



EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA COUNTRY COORDINATING MECHANISM (CCM) YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES STATEMENT FOR THE GLOBAL FUND GRANT CYCLE EIGHT (GC8)

Introduction

This statement was developed by the UNITED! Movement, a regional SRHR/HIV youth network in 14 countries across East and Southern Africa, together with Youth CCM Representatives from 12 ESA countries. It is directed to Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs), Principal Recipients (PRs), Sub-Recipients (SRs), and Sub-Sub-Recipients (SSRs), to call for meaningful youth leadership and participation in all stages of the Global Fund Grant Cycle Eight (GC8).

The East and Southern Africa region bears the world's highest burden of HIV, TB, and Malaria. With young people aged 10-24 accounting for 32% of the population (nearly 215 million), they are at the center

of these epidemics, with infections disproportionately affecting groups like Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYWs). Despite their demographic reality and the unique role they already play running frontline community-led responses (such as support groups, hotlines, and peer networks), young people are consistently excluded from decision-making, often limited to one-off consultations or left out of grant-writing, costing, and implementation design teams. Given that GC8 resources are reduced compared to previous cycles, sustained and equitable youth engagement is not optional, but crucial to achieving impact and preventing the rollback of hard-won health gains.

What Meaningful Youth Leadership Should Look Like in GC8

Meaningful youth leadership must be embedded across all stages of the GC8 cycle:

GRANT APPLICATION

- ✓ Youth must participate meaningfully and consistently in CCM and constituency consultations, technical working groups, and grant writing/drafting teams, with their priorities included in the mandatory Community Priorities Annex.

GRANT MAKING

- ✓ Young people must be actively involved in grant negotiation, budgeting, indicator development, and final decision-making, supported by dedicated resources, skill development, and clear feedback mechanisms

IMPLEMENTATION & OVERSIGHT

- ✓ Youth-led organizations must receive direct, sustained investment as innovative implementers and be empowered to contribute to enhanced community- and youth-led monitoring and accountability for all programs.

CALL TO ACTION

We urge all national stakeholders, CCMs, and the Global Fund to move beyond tokenistic engagement and unequivocally center youth leadership in every stage of the GC8 process. To secure impactful, sustainable, and people-centered responses, you must:

- ✓ Open and sustain meaningful spaces for youth participation and leadership. As the region most affected by these three epidemics, and as the generation carrying both the burden and the solutions, young people must be empowered to co-design, co-decide, co-implement, and co-monitor GC8 investments
- ✓ Resource and recognize youth leadership by providing youth-led organizations with direct, sustained investment to implement, monitor, and hold accountability for HIV, TB, and malaria programs.
- ✓ Ensure youth voices shape priorities across HIV, TB, and Malaria interventions, including through the mandatory Community Priorities Annex.

GC8 cannot achieve its goals of prioritization, integration, value for money, and equity without elevating youth leadership. We urge all stakeholders to move beyond tokenistic engagement and instead embed youth leadership at the center of decision-making to secure impactful, sustainable, people-centered responses capable of ending HIV, TB, and malaria in East and Southern Africa.

