

Independent observer of the Global Fund

Annual Report 2022

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACB	Africa Constituency Bureau
AFROSAI-E	African Organization of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions
BHCPF	Basic Health Care Provision Fund
C19RM	COVID-19 Response Mechanism
ССМ	Country Coordinating Mechanism
COE	Challenging Operating Environment
CREFIAF	Conseil Régional de Formation des Institutions Supérieures de Contrôle des
	Finances Publiques de l'Afrique Francophone sub-Saharienne
GFO	Global Fund Observer
GHIs	Global health initiatives
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
OFM	Observateur du Fonds Mondial
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
RSSH	Resilient and sustainable systems for health
SAI	Supreme audit institution
TB	Tuberculosis

AIDSPAN OVERVIEW

Aidspan is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in 2002 as an independent observer of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. It provides Global Fund stakeholders, including civil society, communities, country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs), governments, and the Global Fund donors, Board, and Secretariat with regular information and analysis to describe and evaluate the Global Fund's progress in the implementation of programs in response to three global epidemics – the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis (TB), and malaria -and resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH) s. These efforts have enhanced the Global Fund's effectiveness, governance, and accountability. Based on this success, Aidspan has expanded its mandate to apply its independent observer role to other global health initiatives (GHIs).

Aidspan aims to provide accurate and timely information and engage in responsible reporting and in-depth analysis of GHI grant operations to improve implementer and beneficiary understanding of grant policies and processes. Aidspan makes information available through its website, social media handles, and regular online newsletters in English and French, through reaching more than 15,000 subscribers. The website also provides a series of openaccess data tools that allow researchers to conduct analyses on Global Fund-related data, with the ultimate aim of helping the Global Fund become more effective.

Aidspan collaborates nationally and internationally with stakeholders who support mutually reinforcing enabling issues such as accountability, advocacy, and transparency; for example, government institutions, civil society partners, and organisations such as the national supreme audit institutions (SAIs) the African Organization of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E), and the Conseil Régional de Formation des Institutions Supérieures de Contrôle des Finances Publiques de l'Afrique Francophone sub-Saharienne (CREFIAF). Other stakeholders in this collective effort are Global Fund stakeholders, including the Global Fund Secretariat and its Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and country stakeholders such as grant recipients and the Global Fund's African Constituency Bureau (ACB), which brings together the two African Constituencies that receives more than 70% of Global Fund support.

Aidspan's team comprises expertise in policy analysis, public health research and writing stakeholder coordination and engagement, capacity building, and policy advocacy. Bilateral and foundation donors and partners financially support Aidspan. These include the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the Ford Foundation, and The Monument Trust, as well as the governments of Australia, France (Expertise France), Germany (GIZ), Ireland (Irish Aid), the Netherlands, Norway (NORAD), and the United Kingdom (Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office).

JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND AIDSPAN'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2022 was a significant year for Aidspan; it ended our 2017-2022 Strategy. It marked the beginning of our 21st year as an independent observer of the Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB

and Malaria (hereafter the Global Fund). This same year, the Global Fund adopted a new sixyear strategy for 2023 - 2028 and launched its next three-year implementation period.

Aidspan is aware of many grant implementation challenges, absorption capacity and policy interpretation issues at the Secretariat and country levels. Over the years, Aidspan has continued to report on, analyse, and comment on these challenges and provide actionable recommendations.

For instance, Aidspan recognised and highlighted some significant challenges that are still a hindrance to the Global Fund achieving its mandate: -

Language Barrier: Not enough translation of its documents has been done to maximise its reach to its stakeholders.

Global Fund documents are too complex: The Global Fund still uses a lot of jargon and complex terms in its publications, thus making it difficult for the ordinary citizen to interpret its work.

Lack of Transparency and Effectiveness: The flow of communication is a complex one at the Global Fund as no definitive information is given to the public on grant information (performance, rating, key staff contact, etc.), making it difficult to uphold its guiding principles of partnership, country-ownership, performance-based financing, and transparency.

In that context, Aidspan remains a crucial informant and explainer of these Global Fund complexities through its timely, informed, and responsible regular publication of issues. It is clear that independent watchdogging - emphasising a cooperative relationship built on trust and shared goals –is vital when information is not necessarily available to everyone.

