



Youth  LEAD

"YOUNG PEOPLE
AND THE GLOBAL FUND
IN MONGOLIA"

CASE STUDY

2020

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Acronyms

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CCM- Country Coordinating Mechanism

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IDU- Injecting Drug User

MSM- Men Who Have Sex With Men

NGO- Non- Governmental Organization

PLHIV- People Who Live With Hiv

SW- Sex Worker

TG- Transgender

UNFPA Mongolia- United Nations Population Fund Mongolia

UNICEF Mongolia- United Nations Children's Fund Mongolia

WHO Mongolia- World Health Organization Mongolia

YKP- Young Key Population

YOUTH LEAD - Youth Leadership, Education, Advocacy, Development

YLM- Youth Lead Mongolia

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Context

The Global Fund is a partnership designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics. As an international organization, the Global Fund mobilizes and invests more than US\$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in more than 100 countries. In partnership with governments, civil society, technical agencies, the private sector and people affected by the diseases, we are challenging barriers and embracing innovation.¹

Youth LEAD, the Asia Pacific Network of Young Key Populations, is one of the recipients of the Global Fund- CRG Strategic Initiative long-term capacity development grant. Within the grant, various YKP-led networks and organizations are supported to meaningfully engage in the GF funding request development process. Youth LEAD Mongolia (YLM) is one of the grantees to have received that support. In 2019, a national consultation on young people and HIV was organized for the first time in Ulaanbaatar. The consultation brought diverse stakeholders and YKP together to brainstorm on the needs and issues of YKP in Mongolia. It also paved the way for YLM to strengthen its engagement with diverse national stakeholders. Following up the consultation and lobbying efforts by YLM, the YKP were engaged at the GF country dialogues and even managed to secure separate country dialogues for YKP.

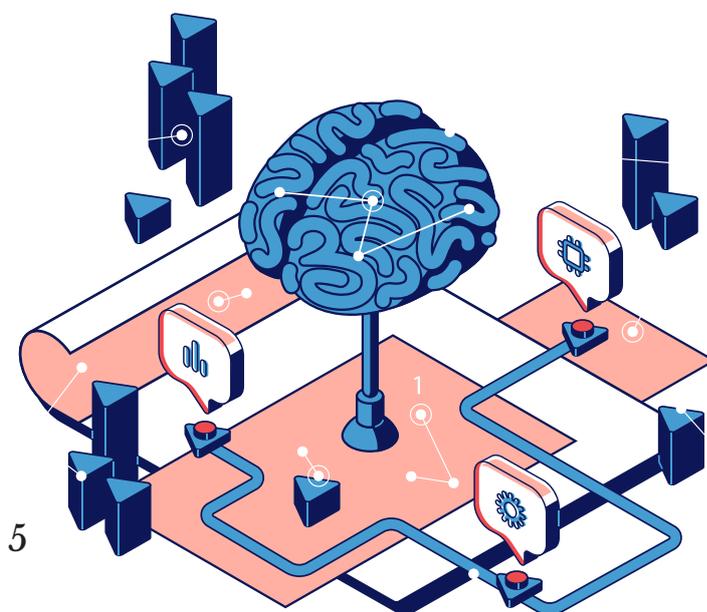
The Global Fund processes are complex and often, still, young people are hesitant to engage with the process. The barriers range from lack of capacity and know-how to other structural barriers of not having an enabling platform for young people to engage and a highly politicized process at the CCM. In spite of all these challenges, YLM was able to comprehend the process, lobbied with relevant stakeholders and their contribution within the funding request reflected a meaningful engagement of young people.

With this backdrop, Youth LEAD conducted a case study on the YLM engagement at the GF funding request process. The case study is led by young people of YLM and will serve as the normative guideline and inspiration for young people within the region to engage and contribute to the national response to HIV.

