

Civil Society transition and sustainability assessment of trans communities in the HIV response in Guyana



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ACRONYMS

CARICOM	Caribbean Communities
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CRG	Communities, Rights and Gender
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GF	Global Fund
GRPA	Guyana Reproductive and Parenthood Association
GTU	Guyana Trans United
GUM	Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinic
ICW	International Committee for Women Living with HIV
KP	Key Populations
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NAP	National AIDS Program
NBTS	National Blood Transfusion Service
NLID	National Laboratory for Infectious Diseases
NCC	National Coordinating Coalition
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief
TB	Tuberculosis
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first reported case of HIV in Guyana was in 1987. Thirty-one years later, the country is still confronted with the challenges of a consistent rise in HIV incidences. With the adult prevalence rate of 2016, the Ministry of Health reports that persons between the ages of 24-49 years are the most affected. Key populations such as men who have sex with men and transgender persons continue to be disproportionately affected as well. In addition to HIV, the country has also been responding to Tuberculosis and Malaria through the support of the Global Fund. In 2014, there were 17,599 reported Malaria cases with a reduction in 2015,¹ while TB prevalence in 2014 was reported at 103/100,000. Since the inception of the Global Fund in Guyana, the fund has invested US \$44,674,960 in the HIV, TB and Malaria response. This has resulted in 4,800 persons living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy, 2,210 new smear positive TB cases detected, and 127,000 Malaria insecticide-treated nets distributed.²

Even though Guyana is still considered eligible for HIV and TB funding due to its high disease burden, the country is being impacted by reduced funding from the Global Fund, PEPFAR and other key external funders. Thus, the country has started the process of putting in place transition and sustainability strategies. As part of this process, the Country Coordinating Mechanism welcomed the LAC Regional Platform's initiative to engage civil society organizations in a social dialogue to discuss transition and sustainability of the HIV, TB and Malaria response and its effect on CSOs. As a part of this exercise, civil society and community leaders had the opportunity to engage in critical reflection on risks and opportunities. This led to the development of a plan of action. This process was led by Guyana Trans United in 2017.

Building on this initiative, Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE) coordinated a two-day capacity building session which sought to facilitate a process in which transgender communities and organizations could participate in dialogue, evaluation and planning in the context of the sustainability and transition of the Global Fund and other external funds. The exercise provided the opportunity for the participants to engage in discussions, forge a joint vision as a transgender community and identify risks and opportunities within the context of transition and sustainability.

Based on these discussions, the following priority areas were identified:

- 1) Stigma and Discrimination (including discriminatory laws)
- 2) Economic challenges
- 3) Access to adequate health care and social services for transgender persons

These priority areas guided the development of a technical assistance request to be submitted to the Communities, Rights and Gender Initiative of the Global Fund to build the capacity of the transgender community.

¹ PAHO/WHO External Evaluation, 2015

² <http://www.globalfund.atm/guyana>

INTRODUCTION

a) HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Guyana

Guyana, with a population of 751,223 and a landmass of 215,000km extending along the northeastern coast of South America, is the third smallest country on the continent. It is the only English-speaking country in South America and is joined by Suriname as the only South American member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Guyana is divided into 10 administrative regions with four coastal regions (3, 4, 5 and 6) and has been classified as a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank. The first case of HIV was reported in a male homosexual in 1987 and since then there has been a progressive increase in the number of reported cases.³

Since the first diagnosed case of AIDS in Guyana in 1987, the government has responded quickly with a medical approach. In 1989, the Government of Guyana established the National AIDS Program (NAP) under the Ministry of Health (MOH). In 1992, the National AIDS Program Secretariat (NAPS) was established with the role of coordinating the national response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The National AIDS Committee (NAC) was also established in 1992 with responsibility for developing and promoting policy and advocacy issues. In 2005, a Presidential Commission on HIV and AIDS formed under the aegis of the Office of the President. The government's response is complemented by activities of various civil society organizations, whose approach has focused primarily on prevention with vulnerable communities and key populations. In 2012, the 2013-2020 National Strategic Plan and HIV Vision 2020 was developed to guide the national response.

