

**CASE  
STUDY**

## Engage to advocate:

*Community Engagement Strategic Initiative of the Global Fund A Case Study on technical assistance in Ecuador*



Participar para incidir:  
**ECUADOR**



Participar para incidir: Estudio de caso sobre asistencia técnica en Ecuador de la iniciativa estratégica de participación comunitaria del Fondo Mundial, es un documento elaborado de Plataforma Regional de Latinoamérica y el Caribe de la Iniciativa Estratégica de Participación Comunitaria.

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La Plataforma Regional de Latinoamérica y el Caribe de la Iniciativa Estratégica de Participación Comunitaria (Plataforma LAC) es una iniciativa impulsada por Vía Libre con apoyo financiero del Fondo Mundial de Lucha contra el Sida, la Tuberculosis y la Malaria (Fondo Mundial).

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# Acronyms

<i>CI9RM</i>	<i>Covid 19 Respond Mechanism of the Global Fund</i>
<i>CCM</i>	<i>Country Coordinating Mechanism</i>
<i>CE SI</i>	<i>Community Engagement Strategic Initiative</i>
<i>CSO</i>	<i>Civil Society Organizations</i>
<i>GBV</i>	<i>Gender Base Violence</i>
<i>GF</i>	<i>Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria</i>
<i>HHRR</i>	<i>Human Rights</i>
<i>HIV</i>	<i>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</i>
<i>ICASO</i>	<i>Internation Council of AIDS Service Organizations</i>
<i>KP</i>	<i>KP</i>
<i>NFM3</i>	<i>New Financial Model 3 of the Global Fund</i>
<i>NS-Ecu</i>	<i>National Space for CSO participation in the national response to HIV in Ecuador</i>
<i>PLHIV</i>	<i>People Living with HIV</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>Principal Recipient</i>
<i>SRR</i>	<i>Sexual and Reproductive Rights</i>
<i>TA</i>	<i>Technichal Assistance</i>
<i>PID</i>	<i>Tuberculosis</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Transition, Sustainability and Co-financing Policy</i>
<i>PTSC</i>	<i>lítica de Transición, Sostenibilidad y Co-Financiamiento</i>
<i>PVV</i>	<i>Personas que Viven con el VIH</i>

# 1. Introduction

*Since 2020, the social and sanitary emergency caused by the COVID 19 Pandemic was added to the challenges for achieving the worldwide goals of the national and regional responses to HIV, TB and Malaria. In this context, the response of the civil society organizations (CSO) and KP (KP), has been one of the most affected because it had to face great obstacles and progressive weakening, not only in Ecuador, but in every country in Latin America and the Caribbean.*

*In 2021 Vía Libre/LAC Plataform provided support to the CSO and KP working on HIV in Ecuador, through the Matices Foundation, in the elaboration of the request for technical assistance to the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CE SI) of the Global Fund (GF), with the purpose to develop actions for its reactivation and articulation through the strengthening of meaningful participation in diverse processes of the national response to HIV, to resume strengthening processes related to ensuring public funding through a social contracting approach for its contributions, to address the need to move forward towards a more effective advocacy and the importance of the engagement of the CSO and KP in the development of the NFM3 new funding request for HIV to be presented on February 2022 to the GF for the period between 2022-2025.*

*The present document describes meaningful aspects of the experience with the technical assistance (TA) to the CSO and KP that work on HIV in Ecuador, implemented between October 2021 and February 2022 with support from the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CE SI) and accompanied by ICASO as the technical assistance provider. The achievements, challenges and lessons learned of the process are highlighted and the next steps of the CSO are analyzed for a more meaningful engagement in the national response to HIV/AIDS.*

# 2. Background

*The analyzed results of the TA provision process are considered another step on the path to strengthen the CSO and KP in Ecuador, and they have as a starting point Ecuador's Transition Plan in the context of the GF grant. This plan was developed in 2019, within the framework of the Global Fund's Transition, Sustainability and Co-Funding Policy (TSCP), in which there was a recommendation to:*

*"Social Contracting of civil society organizations (CSO) for the provision of HIV/AIDS services."*

## The first technical assistance

From the recommendation about investing on the actions of the CSO with public funding (social contracting), between 2019 and 2020, *the first technical assistance* was implemented with the support of the CE SI, with the general objective of

*“Improving the engagement of key populations in the response to HIV and in the transition and sustainability processes within the framework of the Global Fund Grants, with emphasis in the processes to achieve public funding of the CSO”.*

One of the products of this technical assistance was the “Situational Assessment of the CSO that work on HIV in Ecuador with a public funding perspective”, in which the structural barriers and limiting regulations were identified as challenges for the CSO and KP in the implementation of a Multisectional Strategic Plan of HIV. Also, the CSO weaknesses and the importance of addressing them in a comprehensive way to contribute to the sustainability of the response; and the strengths that these organizations had to actively engage in the national response, highlighting their valuable contribution, primarily on advocacy and service delivery to KP. Despite limitations and weaknesses, the CSO maintained their contribution to the response. Consequently, it was considered very likely that with public funding they would have a greater impact. However, to achieve this, it was necessary to move forward in the advocacy, engagement and strengthening processes.

*“Situational  
Assessment of the  
CSO that work on  
HIV in Ecuador  
with a public  
funding  
perspective*



*As a result of the situational assessment, an “Action Plan for the civil society to strengthen engagement in the response to HIV and to ensure sustainability” was drafted. This document has served as basis to guide the next steps towards a more effective engagement of the civil society in the response to HIV. The plan proposed advocacy activities to promote social contracting, for strengthening technical and organizational capacities of organizations and for the coordination of the various stakeholders of the civil society to have a more active engagement in the response.*

*Some more background information in this strengthening process includes: a weakening of the national response to HIV and of the responsiveness of the CSO as a consequence of the COVID 19 pandemic; social dialogues within the framework of funding request for the COVID 19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) in 2021 that enabled to establish a list of community priorities; and finally, the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) presented a new funding request in window 5 of the NFM3 for the HIV component in February 2022, for the period between 2022-2025, which would be a new opportunity for the engagement of the CSO and KPs.*



## The second Technical Assistance:

Within the context described and with the purpose of giving continuity to the process and to execute the actions of the “Action Plan for the civil society to strengthen engagement in the response to HIV and to ensure sustainability”, Via Libre/LAC Plataform supported in the development of a new technical assistance request and it was approved and implemented by ICASO. This technical assistance had a consulting team comprised of two regional consultants, a national consultant and a counterpart consultant from Matices Foundation. The activities were conducted between october 2021 and february 2022.

The main objective of this technical assistance was to support KPs and people living with HIV (PLHIV) for its meaningful engagement in the development of the new funding request in window 5 of the NFM3 for HIV to the GF for the period between 2022-2025 and to move forward with the actions towards social contracting. The specific objectives were:



1. Support in the formation of a dialogue space of the CSO that work on HIV, in order to articulate and prioritize the actions of this sector in the response to HIV.

2. Strengthen the articulation of the CSO and the engagement of the KPs and (PLHIV) in the country's dialogue for the development of the NFM3 new funding requests for HIV to the Global Fund.

3. Design a program to strengthen community services on HIV to reinforce the CSO capacities for social contracting and service provided on HIV.

4. Reinforce the advocacy capacities towards the National and local governments to promote social contracting.



### 3. *How it was done and achieved*

*Among the general activities, planning and coordination actions were taken with the various stakeholders that were involved, these were online and face-to-face; review of documents; communication and convocation activities; development of preliminary documents to be shared, supplemented and validated with all stakeholders; and development of participatory methodologies with key contents.*

#### *Putting together a space of participation for CSO and KPs*

*In order to promote a space of dialogue for the CSO that work on HIV to articulate and prioritize the actions of this sector in the response to HIV, a wide call was extended to the CSO and KPs that work on HIV to a national gathering that took place on November 25 and 26, 2021 in Quito city, in which 30 representatives of organizations from various regions of the country participated.*

En este espacio se firmó el acta constitutiva del Espacio de Concertación Nacional de Sociedad Civil para la Respuesta al VIH en Ecuador (EC-Ecu). Además, se aprobó un manual de funcionamiento, en la que se formalizaron los acuerdos de gobernabilidad y participación.

El EC-Ecu actualmente está integrado por 29 OSC de diferentes regiones del país y avanza en su proceso de crecimiento, consolidación y articulación, a nivel nacional con una importante participación PC y PVVs.



## *Engagement of KPs and PLHIV in the country's dialogue*

*The objective was to strengthen the articulation of the CSO and the engagement of KPs and PLHIV in the country's dialogue for the development of the NFM3 new funding request for HIV to the GF to be presented in February 2022 for the period between 2022-2025.*

*This objective had a challenging process, due to the coordination difficulties with the CCM, that required advocacy actions and meetings with diverse stakeholders and the CCM, in order to arrive to agreements that allowed a greater engagement in social dialogues. Planning meetings were conducted, communication strategies were developed and this issue was included in the NS-Ecu agenda.*

*The contribution to the country's dialogue revolved around discussing the strengthening of the CSO and KPs' priorities to improve their capacities, in order to move forward towards public funding, based on previous processes and from the perspective of the organizations that are members of NS-Ecu, through several steps::*



*he consulting team carried out a detailed revision of the products from previous processes: the critical path of the work plan for Ecuador's transition to the GF in 2019, the situational assessment of the CSO that work on HIV in Ecuador with a public funding perspective and the action plan of the civil society to strengthen the engagement in the response to HIV and to ensure its sustainability, both from 2020. This allowed to establish a series of priorities in two categories: the first one organizational and the second being technical strengthening of the CSO.*

*These priorities, with their respective solution alternatives were taken to a face-to-face meeting with the members of the NS-Ecu, where they were updated and consolidated through participatory methodologies.*



## **Priorities of the CSO and KPs:**

### **Priorities related to the organizational structure of the CSO**

*Securing a legal identity for those organizations that do not have one already*  
*Development and updating of the CSO strategic plans*  
*Bank accounts for those organizations that do not have one already*  
*Develop financial procedures and purchasing manuals*  
*Administrative support and accounting personnel*  
*Training for preparing financial reports, procurement of accounting programs, inventory development and accountability skills*  
*Training for resource mobilization from various sources: State, private sector and international cooperation*  
*Development of functions manuals*  
*Supply of basic elements for proper functioning (computers, communications equipment, office furniture)*

### **Priorities to strengthen CSO technical capacities**

*Project writing, management and evaluation*  
*Advocacy*  
*Institutional management and networking*  
*Approaches: human resources, sexual and reproductive rights, gender, stigma and discrimination*  
*Prevention and care of gender-based violence (GBV)*  
*Updating on combined prevention of HIV*  
*Revision of the national standards of prevention, diagnosis and care of HIV*  
*Peer counselling (pre and post testing and adherence tracking) and support groups*  
*Training for active and targeted search of cases: KPs, index case and assisted notification for couples*  
*Revision of referencing routes to the health system and to social protection programs*  
*Skill building on community-lead monitoring*

*The consulting team organized the information gathered from the various sources and generated a first draft of the strengthening plan of the CSO and KPs of Ecuador.*

*The first draft of the strengthening plan was shared via email with all the members of the NS-Ecu, who offered feedback and requested for some adjustments.*

*The strengthening plan of the CSO to improve their capacities to provide HIV community services, through public funding processes, based on the priorities of the CSO and KPs was ratified in an on-line session.*

*The consulting team developed a budget for the strengthening plan of the CSO and KPs.*

*Taking into account the coordination challenge with the CCM previously described, advocacy and lobbying actions were developed, which included working closely with the representatives of the CSO and KPs in the CCM, so that the strengthening plan was included as a priority of the CSO and KPs in the NFM3 new funding request for Ecuador to the GF.*

*As a result of this process a strengthening plan to improve the capacities in provision of community service delivery in HIV by the CSO and KPs was obtained as a product. This plan is described in the next section, and it was a key input for the engagement of this sector in the development of NFM3 funding request to the GF to be implemented between 2022 and 2025, which was prioritized and included in that funding request.*

- 1 Fondo Mundial, Bitrán & Asociados, Pharos Global Health Advisors (2019). Ruta Crítica del Plan de Trabajo para la Transición Ecuador.
- 2 Iniciativa Estratégica de Comunidad, Derechos y Género, ICASO (2020). Diagnóstico situacional de las OSC con trabajo en VIH en el Ecuador con perspectiva de financiamiento público.
- 3 Iniciativa Estratégica de Comunidad, Derechos y Género, ICASO (2020). Plan de Acción de la sociedad civil para fortalecer la participación en la respuesta al VIH y asegurar su sostenibilidad, Asistencia Técnica.
- 4 Iniciativa Estratégica de Derechos, Comunidades y Género, ICASO (2022). Programa de fortalecimiento de capacidades de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil para la contratación social de servicios comunitarios relacionados con el VIH en Ecuador.

