Development of
Safety and Security Plans

for CSOs Working on HIV with Key Populations in Guatemala

LAC Platform
The Global Fund's Community Engagement Strategic Initiative

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Introduction

There is growing concern about violence experienced by people working with key populations (KPs) most affected by HIV. Some of these people are members of the same KPs. Many organizations have documented the impact of violence on the security of individuals, families and communities. In recent years, several extreme situations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have demonstrated that hostile environments and rights violations affect not only the security of members of key and vulnerable populations but also the people, organizations and programs that support them and their right to health. Thus, security challenges can negatively impact all aspects of the HIV program cycle.

Some organizations and individuals working on HIV programs in Latin America and the Caribbean have identified effective ways to limit or mitigate the harm caused by security risks or to respond effectively to violence. However, more systematic investment is needed to strengthen security and protect implementers and programs working to control the epidemic.

One of the most significant factors of HIV-related vulnerability is stigma and discrimination against the disease and against KPs: people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWID), female sex workers (FSWs), transgender people (TPs) and, more recently, migrant populations. As in other regions of the world, community leaders in LAC working on HIV and defending and advocating for the Human Rights of these populations are exposed to risks and threats associated with their activities with these populations. The impact of these risks on the safety of leaders, families and communities has been documented by many organizations and has been the subject of national, regional and global advocacy analyses. These threats are even more significant in countries experiencing political instability.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has noted that those who advocate for the human rights of LGBTI people and other KPs in Latin America and the Caribbean are more vulnerable to violence due to three factors:

1	**2**	**3**
They identify as LGBT or as members of other KPs who are already vulnerable to greater violence because of their sexuality, behavior, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity;	They experience additional forms of vulnerability to violence because of their role as Human Rights defenders and the specific causes for which they advocate; and	They face alarming levels of vulnerability to violence due to the intersection of their sexual orientation, gender identity, occupation or behavior, and their role as advocates for causes related to these populations.

The Global Fund's Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CE SI) and **Vía Libre/Platform LAC**, believe it is critical to have **Case Studies** that help improve the response to safety and security in LAC, given the risks that leaders, community advocates and mobilizers, program staff, and service providers from CSOs and communities face in their work with KPs. This case study aims to acknowledge the experience in Guatemala and provide information and recommendations for addressing safety and security issues for leaders, community advocates and CSOs working with KPs on Human Rights and HIV issues in LAC countries.

Background

As in other regions of the world, leaders working on HIV and KPs' rights in LAC face risks and threats related to their activities. The impact of violence on the safety of leaders, community health workers and their organizations has been documented by many organizations and has been the subject of global analysis and advocacy [1 - 2].

According to a report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guatemala , LGBT persons continued to be discriminated against, harassed and stigmatized in 2000. Community members continued to face violence, with nine gay men and five transgender people murdered as of November 2020. This situation illustrates the frequency and severity of attacks against human rights defenders, physical, sexual and gender-based violence, threats, intimidation, surveillance and stigmatization. The organization UDEFEGUA recorded 844 attacks against Human Rights defenders. In June 2021, a transgender leader who was part of the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) and leader of a transgender organization was assassinated[4].

Such context has raised concerns about violence against leaders working with KPs and people living with HIV in Guatemala. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF), has proposed to address this issue through the Community Engagement Strategy Initiative (CE SI) and Vía Libre/Platform LAC.

Between March and October 2022, the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), in its role as Principal Recipient (PR) of the GF grant in the country, the LAC Platform and a team of consultants initiated the coordination and implementation of a process to develop Safety and Security Plans (SSP) with and for civil society organizations (CSOs) working on HIV in Guatemala. This is the first time that the safety and security issue has been formally addressed for organizations involved in implementing the GF grant; thus, this experience is a pilot that will help improve strategies and tools for organizations to initiate similar processes in other countries in the region. This case study aims to learn about the process and its progress and identify challenges and lessons learned in developing the SSP.