We know that Aidspan has thrived through continuously adapting to an evolving Global Fund; maintaining our credibility and independence has required great innovation and flexibility. To this end, the Aidspan team continues to cultivate strong and meaningful partnerships, and when needed, we offer our expertise and knowledge to our numerous target audiences.

For Instance, Aidspan implemented the third phase of its project to enhance the capacity of SAIs in sub-Saharan Africa to perform financial, compliance, and programmatic audits of Global Fund and Gavi grants. The first and second phases occurred between December 2018 and December 2021, when we strengthened the capacity of 13SAIs.

Aidspan's flagship newsletter has gained name recognition and is the most significant entry point for audiences seeking Global Fund insight. The Global Fund Observer (GFO/OFM) is published three-weekly in English and monthly in French. Our audience has provided feedback on articles and suggested topics of analysis. The GFO now reaches more than 15,000 subscribers, while social media updates have garnered about 7,700 followers on Facebook, 1,469 on LinkedIn and 1,879 on Twitter.

Aidspan is also overhauling its website and data platform to better provide and simplify data and information from the Global Fund.

We remain committed to ensuring that the Global Fund and other GHIs achieve their constituted mandate to improve lives and achieve the sustainable development Goals declared in the UN charter.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021

In 2022, Aidspan accomplished the following:

- Our coverage of the Global Fund's Seventh Replenishment, the events leading to the Seventh Replenishment, including campaigns and regional approaches, the Global Fund Investment Case, and the Replenishment Conference.
- We maintained the regular publication of newsletters. 20 GFO issues were published with 139 articles and 19 OFM issues with 133 articles.
- The second phase of the SAI capacity strengthening project was finalised, and we embarked on the third phase. We enhanced the capacity of 87 auditors from SAIs in Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, and Zimbabwe to assure the use of Global Fund and Gavi grants in their respective countries.
- We successfully convened two roundtables that brought together external financiers of health programs, umbrella organisations of the English-speaking and French-speaking African SAIs, and heads of SAIs and their delegations to share how to use in-country institutions to provide oversight and assurance on the use of donor funds.
- We facilitated the coordination of the Global Fund-supported resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH) program in the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC).

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AIDSPAN'S 2018-2022 STRATEGY

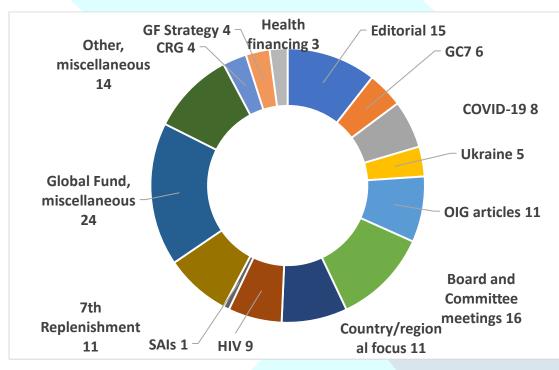
The year 2022 marks the end of the implementation of Aidspan's 2018-2022 Strategy, which has four objectives (Figure 1). The organisation's work for 2022 is aligned with the strategy.



Figure 1. The Aidspan Strategic Framework

AIDSPAN HIGHLIGHTS GLOBAL FUND-RELATED ISSUES AT GLOBAL AND COUNTRY LEVELS

In 2022, the GFO continued with its popular Editorial started in 2021. This feature of the GFO allowed us to draw attention to issues which could not otherwise have been covered by a separate article, as well as briefly highlighting the articles in the actual issue.





Given that 2022 was the year of the Seventh Replenishment, we published many articles on the replenishment and a Special Issue on the Replenishment Conference itself. A special Issue is one in which all articles focus on one event or thematic area. In 2022, we published several other Special Issues, including one on Ukraine and another about the International AIDS Society Meeting in Montreal. This is in addition to our twice yearly Special Global Fund Board and Committee Issues.

We published many articles related to the Global Fund itself. Apart from our regular articles summarising every OIG report audit or investigation, we wrote several articles about the need to improve the <u>Operational Policy Manual</u>, issues relating to poor governance and lack of transparency, and Global Fund communication and language in addition to other topics such as Catalytic Investments, Strategic Initiatives, and the Challenging Operating Environment Policy. We published several articles relating to the new Global Fund Strategy, theCOVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) and the new funding cycle, Grant Cycle 7 (GC7). We were also able to run more articles related to health financing and increased the number of analytical articles in 2022.

