Coalition Leadership to Advance RMNCAH-N Access and Accountability

EVIDENCE BRIEF

SECTION 1

The role of civil society coalitions in driving RMNCAH-N progress

Nearly 800 women around the world die daily from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, most often in impoverished and conflict-affected regions.¹ Almost half of women globally are unable to make their own decisions about sexual and reproductive health. These appalling numbers underscore the urgent need for increased focus on and investment in addressing inequitable healthcare access, especially for the most underserved populations. Addressing these challenges requires a renewed commitment to improving RMNCAH-N services, particularly in regions facing the most significant barriers to healthcare access. The communities, represented through civil society, must achieve meaningful progress and avoid backsliding.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) most effectively achieve their missions when collaborating within broad, multi-stakeholder coalitions. These coalitions often include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), advocacy groups, faith-based organizations (FBOs) and professional associations. These groups can leverage their unique strengths and resources, such as diverse perspectives and extensive networks, to achieve shared goals.

For example, NGOs can provide technical expertise and resources, CBOs offer grassroots connections and local knowledge, advocacy groups bring specialized skills in policy influence, FBOs mobilize communities through established trust and moral authority and professional associations contribute industry–specific insights and professional networks.







By presenting an alliance of organizations and coherent strategy, coalitions can effectively reach and influence various decision–makers and stakeholders. Working together, they can engage with government officials, private–sector leaders and international bodies more effectively than individual organizations acting alone. This collective approach also amplifies coalition voices, increasing the impact of their advocacy efforts. Moreover, diverse coalitions ensure that the needs and perspectives of different constituencies are represented, allowing them to promote more inclusive and equitable solutions. By combining these strengths, coalitions can holistically address complex issues, fostering sustainable development and social change.

SECTION 2

State of CSO leadership and CSO coalitions in Global Financing Facility (GFF) countries

The GFF is a country-led partnership hosted at the World Bank that works to advance the health and rights of women, children, and adolescents. In the GFF's 2021–2025 CSO and Youth Engagement Framework, the GFF recognized CSOs and youth-led organizations (YLOs) as vital partners in the work to ensure community voices and perspectives inform government and donor policy funding decisions, as well as to hold authorities accountable to their RMNCAH-N policy and funding commitments. However, a review of the first five years (2015–2020) of the GFF's operations found that civil society engagement was inconsistent across GFF countries, and many CSOs lacked the knowledge, resources, and technical capacity to effectively engage with the GFF and the development of Investment Cases. The GFF Investors Group established a GFF-CSO task force comprising representatives from its CSO, youth and donor constituencies to investigate these challenges.

The GFF-CSO task force reviewed civil society engagement with the GFF and developed the CSO and Youth Engagement Framework 2021–2025. During the review, the task force found that the quality of civil society engagement was directly tied to the presence or absence of strong CSO and youth coalitions.

The task force noted that while some CSOs and YLOs had access to internal resources or other donors' funding to support their civil society coalitions, funding gaps limited the ability of coalitions to convene meetings, implement activities or develop monitoring and accountability tools. This contributed to weak governance structures, a lack of civil society awareness of the coalitions' role in the GFF, and an ineffective representation of civil society on GFF country platforms. The GFF-CSO task force also looked at the successful work of well-organized CSO coalitions, like the RMNCAH-N coalition in Malawi, that effectively supported their government's COVID responses by spreading information and monitoring and reporting community gaps to the Ministry of Health. These insights led the GFF to commit to investing in existing civil society

platforms and providing funding and technical assistance via an NGO host, which it believed would better orient civil society platforms to the GFF and facilitate cross-learning among coalitions in GFF countries, to strengthen CSO and YLO engagement.

The GFF's 2022-2024 investment in CSO and YLO leadership (through PAI acting as the GFF NGO Host) built on several years of previous investments from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMFG) in CSO and YLO engagement with the GFF at the country and global level. In fact, 51% of all CSOs and YLOs that received 2022-2024 funding were previous grantees, also funded between 2020 and 2022.

