

ROBERT CARR FUND
ANNUAL REPORT
2021

**Stronger
networks**

**stronger
communities**

Robert Carr Fund Annual Report 2021

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IAM: Queer think tank – support and strategic conversation with queer clergy and queer activists.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfricaNPUD	Africa Network of People who Use Drugs	INPUD	International Network of People who Use Drugs
APNSW	Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers	ITPC	International Treatment Preparedness Coalition
ARASA	AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa	LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy	MEL	Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning
ASWA	African Sex Workers Alliance	MENAHRA	Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	MSM	Men who have sex with men (referring to gay, bisexual and other MSM)
C19RM	COVID-19 Response Mechanism	NGO	Non-governmental Organization
CARAM Asia	Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility	Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discriminations Against Women	NSWP	Global Network of Sex Worker Projects
CIRW	Collective Impact Reflection Workshop	OGAC	Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (of the United States Government)
CND	Commission on Narcotic Drugs	OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
COP21	Country Operational Plan 2021	P2PNSP	Peer-to-Peer Needle and Syringe Programs
Coalition PLUS	Coalition Internationale Sida PLUS	PCB	Programme Coordinating Board (of UNAIDS)
CSO	Civil Society Organization	PEPFAR	The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
CSWC	Caribbean Sex Worker Coalition	PLAPERTS	La Plataforma de Personas que ejercen trabajo Sexual
CVC	Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition	PLHIV	People living with HIV
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia	PrEP	Pre-exposure prophylaxis
ECOM	Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity	RedTraSex	Red de Trabajadoras Sexuales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council	RedLacTrans	Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Personas Trans
EHRA	Eurasian Harm Reduction Association	RCF	Robert Carr Fund for civil society networks
ENPUD	Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs	SALC	Southern African Litigation Center
EOF	Exceptional Opportunity Funding	SANOP	Southern African Network of Prisons
EPLN	European Prison Litigation Network	SANPUD	South African Network of People who Use Drugs
EuroNPUD	European Network of People who Use Drugs	SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
EWNA	Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS	UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GCTA	Global Coalition of TB Activists	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
Global Fund	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GNP+	Global Network of People Living with HIV	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
HJN	HIV Justice Network	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
HLN	HIV Legal Network	WHO	World Health Organization
HRI	Harm Reduction International	WLHIV	Women Living with HIV
ICW	International Community of Women Living with HIV		
IDPC	International Drug Policy Consortium		
ISC	International Steering Committee of the Robert Carr Fund		
ISPs	Inadequately served populations		
IAM	Inclusive and Affirming Ministries		
INERELA+	International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS		

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Robert Carr Fund is the world's leading international fund focused on funding regional and global networks led by, involving and serving inadequately served populations¹ (ISPs) — people facing a higher HIV risk than the general population, as well as systematic human rights violations and barriers to information and services. The Fund functions as a pooled funding mechanism, leveraging the contributions of multiple funding partners for the common cause of improving the health, social inclusion and well-being of ISPs. As a cooperative effort of donors and civil society, the Robert Carr Fund is structured to maximize participation, empowerment, equity, transparency and accountability in fundraising and grant-making.

The Fund mobilizes and delivers core and strategic funding for regional and global networks to strengthen capacity of civil society and community networks; protection and promotion of human rights; improved access to HIV services; and mobilization and monitoring of national and international funding for human rights and health. For the 2019–2021 funding cycle, 24 grantees were selected for funding, representing 13 single networks and 11 consortia, for a total of 62 unique networks².

¹ Inadequately served populations (ISPs) are groups or persons that face a higher HIV risk, mortality and/or morbidity compared to the general population, and, at the same time, facing systematic human rights violations and barriers to information and services. ISPs include people living with HIV, gay men, bisexuals and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, people in prisons or other closed settings, sex workers, and transgender persons. Depending on the dynamic of the HIV epidemic and the legal status of these populations, ISPs may also include women and girls, youth, migrants and people living in rural areas.

² The 24 grantees are composed of 68 networks; however, six of these networks work under multiple grantee arrangements (e.g. consortia). Accounting for deduplication of these six, there were 62 unique networks at the beginning of the grant cycle. In 2020, reporting included only 60 unique networks, due to one network for which funding was never released, and one which stopped functioning in 2020. While there was no net change in the number of networks in 2021, the 60 unique networks reporting do reflect two actual changes: one network was added that was formed to replace the previous network which ceased operations in 2020; and one previously-reporting network was unable to submit data due to the political situation in the region.

The work funded by RCF aligns with its Theory of Change (see Annex 1), and results are measured using the Fund's Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning (MEL) framework (see Annex 2). The MEL framework is a unique conceptual framework that measures progress on 11 indicators, each associated with a series of milestone achievements that capture intermediate progress towards the ultimate desired changes.

AREA	THEME	OUTCOME INDICATOR	
Network strengthening outcomes	Organizational capacity	OI 1a	Number of networks with strengthened organizational status
		OI 1b	Number of networks with strengthened core staff structure
		OI 2a	Number of networks showing strengthened fiscal capacity and accountability
		OI 2b	Number of networks showing strengthened financial sustainability
		OI 3	Number of networks more representative of their constituencies and more democratically governed
Programmatic outcomes	Advocacy capacity	OI 4	Number of networks showing strengthened influence and capacity to unite and mobilize movements
	Human rights	OI 5	Number of networks contributing to an improved human rights environment for at least on ISP
		OI 6	Number of networks contributing to increased access to HIV services and programs
	Access to services	OI 7	Number of networks contributing to increased quality of HIV services and programs
		OI 8	Number of networks contributing to increased and sustainable financing of HIV response including ISP programs
	Resource accountability	OI 9	Number of networks contributing to improved HIV-related fiscal accountability

The primary purpose of this report is to provide a complete quantitative picture of RCF's 2021 progress against these indicators, accompanied by a selective summary of qualitative results. As this report also marks the end of the funding cycle, it additionally takes the opportunity to reflect on the cumulative results and compare final data to those collected at baseline.

This report is one of many sources of information about RCF's 2021 journey, complementing the broader and more diverse range of information available on grantee actions, progress and achievements that can be accessed on the RCF [website](#) and [social media](#).

Network Strengthening Outcomes

The RCF is unique in its commitment to supporting network strengthening through core funding, enabling civil society and community-led networks to build their organizational and advocacy capacity. Stronger organizational structures contribute to greater accountability, sustainability, and more effective programs. In 2021, all 60 reporting networks showed progress on at least one of the six indicators that measure change in network strength and influence. Highlights in progress included two networks achieving registration for the first time; and increases in staffing levels for over half of reporting networks. This suggests that RCF-supported networks have navigated the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic well, and used their established systems and capacity to continue successful fundraising despite challenging circumstances. Grantees continued to strengthen their financial systems, with a total of 53 networks (88%) having a Treasurer in place in 2021, with almost all of those (51; 85%) regularly monitoring financial reports. Networks showed accelerating gains in organizational planning and fundraising approaches, with 45 networks (75%) having a costed strategic plan in place (an increase of 12 networks over the previous year) and 47 (77%) having a current resource mobilization strategy (an increase of 10 networks over the previous year). There was also a large increase in the number of networks that reported adequate funding to implement their strategic plan for the next two years.

While the total (18 networks; 30%) still represents a minority of grantees, the increase of 10 networks from the previous year is encouraging. Governance function was strong, with only two networks reporting some interruption in Board function due to the pandemic, which in both cases was a continuation of challenges reported in 2020, and several grantees reporting strengthened governance structures as one of the most important results of having access to unrestricted core funding.

When considering influencing capacity, grantees continued their strong engagement in cross-sector partnership and working relationships with UN agencies, multi-lateral and bilateral donors and government agencies. Sixty-eight percent (41 networks) reported working with UNAIDS and 50% (30 networks) also worked with other UN partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), among others. Thirty-six networks (60%) reported engaging with the Global Fund for TB, Malaria and AIDS and fifteen (25%) worked with the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to achieve advocacy goals. Just under one-third of networks (19) engaged directly with state agencies, and eight (13%) with bilateral donors other than PEPFAR.

The 2020 patterns of grantee involvement in coordination councils and board delegations continued in 2021, and grantees likewise continued to grow in their leadership of issue-based coalitions. In addition to these expansions in influence, many grantees engaged in three key processes of 2021, to assure the representation of civil society and ISP perspectives:

- The development of the Global AIDS Strategy 2022–2026, via UNAIDS;
- The UN High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and resulting Political Declaration of 2021, with civil society engagement led by the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and Aidsfonds; and
- The shaping of the Global Fund Strategic Framework 2023–2028.

The engagement of grantees in these processes is itself notable, indicating that thriving civil society organizations have accessed a place at the decision-making table, from the grassroots efforts that feed up to regional consolidation of perspectives, experiences and needs, to the global level influence that assures that the voices of ISPs are heard in these spaces.

Programmatic Outcomes

RCF measures progress on advocacy outcomes along a continuum: from foundational steps (e.g. collecting evidence) to taking early and advance actions (developing and implementing campaigns), to booking advocacy results (achieving change). Across the three outcome areas (human rights, access to services and resource accountability), grantees showed consistent progress — both in achieving results often years in the making, progressing ongoing advocacy, or undertaking new advocacy, all in a constantly shifting political and global health security context.

All networks reporting on human rights programming (49 networks; 82% of all those funded) reported some level of progress in this outcome area. This included 23 (47%) reporting contribution to legal or policy change, while a further 15 (31%) reported changes in practice or enforcement of protective legislation or policy as a result of their efforts. In influencing access to or quality of services for ISPs, all 47 reporting networks (78% of all those funded) reported some level of outcome in the area. This included a total of 19 (40%) who reported an increase in the new ISP clients being served related to their advocacy efforts, while 11 (23%) reported that their advocacy resulted in increased retention in services or reduced loss-to-follow-up among ISPs. Further, 20 networks (43%) reported that their advocacy contributed to better quality of programming as reported by ISPs. While only 24 networks reported on resource accountability (40% of all those funded), all 24 reported some progress in this area. This included eight (33%) reporting results of their advocacy in the form of increased financial commitments to the HIV response and ISP programming, and three (13%) reporting delivery of increased financial commitments. Further details on all of these results, as well as a wide range of intermediate outcomes are available in the main body of this annual report.

Outcomes Across the Funding Cycle

Across three years of implementation, all 60 unique networks showed progress under the Network Strengthening Outcome Area, with 100% demonstrating progress under at least one of the six organizational strengthening indicators. This showed the diverse but consistent value of RCF funds in strengthening organizational capacity, particularly in terms of financial systems, governance, and strategic planning and fundraising.

Key accomplishments included a 42% increase in the number of networks with a Board Treasurer regularly monitoring financial reports; a 44% increase in the number of networks with a costed strategic plan in place; and a 61% increase in networks with a resource mobilization plan in place. RCF funds also supported networks in building their advocacy capacity, with 2021 results showing progress across the cohort of grantees in all but one metric measured. Highlights in this area included a growth in grantee engagement in and leadership of issue-based coalitions (36% growth over baseline) and in leadership on coordination bodies and board delegations at the regional and global levels (35% growth over baseline).

In the Programmatic Outcome Areas, grantees consistently delivered outcomes at the levels they had planned at baseline, even in spite of the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, grantee results highlights included the following results from across the funding cycle:

- 35 unique networks reported policy change linked to their advocacy in human rights;
- 29 reported improved practices in protection and enforcement of human rights;
- 30 reported contributing to an increase in service coverage for ISPs;
- 26 reported instances of improved retention in care related to their advocacy efforts;
- 41 contributed to improved quality of service as reported by ISPs;
- 11 reported that their advocacy contributed to an increase in financial commitments made (e.g. budget allocations) to HIV response and ISP programming; and
- 12 reported increased delivery of those commitments during this funding cycle.

These end-line results were complemented by a range of intermediate outcomes, including promising progress that is expected to result in legal, policy and financing change in the near future, as further detailed in the body of this report.

Core Funding Value Summary

Data from 2021 implementation year provides a third year of data on funding use, allowing RCF to assess trends in funding use³ for the first time. The table below provides a summary of how grantees used funding across each of the programmatic outcome areas.

Funding utilization	Human rights			Access to services			Resource accountability		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Basic operations of network	37%	68%	47%	43%	33%	50%	22%	39%	25%
Direct salary and support of individual staff responsible for the activity	37%	64%	39%	34%	28%	40%	19%	32%	19%
Directly supported aspects of this activity	20%	35%	19%	20%	15%	19%	8%	15%	7%
Part of small grants program	9%	15%	14%	8%	10%	10%	1%	4%	6%

Consistent across all three years was the pattern of core funding being used most frequently to support the basic operations of networks. The use of RCF funding for direct salary support for staff members to undertake advocacy work was the second most-frequent, once again across all programmatic outcome areas.

Across all programmatic areas, 2021 funding utilization rates more closely mirrored 2019 rates, while 2020 often appeared to be an outlier. This included both increases in the importance of core funding for basic network operations when conducting human rights work (68% in 2020, compared to 37% and 47% on either side of that year) and the increases in direct salary support for resource accountability work (32% in 2020, compared to 19% on either side of that year). Meanwhile, the importance of basic network operations was less frequent in 2020 for activities contributing to access to services (33% in 2020, compared to 43% and 50% on either side of that year). While it is difficult to draw conclusions about why these patterns occurred, it is clear that grantees prioritized the use of funding in different ways during the unprecedented year of 2020 – highlighting the importance of the flexibility of RCF funding in supporting grantee needs, not only as a regular practice, but especially during times of crisis and changing priorities.

³ It should be noted that data reported in this area are self-reports from network funded by grantees, and are based on grantee perspective and experience, rather than financial data. This is due to the nature of the milestones being reported against, and the fact that their achievement may involve multiple years of effort as well as a range of inputs, including executive staff and leadership time, that are difficult to quantify in traditional financial terms. Therefore, in collecting the data in this way, RCF is explicitly placing trust in grantees to know and recount their own experience in a qualitative manner. This approach is novel, and will receive special attention when reflecting on any adjustments that may need to be made for MEL processes in the next funding cycle.

Introduction

The Robert Carr Fund is the world's leading international fund focused on funding regional and global networks led by and involving and serving inadequately served populations⁴ (ISPs) — people facing a higher HIV risk than the general population, as well as systematic human rights violations and barriers to information and services.

The Fund functions as a pooled-funding mechanism, leveraging the contributions of multiple funding partners⁵ for the common cause of improving the health, social inclusion and well-being of ISPs. As a cooperative effort of donors and civil society, the Robert Carr Fund is structured to maximize participation, empowerment, equity, transparency and accountability in fundraising and grant-making.

The Fund is governed by an International Steering Committee (ISC), which sets strategic direction for the Fund; makes decisions about funding priorities; decides on funding allocations; supports fundraising; and oversees implementation of Fund activities. The Fund is administered by the Robert Carr Fund Secretariat, with support from a fund management agent, Aidsfonds. The Steering Committee and Secretariat are supported by a Program Advisory Panel, which reviews grant proposals and makes recommendations for funding to the Steering Committee, and provides programmatic advice about opportunities for funding, grantee capacity building and technical support, and monitoring and evaluation. Together with the grantees funded by the Fund, these bodies form the Robert Carr Fund Collective.

The year 2022 marks the 10-year anniversary of the Fund, an opportunity for reflection on the cumulative

positive impact of its investments over time. While the full story of the Fund's impact is beyond the scope of this report, the content below will begin to frame the status of long-term grantees at this 10-year mark.

Structure of the Robert Carr Fund's Work

The Fund mobilizes and delivers core and strategic funding for regional and global networks to achieve four outcomes:

- strengthening capacity of civil society and community networks (abbreviated: *Network Strength & Influence*)
- protecting and promoting human rights (abbreviated: *Human Rights*)
- improving access to HIV services (abbreviated: *Access to Services*)
- mobilizing and monitoring national and international funding for human rights and health (abbreviated: *Resource Accountability*).

⁴ Inadequately served populations (ISPs) are groups or persons that face a higher HIV risk, mortality and/or morbidity compared to the general population, and, at the same time, facing systematic human rights violations and barriers to information and services. ISPs include people living with HIV, gay men, bisexuals and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, people in prisons or other closed settings, sex workers, and transgender persons. Depending on the dynamic of the HIV epidemic and the legal status of these populations, ISPs may also include women and girls, youth, migrants and people living in rural areas.

⁵ Funding partners include the United States President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

ABOUT DR. ROBERT CARR

The Robert Carr Fund is named in honor of Dr. Robert Carr, a scholar and activist who worked tirelessly for human rights and an end to HIV in his native Caribbean region and globally. Dr. Carr was vocal, honest and unapologetic in naming injustices that contribute to poor health and prevent access to health services. He was a powerful organizer and advocate for the central role of civil society and communities in the HIV response.



Dr. Robert Carr.

This work aligns with the Fund's Theory of Change (see **Annex 1**), and results are measured using the Fund's Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning (MEL) framework (see **Annex 2**). The MEL framework is a unique conceptual framework that measures progress on 11 indicators, each associated with a series of milestone achievements that capture intermediate progress towards the ultimate desired changes.

The Robert Carr Fund explicitly and unapologetically values the process, as well as the end-result, acknowledging that advocacy efforts are often multi-year efforts and that ultimate outcomes may be either positively or negatively influenced by the external environment beyond the advocates' control.

Table 1. Summary of Robert Carr Fund Outcome Indicators

AREA	THEME	OUTCOME INDICATOR	
Network strengthening outcomes	Organizational capacity	OI 1a	Number of networks with strengthened organizational status
		OI 1b	Number of networks with strengthened core staff structure
		OI 2a	Number of networks showing strengthened fiscal capacity and accountability
		OI 2b	Number of networks showing strengthened financial sustainability
		OI 3	Number of networks more representative of their constituencies and more democratically governed
	Advocacy capacity	OI 4	Number of networks showing strengthened influence and capacity to unite and mobilize movements
Programmatic outcomes	Human rights	OI 5	Number of networks contributing to an improved human rights environment for at least on ISP
	Access to services	OI 6	Number of networks contributing to increased access to HIV services and programs
		OI 7	Number of networks contributing to increased quality of HIV services and programs
	Resource accountability	OI 8	Number of networks contributing to increased and sustainable financing of HIV response including ISP programs
		OI 9	Number of networks contributing to improved HIV-related fiscal accountability

About This Report

The following report is an account of outcomes reported by RCF grantees during 2021 — the end of the 2019–2021 funding cycle.

It includes three main sections:

- **Environment in 2021**, setting out the context in which grantees operated and achieved results
- **Outcomes from 2021 Work**, which is based on the progress reported within the framework of the MEL system, and is divided into two sets of indicators:
 - ▶ **Network Strengthening Outcome Indicators**, presenting the overall progress on organizational and advocacy capacity of RCF grantees
 - ▶ **Programmatic Outcome Indicators**, presenting progress and results achieved regarding advocacy within human rights, access to services and resource accountability
- **Core Funding Value Summary**, summarizing how RCF funds helped achieve the outcomes reported.

The MEL framework used to guide grantee reporting and produce the analysis for this report remain consistent with the 2019 and 2020 annual reporting. As in 2020, the report format used this year has been designed with the following assumptions in mind:

- It should be of a digestible length, with a main body of no more than 40 pages.
- Its primary focus should be to serve as an accountability tool, presenting the full range of statistical data and serving as a reference document of RCF's quantifiable achievements for the year.
- It should not be a communication tool for the Fund. Rather it should provide an information base from which the Fund can determine which areas of investment should be highlighted through other communications means, as guided by the Fund's communications and resource mobilization strategies.

The reader should note that while the report provides a quantitative picture of RCF's 2021 progress and the funding cycle as a whole, it offers a more selective range of qualitative results than some previous annual reports. Specifically, while the results section highlights the achievements of particular grantees in particular areas, it does not provide an exhaustive account of every achievement by every network, in every organizational strengthening or programmatic area.

For this reason, this annual report should be seen as one of many sources of information about RCF's 2021 and funding cycle journey. A broader and more diverse range of information is available on grantee actions, progress and achievements, which can be accessed on the [RCF website](#) and [social media](#).

Throughout the report, there are two types of summary box to help the reader glean the main messages from each section.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

These boxes provide a brief analytical summary of the quantitative and relevant qualitative evidence per indicator. They focus on 2021 data, but where relevant also provide commentary on the trend across the funding cycle for that individual indicator.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY

These boxes provide an analytical overview of a specific theme (see Table 1) across the entire funding cycle. They summarize relevant trends with regards to progress against baseline and/or against planned areas of intervention.

Information about additional RCF investments, including the Strategic Opportunity Funding (SOF) and Exceptional Opportunity Fund (EOF) are not covered in this report, and details of these can be found in separate reports that will become available later in 2022.

The Environment of 2021

While much could be written about the environment in which ISPs and their networks operated in 2021, the following summarizes key points raised by grantees themselves, when queried about major environmental factors impacting each outcome area's work.

In 2021, grantees continued to work in an environment where both ISPs and the networks serving them faced tremendous challenges. On an organizational level, networks faced shrinking civic space — particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia⁶, but also in some other countries. In Zimbabwe for example, a pending amendment to the Private Voluntary Organization law threatens to grant power to the government to overregulate any non-governmental activities. Estonia, which had previously been a safe haven for remote registration of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) without a “friendly” home country, began restricting this access, due to concerns from EU member states about its open door practice. On a global level, the barring of certain NGOs (including the International Network of People who Use Drugs — INPUD) from achieving Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) registration status continues to effectively block some partners from officially taking part in global bodies and discussions⁷, including the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)⁸.

Critical situations in some countries also exacerbated the difficulties of representing and mobilizing communities of ISPs. Military coups in Myanmar, Burkina Faso and Mali created environments of extreme instability. Efforts to register sex worker networks in Ghana, South Sudan, and Tanzania have faced discriminatory practices due to sex work being criminalized.

On a population level, ISPs faced familiar challenges of discrimination and lack of access to rights, services and resources, with some environments actively worsening. COVID-19, with its restrictions on movement, continued to provoke increased harassment from law enforcement, particularly for sex workers and people who use drugs. Under the pandemic, any form of civic engagement, including protesting, runs the risk of being seen as against the interests of public health — resulting in the mass detention of protestors⁹, among other restrictive measures. Restrictions against travel and gathering continued to hamper networks' abilities to meet and mobilize in person, forcing most activities to be virtual. This includes advocacy activities, which has severely limited access of civil society to political decision-makers and certain information.