1   International HIV/AIDS Alliance & LINKAGES. "Safety and Security Toolkit: Strengthening the Implementation of HIV Programs for and
        with Key Populations". Durham (North Carolina): FHI 360; 2018.
2   Beyrer C, Grady C, Bekker L, McIntyre J, Over M & Jarlais D. "A Framework for Ethical Engagement with Key Populations in PEPFAR programs".
3   "Situation of Human Rights in Guatemala Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights"
        (Situación de los derechos humanos en Guatemala Informe de la Alta Comisionada de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos). ACHNUD (2020)
4   https://www.dw.com/es/guatemala-asesinan-a-balazos-a-andrea-gonzález-dirigente-lgbtiq/a-57870338

1.   Objective

This case study aims to describe and share the processes, challenges and lessons learned from the development and implementation of the SSPs of CSOs working on HIV with KPs in Guatemala. It also proposes a set of useful recommendations for both Guatemalan organizations and those in other LAC countries that may be interested in developing their own SSPs.

2.   Methodology

A document review focused on the outcomes of the consultancy:
"Development of a costed operational plan to prevent situations that affect the safety and security of KPs in Guatemala, 2022" and the Safety and Security Toolkit: Strengthening the Implementation of HIV Programs for and with Key Populations, developed by the Alliance and FHI 360 for the USAID- and PEPFAR-supported LINKAGES project, and adapted by the LAC Platform[5].

Furthermore, five virtual semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of sub-recipient CSOs (SRs), the PR, the CCM, and a member of the consultant team. At the end of the data collection phase, the information was systematized, collated and analyzed based on categories corresponding to the objectives of the case study and others that emerged during the interviews.

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5   Vía Libre, Plataforma LAC (2022). "Safety and Security for Organizations Working with Key and Vulnerable Populations to Strengthen HIV Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. A Toolkit" (Protección y seguridad para organizaciones que trabajan con poblaciones clave y vulnerables para fortalecer programas de VIH en Latinoamérica y el Caribe, Caja de herramientas).
Available at: https://www.plataformalac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CAJA-DE-HERRAMIENTAS-PROTECCION-Y-SEGURIDAD.pdf

3. Main Results

How did they do it?

Situational diagnosis

Following the **Safety and Security Toolbox guidelines adapted for Latin America and the Caribbean,** the first phase for developing the SSPs included a virtual presentation of the strategy and drafting a situational diagnosis. In this phase, security self-assessments were carried out using tool number 2 *"Security Checklist," which was completed by 78 people from the 6 CSO SRs: Organización Mujeres en Superación (OMES), Asociación para la prevención y estudio del VIH/SIDA (APEVIHS), Colectivo Amigos contra el Sida (CAS), Organización Trans Reinas de la Noche (OTRANS), Asociación de Investigación Desarrollo y Educación (IDEI), and the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP)*.

Interviews were then conducted with 12 people from SR CSOs, including direct, managing, coordinating and field staff. The interviews were performed using the *"Interview Guide or Focus Groups for Key Actors to Identify Resources and Support Networks for Participating Organizations on Security and Protection Issues in Guatemala."*

Six SR CSOs from Escuintla, Jutiapa, Retalhuleu, Quetzaltenango, Flores and Guatemala City were visited during a field visit. Among the main findings of this preliminary assessment were events related to threats to the physical, personal, legal, economic, road, digital and political security; situations of discrimination, robbery, violence, extortion, sexual harassment, road accidents and insecurity, as well as lack of social safety and exposure to extreme weather phenomena.

Respondents shared the perception that the process was inclusive, participatory and democratic. A third moment was a face-to-face workshop to share the results of the rapid diagnosis and the first draft of the SSPs; those who attended the workshop could learn from the experience and clarify their doubts. In addition, it was considered a good idea to invite people not part of the SR organizations (e.g., members of the CCM, the PR operational promoter team, and the UNAIDS country office) to participate.