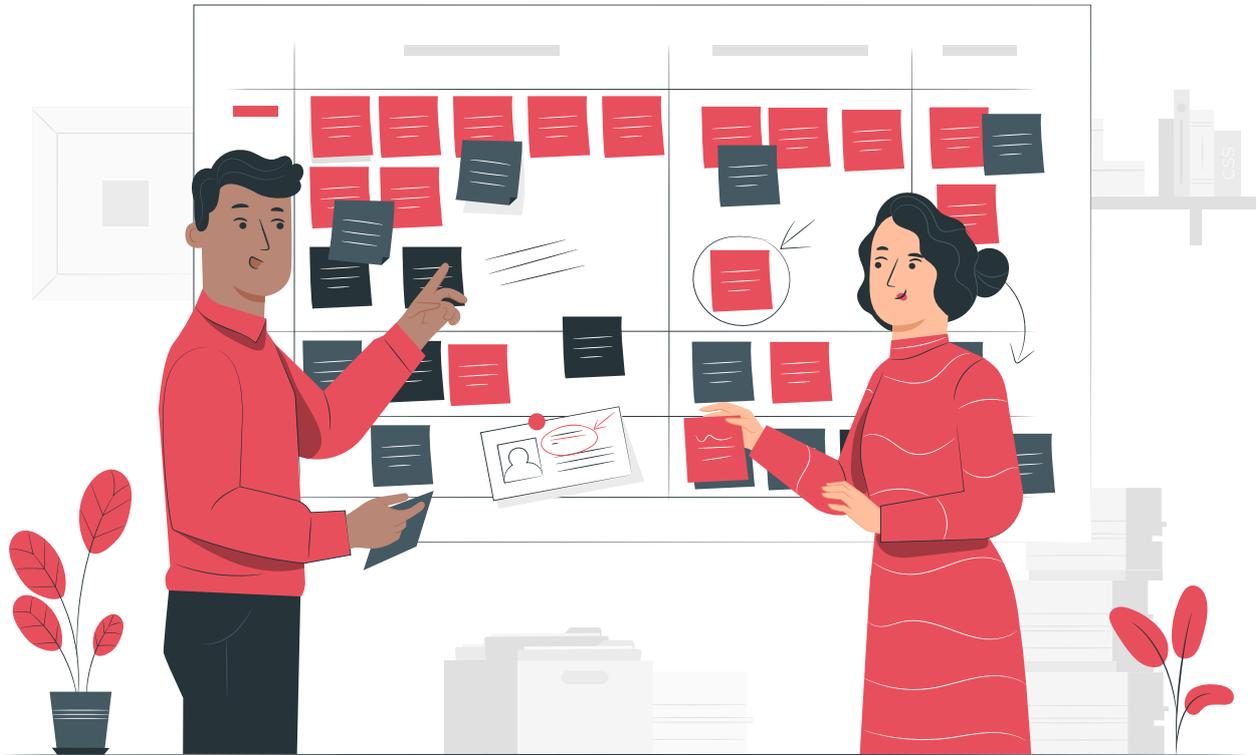
OBJECTIVES OF THE CASE STUDY

- Documenting how the young key populations and Youth LEAD Mongolia had meaningfully engaged with The Global Fund process
- Offer a normative guidance on advocacy and engagement for young people and youth-led organizations to effectively engage and contribute to national HIV response
- Share experiences and inspire young key populations, youth-led organizations to engage with The Global Fund process

¹<https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/overview/>



Methodology



The case study employed qualitative tools and approaches to document both processes of engagement and the results achieved at the end. The supportive processes were documented retrospectively so as to provide the basis of the engagement.

This case study has narrated the events and actions towards the engagement, at the Global Fund, in a chronological order. It has presented step-by-step processes starting from the decision making with YLM to engage, preparation, identification of allies, advocacy work and support from identified partners, and finally the achieved result.

The data were collected through literature review and key informant interviews. In total 6 respondents were interviewed from the CCM, proposal writing team, UN, KP leaders and the YKP.