New grant cycle

The Global Fund and its partners have been preparing for the GC7which covers the funding cycle from 2023 to 2025. Thus, Aidspan covered several issues related to preparations for GC7, including a preview of the GC7 application materials. Three key elements were highlighted as central to future Global Fund applications and which reflect the Global Fund Strategy: prioritisation, HIV prevention, human rights and gender equality.

We covered the Board discussions based on the gender thematic report, including the new gender equality that selected countries will pilot to assess their readiness for gender equality as they prepare for the new grant cycle. Gender equality is one of the core elements of the Global Fund's Strategy 2023-2028.

Seventh Replenishment

2022 was the year of the Global Fund's Seventh Replenishment. The Fund received pledges amounting to \$15.7 billion to accelerate the fight to end AIDS, TB, and malaria. Aidspan highlighted the Seventh Replenishment Conference, hosted by U.S. President Biden, in the third quarter of 2022. The conference was a critical opportunity for the world to come together in a spirit of global solidarity to get back on track to achieve global goals, particularly targets for HIV, TB, and malaria while mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on the three diseases and the livelihoods of communities in Global Fund-supported countries.

Prior to the Seventh Replenishment Conference, Aidspan highlighted how the Global Fund was at a crossroads if it failed to raise the desired \$18 billion outlined in the Investment Case. We painted a picture of how it would be challenging for the Global Fund to achieve its mission if it were unable to meet the projected amount. Aidspan highlighted the challenges faced by the Global Fund in raising the remaining amount after only achieving \$14.25 billion at the Seventh Global Fund Replenishment Conference. We also emphasised the voices of leading institutions in the fight against the three diseases, as well as civil society stakeholders, regarding the Seventh Replenishment.

Global Fund Board meetings

Aidspan typically reports on the discussions of the Global Fund Committees and Board which take place twice annually. In 2022, special GFO and OFM issues covered various issues discussed at these meetings. Specifically, we discussed how the Global Fund could consider improving its communication, transparency and accountability performance. We looked at the Global Fund's Strategic Performance Report of 2021, which showed promising results for most key performance indicators. We also covered the recent evaluation of the Policy on complex country settings and the humanitarian challenges faced by African and Middle East and North African countries.

AIDSPAN MAKES ITS CONTENT AVAILABLE ON DIVERSE PLATFORMS

Aidspan strives to expand content delivery to its diverse audiences. In 2022, the organisation enhanced communication by recruiting a communication specialist. He has led efforts to implement Aidspan's social media plan, including diversifying newsletter delivery via social media. Besides publishing GFO every three weeks, in June Aidspan launched a

<u>GFO newsletter</u> on LinkedIn. The newsletter publishes one article from the GFO issue every other day. By December 2022,to the new LinkedIn newsletter had 583 subscribers. Aidspan continued sharing its content on Twitter and Facebook. A Twitter impression implies the number of times a tweet has appeared on a timeline as the tweet continues to be liked and shared. Twitter impressions increased from 44,920 in December 2021 to 187,220 in December 2022, translating to a rise of 317.5%. Aidspan has increased its Facebook activity, resulting in a significant improvement in Facebook page reach from 125 people in 2021 to 42,412 people in 2022.

Social Media	Total Subscribers/ Followers 01 Jan 2021	New Subscribers/ Followers 01 31 Dec 2022
Facebook	7570	7700
LinkedIn Newsletter	0	583
LinkedIn Page	1073	1469
Twitter	1610	1879
YouTube	21	25

AIDSPAN FOCUS ON THE AFRICAN FRANCOPHONE REGION

Aidspan publishes its newsletter, the OFM, in French to reach people in the francophone regions In 2022, Aidspan published 19 OFM issues with 133 articles, of which 29 were initially written in French and the remainder translated from GFO article originally written in English. The thematic areas covered by the 29 articles are summarised in Figure 3 below.

