



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

New partnerships involving the Global Fund announced at Davos

The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, held on 23–26 January 2018 in Davos, Switzerland, was the occasion for announcements of several new partnerships involving the Global Fund.

The announcements included the launch of the HER initiative; a partnership between (RED) and A4A; and partnerships between the Global Fund and three global private companies. The partnership with one of these companies provoked a reaction from organizations concerned with the effects of alcohol on public health (see below).

The HER initiative

The Global Fund and several partners launched a new initiative to build private sector support for programs that address HIV in 13 African countries where adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) face disproportionate risk.

Nearly 7,000 young women and girls are infected with HIV every week, many of them in East and Southern Africa. The 15–24-year-old population of Africa has doubled since 1990. In the hardest-hit countries, girls account for more than 80% of all new HIV infections among adolescents.

According to a [news release](#) from the Global Fund, incoming Executive Director Peter Sands announced the HER – HIV Epidemic Response – initiative at the Global Goals Gathering, which was part of the World Economic Forum.

“We have made incredible gains against AIDS over the past generation,” Sands said. “But we see a serious threat to that progress if we do not directly address the challenges faced by adolescent girls and young women.”

Sands announced partner commitments from The Coca-Cola Company, Standard Bank, Unilever and ViiV Healthcare, as well as (RED)®, which will expand its operations in Africa. (For more on the partnerships with (RED) and Unilever, see below.)

According to the news release, the HER initiative provides a platform for partners to contribute in a variety of ways, including the following:

- financial resources to accelerate the most impactful HIV prevention programs;
- in-kind expertise to support countries to pilot new approaches and implement innovative programs tailored to meet the needs of AGYW;
- support for HER Voice, a fund which helps ensure young women’s and girls’ voices are heard at key decision-making forums (see [GFO article](#)); and
- awareness raising with employees and customers.

The Global Fund’s [website](#) says that the HER initiative has set a target to reduce the number of new HIV infections among AGYW by 58% over the next five years in the 13 countries covered by the initiative. The countries are: Botswana, Cameroon, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The initiative was inspired by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the DREAMS Partnership, “which has led to greater global recognition of the scope of the challenge of reaching adolescent girls and young women to reduce their risk for HIV,” the website states.

Over the next five years, the Global Fund is planning to raise additional resources to expand HIV prevention programs for AGYW. The HER Initiative aims to support the kinds of programs that can create lasting change for AGYW — programs such as the following:

- comprehensive, adolescent-friendly programs that provide sexuality education, condoms and pre-exposure prophylaxis and HIV testing – all free from stigma and discrimination;
- life skills, financial literacy and “know your rights” education which can empower girls and young women to be advocates for their own health and well-being; and
- cash incentives, peer networks, mentors and other social protection programs — including prevention of gender-based violence — to support girls as they complete their education.

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Partnership between (RED) and A4A

(RED)® — also known as (PRODUCT) RED — announced a new operational partnership with Africans for Africa (A4A) to bring a number of new Africa-based companies into the fight against AIDS. The partnership will focus on engaging companies to generate money to fight HIV through the Global Fund.

The announcement was made at the World Economic Forum by Deb Dugan, CEO of RED. Dugan said that (RED)’s expansion in Africa will be supported by its existing partners, The Coca-Cola Company and SAP.

A (RED) [news release](#) quotes Dugan as saying, “It’s been 12 years since (RED) was first announced here in Davos. With over \$500 million contributed to the Global Fund and more than 110 million people impacted, (RED) is now embarking on its next major chapter — using the power and ingenuity of African

companies, organizations and consumers to help end AIDS.”

Peter Sands said, “There is no more important time [than] now to engage the African economy in helping to end this epidemic for good. We’re so grateful to (RED) for continuously pushing in new directions, underscoring our public-private partnership to save millions of lives.”

[Africans for Africa](#) is an African-driven social investment fund designed to generate investments that will accelerate the pace of sustainable development. Julie Essiam, A4A’s Founding Partner, said: “We’re very excited about our new partnership with (RED). It’s exactly the kind of smart, entrepreneurial model that suits African innovation. It is now more urgent than ever for us to use the power of the private sector to help us finish the AIDS fight on the continent, and around the world.”

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Partnerships with three global private companies

Partnerships between the Global Fund and three of the world’s leading private companies in their fields — Lombard Odier, HEINEKEN and Unilever — were announced in Davos. Details were provided by Christoph Benn, the Global Fund’s Director of External Relations, in a “Voices” [posting](#) on the Fund’s website — and by the companies themselves in news releases posted on their websites.

