



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

More Information on the New Funding Model, Please

This is a plea for the Global Fund to become more active in communicating information about the new funding model to its broad audience of people working on and interested in Global Fund matters.

For a multilateral agency like the Global Fund, the development of a new funding model (NFM) is extremely complex and time-consuming, as is the transition from the rounds-based system. All of this needs very careful planning and attention to detail from all involved. It also needs a good communication strategy to ensure that those affected by the NFM understand what is happening.

Discussion of the design of this new system has been ongoing for at least 12 months, yet new details are emerging with every iteration. In addition, there are elements of the NFM that have not yet been fully defined; some aspects won't be finalised until after the transition period. This is understandable, but it is also frustrating to observe.

Through this period, the biggest complaint that we have heard from people in the field is that they are not being kept informed.

It is now almost three months since the last Board meeting, where a number of very important decisions were made about the NFM. In the interim, people have been given very little information by the Global Fund on developments that have occurred since the Board meeting, or on what actions remain to be taken and when – unless they happen to be part of the consultations organised by the Secretariat.

The consultations are important both to impart information and to obtain input. But, consultations alone don't constitute a complete communications strategy. For one thing, not everyone can participate in the consultations, for obvious logistic and linguistic reasons. For another, many of the representatives of constituencies participating in the consultations are limited in their ability to get the word out to everyone in

their constituencies who are interested.

The Communities Delegation on the Global Fund Board said in a statement released at the end of January that “there remains a lack of clarity” concerning the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the NFM process, and that community knowledge and understanding of the NFM is “extremely limited.” The statement went on to say that “there have been few strategic and resourced efforts to strengthen community knowledge on changes in Global Fund processes.”

In a letter sent on 13 December 2012 to Mark Dybul, who was then the incoming Executive Director of the Global Fund, a group of 19 civil society organisations (CSOs) from Africa called on the Global Fund to provide capacity building for civil society “to understand the NFM” and to allow civil society to more effectively participate in implementation of the NFM at country level.

We think that the Secretariat could and should be more proactive. It has the ability to communicate directly to CCMs and PRs. Of course, this won’t reach everyone, but it would help.

The Secretariat should also be issuing frequent updates on NFM developments on its website – via its News Flash, or its NFM pages, or elsewhere. The precise vehicle for communicating the information does not matter all that much because Aidspan stands ready to disseminate the information to the almost 10,000 subscribers of Global Fund Observer (GFO), and to provide relevant links to the Global Fund website.

Now, that’s an offer we don’t think the Global Fund can refuse.

Note: We offered the Global Fund Secretariat the opportunity to comment on a draft of this commentary. A spokesperson for the Secretariat responded as follows:

“We can always do more on communications around the new funding model. Over the past month, communication has been focused on consultations with a wide variety of partners to explain key changes in the model and to give partners the opportunity to help shape the transition approach. We will communicate more when we launch the new funding model later this month.”

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