



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

A promising (but is it?) end to the year

Dear subscribers

This is the last GFO issue of the year and it's a bumper one of nine articles!

Our first three articles are extremely topical, looking at World Aids Day, the 2023 World Malaria Report, and the implications of the COP28 on climate and health. While all three topics have their positive sides, the reality is depressing.

For example, [World AIDS Day](#) is intended to be a celebration of achievements in tackling HIV. And indeed there is much to celebrate. Yet, despite the gains, the HIV response is still not where practitioners hoped it would be. This year's theme focuses on the potential role of communities in leading the fight against the disease. However, as UNAIDS tells us, community leadership is being held back. Funding shortages, policy and regulatory hurdles, capacity constraints, and crackdowns on civil society and on the human rights of marginalized communities, are obstructing the progress of HIV prevention and treatment services. Without removing these obstacles, community organizations will not be able to play their full roles.

The [World Malaria Report](#) tries to be upbeat but there is no getting away from the fact that the disruption to malaria programs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in malaria incidence and mortality – and recovery has not been as strong as hoped. Despite the efforts of endemic countries and international stakeholders, rates remain very high. Extreme weather events, conflicts, humanitarian crises, budgetary constraints, biological threats and inequalities have hampered recovery. And this takes us into our next article on [COP28](#), hailed by some as a huge achievement because of the unprecedented recognition by governments of the importance of climate and health. For the first time, governments publicly acknowledged the link between climate and health; however, their commitment to protect the environment falls short of what is needed if climate change is to be reversed, it has no legal standing and does not necessarily mean that action will be taken by individual States. How can we make countries accountable to follow up on their paper promises?

We then move on to our next four articles which follow up on November's Global Fund Board meeting. [Resource Mobilisation and Partnerships](#) summarizes the Board paper on this topic, and the following three articles are an important review of how the Global Fund Strategy 2023-2028 has been reflected in the funding requests submitted so far under Grant Cycle 7 (GC7). The first of the series focuses on [HIV, TB and malaria](#), the second on [community, rights and gender, health systems and pandemic preparedness and response](#), and the third on [health financing and NextGen market shaping](#).

Our penultimate article, [Global Fund eligibility and transition status of the HIV and TB country components in EECA](#), follows up on what's been happening in these countries five years after our last article on this topic. It is evident that some countries that were expected to transition have not been able to, hardly surprising given the pandemic and then the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the region.

Our final article brings some encouraging news of the development of new guidance to assist program managers, practitioners and budget officials by guiding the selection of appropriate methods and/or tools which are most likely to yield the required information for planning and decision-making ([New guidance on selecting methods and tools for HIV economic studies](#)). This was one of the most problematic areas in the GC7 funding requests and hence this tool is no doubt very welcome.

Finally, Aidspace's Board and its staff would like to wish you the compliments of the season with very best wishes for happy and enjoyable time spent with family and friends and our best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous 2024.

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.

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 Ida Hakizinka at ida.hakizinka@aidspan.org.

The Aidspan Editorial Team

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