On the other hand, according to the experience of the consultant interviewed, it was significant for the participants in this diagnostic phase to be heard about the risks they faced, their fears, and their experiences. It was even a therapeutic exercise because it is an issue that is either not prioritized or only superficially addressed.

A normalization of violence on the part of some CSO members was also identified:
"Well, it happened to me. It's normal that they can kidnap me, it's normal that they harass me, it's part of my job."
-CSO leader.

Situations of risk

One of the interviewees, a member of a transgender women's organization, commented that CSOs working on HIV in Guatemala decided to request the development of the SSPs because of the cases of extortion, physical and psychological violence, and cyber-attacks during GF-funded activities.
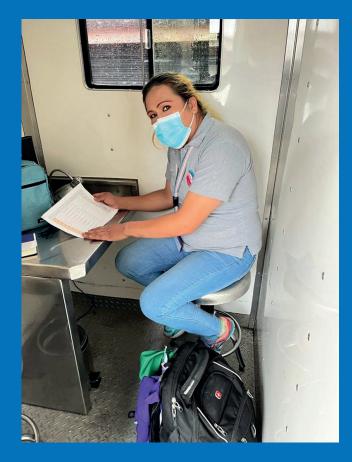
It has been observed that the personal integrity and lives of those working in the HIV community response are constantly threatened and endangered, especially when community health workers are alone in the field delivering HIV prevention and diagnostic kits. Insecurity on the streets worsened after the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, leading to increased criminal incidents at the organizations' facilities, with the health promoter teams being the most affected in the course of their work.

Among the risk situations identified were assassination attempts, physical aggression, and armed robberies to steal their cell phones and backpacks containing their work equipment. Also mentioned were extortion over the phone and safety issues related to natural disasters and weather, such as working in the rain or on scorching days when conducting field-based interventions.

During feedback from the promoter team, some users stated that they did not feel comfortable sitting in a park or on the street to receive rapid screening tests, so promoters sometimes had to get into their vehicle, which could expose them to sexual harassment. In some indigenous communities, promoters have been shunned or targeted for lynching because of their customary laws. Stigmatization, discrimination and exclusion of key populations compunds this threat.

Planning

From March to October 2022, SR CSOs led by KPs received technical assistance for developing SSPs. In addition to the fieldwork and diagnostics described above, a face-to-face workshop was conducted using a participatory methodology, organized into four working sessions. This workshop allowed for a more complete understanding of the risk situations and difficulties related to the safety and security needs of people and organizations working on HIV in Guatemala, as well as the identification of solutions and the development of plans. From convening to development, the process was positively evaluated and considered well-planned and successful due to skillful facilitation and time management.

Communication

The team was grateful for the simple language, good service, and cordial and respectful manner in which the facilitation team conducted the process, which helped to make everything run more smoothly. However, it was noted that there were conflicting positions among the participants, with differing ideas and people taking a long time to defend their arguments, which made it difficult to move forward.

Several comments were made to the PR regarding communication. Given that this type of exercise raises expectations, it was insisted that communication be improved throughout the process. Although the organizations have been informed of the problems that delay the progress of the work, it is necessary that this exercise be continuous and that the parties involved pay attention to these situations. Actions such as sending monthly information bulletins would be beneficial and reduce skepticism and increase confidence in the PR work.

The significance of listening to the teams of health promoters and community health workers, showing empathy for their safety, and engaging them in planning and prioritizing their needs was also highlighted. According to the INCAP representative, *"making them wait so long gives the impression that you are sleeping"* and that they are not being considered.