This Evidence Brief will describe how — in many cases — this sustained, multi-year funding enabled the establishment and strengthening of vibrant, effective coalitions that generated important outcomes and policy wins.

What is a GFF Investment Case?

An investment case is the description of the changes that a country wants to see in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition, as well as a prioritized set of investments needed to achieve these results.

The objective is to have a nationwide, evidence-based, prioritized plan with a clear theory of change and focus on results over a three-to-five-year period. This can take the form of one or several documents which build on existing national planning processes.

SECTION 3

Strengthening civil society coalitions through the Civil Society Coordinating Group (CSCG) and GFF NGO Host at PAI

Following the launch of the GFF in 2015, CSOs and YLOs working in GFF countries recognized the need for a global platform to coordinate engagement with the GFF and drive progress on RMNCAH-N issues at the local, national and international levels. That took the form of the Civil Society Coordinating Group (CSCG).

Today, the CSCG has more than 700 members globally, including all 36 GFF countries. Within the CSCG, the Capacity Building and Country Engagement (CBCE) Working Group leads the platform's work advancing strategic participation of existing civil society networks based in GFF countries in

the GFF process. This means working with representatives of the country platforms in the CSCG to identify the capacity needs of CSO-GFF platforms in terms of coalition-building, action plan development, health financing literacy and advocacy. It also involves coordinating with global civil society partners to support capacity-building efforts for civil society networks and identifying opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and mentorship for coalition leaders.

In 2022, PAI received a \$5 million grant from the GFF to build the capacity of civil society in GFF countries to engage in GFF processes through grants, technical assistance and training. As the NGO Host, PAI awarded \$2.75 million in direct grant assistance to 51 organizations in 28 GFF countries. More than 75% of this funding was allocated to CSOs and YLOs working to strengthen civil society coalitions. Another focus of the funding round was to ensure youth and YLOs had meaningful roles in each coalition and were given support to shape civil society engagement with the government. Many of the grantees led their respective coalitions, or the youth subcommittees of their coalitions, and represented their coalitions on GFF multi-stakeholder platforms.

PAI provided grantees with tailored technical support, coordinated regular meetings to monitor progress and facilitated engagement with GFF processes. All grantees participated in a series of workshops conducted in French, English and Spanish, which explained the GFF ecosystem, the stages of Investment Case development and implementation, the roles of different actors in the GFF process, health financing and advocacy and accountability entry points for civil society. The grantees could ask questions in each workshop and share experiences and lessons learned from their respective countries. Grantees also received recordings and materials to conduct their own workshops with coalition members.

SECTION 4

Feedback and reflections from GFF-funded CSO coalition partners

According to GFF-funded partners, coalition-building brings together diverse actors to leverage their collective strengths, resources and influence, which leads to more effective, efficient and sustainable health outcomes in the communities they represent. They have reported gains in the following areas:

Advocacy and policy influence: Coalitions can consolidate the voices of multiple organizations, making their advocacy efforts more powerful and harder for policymakers to ignore. In addition, coalitions can run joint public awareness campaigns, reaching a wider audience and increasing visibility for RMNCAH-N issues. A coalition's collective strength often brings greater credibility and legitimacy to its members' efforts.

- **Cross-sector collaboration:** Coalitions can facilitate partnerships with other sectors (e.g., education, agriculture, water and sanitation), leading to comprehensive and multi-sectoral approaches to RMNCAH-N. By presenting a united front, coalitions can more effectively engage with private-sector entities for support and innovation.
- Resource mutualization: Member organizations can pool their resources, making funding large-scale initiatives and sharing costs easier. A coalition's collective reach and impact can be more appealing to donors, thus facilitating more significant and more sustainable funding opportunities. By coordinating efforts, coalitions avoid duplication of services and interventions. This efficient use of resources allows members to focus on their strengths, leading to a more comprehensive approach where efforts complement rather than compete.
- **Dissemination of best practices:** Coalitions provide platforms where members can share knowledge and successful strategies, which leads to improved practices and more effective interventions. Organizing joint training sessions and workshops enables all coalition members to build the capacities of member organizations and their staff.
- **Long-term sustainability of efforts:** By building strong networks and collaborative frameworks, coalitions ensure that RMNCAH–N initiatives are sustained beyond the lifespan of individual projects or funding cycles. A coalition provides a support system for member organizations, enhancing their resilience in political, economic or social challenges.

