

2023 Annual Report

Independent

Evaluation Panel

51st Board Meeting

GF/B51/09

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Board Information

Purpose of the paper:

This brief constitutes the inaugural annual report from the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP). In its advisory capacity, the Independent Evaluation Panel is mandated to prepare "An annual report to the Board through the SC including:

- an opinion on the independence, quality, capacity and working modalities of the evaluation structure of the Secretariat; and
- recommendations on improvements."¹

¹ The Global Fund. Terms of Reference - Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) (effective as of December 31, 2022). Geneva, Switzerland: The Global Fund; 2021.

Executive Summary

Context

This brief constitutes the inaugural annual report from the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP).

IEP contributions to support the development of the Secretariat's policies & guidelines

Establishing core policies, procedures, and guidelines was a major focus of the first year of operations. These include: (1) Five priorities agreed by ELO and IEP to inform strategic directions in 2023 and beyond. (2) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that describe the end-to-end process for evaluations, covering the scope of ELO work and IEP's oversight, were agreed and will be published on the Global Fund website in Q1 2024. (3) The "Evaluation Function Documents Procedure" developed by the CELO, in collaboration with the IEP and the Secretariat, reaffirms the Global Fund's commitment to transparency and regulates the publication process of independent evaluations, IEP commentaries, and management responses. It was approved by the SC in October 2023.

Multi-year Evaluation Calendar and Annual Workplans

The multi-year evaluation calendar is a strategic tool to ensure that evaluations conducted by the Global Fund's evaluation function reflect the learning needs of stakeholders and effectively prioritize evaluation topics. ELO is responsible for developing this calendar for approval by the Board, while the IEP oversees its implementation pursuant to the annual workplans approved by the Strategy Committee. IEP oversight gives particular attention to: (1) the adequacy of processes used to consult stakeholders, including the Board, Secretariat and country partners, on learning and accountability needs; (2) the appropriateness of the criteria used to prioritize topics (including evaluability), and adherence to these.

IEP viewpoint on the performance of the evaluation function

The evaluation function made very good progress in 2023. The ELO has very skillfully launched itself and demonstrated its ability to manage evaluations successfully. The IEP and the ELO collaborated well, onboarding new staff and members, building productive working relationships within the Global Fund and with partner institutions, and institutionalized appropriate procedures. The start-up phase also involved challenges, including those related to ensuring that the SOPs included safeguards to enable oversight of evaluation independence. The first two evaluations conducted under the new evaluation function -- Strategic Review 2023 and the Evaluation of the Global Fund Resource Allocation Methodology -- were completed prior to the 24th Strategy Committee meeting in March 2024. Both evaluations were endorsed by the IEP. The IEP endorsed the final evaluation reports based on criteria related to expected quality and independence. For both evaluations, quality was judged to be satisfactory with scope for improvement, but independence was difficult to ascertain due to gaps in procedures (later filled by the SOPs). Now that well-balanced SOPs have been agreed, the evaluation function may be on a solid footing to deliver on evaluation

quality and safeguard independence. It is too early to pronounce on success. In 2024, as we gain experience with the full evaluation cycle, we will be better able to take stock of how the Global Fund's new model for independent evaluation is working and to make improvements.

IEP Recommendations to the Board/ Strategy Committee

1. To support the emerging partnership among the evaluation units of the Global Fund, Gavi and the Global Financing Facility of the World Bank on opportunities to expand the evaluator pool and to redress power asymmetries in evaluation. [Recommendation for Board /SC]
2. Use of ad hoc Evaluation Reference Groups (ERG) to strengthen conduct and use for specific evaluations, tentatively suggested for the upcoming malaria evaluation: [for Board /SC and ELO]
3. Developing guidance for consideration of human rights, gender, poverty, and intersectionality in Global Fund evaluations: [for Board /SC and ELO]
4. Development of meta-learning approach for Imbizo. [for ELO]
5. Development of a formal learning strategy. [for ELO]
6. Recommendation to hold OIG audit as early as possible in 2025. [for Board / SC]

IEP 2023 Annual Report

This brief constitutes the inaugural annual report from the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP). The year 2023 was a period of significant growth and development for the Global Fund's newly reformed evaluation function, which officially came into effect on December 31, 2022². The reform simultaneously created two new structures designed to work in partnership, the Secretariat's Evaluation and Learning Office (ELO), responsible for executing the multi-year evaluation calendar approved by the Board, and the IEP, an advisory group independent from the Secretariat and accountable to the Board through the Strategy Committee (SC), assuring quality and independence over Global Fund evaluation activities to the Board.³

As per the IEP Terms of Reference (ToRs)⁴, this report offers an opinion on the independence, quality, capacity and working modalities of the evaluation structure of the Secretariat, and makes recommendations to further the aims of the Board's reforms - to enhance accountability, evidence-based decision making, and learning from evaluation evidence.