Plan development

The **SSPs** were developed during a two-day in-person workshop using a participatory methodology to actively engage leaders, community promoters, program staff, and service providers from CSOs working with key and vulnerable populations **Sessions 1 y 2 introduced the topic, reviewed basic concepts; and identified and analyzed security risks.** **Session 3** focused on exploring **objectives and alternative solutions to reduce security risks. In session 4** plans were developed to integrate measures and policies to minimize safety and security risks for SR CSOs working on human rights advocacy and HIV prevention and diagnosis with key and vulnerable populations. Twenty-four people from SR CSOs participated in the in-person workshop. In addition, four participants from INCAP guided inputs, services and activities that could be funded. Finally, four people from CCM-Guatemala and the Gender and Human Rights Focal Point from the UNAIDS Office in Guatemala participated as observers of the process.

The consensus was that the methodology used in developing the SSPs was a learning exercise and served its purpose, highlighting the need to prioritize and budget for the safety and security of teams. The fact that the workshop was conducted in person was an added value, as the feedback from the consulting team was more fruitful.

Areas for improvement were identified. For example, two participants noted that the plans needed to be more substantive and contextual. Another respondent commented that the format of the request tool made it difficult to account for some expenses.

One informant recommended distinguishing three stages in the methodology:
1.	 Explaining the framework, the objective, the procedures, the planning and the formats to be used.
2.	Give the organizations more time to think about what they want and to implement the plan. Then, return to the technical assistance team.
3.	Review the quotes and authorizations for the services and products requested together with the technical team.

This methodological proposal is similar to what happened in the final part of the in-person workshop, where the OTRANS representative asked to take the proposal to work on it in more depth with the organization's team and then send it to the technical team. The value of using this methodological proposal for developing the SSPs is that it comes from the experience of the community. It ensures that, once they have the plan together with its associated activities and the necessary inputs to develop it, they can start to implement it. As we will see below, this is one of the areas of opportunity identified for improvement.

Deliverables

Safety and Security Plans

At the end of the SSP development phase, each organization was provided with a **Safety and Security Planning Matrix**. This matrix defines the context in which the plans were developed, and the objectives, activities, and tasks proposed by the SR CSOs. There is also a **matrix for funding the plans**, which details the products, services and activities to be supported and their costing. It is encouraging that the needs of the organizations are taken into account, as the SSPs seem to achieve their objective. However, some limitations were noted, for instance, the omission of issues such as the procurement of professional services, infrastructure and inputs for their implementation, which they consider essential to carry out their work safely and efficiently. SSP activities included implementing security protocols, installing security systems and surveillance cameras, purchasing life insurance, and strengthening cyber-security.

Budget

The budget was US$120,000, of which approximately US$90,000 was allocated for the implementation of the SSPs, attempting to keep the budgets of the four organizations similar. For some organizations, the amount received was sufficient to meet the plan's goals; funding needed to be increased for others. They agreed that the use of resources was limited, which affected the development of more substantial and comprehensive plans. The PR representative stated that there was a need to improve the financial commitment of the GF to the security of organizations and KPs from the outset, i.e., to include it as a priority in new funding requests.

Implementation of plans

The implementation of the SSPs is going well, and there is a consensus that the organizations need to do their part to ensure the sustainability of the SSPs and to follow up on and continue to implement them. At the time of this case study, the implementation of the SSPs was ongoing and will be completed in December 2023. One participant noted that the SSPs are in the pilot phase and that organizations are learning some lessons by examining issues and needs that were not considered when they were developed. This pilot stage will help them improve their impact in the future and update their SSPs.

The organizations' and communities' management and implementation teams report that they feel safer, even though they may differ on some aspects of implementing the plans.

4.   Challenges

Planning

The consultant who was part of the team that led the process mentioned that the inclusion of logistical coordination aspects in the responsibilities of the consulting team made the process more difficult (since they were out of the country) and caused some delays and management difficulties.

Management

One respondent reported that management faced several challenges, creating an environment of *"considerable uncertainty"*. Sometimes, it was unclear who was responsible for making a quote, which created *"quite a mess and required a lot of effort and dedication"*, and overburdened the PR team. Another respondent noted that communication problems and lack of clarity hindered the process and caused an atmosphere of ill will.

