



Independent observer  
of the Global Fund

# GREATER TRANSPARENCY FOR AN EFFECTIVE GLOBAL FUND

An Aidspace Impact Evaluation

June 2016



# CONTENTS

|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 01 | ACRONYMS.....                              | 02 |
| 02 | IMPACT EVALUATION.....                     | 04 |
| 03 | EDITORIAL: GLOBAL FUND OBSERVER (GFO)..... | 04 |
| 04 | OUTREACH.....                              | 06 |
|    | LOCAL WATCHDOG PROJECT (LWP).....          | 06 |
|    | OTHER RELATED OUTCOMES.....                | 08 |
| 05 | RESEARCH.....                              | 08 |
|    | GUIDES.....                                | 08 |
|    | REPORTS.....                               | 09 |
| 06 | DIGITAL INNOVATIONS/ACCESS TO DATA.....    | 12 |

# ACRONYMS

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| AIDS      | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome                                    |
| APW       | Aidspan Portal Workbench   |
| ART       | Antiretroviral therapy   |
| ARV       | Antiretroviral   |
| CCM       | Country Coordinating Mechanism   |
| CHW       | Citizen Health Watch   |
| CONAC     | National Committee against Corruption                                  |
| CoP       | Community of Practice  |
| DFID      | Department for International Development                               |
| FIS       | For Impacts in Social Health   |
| GFO       | Global Fund Observer   |
| HIV       | Human Immunodeficiency virus   |
| IHP       | International Health Policies  |
| KP        | Key populations  |
| LWP       | Local Watchdog Project   |
| MoH       | Ministry of Health   |
| MOU       | Memorandum of Understanding  |
| MP        | Members of Parliament  |
| NFM       | New Funding Model  |
| OFM       | Observateur du Fonds Mondial   |
| OI        | Opportunistic infections   |
| OIG       | Office of the Inspector General  |
| OLUCOME   | Observatory for the Fight against Corruption and Economic Embezzlement |
| PHM-Ghana | People's Health Movement-Ghana   |
| PMTCT     | Prevention of Mother and Child Transmission                            |
| PQR       | Price and Quality Reporting  |
| PR        | Principal Recipient  |
| PS        | Permanent secretary  |
| SR        | Sub-recipient  |
| TB        | Tuberculosis   |
| TRP       | Technical Review Panel   |



## IMPACT EVALUATION

Aidspan was founded in 2002 to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of a new donor institution - The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (hereafter referred to as “the Global Fund” or “the Fund”). Since then, Aidspan’s work has focused on promoting value for money and increasing transparency and accountability within the Fund and at the country level.

Aidspan continues to register numerous successes in its work. For example, through the Local Watchdog Project, 15 watchdogs from sub-Saharan Africa have been mentored and are now monitoring the Fund’s activities within their countries. In addition, more people are turning to Aidspan for expert analysis and comprehensive coverage of the Global Fund; traffic to the Aidspan website has increased by 355% between 2013 and 2015. The diversity of our growing audience is also increasing. Subscriptions to Aidspan’s French newsletter Observateur du Fonds Mondial (OFM) have increased by 93% between 2014 and May 2016.

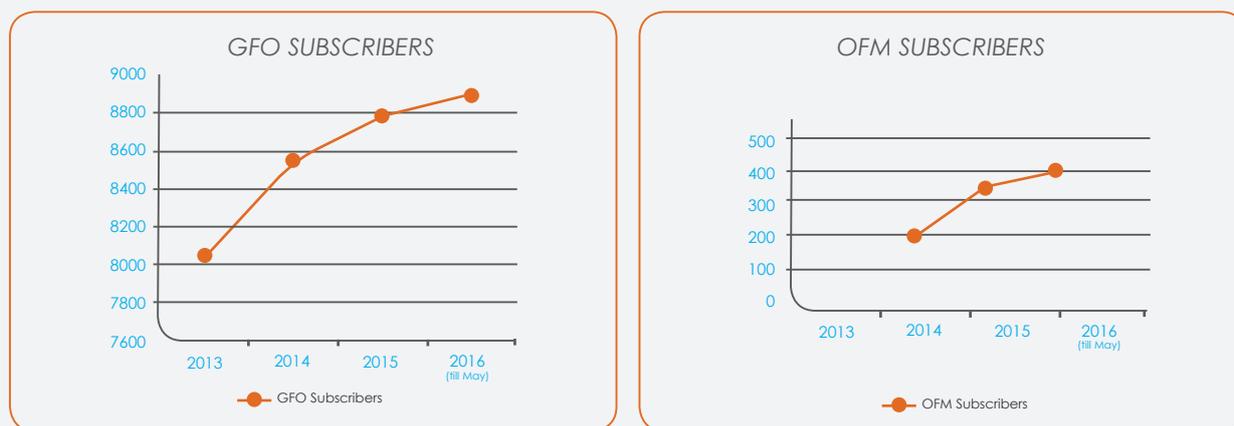
Traditional methods of impact evaluation may not be the best way of measuring the impact Aidspan has had on the Global Fund. This may be attributed to the fact that Aidspan was set up at the same time as the Fund hence one cannot use a pre/post Aidspan design. However, Aidspan has continued to document and track some of the changes it has influenced, making the Global Fund more efficient and effective. This report details some of these changes.

