A Community Guide to the
LAC Platform
What is the LAC Platform?

The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Platform for Support, Coordination and Communication of Civil Society and Communities (LAC Platform) is a component of the Community, Rights and Gender (CRG) Strategic Initiative.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria finances the CRG Strategic Initiative. Six regional platforms are supported through it (one in each continent), and they share the following goal:

Contribute so that all people affected by the three diseases can play a major role in Global Fund processes and make sure grants reflect their needs.

The LAC Platform is implemented by Via Libre, a Peruvian non-governmental organization (NGO) with 28 years of institutional experience at national and international level, whose vision is to establish itself as a sustainable and innovative organization. Via Libre aims at achieving universal and comprehensive access particularly to sexual and reproductive health, and to HIV care, by generating evidence from health programs, services and research, guided by the principles of respect, collaboration and innovation.

How was the LAC Platform created?

In April 2014, the Global Fund Board agreed to allocate 15 million US dollars to the CRG Strategic Initiative for the 2014–2016 financing cycle. Thanks to this, from February 2016 to May 2017 the first phase of the LAC Platform was implemented as part of the then-called Community, Rights and Gender Special Initiative of the Global Fund.
In November 2016, the Global Fund Board reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen the voice of civil society in Global Fund processes when it approved a new phase of the now called Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative, to which it allocated an additional amount of 15 million US dollars to be implemented during the 2017–2019 period through three mutually reinforcing components:

1. Provision of short-term technical assistance among civil society peers
2. Long-term capacity building for organizations, networks of key populations and vulnerable populations
3. Six regional platforms for communication and coordination

In 2017, Via Libre was selected once again to implement the second phase of the LAC Platform, which started its operations in November 2017 and will continue doing so until May 2020.

Which are the main strategic lines and actions of the LAC Platform?

During this new phase, the LAC Platform will continue working within the framework of its three cross-cutting axes: support, coordination and communication.
To coordinate with technical assistance programs and technical partners in the region the conduction of periodic reviews of the effectiveness and/or scope of technical assistance services.

In 2018, a coordinating mechanism for technical assistance providers will be implemented, and a tool for explaining civil society and communities how to use the existing mechanisms to apply for technical support from the Short-Term Technical Assistance Program of the CRG Strategic Initiative of the Global Fund will be prepared.

The LAC Platform will continue fostering initiatives for the development of strategic capacities, particularly in aspects related to the implementation of the Global Fund’s Sustainability, Transition and Co-Financing Policy. In fact, this task has become a strategic line of the LAC Platform, as the region of Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the areas where this policy started to be implemented.

To strengthen the capacities of civil society and community groups so that they can participate effectively in halfway and final reviews of processes related to national strategic planning of responses and regulatory processes for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, by using specific tools which help understand, for instance, shadow reports on Global Fund processes and structures, and the 2017–2019 financing cycle of the Global Fund.

Support...

In order to contribute to improve understanding on gaps and needs in the development of technical assistance capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) and community groups in the region, the LAC Platform is aiming to conduct a series of studies at a national level to be able to do the following:

- To obtain knowledge on access, innovation and effectiveness in the provision of technical assistance, as well as on capacity-building among civil society organizations and community networks by analyzing a sample from countries belonging to the region; and to disseminate results and possible recommendations.

In 2016, the LAC Platform conducted 3 studies on access to and effectiveness of technical assistance services in three countries: Bolivia, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic. These studies allowed to characterize the technical assistance service offer aimed at CSOs in terms of access, innovation and effectiveness; as well as to identify gaps in the provision of technical assistance and the needs CSOs have in this regard.

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One of the main challenges is to generate coordination and communication links between Latin America and the Caribbean. For this reason, the LAC Platform has a Focal Point for the Caribbean (mcarrillo.mcconsultancy@gmail.com) whose mission is to channel concerns and demands from the Caribbean in the best way possible, and to include them harmoniously in the work plan, in line with the objectives and components of the initiative.

- To support coordination among CSOs and community networks for reviewing financing applications to be submitted to the Global Fund, as well as to coordinate their participation in consultation processes on multicountry projects.
- To support civil society participation in processes related to sustainability and transition, such as transition readiness assessments, social dialogues and studies related to transition from Global Fund financing.

With respect to this strategic line, the LAC Platform has provided technical assistance in the context of sustainable transition by organizing social dialogues in Belize, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Dominican Republic; applying the tool for contracting CSOs with public resources; supporting APGM in the application of the social contracting tool, and providing technical assistance for the recognition of type A health services (SCA) by the Colombian health system.

The LAC Platform also seeks to coordinate with other technical assistance initiatives in the region which have CSOs and communities as their target population. To that effect, certain actions have been considered, such as the following:

- To provide support to CSOs and community groups so that they can submit technical assistance requests to the Community, Rights and Gender Technical Assistance Program of the Global Fund or to other technical assistance programs.
- To facilitate the exchange of key information among technical assistance initiatives and programs in the region.
- To disseminate updated information on technical assistance providers from civil society, as well as on capacity-building opportunities in the region.
- To identify and understand the different areas of work and expertise of the different technical assistance providers from the LAC region in order to improve access to technical assistance services for civil society and community groups.

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With the purpose of enhancing knowledge on the Global Fund among community groups and civil society from Latin America and the Caribbean, and improving their access to technical assistance services, the LAC Platform has developed a communication strategy. It includes activities such as the following:

- To create and update directories of civil society members as the basis for sharing relevant information with them on Global Fund processes in the LAC region.
- To disseminate information related to the Global Fund's financing model and technical assistance opportunities using different media, such as web pages, newsletters, news, social media, tools and studies; discussion forums on current topics through a YouTube channel and webinars, and the creation of a document database and an app for Android smartphones.
- To organize the exchange of information through meetings, conferences and other regional forums.

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