

Illustrating the Global Fund's Effectiveness



Introduction

At RESULTS, we strongly back evidence-based approaches to development. We support strategies that monitor and evaluate progress and are based on delivering real-life impact. Furthermore, we advocate for transparency and accountability in international aid as a means of achieving the greatest value for money. As a performance-based entity, the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria is an excellent example of a development institution that focuses on outcomes by tying funding to the achievement of clear, measurable and sustainable results.

Global Fund performance-based funding delivers results

The Global Fund disburses resources in accordance to their performance-based mandate for funding. Grant outcomes are measured against performance indicators that are determined by recipient countries and based on national priorities and context. Outcome-dependant funding gives grantees the opportunity to learn and to demonstrate they can convert financing into results, allowing them to secure further funds for their programmes. Furthermore, by identifying non-performing grants the Global Fund is able to free up resources and reallocate them to programmes more successful at delivering health outcomes.

To ensure that limited resources are invested in technically sound programmes with the greatest chances of success, the Global Fund employs an independent Technical Review Panel (TRP) to review all grant proposals. Additional grant oversight is provided by Local Fund Agents in recipient countries that evaluate grantees and advise the Global Fund on the ongoing performance, and the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), the local partnership that provides governance during implementation and monitors impact. The CCM is made up of representatives from both the public and private sectors, including governments, multilateral or bilateral agencies, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, private businesses and members of civil society, including people living with the diseases. These mechanisms are in place to assess programme impact, maximise results and certify that stakeholders have a say in the decision-making process.

In addition to achieving participation of all groups of society, the Global Fund has implemented checks and balances to facilitate transparency. The Global Fund allows the public to track the progress of programmes by publishing all grants on its website. It also publicises independent evaluations of the organisation's own performance and documents discussed at Board meetings. In addition, the Global Fund's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) provides a further layer of accountability with an independent and objective evaluation of all Global Fund activities. The OIG includes a mechanism to counter corruption and provides whistleblowers with a channel to report fraud or abuse involving Global Fund staff, grant recipients, Local Fund Agents, suppliers or other in-country partners.

The Global Fund demonstrates success where others fall short

While the Global Fund is a prime example of an organisation that works at achieving health outcomes, other organisations have been less successful. The Global Fund's reputation for success is particularly noteworthy in light of a recent report documenting shortcomings of other approaches to fighting diseases in developing countries. [ACTION](#) (Advocacy to Control Tuberculosis Internationally), an international partnership of advocates fighting for resources to treat and prevent the spread of tuberculosis (TB), recently released a report evaluating the effectiveness of Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) for health. SWAs are a funding mechanism that help donors pool their funding for a particular sector – in this case, healthcare – for more efficient administration. In theory, they work to facilitate greater donor harmonisation and result in a country-led and country-owned process - which are all good things and sound principles for how best to deliver aid.

SWAps have been favoured by a number of development organisations, including the World Bank and the Department for International Development (DfID). The report, titled '[Aid without Impact: How the World Bank and Development Partners Are Failing to Improve Health through SWAps](#),' assessed whether efforts to strengthen health systems with SWAps have been successful in fighting TB and in delivering health outcomes.

The report's authors found a lack of evidence demonstrating that SWAps have worked to create positive health outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa, stating, 'There is an unacceptable dearth of scientific assessment that demonstrates the impact of SWAps on health outcomes, despite the billions of dollars that have been invested in this approach since the mid-1990s.' While most people ACTION interviewed for their research identified SWAps as an essential approach to development, they admitted that 'SWAps are not yet being implemented in a way that has led to improvements in health outcomes in effective, efficient, measurable, or sustainable ways.'

The report concluded that the World Bank and its development partners must recognise 'the failure of SWAps to consistently promote better health outcomes' and should focus more on delivering outcomes than on process. It stressed that while SWAps are an important component of the international aid architecture, changes must be made in order to increase their effectiveness and ensure they deliver real positive outcomes. Some of the key areas the report recommended for improvement included:

- Regular reviews of SWAps health programmes by an independent technical team and publicising the findings. Such reviews are meant to assess programme impact and make recommendations for improvement. According to a report by the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, current project oversight does not result in an independently made, publicly available assessment of SWAps programmes.
- Making the World Bank's 'Annual Joint Programme Reviews' that are already being done public to increase transparency and public oversight. The report emphasises that transparency is crucial to ensure the success of investments in low-income countries. Greater transparency of projects is needed to enable more effective implementation and to make grant recipients more accountable to achieving results.
- Rigorously monitoring and evaluating SWAps to establish what works and what doesn't. The report maintained that 'funds should flow on a large scale only to those SWAps that evidence shows are helping to achieve improvements in health outcomes.'

What does this mean for UK Aid Spending?

While the Global Fund does not function perfectly and certainly has limitations, it has delivered health outcomes in the fight against diseases of poverty where other existing organisations have fallen short. ACTION's report coincides with International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell's recent [announcement](#) to create a new, independent watchdog to certify that UK taxpayers are receiving value for money, as well as stating that they will review the money Britain spends through multilateral organisations like the Global Fund, the World Bank and the UN agencies.

We agree that the UK government needs to thoroughly assess all the mechanisms through which they channel their funding for health programmes to ensure that they are allocating it to the right places to deliver results. The Global Fund offers an opportunity to achieve exactly this. Because of the Global Fund's extensive reach and successes, the future of global health is closely related to the funding of the Global Fund. It is therefore vital that donor countries commit to replenishing the Global Fund so it can continue its proven record of success in the fight against tuberculosis, malaria and AIDS.