



Independent observer  
of the Global Fund

## "No more AIDS Conferences in racist countries"

Dear subscribers

Never say we don't treat you! Not just one but two issues of the Global Fund Observer (GFO) in the space of a week!

We hadn't intended to do so (which is why we did not announce it in last week's GFO) but the opportunity was too good to miss, as our intrepid roving reporters Alan Whiteside and Samuel Muniu were on the ground in Montreal to bring you a flavour of the International AIDS Conference in Montreal held from 29 July to 2 August. This Special Issue, therefore, is ALL about the conference.

I will start with the last article first because in a way it is the most important. Whatever else happened at the Conference, it was eclipsed by one of the greatest public relations disasters ever, above all for Canada (for most of the blame lies with the country) and thereafter for the organizers, the International AIDS Society, who came a close second. The Canadian Broadcasting Company summed it up ("[Visa denials denounced at International AIDS Conference, federal minister cancels speech](#)") and as a result the IAS President has announced that it has learnt from these lessons and will re-evaluate how (and hopefully where) it organises international meetings in the future – although it is fair to say that many global south countries do not have the facilities to host such huge events. But some do. And should be used where possible.

It is also fair to say that the Canadian Government did itself no favours by wasting an opportunity to try to put things on a slightly better footing, if it were even slightly possible, by offering a heartfelt apology in person and promising to look into what happened and how to do better in the future. The cowardly decision of the country's International Development Minister Harjit Sajjan not to attend, and the failure to replace him with any government representative, rightly angered presenters and participants alike.

Regular readers will have doubtless followed Javier Hourcade Belocq's last two articles in GFO on this scandalous situation with regard to visa and documentation issues that many global south participants faced and who as a result were unable to attend. We publish his 'swansong' ([The Canadian Government must bear the lion's share of the responsibility](#)) to honour the voices of those left behind.

The best of the rest: well, we kick off with Alan's personal take on the conference. Alan, a veteran of many, many of these conferences, looks at the changes he has seen and reflects on some of the important issues discussed during the five days ([The 2022 International AIDS Society Conference in Montreal: a personal overview](#)). And Samuel follows with his report on the AIDS Healthcare Foundation's panel discussion on the new mechanism for addressing pandemic preparedness and response, how it will detract from the Global Fund who already has a track record in this regard and why people are not deploying lessons learnt in the HIV response to addressing COVID-19 ([We are not building on lessons learned in the HIV response to combat the COVID-19 pandemic](#)).

Samuel was on a roll at the conference because he found time to write a second article, this one on the emerging threat of monkeypox ([Will monkeypox put the Global Fund Strategy's "pandemic preparedness and response" to the test sooner rather than later ?](#)). The proponents of the new Strategy's "evolving" objective of pandemic preparedness and response may find this has paved the way for arguments to fund countries' monkeypox activities if the virus continues to spread.

The remaining three articles cover press releases on three important issues. We cover the launch of a new global initiative to tackle AIDS in children, in a hope to redress the stark inequalities between paediatric and adult HIV infection ([Special action is needed to tackle "outrageous" discrepancy between adult and child HIV infection](#)). Then we look at the success of the Global Fund's Breaking Down Barriers program ([Successful HIV programs need a rights-based approach to complement biomedical interventions](#)). Nice to have confirmed what we knew, that programs which implement initiatives to address legal, policy and social impediments to accessing HIV services show better results than do solely biomedical interventions.

Finally though we have to finish with bad news. News that will probably not come as a surprise but has to be reported on nonetheless ([Progress in addressing HIV is "In Danger"](#)). The UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022 with its bleak title "In Danger" tells us how badly the world is off-track, thanks to a combination of factors, to meet the ambitious AIDS targets. A depressing read.

As ever, Aidspace and our editorial team, under the leadership of Ida Hakizinka, does its best to ensure the accuracy of data and statements in our published articles ? and hence our inclusion of hyperlinks ? but if you, the reader, identify an error or important omission, please notify us and provide us with your data source; and we shall be happy to publish a correction or amendment.

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Don't forget: if you are aware of an interesting development relevant to disease programmes or health systems and that you feel is worthy of global discussion, do let me know together with the name of a person prepared to write about this. Suggestions and comments can be sent to us: Ida Hakizinka or

Arlette Campbell White in English, French or Spanish at [ida.hakizinka@aidspan.org](mailto:ida.hakizinka@aidspan.org) or [acampbell.white@aidspan.org](mailto:acampbell.white@aidspan.org).

International AIDS society

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