

Civil society: Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation

Civil society plays a key role in the response to the AIDS epidemic in many countries. The wide range of strategic and tactical expertise within civil society organizations makes them ideal partners in global, regional and national processes of monitoring and evaluation, including holding governments accountable for commitments on AIDS. Civil society organizations are well positioned to provide quantitative and qualitative information to augment the data collected by governments; they can provide a valuable perspective on the issues included in the National Composite Policy Index (NCPI) and they are also equally well positioned to participate in the review and vetting process for national progress reports.

National AIDS Committees should seek input from the full spectrum of civil society organizations for their biennial reporting on progress made in their national response to HIV, as required in the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. Country Progress Reports are not restricted to data on the core indicators- other data, including qualitative information (from the NCPI and narrative report) and the interpretation thereof, is equally important and civil society can add great value to this. Through a consultative process, outlined in the *UNAIDS Guidelines on the Construction of Core Indicators 2010* (p16) civil society can be fully engaged in the production of a truly national report. UNAIDS staff members at the country level are available to help facilitate input from civil society throughout the process.

The National Composite Policy Index (NCPI) is completed along with reporting on the core indicators every two years as a part of the national reporting process and provides information on a country's policy and enabling environment. Civil society organizations' assessment of the completeness and degree of implementation of laws and policies provides an important counterpoint to the assessment provided by government. The NCPI therefore has two sets of overlapping questions, which are to be answered by government and by civil society separately.

Shadow reports by civil society are also accepted by UNAIDS. Shadow reports are not intended as a parallel reporting process for civil society. Wherever possible, UNAIDS strongly encourages civil society integration into national reporting processes. Shadow reports are intended to provide an alternative perspective where a significant civil society constituency was not adequately included in the national reporting process.

Inputs from civil society received through national reports, including the NCPI the narrative text and shadow reports as well as key published reports and research, are reflected in the UNAIDS Global Report.

In 2010 UNAIDS facilitated a review process of the core UNGASS indicators, including the NCPI. This review process was divided into four work streams: HIV prevention; health sector interventions; care and support; and the enabling environment. Each work stream of the review process was co-chaired by a UNAIDS co-sponsor and a civil society organization and included broad consultation with many partners.



Recommendations from the co-chairs of the work streams to strengthen the core national level indicators and NCPI questions will be submitted to the global Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (MERG) in early 2011.