The journey of 2023 was one of evolution and progress, in which fundamental structures and procedures were developed alongside the first evaluations. Due to their novelty and importance in this year's workplan, this report also describes some of these elements.

IEP oversight of the development of the Secretariat's policies, procedures and guidelines

This section highlights IEP oversight of the Secretariat's policies, procedures and guidelines.

(i) Core evaluation policies and procedures

1. **Setting strategic direction:** In Q4 2022 and Q1 and Q2 2023, the IEP undertook a rapid benchmarking exercise.⁵ Panel members reviewed and synthesized a purposive sample of evaluation policies and frameworks from 17 organizations to help inform directions for evaluation within the Global Fund. The IEP's high-level vision often complemented the ELO's focused and operational orientations. Five priorities were discussed and agreed by ELO and IEP to inform strategic directions in 2023 and beyond.
2. **Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Evaluation Function:** An initial draft of the SOPs was developed by the ELO, and shared with the IEP at the virtual IEP meeting 14 and 15 June, 2023. From 30 June to 30 July, 2023, based on core documents,⁶ the IEP clarified the terms of engagement required to fulfil its Board-assigned mandate in relation to evaluation independence, credibility, quality, and utility, and suggested changes to the SOPs. IEP and ELO iterated on the SOPs during IEP meetings in 2023, with final revisions made in December 2023 following consultations with SC Leadership. The SOPs outline the processes, activities, roles, and responsibilities of key stakeholders in operationalizing the independent evaluation function. Owing to the fact that the SOPs aim to describe the end-

² Although the new evaluation function formerly came into effect on Dec 31 2022, the IEP was recruited and met for the first time in September of 2022.

³ The Global Fund. Independent Evaluation Function - 46th Board Meeting GF/B46/05 revision 1 (Board Decision), 8-10 November 2021, Virtual. Geneva, Switzerland: The Global Fund; 2021.

⁴ The Global Fund. Independent Evaluation Function - 46th Board Meeting GF/B46/05 revision 1 (Board Decision), 8-10 November 2021, Virtual. Geneva, Switzerland: The Global Fund; 2021.

⁵ Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) Benchmarking Consultation on Evaluation Policies and Frameworks, The Global Fund; 2022.

⁶ The Global Fund. Independent Evaluation Function - 46th Board Meeting GF/B46/05 revision 1 (Board Decision), 8-10 November 2021, Virtual. Geneva, Switzerland: The Global Fund; 2021. Terms of Reference - Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) (effective as of December 31, 2022). Geneva, Switzerland: The Global Fund; 2021

to-end process for evaluations, covering the scope of ELO work and IEP's oversight, the Strategy Committee was informed of the key features of the SOPs. The SOPs will be published on the Global Fund website in Q1 2024, and updated when necessary.

3. **Development of the Evaluation Function Documents Procedure:** Approved by the SC following the 23rd SC meeting in October 2023, the "Evaluation Function Documents Procedure" reaffirms the Global Fund's commitment to transparency and regulates the publication process of independent evaluations, IEP commentaries, and management responses. The goal of the procedure is to ensure the public release of all independent evaluation reports, associated commentaries by the Independent Evaluation Panel, and management responses by the Secretariat. Demonstrating their complementary roles, the documents procedure was developed by the CELO, in collaboration with the IEP and the Secretariat.
4. **The Evaluation and Learning Principles** ("The Principles") document is being developed by ELO in collaboration with the IEP to reflect the core values of the Global Fund Evaluation Function. As a complement to existing Global Fund rules, policies, and codes of conduct, the Principles will provide an up-to-date, evaluation-specific frame of reference to guide engagement of team members at all stages of the evaluation process, from the initial needs and evaluability assessment through evaluation design, implementation, reporting, and ultimately evaluation use – including the interaction with stakeholders and partners. To be finalized in 2024, the document builds upon the norms and principles for evaluation of the United Nations system and a review of other development partners' evaluation principles⁷.
5. **IEP Rules and Procedures:** The IEP is further defining the procedures related to the IEP in collaboration with the ELO, LGD and Ethics Office. The document will be submitted to SC for its review in the course of Q3 2024.