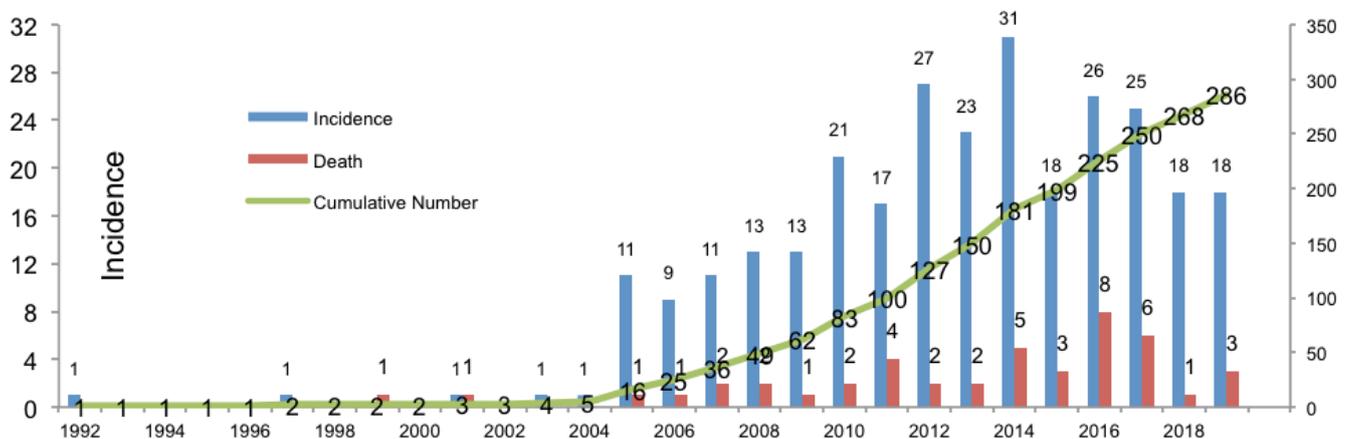
For analysis purposes, the interviews were transcribed and key information was extracted based on the already determined themes. The result will be presented using quotations from the interview to substantiate the argument and the description.

The HIV/AIDS Situation in Mongolia

As of 2019, total population of Mongolia is around 3.2 million and the HIV infections prevalence rate is less than 0.1%. It kept staying as a low HIV prevalence country for a long time. ²

An increased epidemic as portrayed in the graph was due to the gradual reduction in external funding for HIV and certain socio-economic and behavioral factors encountered in Mongolia.

Figure 1: Yearly and cumulative incidence of new HIV cases and AIDS deaths



The Global AIDS Monitoring data presented that the estimated number of people living with HIV in Mongolia was 601, including 486 males, 112 females and 3 children. ³

While registered number of HIV cases in Mongolia is 285, as per National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD). Out of all 285 cases, 21% belongs to the age group of 16-25 or “young key population”, and rest 79% includes those who are above 25; 81.5% were male with 112 MSM, 72 bisexual men and 44 heterosexual men. The female group included 53 heterosexual women and 2 transgender populations. Amongst 53 women, 12 of them were reported or suspected as being involved in selling sex abroad. ⁴

²MOH data presented during National Country Dialogue held on 21 January 2020

³ UNAIDS Data 2020, accessed at https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2019-UNAIDS-data_en.pdf

⁴ The Global Fund funding request form- Mongolia 2021-2023, page-2

Introduction of Youth Lead Mongolia

YLM as the network of young key populations was initiated in 2015 with direct support of UN-FPA Mongolia. It operated as an un-registered network until 2018. However, it managed to receive grant from Youth LEAD and UN agencies to perform its advocacy and other core activities.

In 2018, it was then registered as an official Non-Governmental Organization under the law of Mongolia in order to create a safe and enabling environment for all YKP communities. Up until today, YLM has successfully built the youngest creative team in Mongolia, inclusive of 15 active members aging between 16-25.