GFF-funded partners also reported facing several significant barriers and challenges to building effective civil society coalitions. These include:

- Conflicting objectives and interests: Different organizations within a coalition may have varying missions, goals and priorities, leading to conflicts and difficulties aligning on a common agenda. Members might compete for the same funding sources or media attention, leading to tensions and reduced collaboration.
- **Resource constraints:** Many CSOs face financial constraints that limit their ability to contribute resources or participate fully in coalition activities. Smaller organizations may lack the staff, expertise, or infrastructure needed to engage effectively in coalition activities.
- Difficult political and regulatory environment: In some countries, governments are suspicious or hostile toward CSO coalitions, particularly those involved in advocacy or rights-based approaches. In addition, legal and bureaucratic hurdles can impede the formation and operation of coalitions, such as restrictive laws on NGOs or difficulties in obtaining permits for establishing coalitions.

- **Trust and power dynamics:** Building trust among diverse organizations within a coalition takes time, and historical rivalries or competition can exacerbate distrust. Larger, more established organizations may dominate the coalition, marginalizing smaller or less powerful members, such as YLOs and non-traditional actors.
- Lack of sustainability and continuity: Coalitions often rely on short-term, project-based funding, making it difficult to sustain activities over the long term. In addition, high turnover rates among staff in member organizations disrupt the continuity and institutional memory of the coalition.

SECTION 5

Progress, innovations and outcomes

SPOTLIGHTS



HINA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM (HINA) IN MADAGASCAR

Strengthening the capacity of Madagascar's GFF-CSO coalition to support and monitor the implementation of health policies and programs.

Since 2018, HINA has played various leadership roles in Madagascar's GFF-CSO coalition. The coalition has engaged with the Ministry of Health and the National Assembly on several RMNCAH-N issues contribute to the development of national social sector policies. In addition, the coalition routinely participates in budget analyses and consultations to more effectively address community RMNCAH-N needs.

Between 2019 and 2023, HINA received three consecutive small grants through PAI (two funded by BMGF and one funded by the GFF) to build and sustain the GFF-CSO coalition in Madagascar. In its most recent GFF-funded project, the CSO coalition collaborated to catalyze important policy wins, successfully mobilizing its established community-based networks to implement a community-led scorecard process. This coalition-led advocacy effort prompted the government to distribute family planning kits to 3.22 million women within 100 days, with emergency funds allocated to basic health centers.

Through HINA, the GFF-CSO coalition in Madagascar reported that multi-year support significantly enhanced its effectiveness and sustainability. Sustained investment allowed the coalition to build robust organizational capacities, develop comprehensive strategies and establish enduring partnerships. This stability enabled the coalition to consistently address RMNCAH-N issues, adapt to emerging challenges and achieve lasting impact.

The deliberate participation of youth actors in these coalitions was crucial for amplifying their reach and credibility. Young people brought fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by their peers. Their involvement ensured that the programs and policies advocated for are relevant and resonate with the youth demographic. Youth participation also enhanced the authenticity and legitimacy of advocacy efforts, making them more compelling to policymakers and stakeholders.

Furthermore, empowering youth within coalitions fostered a new generation of leaders who are invested in the cause and skilled in advocacy and organizational management. This not only strengthens current efforts but also ensures the continuity of effective advocacy and program implementation in the future. By prioritizing long-term support and integrating youth actors, national GFF coalitions like HINA can create a more inclusive, resilient and impactful movement to advance RMNCAH-N outcomes.



HEALTH AND RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAMME (HREP) IN MALAWI

Building a sustainable coalition for more effective public health financing accountability.

