



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

WITH GRATITUDE TO DAVID...

My first contact with David, apart from having read hundreds of his meticulously reported articles in the Global Fund Observer during my almost-decade at the Global Fund, was when he, along with Aidspan CEO Ida Hakizinka, contracted me as Acting Editor of the GFO in June 2018.

David had recently been diagnosed with cancer and had had emergency surgery to remove a tumour. He was still editing the GFO but was anticipating needing substantial time off for recovery and follow-up treatment. My recruitment was a 'pinch hit' to hold the fort until his health improved. Needless to say, I felt daunted by the shoes I was stepping into, given David's fifteen years and 1000+ articles (1,086 actually, as David might have wished to specify) for the GFO and additional reports for Aidspan.

Though I was familiar with the Global Fund from my years as an employee there, I immediately understood that David's level of insight, questioning, and grasp of a myriad complexities was way beyond my own. David was, instantly, immensely helpful to me in the transition, providing lengthy explanations, practical advice – on the phone and in lengthy, detailed emails – and a lot of humor, caustic though it often was.

We never met in person – he was in Thailand and I in South Africa – but talked regularly on skype (he never really took to Whatsapp), and wrote each other lengthy emails. We developed a certain professional closeness and camaraderie over the past two years, and I came to depend on him as an anchor, a backstop, and a great moral support.

His knowledge about the Global Fund was encyclopedic, his memory intimidatingly accurate, and his perfectionism in getting the facts right unrelenting. David dotted every 'i' and crossed every 't'. Luckily for us, he continued to write for the GFO throughout his illness, having said that he welcomed the distraction, and persevering with work even through the most difficult periods of treatment. He seemed to relish the

technical detail he sometimes had to deal with or decipher for his articles, and he had apparently inexhaustible patience for going through reams of policy documents, Board decisions, and endless data sets, emerging with clear and precise conclusions.

David's superior intellect, dry wit, and ability to laugh at himself were always present, even up until our last email exchange several weeks ago. That last 'conversation' began with an email from him saying, "Hello! It's been a rough few weeks on my end..." and went on to describe in characteristic and unflinching detail what he was then going through (the side effects of treatment were causing him the most distress). As I said in my last email back to him, I was amazed, impressed and rather in awe of his ability to withstand everything he was going through while retaining his sense of humor.

David's passing is an enormous loss – to his family and his partner, of course, but also to Aidspace and the Global Fund Observer, and the entire Global Fund community, whose success and wellbeing were always uppermost in his mind. He made a huge contribution to all of us.

May he rest in peace. We miss him terribly.

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