## EDITORIAL: GLOBAL FUND OBSERVER (GFO)

The Global Fund Observer (GFO) is an indispensable independent source of news, analysis, commentary and review about the Global Fund. First published in 2002, GFO has a substantial reach of more than 9000 subscribers (including OFM subscribers) from 170 countries, who benefit from an average of nearly 300 articles each year. GFO boasts a reference library of 291 issues to date. The number of GFO subscribers has also grown steadily over the years, up from 8060 in 2013 to increasing to 8886 as of May 2016.

In an effort to expand Aidspan’s coverage, OFM, the French version of GFO, was launched in 2014. As of May 2016, OFM has 393 subscribers and a total of 30 issues have been published with the majority being translated from English to French. In addition, close to 20 articles were translated into Russian in 2015.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF GFO SUBSCRIBERS (2013-2016) (LEFT) AND NUMBER OF OFM SUBSCRIBERS (2013-2016) (RIGHT)



The diversity of voices in GFO has increased significantly over the years. The proportion of articles written by regional correspondents based at the country level around the world has increased from 4% in 2013 to 41% in 2015, as compared to recent years where the majority of the articles were authored by in-house Aidsplan staff. The focus of GFO articles has also shifted from most articles being about developments at the corporate level (i.e. Board, Secretariat and Office of the Inspector General-OIG) to a mix of corporate and country-level stories.

TABLE 1: DIVERSITY OF GFO VOICES (2013-2015)

| AUTHORS  | 2013 |    | 2014 |    | 2015 |    |
|--|------|----|------|----|------|----|
|  | No.  | %  | No.  | %  | No.  | %  |
| In-house Aidsplan authors                          | 214  | 96 | 230  | 63 | 168  | 59 |
| Regional GFO correspondents based around the world | 10   | 4  | 137  | 37 | 118  | 41 |
| Total  | 224  |    | 367  |    | 286  |    |

TABLE 2: FOCUS OF GFO ARTICLES (2013-2015)<sup>1</sup>

| CORPORATE/COUNTRY-BASED ARTICLES | 2013 |    | 2014 |    |
|----------------------------------|------|----|------|----|
|                                  | No.  | %  | No.  | %  |
| Corporate-based articles         | 159  | 74 | 69   | 42 |
| Country-based articles           | 55   | 26 | 97   | 58 |
| Total                            | 214  |    | 166  |    |

A survey carried out by Aidsplan's research team to determine readers' usage, opinions and levels of satisfaction with GFO, revealed that satisfaction is generally high among GFO readers.<sup>2</sup> In the survey, more than 94% respondents felt that the newsletter had improved their understanding of Global Fund issues while 55% of the respondents' indicated that they had cited GFO articles in either their internal communications or external publications. Respondents for this survey were members of the Technical Review Panel (TRP) (1.4%), members of a Global Fund board delegation (4.2%), Global Fund employees (6.5%) and implementers of Global Fund grants (24.1%), among others. Similar results were obtained in a survey carried out in 2011 (see [Aidsplan Report: What Readers Think About Global Fund Observer](#)).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Geneva-based articles are based on developments at the corporate level i.e. articles on the Board, Secretariat and OIG. Examples of this are stories on funding approvals announced by the Board and Board meeting decisions. Non-Geneva based articles are those based on developments at the country level.