Since 2006, HREP has engaged with CSOs, youth and non-state actors to build a community of advocates well-versed in health financing, research, policy development and accountability to strengthen Malawi's health sector and deliver better health outcomes. Previous flexible funding and technical and strategic support from PAI enabled through a 2020–2022 BMGF grant supported HREP to establish Malawi's RMNCAH-N civil society coalition. In 2023, HREP received a GFF-funded grant to sustain and build the capacity of the newly established coalition to conduct evidenced-based advocacy on health financing and improve implementation of Malawi's Investment Case, the Health Sector Strategic Plan III (HSSP III).

Over the course of 2023, the RMNCAH-N coalition grew from 35 to over 50 members, including new organizations with experience working on nutrition issues. The CSO and YLO members participated in a series of workshops and trainings on HSSP III, evidence-based advocacy, health financing and budget advocacy and developing tools to track the implementation of HSSP III. Through regular meetings and information-sharing, the coalition developed a unified voice to engage the government. HREP, representing the coalition on Malawi's GFF multi-stakeholder platform, created space for civil society and youth to shape the platform's priorities and engage directly with the Ministries of Health, Finance, Local Governance and Gender.

One of the coalition's major wins was its successful advocacy with the Ministry of Finance to increase funding for the health sector, resulting in an increase from 8% of the government's budget to 12.2% for the 2024/2025 fiscal year. Civil society is now directly involved in developing

Malawi's GFF Investment Case operational plan to guide the implementation of HSSP III and will be leading advocacy, in partnership with the government, to mobilize domestic resources.



FAITH FOR FAMILY HEALTH INITIATIVE (3FHI) IN UGANDA

Building coalitions of traditional cultural and interfaith religious leaders to drive advocacy.

In Uganda, 3FHi successfully implemented a one-year grant to strengthen Uganda's RMNCAH-N Civil Society Platform and coordinate its advocacy, monitoring and accountability activities for the GFF Investment Case. 3FHi was able to hit the ground running having already spent two years, through a different partnership with PAI, building networks of traditional, cultural and interfaith health champions to conduct budget monitoring and community-led advocacy at the district and national levels across more than a dozen districts.

The experience 3FHi gained, as well as its relationships with civil society and government actors, positioned it to quickly build the capacity of the RMNCAH-N coalition to engage in the GFF process. From 2023 to 2024, 3FHi expanded the RMNCAH-N coalition and built a digital platform to engage, inform and equip members with the skills and materials needed to track progress on the implementation of Uganda's Investment Case: the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent and Healthy Aging Sharpened Plan II. 3FHI additionally engaged with the GFF multistakeholder platform to involve civil society in implementing the investment case.

One of 3FHi's biggest strengths is engaging stakeholders from various perspectives and sectors. With more than 100 members, the RMNCAH-N Civil Society Platform comprises CSOs, YLOs and international organizations operating across Uganda at the national and local levels. The coalition's forums, which span reproductive health, maternal and child health, nutrition, HIV, disabilities, gender-based violence and youth, also reflect the diversity and expertise of the members. 3FHi, which chairs the platform, worked to expand the coalition's membership further, including CSOs working on malaria and vaccines, to facilitate greater alignment on health priorities and strategies for engaging the government. 3FHi also made a concerted effort to engage non-traditional advocates in the coalition's work, particularly religious leaders and FBOs.

Due to the size and geographic coverage of the coalition and the varying needs and capacity of members, managing the work and coordinating members requires substantial financial and human resources. To address these challenges, 3FHi worked with coalition members and PAI to create an interactive online portal with a resource hub for members to access tools, guides, events, fundraising opportunities and other materials the coalition shares. 3FHi also developed the Sharpened Plan II tracker. This online social accountability tool tracks progress on Investment Case commitments and validated it with the Ugandan Ministry of Health, GFF and RMNCAH–N Civil Society Platform. This digital tool assembles the data collected by coalition members working

"For many years, advocacy to advance youth and sexual and reproductive health and rights policies hit roadblocks due to opposition from religious leaders. They were not comfortable working with CSOs, but they are now engaging alongside civil society. We had an interfaith conference on how [religious leaders] will support the implementation...of the Sharpened Plan. They are now talking about equity and inclusion. The Center for Health and Human Rights was brought on board to share studies on issues facing young people, including homosexuality and sex ed. They wanted to learn more. The more they interact [with the coalition], the more interested they are in the evidence."