Anti-ISP movements in certain countries further threatened the well-being of ISPs, including broad anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) movements in Ghana, Guatemala, Senegal¹⁰, and Uzbekistan. This, paired with continued violence against trans people, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, left LGBTIQ populations in a continued state of extreme vulnerability. People who use drugs (PWUD) also witnessed financing for harm reduction services continue to shrink, with the loss of donors such as the Open Society Foundations and the continued restriction of financing needle and syringe programs by PEPFAR.

⁶ <http://www.prisonlitigation.org/civilsociety/sidelining>

⁷ <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/349-ngos-call-for-positive-elections-to-un-body-that-opens-doors-to-civil-society>

⁸ <https://idpc.net/publications/2022/03/a-captured-gatekeeper-an-evaluation-of-drug-ngo-access-to-ecosoc-accreditation-and-the-un-committee-on-ngos>

⁹ <https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org>

¹⁰ <https://f24.my/86Y8.W>

Despite these challenges, 2021 also brought positive changes to some elements of grantee work. The year was an excellent opportunity for influencing major international frameworks with, for example, the development of the new Global AIDS Strategy¹¹, the UN High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and its subsequent Political Declaration, and strategy shaping work at the Global Fund and PEPFAR. The Generation Equality Forum saw US\$40 billion committed for gender equality and women's empowerment¹², and across countries and funding streams, grantees saw increased recognition of the significance of addressing mental health in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some population-specific signs of improved environment were noted. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights acknowledged the potential benefit of recognizing sex work as a regulated profession as part of a formal economy¹³ and the UN Human Rights Council recognizing the need for rights-affirming drug policy¹⁴. Some progress was noted in certain geographies as well, notably in the United States where the Biden administration took power and explicitly invested in reinstating the national HIV response, including addressing the harms of HIV criminalization¹⁵, and US policy on and investments in HIV internationally. Swiss adoption of same-sex marriage rights, alongside Canadian bans on conversion therapy for LGBTIQ populations, demonstrated further gains in the Global North. Meanwhile similar moves in Mexico (legalization of same-sex marriage in Sinaloa State) and India (moving to ban conversion therapy nationwide) provided examples of similar progress in the Global South.

While overall ISPs and the networks that serve them continued to work in a hostile environment, grantees also continued to find opportunities to challenge systems and amplify their impact in places where trends were more favorable. The next section describes the outcomes of their work in these environments throughout 2021.

A NOTE ON CONFLICT IN EASTERN EUROPE

The Robert Carr Fund is shocked by the ongoing events in Ukraine and we strongly condemn all violence. The Fund is deeply concerned about the safety and wellbeing of our civil society partners working in HIV response and all those whose access to life-saving HIV services is jeopardized due to the armed conflict. We stand in solidarity with our partners in Ukraine. We are monitoring the situation closely and will continue supporting our partners in any way we can. While this report presents the results of work done in 2021, grantee reporting took place in 2022 as scheduled. Thus the extreme circumstances impacted several grantees' ability to report as they normally would. The Secretariat appreciates the effort that went into reporting under these challenging circumstances.

¹¹ <https://www.unaids.org/en/Global-AIDS-Strategy-2021-2026>

¹² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25>

¹³ https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/seriea_27_esp.pdf

¹⁴ https://www.hri.global/files/2021/06/14/HRI_IDPC_Briefing_HRC_June_2021.PDF

¹⁵ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/12/01/remarks-by-president-biden-to-commemorate-world-aids-day-launch-the-national-hiv-aids-strategy-and-kick-off-the-global-fund-replenishment-process/>



RedTraSex: General Assembly in Panama.

Outcomes from 2021 Work

Network Strengthening & Influence Outcome Indicators

The following six indicators reflect elements of network strengthening and influence that are core to the RCF's Theory of Change, which asserts that institutionally strong networks are more able to influence change for ISPs. Work, and thus reporting, in these areas is mandatory for each unique network that receives RCF funding. This year, that total was 60 unique networks, representing a net increase of one from the previous year¹⁶. Therefore, all percentages presented in this section are calculated with a denominator of 60.

The data on the next pages describe grantee-reported progress in 2021, as well as the final, cumulative progress against the targets that grantees set for the full funding cycle (2019–2021).

¹⁶ While there was no net change in the number of networks, the 60 unique networks reporting do reflect two actual changes: one network was added that was formed to replace the previous network which ceased operations in 2020; and one previously-reporting network was unable to submit data due to the political situation in the region.

Reading the Numbers

At the close of the funding cycle, there is a significant amount of quantitative data available to describe grantee results and progress over three years.

For the indicators that fall under Network Strengthening, all networks are obliged to report data, and in most cases networks will be working to progress from Foundational Steps to Results, in a linear fashion. For instance:

- Once a network becomes formally registered, it can generally expect to stay in that category, and not need to cycle through the progression from Foundational Steps to through Early and Advanced Actions again.
- Once a network has a Treasurer in place to review its financial reports on a regular basis, this should always remain the standard by which it operates; while it is possible that regression could lead to a lapse without a Treasurer in place for a period, it

would be expected that the network would remedy this as soon as possible, to return to the previous state.

Thus, once a network achieves certain milestones in its strengthening, it needs only to maintain those gains, and not to constantly refresh its growth with new endeavors. In this case, data are presented with baseline values (e.g. the starting point for the cohort) and then subsequently with data showing the status of the grantee cohort for each year. To assess progress at the end of the funding cycle, the reader can look to 2021 numbers and compare them to baseline, to see progress. The table below, and the accompanying key, show how such data are presented for the Network Strengthening Outcomes.

		Baseline		2019		2020		2021	
		N=	C	N=	F	N=	F	N=	F
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
A	B	D	E	G	H	G	H	G	H

- A** Category of outcome (Foundational, Early Action, Advanced Action, Results)
- B** Indicator metric, describing the type of intermediate outcome measured
- C** Number of unique networks reporting at baseline, used as the denominator in the % column (E)
- D** The number of unique networks reporting a result at baseline
- E** The number of networks reporting a result at baseline (D) divided by the total number of reporting networks (C), expressed as a percentage
- F** The total number of unique networks reporting in this specific year, used as the denominator in the % column (H)
- G** The total number unique networks reporting a result on the specific metric, in this specific year
- H** The number of networks reporting a result for this metric (G) divided by the total number of reporting networks (F), expressed as a percentage

While it is generally assumed that most networks will strive for progression from the status in Foundational Steps to that in Results, consultations with grantees during the design and piloting process of the MEL made clear that there were exceptions to this assumption.

		Planned ¹⁷ for 2019– 2021 Cycle		New in 2019		New in 2020		New in 2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
Network Plans for New Engagement		N=	C	N=	E	N=	E	N=	E	N=	H	
		#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks	% of Planned
A	B	D		F	G	F	G	F	G	I	J	K

- A** Category of outcome (Foundational, Early Action, Advanced Action, Results)
- B** Indicator metric, describing the type of intermediate outcome measured
- C** The total number of networks reporting under this programmatic result area at baseline
- D** The number of networks that planned to achieve an outcome under this specific metric, at some point in the three-year funding cycle
- E** The total number of networks reporting under this programmatic result area, in this specific year; used as the denominator in the % column (G)
- F** The total number unique networks reporting a result on the specific metric, in this specific year
- G** The number of networks reporting a result under this specific metric, in this specific year (F), divided by the number of reporting networks (E); expressed as a percentage
- H** The cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) networks reporting in this programmatic outcome area across the three-year funding cycle, used as the denominator for the # column below it
- I** The number unique (de-duplicated) networks reporting on the specific metric, across the three-year funding cycle
- J** The cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) for this metric (I) divided by the cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) networks reporting in this programmatic outcome area (H); expressed as a percentage
- K** The cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) for this metric (I), divided by the number of networks that planned to achieve an outcome under this specific metric, at some point in the three-year funding cycle (D)

¹⁷ Here, “Planned” indicates a stated grantee intent to achieve an outcome in this area at some point in the three-year funding cycle. This should not be misconstrued as being a target, but rather as an intent. The latter is a flexible plan, based on the real needs of a network within the context it encounters during the three years of the funding cycle.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 1A:

Number of networks with strengthened organizational status

This indicator measures a network's basic status as a formal, operating body, indicating whether it has the legal authority to operate as a registered entity.

		Baseline ¹⁸		2019		2020 ¹⁹		2021	
		N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foundational Steps	Network has a newly-acquired fiscal agent	1	2%	1	2%	3	5%	1	2%
Early Action	Network has a stable relationship (>2 years) and long-term agreement with a fiscal agent	4	7%	2	3%	2	3%	4	7%
Advanced Action	Network is in the process of registering	8	13%	9	15%	9	15%	7	12%
Results	Network is registered	46 ²⁰	77%	47	79%	47	80%	47	80%

Network Plans for Growth	Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		New in 2019		New in 2020		New in 2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
	N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60	N=	61	
	#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks	% of Planned
Networks who planned to register during 2019–2022 funding period	10		1	2%	2	3%	2	3%	5	8%	50%

Statistical Narrative

In 2021, a total of 48 networks (80%) were legally registered, while seven were in the process of obtaining registration. This represents no net change of registered networks in comparison to 2020, though it includes two newly-registered networks and seven who continued their journey towards registration.

Only one network obtained a new fiscal agent, while four continued to work under stable, long-term relationships with fiscal agents while awaiting circumstances to allow legal registration. The details of these changes are provided in the Overview of Change on the next page.

¹⁸ Baseline reflects the situation as of 1 January 2019, as reported by grantees. This applies equally for all remaining tables in this section where baseline data are presented.

¹⁹ Data from 2020 are not cumulative unless otherwise noted, and reflect only what was achieved between 1 January and 31 December 2020. This applies equally for all remaining indicator tables in this report.

²⁰ This baseline value was adjusted down from 47 to 46, to account for one networks whose registration status was clarified in 2022 to have never been registered.

Overview of Change

During this 2021 reporting period, two networks obtained registration for the first time (Women's Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN) and Youth RISE/Harm Reduction Consortium). Six networks remained in the process of registering from the previous year: the African Network of People who Use Drugs (AfricaNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs), the Caribbean Sex Workers Coalition (CSCW/Sex Worker Networks

Consortium), the European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD/Harm Reduction Consortium), MENA Rosa, *La Plataforma de Personas que ejercen trabajo Sexual* (PLAPERTS/Sex Worker Networks Consortium), and Y-PEER Asia Pacific (Youth Consortium); and the newly-formed NAPUD (Network of Asian People Who Use Drugs/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs) prepared to begin its registration process for the first time.



Harm Reduction Consortium: The Kenyan Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Program participate in the WHRIN Support Don't Punish Campaign.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 1B:

Number of networks with strengthened core staff structure

This indicator measures a network's basic staffing structure and capacity, indicating whether it has the human resources to perform its work.

		Baseline		2019		2020		2021	
		N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foundational Steps	Network has only volunteers to carry out a defined scope of work and has no paid staff members	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Action	Network has one paid staff member and volunteers to carry out a defined scope of work	9	15%	6	10%	5	8%	9	15%
Advanced Action	Network has more than one paid staff member and may have volunteers to carry out a defined scope of work	51 ²¹	84%	54 ³⁰	89%	55	92%	53	88%
Results	Network has a core team of full time paid staff to carry out scope of work for at least 2 years	37 ²⁰	61%	32 ²⁰	52%	20	33%	34	57%

Network Plans for Growth	Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		New in 2019		New in 2020		New in 2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
	N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60	N=		61
	#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks	% of Planned
Networks who planned to expand staff size during the 2019–2022 funding period	48		23	38%	10	17%	16	27%	49	80%	102%

Statistical Narrative

All 60 networks (100%) had at least one paid staff member contributing to the operations of their network at the end of 2021. Fifty-three networks (88%) had at least two paid staff members, representing a net decrease of two networks — although, overall, 34 networks reported having more staff than in 2020. While in the previous year there was a dramatic decrease in funding security, 2021 saw a rebound: a total of 34 networks (57%) had secured funding to maintain staffing levels for the next two years.

Overview of Change

The significant change in funding security relative to 2020, paired with an increase in staff levels for over half of networks, suggests that RCF-supported networks have navigated the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic well, and used their established systems and capacity to continue successful fundraising despite the circumstances. This once again highlights the importance of RCF's core funding in times of crisis (i.e. the year 2020), to buoy networks while they recover or learn to

²¹ Figures for these indicators have been revised in consideration of a deduplicated data format that excludes double-counting of networks receiving funding under more than one stream, and allows for more accurate representation of change year, on year.

navigate new funding landscapes. The increase in the number of networks who have funding secured for the next two years is likely also a reflection of the success of many networks in securing funding from RCF for the 2022–2024 funding cycle.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Under this indicator, most grantees showed steady progress in registering and securing ongoing funding for their networks, including the development of appropriate staffing levels. While 2020 showed the challenges of factors lying beyond grantee control — namely the availability of funding in times of crisis — 2021 suggested that established networks with consistent core funding will rebound to take advantage of new funding streams as they become available — including, but not limited to, RCF’s 2022–2024 funding round.

Across the full funding cycle, 10 networks had set out to obtain legal registration for the first time, though ultimately only five achieved this goal (50% achievement of target). This reflects the complex and often unpredictable process of registration. The networks left in a multi-year process of registration are, notably, heavily skewed towards the representation of people who use drugs and sex workers (five of the seven networks) — reflecting the challenges in getting legal support for representation of criminalized populations.

Despite such outside factors as inconsistency in funding availability, a total of 49 unique networks managed to expand staffing levels at some point during the funding cycle, achieving 102% of target.



Youth Consortium: Youth LEAD – Organizational capacity development led by Young Key Populations.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 2A:

Number of networks showing strengthened fiscal capacity and accountability

This indicator measures a network's fiscal management systems, indicating whether it can sufficiently and accountably manage the resources needed to conduct its work.

		Baseline		2019		2020		2021	
		N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foundational Steps	Network has a fiscal agent which manages accounting	16	26%	15	25%	15	25%	10	18%
Early Action	Network has its own accounting system	45	74%	45	74%	45	75%	50	83%
Advanced Action	Board Treasurer regularly monitors financial reports	36	59%	42	69%	46	77%	51	85%
	Network has at least one paid dedicated finance staff member to manage accounting	47	77%	50	82%	49	80%	54	90%
Results	Network conducts its own regular organizational and project audits	43	70%	47	77%	45	75%	49	82%

Statistical Narrative

During the 2021 reporting period, a significant number of networks began managing their own accounting system, with a net change of five networks (+8%) since 2020. There were analogous changes in the number of networks with a Board Treasurer regularly monitoring financial reports (+5 networks; +8%) and also in those with dedicated financial staff in place (+5 networks; +8%).

A total of 49 networks conducted either a project or an organizational audit in 2021 (reviewing records for 2020 or earlier), with 37 networks conducting both. Three networks conducted organizational audits for the first time, and one conducted a project audit for the first time.

Overview of Change

Of the additional four networks conducting either an organizational or a project audit in 2021, three (the International Community of Women Living with HIV – North America (ICW-NA/ICW Consortium); Y+ Global (Youth Consortium); and the Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHR)/Harm Reduction Consortium) conducted an organizational audit for the first time, and one (Y+ Global/Youth Consortium) conducted a project audit for the first time.

A total of 53 networks (88%) reported having a Treasurer in place in 2021, with almost all of those (51; 85%) regularly monitoring financial reports. Of those where the Treasurer monitored reports regularly, most (24; 47% of those monitoring) were monitoring on a quarterly basis, with many others (15; 29%) doing so on a monthly basis, and the minority doing so only on a semi-annual (7; 14%) or annual (5; 10%) basis.

Grantee plans for introduction of organizational and project audits presents an area for learning and reconsideration in terms of the MEL process. The progress that grantees had expected in this area, as reported at baseline, appears to have been too optimistic, with only 53% (organizational audits) and 15% (project audits) of grantees having engaged in this area as planned. Based on the way these data were obtained in surveying, it is challenging to verify the cause of such discrepancy. While it is possible that some progress was impeded by the emergency nature of the years 2020 and 2021 (due to the COVID-19 pandemic), this discrepancy between targets and achievement also presents a lesson learned for reformulation of this question and better verification of targets at baseline for these metrics. From its own audit process RCF knows that at least 24 projects audits were submitted by grantees on an annual basis. For the next funding round, the RCF Secretariat will work with both the ISC and grantees to determine the degree to which these metrics provide valuable information to the fund, beyond the audit information already collected as part of standard compliance measures, and revisit more effective measurement metrics as needed.



Sex Worker Networks Consortium: NSWP – Smart Sex Worker's Guide to Digital Security.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Building on last year's progress towards active engagement of Board Treasurers, 2021 saw equal gains in management of accounting systems and the use of dedicated financial management staff. This progress suggests greater capacity of networks to manage funding, and can be linked to the progress noted in the indicator above, in which more networks reported having secured funding for the next two years. These parallel gains reinforce the RCF Theory of Change's assumptions that increased capacity in financial systems is correlated with increased ability to fundraise – a pattern further reflected in the indicator below.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 2B:

Number of networks showing strengthened financial sustainability

This indicator measures a network's resource mobilization capacity, indicating whether it has the ability to raise funds to sustainably conduct its work.

		Baseline		2019		2020		2021	
		N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foundational Steps	Network has at least one source of funding	61	100%	61	100%	60	100%	60	100%
Early Action	Network has more than one source of funding	54	89%	56	92%	54	90%	55	92%
Advanced Action	No single donor accounts for more than 30% of network's funding	18	30%	14	23%	11	18%	9	15%
	Network has a costed strategic plan	25	41%	26	43%	33	55%	45	75%
	Network has a resource mobilization strategy in place	18	30%	25	41%	36	60%	46	77%
Results	Network has secured funding to implement its strategic plan for at least two more years	15	25%	14	23%	8	13%	18	30%

Network Plans for Growth	Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		New in 2019		New in 2020		New in 2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)	
	N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60	N=	61
	#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks
Networks that planned to develop a costed strategic plan or resource mobilization plan	23		9	15%	16	27%	24	40%	49	80%
										213%

Statistical Narrative

All reporting networks had at least one source of funding. Representing a slight increase from the previous year, 92% (55 networks) had more than one source of funding, though only nine networks (15%) could report that no donor made up more than 30% of their funding, indicating a further consolidation of funding streams for most networks.

Networks showed accelerating gains in organizational planning and fundraising approaches, with 45 networks (75%) having a costed strategic plan in place (an increase of 12 networks over the previous year) and 47 (77%) having a current resource mobilization strategy (an increase of 10 networks over the previous year). There was also a large increase in the number of networks that reported adequate funding to imple–

ment their strategic plan for the next two years: while the total (18 networks; 30%) still represents a minority of grantees, the increase of 10 networks from the previous year is encouraging.

Overview of Change

Overall progress under this indicator was mixed. While one additional network reported having more than one funding source, more networks also relied on a single donor for at least 30% of their funding. The funding security picture for grantees remains concerning, with less than one-third of networks reporting a less-than-2-year pipeline for implemen-

tation of their strategic plans. However, an additional ten networks reaching this level of funding security in 2021 appears to indicate the resilience and capacity of networks to engage and strategically adjust to funding environments.

Progress in developing a costed strategic plan and/or resource mobilization plan continued to accelerate, and exceeded grantee targets significantly with 24²⁰ new networks reporting the introduction of one or the other of these types of plans in 2021, and 213% of the portfolio's funding cycle target ultimately being met.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Across the funding cycle, this indicator continued to show trends towards progress in areas that grantees directly control, including the development of costed strategic plans and resource mobilization plans. Strong increases in these metrics (with the number of grantees with resource mobilization plans having almost tripled since baseline) may indicate that RCF's explicit interest in and support of these planning exercises encourages grantees to undertake them, while reallocations available due to COVID-19 (e.g. reprogrammed travel funds) provided the resources to undertake these exercises.

The areas that were beyond direct grantee control, and rely to some degree on the external funding environment, showed mixed progress. The institutional strengthening noted under this and previous indicators appears to support grantees in securing funding to support full implementation of strategic plans. At the same time, this may result in reliance on larger awards from a limited number of donors – placing grantees at risk of funding interruptions if primary donors shift their priorities.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 3:

Number of networks more representative of their constituencies and more democratically governed

This indicator measures a network's practice of democratically representing its constituents, indicating its ability to accurately advocate for their needs.

		Baseline		2019		2020		2021	
		N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foundational Steps	Network has a process in place to democratically elect a governance body (e.g. Board of Directors) from among the network members	58	95%	59	97%	60	100%	60	100%
	The network has open membership, whose members participate in governance elections in line with its membership statute	7	11%	7	11%	7	12%	7	12%
Early Action	Board leadership regularly rotates and adheres to principles of diversity in selecting new leadership	53	87%	53	87%	55	92%	55	92%
Advanced Action	Board of Directors actively engages in governance of the network and is accountable to its constituents from among the members of the network	58	95%	58	95%	55	92%	58	97%
Results	At least 50% of Board is comprised of ISPs	46	75%	47	77%	57	95%	50	83%
	Board is representative of all geographic and population diversity of its constituents	41	67%	42	69%	51	85%	42	70%
No individual network targets are set for these indicators, on the basis that all elements should be aspirational for all networks funded by the Robert Carr Fund (therefore, the de facto target for all is 100%).									

Statistical Narrative

All 60 networks (100%) reported having a democratic governance mechanism in place, and 55 networks (92%) reported that their Board was regularly rotating membership, in line with bylaws.

In a reduction from 2020, only two networks reported interruption of regular meeting of their Boards during 2021. Some reduction of representation was reported, with a total of 50 networks (83%) reporting a Board comprised of at least 50% ISPs, and 42 networks (70%) reporting enforced standards in geographic and population diversity and representation on their Board.