<sup>2</sup> Aidsplan Readership Survey (unpublished)

<sup>3</sup> Aidsplan Report: What Readers Think about Global Fund Observer, [online at http://aidsplan.org/node/2044](http://aidsplan.org/node/2044)

Articles in GFO usually spark discussion and engagement from readers. Readers also use GFO to speak out. In one [article](#) on the conduct of the OIG, Aidspace received a number of responses from readers and published two sets of letters-to-the-editor, including letters from the then [Chair of the Global Fund Board](#) and [other stakeholders](#) from Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) and Principal Recipients (PRs).

In another instance, a reader reaffirmed views in an [article](#) published in 2015 on representation of key populations (KP) in the CCM: “The issue is politics within KP communities, donor patronizing some people, not picking up the professional literates amongst them. This needs to be addressed as well.” Another readers also wrote: “Thank you for the article on the transgender ruling and Global Fund work in India. You did a great job. We posted it on our Facebook page, and it’s has more than 200 likes so far.”

The International Health Policies (IHP) Newsletter, published every Friday, regularly draws readers’ attention to GFO articles, often labelling individual articles as a “must-read.”

## OUTREACH

One of Aidspace’s objectives in its 2014-2016 strategy was to improve accountability by soliciting more voices at the country level. This was to be achieved by providing training on Global Fund processes via the [online learning platform](#), creating more partnerships, mentoring of local watchdogs and establishing a Community of Practice (CoP) named Africa Health Watch.

## LOCAL WATCHDOG PROJECT (LWP)

The recently concluded Local Watchdog Project (LWP) sprang from the view that Aidspace could not provide in-depth coverage of Global Fund implementation at the individual countries due to its lean body of staff. The project was designed to test whether Aidspace could amplify at a country level, what it was doing at a global level. The outreach unit, established in 2010, spearheaded this project with support from other units.

The mentorship project was aimed at equipping local watchdogs with skills to carry out more effective watchdog work. Since 2011, the LWP trained 362 people in 12 African countries on the Fund and watchdogging techniques. Aidspace also selected and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with 15 local watchdogs<sup>4</sup> whom they mentored since 2011.

The organizations that were mentored have shown marked progress in their watchdogging work. Approximately 50% of the respondents interviewed in the end-of-project survey said that their relationship with the Global Fund had changed while 29% reported having a better understanding of the Fund’s systems related to the country context. Respondents also reported a wider partner network (16.7%), better engagement with various partners (16.7%) and better organizational capacity to do a much larger range of work (12.5%) as compared to before joining the project.

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<sup>4</sup> Partners whom Aidspace signed an MoU with: Tanzania - SIKIKA, EANNASO, HDT; Uganda - UNASO; Cameroon - FIS; Zambia - TALC, Zimbabwe – ZADHR & CHW; Nigeria – CHR & CCG; Burundi – OLUCOME, Kenya – KELIN, Ghana – PHM, Malawi – HREP

As a result of the project, about 25% of the respondents are currently carrying out more Global Fund advocacy than they did before. For example, [Observatory for the Fight against Corruption and Economic Embezzlement \(OLUCOME\)](#) in Burundi felt that their knowledge of the Global Fund had increased and by this they were granted, observer status in the Burundi CCM.

As a result of Aidspace's mentorship in Ghana, The People's Health Movement (PHM) was also granted observer status at the CCM. They have reported issues such as underperformance by sub-recipients (SRs) and PRs. In 2015, they requested CCM and grant documents for in-depth analysis and initiated a [mini-study](#) to track Global Fund resources.

In Zimbabwe, Citizen Health Watch (CHW) gained core skills through LWP, such as enhanced professional engagement techniques and negotiation skills. CHW started working with Aidspace in 2014 when they did an Aljazeera documentary on the abuse of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) in Zimbabwe. They have since had 20 of their staff and monitors trained via the Aidspace [online learning platform](#).

Since then, CHW has obtained official observer status in the Zimbabwean CCM. In 2014-2015, CHW negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Health (MoH) which was approved by the Permanent Secretary (PS). This MoU has enabled them to carry out independent client satisfaction assessments for the MoH by carrying out spot checks in opportunistic infections (OI) clinics, monitoring the implementation of the national prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) program, the pediatric antiretroviral therapy (ART) coverage program and ART stock-outs. In 2015, CHW produced a [TB Advocacy brief](#) under this project which was published in local media and sections on pediatric tuberculosis (TB) treatment and prompted the adoption of case detection in the National Health Strategic Plan for 2016-2020.