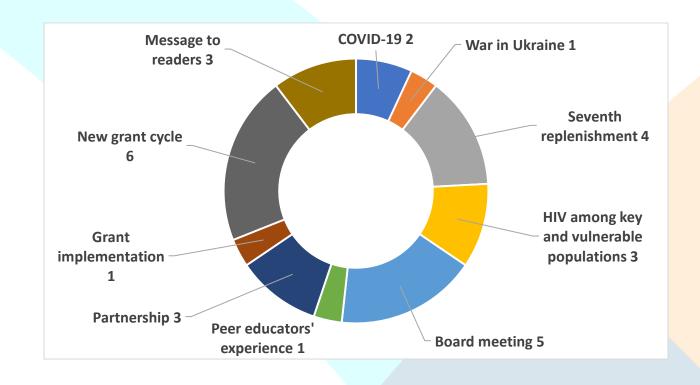
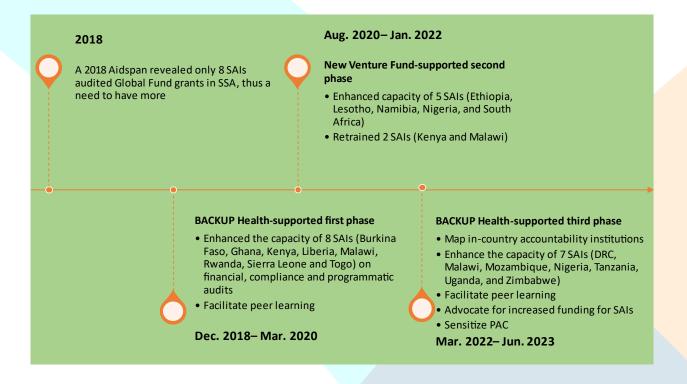


Figure 3: Thematic areas focusing on Francophone countries

AIDSPAN AND PARTNERS ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNAL AUDITORS OF PRINCIPAL RECIPIENTS (PRS) OF GLOBAL FUND GRANTS

In 2022, Aidspan and its partners (AFROSAI-E, CREFIAF, Gavi, Global Fund Secretariat and the OIG) continued to enhance the capacity of in-country institutions, particularly SAIs and the internal auditors of Principal Recipients (PRs) of Global Fund grants in sub-Saharan Africa. Aidspan has been leading this multistakeholder project to enhance the capacity of SAIs in sub-Saharan Africa since 2018, the first phase being from 2018 to 2020. In 2022, we finalised the project's second phase activities (2020-2022) and started the third phase which runs from 2022 to 2023.

Figure 4. SAI project timelines



The SAI project's second phase

The New Venture Fund (NVF) funded the project's second phase which following the successful implementation of the remaining project activities ended in January 2022. On 10 – 14 January, Aidspan and partners organised a capacity-strengthening workshop to retrain 37 auditors from Kenyan and Malawian SAIs to perform financial, compliance, and programmatic audits of Global Fund grants. On 19th January 2022, Aidspan and partners organised a virtual roundtable to mark the end of the second phase of the SAI project. This was attended by over 95 people from eight SAIs from Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa and Aidspan partners from ACB, AFROSAI-E, BACKUP Health, OIG, and the Global Fund Secretariat.

The SAIs shared their experiences and how they applied the learning in their different countries. More about the virtual roundtable is summarised in a GFO article on 27 January 2022 about <u>stakeholders' remarks about the project's second phase to enhance the capacity of Supreme Audit Institutions to audit Global Fund grants</u>.

The SAI project's third phase

Aidspan and partners began implementing the BACKUP Health-financed third phase of the SAI project in March 2022. Its focus is to:

• Map the existing audit and accountability arrangements and mechanisms for government-managed programs in the countries participating in the project

- Enhance the capacity of seven SAIs from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing.
- Sensitise them on fundraising to increase their available resources to assure the use of public funds, including donor funds.
- Sensitise parliament, particularly the public accounts committee and the health committee, on their essential role in the audit cycle through providing oversight on the use of donor funds.

The project began with the updating of the already developed Audit Toolkit for Global Fund grants to include health financing and co-financing for HIV, TB, and malaria and a component on procurement and supply chain management. In addition, Aidspan developed two Audit Toolkits: one for Gavi grants and the other for the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) in Nigeria.

