

## Robert Carr Fund: Strategic Directions and Opportunities

In November 2018, the ISC authorized the undertaking of an exercise to develop a strategic plan for RCF for the period of 2020–2024. The key foundations of the RCF Strategy were developed as part of a broader consultation process between April and June 2019. At its next meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the ISC considered and approved draft vision and mission statements and the Fund’s priorities towards determining the RCF’s strategic direction for the next five years. The ISC appreciated the emerging results of a participatory and consultative strategic planning process and expressed gratitude to a broad range of RCF stakeholders, who have contributed their valuable insights into the development of the RCF Strategy. The ISC agreed that the key priority is to sustain and advance the role of civil society networks to support communities of inadequately served populations (ISP)<sup>1</sup> in the HIV response by investing in:

- Movement leadership to assure a stronger, continuous community-led and rights-based response to HIV;
- Financial health and resilience of ISP programs to assure that ISPs are not forgotten or left behind in the funding landscape;
- Innovation, learning and partnerships to assure that the lessons that networks have learned in the past can be transformed into new and more effective approaches in the current environment.

The emerging strategic priorities are well aligned with the RCF theory of change and results framework, which was previously developed with broad stakeholder input as well. In November 2018, the ISC decided to carry out an incentive funding Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2019. The ISC requested that the incentive funding RFP be aligned with the emerging priorities from the strategic planning process. The PAP recommended and the ISC agreed that the incentive funding RFP be reframed as a Strategic Opportunity RFP linked to the emerging Strategic Plan. Having considered and approved the emerging strategic directions of the RCF for 2020–2024, the ISC approved the priorities and parameters of the Strategic Opportunity RFP to be announced this summer and to allocate 3.75 Million USD for a total number of max seven grants. The Strategic Opportunity grant cycle will be for 18 months in 2020–2021. The Strategic Opportunity RFP is to provide an opportunity to networks and consortia to try new approaches that could maximize the work that they do to improve the health, wellbeing and social inclusion of inadequately served populations (ISP). Craig McClure, incoming Chair of the RCF ISC stated:

- *“The Strategic Opportunity RFP is just that – a strategic opportunity for networks to exercise their creativity and out-of-the-box thinking to work towards*

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<sup>1</sup> ISPs include people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers and transgender people, but depending on the dynamic of the epidemic and the legal status of these populations may also include women and girls, youth, migrants, and people living in rural areas.

*overcoming strategic challenges related to increasingly difficult environments for civil society, ISPs and the HIV response.”*

### **International Steering Committee Leadership Appointment**

The ISC welcomed Sujatha Rao as the incoming Vice Chair of the ISC and Craig McClure as incoming Chair. The ISC expressed their gratitude to the outgoing chair, Sigrun Møgedal, for her dedication and significant contribution to the RCF since its inception.

*“It feels like a critical juncture for global health and the HIV/AIDS movement. It is time when sustaining what works needs to be re-enforced with new ideas, innovative partnerships and re-envisioned ways of working. I am honored to be joining the partnership of civil society and donors pooling their unique resources through the Robert Carr Fund at the moment when the Fund goes through its strategic planning and setting its future course. The future of global health needs both sustaining the gains of the past and innovations to take the HIV/AIDS response steadily into the future.” – Ms. Rao on her joining of the RCF.*

*Members of the International Steering Committee are: Sigrun Møgedal (Outgoing Chair), Craig McClure (Incoming Chair), Sujatha Rao (Incoming Vice Chair), Juliet Whitley (represented by Sally Chakawhata), Hanke Nube , Monica Djupvik, Sandy Thurman (represented by Cornelius Baker), Midnight Poonkasetwattana (represented by Inad Rendon), Anandi Yuvaraj, Marvelous Muchenje-Marisa, Paul-Gilbert Colletaz, Laurel Sprague (observer), Kate Thomson (observer represented by Noah Metheny).*

*Representatives of the Fund Management Agent and RCF secretariat are: Mark Vermeulen, Sanne Karrenbeld, Sergey Votyagov, Maria Phelan, Hendrike Grootenhuis, Nathaniel Miller, Gabriel Sevilla, Samira Helmy, Anja Dietrich and Sylvia Vermeulen.*