



FRIENDS
OF THE GLOBAL FIGHT
AGAINST AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

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The Global Fund and Faith-Based Organizations

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) is a public-private-civic partnership that works closely with faith-based organizations. As of May 2016, the Global Fund had awarded more than \$1.25 billion in grants to faith-based organizations in over 25 countries.

Faith leaders, religious congregations and faith-based organizations – civil society groups with religious affiliations – are critical partners in global health programming. Thanks to their geographic spread, close ties with communities and compassionate values, faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. Not only do they serve as supportive voices and communities for people affected by these diseases, but they can be educators, fundraisers, medical aides and international advocates.

Faith-based groups have tremendous influence in local communities. They can allow people living with HIV/AIDS, TB or malaria to continue to be stigmatized, or, as many faith-based groups do, they can play a powerful role in diminishing stigma and reaching those most in need. Examples include the American Jewish World Service, which advocates health access for stigmatized and marginalized communities and sponsors civil society groups in almost 20 countries; Christian Connections for International Health, which enables the exchange of ideas and best practices among faith groups working in international healthcare; and the Aga Khan Foundation, which coordinates research and public education in addition to operating over 200 health facilities in the developing world.

Faith-Based Organizations are Critical Collaborators

Global Fund-supported programming is determined by Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs): multiple stakeholders identify unmet needs, evaluate assets and draft the country's Concept Note for consideration. The success of these programs depends on the active participation of community organizers and representatives like faith-based organizations. Given their close community ties, faith groups can offer unique insights in these discussions. For this reason, they are represented in most CCMs: over 65 percent of CCMs with active grants in 2016 had at least one faith representative.

Faith-based organizations are also highly skilled partners in program implementation and evaluation. In addition to working in disease prevention – such as distributing mosquito nets and educating their communities – many also treat patients and develop supportive environments for those living with HIV, TB or malaria. Additionally, faith groups play critical roles in advocacy, holding governments accountable for disease response and mobilizing funding.

Combating Malaria: Faith-Based Groups Help Distribute Commodities in Indonesia

Indonesia is home to 13.6 percent of malaria cases in Southeast Asia, and nearly half of the population lives in malaria-endemic areas. The struggle to control the disease in this region is exacerbated by the country's vast and disparate geography, which includes 17,500 islands. For over 10 years, the Global Fund has partnered with Persatuan Karya Dharma Kesehatan Indonesia (PERDHAKI) to help fight the spread of malaria. A Christian group operating successfully in a Muslim-majority nation, PERDHAKI provides health services through its network of 200 parishes and 70 health clinics.

PERDHAKI aims to deliver long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) and medical supplies to people in high-risk areas. By coordinating mass campaigns of volunteers and health workers, it helps distribute millions of nets to underserved people around the country and to pregnant women and children as they receive specialized care. One of PERDHAKI's ongoing grants aims to provide every malaria-positive person in

eastern Indonesia with first-line drugs according to national standards. It complements these efforts by training medical staff and community health workers to diagnose and report cases of malaria to the proper authorities.

Combating TB: Faith-Based Organizations Help Strengthen Health Systems in Mali

In Mali, TB and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) are pervasive threats. However, with support from the Global Fund and faith-based organizations like Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Malians are improving TB treatment and prevention systems. CRS participates in humanitarian initiatives reaching over 130 million people in 100 countries. In 2013, CRS became a Primary Recipient of two Global Fund TB grants that aim for a 25 percent reduction in TB prevalence by 2025. As of 2018, CRS remains a Global Fund partner with optimal performance ratings on its active grants.

As a Global Fund grantee, CRS works to strengthen the capacities of Mali's health systems to diagnose and treat TB. For example, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, CRS has trained more than 1,400 health workers and 240 rural doctors on TB treatment strategies. CRS also helps to equip health centers in the country with essential diagnostic materials, including LED microscopes, GenXpert machines, chest X-ray equipment and diagnostic reagents. As a result, in 2016, nearly three-quarters of Mali's confirmed TB cases were successfully treated and 64 percent of previously-treated patients received drug-susceptibility testing – a vital step in MDR-TB prevention.

Combating HIV: Faith-Based Groups Encourage Social Support in Ethiopia

Four in five Ethiopians live in hard-to-reach rural areas where HIV treatment and prevention programs are limited. Diverse religious demographics pose an additional challenge for healthcare programmers – as 44 percent of the population identifies as Ethiopian Orthodox, 34 percent as Sunni Muslim and 19 percent as Christian. In this environment, faith-based organizations are critical partners for the Global Fund. Ethiopian Interfaith Forum for Development, Dialogue and Action (EIFDDA) – a coalition of nine diverse faith-based organizations with representatives in Ethiopia's CCM – received Global Fund support from 2008 to 2016 and succeeded in reaching target populations across all three faiths.

In addition to increasing ART coverage, EIFDDA has established a variety of social support and mobilization initiatives. For example, EIFDDA trains local faith leaders to organize hundreds of thousands of community conversations and action plans, and recruits local volunteers to care for orphans and other vulnerable children impacted by HIV/AIDS. They also help support groups to mentor HIV-positive mothers. These groups have been shown to better connect HIV-positive mothers to medical services and increase HIV testing for their infants.

Faith-based organizations also play a crucial role in reducing the stigma that surrounds people living with HIV/AIDS. According to a church leader from an EIFDDA-supported community, “[We] are seeing the health of [our] community improve, and stigma and discrimination have declined.”

The Future of Faith-Based Partnerships

Faith-based organizations are critical partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. The Global Fund will continue to rely on faith groups for their insight, geographic spread and social influence, and support their increasingly innovative programming. For example, CRS has begun to integrate its HIV/AIDS and TB interventions, and with Global Fund support, is using a smartphone application to improve the accountability and data quality of its anti-malarial programming in West Africa.

To combat malaria in Nigeria, the Global Fund is currently funding the Nigerian Interfaith Action Association (NIFAA), the largest Christian-Muslim partnership in the world. NIFAA is training religious leaders so they can teach local households how to mitigate risks and use bed nets effectively. In the future, thanks to their demonstrated ability to reach vulnerable populations, as well as their determination and creativity, faith groups will continue to be invaluable partners to the Global Fund.