- Jackie Katana, Executive Director, 3FHi

on community-led monitoring and presents it visually so that members can easily identify achievements and gaps for use in their advocacy.

3FHi's work strengthening the RMNCAH-N Civil Society Platform has already yielded several major wins. First and foremost, the coalition's engagement with the Ministry of Health drove the launch of Uganda's delayed Investment Case in October 2023. After it was approved, coalition members from across Uganda conducted community monitoring of health facilities and medical stores and identified transportation and storage issues causing stockouts of family planning commodities. 3FHi made the stockouts an agenda item on monthly meetings of the GFF multistakeholder platform and brought coalition members to present on the issue. This advocacy led to the allocation of 7.5 billion Ugandan shillings (USD 2 million) for purchasing new reproductive health commodities and addressing logistical challenges.



CENTER FOR INDONESIA'S STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (CISDI) IN INDONESIA

Strengthening the participation of civil society organizations and communities in shaping health interventions in Indonesia through the formation of an RMNCAH-N coalition.

In 2022, CISDI received a grant from the GFF to build a sub-national RMNCAH-N coalition for local CSOs operating in the Garut and West Sumbawa districts. CISDI's advocacy and coalition-building plan was designed to coordinate existing efforts, document and elevate

achievements, allow for collective reflection on lessons learned and continuously formulate policy recommendations for local governments.

In Garut Regency, the coalition has identified three main issues: the high rate of child marriage, stagnant progress in reducing stunting and gender-based violence. Meanwhile, in West Sumbawa Regency, the three primary issues identified are maternal and infant mortality rates, child malnutrition and the health impacts of illegal gold-mining activities on mothers and children.

The coalition drafted and shared several policy documents with district-level authorities, signed by local coalition representatives and local government leaders. Each regional government has committed to implementing several recommendations from the coalition, and coalition members plan to track progress on these commitments moving forward, particularly during the 2024 regional development planning process.

According to CISDI, establishing a subnational CSO coalition to advance RMNCAH-N offered significant advantages. The coalition was able to tailor its advocacy work to local contexts, ensuring relevance and effectiveness. It was also able to enhance community engagement through grassroots mobilization and build broad-based social support for its advocacy priorities.

They also shared that subnational coalitions have the potential to improve resource allocation by targeting areas with the greatest need and leveraging local resources from sub-national authorities, especially in countries like Indonesia, where significant decentralization and budgeting devolution processes are already in place. These processes are beneficial because they provide closer oversight and stronger accountability, which supports effective program implementation and resource use. By addressing specific regional needs and leveraging local strengths, sub-national CSO coalitions contribute to more effective, sustainable and inclusive health outcomes.

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES



OBSERVATÓRIO DO CIDADÃO PARA TRANSPARÊNCIA E BOA GOVERNAÇÃO NO SECTOR SAÚDE (OCTBGSS) IN MOZAMBIQUE OCTBGSS (CITIZENS' OBSERVATORY FOR TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE HEALTH SECTOR, OCTBGSS)

Mobilizing civil society coalitions to collect sub-national data to shape national budgets and policies.

In 2023, OCTBGSS led an evaluation of the previous Investment Case's implementation and positioned civil society to influence the development of the country's new Investment Case, focusing on adequate funding and appropriate policies for sexual and reproductive health.

"Mozambique has 10 provinces [and] 150 districts. It's hard to be [in] all places that health services are being provided. It is much easier in the advocacy process to work as a group. In an environment that is very restrictive, it is hard to be alone."