The epidemic in Guyana is considered generalized, as HIV prevalence of greater than 1.0 percent has been consistently found among pregnant women attending antenatal care clinics. UNAIDS reports a rate of 1.5% among adults aged 15-49 in 2015.⁴ Although categorized as generalized, Guyana's epidemic increasingly displays features of a concentrated epidemic, as several key populations experience significantly higher prevalence (greater than 5%): sex workers (6.1%); gay men and other men who have sex with men (4.9%); and transgender persons (8.4%). Tuberculosis is still reported to be one of the leading causes of mortality in Guyana due to communicable diseases. The incidence rate was 78/100,000 in 2014 and 76/100,000 in 2015. Regions 1, 4, 7 and 10 have incidence rates above the national average. The WHO Global TB Control Report indicates that, in 2014, the estimated TB incidence was 103/100,000, the prevalence 123/100,000 and 25% of tested TB patients were HIV positive, showing a strong co-infection trend between TB and HIV.⁵ Malaria continues to be a major public health problem. In 2014 there were 17,599 reported cases. In 2015 there was a reduction to 13,096.

³ Transition and Sustainability Social Dialogue with Civil Society Organizations in the HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria Response in Guyana, LAC Regional Platform/Via Libre, 2017

⁴ UNAIDS Global Report 2015

⁵ WHO Global TB Control Report 2015

b) The Funding Landscape in Guyana

The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, just like the rest of the world in varying degrees, is undergoing fundamental changes in several areas that will determine the setting, opportunities and challenges for an effective response to HIV, TB and Malaria. Despite significant advances in HIV care and treatment, HIV/AIDS has remained a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in Guyana. The link between HIV and TB also continues to be significant as HIV/TB co-infection, especially among key populations, is still a challenge. For this reason, donors including the Global Fund, Clinton Foundation, PEPFAR, the World Bank and others have prioritized support to Guyana for the National HIV/AIDS Program (NAP) and civil society organizations. Recently, however, external funding provided for the HIV, TB and Malaria response in Guyana has started to decrease. Guyana is one of the countries in this region that benefitted greatly from the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The effects of this are already being felt among civil society organizations and communities that have been benefitting from programs specifically geared towards increasing HIV prevention, care and treatment among key populations. Over the years, Guyana has made great strides towards achieving universal access to HIV treatment, care and support, as well as towards the Sustainable Development Goals because of the support from the Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and Malaria. To date, 4,800 persons living with HIV are on anti-retroviral therapy, 2,210 new smear positive TB cases have been detected and treated, and 127,000 Malaria insecticide-treated nets have been distributed. Thus far, the Global Fund has committed US \$45,016,694 to Guyana's response to HIV, TB and Malaria.

Under the stewardship of the Ministry of Health and the CCM, Guyana acknowledges the importance of sustainability strategizing for its HIV, TB and Malaria response and, with support of the Global Fund and PEPFAR, has started to put measures in place. During discussions with Dr. Morris Edward of the Ministry of Health it was indicated that "the country has been putting contingencies in place for such an occurrence because it has been expected." As the government prepares to put measures in place for the sustainability of the HIV, TB and Malaria response, the government's plans need to focus on how programming for key populations at risk will be sustained and financed.

Civil society organizations have, for the longest time, been at the hub of HIV prevention, care and treatment especially for key populations that are generally not included in national planning and budgeting. CSOs indicate that there is an urgent need to explore Social Contracting and the government's role in engaging civil society organizations in planning and implementation of projects to ensure that civil society organizations will be able to continue their important work as a part of the national response. Thus, this GATE initiative seeks to build the capacity of the transgender community to be able to more meaningful participate in the Global Fund processes, especially within the context of transition and sustainability.

c) Project Background

Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE) is an international organization working on gender identity, gender expression and bodily diversity issues. It was founded and registered in 2009 in New York, USA. GATE's programmatic work is organized around four areas: Depathologization and legal reforms, transgender issues in the international HIV response, Movement building and Development and United Nations. Through the support of a Communities, Rights and Gender grant GATE is leading a global project on strengthen peer-based and community led networks of transgender populations. The aim is to build capacity and support regional and country-based constituencies to more effectively engage in and contribute to the development, implementation and oversight of Global Fund grants. As a part of this initiative, GATE contracted MC Consultancy: Sexual Health and Development to develop a methodology to be implemented in Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Guyana, facilitated by different consultants. In Guyana, GATE was supported by the Guyana Trans United.