Overview of Change

Only two networks reported some interruption in Board function due to the COVID-19 pandemic (MENAHR/Harm Reduction Consortium and CSWC/Sex Worker Networks Consortium), which for both was a continuation of challenges reported in 2020. In both cases this was related to challenges in achieving attendance and reaching quorum for virtual meetings, since COVID-19 continued to prevent meeting in person. Other metrics remained relatively stable or improved, with the exception of ISP representation. The latter metric dropped to 50 networks (83%) in comparison to the 57 networks which had a Board composed of at least 50% ISP

members in 2020; this figure was still up from 46 networks at baseline. The rotation of Board leadership also showed a slight increase, from 53 networks at baseline to 55 networks (92%) in 2021.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Overall, most metrics under this indicator remained steady across the funding cycle, indicating stability in governance processes. Grantees report maintaining strong governance structures that largely adhere to their own bylaws and serve as accountability mechanisms to their constituents. Where some progress was noted in improved engagement of ISPs as Board members and increased geographical coverage in 2020, some back-sliding was noted in 2021, indicating potential for more robust systems to ensure these in future.

It is important to note that this indicator showed strong performance at baseline, with the vast majority of networks beginning the cycle with functioning governance mechanisms, which included representation of ISPs and varied geographies. Within the space left for improvement, some marginal gains are noted, especially in terms of greater engagement of ISPs as board members. Interestingly, grantees noted the contribution of RCF funding to governance as one of the most important among all uses of core funding (for further details, see Funding Cycle Summary Analysis of Core Funding). This may indicate the potential for more nuanced monitoring of governance processes supported on a yearly basis, to provide better insight into the governance health of organizations via the MEL framework.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY ANALYSIS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Across the funding cycle, all 60 reporting networks showed progress on at least one of the six indicators that measure change in network strength and influence, showing the varied but consistent value of RCF core funding in strengthening network capacity. Notable gains across the funding cycle include strengthening in financial systems through a greatly increased number of networks with a Treasurer in place, and reviewing financial reports (36 networks at baseline, and 51 at the conclusion of the funding cycle). Networks showed significant gains in organizational planning and fundraising, with 45 networks having a costed strategic plan in place at the end of the cycle (compared to 25 at baseline) and 46 having a resources mobilization plan in place (compared to 18 at baseline). Governance function remained strong across the funding period, and was noted as a major beneficiary of RCF core funding support.

Several elements measured in this area, including measurement of staffing levels, introduction of and engagement in audit processes, and some elements of governance, merit revisiting for value and clarity in the next round of monitoring for the 2022–2024 cycle. These should be priorities for revision in the MEL framework for this next funding cycle.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 4:

Number of networks showing strengthened influence and capacity to unite and mobilize movements

This indicator measures a network's capacity to influence change both individually and collaboratively with other actors, indicating its ability to deliver the desired results for its constituents.

		Baseline		2019		2020		2021	
		N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foundational Steps	Network has developed a formal or informal advocacy strategy in consultation with its membership (of network or consortium)	56	92%	49	80%	47	78%	43	72%
Early Action	Network has played a significant role in at least one joint advocacy campaign with other partners	57	93%	53	87%	55	92%	58	97%
	Network engages in cross-sector partnership or working relationships with government agencies, UN agencies, bilateral or multi-lateral donors	56	92%	52	85%	51	85%	56	93%
	Network has expanded its active membership base by at least 20%			15	25%	17	28%	18	33%
Advanced Action	Network is active in an issue-based coalition beyond its target ISP or beyond HIV-related issue	46	75%	46	75%	48	80%	54	90%
	Network holds formal membership in a coordination council or board delegation on a key topic for its constituent ISP(s)	42	69%	40	67%	49	82%	53	88%
Results	Network plays a formal and regular representative role in steering HIV and/or health policy for target ISP at national/regional or global levels	48	79%	46	75%	45	75%	52	87%
	Network has initiated and leads issue-based coalition(s)	22	36%	28	46%	33	55%	30	50%
	Network plays a leadership role in a coordination council or board delegation on a topic for its constituent ISP(s)	20	33%	20	33%	34	57%	27	45%

Network Plans for New Engagement	Planned for 2019-2021 Cycle		New in 2019		New in 2020		New in 2021		2019-2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
	N=	61	N=	61	N=	60	N=	60	N=	61	
	#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks	% of Planned
Become active in an issue-based coalition beyond target ISP	19		12	20%	16	27%	31	52%	59	97%	310%
Found or lead an issue-based coalition beyond target ISP	23		9	15%	10	17%	20	33%	39	64%	170%
Gain a leadership role in a coordination council or board delegation	30		4	7%	18	30%	18	30%	40	66%	133%
Expand membership base by at least 20%	21		15	25%	8	38%	8	13%	31	51%	148%

Statistical Narrative

The nature of this indicator is more complex than the previous indicators, with actions often cyclical, e.g. an activity occurring one year may build on activities done in previous years, and the repetition of additional foundational steps may or may not be needed each year. Nevertheless, 43 networks (72%) developed a formal or informal advocacy strategy²² in 2021, and 58 (97%) took part in a joint advocacy effort.

Fifty-four networks (90%) were active in an issue-based coalition in 2020, with 30 (50%) playing a founding or leadership role. Fifty-three networks (88%) held formal membership in a coordination council or board delegation and 27 (45%) played a leadership role in such a body. Eighteen networks (33%) reported expanding their membership base by at least 20%.

Overview of Change

In 2021, grantees continued their strong engagement in cross-sector partnership and working relationships with UN agencies, multi-lateral and bilateral donors and government agencies. Sixty-eight percent (41 networks) reported working with UNAIDS and 50% (30 networks) also worked with other UN partners, including WHO, UNFPA, UNODC, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and OHCHR, among others. Thirty-six networks (60%) reported engaging with the Global Fund for TB, HIV and AIDS and fifteen (25%) worked with PEPFAR to achieve advocacy goals. Just under one-third of networks (19) engaged directly with state agencies, and eight (13%) with bilateral donors other than PEPFAR.

Through these engagements, grantees influenced global processes, including the Global Fund Strategy 2023–2028 (INPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs), the Global Fund's C19RM (ENPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs, International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC)/Harm Reduction Consortium, AGCS Plus and MPact/SHAG Consortium), the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (INPUD and

AfricaNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs, EWNA/Eurasian Regional Consortium), and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (IDPC/Harm Reduction Consortium)²³. Some grantees also directly contributed to shaping donor investments by serving as technical assistance providers, including for the WHO Guidelines Development Working Group (NSWP/Sex Worker Networks Consortium); and for the Global Fund via the Breaking Down Barriers Strategic Initiative (HLN/HIV Justice Global Consortium) and the Community-Led Monitoring Strategic Initiative (ITPC/Syndemics Consortium, along with the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC)), and in Nigeria for the shaping of harm reduction programs (EuroNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs).

The 2020 patterns of grantee involvement in coordination councils and board delegations continued in 2021. Grantees expanded into additional leadership roles in these bodies, including at the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), where MPact (SHAG Consortium) organized and developed a report on societal enablers²⁴; Coalition Plus played a leadership role in developing a new key performance indicator for community system strengthening under the Developing Country NGO Delegation to the Board of the Global Fund; ICW-NA (ICW Consortium) organized a Breastfeeding and HIV Policy Action Committee; and Harm Reduction International (Harm Reduction Consortium) led a first-ever convening of all major harm reduction donors for low- and middle-income countries²⁵.

Grantees likewise continued to grow in their leadership of issue-based coalitions, extending beyond their target ISPs to influence issues such as medication access through leadership of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Community Advisory Board (ENPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs); leadership in a thematic working group on human rights and political barriers under the Civil Society Institute for HIV and Health in Africa (Coalition Plus)²⁶; and founding of the Fighting AIDS Coalition (GNP+/HIV Justice Global Consortium)²⁷.

²² In this case, the term “advocacy strategy” does not necessarily indicate an organizational advocacy strategy, but rather a strategy for a particular campaign, topic or issue. Therefore, a single network may have multiple concurrent strategies operating, and may develop a new strategy each year (the new not superseding the old, but rather introducing a new stream of advocacy).

²³ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Detention/Call/A_HRC_47_40_AdvanceEditedVersion.pdf

²⁴ <https://unaidspcbngo.org/resources/?category=NGO%20Report>

²⁵ <https://www.hri.global/contents/2126>

²⁶ <https://www.civilsocietyhealth.org>

²⁷ <https://gnpplus.net/latest/news/fac-zero-discrimination-day-statement>

In addition to all of these efforts, many grantees engaged in three key processes of 2021, to assure the representation of civil society and ISP perspectives:

- The development of the Global AIDS Strategy 2022–2026, via UNAIDS;
- The UN High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and resulting Political Declaration of 2021, with civil society engagement led by GNP+ and Aidsfonds; and
- The shaping of the Global Fund Strategic Framework 2023–2028.

The engagement of grantees in these processes is itself notable, indicating that thriving civil society organizations (CSOs) have accessed a place at the decision-making table, from the grassroots efforts that feed up to regional consolidation of perspectives, experiences and needs, to the global level influence that ensures that the voices of ISPs are heard in these spaces. Specific examples of how these efforts influenced changes in human rights, access to services, and resource accountability in these global processes are further described in the following sections of this report.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Grantees across the portfolio continued to make progress on this indicator, with all but three metrics surpassing even the growth reported in 2020. Areas where growth was not noted include the development of new advocacy campaigns (addressed further in the Funding Cycle Summary Analysis, below); and in leadership positions of both coordination councils/board delegations, and on issue-based coalitions. On the latter point, it is notable that for both types of leadership, 2021 levels of engagement still exceed both baseline and 2019 levels, lagging only slightly behind 2020 levels. This could easily be interpreted as a natural variation in engagement across time, and is not considered to be a cause for concern.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY ANALYSIS FOR ADVOCACY CAPACITY

Across the 2019–2021 funding cycle, networks showed progress under every single metric of OI4, with the exception of the development of new advocacy campaigns. This outlier is not immediately concerning: the development of new advocacy campaigns is not, itself a desired outcome, but rather a necessary precursor to downstream outcomes such as implementation of advocacy and effecting change. Thus, it is encouraging that, despite a reduced development of new campaigns, grantees have continued to achieve against other metrics of growth and success.

When considering targets set for particular metrics, including the engagement in and leadership of representative delegations and issue-based coalitions, it is both logical and encouraging to see that grantees exceeded targets set at baseline. In fact, the enthusiastic overperformance against all targets (including 438% of target, in one case!) indicates an opportunity to revisit how the RCF Secretariat measures targets at baseline, to support grantees in setting more reasonable targets for 2022–2024. This should be embraced as a natural part of the learning cycle, in which the RCF Secretariat and grantees can collaboratively discuss how advocacy capacity targets may be realistically and helpfully set in a flexible funding model that allows for networks to grow their capacity responsively to their environments over time.

Programmatic Outcome Indicators

The following five indicators reflect the three programmatic areas in which RCF grantees seek to influence change: human rights, access to services, and resource accountability.

Work, and thus reporting, in these areas is optional: networks choose to report on one or more of these areas depending on their priorities and goals as determined at the outset of the funding cycle. Therefore, the number of networks reporting is variable by indicator (see the second row of each table, and first line of each narrative description for this number).

Another important departure for how these indicator results are calculated, in comparison to

the Network Strengthening indicators, is related to the six networks which receive RCF funding through two different streams²⁸. Because, within these programmatic indicators, networks may legitimately work on different issues through different funding streams, networks presented for these indicators are not necessarily unique networks and may potentially count the same network twice, as long as the results reported are unique to that funding stream.



Eurasian Regional Consortium: EHRA – The organization Believe in Yourself and partners distributing food rations to ISPs.

²⁸ (1) ARASA, as both a single-network grantee and via the HIV Justice Global Consortium; (2) Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA) via both the Eurasian Regional Consortium and the Harm Reduction Consortium; (3) Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM) through both the Eurasian Regional Consortium and the SHAG Consortium; (4) Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD) via both the Consortium of Networks of People Who Use Drugs and the Prison Health and Rights Consortium; (5) M-Coalition, as both a single-network grantee and through the SHAG Consortium; and (6) Youth RISE, via both the Harm Reduction Consortium and the Youth Consortium.

THE ONGOING AND CYCLICAL NATURE OF ADVOCACY

Like Outcome Indicator 4 above, these indicators capture work that may be part of a complex process, where grantees may contribute to the change process through a single input (e.g. generating evidence on which advocacy can be based) to contribute the work of a broad range of actors; or alternatively may lead or engage across a full advocacy process (e.g. from evidence generation to advocacy planning to implementation and harvesting of results).

Furthermore, whether grantees engage in single or multiple points of the advocacy process, the cycle of advocacy is self-renewing and responsive to external environment. Thus grantees may engage in similar activities repeatedly across the years, responding to new or emerging environmental factors. Often, a single grantee will be engaging in multiple different points of different advocacy cycles or issues, in a single year.

This makes it complex and challenging to interpret trends in the statistics that follow. For instance, a decrease in the number of grantees generating evidence does not necessarily signal a problem, but rather may simply be a reflection of grantees that have moved on to engage in later steps of the advocacy cycle. At the same time, a stagnation or reduction in the ultimate results reported may also be reflective of natural cycles, and not limited to reflecting the work done in a single reporting year.

Therefore, while the numbers presented below provide a measure of accountability by showcasing the quantitative outcomes of grantee work, the narratives that follow are critical to framing the complexity of advocacy processes. Additionally, to understand the full stories behind any point-in-time statistics presented in this report, the reader is encouraged to explore the case studies and other multi-media materials showcased by grantees themselves (i.e. through social media) and on the RCF website, RCF [LinkedIn](#) and RCF [Twitter](#) account.

Reading the Numbers

At the close of the funding cycle, there is a significant amount of quantitative data available to describe grantee results and progress over three years. The table below, and the accompanying key, describe the selection of data presented for the programmatic outcome indicators.

		Planned ²⁹ for 2019–2021 Cycle		New in 2019		New in 2020		New in 2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
		N=	C	N=	E	N=	E	N=	E	N=		H
		#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks	% of Planned
A	B	D		F	G	F	G	F	G	I	J	K

- A** Category of outcome (Foundational, Early Action, Advanced Action, Results)
- B** Indicator metric, describing the type of intermediate outcome measured
- C** The total number of networks reporting under this programmatic result area at baseline
- D** The number of networks that planned to achieve an outcome under this specific metric, at some point in the three-year funding cycle
- E** The total number of networks reporting under this programmatic result area, in this specific year; used as the denominator in the % column (G)
- F** The total number unique networks reporting a result on the specific metric, in this specific year
- G** The number of networks reporting a result under this specific metric, in this specific year (F), divided by the number of reporting networks (E); expressed as a percentage
- H** The cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) networks reporting in this programmatic outcome area across the three-year funding cycle, used as the denominator for the # column below it
- I** The number unique (de-duplicated) networks reporting on the specific metric, across the three-year funding cycle
- J** The cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) for this metric (I) divided by the cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) networks reporting in this programmatic outcome area (H); expressed as a percentage
- K** The cumulative number of unique (de-duplicated) for this metric (I), divided by the number of networks that planned to achieve an outcome under this specific metric, at some point in the three-year funding cycle (D)

²⁹ Here, “Planned” indicates a stated grantee intent to achieve an outcome in this area at some point in the three-year funding cycle. This should not be misconstrued as being a target, but rather as an intent. The latter is a flexible plan, based on the real needs of a network within the context it encounters during the three years of the funding cycle.

Human Rights

OUTCOME INDICATOR 5:

Number of networks contributing to an improved human rights environment for at least one ISP

This indicator measures the number of networks that are engaged in various stages of human rights-related advocacy work, and indicates their progress towards affecting change.

		Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		2019		2020		2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
		N=	50	N=	50	N=	49 ³⁰	N=	49	N=	51	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting Networks	% of Planned
Foundational Steps	Network has generated credible evidence on which an advocacy strategy/campaign can be based	49	98%	35	70%	41	84%	44	90%	51	100%	104%
	Network has gained increased understanding of government or UN or funding agency mechanism to be targeted for advocacy	47	94%	26	52%	30	61%	37	76%	47	92%	100%
Early Action	Network has developed an advocacy strategy or campaign to advocate for improvements in the rights of ISPs	50	100%	32	64%	34	69%	31	63%	47	92%	94%
	Network has gained access to or representation in a UN or state body to apply influence	42	84%	27	54%	26	53%	26	53%	41	80%	98%
Advanced Action	Network has implemented campaign to promote human rights	50	100%	32	64%	40	82%	41	84%	49	96%	98%
	Network has supported strategic litigation	29	58%	15	30%	15	31%	13	27%	25	49%	86%
	Network has utilized a UN or parliamentary hearing process to apply influence	45	90%	26	52%	19	39%	20	41%	37	73%	82%
Results	Campaign or strategic litigation results in legal or policy change			14	28%	17	35%	23	47%	35	69%	
	Campaign or litigation results in improved practice under existing law or policy			16	32%	15	31%	15	31%	29	57%	

³⁰ The denominator for all percentages includes one fewer network in 2020, accounting for one network that ceased operations during the year.

Statistical Narrative

A total of 49 networks reported on this optional outcome indicator in 2021, and 100% of reporting networks achieved at least one milestone. In the foundational steps phase, 90% percent of those reporting (44 networks) engaged in the generation of credible evidence to form the basis of an advocacy strategy or campaign, and 76% (37 networks) reported gaining increased understanding of a UN or funding agency mechanism to be targeted for advocacy. In the early action phase, 31 networks (63%) developed a new advocacy strategy or campaign in 2021, while 26 (53%) gained access to or representation in a UN or state body to apply influence – with 17 of those being newly-obtained access. Forty-one networks (84%) undertook advanced action on human rights by implementing a campaign, while 13 (27%) engaged in strategic litigation, and 20 (41%) utilized a UN or parliamentary hearing process to apply influence.

A total of 23 networks (47%) reported the achievement of legal or policy change as a result of advocacy campaigns or strategic litigation, while a further 15 networks (31%) reported changes in practice or enforcement of protective legislation or policy as a result of their efforts.

Result Highlights

Throughout 2021, grantees engaged in the protection and promotion of human rights, adapting to the implementation challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and, in some cases, responding to new threats in the environment related to the dual HIV and COVID-19 pandemics. This included **foundational** steps such as preparing human rights mechanisms to better understand possible avenues for redress for PWUD³¹ (INPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs); weekly mentoring trans community human rights reporters to document incidents in their communities (RedLacTrans, CVC); and updating the mapping of laws on sex work and the political participation of women sex workers in Latin America (RedTraSex).

Several COVID-specific evidence generation activities were also undertaken, including documentation of COVID-19 related human rights violations against PWUD in 16 African countries (AfricaNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs)³²; and documentation of human rights impact of COVID-19 on criminalized populations (HRI/Harm Reduction Consortium)³³.



INERELA+: Access to Services for victims and survivors of GBV in South Africa.

³¹ <https://inpud.net/the-fight-for-accountability-opportunities-to-engage-in-human-rights-advocacy-for-inpud/>

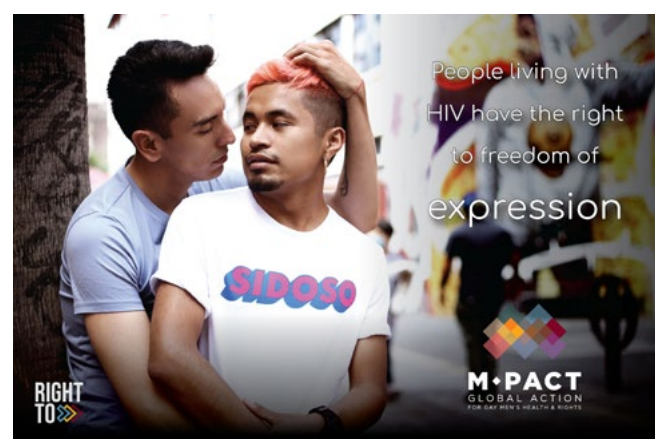
³² <https://africanpud.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Human-Rights-Violation-and-Covid-19.pdf>

³³ <https://www.hri.global/covid-emergency-powers>

Early action also came in the form of the development of new advocacy plans and strategies, including I am Undetectable (GayLatino/SHAG)³⁴, the #RightTo campaign (MPact and ECOM/SHAG)³⁵; 10 Days of Action to End Violence Against Sex Workers in Bangladesh, China, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolian, Nepal, Papua New Guinea (APNSW/Sex Worker Networks Consortium)³⁶; and Advocacy on prisons, COVID-19 and people who use drugs³⁷ and access to vaccines for people in prisons³⁸. Some of these planned campaigns continued to implementation in 2021 (see advanced actions, below), while others laid the groundwork for implementation in 2022.

Grantees undertook **advanced action** through implementing additional campaigns against gender-based violence (AfricaNPUD³⁹ and SANPUD⁴⁰/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs and EuroNPUD and WHRIN/Harm Reduction Consortium on 16 Days of Activism); and the Power of Peers Campaign to promote peer-led responses (INPUD, AfricaNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs)⁴¹; and the #MoreThan campaign to eliminate stigma (GNP+/HIV Justice Global Consortium⁴², INPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs⁴³). Action here also included strategic litigation, such as the defense of trans woman's rights in Uzbekistan, successfully resulting in a reduced sentence of only home arrest⁴⁴ and a constitutional challenge to sex work prohibitions in Canada (HIV Legal Network(HLN)/HIV Justice Global Consortium)⁴⁵. Further advanced action also came through engagement in UN processes, including:

- Engagement with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, a key multilateral human rights body who, in 2021 -- after prolonged advocacy by civil society partners -- released their first major report focused entirely on drug policy issues (EHRA, HRI, and IDPC/Harm Reduction Consortium⁴⁶)



SHAG Consortium: MPACT- Right To Campaign.

