



BRINGING CIVIL SOCIETY TOGETHER
TO END THE TUBERCULOSIS EPIDEMIC

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The Value

of Civil Society & TB Affected Communities role in the TB Response

—
TB Europe Coalition, September 23, 2021

Now, when COVID-19 public health emergency is casting [a devastating effect all over the world](#), the progress achieved in the fight to end TB is under threat. The global response to COVID-19 has slowed the spread of the virus but is continuing to cause serious, short and longer-term disruptions to the programmes for other major diseases. In the context of the global TB epidemic, [COVID-19 has reversed the recent progress](#) made towards global TB targets for [at least 12 years](#). The pandemic highlighted the importance to unite and collaborate in the fight against disease with a necessity to act fast for global public health.

[The Multisectoral Accountability Framework to Accelerate progress to end TB](#) (MAF-TB) could become an approach that fosters collaboration and mutual accountability to end TB within and beyond the health sector. [The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) target 3.3 of ending the TB epidemic by 2030 provides additional leverage for civil society to advocate both for putting TB high on the political agenda and for advancing a multisectoral response in the fight to end TB. The importance of this objective has been further iterated in [the World Health Organization End TB Strategy \(the End TB Strategy\)](#), [Political Declaration of the UN High-Level Meeting on the Fight Against Tuberculosis](#) (UN HLM Declaration on TB) in 2018 and other strategic documents.

The agreed goals of the UN HLM Declaration on TB and SDG by 2030 will remain a distant target if governments do not recognize that civil society and TB affected communities are a powerful resource that is currently still undervalued. Meaningful engagement of civil society and TB affected communities (CSOs) in TB response should become an essential solution for countries, since in the context of COVID-19 there is a high burden on the healthcare system.

“If we really want to see changes in ending TB we need to stop just fighting fires, we need the political will of all decision makers.”

Yuliia Kalanča, Executive Director, TB Europe Coalition

Governments have **to undertake actions to achieve CSOs and the TB community’s meaningful engagement.** And a critical step for governments is the revision of national TB policies backed up by necessary legal provisions in accordance with the new Monitoring Framework of the WHO European Region TB Action Plan 2021-2030 and to mobilize every available resource necessary to support meaningful engagement of civil society and TB affected communities in TB response. It is essential to use the suggested



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indicators that are highlighted as the “minimum package” for a multisectoral response and ensuring sustainable participation of civil society and TB affected communities in the TB response:

Indicator 1: Country **adopts standards and operational procedures** for civil society organizations in the provision of psycho-social support services to ensure treatment adherence for people with TB

Indicator 2: Country **adopts procedures of subcontracting mechanisms** under the state funds or other relevant funding mechanisms for CSOs in the provision of psycho-social support and active case-finding services for people with TB

“Need to invest in those whose motivation never ends.”

Olga Klymenko, Executive Director, TBPeopleUkraine, TB Survivor

We call on governments

To create a favorable environment for meaningful engagement of a civil society and the TB affected community in the TB response by ensuring:

- Sustainable mechanisms of service procurements from CSOs and support of their operational activities (legislation, budget, procedures)
- Formalized standards of community-based care and costed operational procedures
- Sustainable budget allocations from public sources at the national and local levels to support operational and programmatic activities by CSOs
- Sustainable mechanism and funding for capacity building of CSOs

To advance towards universal access to quality, affordable and equitable TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, and education by ensuring:

- Intersectoral policies and coordination mechanisms to reduce health disparities for the poor and most vulnerable, marginalized people
- Developing/supporting specific legislation to promote health equity/reduce health disparities for key and vulnerable groups
- Revision and update of a current legislation to remove barriers to equity/reduce health disparities

To strengthen national multisectoral mechanisms to monitor and review progress achieved towards ending the tuberculosis epidemic by:

- Launching MAF-TB at the country level to support multisectoral accountability and collaboration measures in TB response
- Conducting MAF-TB baseline assessment, engaging civil society and affected communities
- Creating or formalizing MAF-TB coordination and high-level review mechanisms to coordinate multisectoral activities and ensuring a high-level review of the progress to End TB
- Engaging civil society and affected communities in all MAF-TB processes, including its coordination and high-level review mechanisms



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“Civil society and affected communities' work may be cheap but they are not free.”

Paul Sommerfeld, TB Europe Coalition Board Chair

It is essential to ensure sustainable budget allocations from public sources at the national and local levels to support operational and programmatic activities by civil society and affected communities. Especially now, when the civil society and affected communities' role has become instrumental during COVID-19 when difficulties in access to care have been exacerbated by lockdowns and restrictions.

Civil society and TB affected communities should be the ones moving the response.

No hesitation, no divergence.