Guyana Trans United (GTU) was founded on 14th January 2012 in recognition of the need for more trans-specific organizations in Guyana. Several founding members had been involved in other LGBTIQ organizations and human rights work and were eager to engage greater numbers of their colleagues in such work as well as to take on greater leadership roles within their own communities. GTU promotes greater equity and human rights for all. GTU serves as a strong advocate for human rights and standing up against police abuse and violence. The mission of GTU is to empower trans Guyanese to advocate for their human rights and to participate as citizens in all decisions, which may affect their lives. GTU's main goals are to improve the quality of life of Guyanese Trans and to ensure that their rights are recognized and upheld in all domains. GTU is a member of the Country Coordinating Mechanism of the Global Fund in Guyana. To date GTU has not qualified to be a sub-recipient nor sub-recipient of the Global Fund. GTU has received small pockets of funds (max US\$500) to conduct consultations with the trans community in preparation for concept notes and work plans for trans specific activities of the Global Fund.

Project Goal

The goal of this project is to improve understanding and ensure meaningful engagement of transgender persons in Global Fund activities at the national level; strengthen capacity of national transgender organizations and build peer-to-peer knowledge sharing; encourage evidence-based programmatic interventions and policies based on needs of the transgender community; and inform funding transition preserving investments made in strengthening transgender communities.

The project is also intended to focus on strengthening local capacity; especially in support of transgender people in their regional and country-based constituencies to more effectively engage in, and contribute to, the development, implementation and oversight of Global Fund supported programs.

OBJECTIVES

To implement and accompany civil society in a methodological process to assess the risks and needs related to sustainability and to plan actions from the civil society's perspective within the context of the sustainable transition from Global Fund grants in Guyana.

Specifically:

1. Strengthening HIV key population networks with global reach, to support their country level constituencies to effectively engage in Global Fund-related processes during the whole grant cycle;
2. Developing the capacity of marginalized and criminalized networks and communities to effectively and safely engage in all Global Fund-related processes;
3. Strengthening of key and vulnerable populations for HIV capacity to advocate for increased investment in rights-based and community responsive programs, as well as effective community-led, human right and gender related programming within Global Fund grants.

METHODOLOGY

This process was conducted based on a comprehensive, evidence-based approach, which included analysis, interpretation of available evidence, engagement in dialogue, and agreement among the transgender organization and community leaders in Guyana. The following activities were undertaken to ensure that the objectives of the consultancy were met successfully:

1. Desk review of key documents including: GF, GATE and LAC Regional Platform reports on Transition and Sustainability Initiatives undertaken in the region
2. Development of a tool to guide the facilitation of the process based on the project goal and objectives. Consult with other consultants, compile feedback and finalize tool.
3. Facilitated a 2-day dialogue and workshop with identified transgender leaders in Guyana. Develop and implement agenda based on Transition and Sustainability Tool.
4. Provided guidance to the participants in the development of a technical assistance request to the CRG.
5. Preparation of workshop report based describing the process, the findings and recommendations based on the discussions during the 2-day session.
6. Preparation of a case study outlining the learning experience from the perspective of two participants.

Overview of the Tool

This tool was created to facilitate the process in which transgender communities and organizations can engage in dialogue, assessment and planning within the context of sustainability and transition of the Global Fund and other external funding. It provides an opportunity for forging a vision through the identification of risks and opportunities. By identifying key barriers and developing a plan of action to address these, transgender communities are able to play a critical role in the process of preparing for transition and planning for sustainability.