³⁴ <https://redgaylatino.org/campaigns/Soy-Indetectable-Intransmisble/GayLatino-presenta-Soy-Indetectable-Intransmisble-en-el-marco-del-Dia-Mundial-de-the-Response-to-HIV>

³⁵ <https://mpactglobal.org/rightto/>

³⁶ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/its-time-end-violence-against-sex-workers-speakers-308209>

³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wd6Pb6pkDM>

³⁸ <https://www.hri.global/contents/2171>

³⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/107353621182189/posts/387782606472621>

⁴⁰ <https://www.sanpud.org/show-of-solidarity-at-femalve-commemorative-silent-walk>

⁴¹ <https://inpud.net/powerofpeers-international-drug-users-day-2021>

⁴² https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10Z0YpOVv57Aps53pWYQBBSARqprON_NfagrSYAVkmwo/edit#slide=id.ge5447f934c_0_49

⁴³ <https://idpc.net/events/2021/07/international-drug-users-remembrance-day-2021> AND <https://inpud.net/announcing-the-winners-of-the-morethan-video-contest/>

⁴⁴ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=INT%2fCEDAW%2fCSS%2fUZB%2f47454&Lang=en

⁴⁵ <https://www.hivlegalnetwork.ca/site/sex-worker-human-rights-groups-launch-constitutional-challenge/?lang=en>

⁴⁶ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Detention/Call/A_HRC_47_40_AdvanceEditedVersion.pdf

- Engagement with UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, for a thematic report on “The right to sexual and reproductive health — challenges and opportunities during COVID – 19” (NSWP/Sex Worker Networks Consortium); and
- Contributions to the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for rights violations in Georgia⁴⁷, Armenia⁴⁸, Kyrgyzstan⁴⁹, (ECOM/Eurasian Regional Consortium).

Some advanced advocacy actions had not yet reached the level of policy, legal or practice change, but had gained enough traction to suggest changes to be anticipated in the coming years:

- ICW-NA’s (ICW Consortium) advocacy for a revision of breastfeeding guidelines for Women Living with HIV (WLHIV) have resulted in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention undertaking the revision process; however, this process remains ongoing.
- Pending legislation in Benin and Burkina Faso, supported and promoted by the HIV Legal Network (HIV Justice Global Consortium), could decriminalize or strictly limit HIV criminalization in these countries.
- Inclusive and Affirming Ministries’ (IAM’s) advocacy against anti-homosexuality movements in Ghana and South Africa, providing a religious perspective to lawmakers in support of protecting same-sex rights.
- In response to MPact’s (SHAG Consortium) awareness raising around and advocacy against the co-location of conversion therapy and HIV services funded by PEPFAR, the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) made a commitment to not directly support conversion therapy. However, discussion on how to assure that clinics conducting conversion therapy are not funded remain ongoing. Further work will be required to see that the necessary commitments are made.



RedLacTrans: We are not dying, we are being killed! – National Latin America and the Caribbean Transgender Rights Reporting Office Publication.

On the other hand, several efforts yielded the final desired outcomes, as the result of long advocacy efforts by grantees. These included:

- Improvements in the criminal code and reduction of fines for drug possession in Kyrgyzstan (EHRA/Harm Reduction Consortium)
- Legalization of same-sex relationships in Botswana (Southern African Litigation Center (SALC)/HIV Justice Global Consortium)⁵⁰
- Adoption of the first Trans Health Policy in Jamaica (CVC)
- The inclusion of combating stigma as one of the top 10 priority recommendations of the UN Secretary General’s report 2020 on TB for actions needed to accelerate progress towards global TB targets (GCTA/Syndemics Consortium)⁵¹
- A ruling by the European Court of Human Rights on the case of Cosovan vs. Moldova, based on strategic litigation supported by EPLN and its Moldovan partner PromoLEX (European Prison Litigation Network/Prison Health and Rights Consortium), that established a breach of the rights of a prisoner who was not promptly and

⁴⁷ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fICO%2fGEO%2f45060&Lang=en

⁴⁸ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fICO%2fARM%2f45061&Lang=en

⁴⁹ Report publication is forthcoming, to be available at <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org>

⁵⁰ <https://www.southernafricanlitigationcentre.org/2021/11/29/breaking-news-botswana-court-of-appeal-decriminalises-consensual-sex-between-same-sex-partners/>

⁵¹ <https://www.who.int/news/item/21-10-2020-un-secretary-general-outlines-priority-recommendations-to-accelerate-the-tb-response-and-reach-targets>

⁵² www.prisonlitigation.org/cosovan

⁵³ <https://www.hivjustice.net/news/illinois-fully-repeals-its-hiv-criminalisation-law/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LoQWP7oMnI>

effectively treated for his hepatitis and cirrhosis and reiterated the UN Committee Against Torture's recommendation that the state transfer responsibility for care from the prison system to the Ministry of Health⁵².

Significant gains were also made specifically in the area of reducing HIV criminalization in the United States. Efforts from Positive Women's Network and Sero Project (both of HIV Justice Global Consortium) contributed to modernization of HIV laws in the states of Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, Nevada, Virginia⁵³ and

President Joe Biden became the first sitting president to speak out directly against criminalization of HIV⁵⁴.

Finally, multiple grantees engaged in the development of the Global AIDS Strategy 2022–2026, as well as the shaping of the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS 2021, assuring that targets on decriminalization and community leadership were included in the former and that the latter prioritized gender equality, youth leadership, and human rights. These priorities are also echoed in the next Global Fund Strategy Framework for 2023–2028.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Across the full three-year funding cycle, most metrics held steady in the level of grantee achievement each year. An exception was the number of grantees engaging in Foundational Steps, which increased each year, up from 70% in Y1 to 90% in Y3. This may reflect the natural flow of an advocacy cycle, or may be an artifact of the year after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which a change in landscape for many ISPs necessitated a greater level of documentation and evidence gathering. The other exception to the trend was in the ultimate results of legal and policy change, which yielded strong changes in 2021. This may be in part due to several ongoing policy-making processes, including the Global AIDS Strategy, Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, and the development of a new Global Fund Strategy Framework; however, many of the results were independent of these processes and reflect the coming to fruition of long-term advocacy efforts to change laws and policies.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY ANALYSIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Across the three-year cycle, grantees largely met or exceeded their planned engagement in each of the metrics measured by this indicator. Some deviation from plans is noted under strategic litigation and engagement in UN and parliamentary hearing processes — both of which occurred at slightly lower rates (86% and 82%) than anticipated at baseline. This may be partly due to the COVID-19 restrictions, including limited access to judicial processes, or may otherwise reflect a change in priorities in the face of emerging human right crises during the pandemic.

Ultimately, however, results in policy change (35 unique grantees) and improved practice (29 unique grantees) across the three years show a steady return on the multi-year investments of grantees in the protection and promotion of human rights for ISPs.

Access to Services

OUTCOME INDICATOR 6:

Number of networks contributing to increased access to HIV services and programs

This indicator measures the number of networks that are engaged in various stages of advocating for increased access to HIV services and programs, and indicates their progress towards affecting change.

		Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		2019		2020		2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
		N=	51	N=	51	N=	50 ⁵⁵	N=	47 ⁵⁶	N=	51	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting (N)	% of Planned
Foundational Steps	Network has generated credible evidence on which an advocacy campaign or educational activities can be based	47	92%	34	67%	44	88%	42	89%	47	92%	100%
Early Action	Network has developed an advocacy strategy or campaign to advocate for improvements in health outcomes for ISPs	48	94%	34	67%	29	58%	28	60%	49	96%	102%
	Network has gained access to or representation in a multilateral donor's or state's program	42	82%	22	43%	26	52%	32	68%	42	82%	100%
Advanced Action	Network has implemented campaign or other educational activities to influence accessibility of services	48	94%	33	65%	33	66%	32	68%	50	98%	104%
	Network has implemented campaign or other educational activities to increase ISP awareness of and demand for services	41	80%	33	65%	34	68%	18	38%	51	100%	124%
	Network has utilized a UN process or participated in a national program planning or review or development process to affect changes on access to services	46	90%	30	59%	32	64%	31	66%	42	82%	91%
Results	ISP services report increase in new clients			18	35%	23	46%	19	40%	30	59%	
	ISP services report increased retention of clients/reduced loss-to-follow-up			10	20%	18	36%	11	23%	26	51%	

⁵⁵ The denominator for all percentages includes one fewer network in 2020, accounting for one network that ceased operations during the year.

⁵⁶ Three previously-reporting networks were unable to submit data for this implementation year.

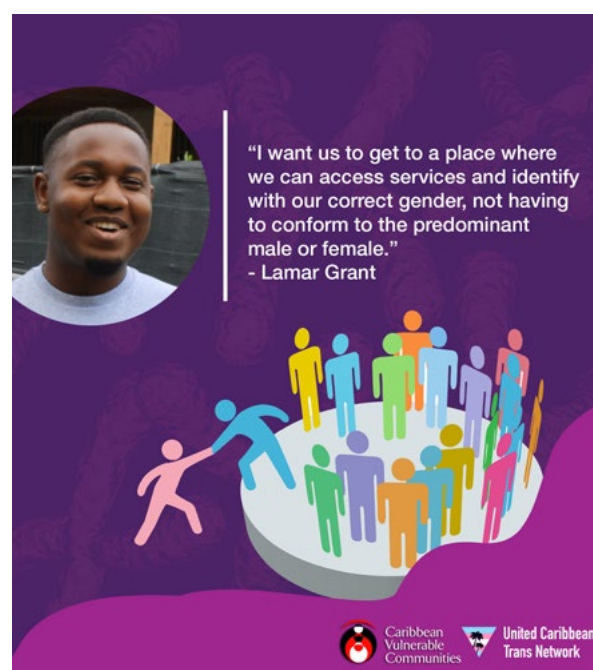
Statistical Narrative

A total of 47 networks reported on this optional outcome indicator in 2021. Among them, 42 networks (89%) engaged in the generation of credible evidence to form the basis of an advocacy campaign or educational activities to influence health outcomes for ISPs. Twenty-eight networks (60%) used evidence to develop an advocacy strategy or campaign, while 32 networks (68%) used access to or representation in a UN or state body to advocate for improved access to services. Thirty-two networks (68%) undertook advanced action by implementing a campaign to influence the accessibility of services, while 18 (38%) undertook activities to increase ISP awareness of and demand for services. A further 31 networks (66%) took part in a UN or national program planning process to influence access to services.

A total of 19 networks (40%) reported an increase in the number of ISPs being served related to their advocacy efforts, while 11 networks (23%) reported that their advocacy resulted in increased retention in services or reduced loss-to-follow-up among ISPs.

Results Highlights

Throughout 2021, grantees undertook **foundational** and **early actions** in advocacy for improved access to services. These included assessment of access barriers related to COVID-19, such as mapping access to mental health services for WLHIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EWNA/Eurasian Regional Consortium)⁵⁷; researching practices in providing harm reduction services during public health emergencies in Montenegro and Moldova (EHRA/Harm Reduction Consortium)⁵⁸; conducting a regional scan on access to SRHR and HIV services for trans persons in 5 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa (ARASA)⁵⁹. New advocacy campaigns included a multimedia communications campaign #knowmyviral-load to promote demand for routine viral load testing (ITPC Global/Syndemics Consortium) and Peer Works! to promote peer-led harm reduction and opioid agonist treatment literacy (EuroNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs).



CVC: Social media campaign on gender markers and gender identity.

Grantees also undertook advanced actions engaging with multilateral, state and UN bodies to drive advocacy wins. These included influencing of the Global Fund Strategy Framework 2023–2028, such as by AfricaNPUD's (Consortium of People Who Use Drugs) member representative to the Community Delegation to the Board, through which they advocated for higher funding allocations for community-led responses and the funding of community-led monitoring; the submission of community priorities for the Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) processes in 11 countries (INPUD, ENPUD, SANPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs and MPact/SHAG Consortium); and the leadership of a global youth consultation to assure that young people's priorities were reflected in the Strategy Framework (Youth LEAD, Y+Global, Youth RISE/Youth Consortium)⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ http://www.ewna.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/EWNA_UNFPA_Depression-screening-report_2021_rus.pdf (in Russian) and http://www.ewna.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/EWNA_UNFPA_Screening-for-Depression_2021_eng.pdf (in English)

⁵⁸ <https://harmreductioneurasia.org/covid-19-practices-english/>

⁵⁹ <https://arasa.info/trans-rights-health-rights-2022/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcCKed6a8Rs>

Ultimately, in 2021, advocacy efforts from prior years delivered **increased service access** for multiple different ISPs:

- After a three-year pilot project in Morocco, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was included in the national strategic plan as an institutionalized intervention (Coalition PLUS)⁶¹;
- Peer-to-peer NSP in Bath (UK) increased coverage from 28% of injecting episodes with fixed site and pharmacy needle and syringe programmes to 100% coverage once Peer-to-Peer Needle and Syringe Programs (P2PNSP) was added to the package. 60% of sterile injecting equipment in Bath is distributed on a peer basis (EuroNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs);
- Testing and treatment services for Hepatitis C resumed in India after a six-month hiatus, with 300 people able to newly access treatment in Delhi (DNP+/Syndemics Consortium)⁶²;
- Sex workers in Bangladesh, China, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal and Papua New Guinea reported reductions in stigma and discrimination faced at services (APNSW/Sex Worker Networks Consortium)⁶³;
- Over thirty support groups across Eastern and Southern Africa provided women and girls living with HIV with services and support to improve medication adherence (International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+)); and
- The training and deployment of a peer educator on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in rural Luve community in eSwatini provided not only reintegration support to a formerly incarcerated youth, but also expanded access to SRHR knowledge among local youth in eSwatini (Southern African Network of Prisons (SANOP)).

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

In comparison to previous years, grantees continued with a high level of evidence generation around access to and quality of services, maintaining the rise in engagement in this area seen in 2020, and likely a result of COVID-19's influence on service access (as discussed in the previous section). A significant increase in activity is noted in engagement in multilateral donor or state processes – again, possibly related to the strategies and political declaration generated during 2021. Conversely, fewer grantees undertook activities to create demand for services in their communities, with no apparent explanation. This is possibly part of the natural arc of the advocacy cycle, or may also reflect a resting period after a high level of engagement in these activities during 2020, due to changes in service patterns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁶¹ <https://2m.ma/fr/news/vih-lalcs-sensibilise-sur-lusage-de-la-prep-au-maroc-20211222/>

⁶² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/lok-nayak-restarts-hepatitis-c-clinic/articleshow/77136306.cms>

⁶³ Advocacy efforts are described in: <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/its-time-end-violence-against-sex-workers-speakers-308209>, <https://www.newagebd.net/article/158112/sex-workers-are-at-the-bottom-of-the-society-and-its-time-to-bring-them-up-lawmaker-shameem-haider-patwary>, and <https://dailyasianage.com/news/273679/we-must-recognize-sex-workers-begum-lutfun-nessa-khan>; an article on the reduced stigma and discrimination faced at services is forthcoming.

OUTCOME INDICATOR 7:

Number of networks contributing to increased quality of HIV services and programs

This indicator measures the number of networks that are engaged in various stages of advocating for improved quality of HIV services and programs, and indicates their progress towards affecting change.

		Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		2019		2020		2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
		N=	51	N=	51	N=	50 ⁶⁴	N=	47	N=	51	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting	% of Target
Foundational Steps	Network has generated credible evidence on which an advocacy campaign or educational activities can be based	47	92%	34	67%	44	88%	42	89%	47	92%	100%
Early Action	Campaign or other educational activities implemented to improve quality of services for ISPs	49	96%	29	57%	31	62%	27	57%	42	82%	86%
	Network has gained access to or representation in a multi-lateral donor's or state's program planning or review process	43	84%	24	47%	23	46%	32	68%	39	76%	91%
Advanced Action	Network has utilized a UN process or participated in a national program planning or review or development process to affect changes on quality of services	47	92%	28	55%	28	56%	31	66%	42	89%	91%
Results	Better quality of programs and services reported by ISPs			16	31%	18	36%	20	43%	41	80%	

⁶⁴ The denominator for all percentages includes one fewer network in 2020, accounting for one network that ceased operations during the year.

Statistical Narrative

A total of 47 networks reported on this optional outcome indicator. In 2021, 42 networks (89%) engaged in the generation of credible evidence to form the basis of an advocacy campaign or educational activities to influence health outcomes for ISPs⁶⁵. Twenty-seven networks (57%) implemented a campaign to improve the quality of services for ISPs, while 32 networks (68%) used a donor or state program's planning process to influence improvement of service quality. Thirty-one networks (66%) undertook an advanced action of using a UN or national program planning process to influence quality of services for ISPs. A total of 20 networks (43%) reported that their advocacy resulted in better quality of programming as reported by ISPs.

Result Highlights

Throughout 2021, RCF grantees continued their efforts in securing **foundational** outcomes for improved quality of services for ISPs, including research on the quality and approaches of PrEP programs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECOM/SHAG Consortium); and publication of the Smart Sex Workers Guide to Digital Security, which documents the requirements for safe, high-quality online services (NSWP/Sex Worker Networks Consortium); and mapping of how SRHR services are impacted by COVID in five Middle East and Northern African countries (MENA Rosa)⁶⁶. Activities noted under the previous indicator, such as EHRA's research on practices in providing harm reduction services during public health emergencies in Montenegro and Moldova⁶⁷ and ECOM's study on the provision of remote and digital medical and social services for the prevention and treatment of HIV in the EECA region, also generated evidence related to service quality.

Notable **early action** included the development and piloting of a Trans COMP (competency) Community-Based Monitoring Tool to track quality of trans-competent HIV and other health services in the Asia-Pacific region, implemented in Thailand,



HIV Justice Global Consortium: Members of GNP+, the Central Asian Union of People Living with HIV and the Supreme Court of Tajikistan at the EECA Regional Forum.

Laos, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mongolia, and PNG (Asia Pacific Network Foundation/Trans Asia Pacific Consortium); the promotion of best practices for harm reduction services for women during COVID-19 (WHRIN/Harm Reduction Consortium); and the Peer Works! campaign as referenced in the previous section (EuroNPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs).

Advanced action around influencing of multilateral and international donor partners mirrors the results described above in access, as the influencing of the Global Fund Strategic Framework has implications for both access to and quality of services. This also included the significant contributions of grantees to the Global AIDS Strategy and the UN High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, for which GNP+ (HIV Justice Global Consortium) assured that the voices of people living with and impacted by HIV were prominent in decision-making, through their coordination of civil society input.

⁶⁵ This data point reflects the same information presented for Outcome Indicator 6. This is because, in practice, the generation of such evidence is often exploratory in nature (e.g. does not yet know whether it will capture gaps in access to or quality of services), or captures gaps in both access to and quality of services. Therefore, it is not feasible or rational to ask grantees to report separately on evidence generation for these two different but highly related areas of work.

⁶⁶ <https://menarosa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SRHR-Service-Mapping-Report-2.pdf>

⁶⁷ <https://harmreductioneurasia.org/covid-19-practices-english/>

Ultimately, positive **results** that were noted in service quality included such progress as an introduction of community-led mental health activities, funded under C19RM in for example Uzbekistan (EWNA/Eurasian Regional Consortium); virtual support groups, result-

ing in reduced loss-to-follow-up for antiretroviral therapy (ART) in China (ITPC Global/Syndemics Consortium); and strengthened linkages between government health care facilities and people living with HIV (PLHIV) community leaders for delivery of ART in Pakistan (CARAM Asia).

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Similar to the previous indicator measuring changes in access to services (Outcome Indicator 6), grantees maintained an increased engagement in generation of evidence related to quality of services in 2021. An increase in engagement with multi-lateral and UN processes was also noted, likely reflecting the opportunities available to influence service quality via UNAIDS, Global Fund and UN Political Declaration processes.

Overall, this indicator is noted to contain significant overlap with the previous indicator. This is not necessarily problematic; it reflects the reality that service access and service quality are often addressed together. However, it is a point for learning that these indicators may be reconsidered during the next funding round, to be recombined and simply use separate sub-indicator metrics to measure different contributions to access, quality and demand for services.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY ANALYSIS FOR ACCESS TO SERVICES

Grantee engagement in this area largely met or exceeded plans as baseline, with grantees exceeding their planned level of activity in five out of six metrics related to access to services and demand promotion amongst ISPs. Work on quality of services was slightly less than planned, though grantees still reached intermediate outcomes at 85–95% of the expected rate.

Ultimately, 30 networks reported contributing to an increase in service coverage for ISPs, and 26 reported instances of improved retention in care related to their advocacy efforts. A further 41 unique networks contributed to improved quality of service as reported by ISPs. Notably, these results were well-distributed across the three years, with little overlap in the unique networks reporting results from year to year — reiterating the longer-term nature of advocacy and the importance of looking for results across time.

As noted in the box above, the two indicators in this programmatic area contain significant overlap, and an improved framing of measurement in this area may promote both improved understanding of grantee plans and expectations, as well as better understanding of the value of results as access, demand and quality of services relate to one another. This should be a priority for reflection in revision of the MEL framework for 2022–2024.

Resource Accountability

OUTCOME INDICATOR 8:

Number of networks contributing to increased and sustainable financing of HIV response including ISP programs

This indicator measures the number of networks that are engaged in various stages of advocating for increases in sustainable financing of services for ISPs, and indicates their progress towards affecting change.

		Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		2019		2020		2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
		N=	29	N=	29	N=	28 ⁶⁸	N=	24	N=	33	
		#		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting	% of Planned
Foundational Steps	Network has undertaken budget monitoring and analysis to develop advocacy plan	21		3	10%	10	36%	11	46%	17	59%	81%
	Network has developed advocacy plans to push for increased financing, based on international or regional commitments, or existing budget analysis	23		13	45%	16	57%	12	50%	20	69%	87%
Early Action	Network has implemented a campaign or other advocacy activities to push for increased sustainable financing	26		14	48%	21	75%	15	63%	24	83%	92%
	Network has gained access to or representation in a multi-lateral donor's or state's budgeting process	19		10	34%	7	25%	7	29%	15	52%	79%
Advanced Action	Network has taken part in a donor or national budget review or development process	19		10	34%	11	39%	7	29%	15	52%	79%
Results	Campaign or other advocacy activities contributed to an increase in financial commitments made (e.g. budget allocations) to HIV response and ISP programming			6	21%	4	14%	8	33%	11		

⁶⁸ The denominator for all percentages includes one fewer network in 2020, accounting for one network that ceased operations during the year.

Statistical Narrative

A total of 24 networks reported on this optional outcome indicator in 2021. Eleven networks (46% of those reporting) undertook budget monitoring activities that could provide evidence for advocacy, and 12 networks (50%) developed an advocacy plan. Fifteen networks (63%) engaged in the early action of implementing advocacy activities. Seven networks (29%) gained access to and took part in a donor or national planning process, and eight networks (33%) saw the results of their advocacy in the form of increased financial commitments to the HIV response and ISP programming.

