

CS4ME

CIVIL SOCIETY FOR MALARIA ELIMINATION

From Capacity Building to Strategic Influence: Civil Society Facing the GC8



Cameroon



IMPACT SANTE AFRIQUE

Impact Santé Afrique (ISA)

Context and needs:

In 2024, civil society organizations (CSOs) faced major challenges in effectively engaging with Global Fund processes, particularly due to a limited understanding of funding mechanisms, grant cycles, and strategic entry points. This situation contributed to insufficient and low-impact CSO participation in the development of funding applications, resulting in limited consideration of community realities in malaria control interventions.

Faced with the persistence of a high malaria burden and the need to ensure appropriate and inclusive responses, CSOs thus expressed the urgent need to strengthen their capacities in order to better understand and influence Global Fund processes, and to improve the effectiveness of interventions at the community level.

To address this need, a tool was developed by Impact Santé Afrique, the CS4ME Secretariat, in 2025 titled **“What I Need to Know About the Global Fund as a Civil Society Organization Active in the Fight Against Malaria.”** This tool aimed to strengthen the technical and strategic capacities of community actors to improve their participation in national processes and gain a better understanding of how the Global Fund operates.

Following the development of this tool, we conducted training for CSOs on its use, facilitated its dissemination, and monitored its proper implementation by CSOs.

Desired change:

Through this tool and the associated training, we aimed to strengthen civil society organizations' knowledge and skills regarding the Global Fund's operations, the role of CCMs, funding cycles, and advocacy opportunities within the GC7 framework.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to strengthen the health security system against malaria by promoting greater ownership of the Global Fund's processes and mechanisms. It thus aims to enable CSOs to adopt best practices, effectively influence funding processes, and contribute to interventions that are more relevant, inclusive, and tailored to community realities.

Your approach:

To address capacity gaps, the approach centered on a training workshop on the tool developed for the Global Fund.

The workshop evaluation was conducted using a **pre-test/post-test comparative approach**, allowing for a rigorous measurement of participants' knowledge before and after the training. Based on a representative sample (**85%** participation), this methodology enabled an analysis of the evolution of knowledge regarding the Global Fund's main mechanisms. The results highlight a **significant overall improvement among participants**, who progressed from an **initial intermediate level (approximately 60%–75% correct answers)** to a **satisfactory to high level (up to 75%–100%)** after the training.

Notable improvements were observed on key topics, including:

- a **27-point** increase in understanding of the funding stages,
- **100%** compliance with the funding criteria and community engagement requirements,
- and an overall improvement in understanding of the Global Fund's roles and mechanisms.

Overall, the results demonstrate **measurable and significant learning gains**, attesting to **the success of the capacity-building activity**. The training led to a tangible improvement in the knowledge of civil society organizations, thereby strengthening their ability to engage effectively in Global Fund processes.

Capacity building was not limited to theory: **sessions on “How to Meaningfully Engage in Global Fund Grant Cycles at the National Level” and “How to Use the Global Fund Guide to Improve Interventions on the Ground”** were organized, providing participants with the tools and techniques needed to deepen their understanding of the subject. This collaborative process led to the formalization of a plan for disseminating and utilizing the CS4ME Guide at the community level to ensure a broader and sustainable impact beyond the direct participants.

Changes to date:

The actions taken so far have already led to significant changes, laying the groundwork for stronger and more effective community engagement:

- Improved understanding among civil society organizations and communities of the Global Fund process: Participants progressed from a partial to intermediate level of understanding prior to the training (60%–75% correct answers on several key topics) to a generally satisfactory to high level of mastery after the training (75%–100%). Training on the CS4ME Guide to Global Fund processes has increased the number of CSOs and community representatives who not only participate but

also actively contribute to national dialogue platforms and other decision-making bodies.

- More strategic advocacy initiatives: Country partners and communities have formalized an advocacy agenda that is both strategic and evidence-based. This shift in approach ensures that advocacy efforts focus on the most relevant levers of influence and are supported by factual information, making advocacy actions more impactful and measurable.

Testimonial shared by a CSO.

“Before this training, the Global Fund’s operations seemed very technical to us. Today, we understand where and how to intervene strategically.”

Mr. Raphaël Kakmeni

Representative of a community-based organization

Key lessons and messages:

- Participants demonstrated significant progress on topics directly related to their fieldwork, particularly funding mechanisms and community engagement, indicating that the content was relevant to their needs.
- The use of a structured approach based on targeted content and pre- and post-test assessments led to a measurable increase in knowledge, particularly regarding the operational aspects of the Global Fund (funding processes, roles of stakeholders).
- Training alone is not enough: dissemination and follow-up are essential.
- Simplified tools facilitate ownership by community stakeholders.
- Anticipating the funding cycle strengthens civil society’s influence.

Next steps:

- Support CSOs in drafting technical contributions to the development of the GC8 concept note
- Continue monitoring the use of the guide in communities
- Establish a mechanism to track commitments made by decision-makers