(ii) *Evaluator selection and approaches to manage evaluator pools.*

Expanding the evaluator pool is a priority to (a) mitigate the risk of dependency on a small number of service providers, typically based in high-income countries (HICs), who frequently conduct Global Fund evaluations; (b) expand opportunities for implementing country entities to contribute knowledge and expertise. This should enhance evaluation quality and relevance especially in the regional/ country contexts where the Global Fund invests. Actions include:

- **To increase awareness among potential evaluation service providers**, for all three evaluations seeking bids, ELO and the Sourcing department organized webinars with potential bidders to explain the evaluation and application process. These webinars each attracted 10 to 30 participants, some representing completely new suppliers. In addition, to expand RFP dissemination channels, ELO curates a growing list of evaluation service providers and the Sourcing department now notifies the list directly. Finally, evaluations are also advertised on the Global Fund website, and on social media sites such as LinkedIn and links disseminated by IEP members.
- **To allow more time to prepare bids**, as recommended by the IEP and requested by the ELO, the Sourcing Department extended the previous four-week response time from RFP announcement to proposal submission to minimum six weeks. Following approval of the Evaluation Workplan and the

⁷ United Nations Evaluation Group (2016), Norms and Standards for Evaluation. New York: UNEG, Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO), *Guidelines for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of Full-Size Projects*, Washington, DC: GEF IEO, 2023. World Bank Group, Evaluation Principles April 2019

2024 OPEX budget, the list of planned evaluations for 2024 with indicative timelines was made public on the sourcing section Global Fund website in Dec 2023⁸.

- **To strengthen cross-institutional initiatives and learning**, the IEP and ELO jointly initiated cooperation with the evaluation units of Gavi and the Global Financing Facility of the World Bank on opportunities to expand the evaluator pool and redress power asymmetries. As a first step, an announcement to the global community about this initiative is forthcoming in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.⁹ At its most recent meeting on November 21-23, 2023, the Panel agreed to prioritizing this initiative in 2024. IEP members will contribute time and expertise to support the ELO and partner organizations to move forward on this agenda, for example, by helping to support outreach and build links with new potential evaluators, especially those from the Global South, by collaborating with the ELO to review and improve (as needed) technical selection criteria used to select service providers, and by providing mentorship to those seeking to apply, for example, by contributing to webinars.

Finally, for two evaluations in 2023 (Strategic Review 2023 and Resource Allocation Methodology), while the SOPs governing IEP engagement were in development and negotiation, the sourcing department managed a Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) and undertook provider selection without IEP participation. However, after a request from SC leadership and reflecting on the experience of 2023, starting in 2024, an IEP Focal Point will participate as an observer in future TECs. This was necessary in the view of the IEP to allow IEP to deliver on its Board-assigned mandate to oversee independence of the end-to-end evaluation process (more details below).

II. Multi-year Evaluation Calendar and Annual Workplans

The multi-year evaluation calendar is a strategic tool to ensure that evaluations conducted by the Global Fund's evaluation function reflect the learning needs of stakeholders and effectively prioritize evaluation topics. ELO is responsible for developing this calendar for approval by the Board, while the IEP oversees its implementation pursuant to the annual workplans approved by the Strategy Committee. IEP oversight gives particular attention to: (1) the adequacy of the processes used to consult stakeholders, including the Board, Secretariat and country partners, on learning and accountability needs; (2) the appropriateness of the criteria used to prioritise topics (including evaluability), and adherence to these.

(iii) Oversight of the implementation of the evaluation calendar

The IEP and ELO have jointly established processes to enable effective oversight of the multi-year evaluation calendar and annual work plan by the IEP. First, the CELO provides operational updates at all IEP meetings, including progress reports and future plans. Moreover, routine bi-weekly calls between the CELO, ELO, and IEP Leadership ensure that the IEP stays fully informed about the progress of the annual work plan and any emerging challenges.