– Jorge Matine, ED, OCTBGSS

Mozambique's lack of a dedicated GFF multi-stakeholder platform challenged local CSOs. Unlike other GFF countries, the Ministry of Health in Mozambique maintains several different technical working groups (TWG) that independently cover the various aspects of the Investment Case. Each TWG has limited civil society seats, usually only one, and is highly specialized, requiring a high level of technical expertise to participate in meetings.

For civil society to have a meaningful voice in government spaces, OCTBGSS worked with two different civil society coalitions. The first coalition, the Mozambican Civil Society Platform for Health (PLASOC-M), was created for CSOs working on HIV and AIDS and comprises a large network of CSOs with experience engaging locally and conducting community health monitoring. The second coalition, Alliance for Health, comprises national and international CSOs and brought experience conducting training and capacity-building for CSOs, as well as established relationships with government ministries and parliamentarians.

As part of generating evidence for its advocacy, OCTBGSS collected and analyzed data to inform the creation of concrete budgetary and policy recommendations for the next Investment Case. To this end, OCTGBSS worked with PLASOC-M and Alliance for Health to train their networks of CSOs to use a budget expenditure tracker, social audit tool and a community scorecard tracking tool to monitor and highlight gaps and quality issues for services needed by different groups. OCTBGSS then synthesized this sub-national data and elevated it into a national dataset.

Whereas all previous GFF information was drawn from the Ministry of Health and World Bank sources, this project allowed OCTBGSS to present new, more timely information to the GFF that highlighted problems with the current investment and suggested new, more relevant indicators. It also created the opportunity for historically excluded groups — including the LGBT+ community, people with chronic illness, people with special needs and others — to engage in local and national dialogues and provide input to the decision-making process. Using the findings of its analysis, OCTBGSS produced policy briefs for government officials and public health institutions to advocate for greater investment in the health sector, expansion of health services and improvements in programming.

In addition to strengthening civil society engagement in Mozambique, it is important to note that the coalitions have also helped their members navigate the challenges of a shrinking civil society. New laws affecting the registration of local organizations with requirements to register beneficiaries and funders and the need to do it online have created hurdles for small organizations. Organizations and their staff have also been victims of violence by police and other groups. This is especially true in northern Mozambique, where activists responding to a conflict–driven humanitarian crisis are targets of government actors and armed groups that they criticize.

Not only did OCTBGSS's work to build the capacity of different coalitions and help smaller CBOs strengthen their advocacy and relationships with other CBOs and government entities to deliver better results for the project, but it also bolstered the continued existence of civil society at the community level, even in a hostile environment.



SOS JEUNESSE ET DEFIS (SOS YOUTH AND CHALLENGES, SOS JD) IN BURKINA FASO

Establishing a CSO platform to support the leadership of CSOs and young people in advancing the GFF Investment Case in Burkina Faso and monitoring its implementation.

Burkina Faso's GFF Investment Case (2019–2023) focuses on enhancing community health and improving service procurement. This involves health initiatives like extending free health insurance to women and young children, training community health workers in family planning and reproductive health and providing online services to overcome accessibility challenges. However, in 2022, implementation was complicated by the sudden deterioration of the country's human rights situation. Civilians faced a surge in deadly attacks by Islamist armed groups, violence from military forces and pro–government militias during counterterrorism operations and deepening political instability after two military coups.

In 2024, SOS JD, a Burkinese YLO, completed a GFF-funded project to strengthen youth and civil society leadership in advancing the GFF Investment Case. During this project, SOS JD successfully established a new CSO platform to mobilize civil society and youth engagement with national-level GFF processes, including training civil society and youth in monitoring and accountability.