## Strengthening plan of the CSO and KPs

As a response to the objective of designing a strengthening program of community services on HIV to reinforce the capacities of the CSO for social contracting and the provision of services on HIV, the strengthening program of capacities for CSO was the outcome of the consulting and validation work by 24 representatives of organizations, as well as of the situational assessment and consults conducted from 2019 to 2021 - - . The analysis from these concluded that:

“From the alternatives to achieve sustainability and co-funding of the response to HIV, as proposed by the GF, supposes to generate conditions for social contracting and public funding of community services on HIV, as a continuity strategy of the use of these previous documents and the engagement of the CSO that are members of the NS-Ecu, added political strength for positioning the strengthening program into the priorities of the CSO and KPs to be included in the NFM3 new funding request of Ecuador in 2022.

*The Strengthening plan to improve the capacities of the CSO for social contracting of community services related with HIV in Ecuador included:*

- Needs assessment to strengthen the CSO carried out from various sources{
- A route to strengthen the CSO that provide community services within the framework of the national response to HIV, in two categories: organizational and technical capacities
  - Institutional management and networking
  - Approaches: human resources, sexual and reproductive health, stigma and discrimination
  - Prevention and care of the gender-based violence      Combined prevention of HIV
  - National standards of prevention, diagnosis and care of HIV
  - Peer counseling (pre and post testing and adherence tracking) and support groups
  - Active targeted search of cases: KPs, index case and assisted notification for couples
  - Referencing to the health system and to social protection programs
  - Community-lead monitoring

As a supplementary product to the strengthening program a budget of the program was developed to be included in the funding request for HIV before the GF.

## *Advocacy plan to move forward on public funding*

*With the purpose of reinforcing the advocacy capacities before the national and local governments to promote social contracting several steps were developed:*

*The first step was the development of a situational assessment of the country, that included social, political and economic aspects, among others;*

*The second step was putting together three advocacy teams for the Pichincha, Guayas and Manabí regions, comprised by people from the CSO that are NS-Ecu members, all of whom were trained in: advocacy, possible roadmaps to achieve public funding for the work of the CSO, and international and national policy frameworks.*

*Third step, operative planning for advocacy in the territory and communication tools were developed in order to progressively expand these teams and strengthen other regions of the country.*

*Fourth step, an advocacy plan for public funding was consolidated; it was refined through online meetings and by the validation and approval of the NS-Ecu.*



## *The advocacy plan to promote social contracting in the regulations and public policies in Ecuador*

- *is a guide document developed in a participatory way with the members of the NS-Ecu and facilitated by a consulting team.*

### *Objectives:*

- *Get the government to sign and execute a public policy that allows for social contracting of the CSO that work on HIV, to bring promotion, prevention, diagnosis, training, peer counselling, accompaniment and support services.*
- *Technical, administrative and legal training of the CSO so that they are able to offer community services on HIV as part of social contracting.*
- *Advocacy and management to achieve sustainability of the fundamental collective actions of the NS-Ecu.*
- *Respond to emerging situations on human rights related with HIV.*

*The plan proposes a series of strategies and activities to achieve these objectives, the main ones being: stakeholders mapping, establishing partnerships, development of methodology tools with key contents related with social contracting, awareness-raising and lobbying actions, communication strategies, monitoring and evaluation strategies and the development of the budget for the plan.*