(iv) Identified learning and accountability needs

In 2022, the Secretariat initiated a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process to create

⁸ <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/iel/upcoming-requests-for-proposals/>

⁹ Shams El Arifeen, John Grove, Peter M. Hansen, James R Hargreaves, Hope L. Johnson, Mira Johri, Esther Saville. Strengthening evaluation in Global Health Initiatives (GHIs) to achieve health equity: placing in-country research and technical institutions at the centre. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 2024 Feb 1;102(2):137-139. doi: 10.2471/BLT.23.290531. Epub 2023 Oct 31.

a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the 2023-2028 Strategy and to pinpoint learning needs for the new Strategy. The Board approved the Multi-Year Evaluation Calendar in November 2022. Given this recent consultation, the ELO maintained the suggested topics for the 2024 annual workplan, which were approved by the Strategy Committee in October 2023. In June 2023, the Secretariat's technical teams were consulted to reassess ongoing learning needs and priorities, refining the set of evaluation topics for 2024.

Beginning in 2024, the ELO launched an innovative new initiative to solicit feedback from partners known as "Imbizo". Imbizo seeks to ensure that evaluation will be a two-way process and that implementing partners at country level have an opportunity to channel feedback to the Global Fund. It is anticipated that additional learning needs leading to new evaluation topics may be voiced by partners through this process during 2024, and considered in future years.

(b) III. IEP advice on the performance of the evaluation function

The evaluation function made very good progress in 2023. The ELO has very skillfully launched itself - it has hired and trained staff and established a fully functioning unit, introduced an innovative evaluation and learning engagement model spanning the entire evaluation process from pre-scoping on a proposed topic to following up on recommendations, commissioned and managed two evaluations (instilling confidence in its capacity to manage 4-6 evaluations annually at capacity), and implemented new approaches to seek feedback from the Secretariat (through "users groups") and from country partners (through "Imbizo") – these are critical components of an independent, credible, and transparent evaluation function.

The IEP and the ELO collaborated well, onboarding new staff and members, building productive working relationships within the Global Fund and with partner institutions, and institutionalised appropriate procedures. The start-up phase also involved important challenges. On the side of the IEP, these related principally to ensuring that the SOPs included specific safeguards to enable the IEP to fulfil its role to provide oversight of evaluation independence and quality. Now that well-balanced SOPs have been agreed, the evaluation function may be on a solid footing to deliver on evaluation quality and safeguard independence.

While solid foundations have been laid, it is too early to pronounce on success. In 2024, as we gain experience with the full evaluation cycle, we will be better able to take stock of how the Global Fund's new model for independent evaluation is working and to make improvements.

(i) Capacity and working modalities of the evaluation structure

Initially, the ELO began the year under-resourced, with only five of the nine planned full-time staff positions filled. It was only by the year's end that the office reached its full staffing capacity. During the same period, the IEP experienced planned member transitions, adding two new individuals by September 2023.

In terms of working modalities, the ELO has established a good evaluation and learning engagement model spanning the entire evaluation process, integrating the IEP at specific touchpoints. Current practices also include provision of operational updates by the CELO at each IEP meeting, and routine bi-weekly calls between the CELO, ELO, and IEP Leadership.

(ii) *Design of the IEP evaluation oversight process*

We provide an overview of the design of the IEP's oversight process (a key deliverable of the start-up phase) before summarizing the IEP position on the first two evaluations.

1) *Quality assurance of the evaluations*

The IEP is mandated to provide oversight in the form of quality assurance to individual evaluations at critical stages of the evaluation life cycle. To operationalize this responsibility, for each evaluation, the IEP Chair designates two IEP members as "quality assurance focal points", and two different IEP members as "quality assessment focal points." An IEP member cannot serve both roles for the same evaluation.

- The role of Quality Assurance Focal Points is to provide oversight contributing to evaluation quality and independence during the evaluation process. These FPs are involved at regular touchpoints from the beginning of the process, starting with the development of the Terms of Reference (ToR), to the completion of the draft final evaluation report. They contribute advice to strengthen evaluation quality and help to monitor that the evaluation progresses as per the Terms of Reference.
- The role of Quality Assessment focal points is to provide an objective assessment of the final evaluation report, with a focus on evaluation quality and independence. The assessment is a critical source of information supporting the IEP decision on whether to endorse the evaluation report or not.
- To promote transparent and consistent application of criteria, a new Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) will be used by all focal points to review evaluation reports. The QAF, which was designed by the IEP with extensive feedback from ELO, is aligned to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards for evaluation reports and tailored to the Global Fund's needs. It underwent pilot testing on previous evaluations and was finalised in November 2023. The QAF will be reviewed and modified by the IEP periodically (next in 2025).