As the only YKP-led organization in Mongolia, the organization focuses more on advocacy work and online anti-discrimination campaigns by delivering a range of content on social media. In 2019, YLM decided to increase capacity development of YKPs by presenting their ideas to relevant stakeholders and decision-makers in order to strengthen their engagement with the Global Fund.



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF ENGAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

This section will highlight the previous and current work of YLM that were relevant in building the strong foundation of the network to be able to engage at the national level on HIV. This required strong partnership with the stakeholders, motivation within the group to engage, leadership and technical support. For YLM it was a partnership that played an important role. They were able to foster collaboration with diverse stakeholders who then became allies in various fronts of the advocacy work of YLM. The nature and types of partnership can be broadly categorized as below

■ 1. Youth-led organizations:

YLM has been engaging with a number of youth-led organizations on several projects and activities since its establishment. This type of engagement helped both sides to sustain and promote their organizational functions. YLM became a part of the CCM through collaboration with youth-led organizations like the Mongolian Youth Council or “MYC”. MYC is a semi-government entity and a bridge between youth led organizations and government bodies. It has the mandate to communicate with decision makers on behalf of Mongolian youths. Thus, it was vital for YLM to get engaged with this council and registered as an official member of it. As expected, this has given YLM the opportunity to meet over 20 youth-led organizations and expand its communication range after being registered. On the other hand, importantly, YLM was proposed as the youth representative of the CCM through the MYC. The process is explained below.

■ 2. Key population-led organizations:

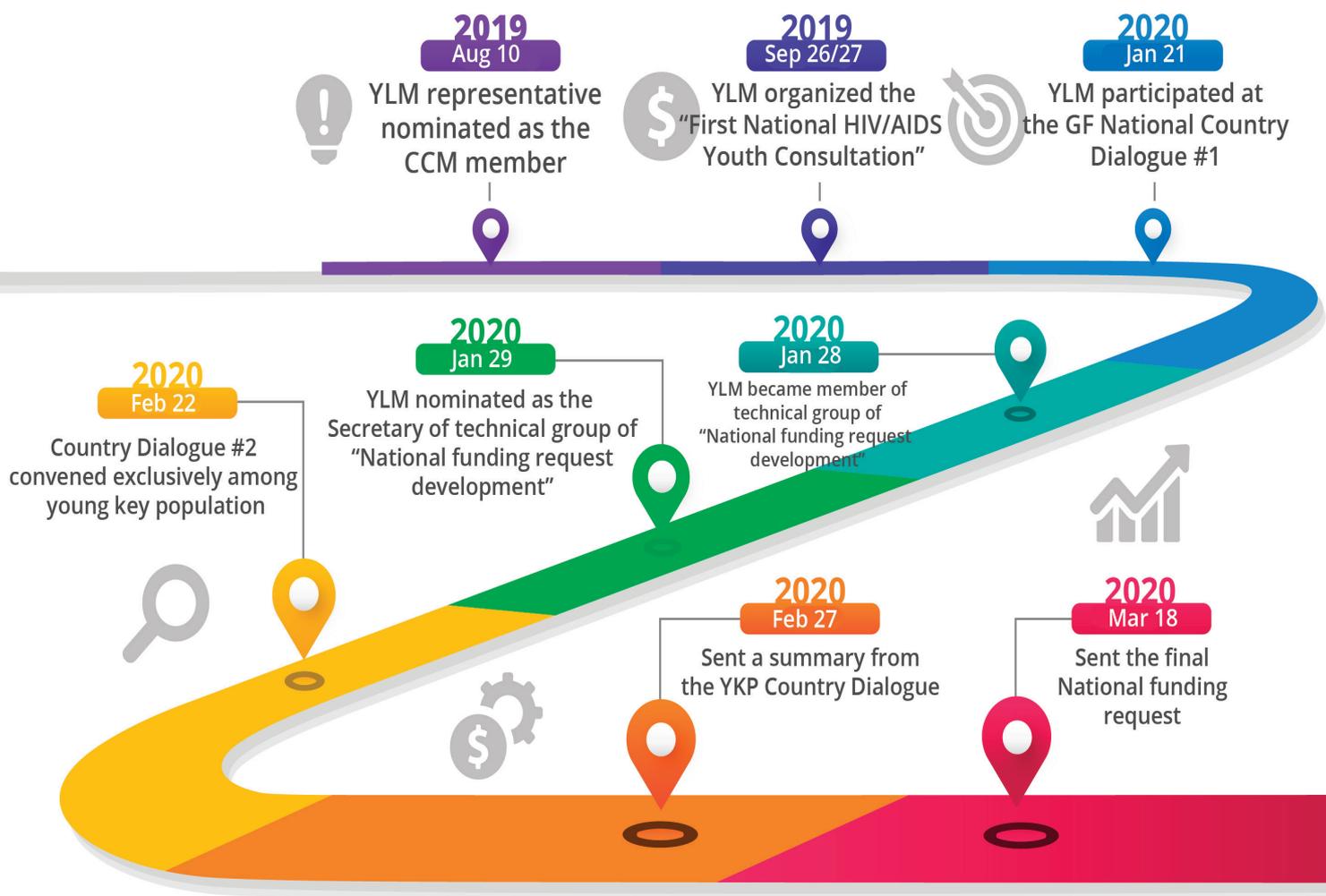
The key population-led organizations in Mongolia, though led by adults, are the strategic partners in-terms of advancing the issues of YKP within the HIV response. Therefore, it was imperative for YLM to foster a relationship with the KP networks. In 2018, YLM attended a training program held by the “Youth For Health” NGO, which works alongside the MSM community. After the training, Youth For Health awarded YLM with a small grant. The implementation of the small grant allowed for further engagement and YLM began receiving invitations to meetings and training programs from other key community organizations (FSW, PLHIV, IDU, MSM, TG-LED) funded by the Global Fund. Although YLM attended these meetings and training programs, it felt more like a participatory checklist of young people rather than meaningful engagement.