Following an election among members, SOS JD was selected as the new platform's Secretary General. The platform quickly pursued links with the CSO-GFF platform in Chad, established in 2022 under another GFF grant, to share knowledge about domestic resource mobilization and the Investment Case implementation. SOS JD also used the platform to train members on knowledge management and health sector alignment — a key priority of the Reproductive Health Technical Group in charge of implementing the Investment Case. Having received a grant from the GFF, SOS JD secured a seat on the newly established sub-committee of the Technical Group in charge

of strengthening alignment in the health sector. As part of the committee, SOS JD represented the CSO-GFF coalition and mobilized civil society engagement in Burkina Faso's "One Plan, One Budget, One Report" alignment process.

The "One Plan, One Budget, One Report" approach is a strategic framework often used in development and health sectors to streamline planning, budgeting and reporting processes. CSOs play crucial roles in this approach, particularly in RMNCAH-N. Throughout 2023, SOS JD engaged with government officials, technical and financial partners and the private health sector and facilitated the participation of civil society in a series of workshops to rate the level of alignment of different actors and initiatives in the health sector with the Investment Case.

SOS JD concluded its project by working to set a roadmap for future collaboration. The YLO represented the GFF-CSO Coalition in a workshop that brought together government representatives, platform members and technical and financial partners, including the World Bank country office and the GFF. This convening marked the culmination of previous workshops where each stakeholder independently rated the levels of alignment within the health sector. During this final workshop, participants reviewed and discussed alignment scores from various stakeholders to develop an action plan for achieving full alignment of Burkina Faso's health sector with the GFF Investment Case.

By actively participating in planning, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and advocacy, CSOs help to ensure that health interventions are effective, equitable and accountable, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes for women, children and adolescents.

"In some countries, there are strong CSO and youth coalitions that provide a mechanism and platform for coordination, information-sharing and joint advocacy and accountability efforts; but, in many countries, CSOs and youth are fragmented and/or lack capacity to effectively engage in the GFF. Often, the capacity, coordination and effectiveness of CSO and youth coalitions is linked to the availability of funding and support from external partners; other times, it may be related to shrinking spaces for civil society in political dialogue, in general."

- CSO and Youth Engagement Framework 2021-2025



SECTION 6

Recommendations

For the GFF:

- Sustain multi-year investments in coalitions: Provide sustained funding (a minimum of three years) to convening organizations to enable them to maintain and grow large coalitions of civil society and youth organizations representing all communities. Preventing gaps in funding can avoid the demobilization of coalitions, which is more likely to impact smaller organizations and those working in rural, remote or underserved communities. The most pronounced policy impacts have been achieved by CSO partners that receive at least three years of funding to advance key priorities.
- Support coalition engagement with their government: Build close relationships between GFF liaison officers, country focal points and civil society coalitions and highlight these coalitions as GFF partners. This facilitates more meaningful government engagement with civil society, in which governments proactively seek and use coalition input to inform decisions.
- Fortify regional networks and regional small-grants mechanisms: An intentional regional complement to the global coordination and strategic and technical support will expand policy and CSO engagement and partnerships, and further elevate national-level advocacy agendas into regional blocs and decision-making bodies.

For the CSCG and Global Youth Platform (GYP):

- Build direct relationships with country civil society platforms: CSCG and GYP platform representatives should periodically engage directly with civil society coalitions in GFF countries. This could be achieved through the creation of regional platforms that strengthen coordination, commitment, and accountability between the national and international civil society platforms and allow coalitions to showcase their work and learn from peers in their region.
- Reduce language barriers: Invest more in translation services beyond English and French to ensure that meetings and resources are accessible to the CSCG's diverse constituency and the coalitions to which they belong.

For civil society coalitions:

- Diversify membership to strengthen platforms: Expand coalitions strategically to increase the number of communities the coalition represents and the repository of technical and thematic expertise from which the coalition can draw to improve the value and quality of engagement with the government and GFF.
- **Enhance sub-national CSO network engagement:** Sub-national CSOs should strengthen their collaboration to secure increased decentralized budget allocations and disbursements, and ensure sub-national systems and policies deliver the corresponding services. In addition to strengthening community resilience, this also ensures localized needs are addressed.

Endnotes

1. "Maternal Mortality," World Health Organization, 26 Apr 2024, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality





