



CENTER  
FOR  
GLOBAL  
DEVELOPMENT

# Ideas to Action

Case Studies of the  
Influence and Impact of  
Five Initiatives at the Center  
for Global Development

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*An External Assessment Led by  
Benjamin Soskis of the Urban Institute*

2022



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# About These Case Studies

The case studies in this volume were produced as part of an external assessment undertaken between 2020-2022 to examine how the Center for Global Development contributed to influence and impact in some of its areas of work. The case studies detail five notable initiatives from the organization's first 20 years. On a broad level, the case studies also illustrate the complex ways in which policy change happens and is understood retrospectively, the variability of success, and the interdependency of a range of contextual factors in enabling (or hindering) progress. This external assessment was led by Benjamin Soskis of the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy and overseen by Amanda Glassman with coordination and support from Brin Datema in consultation with CGD's President Masood Ahmed. Each of the case studies were researched and authored by independent consultants to CGD.

# Acknowledgments

CGD is immensely grateful to Benjamin Soskis for his leadership and to the rest of the case study authors—Cordelia Kenney, Emily Huie, Hannah Postel, and James Ladi Williams—for undertaking this project with us. We are thankful for the interest and commitment you showed to learning with us. We are also grateful to each of the CGD leads (past and present) of the initiatives explored in this volume for offering their time and insights to the case study authors. Thank you as well to all of the sources interviewed. We are grateful to Alexander Berger, Otis Reid, Sarah Lucas, Chris Maloney, Karen Mathiasen, and Erin Collinson for their feedback. Many thanks to Brin Datema who coordinated this effort and to Emily Schabacker, Sarah Allen, Maya Verber, and Stephanie Donohoe for supporting the publication of this volume.

CGD is grateful for contributions from Open Philanthropy in support of this work.

# Thinking, Doing, and Learning: 20 Years of Influence and Impact at the Center for Global Development

MASOOD AHMED, AMANDA GLASSMAN, AND BRIN DATEMA

Masood Ahmed is president of CGD. Amanda Glassman is executive vice president and a senior fellow at CGD. Brin Datema is a manager supporting programs at CGD.

When the Center for Global Development (CGD) was set up as a “think and do tank,” the aim was not just to produce papers or create “a sandbox for economists,” as one of our founders put it. Rather, our vision was to turn ideas into action by combining rigorous research and evidence with practical experience in economic development and global health economics.

Part of that mandate means examining how we work, learning from success and disappointment, and finding ways to improve. While this reflection is and should be continuous, we’ve used our anniversary milestones to formally assess our progress. As CGD celebrates its 20th anniversary, it is an opportune time to look back at our work and impact and draw lessons from those efforts. Part of that formal assessment process is embodied in this book of case studies, assembled by Benjamin Soskis at the Urban Institute’s Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, with financing from Open Philanthropy.

CGD has grown considerably in the 20 years since its formation. What started as a small group of experts has grown into an organization with 120 employees; offices in Washington, DC, and London; an impressive roster of nonresident fellows; and more developed communications, outreach, and

fundraising functions. Our budget across both sites is now approximately \$25 million per year, up from about \$13 million in 2016. We are publishing more research and analysis, convening more events, and expanding audiences, and we are being called upon more frequently by media outlets and decision makers. We are also more invested in partnerships with other researchers and analysts, including think tanks in the Global South such as Ghana’s African Center for Economic Transformation and Kenya’s African Population and Health Research Center. Indeed, around 60 percent of the money that CGD spends on research partners supports partners in Africa and South Asia.

With this growth in size, productivity, and reach has come increased impact in global development. In the past few years, we have seen instances in which CGD research and outreach have resulted in tangible change. In 2022 alone, CGD scholars developed an agenda for women’s economic empowerment that was picked up by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank; pushed the UK government to adopt better trading terms for developing countries post-Brexit (we were gratified to see the UK government’s announcement in August

2022 that UK terms will beat EU terms in ways that build on our recommendations); and supported the G20 in its efforts to set up a new pandemic preparedness fund in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (this idea started as a CGD blog post published in 2019 and came to fruition in 2022 when such a fund was approved by the World Bank’s board). Some additional examples of our impact and influence are detailed on our website—we encourage you to take a look.<sup>1</sup>

Over the years, we have come to recognize that impact can take many forms. Shaping the academic consensus on the economics of migration is very different from promoting the creation of a full-service development finance corporation, but both are important. Field building, socializing ideas, and changing an evidence base all contribute to the evolution of the development landscape. And sometimes, realizing the full potential of a good idea may mean letting it flower elsewhere. We’ve seeded several new organizations—including 3ie, the Energy for Growth Hub, and Labor Mobility Partnerships—that have continued to thrive on their own. And while there are policy-related moments in time that signal the adoption of a proposal or an idea, the reality is that the work to make an idea deliver on its expected impact means continued engagement over the long term.

