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WHILE IT HAS GIVEN GENEROUSLY TO THE GLOBAL FUND, THE U.K. HAS SLASHED ITS BILATERAL AID FOR HIV, NGO SAYS

The U.K.'s generosity to multilateral institutions, and to the Global Fund in particular, has come at the expense of the country's bilateral aid, according to STOPAIDS, a network of U.K. agencies working on HIV.

STOPAIDS has released a new publication, a "[stocktake review](#)" of the work of the Department for International Development (DFID) on HIV, in which it says that although the U.K. increased its contribution to the Global Fund in the last replenishment, and has maintained its level of contribution to UNAIDS and UNITAID, the country has implemented significant cuts to its bilateral programs focusing on HIV.

STOPAIDS said that DFID's overall funding for HIV declined 22% between 2012 and 2015 (from £416 million to £324 million). DFID's bilateral funding for HIV-specific programs declined from a peak of £221 million in 2009 to £23 million in 2015.

"Cuts to country offices have cancelled out DFID's increased contribution to the Global Fund," STOPAIDS said. Funding for civil society has been particularly hard hit, it added, declining from £30 million in 2011 to just £8 million in 2015.

The network said that despite a legacy of U.K. Government financial leadership within the HIV response, civil society and the U.K. Parliament have raised concerns that DFID's commitment to HIV is fading.

“DFID has closed the majority of its bilateral programmes specifically focussed on HIV and no longer has a position or strategy on HIV,” STOPAIDS stated. The UK’s presence at high-level international forums where HIV is discussed has also declined in recent years, it added.

Multilateral funding is making up an increasing share of DFID’s overall funding for the global HIV response. In 2012 multilateral spending accounted for 25% of total funding, but by 2015 the proportion of multilateral spending had increased to 57%.

All three multilaterals – the Global Fund, UNAIDS and UNITAID – performed well in the U.K.’s Multilateral Development Review in 2016 (see [GFO article](#)). “The U.K. recognised the Global Fund as achieving ‘exceptional’ results and UNITAID was found to be a ‘very good’ match with U.K. development objectives,” STOPAIDS said.

At the Global Fund’s the Fifth Replenishment Conference in September 2016, the U.K. pledged £1.1 billion, an increase of 37% over its previous contribution. According to STOPAIDS, at the conference the U.K. referred to the Global Fund as “one of the world’s most effective aid institutions.” The U.K. also recently recommitted to maintain funding for UNAIDS at £15 million per year “in a challenging context when many other donors are pulling back,” STOPAIDS stated.

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