

To: PEPFAR-Malawi
c/o Cynthia Mambo
PEPFAR Malawi Senior Program Advisor
NICO House
Lilongwe City Center

From: Diversity Forum
Lilongwe, Malawi

18 June 2019

Dear Ms. Mambo,

Letter to PEPFAR from concerned LGBTQI+-led indigenous organizations on KPIF

We write this letter as concerned members of the LGBTQI+ community in Malawi, in particular as the leadership of organizations that comprise the Diversity Forum, a consortium of LGBTQI+-led organizations operating in Malawi. The Diversity Forum comprises the leadership of the following organizations: CEDEP, LITE, Gender Links, CHERA, NRA, Ivy Foundation, and FSWA.

The establishment of the Diversity Forum (on 11 May 2019) emanates partly from concerns among the leaders of LGBTQI+-led organizations that, with rising global interest in key populations (and in particular with the announcement of the Key Populations Investment Fund (KPIF) that will channel 4 million USD toward key populations in Malawi between 2019-2021), there has also been a recent emergence of organizations newly interested in working on and with key population and LGBTQI issues in Malawi. 70 percent of the 4 million USD earmarked for KPIF (meaning 2.8 million USD) is targeted toward “local, indigenous organizations” that are KP-led. Yet, recalling previous funds directed at key populations in Malawi, international host organizations and grant managers had *no history of work with LGBTQI+ communities, no real knowledge of the complex issues and challenges faced by these communities, and no links to members of these communities*. The same is true of many international NGOs and other organizations that register as “indigenous organizations” and then seek (and secure) roles as implementing partners or host organizations with global projects targeting KPs. Amid the shrinking of donor funds directed toward the global South, this means that organizations that have long been dedicated to the LGBTQI+ cause and LGBTQI+ populations, and that have significant experience working in this sector (namely, the organizations that comprise this Forum), can be sidelined and left in the cold, despite their being best placed to implement projects and service delivery with LGBTQI+ populations.

The Diversity Forum, which includes all LGBTQI+-led organizations operating in and registered in Malawi, defines *LGBTQI+-led* as such: an organization that exhibits long term, sustained, and meaningful advocacy or implementation with LGBTQI+ populations. As of now, membership in the Diversity Forum is closed, as we are confident the current membership includes all LGBTQI+-led organizations operating in and registered in Malawi. The organizational members of the Diversity Forum define *indigenous* as: founded by Malawians on Malawian soil, working at the grassroots, and initiated first in Malawi, with no international offices or staff members. The members of the Diversity Forum are examples of indigenous, LGBTQI+-led organizations. Meanwhile, international organizations like FHI 360, Action Aid, and others do not meet this criteria.

Our understanding is that KPIF takes up a different model than past projects that have been implemented that target key populations, led by different PEPFAR partners. In this regard, we wish to clearly understand how KPIF differs from past examples: **we wish to ensure that indigenous KP-led**

organizations are at the very center of decision making, grant management, and implementation under the KPIF. In the past, implementers for PEPFAR KP projects often failed in their goals due to lack of knowledge, experience, or access to key populations. International partners bring projects to the table that have not taken sufficient account of cultural, geographical, economic, and ethical contexts on the ground due to lack of consultation with indigenous KP-led organizations. Host organizations and grant managers have largely disempowered the organizations that comprise the Diversity Forum, despite their being at the center of the implementation of projects and activities targeting key populations, and their being entitled to benefit from resources meant for them.

As of now, the KPIF seems likely to face the same problems as past PEPFAR-headed endeavors. We are particularly worried by the fact that Diversity Forum organizations and their membership and target communities often have no say in projects, plans, policies, and funding streams meant to help key populations or the LGBTQI+ community, except—if at all—after the fact, when proposals have already been developed or funding has been released to other organizations.

In this regard, we, the concerned members of the LGBTQI+ community, speak loudly: *Nothing for us, without us.* LGBTQI+ led organizations that constitute the Diversity Forum must be at the center of planning and implementing *any and all activities, interventions, or programming targeting LGBTQI+ people and key populations in Malawi.*

Further, we put forth the following demands to PEPFAR:

- CEDEP, the Secretariat of the Diversity Forum, should be named the host organization/grant manager for KPIF funds. CEDEP possesses the capacity to manage these funds, and has demonstrated long, sustained, meaningful engagement of LGBTQI+ and key populations. CEDEP maintains positive working relationships with all other LGBTQI+-led organizations, namely those with membership in the Diversity Forum. The Diversity Forum endorses CEDEP as host for the funds
- The Diversity Forum should be consulted *at every stage* of planning, proposal writing, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of KPIF-related activities and projects
- The Diversity Forum members should be present at all PEPFAR meetings and consultations pertaining to KPIF in Malawi; PEPFAR should issue formal invitations to the members of the Forum on these occasions
- PEPFAR should work to develop the technical capacity and ability to provide services of all the organizations that comprise the Diversity Forum
- PEPFAR should not lose sight of the role of the advocacy and activism undertaken by the organizations of the Diversity Forum in improving service uptake and delivery, mandates at the core of KPIF

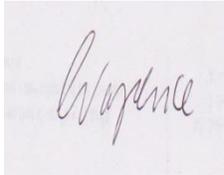
The Diversity Forum looks forward to PEPFAR's response to these demands.

Signed, the members of the Diversity Forum,

Lawrence Phiri
Executive Director, LITE
Chair, Diversity Forum



Aniz Mitha
Executive Director, CHERA
Vice Chair, Diversity Forum



Gift Trapence
Executive Director, CEDEP
Secretariat, Diversity Forum



Ishmael Makhuludzo
Executive Director, Gender Links



Eric Sambisa
Executive Director, NRA



Samantha MacJessie
Executive Director, Ivy Foundation



Zinenani Lucy Majawa
Executive Director, FSWA