Like our peer institutions, we document our contributions by counting our outputs and activities (e.g., papers written, events hosted and attended, page views, media mentions, etc.). But we are acutely aware that research products don’t lead in a linear fashion to influence and impact, and a paper or blog post is rarely the sole impetus behind a change in policy. So, to complement these quantitative metrics, we take a deeper look at how our outputs and activities come together to achieve an ultimate goal (e.g., policy change, shift in global dialogue, increased transparency, etc.). These qualitative assessments, including the case studies in this volume, provide a clearer picture of our influence and impact and, more importantly, showcase how we translate our research into action.

With these five case studies, we wanted to go beyond the numbers (which are still valuable) and the high-level summaries of activities to really look closely and critically at how we got to

where we did. We wanted to look back at our approaches and tease out what our ultimate role was in bringing about change in each area, and what that implies for the way we organize ourselves going forward. Most importantly, we wanted to carry out this examination in a manner consistent with our commitment to transparency.

We commissioned these case studies as part of a package of work reflecting on our organizational progress and how we can be more systematic about setting priorities and tracking our impact. This project covers a necessarily limited number of cases from our first two decades, representing five significant areas of work in terms of time spent and clear policy intent. They are not a series of our “greatest hits” but rather projects that we felt we could learn from—whether because of the successes achieved or challenges faced in their execution.

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## WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

### The tools are similar but the path to impact is unique

Each of these case studies illustrates the complexity and uniqueness of the path from ideas to impact. The creation of the US International Development Finance Corporation, for instance, centered around uptake of a CGD policy proposal, while our work on identification for development helped build a field, and our value-for-money portfolio sought to generate consensus and shape the agenda around value for money in HIV/AIDS financing. Our combination of tools remains consistent across the cases and includes analytical work, convenings, targeted outreach, and partnerships with like-minded and complementary organizations. Yet, depending on the landscape of action and each program team’s relative strengths, these tools are utilized differently across CGD. Convening without some analytical base will not result in effective policy, nor will analytical work without complementary convening and outreach. We must invest in both.

### We can’t attribute impact, but we can demonstrate influence

Unlike many of the policies and programs we study, the impact of our own work cannot be isolated. Ideas are not trademarked,



many actions are undertaken in coalition and collaboration, and external contextual factors ultimately influence the result (we see both enabling and limiting external factors at play in the case of our work on value for money in HIV/AIDS financing, for example). More importantly, our goal isn't to take credit but to ensure that our work has an impact. Collaborations help us amplify our impact, reach wider audiences, and gather feedback on ideas so we can strengthen our analyses and recommendations and ensure that we're incorporating different perspectives. This poses a measurement challenge not specific to CGD but faced by all organizations that engage in policy research. There are no easy answers, but these case studies are a rigorous way to illustrate how policy research can work, and a good input to discussion with CGD funders to set realistic expectations.

## **The quality and reach of researchers matters alongside support functions and broader networks**

At the heart of CGD's accomplishments over the past two decades are our people, and the cases presented here are often centered around the work of one or two researchers on a given topic (e.g., senior fellow Charles Kenny's efforts around the open contracting movement and senior fellow Alan Gelb's work on biometric identification for development). However, while it's important to have someone leading the charge, it's often a combination of different skills that gets us where we need to go. In our work on Global Skill Partnerships, for example, senior fellow Michael Clemens's innovative research and policy ideas were well complemented by policy fellow Helen Dempster's focus on policy outreach—and it's the combination of the two individuals' contributions that has led to success in getting the idea off the ground (or, rather, off the page).

These cases also illustrate the importance of our support teams (communications, policy outreach, fundraising) in helping to amplify our researchers' work, inform the right audiences, and ensure that funding is available to support the work. As CGD has grown over the years, so too has our ability to expand and formalize these support functions and thus be

more intentional and effective in our idea dissemination and outreach.

The centrality of our researchers in these cases has implications for hiring at CGD. We need experienced researchers who are willing and able to follow their ideas through to action and impact. Ideally, such researchers have prior experience in the development sector and the policy space. As we see in these case studies, the CGD researchers often play an important insider/outsider role, bringing together this experience in and understanding of key development institutions with an ability to serve as an independent, constructive critic and convener. The skill set associated with this insider/outsider profile is not easy to match, and this places natural limits on our growth while also requiring strategic partnerships with outside groups that have complementary skills and networks.

Finally, the cases illustrate that we are most successful when we draw on our full set of human resources, including our board members, our network of nonresident fellows, and "CGD friends" who provide invaluable advice and collaboration on the road from ideas to influence and impact.

## **Policy and narrative change (often) take time**

These cases also clearly illustrate how influence and impact sometimes need to wait for narrow windows of political opportunity. Though there are some exceptions, including our recent work on women peacekeepers, the timeline for ideas to generate clear impacts often exceeds a typical grant period. Making a difference requires sustained attention to an issue over time. For example, while Clemens's paper specifically proposing the Global Skill Partnership model was published in 2014, it wasn't until 2019 that the first pilots were initiated. And CGD's persistence in pressing for greater value for money and data transparency in HIV/AIDS financing has, over time, helped shape attitudes and thinking around the value-for-money agenda at global health institutions.

## **Flexible core funding is critical**

For all the abovementioned reasons, CGD's success depends on the availability of flexible and long-term funding that allows our researchers to pursue, and stick with, their innovative

ideas. This kind of support enables us to explore ideas “ahead of the curve” and respond quickly to emerging crises (e.g., pandemics, geopolitical conflict, etc.) and take advantage of narrow policy windows. This flexibility also allows us to attract bold new researchers, including individuals who have held prominent positions in government, multilateral institutions, academic institutions, NGOs, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector.

## We must ensure a feedback loop

We need to engage in more regular assessment of our projects and programs in order to better determine which ideas to champion and at what level of intensity, the most effective approach, and when to change course or walk away from a given issue. The latter is, of course, particularly difficult, as many of our greatest impacts have resulted from protracted

engagement (e.g., our work on the US International Development Finance Corporation). But, as opportunity costs are real and funders’ priorities can change, this is an area in which we can and will improve in the years ahead.

## LOOKING AHEAD

We continue to capitalize and build upon our strengths—our independence, our people, our commitment to evidence, and our convening power—in the pursuit of new ideas to shape better policies and practices around the world. We look forward to sharing the five case studies in this volume and we hope that their stories offer insights and lessons on the policy and narrative change process, showcase the challenges and opportunities inherent in our work, and help reframe donor expectations around research influence and impact.

## Notes

1 “Impact,” CGD, [www.cgdev.org/page/impact-and-influence](http://www.cgdev.org/page/impact-and-influence).

*As a 501(c)(3) organization, CGD’s employees and agents shall not engage in federal lobbying contacts or federal lobbying activity, as such terms are defined in the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, 2 U.S.C. § 1601, et. seq., as amended, on behalf of any donor, including making any oral or written communication, including electronic communication, to a covered federal executive or legislative branch official on behalf of any donor regarding: the formulation, modification, or adoption of federal legislation, rules, regulations, Executive orders, or other governmental programs, policies, or positions; the administration or execution of federal programs or policies, including the negotiation, administration, or award of contracts, loans, grants, permits or licenses; or the nomination or confirmation of a person subject to confirmation by the Senate. CGD shall not function directly or indirectly as a donor’s representative or agent to the public at large. CGD and its employees and*

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# Thematic Overview

## BENJAMIN SOSKIS

Benjamin Soskis is a senior research associate in the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute. Soskis served as an external consultant to CGD overseeing the development of the case studies in this volume and authored the case study on biometric identification for development.

In commemoration of the Center for Global Development's (CGD's) 20th anniversary, the institution commissioned five case studies analyzing significant initiatives it has undertaken over the last two decades. The case studies are primarily focused on understanding and learning about CGD's influence and impact with respect to policy change or field building. The approach follows a deliberately circumscribed, "mechanistic" definition of impact. In other words, the case studies do not analyze the overall humanitarian consequences of the policies pursued and enacted and the fields built and bolstered. Instead, the cases address the particular work that CGD has done and attempt to assess, with as much specificity as possible, the available evidence related to how that work has led to policy change or shifts in the practice of development.<sup>1</sup> The authors of these case studies approached them historically, meaning that they sought to incorporate the appreciation for contingency and the multicausal nature of political and social change, and the efforts to establish deep contextualization, that define the best of historical scholarship. They have often adopted counterfactuals that imagine what might have happened in the absence of CGD's interventions as an analytic instrument to help "stress-test" claims of CGD's impact or influence.

Each of these case studies is based on 10 to 20 interviews with key stakeholders, a literature review, and internal CGD documents. As such, they cannot offer fully comprehensive accounts of the initiatives under review. Rather, the case study authors have sought to engage the material with sufficient

thoroughness to be able to address key questions regarding those initiatives' influence and impact, while noting where additional research would be helpful.

In commissioning these case studies, CGD's hope was not only to gain clarity on the nature of its own distinct contributions to the fields in question, but also to advance discussions more generally regarding the challenges involved in assessing the influence and impact of think tanks and advocacy and research organizations in the development space. Perhaps the most significant of these challenges is the fact that much of the work that such organizations do in the hope of shaping development policy or practice—building an evidence base, strengthening and facilitating debate around key issues, issuing recommendations for best practices—involves the pursuit of indirect impact, applied to the realm of ideas or through a field of practice at some remove from policymaking institutions. Thus, the work resists clear lines of causal attribution with respect to changes in development policy or practice, even as close scrutiny of the work can also confirm the general importance of idea crafting and field building to the process of policy change.

A number of other related evaluative challenges emerge from these case studies. These include the need to weigh the causal significance of "windows of opportunity" for policy change, widening or narrowing due to external circumstances over which policy research organizations wield little control; the significance of determining the temporal vantage point from

which to engage in assessments of open-ended campaigns; and the complications of assessing a “crowded field” and incorporating into causal narratives partnerships and collaborations, which can significantly amplify impact while also making it difficult to isolate the contributions of any particular organization.