The primary target for this tool is transgender persons, including organizations that work with and for transgender communities. The findings of this process will serve to inform key decision-makers and other stakeholders including: the National AIDS Programs and Commissions; key governmental ministries; civil society organizations and informal community-based groups of transgender persons; technical partners including multilateral partners, such as UN agencies; and donor agencies such as the Global Fund and other multilateral and bilateral donors.

The overall objective of this tool is to guide facilitator's in engaging the participants in a process of increasing awareness, dialogue, strategic planning and grant development. Guided by the activities outlined in the two-day agenda, the facilitator will make presentations, describe the objectives of each small group discussion, and guide the participants in the identification of gaps and opportunities and establishing priority areas. The facilitator will guide them through the process of identifying strategies and actions to address the gaps and recommendations identified.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PROCESS AND FINDINGS

DAY 1

a) Making the Case: Global Fund Board “Mock Exercise”

The session included a “mock exercise” in which the participants had to prepare a presentation for the Global Fund Board. The objective was to assess the level of knowledge of the participants on the situation of the 3 diseases and the trans community in Guyana as well as their knowledge of the wider issues affecting the transgender community in Guyana. The participants were made aware of the importance of evidence-based data; the need to build on what the Global Fund is already doing in the country and the prioritization of the needs and issues affecting the trans community in Guyana. Thus, the participants were divided into 3 groups and were later encouraged to work together as a large group to strategize the best way in which they could make their presentation within the timeframe of 15 minutes.

Each of the 3 groups was tasked accordingly:

- **Group 1** – The Situation of HIV, TB and Malaria and Transgender persons in Guyana;
- **Group 2** – Acquire background information on the Global Fund and assess what Global Fund has accomplished in Guyana;
- **Group 3** – Compile the needs and issues affecting the trans community in Guyana.

The three persons presenting on behalf of each group were asked to envision that they were presenting to the Global Fund Board.

The Situation of HIV, TB and Malaria, the Global Fund and the Trans Community

The presenters shared that there has been significant reduction in the three diseases that the Global Fund focuses on. In Guyana, 8500 persons were found to be living with HIV in 2016. The prevalence for sex workers infected with the virus was 6.1% and prisoners was 1.2%, with 100 children newly infected. In the malaria program, the beneficiaries were miners and loggers. They shared that the trans community is left behind, including homeless persons and prisoners. Trans persons in Guyana are ignored and still highly stigmatized. In 2017, three persons from the Guyana Trans United died from HIV-related illnesses. The presentation highlighted that, to date, 97% of the Global Fund money has been spent to reduce the HIV epidemic, and yet the transgender community has not benefited enough from those funds. The funds have not been reaching the trans community.

Needs of the transgender community in Guyana

In regard to needs, the participants shared that the trans community requires access to education, skills building, trade and at least high school education. Many laws hinder trans persons from expressing themselves, and legal assistance is needed particularly as there is a lack of police protection. The trans community encounters violence from partners and society. Trans representation at the policy level with respect to laws and health is needed. It was also shared that trans persons are not in the system and there was no data available regarding the trans community specifically. Sometimes, persons from the trans community

would be placed into the MSM category, but holistically the trans community has not been targeted.

Thus, in general, there were 4 key areas highlighted by the participants in the presentations:

- Lack of data on the situation of trans persons;
- Legal situation – discriminatory law;
- Representation at decision and policy making level;
- Discrimination from the government.

Feedback and recommendations on the group presentation

After the presentations, it was agreed that the community had a very good understanding of the situation of HIV, TB and Malaria in Guyana as well as the needs of the transgender community. However, the facilitators felt that there were also some opportunities for improvement which were shared to the participants as outlined below:

- Most of the information presented was from other key populations and valuable time was taken away from making a case for the trans community;
- Not enough emphasis was placed on the other two diseases that the Global Fund addresses – tuberculosis and malaria;
- The information shared on the trans community not benefitting is not accurate– trans persons do access HIV tests from Global Fund monies, and condoms and lubricants are sponsored by the Global Fund;
- The point made on discrimination in schools did not connect to HIV and reducing the prevalence among trans people;
- In summing up, it was a wish list with no obvious connections, and there was a need to focus on how it will affect services, to make the connections stronger and to build a stronger case.