2) *Independence of the evaluation function*

Ensuring independence is a joint responsibility of ELO and IEP. The IEP plays a key role for the Board in providing assurance of the independence of Global Fund evaluations under the new evaluation structure, while ELO serves as a first line of defence. Several key processes and procedures to strengthen the independence of evaluations have been established and standardized in the SOPs. Key examples include:

- Commencing in January 2024, for each evaluation, one IEP evaluation Focal Point will participate as an observer in the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC). In this role, the IEP FP will have the opportunity to review submitted technical proposals and witness the selection process for evaluation service providers who bid in response to Requests for Proposals. IEP Focal Points will not take part in TEC discussions or decision-making.
- To enable IEP Quality Assurance Focal Points to support evaluation quality and independence, norms have been established for communication at regular touchpoints throughout the evaluation lifecycle, including transparent access to evaluation documents and comments from stakeholders.
- A procedure has been established in the SOPs to advise evaluators that, if they experience any problems with independence during the course of their work, these can be escalated first to the CELO and thereafter, if needed, to the IEP FPs and Leadership.
- Involvement of the IEP Quality Assurance FPs at regular touchpoints provides an additional avenue for monitoring the evaluation process. FPs may discuss any problems that they observe with the IEP Leadership.

- The SOPs ensure that results validation meetings, in which the Secretariat and evaluators come together towards the end of an evaluation to discuss key findings and potential recommendations, are co-chaired by the CELO and the IEP Leadership.

3) Development of Terms of Reference (ToRs)

The IEP provides advice on the scope and content of the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) and is ultimately responsible for their approval. To ensure a culture of no surprises, the IEP and ELO have agreed on criteria that might lead the IEP not to endorse a ToR, including inadequate or biased consultation to develop the scope and questions, serious concerns about evaluability, or concerns that the evaluation is not positioned for learning (i.e. that it does not prioritize evaluation questions and outcomes that meet demand from key decision-makers and promise to deliver in a timely way-- this should not occur if the multi-year calendar is well set).

To facilitate decision-making, for each ToR, the ELO now offers an opportunity for consultation to all stakeholders mutually agreed by ELO and IEP, including relevant Secretariat parties and the Strategy Committee, and provides the IEP with detailed information on consultation processes and outcomes, evaluability, and learning objectives. The IEP will assess each ToR using a standardized tool, which is currently under development based on the QAF. It is expected to be reviewed and adopted in Q2 2024.

Endorsement of the Final Report

For the final evaluation report to be endorsed, evaluation independence and quality must be assured at every step in the process. The decision to endorse is taken by the Panel as a whole, based on pre-specified criteria and inputs collected throughout the evaluation lifecycle.

The IEP interprets endorsement to mean that the Panel is confident that decision makers should seriously consider the evaluation findings and the recommendations. The IEP will endorse the final evaluation report if it meets expectations for quality and independence.

- **Quality:** if the quality assessment based on the QAF confirms that the evaluation is of acceptable quality, the Panel opinion will be positive. Informed by UNEG norms of quality, the QAF considers criteria such as whether the evaluation addressed the agreed evaluation questions and scope of the ToR (or inception report), whether the methodology and analysis are robust, whether findings and conclusions are sufficiently evidence-based, and whether conclusions are impartial and free from bias.
- **Independence:** the Panel viewpoint will be positive if independence has been safeguarded at each stage of the evaluation, meaning that either no problems related to independence have been raised, or, if problems did arise, they were successfully resolved without detriment to evaluation findings and recommendations.

(iii) *IEP advice on evaluations completed in 2023*

The first two evaluations conducted under the new evaluation function were completed prior to the 24th Strategy Committee meeting in March 2024. Table 1 summarises decisions made.

Evaluation	Quality Rating ¹	Independent ²	Endorsed by IEP? ³
Strategic Review 2023	Good	Satisfactory	Yes
Resource Allocation Methodology	Less than Acceptable/ Good ⁴	Satisfactory	Yes

¹ Evaluation quality is assessed on a four-point scale: Unacceptable, Less Than Acceptable, Good, or Very Good.