The complexity of coordinating different work plans to meet the needs of the SRs, the PR and the GF is acknowledged. While recognizing the difficulties, the PR representative commented that managing SSPs takes time and rigor. He explained that the organizations that have made the most progress in implementing the plan are those that have requested simpler things (e.g., renewal of vehicle insurance or maintenance of fire extinguishers).

Programming and scheduling

The development of the SSPs began in October 2022. Although the original plan was to start implementation in January 2023, it actually began in April and May of that year. The SR organizations have to complete the implementation in October 2023, and some of them think that *"in September, they will make us run to buy stuff because they did not do it before"*.

Time management was one of the most criticized aspects. The delay in the implementation of the SSPs is seen as a proof of the slow management of the PR, and its processes are considered bureaucratic. An example of this is having only five months for implementation, which differs from the approved schedule.

According to the PR representative, of the four beneficiary organizations, two have 80% progress in implementing the plan, while the others have 40% or 50% progress. According to him, this process has taken longer than expected, partly because of the need to better understand the specific issues that will be incorporated into a broader plan.

Capabilities of the Principal Recipient

There were also mixed opinions in this area: some say that PR was willing, open and supportive as organizations prioritized their needs and defined activities; on the other hand, there is also a perception of a lack of experience, as staff seem unprepared to solve problems that arise, or they do so too late.

According to the PR representative, the delays are due to the lack of experience in managing the purchase of some inputs in particular and to the fact that each authorization to disburse funds requires review and technical justification, as well as the collection of information necessary to comply with internal transparency and accountability processes. Technical expertise is required to purchase certain inputs or contract certain services.

More costly has been the purchase of life insurance for the team of community health workers, which has been resolved administratively. This difficulty is because their work is considered a **"risk profession"** that no company can insure. In addition, security cameras posed another challenge for PR because to make an effective purchase, it is necessary to have specialized information on the models, their functions, technical specifications and other technological elements. For the installation of biometric controls for access to offices, it is necessary to answer questions related to codes, fingerprint readers, the number of people to be registered, where the information will be stored, and *"the kind of things that go beyond just seeing the little box on a door."*

Grant monitoring and evaluation

The benefits of SSPs will be known once the final results are delivered. There is agreement that the goals of the grant are high and that there is a lot of pressure and stress to meet them, which increases the likelihood of being exposed to dangerous situations at work. There is a common perception that people's safety is being put on the back burner in favor of meeting goals. From their point of view, there is a need to change and improve the conditions under which people strive to achieve these results. Although the situations that endangered the lives and integrity of the collaborating personnel were discussed with the PR and the GF and were well received, this is not reflected in the lowering of the goals.

Plan development

According to the consultant interviewed, there is a large gap between the available budget and the wide range of needs identified by CSOs to reduce the risks they face and improve the safety and security of individuals and organizations.

The consultant also mentioned that the participants in the SSPs workshop focused on improving the safety of the organization's facilities, neglecting the security of field staff, who face higher risks.

The fragmentation of CSOs was another challenge: they are divided, have many differences, and each organization works in isolation. Therefore, according to the consultant, planning broader and common strategies as a sector to reduce security risks has yet to be achieved.

Implementation of plans

There is satisfaction with the work done, although there is still a need to broaden the perspective regarding security risk and protection of promoters and KPs. The lack of in-depth knowledge of the environment in which the organizations work directly impacts programmatic and budgetary decisions, which in turn impact on increasing or decreasing security. It is necessary for all those involved in these processes to have an in-depth view of the situation and to have elements that help them understand the decisions of the SRs, even if "it may not seem relevant from their office," such as the purchase of sunscreen or dark glasses to protect promoters' eyesight from the sun.

5.   Lessons Learned

- **Safety and security plans are an investment.**

The development and implementation of SSPs should be a long-term investment, at least until the working conditions of the people in the organizations improve. In this sense, the SR organizations should be seen as the experts who know how risk situations arise and are dealt with on the ground.