The five case studies (along with the researchers who wrote them) are as follows:

- ▶ *Creating a New US International Development Finance Corporation*, assessing CGD’s work to unlock greater and more efficient US bilateral financing for private, pro-development investment (Emily Huie)
- ▶ *Contributing to Enhancing the “Value for Money” of HIV/AIDS Financing*, evaluating CGD’s efforts to maximize the impact of financing on HIV/AIDS outcomes given limited aid resources (Cordelia Kenney)
- ▶ *Developing Global Skill Partnerships*, analyzing CGD’s promotion of a policy initiative for more expansive, win-win labor migration between high-income and low- and middle-income countries (Hannah Postel)
- ▶ *Supporting the Field of Biometric Identification for Development*, examining CGD’s work to encourage the use of, and shape global best practices related to, biometric ID technology in order to help improve public service delivery and advance progress on many of the Sustainable Development Goals, among other applications (Benjamin Soskis)
- ▶ *Contributing to the Development of the Open Contracting Movement*, assessing CGD’s involvement in launching a movement intended to improve the efficiency and transparency of public-sector procurement (James Ladi Williams)

It’s important to note that CGD did not select these five case study topics based on the judgment that the highlighted initiatives represented the organization’s “greatest hits” or “biggest bets.” Rather, CGD selected cases based on a diverse range of criteria with the aim of gaining insight and extracting learning. The five cases feature initiatives that are generally considered to be successes, with relatively clean lines of causality between CGD’s research work and desired policy outcomes or development practices, as well as initiatives whose success is more ambiguous or indeterminate, and in which those lines are much less well-defined. The cases include initiatives in a

range of program areas and favoring varying mechanisms of influence and impact; initiatives that have brought in a range of funding amounts; initiatives that have commenced more recently and initiatives dating from closer to CGD’s establishment, two decades ago; and initiatives in which CGD was clearly the lead organization and initiatives in which it was one coequal player in a broader network of actors.

These historical case studies can be understood as being positioned between two other approaches to evaluation, one that seeks out precise measures of outcomes and impact that can be tracked and assessed over time (page views, money moved, disability-adjusted life years increased) and another that regards efforts to assess impact with discomfort and even with suspicion, believing they often fail to capture the contributions of long-term movements for social change and have been at times used as a means of disciplining or restraining those movements. These case studies do attempt to be as detailed, rigorous, and precise as possible about the mechanisms and levers by which CGD has sought to enact policy change, but they are also sensitive to the limits of that analysis and thus try to maintain a degree of epistemic humility regarding the certainty of the claims that can be made on CGD’s behalf. Thus, they highlight the value of careful attention to impact as a category of analysis, while also making clear the limits of such analysis and opening up room for other ways of talking about and assessing the contributions made by CGD.

The sections below explore some of the common themes that emerge from these five case studies and reflect on the relationship of these themes to the challenges involved in assessing CGD’s impact and influence.

## CGD’S APPROACHES

The case studies highlight a range of approaches central to achieving the desired impact or influence. In several of the case studies, CGD’s aim was to expand the boundaries of what is considered an instrument of aid or development, such as identification or migration. In several instances, CGD designed and promoted innovative policy solutions, such as a development finance corporation or Global Skill Partnerships. In

others, CGD sought to build up an embryonic field, movement, or mode of thinking and analysis within the development space, such as the open contracting movement, the identification for development field, or the value-for-money approach within global health.

In these case studies, CGD at times conducted analysis and educational outreach around specific policy proposals (such as the creation of a full-service US development finance institution) and at times directed its work more “upstream,” to shape attitudes and modes of analysis that would in turn inform policy, through guidelines and policy recommendations. CGD produced research and analysis in response to policy priorities as well as specific queries or mandates from funders or policymakers, and helped frame, brand, and socialize certain novel policy ideas. CGD publications featured in these case studies range from blog posts to research reports to lengthier monographs. Finally, as will be discussed in greater detail below, these case studies feature CGD researchers working both informally with other partners and through more formal convenings and working groups.

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## CGD ASSETS

In nearly all these case studies, senior research fellows play the leading role in developing and promoting the given policy change or in field building. As such, they clearly represent one of CGD’s key assets—its people. This model of institutional reliance on senior fellows carries with it certain strengths and liabilities. Such weighting toward the apex allows CGD to highlight and leverage senior figures’ expertise, analytic prowess, and entrepreneurialism; the trust and respect they command; and their ability to reach leading policymakers. Yet it also means that the success of certain initiatives at CGD is especially dependent on the “personality, professional exigencies, and personal connections,” of one or two individuals, as Hannah Postel notes in her case study of Global Skill Partnerships, and thus the policy impact associated with a particular policy initiative is potentially vulnerable to any disruption to the status of the senior fellow.

But the case studies also highlight CGD assets beyond the senior leads. Mid-level fellows and associate staff play a significant role in several of the cases, both in terms of the research and analysis they provide and in terms of their movement from CGD to other development institutions. The case studies make clear the extent to which the dissemination of CGD policy ideas has been aided by the “pollination” of former CGD staffers—at the associate and senior levels—throughout key public and private agencies (the case study on identification for development is an especially strong example of this). The case studies also highlight the important work that CGD board members have done in supporting the efforts to drive policy change featured in the case studies; to cite just one example of many, the report on the creation of the US International Development Finance Corporation highlights how board member Rob Mosbacher helped build support for the policy among conservative House members and board member Smita Singh supported the push via her membership on President Obama’s Global Development Council.

The case studies make clear as well that CGD’s published research and analysis represent important assets that can spread and exert influence independent of the efforts of the researchers and staff who created them. They also highlight the organization’s ability to issue timely publications and arrange complex logistics; the vital contributions of the staff who manage and support CGD’s operations can be discerned throughout. In addition, the case studies show the importance of CGD’s responsiveness and adaptability as an institution—characteristics enabled by flexible funding, which has allowed CGD researchers to opportunistically focus on or pivot to particular issues at key moments. Finally, the case studies underscore the significance of CGD’s reputation for rigor and independence and its standing in the field as key assets that are obviously fueled by the work of the organization’s staff but that also exert an independent force on the development field.

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## COMMON THEMES

### 1. Insider/outside status

One theme that emerges from these five case studies is the importance of CGD’s status as both an insider and outsider



institution (the same holds for the research leads featured as well). On the one hand, CGD's work often relied on considerable knowledge of and familiarity with the operation of government or key private institutions, either from the prior work experience of researchers or years of observation and the cultivation of close relationships. In all the initiatives featured in the case studies, that experience and those relationships granted CGD the ability to initiate contact with senior government or development agency officials. This was the case, for instance, with respect to Todd Moss and Ben Leo's success in advancing their proposal for the creation of a development finance corporation, as well as the influence Alan Gelb had with the World Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) initiative, in part due to his prior experience as a senior economist at the institution.

On the other hand, it was also because Gelb was no longer a World Bank official, because his work was now situated outside the institution, that he was able to play an important role as mediator and facilitator in the creation of the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development, which were intentionally crafted and presented as the product of a collection of development stakeholders and not as official World Bank guidelines.

More generally, the balance between outsider and insider positioning in these case studies emerged as a key component of CGD's ability to serve as a "constructive critic," one that could advance (sometimes critical) normative imperatives but remained attentive to the institutional constraints and political exigencies facing development institutions. In the case studies, CGD's credibility as a policy research institution was often linked to its putative independence, meaning its distance from the development institutions it analyzed (public and private) but also from the advocacy organizations some sources claimed were excessively critical and removed from an appreciation of the actual challenges facing those institutions.

These case studies illuminate the delicate balance that CGD must maintain between these insider and outsider positions. If CGD tips too much in the former direction, it runs the risk of

*These case studies illuminate the delicate balance that CGD must maintain between [an] insider and outside position.*

"institutional capture" and the loss of its independent, critical perspective. Yet if it moves too far in the other direction, its analysis could seem too theoretical and detached from the exigencies facing development policymakers.

Several of the challenges to claims of CGD's impact in these case studies stem from an assessment that it had lost this balance at certain times.

## **2. Patience and persistence**

Another theme that emerges from these case studies is that the impact and influence ascribed to CGD is often the product of long-term investments that involve periods of relative dormancy and even frustration, during which it is not clear if the work is progressing. The prominence of patience and persistence in these case studies points to several related observations about the nature of CGD's impact and influence.

First, the case studies highlight the significance of CGD's strategy of "seeding," meaning the aggressive dissemination of policy ideas across a wide range of platforms and institutions, without a definite plan as to how the ideas will be taken up, shared, or acted upon. Such a strategy necessarily requires time, both because of the hit-or-miss nature of the enterprise and because once "seeded" in institutions, ideas often will need to germinate for a considerable duration before leading to concrete policy actions.

This strategy, then, highlights the importance of sticking with an idea; indeed, in the case studies, sources frequently cited CGD's tenacity and consistency as key traits. As CGD policy fellow Helen Dempster explains in the context of CGD's campaign to promote Global Skill Partnerships, "Sustained hammering is effective!" Similarly, Emily Huie, in her case study of CGD's role in the creation of the Development Finance Corporation, notes that, after the publication of the paper in which they

proposed a version of the institution, CGD's Moss and Leo kept up "a steady drumbeat" of meetings, both within the international development community and with related NGOs. It's notable that Cordelia Kenney uses the same phrase in the "value for money" case study to describe CGD's approach; the work generated a "drumbeat," she writes, around the issue of data transparency in order to shape policy at PEPFAR. The suggestion here is that persistence did, or ultimately will, pay off—that it was a necessary condition for impact. Indeed, one former CGD staffer quoted in that case study argued that CGD's analysis and educational efforts encouraged repeated conversations about value for money in global health to the point that the ideas were "no longer taboo and [became] part of the mainstream dialogue." Finally, in the case study on Global Skill Partnerships, Hannah Postel details the extended time period during which there was little uptake of the idea, despite the efforts of CGD to promote it with companies, origin countries, and destination countries. This fact was not lost on CGD leadership. As CGD's president at the time, Nancy Birdsall, recalls, "For three or four years I don't think there was any [outside] interest there at all [but] the most amazing thing was how Michael [Clemens] kept plugging away at it."

It is easy to think of persistence as an individual virtue—as Birdsall seems to suggest in the above quote. It no doubt is one, but it is also, and just as importantly, as revealed in these case studies, an institutional one. It was an institutional decision to allow CGD researchers to continue their work even without a clear endpoint in sight. The leeway granted senior researchers is in part a result of funding models that have provided unrestricted general operating support; it is also a product of the vision of CGD leadership with respect to how policy change actually happens over time.

The case studies also make clear the value of a quality closely related to persistence—one that prevents it from deteriorating into obstinance—opportunism. That is, for CGD, persistence had value not as an abstract moral quality but to the extent that it was paired with an attentiveness to the opening of policy windows. The impact attributed to CGD in these case studies was clearly linked to the opportunism of its researchers. The

case studies feature examples in which staff published policy briefs framed around upcoming elections and presidential campaigns and took advantage of flux at the start of new administrations, changes in senior government officials, or unexpected political crises. The Trump presidency, for example, provided an unexpected opportunity for Moss and Leo when a new official appointed to the National Security Council, Jim Mazzaella, took up the cause of a development finance corporation. The "value for money" case study details a policy window opening with a spate of negative media attention on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the early 2010s, which led it to be more receptive to new funding models. Of course, apertures can just as easily tighten as expand, which the case studies also highlight, showing, for instance, how Global Skill Partnerships became more difficult to promote during the initial migrant "crisis" in 2015.

These "windows" represent a complicating factor in any case study that seeks to chronicle and untangle impact claims involving policy change, since such external events exert causal weight of their own. CGD can take advantage of a policy window, but the widening of the aperture can be the more causally significant factor, and one for which CGD can claim little credit. Conversely, these case studies show the extent to which CGD's impact is often at the mercy of the vagaries and exigencies of politics, since even the strongest policy proposal can be undermined by a political crisis.

How should one assess impact claims when those claims are so profoundly shaped by exogenous political circumstances?

With a significant degree of circumspection, these case studies suggest. Certainly, the ability of policies to withstand political "shocks" (or to take advantage of opportunities) is one key quality to identify, and in several of these case studies this

*How should one assess impact claims when those claims are so profoundly shaped by exogenous political circumstances?*

ability is a product of bipartisan or trans-ideological appeal, which serves as a sort of political hedge.

A focus on institutional persistence in policy change raises another evaluative challenge, since the terminal point of inquiry can determine the result of the findings. Several of the featured initiatives, especially those that are not pegged to a particular policy outcome, do not in fact have clear terminal points and so these case studies compel the question of how much time is necessary to assess the impact and influence of CGD and whether there are markers, signals, or intimations of future impact (or failure to achieve impact) that can be identified in the “seeding” process.

Does a drumbeat that will ultimately lead to policy success sound any different from one that will ultimately have little impact?

Such questions are especially challenging with respect to a particular form of “seeding” that appears in these case studies, one that is directed “upstream” (as Cordelia Kenney terms it in her report on CGD’s work on value for money in HIV/AIDS financing) and that seeks to build “fields” (as in the open contracting or identification for development case studies) or to disseminate ideas or attitudes that will indirectly shape concrete policies. The pursuit of such indirect impact is a common theme that emerges in these case studies; several of the individuals consulted for them note that “upstream” work represents some of CGD’s most powerful opportunities to shape policy.

Yet this work is also some of the most difficult to assess in terms of impact, a paradox that is not lost on many of those interviewed and that colors much of the discussion of causal attribution within the case studies. Several of the case studies, for instance, highlight moments in which policy ideas hatched or heavily promoted by CGD began to float more freely, independent of CGD’s efforts to disseminate them. Indirectly, CGD can take some credit for those developments, even if it did not have control over the precise direction they took. So, for instance, the fact that countries that did not have an active relationship with the World Bank began to incorporate into

## *Does a drumbeat that will ultimately lead to policy success sound any different from one that will ultimately have little impact?*

their policy frameworks the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development, which the World Bank and CGD had a leading role in crafting, marked a particularly important moment in the narrative of CGD’s impact on the identification for development field. Similarly, the significance of the fact that the Global Skill Partnerships model was taken up by governments with which CGD had little contact was also noted in Hannah Postel’s case study. As Helen Dempster remarks in it, an “unintended consequence of [the Global Skill Partnerships idea] getting bigger is that CGD has lost ownership over it.”

One final related irony that emerges from these case studies is worth noting. Despite the prominence of persistence in many of these cases, there is also a countertheme that raises questions about CGD’s departing the scene or decreasing its attention on a policy it once promoted after some milestone was reached or once funding ended, and therefore losing an opportunity to continue to inform the implementation of that policy. Some of these concerns relate to the division of labor between CGD and other, more advocacy-focused organizations, as discussed below. But they also reflect the challenge of defining the terminal point from which to assess influence and impact. Additionally, if, as Cordelia Kenney points out in her “value for money” case study, CGD’s focus on “upstream” work often means it focuses less on policy implementation, this also guarantees that the longer-term impact of CGD’s work will often be at the mercy of bureaucratic, organizational, or political factors largely outside CGD’s sphere of influence.

### **3. CGD in partnership**

All the case studies feature partnerships between CGD and other organizations, whether advocacy NGOs like the ONE Campaign, other think tanks like the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Brookings Institution, multis-takeholder initiatives like the Open Contracting Partnership,



multilateral global institutions like the World Bank, or US and foreign governmental agencies.

These partnerships, often a key ingredient of CGD's impact, are grounded in the organization's recognition of its specific competencies and the limits of its own role and thus the need to leverage its work through collaboration with institutions with different comparative advantages, whether in terms of resources, outreach, or expertise. The relationships that are established with these institutions are often symbiotic; in the case of the Open Contracting Partnership and the World Bank's ID4D initiative, for instance, CGD had a role in the establishment and sustenance of those institutions, which in turn helped to disseminate CGD's work. The case studies make clear that the partnerships and networks that CGD helped to cultivate were key mechanisms in extending CGD's reach, disseminating its research and policy ideas, and thus amplifying its impact.

These partnerships can also be understood in terms of a division of labor in the broader project of policy change (which also suggests, as will be discussed below, a division of causal attribution). In the initiatives featured in these case studies, CGD's work often (but not always, as the Global Skill Partnerships case study makes clear) was focused on the early stages of the policymaking process, in the development and dissemination of ideas, as opposed to active advocacy efforts or engagement in the legislative process. This often translated, as James Ladi Williams writes in his case study, into an emphasis on "influencing the influencers—or those with greater proximity to the actors that needed to be influenced in order for [a favored policy] to take root." In these cases, CGD was willing to rely on the advocacy apparatus of its partners. Some of the individuals consulted for these case studies were surprised by this and expected CGD to be more actively engaged in advocacy work. But as discussed above, if CGD's credibility stems in part from its differentiation from other, more advocacy-focused organizations, disregarding these divisions could plausibly undermine some of CGD's impact.

**The crowded field.** Another evaluative challenge related to CGD's use of partnerships cited in these case studies was

the fact that the fields in which CGD was working were often crowded with other actors seeking to promote similar policies. To cite just one example, those interviewed for Cordelia Kenney's "value for money" case study specifically addressed how crowded the HIV/AIDS research and advocacy community was in the 2000s and 2010s, pointing to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Clinton Health Access Initiative, Results for Development, amfAR, the Global Health Council and its members, UNAIDS, Friends of the Global Fight, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (which funded CGD and the Clinton Health Access Initiative), as other important organizations active in the HIV/AIDS space doing similar work.

It becomes easier to isolate CGD's distinctive contribution to a policy arena when the landscape in which CGD operates is less crowded or the field it is trying to build more inchoate. (One reason, for instance, that it's possible to make a relatively strong impact claim on behalf of CGD in the creation of the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development is because there were no other similar efforts underway around which to construct a counterfactual.) And yet a more crowded landscape also offers the possibility of greater leverage with strategic partnerships and amplification of CGD's work, thus increasing the potential for impact.

**The working group.** In several of the featured initiatives, CGD capitalized on a crowded field through the establishment of a working group, often with the aim of developing guidelines or recommendations for the field. The working group often depended on CGD's capabilities as a convener, bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders from government, industry, and civil society. In some cases, sources suggested that some of these officials might not have had opportunities to engage with each other without that convening.

The relationships, networks, and coalitions that CGD helped build often became important and enduring infrastructure for the fields in question, which in turn could serve as conduits for CGD research and analysis. As one case study notes, although a report that came out of a CGD working group was branded as a CGD product, "all the other players had a stake in it." But this diffusion also makes disentangling claims of

causal attribution more difficult. As James Ladi Williams notes in his case study on the open contracting movement, “By its very nature, in the diversity of stakeholders it cultivates, the working group process makes it difficult to isolate CGD’s own distinct impact.” The working group then represents another example that emerges from these case studies of elements or instruments of CGD’s work that are associated with the organization’s strongest general claims to impact but that also resist clear lines of causal attribution.

#### **4. Establishing causation difficult but influence undeniable**

A final overarching theme of these case studies is an acknowledgment from many of the stakeholders of the difficulty of establishing clean causal lines from CGD research and analysis to policy change—although there is clearly a range of confidence in such impact claims, with initiatives pegged to particular policy outcomes, such as establishment of the Development Finance Corporation, able to generate the strongest claims and “upstream” work the most uncertain. As Cordelia Kenney notes in her “value for money” case study: “There was... consensus... among people interviewed for this report that it was difficult to assign direct, singular causal attribution to CGD or a belief that such an attribution was unlikely.” And even when sources were more comfortable making strong causal claims, those claims were often accompanied by the suggestion that a similar outcome might have materialized even in the absence of CGD’s contribution, just perhaps on a delayed timeline.