² Binary response required (Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory)

³ Binary response required (Yes, No)

⁴ The Quality Assessment Focal Points did not reach consensus; therefore, both ratings are given.

IEP commentaries, which use an agreed template to unpack the quality or strength of evidence underlying key recommendations and their actionability, are available to facilitate informed uptake of these evaluations by the Strategy Committee and the Board. We provide some high-level insights from these first evaluations.

- **Strategic Review 2023:** *The IEP endorsed SR2023. The evaluation has demonstrated satisfactory quality; however, the independence could not be fairly and objectively assessed.*
- Because SR2023 was conducted before the SOPs were finalized, some elements required for the IEP to take a decision on independence were not available. Held on January 31st, 2023, an exit interview involving the independent evaluator, CELO, ELO, and IEP was conducted to identify any gaps in the process and for learning.
 - The high quality of evaluation management offered by the ELO was praised by the independent evaluator;
 - The Secretariat "user's groups" were perceived by the independent evaluator as a strong asset to ensure that the evaluation is informed and anchored in the Global Fund's realities; however, it was noted by the independent evaluator that they also come with some challenges, including putting some pressures on evaluators to conform to viewpoints and comments expressed;
 - In the independent evaluator's view, the current process of the UG structure and composition gave proportionally greater space to the Secretariat's viewpoints. To counterbalance this, the independent evaluator recommended that the space accorded to external viewpoints within a UG type structure be strengthened going forward.
 - The mechanisms to create the external balancing voice remain to be defined. The independent evaluator lead suggested (i) involving an external reference group or advisory group and (ii) having the opportunity to make direct presentations to the IEP.
 - The presence of the IEP Chair and IEP Focal Points in the validation workshop was noted as a positive to strengthen independence.

The IEP found the interview very helpful to delineate the many strengths in the evaluation process and to highlight areas for improvement. External voice should be strengthened in the evaluation process through various means, including strengthening the role of the IEP.

- **Evaluation of the Global Fund Resource Allocation Methodology:** The IEP endorsed the RAM evaluation, and similar caveats were noted with respect to ability to ascertain independence. With respect to report quality, the variable strength of evidence for specific recommendations was highlighted.

1.2 IV. Recommendations to the Board/Strategy Committee

Despite the challenges of start-up, the new independent evaluation function made very good progress in 2023 and is well-placed to deliver high-quality, independent evaluations to meet the learning needs of the Global Fund. To reinforce this positive momentum, the IEP recommends:

1. *To support the emerging partnership among the evaluation units of the Global Fund, Gavi and the Global Financing Facility of the World Bank on opportunities to expand the evaluator pool and to redress power asymmetries in evaluation.* The conversation on the future of Global Health Initiatives (GHIs)¹⁰ adds impetus to the need for thoughtful reforms, and IEP and ELO both place a high importance on this issue, which is cross-cutting. We bring this initiative to the attention of the Board and Strategy Committee and request any additional guidance, as well as support to publicize the initiative among their networks.
2. *Use of ad hoc Evaluation Reference Groups (ERG) to strengthen conduct and use for specific evaluations:* Constitution of an ERG comprising key external stakeholders relevant to the evaluation (e.g. country representatives, community representatives, or technical partners such as WHO, Roll Back Malaria, Stop TB, Unitaid) is often seen as a best practice to engage expertise and strengthen cross-organizational learning from evaluations. While ERGs may not be needed for every evaluation, they may be especially valuable in specific situations, such as when the evaluations are technically oriented, or when the results are likely to impact other organizations. Members are usually technical experts, policy experts, or persons with relevant lived experience. They facilitate consensus-building and provision of clear and coherent direction to evaluators. They also contribute to more effective coordination of actions in the context of the multilateral system, as they facilitate trust, cross-organizational learning and joint actions. IEP Quality Assurance Focal Points would be an integral part of an ERG, enabling them to follow the evaluation from beginning to end and fulfil oversight responsibilities. This is not anticipated to add additional efforts or activities beyond those defined in the current SOPs for the evaluation function, as IEP Focal Points would conduct their activities in the context of the ERG. We recommend to the Board/ Strategy Committee and ELO that use of an ERG be considered as a learning exercise for an upcoming evaluation, and tentatively suggest the upcoming Malaria evaluation.
3. *Developing guidance for consideration of human rights, gender, poverty, and intersectionality in Global Fund evaluations:* Development evaluations have traditionally been responsive to high-influence stakeholders such as donor governments or agencies, with little place accorded to the intended beneficiaries of development programs. The IEP recommends development of best practices and related guidance to ensure that beneficiaries have genuine voice and representation in evaluations, reflecting the Global Fund's deep commitment to gender equality, communities and human rights. Moreover, by placing emphasis on participation, inclusion and fair power relations, it would help to ensure that evaluation contributes to empowerment. As a complementary point, we recommend development of guidance on how to consider intersectionality (the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of interdependent forms of privilege and oppression (such as colonialism, homophobia, racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups)¹¹, in