■ 3. Technical partners and UN:

In Mongolia, WHO and UNICEF are the most active UN agencies in relation to the Global Fund, especially in the process of project proposal writing and development. They were first introduced to YLM during the “Primary Youth Health” consultation organized by UNICEF in 2018, where the consultation was facilitated by the former coordinator of YLM.

Having established a close connection with the three organizations listed above, YLM's email address was included in the recipients list of important documents that enabled access to news and updates about the proposal development of the Global Fund. This is one of the most vital advantages to the organization for the upcoming processes.

TIMEFRAME OF ENGAGEMENT



MAIN ENGAGEMENT AT THE FUNDING REQUEST PROCESS

■ **Becoming the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) member**

The CCM is the decision making body on the Global Fund proposal at the national level. The Mongolian CCM includes representatives from the government, civil society, multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations and one representative from each key population community, such as MSM, PWID and PLHIV.

Interestingly, only one young person is allowed to represent all youth groups within the country. The Mongolian Youth Council, the semi-government youth network, is mandated to appoint the young people to the CCM. Since one of the effective ways to engage meaningfully with the Global Fund was by becoming a CCM member, the former coordinator of YLM lobbied with the MYC and offered numerous orientation and training to MYC members on the Global Fund. As a result, she was considered to represent the young people of Mongolia and was appointed by the MYC to become the youth representative in the CCM.

■ **“First National HIV/AIDS Youth Consultation in Mongolia”**

In September 2019, YLM organized the first ever-national youth consultation on HIV/AIDS issues with the support of Youth LEAD Asia and the Pacific. The most significant thing about this event was inviting young people from provinces outside the capital city, especially from areas where HIV/AIDS infection was higher than the national average level. The consultation meeting also included representatives from key population led organizations, young key populations, decision makers and CCM members.