For Impacts in Social Health (FIS) in Cameroon also started working with Aidspace in 2014. After the training by Aidspace, FIS mobilized 12 watchdogs to carry out monthly tracking of quality of services in Global Fund-supported health facilities. FIS uncovered malpractice in some of the health facilities that charged for pediatric malaria treatment, which was supposed to be distributed for free. The head of districts were ordered to stop charging for this medication and the National Committee Against Corruption (CONAC) was brought in to investigate the malpractice. In 2015, Aidspace also supported FIS to [document best practice](#) on the involvement of key affected populations in country dialogue and concept note development processes. This was intended for the Community, Rights and Gender department at the Global Fund Secretariat, Another example of collaboration with government is FIS's [TB analysis of cost of treatment](#) (Domestic versus Global Fund investments). This TB brief was used to advocate for more domestic funds for TB.

In 2014-2015, Sikika (Tanzania) monitored proper utilization of Global Fund grants both at the national and local levels. At the local level, they revealed unspent balances of the Global Fund HIV grant of USD

177,385,983 as well as [misspending](#). Aidspan supported Sikika by providing training on Global Fund data collection and analysis, review of data and research, and drawing follow-up strategies and advocacy plans. Sikika presented the findings to the Biennial HIV Sector Review which resulted in members of parliament (MPs) committing to review, every two years, unspent balances and get explanations from the relevant government offices.

## OTHER RELATED OUTCOMES

CCM website: As part of promoting accountability, Aidspan aimed at developing and operationalizing 15 CCM websites by the end of 2016. We reached out to 12 CCMs, with 4 CCMs and 1 watchdog agency having completed the development of their websites using this technology. In 2015, Aidspan adopted a more cost-effective approach with a wider reach, where it made the technology available to all CCMs and developed a [CCM Website Toolkit](#) for technical support. So far, the toolkit has been downloaded more than 100 times.

## RESEARCH

Aidspan has continued to improve their role as analyst and “explainer” of the Global Fund’s systems, processes and outcomes. In its 2014-2016 strategy, Aidspan aimed at increasing stakeholders’ understanding of the Global Fund’s New Funding Model (NFM) and providing feedback to strengthen the process. The research unit was charged with producing working papers, peer reviewed articles, reviews, reports and analyses of the processes, effectiveness and impact of the Global Fund. Since inception, Aidspan has released a total of 18 guides and 36 research reports.

## GUIDES

Aidspan took up the role of packaging information on the Global Fund’s processes in a simpler form, mainly through guides aimed at increasing stakeholders’ understanding of the Global Fund and helping them navigate the Fund’s processes

Many of the guides produced were developed because the Global Fund as not doing an adequate job of explaining its own processes. By producing our own guides, Aidspan successfully pushed the Fund in the direction of improving its guidance. For example, during Rounds 7 and 8, at the request of the Secretariat, Aidspan reviewed the application forms and guidelines and provided suggestions for improvement. The Fund adopted a number of these suggestions.

By the time the NFM was launched, Aidspan deduced that there was no longer a need to prepare a guide on how to complete the concept notes because by then the Fund was providing adequate guidance on its own. However, there remain many areas in which the Global Fund needs to be continually pressed to make information more accessible to stakeholders.



## SAMPLE GUIDES

**A GUIDE TO BUILDING AND RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE COUNTRY COORDINATING MECHANISM (CCM) (2014):** This guide provides advice on how to build an effective CCM (downloaded 2975 times)

1

**UNDERSTANDING THE NEW FUNDING MODEL (2014):** This guide was designed to explain the New Funding Model (NFM) which was launched in 2014. (Downloaded 5279 times)

