



Independent observer  
of the Global Fund

## The Global Fund is no longer honouring its commitment to transparency

In previous articles (see [The Global Fund's guiding principle of openness, transparency and accountability needs to be dusted off and rebooted](#) and editorials, the Global Fund Observer has written about decreasing transparency by the Global Fund. Then on 1 March of this year Bernard Rivers, founder of Aidspan and of Global Fund Observer, wrote to selected leaders of the Fund with his own take on the situation. His letter, to which no reply was received, was as follows:

Dear All,

I'm writing to express my concern at the fact that over the past few years, the Global Fund has significantly reduced its transparency.

I worked full-time as an observer of the Fund during its first twelve years or so and attended 25 board meetings. I am now retired, but still passionately believe in the importance of the Fund. I've never previously written to a significant number of Global Fund leaders in this way, and I have no expectation of doing so again.

Last December, I published an article in Global Fund Observer entitled Who can fix four fundamental Global Fund problems? (See [here](#).)

In that article, I made the following comments about transparency:

Problem #1: Global Fund transparency is decreasing.

The Global Fund Board passed a resolution in 2011 reaffirming "the Global Fund's strong and continuing commitment to the highest standards of transparency." And the Fund's current Strategy document says: "The work of the Global Fund is based upon four principles – partnership, country-ownership,

performance-based financing, and transparency.” And the Fund’s Operational Policy Manual says “*Transparency: All final reports from in-country program reviews and evaluations [must be made] accessible to all stakeholders.*” (All italics added by me.)

However, these commitments to transparency are no longer being honoured. It used to be very easy to find and view full information regarding each grant, including Grant Performance Reports and other documents that spell out what exactly has happened with the implementation of individual grants. It’s now significantly harder to find grant information, and when you do find it, the Grant Performance Reports and other key documents are not available. (See [here](#) for details.)

On 26 January 2023 I wrote to Christy Feig, the head of the Fund’s Communications Department, asking if she could look into this. Her 28 February response on this issue was, in its entirety, as follows:

The Global Fund is currently working on an upgraded version of the Grant Performance Reports which will go live by the end of the year.

I regard this as a seriously inadequate response. Within implementing countries, stakeholders ranging from government ministers to concerned members of the public have the absolute right to know how effectively their Global Fund grants are being implemented. They are unable to obtain this information. The Global Fund is not honouring its above-stated commitments to transparency, despite this commitment having been reaffirmed in the 17 February 2023 version of its Operational Policy Manual.

Sincerely,

Bernard Rivers

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