The participants agreed with the feedback and saw it as an opportunity to make improvements.

b) The lifeline of the transgender person in Guyana

The objective of this activity was to gather information from the participants on the issues affecting transgender persons in Guyana throughout their lifetime. Participants were tasked with being as creative as they could and to draw the lifeline of a transgender person in Guyana. They were encouraged to show the lifeline of a transgender person from the time of their birth to when they die. Participants were tasked with including early childhood, the trans teenager and the trans adult. They were guided to document the issues at each stage. Participants were reminded that your sex is between your legs and your gender is what is happening in your brain.

Group 1

At birth and early childhood, the mother is walking out and friend compliments the mother on a beautiful baby. Automatically it is assumed that the baby is a girl if they are wearing earrings or pink, or a boy if they are wearing blue. Participants shared that the life of a trans person is a roller coaster, sometimes up and sometimes down. The use of one color on the drawing is symbolic. It highlights the struggle for identity.

Group 2

In Guyana, birth is very happy: “mom, it’s a boy!” As the child progresses, she is in a state of confusion into her teen years. She receives lots of “licks”, doesn’t wear her makeup, receives punishment from parents, feels forced to go to church, receives discrimination from the community since she does not fit with the gender norm that she “should” be. It’s possibly frightening for the parents, compounded by issues of self-acceptance and wanting to hide from society. When she dies, parents want to bury her with clothing from the sex that she was born with.

Group 3

Birth, joyful moment, formation of the chromosomes, 23 male and 23 female chromosomes. Noticed that they are a bit off balance, very clueless ages 1-5, society says that only boys are allowed to play with green and blue. Teenage years: confusion about sex and identifying themselves, a battle, feeling different, confusion, trying to go into groupings and sections that make them feel comfortable. In adulthood, they still face discrimination but become more comfortable with themselves and ownership. In death in Guyana, as a trans person you are not given a choice and parents usually do what they think society deems fit. Life is like a river for a transgender person.

Large Group discussion

Participants were open and willing to share their experiences of life as a transgender person in Guyana. In summing up, the life of a transgender person is a struggle. One of the major struggles is clothes and dressing for trans females. The cross-dressing law that discriminates against the way trans persons dress is upsetting and paralyzing. Societal norms and culture play a major role in Guyana with respect to how trans persons are treated. The trans person needs to be mentally strong to live in Guyana. It puts a trans person in a terrible state of confusion, which can lead to depression. This includes not wanting to go into public spaces and being forced to be someone different. Not everyone is strong enough mentally to deal with the challenges. Most transgender persons are immediately labelled as sex workers.

The financial strain on a transgender person in Guyana is horrendous. One of the biggest challenges is the difficulty faced in accessing public transportation. As a result of this, trans persons usually need to ask a family friend to transport them and they still have to pay their way. Labels are put on trans persons. The cross-dressing law also affects trans persons, with housing and accommodation as another major problem. Issues such as finance, housing, access to health, public transportation and other services, stigma and discrimination, and security all contribute to the hardships of life for the trans community in Guyana. Trans persons are seen as sex objects and sex providers.

Stigma in the community hampers the development of trans persons in Guyana. For example, the perception that one participant isn't trans because they do not cross-dress. In the trans community, the younger trans persons discriminate against the older trans persons, despite the fact that it was the older trans community who have blazed the path so that the younger generation can walk the streets. Discrimination is also directed towards trans persons that have gained certain opportunities. It's usually expected that if you are working with your own community, it should be easier, but that is not always the case.

Unity within the community is a major problem, as well as behavior change. Most transgender persons do not know how to operate and present themselves in certain situations. This also affects persons who are HIV positive in comparison to those who are not HIV positive. Respect is not given to one another. The importance of how persons conduct themselves was highlighted.

