



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

The Global Fund's guiding principle of openness, transparency and accountability needs to be dusted off and rebooted

Dear subscribers;

We have a cracker of an issue for you this time since we have not one but three 'causes' to bleat about – and you know how we love a cause!

The first and most immediate is what is shaping up to be a positive scandal and yes, a disaster: and that is not too strong a word to use when it comes to the International AIDS Society's biannual conference, this year about to be held in Montreal. Last issue we reported on the early signs that people from the global south were having problems in getting visas and in this issue we publish more evidence of this – problems not just with visas but with documentation in general. It is heart-breaking to read the comments from people who have tried to apply and been rejected or failed to apply because of the complex and bureaucratic application process ([The voices of those who lost out on visas to attend the International AIDS Conference](#)). Clearly those who have had visa and documentation issues feel that neither IAS or the Canadians have been much help...it is a real blow for the principle of putting people and communities at the centre of global efforts to address the epidemic and it is all the more shocking that these problems are so manifest in 2022, more than thirty years into working on HIV. We seem to be going backwards rather than forwards.

As we try to present a balanced view, you will see that we gave IAS the opportunity to comment on the article and we have included its reply at the end of the article.

To coincide with the launch of AIDS22, the African Journal of AIDS Research is publishing a special issue on '[AIDS in the time of COVID-19](#)'. [Article 8](#) of the same title tells you a little more about the issue and

lists the papers and authors that will be published.

While I am complaining about things, let me move on to draw your attention to the Global Fund who, at the Board Retreat of 8 July talked about how the Board had agreed to broad and early engagement with the Board on how best to “communicate transparent, routine performance and results data”. We have some ideas about where this has been lacking and what can be done to improve it, starting with an overhaul of the datasets and information on the dashboard to include widening the availability of grant-related materials (as in the ‘good old days’) and comprehensive sharing of Committee and Board papers ([Transparency is a founding principle of the Global Fund: so where is it ?](#)).

Our other ‘cause’ stems from the recent meeting of the African Constituency Board in Lomé at which there was a lively discussion on challenging operating environments. We have talked about donors’ risk appetite in several articles earlier this year. Building on these, our article talks about why giving beneficiaries more engagement in decision-making may be risky: but worth it ([Shifting the power to the people](#)).

There are two articles on issues of key importance regarding the forthcoming Global Fund Strategy: how to implement it ([More questions than answers: stakeholders are anxious to clarify plans to implement the new Global Fund Strategy](#)) and how to measure its implementation ([Measuring the performance of the new Global Fund Strategy](#)).

Finally, our article on [Racism in the aid sector](#) relates to a recently published paper by the British parliamentarians on the impact of neocolonialism and paternalism on why, how and where we in the richer north support (or don’t) our brothers in the poorer south. The actual report on which the article is based might benefit from a bit of editing and some of its conclusions may be somewhat simplistic (for example, blaming poverty solely on colonialism when corruption tribalism and other factors also have a role to play) but for those of us working in the aid sector (surely, everyone who reads the GFO?) it is a powerful and worthy read. It is also extremely relevant to the Global Fund who would do well to absorb the findings and their application to the Global Fund business model.

Editeur de ” l’OBSERVATEUR DU FONDS MONDIAL ”

Aidspan cherche un [éditeur pour sa lettre d’information “l’Observateur du Fonds Mondial \(OFM\)”](#). Il s’agit d’un poste à temps plein (avec au moins 8 jours par mois de présence physique au bureau d’Aidspan), à titre de consultant avec rémunération forfaitaire mensuelle soumise à l’impôt local pour tout candidat situé à Nairobi.

As ever, Aidspan 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.

If you enjoy the GFO and find it relevant to your work, please encourage your colleagues to colleagues to [subscribe!](#)

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 or acampbell.white@aidspan.org.

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