPFAR country team
- 2.) Plan to participate in the first PEPFAR quarterly review meetings, set to take place in September
- 3.) Remain in contact with your PEPFAR country team to receive key populations programming and data, which is required to be released to civil society in advance of the quarterly reviews
- 4.) Communicate with other major donors and key stakeholders, such as the Global Fund and the local Ministry of Health, to align priorities for key populations programming
- 5.) Communicate with OGAC, either via your PEPFAR country team or through global civil society like MSMGF, to provide input on improvements to the civil society engagement components of the COP review process

Your PEPFAR country team can be reached via [your local U.S. embassy](#), which can also provide guidance on additional small grants that may be available through programs such as the [U.S. Ambassador's Small Grants Program](#). For background on the new PEPFAR COP process requirements, please consult our [March](#), [April](#), and [June](#) community updates.

As always, we greatly value receiving your thoughts and feedback, which help reinforce our advocacy efforts at local, regional, and global levels. We would appreciate hearing your perspectives on how PEPFAR engagement is going at country level, including examples of successes, positive experiences, and ongoing challenges. Please communicate your feedback and any questions/concerns you may have to Nadia Rafif,

^{*} In Dar es Salaam, draft COPs will be reviewed for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, and Tanzania.

Senior Policy Advisor, at nrafif@msmgf.org. We thank you kindly for your much-appreciated engagement with this critical process.

Kind regards,
The MSMGF