The segregation within the community between trans persons who wear female clothing all the time and those who don't was highlighted. One participant shared that in their early teens they had children and they feel that wearing female attire would end their chances of having a relationship with their children. Some persons do not want to be attached to the word trans, as the stigma and discrimination can be overwhelming.

Trans verses gay also came up for discussion. The facilitator shared that we must always remember that coming to terms with your identity is a personal challenge. You can be trans and gay. Being trans relates to gender identity, being gay relates to sexual orientation. Persons can also be pansexual.

It was shared by the facilitator that in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua the experiences are the same. Even in countries where cross-dressing is not illegal, the stigma remains the same. As humans, we have the right to express ourselves as we wish. With rights come responsibilities and you have the right to carry yourself with dignity. There is a place and time for everything.

It was highlighted by the facilitator that transgender persons should see themselves as a community. Even though there are differences, they are still a family.

c) Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the trans community in Guyana

In accordance with the objectives of the 2-day session, participants were also provided with an opportunity to engage in an assessment of their organization and community by participating in a SWOT analysis: Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.⁶

The SWOT method was originally developed for businesses and industries, but it's equally useful in health work and community development, education and even personal growth. SWOT is not the only evaluation technique that can be used. It can be compared to other assessment tools in the Community Toolbox to determine if this is the right approach for the situation. The advantage of this method is its simplicity and application to a variety of operation levels. Participants were placed into three groups to execute a SWOT analysis.

Please see the next page for the SWOT analysis.

⁶ A SWOT analysis is a guide to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation (S-W), as well as broader opportunities and threats (O-T). Developing a greater awareness of the situation helps with strategic planning and decision making.

Strengths

- Created employment for trans persons in Regions 3, 4, 5, 6
- Creation of space for trans persons to learn a skill and receive treatment
- Acquired 20 acres of agricultural land for poultry and cash crops farming
- Cross-dressing case has been taken to the CCJ
- GTU is a legally registered entity with a bank account that can mobilize and receive
- External donors supported projects
- Organization represented at high decision-making spaces

Weaknesses

- Lack of adequate data on the trans community
- Transportation for trans to move about
- Avenue to report acts of stigma and discrimination
- Barriers to access health care
- Lack of capacity to cost services being offered to the trans community
- Lack of knowledge about services available to transgender persons
- Lack of skilled personnel
- Lack of preparedness for jobs and opportunities and equal labor
- Lack of owning of own building for office space (rent is costly)
- Lack of commitment from members of the community to claim what is theirs
- Legal representation
- Representation at the policy level
- Educational deficiencies

5 prioritized areas of Weaknesses

- Lack of data and the capacity to adequately cost the services to take care of ourselves
- Lack of knowledge about services available
- Do not own building (costly)
- Lack of commitment from the trans community members to claim what is theirs e.g. rights
- No meaningful representation at the decision-making level

Opportunities

- International decision-making mechanisms such as UNAIDS, OAS, PCB-Program Coordinating Board, IRGT, OAS Youth rep
- External donors – COC, APC
- Can access technical support from the CRG to build trans

Threats

- Drying up of funds
- Increase of HIV in the country
- Discriminatory, archaic laws affecting transgender persons
- Religious right-wing organizations, persons, opposition to the existence of the community
- A culture of stigma and discrimination

Participants were tasked with completing an assignment for the next day. The assignment was to identify one key priority area that is a challenge to the trans community and the mitigating action to address the risk, gaps and needs for that priority area.

DAY 2

c) Recap of Day 1

Participants were asked to share one thing that stood out for them.