2

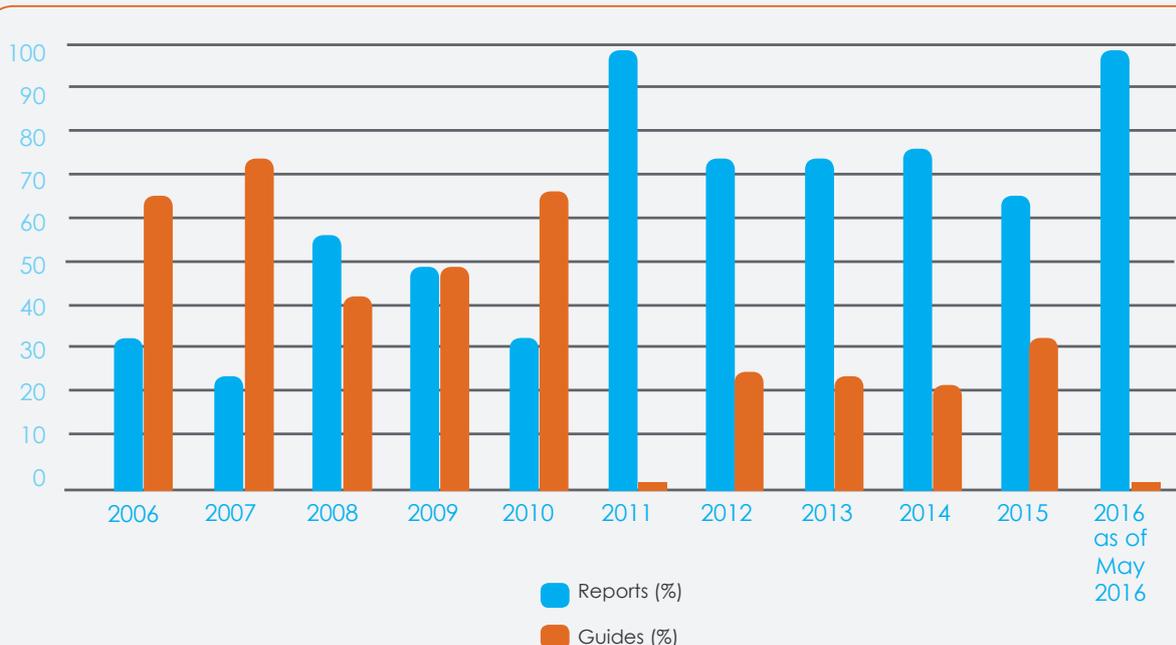
**A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE GLOBAL FUND (2013):** the guide was designed to increase the understanding of the Global Fund's process among people with no or minimal experience with the Global Fund (downloaded 6582 times)

3

## REPORTS

Aidsplan has now evolved from the “explainer” role to a more critical and analytic role, as evidenced by the percentage of reports vs. guides released in recent years (Figure 2). In 2015, for example, a total of eight research reports were published covering 40 countries. The research reports assessed risk management within the Global Fund programs, implementation, transparency, accountability and CCMs.

FIGURE 2: AIDSPAN PUBLICATIONS BY TYPE (PROPORTION OF REPORTS VS. GUIDES)



## SAMPLE REPORT OUTCOMES



### THE "FAIR SHARE" OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: AN AIDSPAN REPORT ON WILLINGNESS TO PAY

A report from a case study analysis by Aidspace of how the Global Fund willingness-to-pay policy leveraged additional government resources in the NFM. This report specifically examined the how and where upper-middle income countries were dedicating domestic resources to key populations in the context of transition as a result of the Fund's co-financing policies.



### CHILDREN AND THE GLOBAL FUND(DECEMBER 2015)

In 2015, Aidspace conducted an analysis of HIV/TB and HIV concept notes and grant agreements submitted to the Global Fund under the NFM to determine the level of inclusion of children. Findings indicate that young people are not adequately prioritized under the New Funding Model. From this, Aidspace has been invited to work with the Coalition for Children Affected with AIDS, based in Toronto-Canada, to use the report to request a response from the Global Fund

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*"We at the Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS read your excellent report "Children and the Global Fund" with great interest, but of course it provided more evidence for concerns we have had for some time about Global Fund grants. I was hoping you might have some advice for us about to whom we might submit it, or anything else you might suggest. We were also thinking of gathering together a few groups to sign a letter asking for a response."*

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## THE GLOBAL FUND'S APPROACH TO RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY (APRIL 2015)

The report simplified the Global Fund's Risk Management Policy which had just been released. It summarized the different aspects of the policy including a definition of terms, the operational risk management with the risk register and the risk differentiation framework. This report was used by the Global Fund during the Risk Management training session held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015 as background preparatory reading.

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*“On the pre-Board Day 30 March, we have arranged to provide training to constituency members on risk management, and as background preparatory reading we have provided a copy of Aidspan's document The Global Fund's Approach to Risk Management.”*

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## EXAMINING THE TRENDS IN COSTS OF MEDICINES FOR DRUG-SUSCEPTIBLE AND DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS FROM 2010-2013: AN ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL FUND PQR DATA (JANUARY 2015)

This paper examined the trends in the costs of medicines to treat both drug-susceptible and drug-resistant (TB) including a comparison between the high burden countries and other countries that were receiving or had received Global Fund support. The paper was cited in various sources including [here](#).

In 2013 and 2014, Aidspace published two peer reviewed journal articles in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the Malaria Journal.