Result Highlights

In 2021, grantees engaged in **foundational** work to document resource gaps, including ECOM's (Eurasian Regional Consortium) analysis of key

WHO-recommended services that are underfunded in five EECA countries⁶⁹; ATHENA's monitoring of how resources committed for gender equality are reaching young feminist groups⁷⁰; the documentation of how women who use drugs were underrepresented in applications for emergency funding in COVID-19 responses for harm reduction (WHIRIN/Harm Reduction Consortium)⁷¹; and CARAM Asia's review of government budget allocations for HIV and SRHR services for migrants (including MSM migrants) in Bahrain, Jordan and Lebanon⁷². Grantees also provided technical support to members, including through Harm Reduction International's development and training on a budget advocacy guide for communities⁷³; the investigation of alternative funding models for Mauritius and Namibia (ARASA); and the development of a PEPFAR resource mobilization strategy for six West African countries (Coalition Plus).



CARAM ASIA: Celebration of World AIDS Day with Returnee Migrants at POURAKHI Nepal.

⁶⁹ <https://ecom.ngo/news-ecom/cascade-armenia-2020>

⁷⁰ #StopTalkingStartFunding campaign can be tracked on Twitter, with the following examples of tweets involved in this campaign: <https://twitter.com/NetworkAthena/status/1410241474122469381?s=20&t=te7Eu6xNdPcgnERRYwxVbg>; <https://twitter.com/NetworkAthena/status/1410588387451490304?s=20&t=te7Eu6xNdPcgnERRYwxVbg>; <https://twitter.com/NetworkAthena/status/1410575382437371905?s=20&t=te7Eu6xNdPcgnERRYwxVbg>

⁷¹ <https://whrin.site/ourpublication/country-examples-of-covid-hr-responses-for-wud-2/>

⁷² <https://www.facebook.com/107739930893668/posts/pfbid0cGNVzXCvsChd3Z3EGLu6XQHbqn57pE6neqzgPjdqNzSXmdA3shh7cFyWrRnuqFwCl/?d=n>

⁷³ <https://www.hri.global/budget-advocacy-guide>

At the global level, grantees took **early action** in advocacy for the Global Fund to consider a separate funding mechanism for key population-led organizations, including appropriate grant management processes for smaller community-led organizations and multi-year service agreements for key population-led groups (NSWP/Sex Worker Networks Consortium)⁷⁴; and through the engagement of all major international donors via Leaders Convening, to catalyze interest and engagement on funding for harm reduction, strengthening shared ambition within the global funding community (Harm Reduction International/Harm Reduction Consortium)⁷⁵.

Advanced action took the form of support for budget reviews and participatory budget-making in Armenia, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan and Romania (EHRA/Eurasian Regional Consortium), Republic of Georgia (ECOM/Eurasian Regional Consortium), Malawi and Zimbabwe (ARASA), Nigeria, Malawi and Cameroon (MPact/SHAG Consortium), and in Burundi (via PEPFAR Country Operational Plan 2021 (COP21), Coalition Plus). At the global level, Harm Reduction International

advocated to the Global Fund for dedicated funding stream for key populations⁷⁶, and to PEPFAR for harm reduction services to be funded under that bilateral's strategy⁷⁷. As a further example of global action, in the context of the preparation of the next Global Fund Replenishment Conference, Coalition PLUS convened a working group of members in the donor countries of France, Portugal, Canada and Switzerland, aiming to ensure that the Global Fund mobilizes a minimum of US\$18 billion for the next triennium.

Ultimately, in 2021, RCF grantees advocacy produced **increased mobilization of resources for ISPs**, in the form of increased funding for harm reduction in Lithuania from €35,000 to €450,000 – a 12-fold increase over the previous year (EHRA/Eurasian Regional Consortium); increased budgets by at least 10% for key population programming in Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi and Nigeria (MPact/SHAG Consortium); and a commitment from the Government of Nepal for increasing financial resources for ISPs programming and health services (CARAM Asia)⁷⁸.

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

While this indicator saw decreases in the number of networks undertaking resource accountability work on all but one metric (budget monitoring was undertaken by one more network than in 2020), the quality of work undertaken in 2021 compensated for any shortage in quantity. Grantees such as HRI, EHRA and Coalition Plus, who have consistently engaged in Resource Accountability work across the funding cycle, show increasingly sophisticated engagement – and potential return on their advocacy investments, in the form of influencing of major global funding processes.

At the same time, reporting under this indicator continues to be disproportionately low compared to other areas of work, raising questions about whether it adequately captures the work that is being done by grantees in this area. In the next funding cycle (2022–2024), this also offers an opportunity for linking and learning across the portfolio, to build knowledge across networks in this implementation area.

⁷⁴ <https://www.nswp.org/resource/nswp-briefing-notes/briefing-note-global-fund-strategy-development>

⁷⁵ <https://www.hri.global/contents/2126>

⁷⁶ <https://www.hri.global/contents/2161>

⁷⁷ <https://www.hri.global/contents/2168>

⁷⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/107739930893668/posts/pfbid0cGNVzXCvsChd3Z3EGLu6XQHbqn57pE6neqzgPjdqNzSXmdA3ssh7cFyWrRnuqFwCI/?d=n>

OUTCOME INDICATOR 9:

Number of networks contributing to improved HIV-related fiscal accountability

This indicator measures the number of networks that are engaged in various stages of advocating for improved accountability in financing of the HIV response and ISP programming, and indicates their progress towards affecting change.

		Planned for 2019–2021 Cycle		2019		2020		2021		2019–2021 Cycle Total (Cumulative Unique Networks)		
		N=	29	N=	29	N=	28 ⁷⁹	N=	24	N=	29	
				#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of Reporting (N)	% of Planned
Foundational Steps	Network has staff trained on budget and expenditure monitoring and accountability	17		5	17%	10	36%	10	42%	15	52%	88%
	Network has established a working partnership with budget monitoring groups or coalitions	18		5	17%	8	29%	7	29%	12	41%	67%
Early Action	Network conducts monitoring and analysis of donors or states expenditure against their commitments	12		3	10%	7	25%	5	21%	11	38%	92%
Advanced Action	Network develops asks and conducts advocacy as a result of budget or expenditure monitoring and accountability	17		5	17%	9	32%	4	17%	11	38%	65%
	Network engages with the budget processes of donors or states to influence spending	19		11	38%	11	39%	6	25%	19	66%	100%
Results	Increased financial commitments delivered to HIV response, particularly funding of ISP-related programs			6	21%	6	21%	3	13%	12		

Statistical Narrative

A total of 24 networks reported on this optional outcome indicator in 2021. Ten networks (42% of those reporting) trained their staff on budget and expenditure monitoring, to build a workforce to contribute to greater accountability culture, and seven networks (29%) established a working partnership with a budget monitoring group.

A further five networks took the early action of conducting monitoring of donor or state expenditure against commitments, while four (17%) developed advocacy asks and conducted advocacy as a result of that monitoring. Six networks engaged in budgeting processes of donors or states to influence spending, and three networks (13%) saw the results of increase financial commitments delivered as a result of their work on accountability advocacy.

⁷⁹ The denominator for all percentages includes one fewer network in 2020, accounting for one network that ceased operations during the year.



SANOP: Peer educator delivering SRHR messages in collaboration with a chapter member organization in Eswatini.

Result Highlights

In 2021, grantees achieved **foundational** and **early action** outcomes by building the capacity of communities for budget and expenditure monitoring for accountability. Examples of this include ARASA's training of community activists on Universal Health Coverage and budget advocacy, leading to ISP engagement in budgeting processes in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia; and Coalition Plus's capacity building for Francophone activists in Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Burundi and Cote d'Ivoire, leading to their increased engagement in PEPFAR (COP21) processes.

Advanced action in the monitoring and analysis of expenditure included Harm Reduction International's engagement in PEPFAR's strategy development process, stressing the negative impact on harm reduction programming due to a prohibition on funding needles and syringe programs; and the Eurasian Harm Reduction's (Eurasian Regional Consortium) engagement in Global Fund Strategy Working group meetings and Board delegations to ensure that the needs of PWUD are included when deciding

on funding priorities. Ultimately, grantees' actions contributed to **increased delivery for funding for ISPs** through the development of a US\$10m key population fund in India⁸⁰ (INPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs); increased funding for key population programming in Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi and Nigeria (MPact/SHAG Consortium); and increased funds for health and community systems strengthening and services for ISPs in 2021 in the form of US\$80,000 in C19RM funds for PWUD (INPUD/Consortium of People Who Use Drugs).

⁸⁰ <https://inpud.net/the-successes-and-challenges-of-gf-c19rm-in-meeting-the-needs-of-key-populations>

2021 SUMMARY ANALYSIS

As with OI8 above, grantees show slightly reduced activity in all but one element of this indicator (budget monitoring). There appears to be less cohesion and strategy in how grantees approach — or at least report on — the work of assuring that donors and governments are delivering the commitments made. Based on the instruments used to collect these data (e.g. survey questions), it is difficult to judge whether there is a lack of grantee capacity or interest in doing this work, or whether there is a limited understanding of how to frame the accountability work that is being done in terms of resource accountability.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY ANALYSIS FOR RESOURCE ACCOUNTABILITY

There are two notable factors when considering grantee outcomes on funding accountability across the 2019–2021 funding cycle:

- A smaller cohort of grantees works on this area in comparison to either of the other two programmatic outcome areas; and
- Engagement within the grantee cohort varies from year to year.
In particular, when examining the unique networks reporting results from one year to the next, it is apparent that most networks reporting in this area do this work inconsistently — whether this is sporadic, or strategic is not clear.

Nevertheless, ultimately 11 unique networks reported that their advocacy contributed to an increase in financial commitments made (e.g. budget allocations) to HIV response and ISP programming, and 12 reported increased delivery of those commitments during this funding cycle.

There do appear to be challenges in grantee understanding of this reporting area (as evidenced by significant data cleaning and reinterpretation each year), pointing to a potential misalignment of how the RCF Secretariat and ISC view resource accountability, and how grantees perform.

While the results that have been obtained under this programmatic area are valuable, there is a clear opportunity for further investigation of how the majority of grantees view and practice resource accountability work. This should inform the better tailoring of OI8 and OI9 for future reporting and learning purposes.

Core Funding Value Summary

The 2021 implementation year marks the third year that RCF gathered funding utilization information from grantees⁸¹, asking them to reflect on the ways in which RCF funding made the achievement of outcomes possible. Thus, this year's data allows, for the first time, reflection on trends across a full funding cycle. Table 1, below, presents the data from each year, by programmatic outcome area.

Table 1.

Funding contribution to achievement of human rights, access to services and resource accountability milestones

Funding utilization	Human rights			Access to services			Resource accountability		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Basic operations of network	37%	68%	47%	43%	33%	50%	22%	39%	25%
Direct salary and support of individual staff responsible for the activity	37%	64%	39%	34%	28%	40%	19%	32%	19%
Directly supported aspects of this activity	20%	35%	19%	20%	15%	19%	8%	15%	7%
Part of small grants program	9%	15%	14%	8%	10%	10%	1%	4%	6%

⁸¹ It should be noted that data reported in this area are self-reports from network funded by grantees, and are based on grantee perspective and experience, rather than financial data. This is due to the nature of the milestones being reported against, and the fact that their achievement may involve multiple years of effort as well as a range of inputs, including executive staff and leadership time, that are difficult to quantify in traditional financial terms. Therefore, in collecting the data in this way, RCF is explicitly placing trust in grantees to know and recount their own experience in a qualitative manner. This approach is novel, and its value will be carefully reviewed with grantees when considering adaptations of the MEL process for the 2022-2024 funding cycle.

Consistent across all three years was the pattern of core funding being used most frequently to support the basic operations of networks. The use of RCF funding for direct salary support for staff members to undertake advocacy work was the second most-frequent, once again across all programmatic outcome areas.

Across all programmatic areas, 2021 funding utilization rates more closely mirrored 2019 rates, while 2020 often appeared to be an outlier. This included both increases in the importance of core funding for basic network operations when conducting human rights work (68% in 2020, compared to 37% and 47% on either side of that year) and the increases in direct

salary support for resource accountability work (32% in 2020, compared to 19% on either side of that year). Meanwhile, the importance of basic network operations was less frequent in 2020 for activities contributing to access to services (33% in 2020, compared to 43% and 50% on either side of that year). While it is impossible to draw detailed conclusions about why these patterns occurred, it is clear that grantees prioritized the use of funding in different ways during the unprecedented year of 2020 — highlighting the importance of the flexibility of RCF funding in supporting grantee needs, not only as a regular practice, but especially during times of crisis and changing priorities.

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY ANALYSIS FOR CORE FUNDING

When surveyed regarding the most important value of core funding for their network, grantee responses were clustered into several categories, as follows:

- Stability of staffing levels and retention of talented individuals, even when experiencing unexpected challenges and emergencies such as COVID-19 (ATHENA, ITPC-LATCA, ITPC-WA, MENA Rosa, HRI, GayLatino, Asia Pacific Networks Foundation)
- Strengthening of governance systems, membership structure, and democratic representation (EHRA, EWNA, GCTA, ICW-NA, EuroNPUD, EPLN)
- Supporting engagement of membership, including through face-to-face general assembly meetings and mentorship of members (ENPUD, INPUD, ECOM, APNSW, SWAN, ASWA)
- Building financial and administrative systems to function transparently and ethically, including through leadership transitions (AfricaNPUD, INPUD, Y+., AGCS, MPact)
- Strengthening technology infrastructure and transitioning to virtual outreach, learning and advocacy methods (ITPC Global, CVC, NSWP).

This variety highlights the importance of self-determination of funding use by networks, responding to individual network needs and opportunities as they arise — expected or not — throughout the funding cycle.

LEARNING IDEAS FOR THE 2022–2024 FUNDING CYCLE

Throughout the 2019–2021 funding cycle, RCF committed itself to strengthening a culture of learning. Primary avenues for this were the full activation of the MEL system and the continued evolution of the annual collective impact reflection workshop (CIRW).

The emergence of the COVID–19 pandemic presented unique challenges for learning practice – particularly the CIRW, which had traditionally been done in-person. Like so many experiences during this period, a move to virtual modes of learning and exchange carried a mix of opportunities and challenges: the opportunities for broader engagement of more grantee staff, community members and partners, including through interpretation in several languages; and the challenges of highly-structured virtual meetings held over a much more limited number of hours than traditional in-person meetings.

Ultimately, however, the CIRW held in October 2021 served as a showcase of the adaptive abilities of both grantees and the Secretariat, and laid the groundwork for the development of a bolder, deeper learning agenda for the next funding cycle. This iteration of the workshop was also the first to feature fully grantee-hosted thematic sessions. Some of the key thematic learnings from this event included:

- The pressures and competing priorities of a global emergency like COVID–19 forced ISP communities to once again prove both their level of need and the importance of involving communities in health responses. Grantees learned that sharply focused advocacy messages, backed by concrete data, were critical for gaining the attention of decision-makers. Community-led data generation and use will continue to be needed in the coming funding cycle, and grantees have rich experiences to share with one another.
- The power of data for a strong evidence base, and particularly the data garnered through community-led monitoring, has supported the outcomes in human rights, access to services and resource accountability.
- The limitations of advocacy in a digitally-focused world, with less opportunity to travel and curtailed ability to draw on personal relationships, means that coordination and collaboration between different networks, across ISPs, is more important than ever. The Consortia, in particular, reflected on great leaps forward in their coordination during this funding cycle – and yet there continue to be more opportunities for continued collaborative work.
- COVID–19 has led to further closing of civil society space and exacerbated human rights issues faced by inadequately served populations. It's necessary to rethink approaches to human rights work and the importance of providing emergency funding, collaboration between local, regional and global efforts, and general creativity around finding solutions for advocacy.
- RCF core support has been critically important, both before and during the turbulent pandemic years, to support the resilience of networks. In particular, this has enabled networks to develop strategies to navigate this volatile context and continue achieving results for the communities.
- Even with core support, the resilience of networks has been tested by the COVID–19 pandemic. Networks have shown once again how ISP communities show up, help one another, and continue

to adapt under even the most stressful circumstances. At the same time, this experience has taken a toll on many of the individuals working in this field, and there may be as-yet-unseen long-term impacts on networks themselves. Continued attention to the wellbeing of people working in these movements, and to the resilience of organizational structures themselves, will be needed in the years to come. By continuing to navigate these challenges together, grantees will maximize the investments of the Robert Carr Fund, sharing lessons and support with one another.

- Ultimately, many networks and consortia have dealt with similar challenges — either organizationally or in their working environments, and there is tremendous value in supporting each other through these difficult times.

The 2021 annual survey provided an additional opportunity for further reflection on the full funding cycle, and captured feedback from grantees on their experiences and their needs for support in the upcoming funding period. Summaries of this feedback -- from all grantees, as well as a subset focused on consortium leaders -- can be found in Annexes 5 and 6, respectively.

The combination of the grantee perspectives gained from the CIRW and the annual survey questions points to several key objectives for learning ideas for the 2022–2024 period:

- The Secretariat can more actively facilitate regular communication and event-sharing between grantees, to support continued and expanded coordination of advocacy work.
- More frequent, structured grantee exchange events can help grantees to build technical and organizational skills that are needed as networks continue to grow.
- Continued expansion of grantee leadership in shaping and hosting CIRW sessions is not only feasible, but successfully within the spirit of RCF and can be continued.
- Periodic connection and learning between consortium leads presents an opportunity not only to strengthen the management and operation of consortia, but also to amplify lessons learned across a greater number of grantees through consortium mentorship mechanisms, through which consortium leads help to build capacity of consortium members.

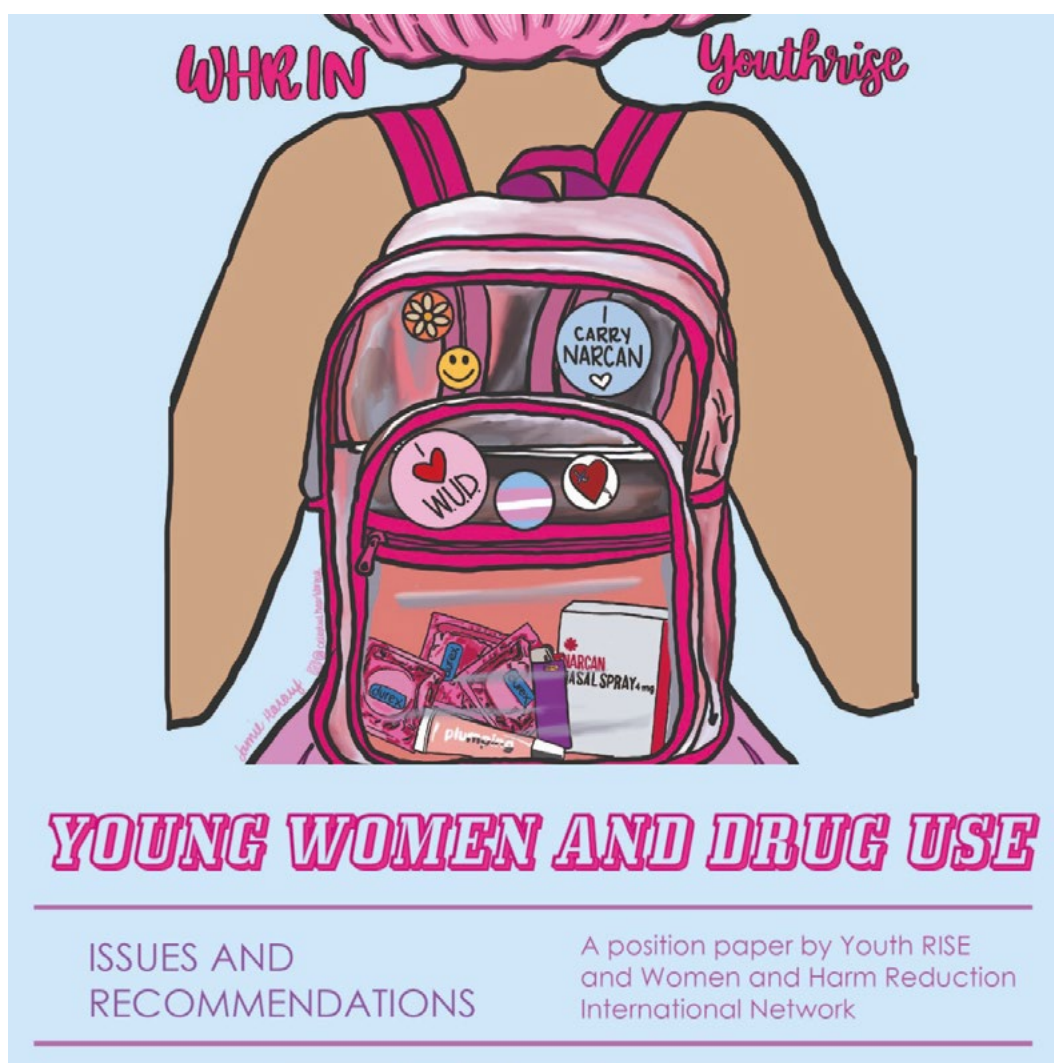
Conclusion

The 2021 implementation year marked the end of a funding cycle, and the continuation of an unprecedented time in modern history. As grantees continued to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, they also returned to a level of stability that reflects the strength of the systems and human capacity that has been supported through RCF investments over recent years.

Across three years of implementation, all 60 unique networks showed progress under the Network Strengthening Outcome Area, with 100% demonstrating progress under at least one of the six organizational strengthening indicators. This showed the diverse but consistent value of RCF funds in strengthening organizational capacity, particularly in terms of financial systems, governance, and strategic planning and fundraising. Key accomplishments here included the 42% increase in the number of networks with a Board Treasurer regularly monitoring financial reports; the 44% increase in the number of networks with a costed strategic plan in place; and the 61% increase in networks with a resource mobilization plan in place. RCF core funding also supported networks in building their advocacy capacity, with 2021 results showing depth of results across all advocacy capacity metrics, including a growth in grantee engagement in and leadership of issue-based coalitions (36% growth over baseline) and in leadership on coordination bodies and board delegations at the regional and global levels (35% growth over baseline).