# Challenges

*As in every process where several stakeholders are involved, there were challenges that made necessary to review the work strategies. One of them, which also brought lessons learned, was related with objective number 2, regarding the coordination with the CCM for the development of social dialogue to identify priorities of the CSO as input for the NFM3 new funding request. The technical assistance proposed dialogues with wide participation of the various sub-sectors of the civil society, but that was not fostered by the Executive Secretary of the CCM, arguing that those dialogues were under the jurisdiction of the CCM.*

*This challenge was overcome in a strategic manner with dialogue, consensus and lobbying by the NS-Ecu, to achieve the general objective of strengthening community engagement and advocate so that their priorities, which are described in the previous section, were considered in the development of the new funding request for HIV before the GF. Actions with representatives of the civil society members of the CCM were emphasized. The Strengthening Program and the Advocacy Plan with their respective budgets were formally sent to the Executive Secretary and the Steering Committee of the CCM, with copy to the GF and the CE SI of the GF, for its respective follow-up*

## Lessons learned

*A key element for the development of these activities was the interagency and multisectional coordination at every level. First of all with the CSO, KPs and PLHIV, including new stakeholders like: representatives of people in mobility and users of psicoactive substances. Furthermore, coordination with the Ministry of Public Health, as Principal Recipient (PR) of the current grant by the GF, that has in place in their technical assistance plan, the design of a “Critical Path of engagement with CSO that work with KPs to strengthen social contracting”; coordination with subrecipients of the civil society (CARE and Kimirina) and with representatives of the KPs that are CCM members.*

*To achieve the technical assistance objectives, the agreements with stakeholders with decision-making capacity should be put into writing and widely shared with other stakeholders, with emphasis in those interested. Also, tracking of the work process should be put into place to ensure proper compliance.*

*Social processes, like advocacy to achieve public funding of the response by the CSO and the communities in a country like Ecuador, are a continuum that requires constant support through time. In this case it was observed how the results of the previous technical assistances gave leverage to processes that allowed to move forward in a more effective engagement of this sector to develop the NFM3 country's funding request to the GF for its strengthening and advocacy.*

*When working with a wide variety of stakeholders of the civil society with diverse skills and capacities, it is required not only to reach formal agreements, but also, the use of widely participatory methodologies that can allow the voices with different expressions to take the time to contribute to the agreements. In addition, leisure and meaningful learning methodologies must be incorporated to promote trust in all the processes, to enable effective participation and the strengthening of a more meaningful networking.*

*The technical assistance process had other collateral outcomes that have strengthened the results, and it is foreseen that they will provide sustainability in the future to the advances of engagement of the CSO and KPs: empowerment of the CSO as key stakeholders in the national response; recognition among the CSO of their diverse knowledge, the previous experiences and expertise that each of them bring which makes them stronger as civil society; recognition of diverse leaderships; increase in trust among CSO; and a collective agreement to support the representatives of KPs and PLHIV of the CCM to increase their advocacy capacity as civil society.*

## Siguientes pasos

*The next steps that are proposed to move forward for social contracting of the CSO and KPs, and towards a more meaningful engagement are:*

*Strengthen CSO and KPs according to the proposed strengthening plan included in the NFM3 new funding request to the GF to be implemented between 2022 and 2025. This plan must include the follow-up of its goals and impact both for its processes and its indicators, and the human resources that will do that must be experts in those subjects.*

*Taking into consideration the important progress, the NS-Ecu among other interested stakeholders, must establish a roadmap for the respective tracking in public funding to make this a reality in Ecuador; through lobbying and advocacy on a national level and in the territories, so that the national and local governments may be able to fulfill this objective.*

*The formation of other CSO and KPs on a national level is required, so that they become part of the NS-Ecu to strengthen the advocacy that the social contracting requires.*

*Promote the engagement of the CSO and KPs, in particular those that are members of the NS-Ecu in the pilot test of social contracting that will be implemented within the framework of the current grant, of beneficiaries as well as service providers.*

*Conduct an impact evaluation of the pilot and provide recommendations that will allow to make adjustments to the national regulating frameworks.*

*Ensure the effective engagement of the CSO and KPs in the negotiation processes of the NFM3 new grant for HIV approved by the GF. It is a duty of the representatives of these sectors in the CCM to make advocacy in accordance with the interests and needs of the populations they represent and to maintain a two-way communication between these populations, the CCM, the PR and the GF.*