The outcome of this consultation meeting was to be recognized by relevant stakeholders for the line of work YLM does. The summary of the meeting was sent out to all invited organiza-

tions, even ones that could not attend. However, those absent did ensure their participation for the next meeting.

■ **YLM in the Technical Working Group of the Funding Request Development**

The Global Fund funding request development for 2021 to 2023 began in Mongolia in late 2019 as it was scheduled to submit the proposal for window 1. In order to be a step ahead, the youth CCM member sent a request to the CCM secretariat to become a part of the technical working group (TWG), which was successfully accepted. During the first meeting of the TWG, the youth CCM member volunteered for the secretary position. Becoming the secretary was a strategic move as it not only kept a youth member at the forefront of the discussion, but the all CCM members observed youth leadership as the secretary was tasked to communicate with information updates.

The Technical Working Group is responsible for the whole process of proposal development with specific responsibilities:

- 01** Decisions about writing new projects (Made by the CCM)
- 02** Setting up a Technical Working Group on the new projects
- 03** Organize country dialogues 2-3 times (can be more than 3 if needed)
- 04** To organize a joint meeting between the Technical Working Group and consultants in charge of writing the funding request
- 05** To hold a joint meeting on approving the funding
- 06** To submit the approved funding request to The Global Fund

■ YLM in the National Country Dialogue

The first Country Dialogue was organized on 21st of January, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia by the CCM secretariat. The dialogue is a requirement of the Global Fund to develop the country proposal and it aims to identify the key issues and interventions for the proposal. Out of more than fifty stakeholders present at the meeting, three YKP members from YLM were invited.

Despite YKP members contributing significantly to the meeting, they faced a challenge of identity amongst stakeholders, as the concept of YKP is still quite new.

“The biggest challenge were when we attended the first country dialogue of this year, other participants and some stakeholders found us as a only youths, not the YKP representatives which is also in a high-risk population”

- Sod-Erdene, National coordinator of YLM

The YKP members facilitated the group on “Adolescents, young people, mobile population, armed forces, law enforcement and border protection agencies” and participated in a group for “High-risk population (MSM, FSW, TG, IDU, PLHIV)”. At the end of the meeting, the YKP members were able to provide concrete suggestions and their leadership was praised by stakeholders.

“Including significant programs for YKPs aged between 16-25 in the new project proposal was perhaps the result of their active engagement throughout the whole process. For instance, during the first National Country Dialogue of The Global Fund on January, 2020, a discussion session of one of the divided four teams was facilitated by both me and the former coordinator of YLM. In this manner, they succeeded in ensuring participation of the general youth population and young key population simultaneously.”

- Gansukh, HIV project manager of PCU of the Global Fund

■ YLM Organized a Separate Country Dialogue with YKP

In addition to the national country dialogue, YLM was able to organize a separate country dialogue exclusively for YKP with support from the Youth LEAD Secretariat. The YKP dialogue was formally endorsed by the CCM and received wider recognition from the stakeholders. The dialogue was observed by the international consultant of the writing team.

The dialogue was attended by 25 number of YKP and was facilitated by the MSM network leader. The outcome of the dialogue was shared with all the CCM members, and TWG.

“Timing is important, you should congratulate yourself for organizing the country dialogue in an absolute right time. If the country dialogue is held before the funding request development time, most of the stakeholders and project developers can forget it easily. Plus, if you organize it after the time of the funding request then that will be useless too. The truly right time for efficient country dialogue is exactly during the time of funding request development”

- Jan William, International consultant of funding request developing technical group



Out of the many suggestions and recommendations that surfaced from the consultation, two intervention programs for YKP were included in the main country proposal, which was submitted to the Global Fund after endorsement from the CCM. The accepted programs includes:

