



HEALTH STRATEGY AND DELIVERY FOUNDATION

Improving Health Outcomes for Women, Children, and Adolescents through Evidence-Based Investments - The Global Financing Facility Case Study



Problem Overview

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 800 women die daily from preventable causes related to pregnancy and 99% of these deaths occur in developing countries¹.

In a bid to reduce these statistics and lessen the global funding gap for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH-N), the Global Financing Facility (GFF) was launched in 2015, as a multi-donor trust fund dedicated to the health and nutrition of women, children, and adolescents, to accelerate progress on, and promote sustainable financing for RMNCAH-N in the world's poorest countries.

The GFF's overall goal was and is to contribute to the global efforts to accelerate progress on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition through government-led, multi-stakeholder platforms in low and lower-middle income countries. The global health landscape has changed substantially over the last seven years, particularly since the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2019, which devastated over 200 countries while posing serious economic risks for the whole world. The pandemic also exposed the vulnerabilities of global health systems, especially in developing countries, and their global consequences.

Project Description

Before the commencement of the GFF, the global funding gap for RMNCAH-N was estimated at \$33.3 billion in low to middle-income countries². According to the International Finance Corporation, the total value of the contributions and new pledges of the Trust Fund stood at \$2 billion from over 16 donors as of June 2020, leaving a huge funding gap of over \$30 billion³.

As the pandemic continues to reshape investment focus in global healthcare and within countries, GFF is in a unique position to provide targeted support across four areas – protection of essential services and vulnerable populations, building resilient health systems, health financing, and innovation. GFF supports governments in 36 low- and middle-income countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America in transforming how they prioritize and finance the health and nutrition of their people.

Re-aligning the GFF Strategy

Given the changes in the global healthcare landscape and the need to ensure that GFF remains fit for purpose to deliver on its objectives of saving

38 million women, children, and adolescents by 2030, a strategy refresh exercise was commissioned by the GFF Trust Fund Committee to take place in the first half of 2020.

The main objectives of the GFF strategy refresh were to:

- Reflect on recent changes in the global landscape and their impact on the positioning, scope, and scale of the GFF Partnership and Trust Fund.
- Review the GFF model, focusing on country implementation experience to date.
- Take stock of the global partner engagement of the GFF in relation to its objectives.
- Lay the groundwork for future resource mobilization for the GFF Trust Fund and inform the GFF mid-term review.

To drive this initiative, the GFF engaged the Health Service and Delivery Foundation (HSDF). HSDF adopted an iterative, evidence-driven process to recommend strategic options and a strategic framework. The three major thrusts were:

- To reflect on changes in the global landscape, including the epidemiological and demographic transitions in many sub-Saharan African countries, the health financing transitions, among others and their impact on the positioning, scope, scale, and focus of the GFF.
- To review its current model focusing on the implementation experience to date, challenges faced (past and anticipated) including root causes and context-analysis.
- To take stock of the partner engagement of the GFF in relation to its objectives as the global agenda evolves.

To ensure that the strategy refresh was evidence-driven, HSDF conducted document reviews for over 300 key documents. These comprised all GFF-related documents, RMNCAH-focused documents and country investment cases from all GFF-supported countries, including focus countries of Mozambique, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Speaking on the scope of the exercise during a phone interview, a senior associate at HSDF and one of the GFF project leads, stated that:

“The strategy refresh was a very high-level exercise – which involved conducting reviews of all GFF documents to gauge the progress made so far and to get a sense of how far the GFF was from achieving its targets and goals by 2030. HSDF also deployed staff to three countries (Ghana, Mozambique, and DRC) over a period of six months to engage and speak with the key country stakeholders especially the country engagement managers in those countries. Furthermore, we conducted a review of the countries’ model to understand where the transparency and accountability challenges were as well as figuring out how those challenges can be addressed by the GFF”.

According to her, the country visit was suspended in early March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its global restrictions and lockdown, which meant that most of the work done afterwards was virtually conducted.

Program Outputs

At the end of the exercise, HSDF produced the following:

- An initial diagnostic report based on interviews with more than 100 global and country stakeholders and a desk review of more than 300 documents, including previous assessments of the GFF
- Co-creation of technical sessions and produced a comprehensive report on the consultation feedback
- An 88-page slide deck detailing four (4) Strategic Inputs into the GFF Strategy Refresh document
- One Inception Report outlining the strategy and objectives for the analysis and final product
- One Issues Paper outlining the main strategic challenges and opportunities facing the GFF and identify potential implications for the future

Key Program Success Factors

When asked to share her thoughts on key success factors for the strategy refresh exercise, the senior associate at HSDF identified two primary factors namely:

- I. Leadership:** During the strategy refresh exercise, HSDF deployed very competent team leads who had relevant experience and qualifications, which helped them to engage with different stakeholders during the exercise.
- II. Teamwork:** In addition to leadership, teamwork was another critical success factor in the strategy refresh exercise. This was because much of the work was done during the lockdown, with six different team members operating from three different continents.

Next Steps

Based on the findings from the strategy refresh, stakeholder inputs and recommendations, the GFF adopted an updated strategy in 2021, ‘Protecting, Promoting and Accelerating Health Gains for Women, Children and Adolescents’ with the aim of saving 38 million women, children, and adolescents by 2030.

With renewed commitments and necessary investments from its funding and implementing partners for the new strategy, the GFF has the vision, platforms, and experience to support countries to adapt to some of the health challenges in developing countries

References

1. Maternal Mortality Fact Sheets by World Health Organization ([WHO_RHR_14.06_eng.pdf](#))
2. Global Financing Facility GFF FAQs.pdf ([globalfinancingfacility.org](#))
3. Global Financing Facility for Women, Children, and Adolescents
4. Global Financing Facility. Protecting, Promoting and Accelerating Health Gains for Women, Children and Adolescents. Global Financing Facility 2021-2025 Strategy. October 2020. Supported by World Bank Group.

https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/sites/gff_new/files/documents/GFF-Strategy-2021-2025.pdf.