



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

EDITOR'S NOTES

Hello, dear subscribers! We hope you have had a wonderful summer ? and you might have noticed we took a few weeks off ourselves!

So: what to expect in this issue? We continue to cover experiences with developing COVID-19 Response Mechanism grants from the dual perspective of those providing the technical assistance ([Community-based, rights and gender interventions fail to feature strongly in Global Fund COVID-19 mitigation proposals](#)) and the countries who have to navigate the new templates and Modular Framework to turn around an in-depth proposal in a very short amount of time ([Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism grants to Ethiopia yield challenges and lessons](#)). Look out for more articles covering technical assistance provision and its implications for the future, and country experiences, in our next GFO. We also include a summary of a key report highlighting the glaring disparities faced by children in accessing HIV prevention and treatment services, doubtless affected by service disruptions due to the pandemic: [Global Fund partners call for urgent action to address paediatric HIV services](#).

Given the controversy surrounding the placement of pandemic preparedness and response in the forthcoming Global Fund Strategy, we publish an open letter to the Global Fund Board urging it to expand the organization's mandate ([Former Global Fund Board members urge the strong placement of pandemic preparedness and response in the new Strategy](#)). We will continue to develop articles discussing the pros and cons of this; and we would really welcome any comments, feedback or even articles from you on why ? or why not ? the mandate should be expanded. This is very timely given that the Strategy's narrative is now under development.

Well, the eighth article in our series on COVID-19 and HIV from Alan Whiteside and partners, [The time is ripe for an Africa commission of inquiry to investigate the COVID-19 response](#), was supposed to be the

last. But since it has already been extended from the original five articles to this one, the eighth, you can guess what has happened – yes, there is a lot more to say! So this article is not the last in the series but we will publish at least four more, focusing in particular on Africa.

This month's staff interview is with Aidspan's Research Assistant ([Hoping for a bright future despite COVID-19 and reduced funding opportunities](#)) and we also have our usual summary of the latest report from the Officer of the Inspector General; this time the spotlight is on Malawi ([Office of the Inspector General's Report on its investigation into fraudulent activity in a Global Fund Grant in Malawi](#)).

Last but not definitely not least: although we published our 400th birthday issue in July, quotes are still coming in from colleagues wanting to acknowledge this special birthday. Professor Rifat Atun, currently Professor of Global Health Systems at Harvard Medical School, was the Global Fund's Director of the Strategy, Performance and Evaluation Cluster between 2008 and 2012 and, as such, came to know the Global Fund Observer very well. He tells us

“Aidspan and GFO has made an immense contribution to the development of the Global Fund through their incisive analyses and comments presented in a very accessible language. They have been able to give the civil society a strong voice in the discourse that shaped the Global Fund into the inclusive organization it is and hold the management to account. Long may this excellent work continue.”

What a lovely note to end with!

As usual, we ask that if you enjoy the GFO and find it relevant to your work, please encourage your colleagues to [subscribe](#)!

Don't forget: if you are aware of an interesting development relevant to disease programs 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 in English, French or Spanish. You can find me, the GFO's interim editor, through my email, christelle.boulanger@aidspan.org.

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