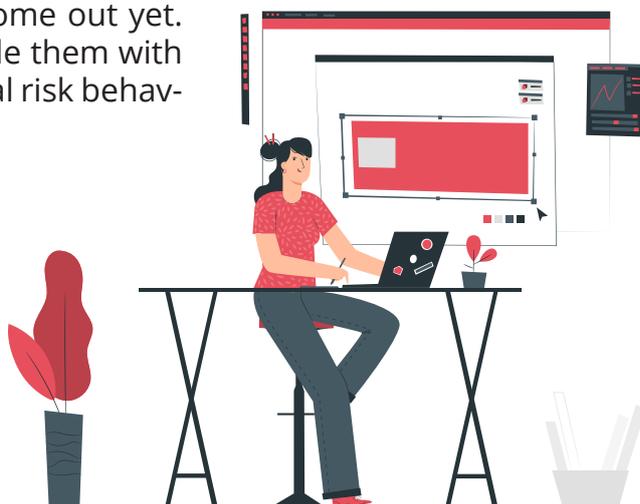
Brothers and sisters program

This program is targeted at younger generations of key population, such as MSM and FSW community members at university and high school, to introduce and reach them out to the voluntary counseling and testing of HIV by taking advantage of their personal connections with older brothers and sisters who have already been informed about it.



Online program for the hidden population

This online program aims to reach the hidden population such as young transgender that has not come out yet. Through a series of online courses, it will provide them with accurate information so as to change their sexual risk behaviors.



This achievement has been an invaluable inspiration to the organization engaging with the Global Fund for the first time.

“Mongolia went well with YKP participation compared with other countries but next time definitely should invite more high-level participants (Ministry of Health- principal recipient of the fund) and make them come to the Country Dialogue. Develop a great advocacy strategy. You need to show that you are representing a significant community”

- Jan William, International consultant of funding request developing technical group.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE LESSONS GATHERED FROM THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Meaningful negotiation

It was not easy for YLM to engage in the Global Fund process. However, they managed due to the coordinator and core members volunteering their time and efforts, even though only a few members were aware of the Global Fund process or had some level of knowledge. In addition, time was a constraint, and there was no time to prepare all the members, capacitate them and deploy for engagement. However, YLM was in a good position with their former coordinator as the youth CCM member and they had built a good relationship with the stakeholders. Thus, the team reflected back on what worked well and the negotiation and dialogue with the key stakeholders was one of the key successful strategies.

The key informant respondents stated that successful advocacy requires allies with partners and stakeholders. YLM's key representatives and the youth CCM members led this process. They identified the concerned stakeholder and initiated the dialogue at every level. They held numerous one-to-one personal and organizational meetings with the stakeholders and presented their ideas on YKP engagement. Most importantly they kept the discussion consistent until the end of the process. They portrayed the highest level of dedication and commitment, which was recognized by the stakeholders, who eventually became their allies.

Additionally, YLM with support from the youth CCM members were able to access the important documents, read them, analyze them and use them as a tool of negotiation. One of the lessons learnt was that the documents were readily available in the local language but a connection was needed to access such documents.

The support from KP-led NGO and networks were also instrumental as they backed the YLM agenda during the meetings and also provided personal support during the process.

"In countries with low prevalence rates, The Global Fund follows a principle of funding programs only for key-populations. According to the WHO report, the key populations deal with 5 different groups. Because young people are not included in one of these five groups, it has low possibility to get funded. That's why it is significant to conduct a qualitative survey showing its detailed needs and do special advocacy work to add activities for YKPs by introducing the result of the survey. We will be grateful to give a hand once youths are innovative and active"

- Oyundari, Coordinator of CCM Mongolia

Meaningful Participation

In addition to a connection with the key partners, YLM was consistent throughout the meetings and consultations that were related to the country dialogue. The participation was at diverse levels. The youth CCM member was active at the CCM and part of the technical working group, while other members engaged in the meetings and contributed as the facilitators or vocal participants.