In the Programmatic Outcome Areas, grantees' consistent delivery of outcomes, even in spite of the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights how activity funding from RCF complements core funding. Ultimately, this delivered a range of intermediate and end-line outcomes, including:

- 35 unique networks reported policy change linked to their advocacy in human rights;
- 29 reported improved practices in protection and enforcement of human rights;
- 30 reported contributing to an increase in service coverage for ISPs;
- 26 reported instances of improved retention in care related to their advocacy efforts;
- 41 contributed to improved quality of service as reported by ISPs;
- 11 reported that their advocacy contributed to an increase in financial commitments made (e.g. budget allocations) to HIV response and ISP programming, and
- 12 reported increased delivery of those commitments during this funding cycle.



Harm Reduction Consortium: Young Women and Drug Use – briefing paper launched by WHRIN and Youth RISE on International Youth Day.

With the MEL framework allowing for year-on-year analysis of outcome trends, it is clear that even outcomes left at the intermediate level at the end of this funding cycle can be expected to deliver final results in coming years.

The conclusion of the first funding cycle fully monitored with a functioning MEL framework has also provided ample insights and opportunities for learning – including further refinement of metrics and systems for measurement, as well as ways that the Secretariat and funding structures can better support the unique needs of grantees. The analysis of these data and production of this report pave the way for a further reflective exercise, leading into the 2022–2024 funding cycle, with a focus on ensuring

that all data collected as part of this exercise are of value to the ISC and grantees themselves, in service of further learning and enhancement of impact.

In the meantime, this final year of the funding cycle, with its wealth of data to show the depth of grantee progress and achievements, highlights the vital importance of RCF funding to grantee stability, and of grantee contributions to the health, well-being and social inclusion of ISPs within and beyond the global HIV response.

Annexes

ANNEX 1 – THEORY OF CHANGE

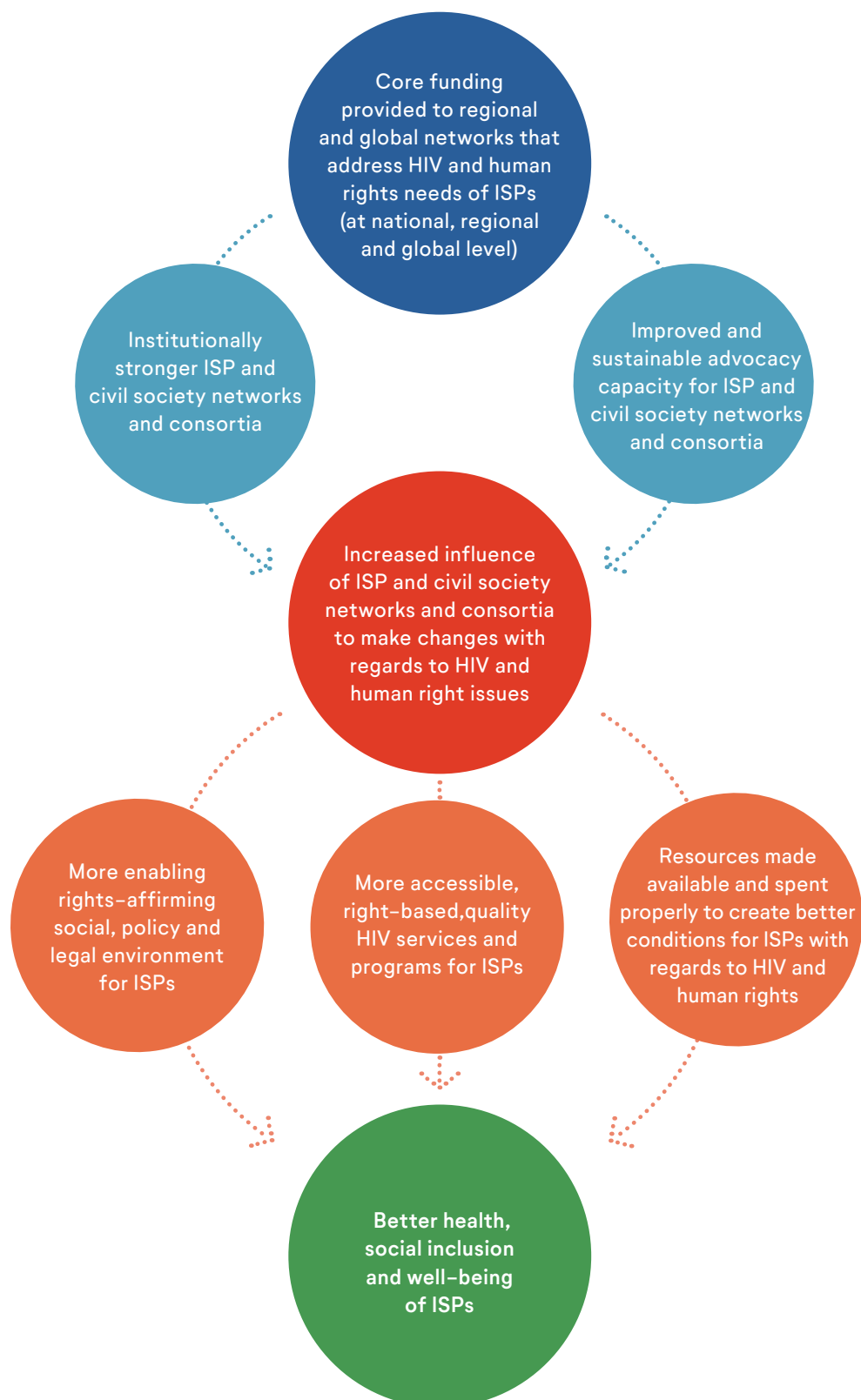
ANNEX 2 – MEL FRAMEWORK

ANNEX 3 – FINANCIAL REPORT 2021

ANNEX 4 – RISK, RISK MITIGATION AND FUND MANAGEMENT

ANNEX 5 – COVID-19 IMPACTS AND RESPONSES

ANNEX 1: Theory of Change



ANNEX 2: MEL Framework

OUTCOMES		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	OUTCOME INDICATORS			
Networks strength and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutionally stronger ISP and civil society networks and consortia 	EI 1: The legal and policy framework allows for freedom of association for ISP/ civil society networks, including their right to establish/register and operate as non-profit/ non-governmental entities without discrimination.	OI 1a: Number of networks with strengthened organizational status.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has a newly acquired fiscal agent (<2 years)	Network has a stable relationship (>2 years) and long-term agreement with a fiscal agent	Network is in the process of registering	Network is registered
			OI 1b: Number of networks with strengthened core staff structure.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has volunteers to carry out a defined scope of work and has no paid staff members	Network has one paid staff member and volunteers to carry out a defined scope of work	Network has more than one paid staff member and may have volunteers to carry out a defined scope of work	Network has had a core team of full-time paid staff to carry out scope of work for at least 2 years
			OI 2a: Number of networks showing strengthened fiscal capacity and accountability.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has a fiscal agent which manages its accounting	Network has its own accounting system and at least a part-time staff member devoted to finance	Network has at least one paid dedicated finance staff member to manage accounting AND Network Board of Directors has financial oversight	Network conducts its own regular organizational and project audits
			OI 2b: Number of networks showing strengthened financial sustainability.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has at least one source of funding	Network has more than one source of funding	No single donor accounts for more than 30% of network's funding AND Network has a costed strategic plan or a resource mobilization strategy in place	Network has secured funding to implement its strategic plan for at least two more years

OUTCOMES		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	OUTCOME INDICATORS			
Networks strength and influence	• Institutionally stronger ISP and civil society networks and consortia	EI 1: The legal and policy framework allows for freedom of association for ISP/civil society networks, including their right to establish/register and operate as non-profit/non-governmental entities without discrimination.	OI 3: Number of networks more representative of their constituencies and more democratically governed			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has a process in place to democratically elect a governance body (e.g. Board of Directors) from among the network members OR The network has open membership, whose members participate in governance elections in line with its membership statute.	Board leadership regularly rotates and adheres to principles of diversity in selecting new leadership OR Network members actively participate in the governance elections of the network (at least 30% of members vote in elections)	Board of Directors actively engages in governance of the network and is accountable to its constituents from among the members of the network	At least 50% of Board is comprised of ISPs OR Board is representative of all geographic and population diversity of its constituents OR Network members actively participate in the governance elections of the network (at least 45% of members vote in elections)

OUTCOMES		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	OUTCOME INDICATORS			
Networks strength and influence	• Institutionally stronger ISP and civil society networks and consortia	EI 2: ISP/civil society networks experience freedom of expression without harassment by government and other influential entities.	OI 4: Number of networks showing strengthened influence and capacity to unite and mobilize movements			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has developed a formal or informal advocacy strategy in consultation with its membership (of network or consortium) OR Network has established relations with new allies and partners	Network has played a significant role in at least one joint advocacy campaign with other partners OR Network engages in cross-sector partnership or working relationships with government agencies, UN agencies, bi-lateral or multi-lateral donors OR Network has expanded its active membership base by at least 20%	Network is active in an issue-based coalition beyond its target ISP or beyond HIV-related issue OR Network holds formal membership in a coordination council or board delegation on a key topic for its constituent ISP(s)	Network plays a formal and regular representative role in steering HIV and/or health policy for target ISP at national/regional or global levels OR Network has initiated and leads issue-based coalition(s) OR Network has demonstrated ability to collaborate with other advocates to bring issues to a global agenda and affect change OR Network plays a leadership role in a coordination council or board delegation on a key topic for its constituent ISP(s)

ANNEX 2: MEL Framework.

OUTCOMES		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	OUTCOME INDICATORS			
Networks' influence on access of inadequately served populations to justice, health and resources	• More enabling and rights-affirming social, policy and legal environment for ISPs	EI 3: ISP rights are protected by policy and/or legislation, which is enforced and allows for effective redress of violations.	OI 5: Number of networks contributing to an improved human rights environment for at least one ISP			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has generated credible evidence on which an advocacy strategy/campaign can be based OR Network has gained increased understanding of government or UN or funding agency mechanisms to be targeted for advocacy	Network has developed an advocacy strategy or campaign to advocate for improvements in the rights of ISPs OR Network has gained access to or representation in a UN or state body to apply influence	Network has implemented campaign to promote human rights OR Network has supported strategic litigation OR Network has utilized a UN or parliamentary hearing process to apply influence	Campaign or strategic litigation results in legal or policy change OR Campaign or litigation results in improved practice under existing law or policy

OUTCOMES		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	OUTCOME INDICATORS			
Networks’ influence on access of inadequately served populations to justice, health and resources	• More accessible, rights-based, quality HIV services and programs for ISPs	EI 4: ISP experience full access to rights-based, quality HIV services.	OI 6: Number of networks contributing to increased <u>access</u> to HIV services and programs.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has generated credible evidence on which an advocacy campaign or educational activities can be based	Network has developed an advocacy strategy or campaign to advocate for improvements in the health outcomes of ISPs OR Network has gained access to or representation in a multi-lateral donor’s or state’s program	Network has implemented campaign or other educational activities to influence accessibility of services OR Network has implemented campaign or other educational activities to increase ISP awareness of and demand for services OR Network has utilized a UN process or participated in a national program planning or review or development process to affect changes on access to services	ISP services report increase in new clients OR ISP services report increased retention of clients/reduced loss-to-follow-up
			OI 7: Number of networks contributing to increased <u>quality</u> of HIV programs and services.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
			Network has generated credible evidence on which an advocacy campaign or educational activities can be based	Campaign or other educational activities implemented to improve quality of services for ISPs OR Network has gained access to or representation in a multi-lateral donor’s or state’s program planning or review process	Desired changes made in structure, function or delivery of services for ISPs OR Network has utilized a UN process or participated in a national program planning, review or development process to affect changes on quality of services	Better quality of programs and services reported by ISPs

ANNEX 2: MEL Framework.

OUTCOMES		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	OUTCOME INDICATORS			
Networks’ influence on access of inadequately served populations to justice, health and resources	• Resources made available and spent properly to create better conditions for ISPs with regards to HIV and human rights	EI 5: The funding environment allows for sufficient allocation of resources for HIV prevention, testing, care, and treatment.	OI 8: Number of networks contributing to increased and sustainable financing of HIV response including ISP programs.			
			Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
		Network has undertaken budget monitoring and analysis to develop advocacy plans OR Network has developed advocacy plans to push for increased financing, based on international or regional commitments, or existing budget analyses	Network has implemented a campaign or other advocacy activities to push for increased sustainable financing OR Network has gained access to or representation in a multi-lateral donor’s or state’s budgeting process	Campaign or other advocacy activities contributed to an increase in financial commitments made (e.g. budget allocations) to HIV response and ISP programming OR Network has taken part in a donor or national budget review or development process	Increased financial commitments delivered to HIV response, particularly funding of ISP-related programs	
		EI 6: The funding environment allows for sufficient allocation of resources for advocacy and other supportive enabling environment programming for ISPs.	OI 9: Number of networks contributing to improved HIV-related fiscal accountability.			
	Category 1		Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	
			Network has staff trained on budget and expenditure monitoring and accountability OR Network has established a working partnership with budget monitoring groups or coalitions	Network conducts monitoring and analysis of donors or states expenditure against their commitments	Network develops asks and conducts advocacy as a result of budget or expenditure monitoring and accountability OR Network engages with the budget processes of donors or states to influence spending	A change in budgeting or expenditure is made as a result of advocacy
Impact:		• Better health, social inclusion and wellbeing of the ISPs				

FINANCIAL REPORT 2019–2021

(all \$ are USD)

Figure A:
Funders' Contributions to the RCF Pool – 2019–2021 (\$39 Million)

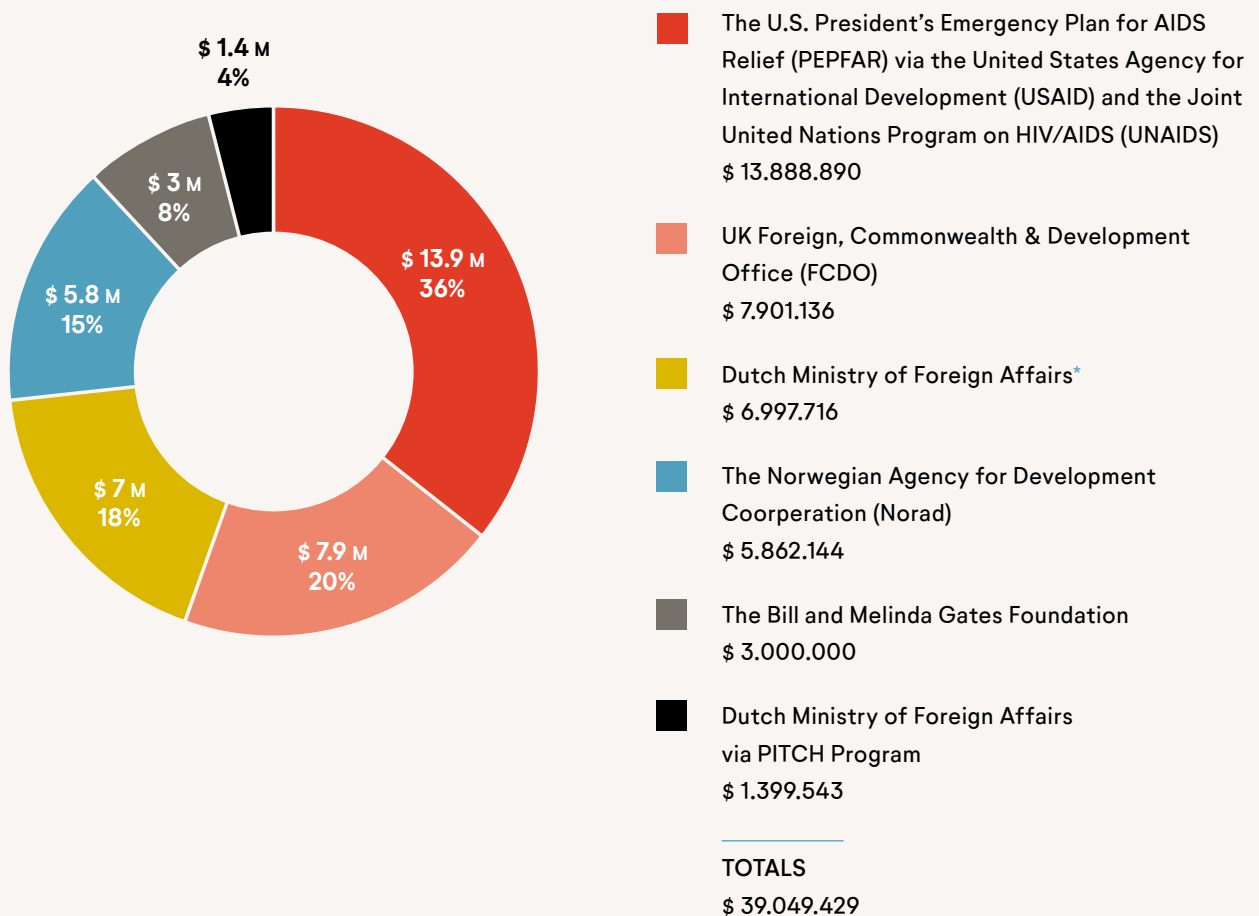


Figure B:
Total RCF Expenditure 2019–2021 (\$37.8 Million)

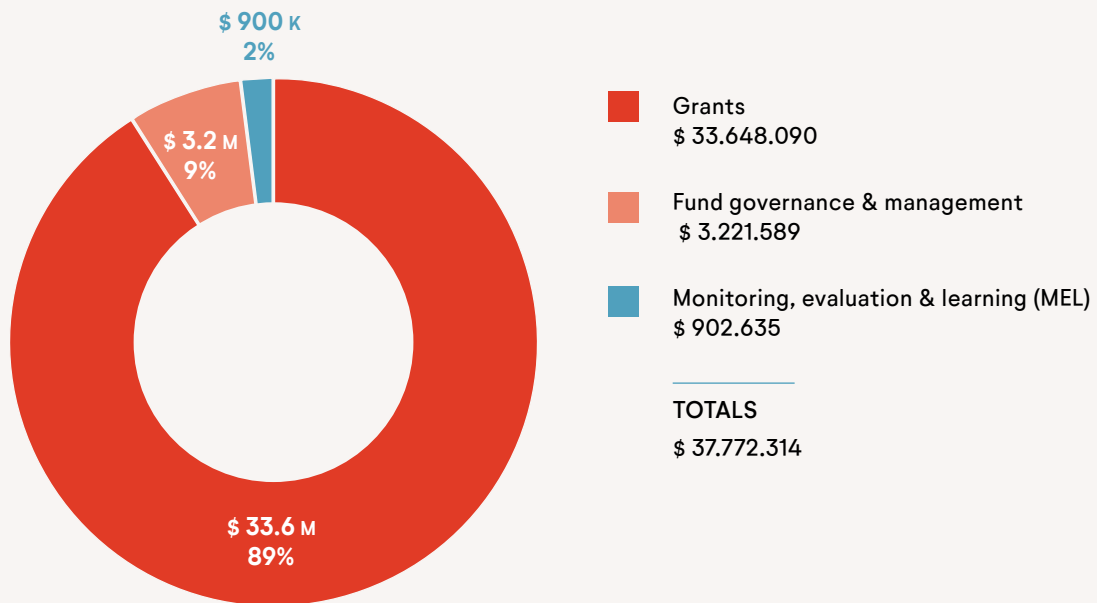


Figure C:
Total RCF Grantee Expenditure 2019–2021 (\$33.5 million)

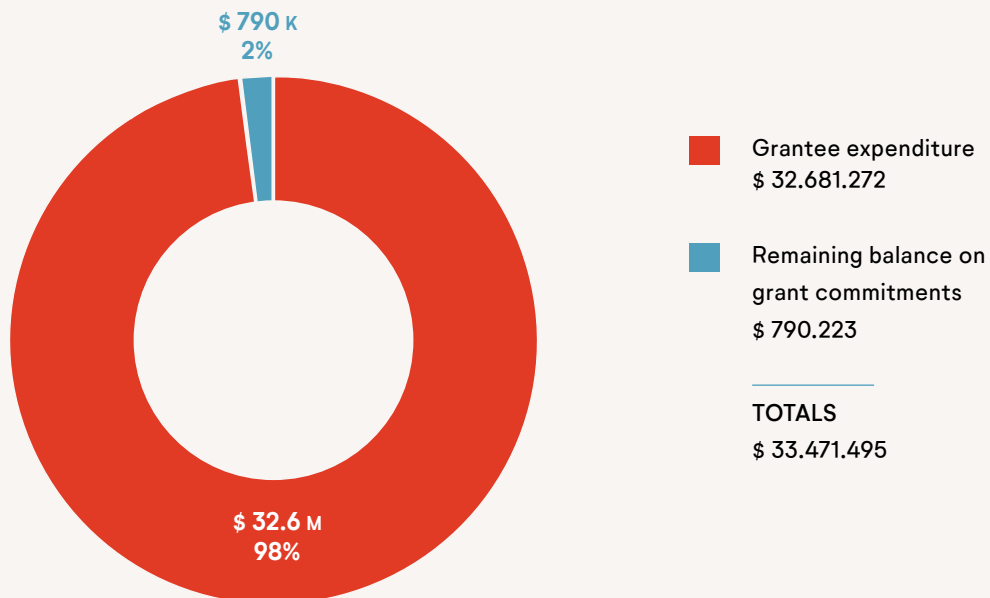


Figure D:

RCF Grants 2019–2021 – Core vs. Activity Expenditures (\$32.7 million)