Wafula, F., Agweyu, A., & Macintyre, K. (2014). Trends in procurement costs for HIV commodities: a 7-year retrospective analysis of global fund data across 125 countries. JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, 65(4), e134-e139.

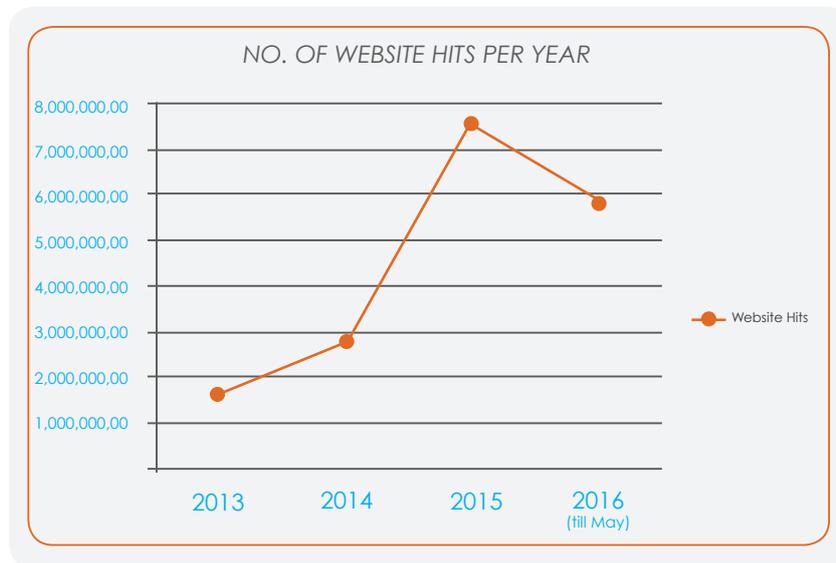
Wafula, F., Agweyu, A., & Macintyre, K. (2013). Regional and temporal trends in malaria commodity costs: an analysis of Global Fund data for 79 countries. Malaria journal, 12(1), 1.

The papers examined the roles of the Price and Quality Reporting (PQR) system and its implication on the procurement policies. These papers were used by several donors interested in procurement by the Fund e.g. Department for International Development (DFID). The paper published on the Malaria Journal was downloaded more than 2000 times.

## DIGITAL INNOVATIONS/ACCESS TO DATA

Aidspace aims at enhancing stakeholders' knowledge and understanding Global Fund processes through the use of digital innovations. In 2014, Aidspace launched a new and improved website with infographics, cloud tagging and multimedia, which are now on a more interactive forum. Traffic to the website increased by 355% between 2013 and 2015.

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF WEBSITE HITS RECORDED PER YEAR SINCE 2013



In 2015, Aidspace began a campaign to persuade the Fund to release documents that were not being made public. The campaign is ongoing but has already met with some success. Concerning applications under the NFM, the Fund had been making public only the concept notes. As a result of Aidspace's advocacy, the Fund agreed to also release three attachments to the concept notes: the modular template, the financial gap analysis and counterpart financing table and programmatic gap table.

Aidspan has developed 4 open access data tools to facilitate access to user-friendly data by anyone who has interest in Global Fund's work. These include:

**AIDSPAN PORTAL WORKBENCH (APW) (NEW):** This is a web-based application which retrieves grant portfolio data from the Global Fund's web services and makes it available to its users in a user-friendly manner. Since APW was opened to the public in 2015, a total of 146 users have been registered and data used on numerous occasions.



**GRANT PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS TOOL (NEW):** This tool allows for comparison and analysis of grant performance by a number of different criterion: region, country, disease component, principal recipient (PR)



**GRANT PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW:** Provides an overview of all Global Fund grants by disease component, region and country. The grants-by-country page is among the most viewed pages in Aidspan's website.



**DONOR PLEDGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS PAGES:** Provides information about donor pledges and contributions- data is obtained from publically available data from the Global Fund's own website



Aidspan is the only organization which has automated services that synchronize its data with that of the Fund's database every 3 hours, thus ensuring that the users get the most up-to-date data accessed the data.

Use of the data has been encouraging. One of the data users, a Research Fellow in South Africa, wrote to Aidspan:

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*"I have found your website and downloadable data so useful. My colleagues and I have done an exercise trying to match the global fund concept notes for countries in East and southern Africa with the final grant amounts and grant numbers reported on your website. We had to use dates and approximate concept note request amounts to do the matching."*

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