Responses included:

- SWOT – Strengths and weaknesses come from within and opportunities and threats come from outside;
- SWOT Analysis but in particular the weaknesses and coming up with possible resolutions;
- The lifeline – at birth and at death you are unable to make decisions;
- Reflection on the strengths, GTU has come a long way, now we have a voice, our lives are like the waves, sometimes you are up and sometimes down;
- The SWOT, our weaknesses can become our strengths, in the lifeline, at no point in a trans life is your decision your own, society, religious community and other factors affect decisions made.

d) Technical Assistance Request

Priority Areas Identified

Priority areas shared by participants included:

1. Financial stability in the trans community at the individual and organizational level;
2. Discriminatory laws and the need for sensitization at all levels;
3. Stigma and discrimination relating to accessing all types of services;
4. Lack of formal education and training is a big challenge for the transgender community;
5. Education - especially reading, writing and literacy for transgender persons;
6. Public transportation; discrimination experienced by trans persons on buses;
7. Opportunities for skill building and income generation.

4 main priority areas:

1. Discriminatory laws
2. Stigma and discrimination in the larger society
3. Lack of skills from within the community
4. Access to comprehensive health treatment and services for trans

Based on the objectives of the session, the participants were also able to engage in discussions in which they discussed mitigating actions that can be taken to address the issues within the 4 priority areas.

Mitigating actions

- 1) Conduct a situational analysis and needs assessment of the Transgender community. The findings could then be presented to the Ministry of Social Cohesion so that policies can be introduced or enacted to sensitize the general population on the issues affecting the trans population and the need to address laws that are discriminatory.
- 2) Engagement in country dialogue (using data obtained from the BBSS – 2014, 2017) to engage stakeholders and multisector to sensitize on trans existence and how trans persons are resourceful and can contribute to Guyana's economy.
- 3) Program Design – Create programs so that trans persons and trans communities can build their capacity to be self- sufficient. Build the academic skills to monitor and evaluate the programs to have an effective outcome.

As the group discussed different opportunities for support to implement these recommended actions, they learned about and discussed the Technical Assistance available through the Communities, Rights and Gender Initiative of the Global Fund.

Overview on the Community Rights and Gender (CRG)

The Global Fund was launched in 2012. Two million dollars was given to the Guyana government for the Trans community. CRG provides assistance in the following areas:

1. Situational analysis and needs assessment;
2. Engagement in the country dialogue;
3. Supporting program design;
4. Supporting oversight and monitoring of grant implementation and re- programming CRG technical assistance;
5. Engagement in sustainability and transition strategies.

In accordance with the agenda, the facilitator proceeded to share with the participants about the CRG Technical Assistance Request form. The participants engaged in the process of filling out the request application form based on the priority areas identified and the risks within the context of transition and sustainability for the transgender communities and organizations. It was shared that the CRG focuses on the community within the context of the transition of the Global Fund out of the country. It addresses areas that need support so that organizations such as GTU can be strong enough for the community to survive. It was shared that organizations should always get to know the funders, their priority areas and past projects that they have funded.

Final Priority areas that were considered for the Technical Assistance Request to the CRG

1. Build the capacity of the transgender community in Guyana to be able to serve as “watch-dogs” monitoring the Global Fund process to ensure that they are in line with the principles of community involvement, human rights and gender.
2. Technical support for the elaboration of advocacy programs for the trans community in Guyana to ensure that they can implement strategies that will contribute to the sustainability of the Trans response to HIV and TB.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the process and the outcomes, in particular the learning that took place and the ideas that were generated during this two-day session with the trans community in Guyana, it can be concluded that the activity was a success. The participants were able to engage in various activities that provided opportunities for them to reflect on the challenges experienced by the community on a daily basis. They were able to prioritize these challenges and discuss how these pose threats to the transition and sustainability of the trans response to HIV, TB and Malaria as well.

Other Recommendations

- Follow-up support to GTU for the completion and submission of their TA request to CRG
- Follow-up visit to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the proposed activity as well as any other outcomes based on the mitigating actions proposed.
- Support to GTU so that they can implement an information-sharing on all matters relevant to the Global Fund processes in Guyana. This can be done through Devanand Milton of GTU who sits as co-chair of the Country Coordinating Mechanism

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<http://www.guyana.gfccm.org>

ABOUT GUYANA TRANS UNITED

Guyana Trans United was founded on 14th January 2012 in recognition of the need for more trans-specific organizations in Guyana. Several founding members had been involved in other LGBTIQ organizations and human rights work and were eager to engage greater numbers of their colleagues in such work as well as to take on greater leadership roles within their own communities. GTU promotes greater equity and human rights for all. GTU serves as a strong advocate for human rights and standing up against police abuse and violence.

