



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

From Doctor to Activist to Board member

[This is the first in a series of GFO Newsletter articles in which readers get to meet Global Fund Board members and Secretariat staff.]

I have been involved for sixteen years in the AIDS fight. My involvement started in 1987, working within the French government for about a year when the first national information campaign took place. I was already convinced at that time that nothing concerning the epidemic could be done without the expertise of the communities facing the disease. At the beginning of 1989 I left government work to join AIDES, the largest French NGO in the AIDS fight. Even though I am a medical doctor and was hired as a professional, I rapidly became an activist. In 1998, I took the position of Director General of AIDES, which has about 1,000 volunteers, 360 paid staff, and 52 chapters in France.

For years, AIDES has been a strong advocate for access to treatment, through different forms of involvement. Arnaud Marty-Lavauzelle, former president of AIDES, has been a member of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) of UNAIDS. Since 1997, AIDES has been a founding member and coordinator of a network of 15 African NGOs called "Afrique 2000". The network released guidelines in 2001 about the ways some African NGOs deliver the best standards of care including ARV therapies. Before the birth of the Global Fund, I was invited as the only community AIDS NGO representatives to the Okinawa G8 technical meeting. Later I went to New York for UNGASS, as did many other AIDS activists.

I believe in the Global Fund as a unique chance to improve the quality and quantity of life for millions of human beings. I also believe – and that is why the Global Fund concerns everybody motivated by equity, health and development – that we don't have the right to fail. The issue of affordability of medicines and prevention tools will be at the heart of my mandate. But the challenges are immense and require accurate strategies to disentangle and balance, in a sustainable way, emergency and long term actions, prevention

and treatment, governmental and non-governmental care delivery, private and public funding, and more.

Being a board member requires determination, negotiation capacities with the other parties, and freedom of speech. All the fights that the Global Fund wants to tackle are ones I share, but my role will be, with my other colleagues from NGOs, to always have in mind that all the decisions have to be targeted in the first place towards communities.

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