"Our team was trying our best to prove that "We are the integral part of key population working on HIV issues in Mongolia" during country dialogue "

- Munguntsooj, Board member of YLM

In 2020, due to the current pandemic COVID-19, the country dialogue couldn't be organized as planned, however, YLM managed to get endorsement from the CCM to organize the dialogue exclusively for YKP. It was largely possible due to a good relationship established with the CCM members and secretariat through the youth CCM member.

"To engage in the process of any projects of the Global Fund, it is important to stay tuned for the open announcement of project proposal and implementation. Also I am suggesting you to have more YKP representatives who can give pre-understandings to CCM members about the significance of YKPs' engagement at the decision making level."

- Myagmardorj, Coordinator "Youth For Health" NGO.

MOVING FORWARD

It was indeed a great experience for the entire team of YLM to have engaged comprehensively and to have produced a tangible result. The key results as perceived are:
- YLM and YKP issues received increased attention and recognition from the national stakeholders on HIV and beyond. This will largely enhance the image and credibility of YLM in the future.

- The recommendations surfaced from the YKP dialogue were included in the main funding request submitted to the Global Fund. This is indeed a tangible result of the engagement. This will pave the way for engagement during the GF grant implementation after the approval of the proposal.

“The Global Fund must have the guideline to include young people who are from the significant community, and in its development process should also include them to hear their perspective”

- Jan William, International consultant of funding request developing technical group.

YLM has envisioned the following road-map, once the proposal is approved by the Global Fund board.

1.To become the sub-sub-recipient of the National Grant

2.To be the main implementer of the two YKP programs produced from the YKP country dialogue and included in the national funding request

3.To submit a request for YKP representatives aged 16-25 in the Mongolian CCM



1. Check official websites and social media pages of the Global Fund and other organizations that you intend to collaborate frequently with.

2. Apply frequently to local projects, regardless if it offers a low or high budget. It is even better if the project is announced by any sub-recipient organizations of the Global Fund.

3. Aside from focusing on capacity development of your team members, try to get involved in meetings, conferences and training programs held by KP-led organizations in order to get known by them.

4. Taking voluntary responsibility for activities and tasks can open new doors and connections.

5. If you are planning to organize a YKP Country dialogue, do not forget to invite stakeholders and other related influential people in the process of project development and decision-making.

6. If you are planning to write projects and get funding, make sure you have prepared data information and statistics on the community you are focusing on.

7. Find out what programs were implemented in your country in previous years and how efficient they were and which programs have not been implemented yet.

8. When attending official and significant meetings, lay claim to your point of view professionally. However, feel free to have a more informal connection outside these professional meetings.

9. Be prepared to share your organizations' successful past projects and take the opportunity to share those experiences during the process of funding request development.

10. Connect, learn and share experiences with other organizations in the same line of work in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen the youth network as a whole.

Using tool for stakeholder mapping

Example was given in stakeholder -1

Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

Stakeholder Name	Contact Person Name, Address...	Power The ability to stop or change the process	Interest The size and location of the overlap between their interests and grant goals	Engagement Strategy The type and frequency of communication
Stakeholder 1 <i>Example</i>	<i>MSM representative of CCM</i>	<i>Voting, speaking behalf of MSM community,</i>	<i>Getting more funding for his/her organization</i>	<i>Inviting to the main events, etc.</i>
Stakeholder 2				
Stakeholder 3				
Stakeholder 4				
Stakeholder 5				
Stakeholder 6				



Using tool for planning meaningful engagement

Example was given in activity-3

Design thinking

Calendar /Planning date			2022-Sep		
Name of activity or engagement			Activity #3 Country Dialogue among YKP		
How to engage			-Taking a permission from CCM -Inviting all KP-led organization representatives		
			-Taking a lead by my organization -Including all the necessary needs for YKPs		
What will be your output			To include YKP country Dialogue to the Proposals prioritization process		
			To write a reference to the technical group of the Funding request Development		



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