



Independent observer  
of the Global Fund

## Challenges facing the Global Fund at the dawn of 2025

Dear subscribers

As we step into 2025, we begin this issue with a [message from the Chairman of the Board of Aidspan](#), extending warm wishes to all our readers and reaffirming our shared commitment to a world free from the burdens of HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria. With renewed determination, we focus on the important issues shaping the global health landscape, from the [impact of the Trump administration's decisions](#), to changes in funding and policy, to pressing questions of equity, innovation and sustainability.

The year ahead will be pivotal for the Global Fund, as countries move to implement the Sixth Replenishment commitments. The \$14 billion raised was intended to catalyse \$46 billion in domestic investments, ushering in a new era of co-financing. However, a key policy shift is on the horizon: countries will soon be required to demonstrate domestic investment in key populations, demanding greater transparency in expenditure tracking. In this issue, we explore how teams from [10 African nations](#), convening in Cape Town, are tackling the complexities of HIV resource tracking to ensure that every dollar reaches those who need it most.

Yet, financial investments alone are not enough. Meaningful community engagement remains essential to the effectiveness of Global Fund programs. This issue delves into a [newly launched roadmap](#) for strengthening the role of communities in Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs). Drawing on findings

from the RISE study, the roadmap outlines pressing challenges—including limited onboarding, high turnover, and persistent power imbalances—and proposes concrete measures for Grant Cycle 8 (GC8) to empower community voices, improve transparency, and enhance accountability.

Equity, however, continues to face stark challenges beyond funding and governance. The recurrent denial of visas to African delegates at major global health conferences underscores a troubling imbalance. From Montreal in 2022 to Munich in 2024, these exclusions have silenced voices from the very regions most affected by infectious diseases. In a [scathing critique](#), we examine how these barriers hinder truly inclusive global health discussions and call for urgent reforms, including relocating key conferences to more accessible venues and overhauling discriminatory visa policies.

Scientific breakthroughs also feature prominently in this issue, with a reflection on the global response to the recently announced seventh patient cured of HIV. While the achievement is remarkable, the article underscores the broader reality: nearly [40 million people worldwide continue to live with HIV](#), and close to 10 million still lack access to treatment. Marginalized populations bear the brunt of this crisis, facing structural inequalities that perpetuate stigma and exclusion. We emphasize the urgent need to complement scientific progress with stronger community-based responses and a commitment to addressing the deep-rooted disparities that hinder the fight against HIV.

Amid these global developments, we also turn our attention to a landmark initiative: the adoption of the Charter on Investment in Human Resources for Health in Africa in May 2024. While ambitious in its vision, the question remains—will it succeed where previous declarations have faltered? This [article critically assesses the charter's potential impact and the risk](#) that, like many well-intentioned instruments before it, it could languish without proper implementation and accountability.

[Finally](#), we close this issue with an in-depth look at the sustainability of opioid agonist therapy (OAT) programs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) as they transition from Global Fund support to domestic financing. A multi-country assessment in Belarus, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Ukraine reveals significant gaps, particularly in policy frameworks, financial sustainability, and service accessibility. Despite progress in some areas, no country has yet achieved full OAT sustainability, underscoring the need for continued technical support, policy reform, and innovative financing strategies to ensure that harm reduction efforts remain resilient.

From financing shifts to governance challenges, from scientific milestones to political hurdles, this issue of GFO captures the complexity of the global health response in 2025.

And any thoughts about which aspect in the global health initiative sector you'd like to see covered in our newsletter are always welcome and we'd really appreciate suggestions on who can pen an article on it! Anyone who wishes to voluntarily contribute as a guest columnist and provide an incisive analysis or first-person account of what is happening at micro – or macro – levels in the field of global health interventions is also welcome. Any feedback and suggestions in French, Spanish, English can be sent to Ida Hakizinka [ida.hakizinka@aidspan.org](mailto:ida.hakizinka@aidspan.org)

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