The mission of GTU is to empower trans Guyanese to advocate for their human rights and to participate as citizens in all decisions, which may affect their lives. GTUs main goals are to improve the quality of life of Trans Guyanese and to ensure that their rights are recognized and upheld in all domains. GTU is a member of the Country Coordinating Mechanism of the Global Fund in Guyana. To date GTU has not qualified to be a sub-recipient nor sub sub-recipient of the Global Fund. GTU has received small pockets of funds (\$500 max) to conduct consultations with the trans community in preparation for concept notes and work plans for trans specific activities of the Global fund. For this reason, GTU does not feel that the Global Fund transitioning out of Guyana will affect much. Presently, GTU has a secretariat with a small staff and receives funding for projects and operational costs from USAID, COC Netherlands, FRIDA Foundation and other private donors.

GTU has engaged in some sustainability planning as it is focused on an income generation for its members and the organization. This includes pastry making, floral arrangements and sewing through a skills-building project with COC Netherlands. The goal is to establish a cooperative that will generate revenue to cover operational costs and some activities of the organization while also providing for individual members. GTU indicated that key areas that need to be focused on in preparation for the transition are: 1.) Human resources, 2.) Lack of expertise in resource mobilization; proposal writing and leadership and, 3.) Lack of knowledge in strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, GTU believes that there is need for greater networking and collaboration among civil society organizations especially those working with key communities. There is also an urgent need to explore Social Contracting and the government's role in engaging civil society organizations in planning and implementation of projects.

ANNEXES

Workshop Timetable

DAY 1		
<u>Time</u>	<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Activity</u>
8:00 – 8:15	ARRIVAL AND SIGN-IN	
8:15 – 8:30	Welcome Overview of session: Agenda, Goals and Objectives of the GATE Project	Erika Castellanos, GATE, Director of Programs
8:30 – 9:30	The National Situation and Response to HIV and TB and Transgender persons	Presentation
9:30 – 10:30	Regional and National Global Fund projects which include transgender communities	Large Group Discussions
10:30 – 10:45	BREAK	
10:45 – 11:45	Regional and National Global Fund projects which include transgender communities: Accomplishments and Challenges	Small Group Discussions
11:45 – 12:30	Group Presentations	Plenary – Group Presentations and discussions
12:30 – 1:30	LUNCH	
1:30 – 1:45	TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITY	Energizer
1:45 - 3:45	SWOT analysis; Needs of the transgender community and key barriers which must be addressed to ensure transition and sustainability	Small Group Discussions
3:45 – 4:45	Identification of key priority areas based on needs and barriers	Plenary – Group Presentations and discussions
4:45 – 5:30	SUMMARY AND CLOSING	

DAY 2		
Time	Schedule	Activity
8:00 – 8:15	ARRIVAL AND SIGN-IN	
8:15 – 8:30	Review of Day 1: Participants	Icebreaker Activity
8:30 – 9:00	Key Findings of Day 1: Needs, Barriers, Priority Areas	Presentation
9:00 – 10:15	Identification of Strategies and actions to address gaps and needs	Small Group Discussion
10:15 – 10:30	BREAK	
10:30 – 11:15	Identification of Strategies and actions to address gaps and needs	Plenary – Presentation and Discussion
11:15 – 12:15	Identification of Timeframes, Persons Responsible and Inputs	Small Group Discussion
12:15 – 1:15	LUNCH	
1:15 – 2:30	Presentation of Technical Assistance Request Template	Plenary – Presentation and Discussion
2:30 - 4:00	Development of Technical Assistance Request	Small Groups Discussion
4:00 – 4:30	Review and Consensus-Building	
4:30 –	SUMMARY AND CLOSING	