On 13 – 15 July 2022, Aidspan and the Office of the Auditor-General of Kenya co-hosted a regional roundtable to mark the inception of the third phase of the SAI project. Several stakeholders attended the regional roundtable, including the Global Fund Secretariat, OIG, Gavi, ACB, AFROSAI-E, CREFIAF (the umbrella organisation of SAIs from French-speaking countries), and representatives of CCMs, PRs and SAIs from the seven countries participating in the project. The roundtable provided a platform for stakeholders to interact, learn and share experiences, and identify their roles.

Figure 5. Participants at the inception roundtable in Nairobi held from 13 to 15 July 2022





Figure 6. A roundtable session in Nairobi, Kenya

By the end of the year, Aidspan and its partners enhanced the capacity of two SAIs that were part of the third phase of the SAI project. On 12 - 16 September and 10 - 14 October, Aidspan organised capacity-strengthening workshops in Zimbabwe and Nigeria, respectively. Aidspan enhanced the capacity of 50 auditors in both countries to conduct financial, compliance, and programmatic audits of Global Fund grants.

Figure 7. Aidspan training of the Office of the Auditor General for the Federation of Nigeria



Figure 8. Participants in the SAI Zimbabwe training in Harare held from 12 to 16 September 2022



The participants were taken to a health facility for a mock audit during their training on the third day of the workshops. The team visited the Parirenyatwa group of hospitals in Zimbabwe and the Maitama District Hospital in Nigeria. From the health facility visits, the auditors got a practical orientation on preparing and conducting programmatic and procurement and supply chain management audits in health facilities for Global Fund grants.

Figure 9. SAI Zimbabwe training participants visit Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals for a field visit to conduct a mock audit



Figure 10. SAI Nigeria training participants visit Maitama district hospital for a field visit to conduct a mock audit





SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RSSH GRANT IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

In the framework of its engagement in RSSH and Central Africa, Backup Health (GIZ) has awarded a grant to Aidspan in order to support the implementation of the RSSH grant in DRC for the current cycle and help maximise the impact of these investments. The project has three main objectives:

• To train CCM members in health system strengthening and provide them with detailed information on Global Fund-financed activities and an adapted tool to facilitate the monitoring and accountability of the PRs and government departments.

A training session for newly elected CCM members was held in October 2022 to familiarise them with the RSSH grant, its performance framework and the grant's main activities. and to sensitise them to the importance of securing enough funds for the GC7 cycle. In that sense, the decision to secure the\$56 million grant was a key element to being able to maintain the NFM3 investments and ensure a continuity in the support to the main pillars of: health products management, the health management information system, human resources, laboratory and governance.

• To support the coordination and implementation of RSSH activities and create/reinforce platforms with the national actors engaged in RSSH (CCM, civil society organisations (CSOs), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Project Management Unit (PMU), PRs and Sub-Recipients (SRs),).

Several activities were conducted in 2022:

- **Two induction workshops were held in Kinshasa (July) and Goma** (November) gathering the eight health provinces receiving funds to implement HIV, TB and malaria, and RSSH activities . This provided an opportunity to train participants on the Global Fund's procedures and management tools. Participants familiarised themselves with the budget for the three-year RSSH grant as well as the list of activities. They were also provided with a new planning and follow-up tool, a Dashboard comprising of programmatic and financial information. Since November 2022, all the provincial implementing partners have updated it weekly and meet to inform the PR on their main successes and delays. Since the tool has been implemented, progress has been noticed in the timely implementation of activities and financial justification of the expenses.

Figure 12. Workshops in Kinshasa, 6-10 July 2022



- Support to Kinshasa and Maniema reviews: Two reviews took place in September 2022: the "Provincial Approach" review and the quarterly review of the Provinces' activities. In both cases, methodological support was provided, and part the first review was moderated by Aidspan. To improve the quality of the results for the next reviews an valuation of the process was conducted, transitioning from an exhaustive review of all the data to an analysis of the key problematic indicators in order to identify the bottlenecks and efforts required to address them.