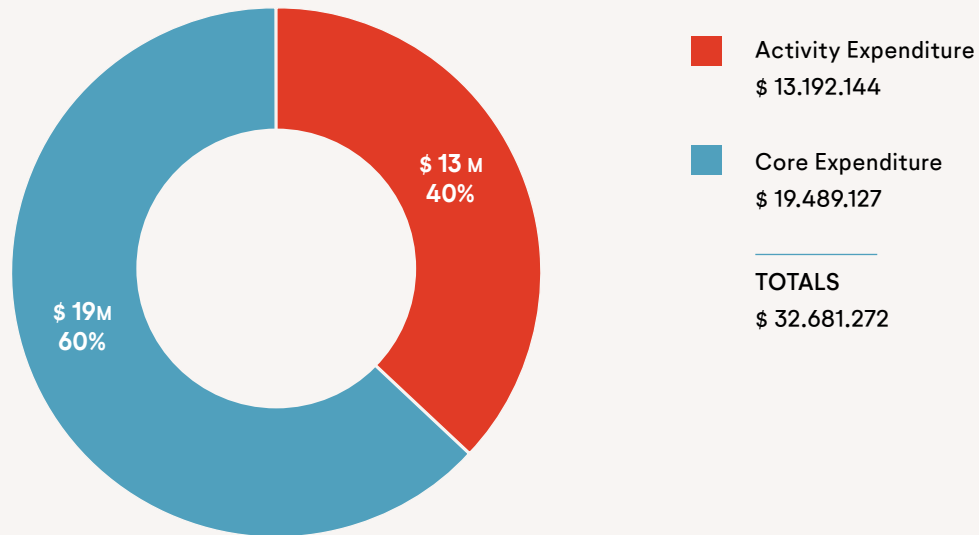


Figure E:

RCF Grants Core Expenditures 2019–2021 (\$19,5 Million)

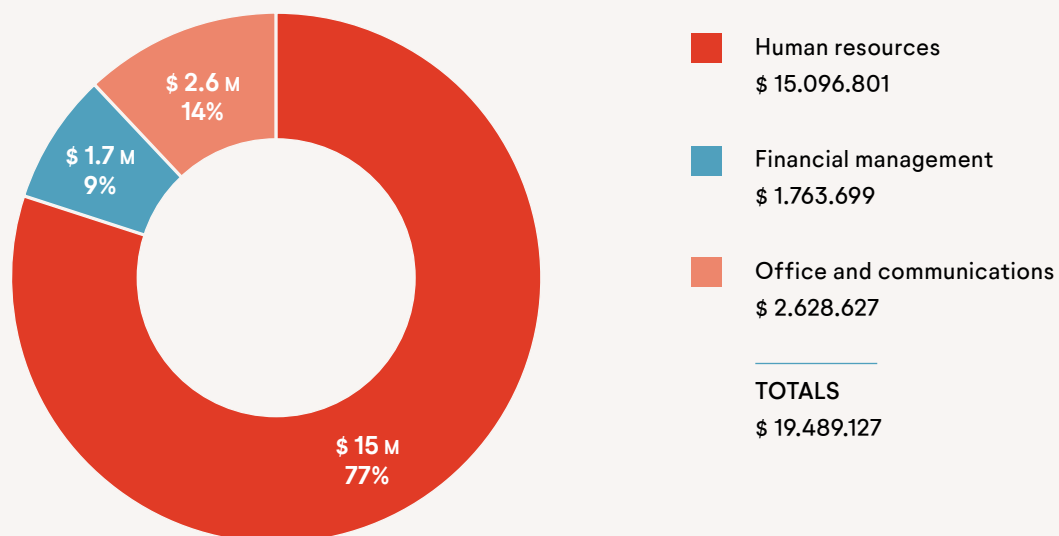


Figure F:
2019–2021 Grantee Activity Expenditure per ISP (\$13.2 Million)

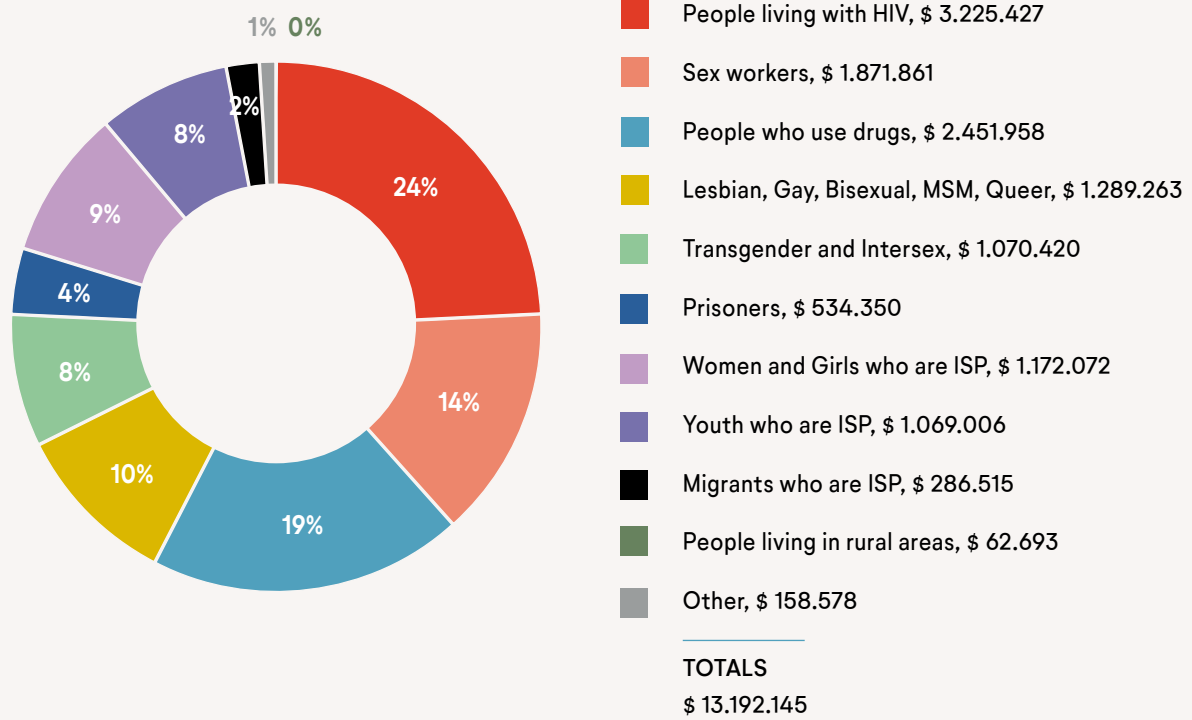


Figure G:
2019–2021 Grantee Activity Expenditure per Region (\$ 13.2 Million)

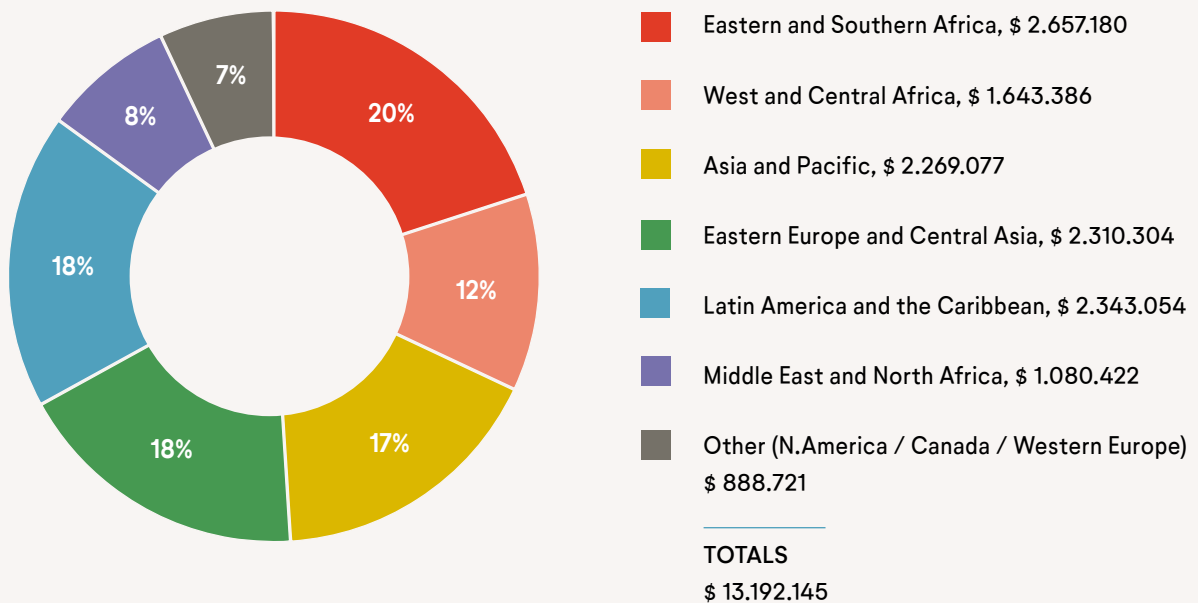


Figure H:

2019–2021 Grantee Activity Expenditure per Outcome Areas (\$ 13.2 Million)

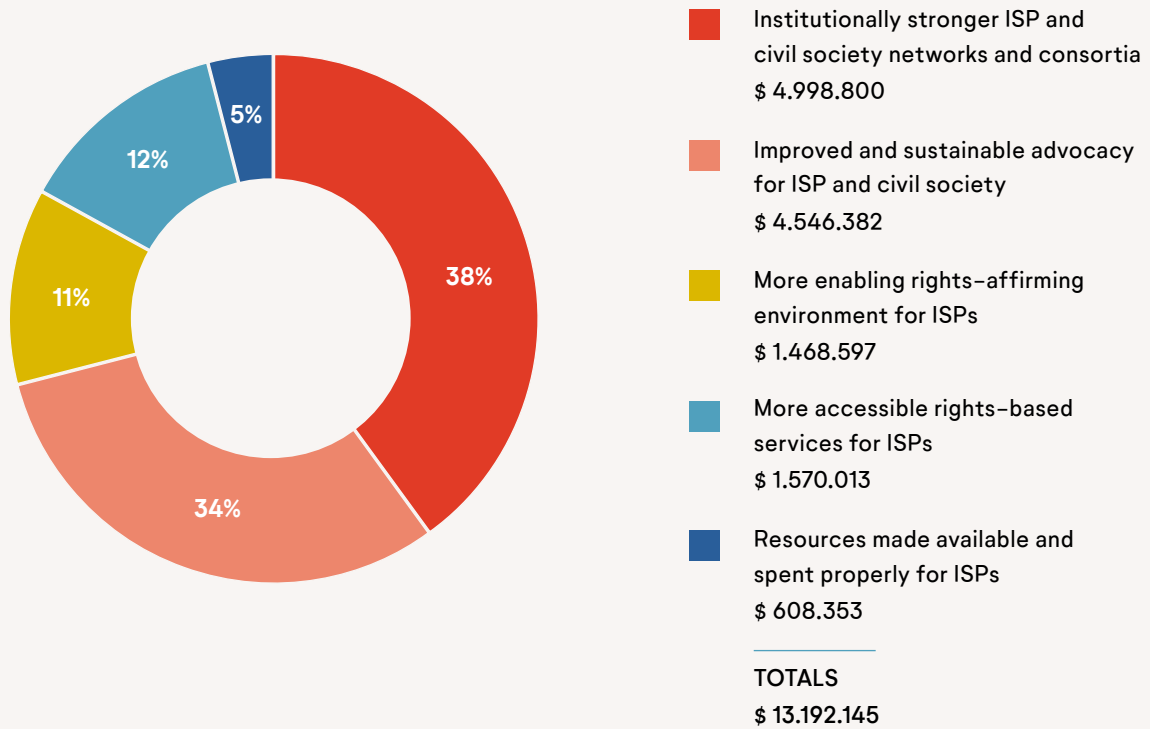


Figure i:

2019–2021 Grantee Activity Expenditure per Results Areas (\$ 13.2 Million)

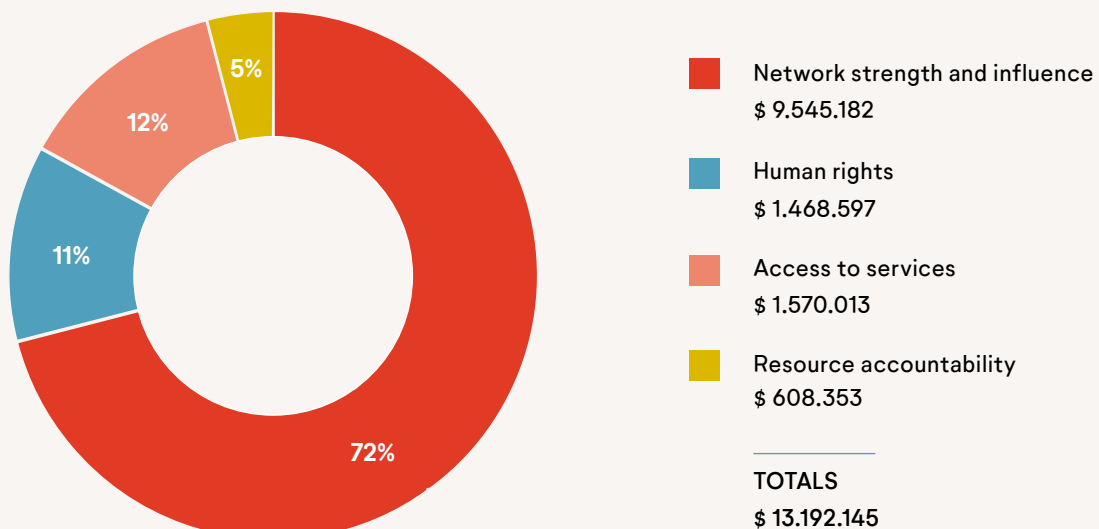
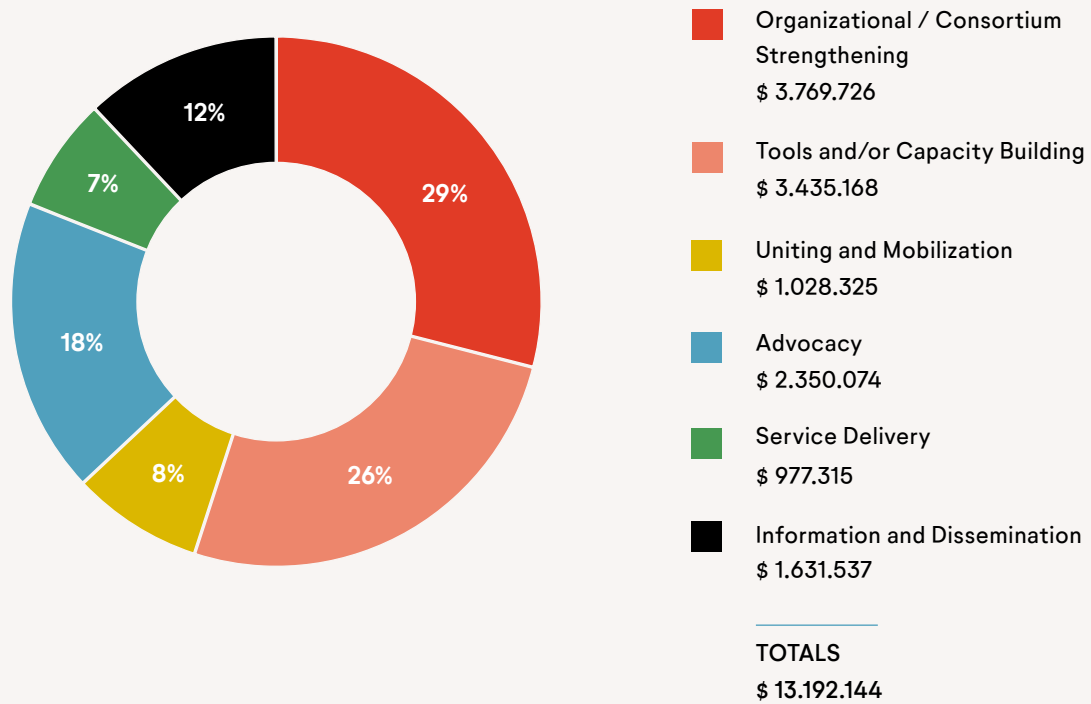


Figure J:

2019–2021 Grantee Activity Expenditure per Category of Activity (\$ 13.2 Million)



Risk, Risk Mitigation and Fund Management

While the risks faced by the Fund and the grantees continue to mostly fall under the categories of financial and/or organizational risks, the year 2021 and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have undoubtedly continued to place additional challenges upon the Fund as a whole as well as grantees.

While grantees and the Fund were already used to adapt to virtual/remote working and operating in restricted lockdown environments grantees had to accept the longer term nature of the epidemic and move from an emergency response to longer term solution and resilience planning. The Exceptional Opportunity Funding round aimed to mitigate the impact of COVID 19 on HIV programs, launched by RCF in 2021 will provide important insights into community driven responses and risk mitigations in relation to the continued pandemic.. The FMA as well as the Secretariat implemented fast and efficient policies to ensure flexible work arrangements from home that enabled the continuation of the Fund and the well-being of its staff. Nevertheless, continued Covid infections and mental repercussions of several lockdowns did undoubtedly leave traces — at all levels of the Fund. I.

The financial and/or organizational risks could include corruption fraud and mismanagement and wider integrity breaches taking place at the grantee level or internal organizational challenges such as high staff turnover, burnout, poor governance or uncertain financial sustainability. Furthermore,

some grantees may operate in challenging political environments or in situations of civil unrest which could negatively influence project activities and the safety of the people undertaking such work and negatively impact upon organizational stability as well as the ability to demonstrate attainment of outcomes.

Strong risk and mitigation strategies are key to preventing and managing such risks as well as capturing environmental changes which may impact grantees.

Integrity breaches: Corruption including sexual harassment, Fraud and Mismanagement (CFM)

As in previous years the Robert Carr Fund, with support from Aidsfonds Project Control, continues to prioritize the areas of CFM prevention and management. At ISC level the RCF continued regular meetings with the Accountability Committee, comprised of two ISC members, RCF Secretariat and FMA representation, tasked with overseeing the

work in regard to suspicions of integrity breaches and misuse of funds. The Accountability Committee is kept informed of all open CFM investigations and provides advice and guidance on the application of the CFM policies and procedures to CFM cases.

This can also include situations deemed high risk for which the RCF Secretariat is monitoring. The Accountability Committee also has a report back function to the broader ISC on outcomes/progress in addressing CFM cases. The full ISC is responsible for ensuring all policies related to CFM are appropriately implemented. Preventing and tracking CFM is a priority, to ensure all funds committed are available to support grantees' work in scaling-up services and protecting the rights of the ISP community. The Fund in collaboration with Aidsfonds, as the Fund Management Agent, have continued to further improve due diligence processes and CFM policy operationalization, including through the hiring of qualified project controllers as additions during high-workload periods.

For the 2021 Request for Proposals an enhanced – Aidsfonds wide due diligence process – was used to access the grantees financial health and governance. Conditions were placed upon some grantees for the 2022–2024 grant implementation period requiring them to invest sufficiently in financial management and/or governance strengthen to reduce risk and create stronger, more resilient, organizations. These conditions are monitored and updated where appropriate during the implementation of the grant. Additionally, a mid-term financial reporting is introduced for all grantees in the new funding cycle in order to further monitor grantees' financial activities.

The Policy on Integrity Breaches (2019v3.1), and supportive Integrity Breach Protocol (2018v3.0), was reviewed in 2018 to include wider definitions such as sexual harassment and bullying. When given cause, the FMA convenes an inter-departmental standing working group to include representatives from the RCF Secretariat, International Department, Project Control and Finance, that mobilizes a rapid and efficient response to any suspicions of integrity breach and in line with the mandatory Integrity Breach Protocol. This body then takes the decision based on the severity of the warning signals of

suspicions of integrity breach to place any disbursements with immediate effect to the grantee on hold and internally red flag the organization in question until investigations have been concluded and the breach deemed remedied. Bilateral conversations may also be undertaken where necessary to alert donors of suspicions of integrity breach taking in to consideration sensitivity of information and without jeopardizing any investigation that may be conducted. The Policy on Integrity Breaches stipulates that if analysis of available information confirms that accountability is unsound, appropriate measures will be taken. This can include but is not limited to an external forensic audit being requested and, if appropriate, legal action taken and any RCF funds identified as unaccounted or misused reclaimed.

As in previous years, the 2021 Request for Proposals Strategic Opportunity Funding included stringent requirements for applicants in relation to risk management and on preventing and handling integrity breaches. The Project Agreement and Terms and Conditions issued to grantees includes clauses referencing the Policy on Integrity Breaches, with applicants who are consortia being contractually obliged to have a bilateral agreements between the lead and partner/member organizations as sub-recipients, and the inclusion of an integrity clause in the consortia MoU and a commitment to developing and operationalizing integrity policies in line with the over-arching Aidsfonds/RCF Policy on Integrity Breaches. This ensures that networks consider the implications of CFM thoroughly before submitting a proposal and know their obligations and duties from the start. Furthermore, the Fund has made important progress in the past year, including the successful contracting of new grantees under the 2019–2021 grant cycle, encompassing an assessment of grantee financial and governance capacities and development of action plans for those funded under conditions to address strengthening of the network.

While in person monitoring visits were unfortunately impossible in 2020 the RCF Secretariat has sought to stay in regular contact with its grantees and strives to ensure all grantees have whistle blowing procedures in place. Any suspected or alleged misuse of funds is reported immediately to the

accountability committee and RCF donors and thoroughly investigated by the RCF staff with Aidsfonds support and/or an independent forensic audit team.

In 2020 RCF hosted a budget and work plan learning event and seeks to organize a reporting learning webinar in the coming year to ensure that grantees are fully aware of RCF financial and audit requirements and build capacity in these key areas.

Staff Security

In 2020 Aidsfonds introduced a new Safety and Security Travel policy in collaboration with the Centre for Safety and Development outlining clear safety measures to follow prior, during and after a foreign business travel. All staff are required to undertake travel safety training with refresher courses taking place every two years.

Financial sustainability

For some grantees, long term financial sustainability is uncertain. RCF continues to encourage grantees to prioritize activities to ensure sustainability for individual organizations as well as the sector as a whole. This was especially true in 2021 as many pre-planned activities were changed or put on hold due to COVID 19 restrictions. In this case grantees were encouraged to redirect funds towards core costs and/or strategic activities such as the development of resource mobilisation strategies. Moreover, the MEL framework captures both environmental and outcome level data regarding both grantee level financial health and sector wide financial sustainability which allows the fund to closely monitor trends in this area.

