
NCD Alliance's new Solidarity Fund will support 20 NCD alliances to strengthen civil society's response to COVID-19

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NETWORK RELEASE

Monday 13 July 2020, Geneva, Switzerland - The NCD Alliance is launching today the first Civil Society Solidarity Fund on NCDs and COVID-19, which will support 20 national and regional NCD alliances in Africa, Asia, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean and Latin America to accelerate the response to the coronavirus pandemic. The fund totalling \$300,000 will competitively award grants of up to US\$15,000 to these alliances to support them in addressing the critical needs of people living with NCDs during COVID-19 via advocacy and communication activities that will promote stronger organisational stability and resilience. Activities will include advocacy and communication efforts for the continuity of essential NCD health services and inclusion of NCDs in national COVID-19 response and recovery plans and community-led awareness-raising campaigns on the linkages between NCDs and COVID-19.

"The coronavirus pandemic shows many intersections between COVID-19 and NCDs. People living with NCDs are more vulnerable to COVID-19, with a substantially higher risk of becoming severely ill or dying from the virus. The pandemic is also impacting the poorest communities around the world and the most vulnerable people in every country. The civil society solidarity fund was born out of the need to tackle NCDs as fundamental to health security and to prevent a reversal of gains made in NCD prevention and control around the world" - said **Todd Harper, President of NCD Alliance**

Given the vulnerabilities of COVID-19 to people living with NCDs, it is key to ensure a vibrant and strong NCD civil society that can elevate the voices of communities and people living with NCDs, advocate for health policy reform and hold governments and other stakeholders to account. The global NCD civil society movement has seen very significant growth over the last decade. COVID-19, however, is challenging its sustainability and has stalled advocacy efforts on the ground. If we are to avoid people left behind including NCD advocates, youth movements and community engagement, a strong civil society movement is essential. It is crucial to support NCD advocates now to ensure they can continue their very needed work.

"This is a first-of-its kind fund to support NCD civil society organisations (CSOs) respond to COVID-19. During pandemics, momentum in several health and sustainable development issues, notably HIV/AIDS, Ebola and climate

*change, have repeatedly reinforced the critical role of CSOs and community-led efforts in accelerating action from local to global levels. Civil society are proven campaigners, change agents, experts, implementers, and watch dogs" said **Katie Dain, CEO of NCD Alliance***

The NCD Alliance Civil society Solidarity Fund on NCDs and COVID-19 has been made possible thanks to generous financial contributions of NCD Alliance's supporters: The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, Access Accelerated, Takeda, AstraZeneca and Upjohn (Pfizer).

The Solidarity Fund received 45 submissions from national and regional alliances across all regions, which were reviewed by a Selection Committee that included: Dr Svetlana Akselrod, Director of the Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs at the World Health Organization; Diana Vaca McGhie, Director of Global Advocacy at the American Heart Association; Cajsa Lindberg, advocate living with NCDs and member of the Our Views Our Voices Advisory Committee; and Dr Hoseah Waweru, President of the International Federation of Psoriasis Associations.

The Fund recognises the essential work of NCD advocates, which now becomes even more critical than ever to ensure political and media attention to the needs of people living with NCDs as one of the most vulnerable groups to COVID-19. The recipients of the Civil Society Solidarity Fund are:

Category 1 - Strengthening of NCD alliances' infrastructure, governance and sustainability in light of COVID-19 (\$5,000 USD awarded to each alliance)

- o [Alianza ENT Uruguay](#) [1] (*NCD Alliance Uruguay*)
- o [Zambia Non-Communicable Alliance](#) [2]
- o Slovenian NCD Alliance

Category 2 - Developing a comprehensive and cohesive NCD advocacy and communications strategy for the COVID19 response (\$15,000 USD awarded to each alliance)

- o [Healthy Caribbean Coalition](#) [3]
- o [Coalición Latinoamérica Saludable \(*Healthy Latin American Coalition*\)](#) [4]
- o [Cambodian NCD Alliance](#) [5]
- o [East Africa NCD Alliance](#) [6]
- o [Healthy Philippines Alliance](#) [7]
- o [South African NCDs Alliance](#) [8]
- o South East Asia Regional NCD Alliance
- o [Cameroon Civil Society NCD Alliance](#) [9]
- o Trinidad and Tobago NCD Alliance
- o [UK Working Group on NCDs](#) [10]
- o [ACT Promoção da Saúde \(*ACT Health Promotion - Brazil*\)](#) [11]
- o Bangladesh Non-Communicable Diseases Forum
- o Jordan NCD Alliance

Category 3 - Supporting people living with NCDs and amplifying their voices in the COVID-19 pandemic

(\$10,000 USD awarded to each alliance)

- o [Coalition MNT-Togo \(NCD Alliance Togo\)](#) [12]
- o [NCD Alliance Nigeria](#) [13]
- o Burundi NCD Alliance
- o [Alliance MNT Benin](#) [14] (*NCD Alliance Benin*)

[NCDAs](#) conducted a short survey in May 2020 to better understand current needs and challenges of NCD civil society, where the global network of national and regional NCD alliances identified that the top three challenges that countries and regions are expected to face in the coming months due to the COVID-19 pandemic are: Increased vulnerability of people living with NCDs (92.5%); disruption of treatment and care for them (87.5%); and travel restrictions and social distancing measures challenging people living healthy lives (e.g. lack of access to healthy food, lack of physical activity, increased alcohol and tobacco use) (87.5%). The survey also identified that, over the next six months, the three most important challenges that NCD alliances expect to face will be: Delayed operations and services (87.5%); difficulty securing future funding (70%); and difficulty retaining funding (42.5%). Through the Solidarity Fund, the NCD Alliance will support regional and national NCD alliances to strengthen their advocacy and communications strategies and overcome some of the challenges imposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic to health systems globally.

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Links

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