Figure 14. Provincial Approach Review in Kinshasa, 12-1 September 2022



- To support the coordination of other health donors and promote the crosscutting follow-up of all RSSH activities under MOH leadership.
- •
- Meetings have been held with the Secretary General and the Provincial Divisional Heads to better understand where and how partners invest in the health sector, and how effective the coordination is at the Ministry level. In accordance with the division priorities, a new "tracker" tool was created to map all investments made in each province. A pilot phase has started in Kinshasa Province, where the partners mapping has started and the tracker has been introduced to the partners, who have agreed to update it quarterly. A second phase of deployment will happen in 2023, making it possible for the Secretary General and the Minister to have an updated and exhaustive view of what is currently supported by partners and what needs to be prioritised. This is a key step towards better resource optimisation regarding the Government's priority of Universal Health Coverage implementation.

AIDSPAN'S OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL DATA

To preserve its independence, Aidspan does not accept any financial resources from the Global Fund. As a watchdog of the Global Fund, most of Aidspan's funding comes from entities that also fund the Global Fund.

In 2022, we received funding from our traditional donors (Irish Aid, L'Initiative, and GIZ BACKUP Health.)

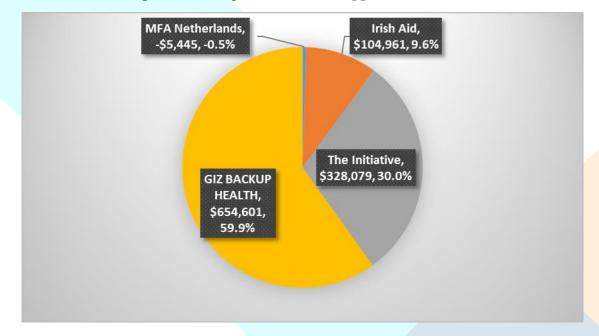


Figure 15. Aidspan's financial support from donors

The 2022 Annual Financial Report provides the consolidated financial statements for Aidspan, reflecting the effective and efficient use of financial resources to support programs that reinforce the Global Fund's effectiveness. For a more detailed report, visit <u>https://www.aidspan.org/page/key-documents</u>.

Item	2022	2021
	(USD)	(USD)
Grants	1,082,196	289,883
Other income	383	124,404
Programme expenditure	(940,796)	(532,388)
Administrative expenses	(96,841)	(73,579)
Establishment expenses	(45,654)	(71,070)
Annual deficit/surplus	(712)	(262,750)

We commend the Executive Director and the Finance and Reporting Manager, for their financial management and oversight. The 2022 Annual Financial Report represents a culmination of outstanding work by the Finance team supporting the programme department.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2023

The year 2023 is the first year of implementation of our new Strategy. In our new <u>Strategy</u> (2023-2028), we will continue acting as an independent observer of GHI-supported programs. We will strive to meet our stakeholders' needs, including donors, implementing countries and organisations, as well as beneficiary communities.

We will undertake the following activities in 2023:

- Conduct independent observations of global, regional, and country-level donor processes.
- Conduct research and evidence-based reporting on the effectiveness of GHI programs.
- Evaluate the Global Fund as it expands its mandate in its next strategy period (GC7).
- Engage country structures in enhancing accountability for funds.
- Disseminate information at the global, regional, and country levels to highlight stakeholders' voices and influence desirable change in implementing GHI programs.
- Collaborate with donors, implementing countries, and beneficiaries to coordinate efforts to enhance GHIs' effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of GHIs.

Our new Strategy will enhance the effectiveness of grant implementation by bringing attention to implementation barriers, helping to reduce health inequities by amplifying the voices of communities, and improving access to information for decision-making. Our work will also result in supporting the sustainability of donor-funded health programs due to our focus on system strengthening and aligning donor-to-country systems. Furthermore, we will contribute towards the greater ownership, accountability, and alignment of donor grants within country systems.

HOW TO SUPPORT AIDSPAN

To ensure Aidspan's continuity as an observer of the Global Fund's activities, you may want to consider the following:

- Email us for information on how you can support and become involved in our activities: <u>info@aidspan.org</u>.
- Sign up for the <u>GFO</u> e-newsletter in English or the <u>OFM</u> in French.
- Propose ideas for reports and articles or write for our newsletters by sending an email to: <u>info@aidspan.org</u>
- Visit our <u>website</u> for more information on areas of collaboration and support.
- Download our <u>publications</u> (guides and reports on the Global Fund).
- Follow us on our social media handles. Like, Share, and Retweet our work. <u>Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn</u> and <u>YouTube</u>
- Please give us feedback about our services; help us to serve you better!