Climate and Environment

RCF endeavours to minimize the impact of building, transport and organization processes on the environment and chooses partners and suppliers who treat human beings and the environment in a responsible way. Aidsfonds new travel policy adopted in 2020, thoroughly followed by RCF, puts climate and environment clearly at its centre: *'[...] in this day and age we also have to consider our impact on the world very*

carefully, which in part means devoting attention to reducing CO2 emissions for the benefit of the climate' and the necessity of a foreign business trip has to be decided by an employee with good reason and proper consultation. Further, RCF attempts using teleconferences and bolt-on visits to grantees with other meetings as well as using Zoom/Skype interviews with grantees in place of site visits where appropriate. RCF uses recycled paper, but printing is minimized. Paper and plastic waste is recycled. Secretariat staff have a pass to access public transport within the Netherlands for journeys to/from the office and for meetings with external partners. Further, Aidsfonds also has a bike scheme in place where an employee can purchase a bicycle and have the tax reimbursed through their salary. Both of these schemes encourage the use of environmental sound transportation reducing the reliance of car use for work purposes.

Donor income

An on-going risk to the overall Fund is receiving less income than expected, or receiving it later than planned. Exchange rate currency fluctuations continue to negatively impact the actual income received by RCF in 2021. These developments are closely monitored, and RCF works to minimize these risks by transferring funding to grantees only after it has been received from the funding partners. In order to further manage risks related to exchange rate fluctuations an Exchange Change Rate Policy was developed in 2017 to better manage income expectations and to mitigate exchange rate losses as much as possible. The policy is being reviewed with the support of external experts and will be finalized in 2022.

The ISC budget committee is regularly updated on any losses or gains related to currency fluctuations and provide a feedback function to the wider ISC on implications and proposed budget adjustments. In the case of currency fluctuations experienced on the part of the grantees, it is contractually stipulated that it is the responsibility of grantees to manage such fluctuations. Gains and losses should be reported in the audited statement of income and expenditure as well as any deviations greater than 10%.

Resource mobilization and sustainability

After the successful recommitment process of 2017 leading to a new RFP and grant round in 2018 the ISC agreed to create a standing fundraising working group. The working group is tasked with overseeing a rolling fundraising cycle which main priority in 2021 was the recommitment culminating in a successful side event at the 2021 High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and mobilizing 42,090,000 USD for the HIV Response. This includes 10mIn USD dedicated to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on HIV Programs for ISPs – Exceptional Opportunity Funding (EOF) and 30mIn USD 3 Year funding for 24 regional and global networks and their consortia.

Human Rights and Gender Equality

There is a need for increased support for advocacy and service delivery that sustains and protects human rights. Human rights violations disproportionately affect ISPs and their ability to access HIV and other health care services – a fact that the Covid-19 environment has unfortunately further demonstrated. Human rights advocacy is also an area that is significantly underfunded in the HIV response. Therefore, the RCF continues to prioritize and fund human rights protections as a high priority. The challenging political and social conditions in the targeted countries increase the vulnerability of the ISP and grantees. The majority of partners have good mitigation strategies in place and have the expertise defending the rights of ISPs. All grantees advocate for equal rights and examples of outcomes related to gender equality can be seen above. The RCF focuses on gender issues and the most marginalized; girls and women are consistently prioritized as an inadequately served population and the Fund actively promotes the rights of women, including transgender and gay women. All grantees strive for diversity and representation of ISPs in their governing bodies. Lastly, the governing bodies of the RCF consist of representatives of civil society and Inadequately Served Populations and reflect a gender and geographical balance that the Fund ensured to maintain through its ISC CS and PAP membership renewal. The RCF and Aidsfonds aim at a diverse work-

force with a balanced representation of men and women, ages, sexual orientation and ethnic background. When recruiting new staff, the Fund particularly encourages applications from candidates who are living with HIV and/or from key affected communities.

Challenges related to tracking and measuring results

The strengthening of the MEL in line with the new funding cycle has allowed the Robert Carr Fund to capture for the first time both a robust baseline and a set of programmatic engagement targets. As well as providing a starting point for the 2019–2021 portfolio of grantees, this allows the Fund to see clearly whether grantee work has proceeded according to plan and what changes have occurred over the course of a year – and across a full funding cycle. Some indicators however remain complex, with action being non-linear and often cyclical, e.g. not every network has the need or opportunity to engage in each of these elements in any given year. The Fund hosted a virtual workshop in Q4 2021 in which focused on applying the lessons of 2021 to the development of 2021 work plans and budgets. The Secretariat will look into further streamlining and simplifying the data collection method and refining eventually some of the indicators. For further information please see Annex 5 and 6.

IATI

RCF supports groups that are vulnerable and sometimes at-risk. This includes groups which are criminalized or face risks related to stigma and discrimination. Therefore, RCF is committed to protecting the identity of our target groups and partners and is continually reviewing the implementation of the IATI exclusion policy. At the same time, transparency is essential. RCF strives to find an appropriate balance. Grantees are contractually obliged to comply with IATI reporting standards.

Procurement

Procurement of items or services is utilized following our internal procedure in line with international best

practice and applicable regulations. RCF have also ensured that grantee contracts for the 2022–2024 funding cycle, include clauses which require grantees to meet the procurement standards required by donors to the fund.. The enhanced – Aidsfonds wide – due diligence process included an assessment of grantees’ procurement policies and where relevant conditioned grantees to prioritize this area of work. Procurement is also a focus area for RCF’s regular monitoring visits.

OECD/DAC list of recipients

Approximately 90% of RCF funding goes to ODA (Official Development Assistance) recipient countries. 66% of the lead organizations are based in ODA–recipient countries. As in line with contract stipulations, funding from FCDO and Norad is spent only on activities and countries that qualify for ODA according to OECD/DAC.

Value for Money

The **key cost drivers** for the Fund are onward granting via the Fund Secretariat and Aidsfonds (the Fund Management Agent), and the overheads for fund administration, grants management and evaluation. These funds are used by the Secretariat and FMA to manage relationships with grantees, manage donor funds and grant making, and coordinate bi–annual ISC meetings. Contracting a competitively tendered FMA to manage a pooled donor fund for global and regional HIV civil society networks to improve the HIV response for inadequately served populations was designed to increase **efficiency** by developing collaboration and coordination among networks, as well as aiding transparency through joint oversight and governance structures for the Fund. Furthermore, the consortia model, introduced in round 2, has worked to ensure collaboration between networks and to encourage synergy. This arrangement improves **economy** by reducing transaction costs for both donors and recipients. The RCF is fulfilling important aspects of its intended added value, such as being a ‘bridge from donors to ISPs’ and a ‘unique inventory of the demand from civil society’ while cutting management costs and time for donors. Results are now being better articulated through the new MEL.

The RCF is unique in its focus on regional and global civil society and community networks that represent ISPs. Within that focus, a key defining feature of the Fund is its commitment to providing core funding, which allows networks to build their institutional capacity, as highlighted in output 1. Core funding does not simply allow networks to exist. It supports them to undertake work for which grant opportunities may not yet exist and **to add value** to work that is funded through other sources (such as the Global Fund, bilateral agencies and UN partners). Core funding also enables them to invest sufficient resources in monitoring and learning from their work so they can continually improve their advocacy efforts. Until recently, the Robert Carr Fund used anecdotal evidence to show that its core funding contributes to the programmatic outputs of its grantees. Now that it has a fully operational MEL system, the Fund can now track the frequency at which core funding versus activity specific funding is used to achieve milestones for each output area.

ANNEX 5:

Grantee Reflections on the RCF Secretariat

As part of the 2021 annual reporting survey, grantees were required to respond to the following summary questions about their experience with the Robert Carr Fund, while reflecting on the entire grant cycle (2019–2021):

- What kind of support from the RCF Secretariat was the most useful to you?
- How can the RCF Secretariat improve its support to RCF grantees in the future?

The following section summarizes grantee answers, grouping information by themes that became apparent based on frequent and similar answers.

Value of the Robert Carr Fund: A Grantee Perspective

In answering questions about the Secretariat, it must be noted that grantees praised many of the core foundational aspects of the Fund – an indication that the Secretariat is effectively managing to Fund to fulfill its intended purpose.

“Keep the uniqueness, values and ideas as a Fund for ISPs in the HIV response”

For instance, when queried about what aspect of RCF support was most useful, grantees reflected back many of the elements that make the Fund unique, including (listed in order of frequency at which it was mentioned):

- Flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances, including developing new responses to emerging needs, reprogramming of funds, and changes in activity scheduling – not limited to but especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

“The level of flexibility that RCF afforded regarding the reallocation of resources based on emergency and emerging situations was greatly appreciated.”

“They showed flexibility regarding the budget: Allocating a top-up budget for COVID-19, enabling us to use savings from one year to another, giving opportunity to reprogram our activities at mid-year”

“By reallocating resources based on emerging needs, providing ongoing support and advice to [our network] team and a sustained acknowledgement of how difficult it can be to strengthen and remain stable as a community-led network, RCF has proven critical to the community-led HIV response.”

- The value of core funding for networks to sustain their basic operations and invest in their organizational capacity

“Core Funding...enabled us to hire qualified staff, increased our visibility, advocacy profile and contributions to national and regional discourse as well as increased our funding profile”

“Even if [our network] manages to find activity funding, we always lack core funds to support the sustainable work of the secretariat and maintain our financial operations. The valuable collaborations with other global networks allowed [us] to exchange best practices in creating enabling legal and social environment for qualitative HIV services for gay men and trans people.”

- Understanding of the nature of community-led networks, and willingness to invest in emerging networks and support those facing serious challenges

“We recognize that no other funder would have so rapidly agreed to galvanized around supporting a new network in the region”

“The RCF Secretariat quickly understood the situation and supported [our network] as the lead consortium to navigate this situation and allowed us to reallocate funds to undertake a scoping analysis as well as provide core funding to a new, emerging network.”

“The confidence that RCF expresses in the consortium grantees through its funding model allows us to be responsive to the needs of our groups but also to respond creatively and with tailored funds to respond to changing needs, risks and opportunities. Having core funding over a 3-year cycle allows our country groups to have confidence in our development cycle.”

Two networks also referenced the RCF MEL approach and the way that it accommodates the particular nature of regional and global community-led networks.

“The thoughtful theory of change of RCF, MEL and reflection processes are another important thing that helps us as community-led networks to better structure and understand the impact of our performance.”

“Therefore, from the logic of the Theory of Change we have documented our reality to sustain advocacy. And the Robert Carr Fund has been remarkable giving us the possibility to continue to innovate producing researching, leaders mentoring, advocacy and political communications.”

- Opportunities to connect and be in solidarity and partnership with other networks, doing similar work. Here grantees (12 mentioned), in particular, referenced the meetings organized by the Secretariat, including kick-off and annual reflection meetings, trainings, and workshops.

Secretariat Strengthening Opportunities

When asked how the RCF Secretariat could better serve grantees, responses were positive and constructive — but also highly varied in the themes of their suggestions. Three key themes revolved around basic Secretariat functions.

COMMUNICATIONS

While many grantees appreciated the level of communication they receive from the Secretariat, a few felt that increased direct communication with individual grantees could be improved. One grantee also expressed a request for multi-media support in using some of the accountability tools required:

“Sometimes it was challenging to work with the financial template and young networks that are just emerging and don’t have a strong finance team to understand the template. It might be useful to have a video, or some online webinars on the financial templates and reporting for sub granting or young networks.”

Multiple grantees also recommended that the Secretariat continue building its own external communications capacity, and particularly their visibility on social media. This would allow the Secretariat to fulfill grantee requests such as participation in advocacy efforts that grantees are undertaking at the global or regional level, and to share other funding opportunities with their grantees.

One network also suggested that Program Officers may benefit from more engagement in and direct observation of grantee work (echoing a common practice prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic):

“A better understanding of the regional specificity, such as visits of the Program Officer to the region, participation in workshop/training organized by the grantees, will provide the RCF Secretariat a more holistic view of the challenges faced by the network and the ISPs.”

GRANT MANAGEMENT

Many grantees expressed an appreciation for the flexibility that the Secretariat allows, especially in reprogramming funding to respond to emerging needs. Grantees had two further suggestions for improved grant management practices, including starting the overall funding cycle (including RFP and grant negotiations) 4–6 months earlier, to allow an earlier certainty about funding amount and an earlier first disbursement; and the provision of annual updates and reminders on grant conditions at the beginning of each year (not only the beginning of the grant cycle), to assure that

grantees remain in compliance even in the event of staff transitions from one year to the next.

Consortium Leads also had several distinct requests (each by individual Leads, unless otherwise noted) to adopt a previous suggestion to establish an advisory finance group that would consult with grantees on any changes to and improvements in the financial reporting tools and process; to provide more streamlined and more comprehensive guidance on submitting budgets and reprogramming requests; to provide clear timelines for payment processing; and to always consult consortium leads before making major changes to finance and reporting timelines.

Streamlining Reporting The most frequently-cited suggestion related to core Secretariat functions was around the improvement of the annual reporting process. These requests were further divided into suggestions to streamline the survey and improve the survey platform itself. Consortium Leads were particularly interested in a survey platform or format that better integrates the consortium experience. Further suggestions were to include more space for qualitative explanation of the grantee journey, either through interview or a narrative section of the report.

There were also many grantees who requested the Secretariat to expand its work into the area of grantee technical support and exchange. These requests can be consolidated into two themes:

SUPPORTING GRANTEE EXCHANGE

A frequently-made request was for greater support for grantee linking and learning. This included facilitating greater direct connection between grantees through a group email or a network platform where grantees could share information, best practice, and a shared resource library with all resources developed with RCF support. Grantees also requested more reflection meetings and a renewed face-to-face exchange for the annual reflection meeting. One grantee commented on the opportunity to design exchanges that enhance intersectionality and

intentionally link grantees for this purpose.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

A sizable number of networks requested that the Secretariat provide more technical support, with one suggesting that the Secretariat have regionally-based technical staff to support younger networks in their growth. The remaining networks in this category requested skills building-sessions, on topics including advocacy (using a certified training approach), digitalization of services and digital security, state and donor budget monitoring, social protection for ISPs, community leadership skills, and M&E. It is notable that many or all of these requests may be more effectively supported through peer-to-peer learning facilitated by the Secretariat (as described above), versus through the Secretariat itself providing technical support.

Alongside all of these requests, many grantees expressed appreciation for the way that the Secretariat functions, and noted that distinct improvements have been made over the years to improve the grantee experience. In particular, several grantees referenced the availability, reliability and responsiveness of Program Officers, including the collaborative and non-paternalistic way that they interact with grantees, allowing grantees to speak frankly and pragmatically with the Secretariat in a way that is not possible with other donors.

Below is a sampling of other, overarching reflection on the Secretariat's role in supporting grantees.

"The RCF Secretariat is brilliant. It may be strategic to consider using RCF as a fund manager for more community and civil society grants from larger institutions."

"The support from the RCF Secretariat has improved significantly over the years. The instructions provided in the financial and activity reporting log are clear and concise, making it easier to follow through as compared to previous grant."

“We honestly believe that the secretariat is doing an amazing job in supporting us, and staying in touch on every need with very prompt response level. We applaud this and hope that it continues going forward.”

“Just continue doing what you do. We highly appreciate this support that has continued for [our network] already more than six years. With your help, we have grown as a robust network.”

Budget-Related Suggestions

When asked how the Secretariat could better support grantees, several grantees responded with requests related to budget allocation. As these decisions are beyond the scope of the Secretariat’s responsibilities, they are presented separately here, for consideration by the ISC.

INCREASED BUDGET REQUESTS

Four networks requested increase in budget ceilings, and expanded budget provision to support more FTE. One network also requested more truly unrestricted core funds.

“[We would like to see] truly unrestricted core funds – i.e. not linked to a budget or reporting requirement. This would also allow smaller networks (including ISP networks) to build reserve – which remains a huge challenge for several Consortium members.”

TIMING-RELATED REQUESTS

Other requests made by grantees (individual networks, unless otherwise noted) included a lengthened funding duration; allowance for no-cost extensions (especially under extenuating circumstances like COVID-19); more opportunity for thematically-driven funding; and the regular provision of 1-year bridging grants to support grantees who are experiencing gaps between other donors’ 3- and 5-year cycles.

REDUCING WITHHOLDING PRACTICES

One consortium lead, representing several grantee perspectives requested that RCF discontinue the practice of withhold final instalments until audits are complete (often a delay of 5–6 months). This was reported as a major financial challenge for most partners of this particular consortium, including well-established organizations, and many of whom had requested exemptions.

Summary of Requests and Ongoing or Planned Responses/Action

The following table summarizes the major requests made above, alongside the Secretariat's ongoing or planned actions to address these requests.

REQUEST	RESPONSE/ACTION
Secretariat continue building its own communications capacity.	The Secretariat acknowledges this need and has recently hired a communications officer to implement the Fund's communication strategy. In the past months the Fund has already multiplied its efforts on LinkedIn and Twitter.
Program Officers (POs) travel to conduct direct observation of grantee activities, in order to increase understanding of grantee work .	This was a common practice prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and is planned to resume as soon as the pandemic situation allows. In the meantime, regular check-in calls and virtual site visits are being employed with grantees. In order for POs to stay informed about latest developments grantees are encouraged to share event announcements and reports with POs.
Provide more streamlined and more comprehensive guidance on submitting budgets, reprogramming and payment requests.	The Secretariat has introduced regular webinars to aid in these topics (including the Kick-off Meeting earlier this year),but is currently considering options for more regular capacity-building and clarification opportunities in this area.
Streamline MEL reporting processes and strengthen the reporting (survey) platform for greater user-friendliness	The Secretariat is fully aware of this need and made efforts to streamline within the bounds of the established reporting process for the 2021 survey. For the next funding cycle (2022-2024), the Secretariat will conduct focus groups to gather feedback on both survey content and format/platform.
Provide greater support for grantee linking and learning.	During the 2019-2021 cycle, the Secretariat worked to expand the listserv (grantee email group) as the primary platform for linking grantees. During the 2022-2024 funding cycle, the Secretariat is exploring further opportunities for more active facilitation of peer-to-peer exchange and learning.
Provide more technical support to build grantee capacity.	While the Secretariat appreciates the need for grantees to continue building their technical capacity, it is not the mandate of the Secretariat to do so. Rather, the Secretariat believes that technical capacity will be further increased through the facilitation of increased peer-to-peer learning, as mentioned above.
Lengthen funding duration and allow for no-cost extensions.	These issues could be considered by the ISC for their feasibility for future funding rounds.
Provide opportunity for thematically-driven funding.	
Regular provision of 1-year bridging grants to support grantees who are experiencing gaps between other donors' 3- and 5-year cycles.	
Exemption from audit results being available before final instalment made.	The current practice is that grantees can ask to waive the withholding if valid reasons are brought forward, though case-by-case consultation with the focal point will still be required.

ANNEX 6:

Consortium Lead Reflections

As part of the 2021 annual reporting survey, grantees who served as consortium leads were required to the following summary questions about their experience, while reflecting on the entire grant cycle (2019–2021):

- As a consortium lead, what was the most important change you made or lesson you learned in consortium leadership during this grant cycle?
- What can the RCF Secretariat do to better support consortium leads?

The following section summarizes the consortium leads' answers, grouping information by themes that became apparent based on frequent and similar answers.

Reflections on Leadership Roles

When consortium leads were asked to reflect on the major lessons they learned in this leadership role during the funding cycle, their experiences fell into the following categories:

- Hold regular (monthly or bi-monthly) check-in calls with each consortium partner, to share information on progress and approaches, and to provide technical assistance on financial management and programming.

“The most important lesson we took away was the need for regular check-in calls with each consortium partner in order to share information and provide technical assistance on financial management and programming. We have been doing this monthly and learnt the importance of implementing this following RCF convened MEL meetings, where [our network] joined the session on network strengthening and picked up tips from [another Consortium Lead] on their approach.”

- Organize consortium-wide meetings on special organizational capacity topics -- such as governance and membership, financial management strategies and software -- to allow consortium members to share approaches.
- Conduct a scan of capacity and needs for each consortium member at the outset of the partnership, and develop differentiated approaches to supporting each network and its unique needs working in its unique environmental context.

“In this cycle, we oversaw three Consortium-wide capacity scans – reviewing the Consortium members’ governance, financial and fundraising systems and processes. This was a positive experience and helped to identify several key recommendations and solutions...The scans also helped to highlight and reinforce the strengths and good practice across the Consortium.”

“Regional partners have required differentiated technical support, for example when preparing budget and/or workplans for submission, or when completing monthly finance and narrative reports, or drafting case studies to show impact as part of the consortium MEL. We have gained an in-depth understanding of the different levels that each of our partners operate at, and have adapted our systems to accommodate all levels.”

- Engage not only in joint advocacy, but in joint fundraising, leveraging the experience of working as a team under RCF funding to show other donors the potential for cross-organizational and intersectional collaboration — especially across multiple ISPs within a specific geographic region.

Requests for Improved Support

In response to an inquiry about how the Secretariat could better support the Consortium Leads, the following two types⁸² of requests were made:

- Allow for budgeting additional direct and indirect costs associated with being the Consortium Lead.

“Being the consortium lead requires significant human resources, and a challenge to balance project coordination, administrative and financial oversight skills, with advocacy and technical knowledge to fulfill activity obligations. We have learnt that there needs to be some restructuring undertaken to cover all needs. It would also be helpful if up to 10% of funds could be used for direct/indirect costs that could support management of the consortium itself that could be used flexible for additional staff, management or core costs.”

- Organize a regular calls or meetings (biannually or quarterly) specifically between responsible Program Officers and Consortium Leads, discuss progress and any other issues as they relate to the management of consortia.

Summary of Requests and Ongoing or Planned Responses/Action

The following table summarizes the requests made above, alongside the Secretariat's ongoing or planned actions to address these requests.

REQUEST	RESPONSE/ACTION
Allow for budgeting additional direct and indirect costs associated with being the Consortium Lead.	There is currently no restriction on the amount of the budget which can be designated for this purpose; however, it is dependent on negotiations within the consortium to allocate these costs for this purpose.
Organize a regular calls or meetings (biannual-ly or quarterly) specifically between responsible Program Officers and Consortium Leads, discuss progress and any other issues as they relate to the management of consortia.	RCF arranged a dedicated consortium lead breakout group during the Kick Off Meeting for the 2022-2024 cycle and will convene this group more regularly throughout the 2022 – 2024 grant cycle.

⁸² It should be noted that several Consortium Leads also lodged requests that were not directly related to the management of a consortium, but were more applicable to overall grantee experience. This feedback has been incorporated with other grantee feedback on desired Secretariat support in Annex 5.

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