

Update on Successes and Challenges to Engagement of Key Populations in the PEPFAR 2015 Country Operational Plan Process

June 2015

The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) continues to work with the U.S. Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) and civil society networks to monitor the meaningful engagement of in-country key populations in the PEPFAR Country Operational Plan (COP) 2015 process. As we presented in our [March](#) and [April](#) community updates, OGAC has issued **new PEPFAR COP process requirements** that mandate a more meaningful engagement of PEPFAR country teams with civil society representatives of key populations in the PEPFAR COP 2015 process.

We have now completed three “regional COP review” meetings (in Atlanta in April, and Bangkok and Frankfurt in May), with two scheduled to occur in June in Windhoek and Dar es Salaam.* These meetings, convened by OGAC and attended by PEPFAR country teams, civil society representatives and other country-level stakeholders, are intended for the review and approval of final budgets and programs for the 2016-2017 fiscal year (April 2016-March 2017) for all [PEPFAR countries and regions](#).

We continue to identify challenges across COP reviews, including: 1) Insufficient country-level population size estimates of key populations, 2) Insufficient proposals to improve key populations data, 2) Inadequate consideration of worsening human rights conditions on provision of key populations programming, 3) Inadequate coverage targets for key populations, 4) Underfunding of key populations programming in country regions being deprioritized due to the PEPFAR “pivot,” and 5) Insufficient communication with in-country civil society groups that represent key populations.

We also note that several PEPFAR country teams have achieved successes in engaging key populations groups in COP processes. These successes include: 1) Holding multiple small meetings with civil society organizations during the COP drafting period, 2) Providing relevant data in advance to civil society, 3) Providing written feedback to civil society upon submission of COP drafts, and 4) Making available to civil society a final version of the approved COP. This high level of engagement has resulted in several instances of COPs setting ambitious targets for key populations programming, even when population size data is unavailable due to security concerns or inadequate funding.

* Countries/regions participating in the [Atlanta review](#): Caribbean Regional, Central America Regional, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Ukraine, Zambia; [Bangkok review](#): Asia Regional, Burma, Cambodia, Central Asia Regional, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam; [Frankfurt review](#): Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, South Sudan, Zimbabwe; [Windhoek review](#): Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda; and [Dar es Salaam review](#): Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania.

We remind our civil society partners that there are multiple ways to remain engaged in the PEPFAR COP processes, in 2015 and beyond. We remind you of the crucial and urgent need to:

- 1.) Stay in contact with your PEPFAR country team via email, phone, or ideally in-person meetings to communicate key populations programming and data concerns, **even after the COP is submitted to OGAC**
- 2.) Ensure that you receive a final version of the approved COP from the PEPFAR country team
- 3.) Participate in formal civil society consultations that are required to occur at least once a quarter, and advocate that these consultations include meaningful participation by key populations groups
- 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.) Advocate that normative guidance for key populations programming, such as the [WHO Consolidated Guidelines](#), be integrated into PEPFAR COP strategy

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](#).

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

Kind regards,

The MSMGF