¹⁰ Sophie Witter NP, Rosemary James, Shehla Zaidi, Severine Carillon, Rene English, Shifa Habib, Jeff Tan, Fatouma Hane, Giulia Loffreda, Emilie Venables, Seyed-Moeen Hosseinalipour, Valery Ridde, Maria Paola Bertone, Adama Faye, Karl Blanchet. Reimagining the Future of Global Health Initiatives, Research Report, Queen Margaret University, Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies, Aga Khan University, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Stellenbosch University.; 2023.

¹¹ Hankivsky O. Intersectionality 101. The Institute for Intersectionality Research & Policy, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. Publication date: April 2014 ISBN: 978-0-86491-355-52014; Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics,

evaluations. This would help to ensure that evaluation findings and recommendations are relevant to multiple complex realities. Building on conceptual frameworks used by the Global Fund, evaluation-specific guidance could be informed by examples of principles and practices from other organizations, such as UN Women and UNICEF, and establish the Global Fund as a field leader in this area. We recommend to the Board/ Strategy Committee and ELO that collaboration be initiated for the development of these guidelines, which could draw upon the expertise of the Secretariat, particularly that related to community, rights, & gender, ELO, and the IEP.

4. *Development of meta-learning approach for Imbizo.* The objective of Imbizo is to drive insights generated by country stakeholder feedback to promote learning and critical discussions among Board, the Secretariat and implementation partners to improve the Global Fund's operational model, and better achieve the Global Fund partnership results. In the 2024 pilot year, Imbizo will experiment with a number of methods and approaches for large-scale real-time country consultation, and learn by doing. While this is very appropriate, the IEP recommends that the ELO use this opportunity to ensure that, if and when Imbizo is extended, it is also strongly evaluable. To this end, the objectives, success criteria and indicators of the initiative should be refined during the pilot phase.
5. *Development of a formal learning strategy.* Learning from evaluation is a key responsibility of the evaluation function of the Global Fund. To ensure that it is well integrated into the fabric of evaluation at the Global Fund and given the attention it needs, a learning strategy is needed. The IEP notes that conceptual work has been started by ELO on broad strategies for learning and dissemination and was presented to the IEP in the 5th (Nov 2023) IEP meeting. The IEP recommends to the ELO that this work be prioritized and look forward to following and contributing to this workstream.
6. *Recommendation to hold OIG audit as early as possible in 2025.* The IEP is mandated to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the independent safeguards in its annual report to the Board. Although it is early in the learning process, the first evaluations (SR2023 and RAM) were discussed at this meeting, and learning on implementation of the evaluation function is also accruing rapidly. According to Board Paper Independent Evaluation Function - 46th Board Meeting GF/B46/05 revision 1 (Board Decision), 8- 10 November 2021 the OIG has indicated it will initiate a review of the Evaluation Function and the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) by not later than 31 December 2023, subject to approval of its proposed work plan by the Audit and Finance Committee. The review is expected to include the adequacy and effectiveness of the Evaluation Function and the IEP, with a particular focus on the measures to safeguard independence. The effectiveness of the measures to safeguard independence is as yet unknown and challenges have been experienced. In addition, the SOPs defined based on the IEP and ELO mandates to provide assurance require specific actions that may have resource implications, and the 2023 and 2024 IEP work plan revealed a disbalance in work planning and resourcing. Noting that the audit date was deferred to 2025 to gain experience, the IEP recommends to the Board and Strategy Committee that the audit be held as early as feasible, for learning and possible course correction.

and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>