Lombard Odier, a private banking and asset management company that originated in Switzerland, and the Global Fund announced a strategic partnership to create ways to help the private sector contribute to the work of the Fund, while addressing investors’ need to meet their financial goals. Among other things, the partnership will examine structures that allow investors to share a proportion of the gains they receive from putting their capital to work. Patrick Odier, Senior Managing Partner of the Lombard Odier Group [said](#), “Investors no longer need to choose between doing well and doing good. It is becoming easier to meet both goals at the same time.”

The Global Fund and HEINEKEN, a global brewing company, entered into a partnership to fight infectious diseases in Africa. Benn said that HEINEKEN will lend its expertise in logistics and communications to support the Fund to better reach specific demographic groups that are most at risk of the three diseases. For example, HEINEKEN will pair supply chain experts with logistics planners at the Global Fund to share expertise in demand-forecasting and quality control during shipment. And locally, in countries in Africa, HEINEKEN will support efforts to improve the effectiveness of last-mile distribution, focusing on ensuring the right goods can reach health care facilities and patients in remote areas. This is already taking place in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Nigeria, Benn said. HEINEKEN’s announcement can be found [here](#).

Unilever, a multinational manufacturer of food products and other consumer goods, headquartered in London and Rotterdam, will work with the Global Fund to improve health program effectiveness, reduce infections and save lives fighting HIV and malaria in certain countries in Africa (e.g. South Africa and Nigeria) and Asia (e.g. India and Bangladesh). Benn said that the partnership will support work in the following areas: HIV prevention programs that focus on adolescent girls and young women; water, sanitation and hygiene programs in malaria case management, particularly for children under five; supply chain-strengthening initiatives to build in-country capacity and more effective distribution networks; and designing more patient-centric programs. Unilever and the Global Fund have agreed to invest \$5 million each to support these activities over the next three years. Unilever’s announcement can be found [here](#).

“Private companies have a broad range of expertise and capabilities that can increase the public-sector response to disease control, from data management and supply chain logistics to awareness campaigns to the deployment of innovative technology and financial services,” Benn said. “Public-private partnership has always been part of the Global Fund’s DNA. Experience tells us that our best work is done when corporations collaborate with governments, international organizations, donors and non-profits to expand the reach and impact of programs.”

Reaction to the partnership with HEINEKEN

According to an [article](#) by the news agency Reuters, the announcement of the partnership with HEINEKEN sparked a reaction from three organizations concerned with the effects of alcohol on public health — IOGT International, the Global Alcohol Policy Alliance and the NCD Alliance.

In a letter to incoming Executive Director Peter Sands, Interim Executive Director Marijke Wijnroks, and Board Chair Aida Kurtovic, the three organizations said that they are “deeply concerned about this partnership and its implications for global health.” The organizations referred to “the dangers inherent in partnerships with the producers and marketers of hazardous products such as alcohol.” They cited alcohol as “a major risk factor for both TB and HIV/AIDS.”

The three organizations said that “partnerships with the alcohol industry are laden with inherent conflicts of interest. Transnational corporations producing and aggressively marketing alcohol rely on the harmful use of alcohol for their sales and profits.”

Seth Faison, the Global Fund’s Director of Communications, provided Aidspan with the following response to the open letter:

“The Global Fund’s partnership model embraces forward-thinking and innovative approaches, necessary to achieve ambitious goals of ending epidemics. Private sector engagement and expertise is part of the solution. Ending epidemics requires overcoming the “last mile” challenges that can prevent life-saving health products from getting to remote clinics. A new partnership between Heineken and the Global Fund enables Heineken’s supply chain experts to provide expertise to Global Fund logistics planners on how to improve the supply chain. In mid-2017, the Global Fund’s senior management reviewed the risks and benefits of the Heineken partnership before approving it. The Global Fund is aware of concerns about the role of alcohol in public health, and concluded that Heineken’s positive track record on AIDS, and on responsible consumption, supports partnership work on supply chain.”

[IOGT International](#) is an organization that promotes a lifestyle free of alcohol and other drugs. The [Global Alcohol Policy Alliance](#) is a network of non-governmental organizations and people working in public health agencies who share information on alcohol issues and advocate evidence-based alcohol policies “free from commercial interests.” The [NCD Alliance](#) is a global network of 2,000 civil society organizations dedicated to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

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