- **Position at each stage of the funding cycle.**

SSPs should be considered throughout the development of Funding Requests. Therefore, all stakeholders participating in Country Dialogues must agree to prioritize and position the SSPs as one of the urgent priorities of communities.

- **Security and Safety Plans as a priority component of any GF grant.**

SSPs require dedicated planning and funding to address organizations' and communities' safety and security needs as part of the programmatic design of priority interventions for communities included in the GF guidelines.

- **Increased engagement of civil society and KPs.**

The Guatemalan experience demonstrates the need for civil society and key populations to engage actively in the SSPs management processes. Some of the respondents agreed on the establishment of an advisory board with the participation of representatives of organizations, PR, CCMs and the GF.

- **Work hand in hand with the technical assistance team.**

The close and in-person accompaniment in developing the SSPs helped to identify relevant aspects that had not been considered before, such as cyber-security to protect the information and personal data of the implementation team and service users.

-   The importance of conflict resolution skills.

The technical assistance team in the face-to-face workshop helped resolve differences among participants, especially when things got complicated. For this reason, it is always essential to have facilitators who are sensitive and experienced in leading this type of process and in inter-organizational conflict mediation.

-   First-hand knowledge is crucial.

Field visits are an important opportunity to learn first-hand about the complexity of the context in which the Global Fund's HIV program strategies are implemented. These visits serve as a way for the technical team and individuals representing PR and GF to develop greater sensitivity to the issues that affect the safety and security of the implementing teams and to understand the urgency of streamlining management processes.

-   Encouraging and therapeutic.

Addressing the security, risks and vulnerability of CSO staff and KPs working in HIV is a historical debt to the sector. Based on the experience of this process, it has been empowering and even therapeutic for many people to feel that their experiences have been heard.

6.   Conclusions

This pilot project represents one of the first experiences for the GF and CSOs in Latin America and the Caribbean in funding and implementing security plans. In general, both at the institutional level and within their working teams, the organizations have benefited from the plans, minimized risks, and better managed emergencies.

Although it is necessary to wait until the end of their implementation to know the final results, the plans have helped to strengthen physical and electronic security, as external backups or anti-virus software are now in place.

The organizations are calling for a break with the centralization of GF processes in the cities. Instead, they propose that they be conducted outside the urban centers, in the provinces and especially in the communities. According to them, this would be an opportunity to transform a traditional model of participation that fails to recognize and understand the complexity of the epidemic in a variety of contexts and needs.

This project has been a valuable exercise to identify lessons learned and areas of opportunity and make specific recommendations to the various actors engaged in developing and implementing the SSPs. We hope it will help initiate similar processes in other countries in the region.

7. Recommendations

For participating SR organizations

Increase empathy. As part of the SSP development process, training is recommended to enhance assertive communication and conflict resolution skills and build a peace culture.

Diversify funding sources. Funding sources should be diversified to ensure the sustainability of SSPs.

Develop action protocols. It is recommended that consultants be hired to help develop the critical route and action protocols to know what to do in the event of assault, sexual harassment, cyber-violence, etc., according to the needs of each organization.

Comply with current legislation. In the case of Guatemala, it is recommended that a legal consultant be hired, as current legislation requires organizations (workplaces) to comply with the *"Mandatory Occupational Health and Safety Regulations"*.

Pay more attention to mental health. It is recommended that permanent mental health care be included in the SSPs due to the stress and other psycho-emotional problems caused by having to meet the high GF goals under such conditions of insecurity, risk and threat.

Invest in safety and security. It is recommended that the programmatic and budgetary design of interventions developed with external funding include a percentage of fixed costs to ensure the continuity of SSPs and, consequently, the reduction of risk situations and episodes of violence.

Advocate for investments in safety and security. SR CSOs are encouraged to participate in community and country dialogues for the development of funding requests to engage and advocate for resources to invest in the safety and security of community organizations working to implement GF grants.

Coordinate work among sector organizations. Work together as a sector to implement advocacy actions that reduce the vulnerability of implementers on the ground, from a more structural perspective with different national stakeholderes.

For the Principal Recipient

Hire specific technical assistance. At least during the SSP development and procurement processes, hire specific advisory services from experts in the fields of

    a)   security equipment, digital technologies and surveillance systems;
    b)   life insurance purchasing.

This would avoid the difficulties reported by those who have developed and are implementing these processes. In this way, the start of their implementation would not be affected, nor would there be a feeling that they are being implemented in a hurry.

Develop an institutional communication strategy. The PR is recommended to have a communication consultant to improve the communication channels with the rest of the actors involved in the process and to make the communication more straightforward and constant so as not to create uncertainty during the process.

Conduct field visits. Field visits by PR team members should be more extensive and include:

    a)   accompaniment during field activities throughout the day,
    b)   use of the transportation system employed by the team of community promoters,
    c)   overnight stays in the red zones where activities are taking place,
    d)   conversations with people from the KPs. Field visits should include indicators to assess and monitor the safety of the organizations and community health workers.

Include coordinated work with the owners and managers of KP meeting places in the SSPs. This action can reduce the vulnerability and risks faced by field workers. To this end, sensitization and training should be initiated with these individuals.s.

Efforts must be made to change the idea that the PR has the final say on what is purchased, even if the budget is well justified. It is for this reason that there is a perception that critical issues such as the following have been deliberately omitted from the SSPs and are therefore recommended for inclusion:

A.   Facility and en route security.

Hiring security personnel who can assist in the event of attempted assaults, intoxicated or drugged persons, or if they become violent.

Hiring a team of consultants to develop an occupational health and safety plan that addresses different risks (physical, emotional, harassment, etc.).

Acquisition of vehicles to improve mobilization and prevent assaults during travel and on public transportation that occur during trips to marginalized neighborhoods of cities or rural and indigenous areas of the country.

B.   Infrastructure.

Having a safe place that can serve as a collection point for supplies and also as a shelter in case a situation arises that could endanger people, or even when there are heavy rains or extreme heat that also affect their physical well-being.

C.   Inputs for implementation.

Provide field organizers with sunscreen to counteract the effects of constant exposure to the sun.

For the Global Fund

Improve awareness, preparedness and sensitivity to emergencies.

It is recommended that the Global Fund improve the guidelines for resource management and operation of the SSPs so that the necessary resources can be quickly mobilized to address the emergency (e.g., purchase of mobile phones, immediate medical care, etc.). This inclusion should be non-negotiable, as the way the SSP development process is currently structured, the resolution of emergencies is not considered.

According to the participants in this case study, there is a need to develop greater sensitivity to the needs of the context rather than prioritizing the administrative requirements of the PR or GF. It is necessary to recognize that promoters who speak an indigenous language in addition to Spanish are doubly relevant to achieving goals in a multicultural country. Being peers and understanding the cultural contexts of key indigenous populations facilitates the incorporation of prevention practices, including early detection. It is therefore necessary to take this into account in their remuneration.

For consultants

Provide face-to-face technical assistance. Conduct reviews and approvals face-to-face with the technical team to provide better feedback, clarify questions, and speed up the implementation process.

Recognize that organizational needs (especially those of field staff and KPs) should always precede over technical guidelines and administrative issues.

Establish criteria in the SSP development process that allow for the meaningful engagement of field staff, not just managers, as they have first-hand knowledge of the risks faced in the field and will ensure that the SSPs balance the safety of facilities with the safety of the most vulnerable personnel.

Strengthen and seek working methods that promote the development of collective SSPs, not just individual plans for each organization. This can have a significant impact on individual and organizational security.

Include a session on conflict resolution and networking skills in face-to-face activities. Some vulnerability factors for individuals and organizations are related to conflict, differences, competition and, in general, fragmentation as a sector.