And yet, despite the prevalence of this causal indefiniteness, it’s striking how often this uncertainty is accompanied in these case studies by a countervailing confidence in *CGD’s influence*, a more diffuse concept and quality in which the precise lines of causality are not clearly mapped or demarcated between CGD’s research and changes in development policy or practice. As Kenney writes on the global health “value for money” work, “While more difficult to track relative to, say, specific policy changes, CGD’s role in changing how people think about global health policy problems, such as the value for money of investments, and their respective solutions may actually be the most compelling example of its impact.”

*In some cases, there might be an actual benefit to such indefiniteness, given the collective effort inherent to policy change, and the possibility that any one institution arrogating to itself exceptional causal credit might disrupt the coalition.*

It’s possible that this stated confidence in CGD’s influence, in the face of the absence of clear lines of causality, might have something to do with a sort of evaluative politesse, with those being consulted reluctant to state definitively that CGD’s work failed to contribute in some meaningful way to desired policy outcomes.

But it is more likely that the coexistence of hesitation to assign definite impact with a firm belief in influence stems from the high degree of comfort that those within institutions that engage in policy research on global development have with a lack of clear causal attribution when it comes to this type of work. In some cases, there might be an actual benefit to such indefiniteness, given the collective effort inherent to policy change, and the possibility that any one institution arrogating to itself exceptional causal credit might disrupt the coalition. Given the scale and high “stakes” involved in the arenas in which CGD has sought policy change—the enormous amounts of funds devoted to development, the potential lives saved—it’s also possible that those in the field are comfortable with the inherent uncertainty of impact, or with smaller-scale influence, that might still produce significant changes in development outcomes.

*The work that has the greatest potential impact is often work that resists clear and definitive impact narratives.*

Finally, the willingness to accept some degree of causal indeterminacy also reflects the interviewees' appreciation of a paradox that emerges out of these case studies of CGD's work: The work that has the greatest potential impact is often work that resists clear and definitive impact narratives. If that is

indeed the case, it is worth continuing to reflect on what the analytic proxies might be for such impact claims that can adequately assess, and reflect, CGD's contributions in the realms of development.

## Notes

- 1 The author is indebted to Elie Hassenfeld, co-founder and CEO of GiveWell, for the distinction between humanistic and mechanistic impact.

# Open Philanthropy Response to Case Studies: The Value of In-Depth Case Studies as an Evaluative Tool

ALEXANDER BERGER AND OTIS REID

Alexander Berger is co-CEO of Open Philanthropy. Otis Reid is a senior program officer at Open Philanthropy.

At Open Philanthropy, we've long been partisans of the case study approach to assessing advocacy and philanthropic impact that this volume foregrounds. The overlap is not a total coincidence: we've previously worked with Benjamin Soskis, whom the Center for Global Development (CGD) commissioned to oversee this effort, to conduct a number of in-depth case studies on important impacts in the history of philanthropy.<sup>1</sup> We wanted to take this brief opportunity to articulate why we see case studies like these as such a useful evaluative tool, and what implications they can have in the quest to improve public policies related to global health and well-being.

Fundamentally, we believe that think tanks like CGD and funders like Open Philanthropy are in a similar position: we all support a variety of initiatives to achieve policy change, with any given initiative relatively unlikely to succeed in bringing about the desired change, but a few successes potentially being more than large enough to justify the whole portfolio of efforts. We call this hits-based giving<sup>2</sup> and think of it as similar to venture capital—one successful initiative may be more than enough to make up for a large majority of bets that don't pan out.

Case studies are a natural fit for evaluation in this framework because they allow for an in-depth focus on apparent successes, which are expected to be both rare and crucial to the overall returns of the effort. By contrast, more conventional evaluation approaches often focus on quantifying the number of outputs or ensuring accountability to a precommitted set of deliverables, which we think of as less useful when success is rare and unpredictable. Additionally, because each policy change is different, there's no replacement for detailed, open engagement with the actors and claimed causal pathways to try to get at the truth of whether a particular grant or advocacy effort was instrumental to the outcome that occurred. Of course, in-depth case studies don't magically let us observe the counterfactual—for example, we still can't be 100 percent sure there wouldn't have been something like a US International Development Finance Corporation without Todd Moss and Ben Leo's work—but given the intrinsically small sample sizes for key victories of a given think tank or funder, they're the best impact assessment tool we know of.

The case studies in this volume largely stop at the policy change stage. But from a funder perspective, we think it's valuable to go a step further and try to ask, however uncertainly and

ambiguously, about the value of the policy change in terms of ultimate outcomes (e.g., lives saved, incomes increased, emissions abated). We carried out a much more limited version of this exercise in our public writeup for a grant to CGD in 2016: we focused on several of CGD's self-identified impacts, such as helping Nigeria renegotiate its debt service, which we argued created something like US\$1.5 billion in net transfers to Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> Without detailed case studies like the ones in this volume, we weren't able to attribute policy outcomes to CGD's work as confidently. But we think that case studies that both estimate the value of a policy change and carefully consider how to attribute that change to specific actors are the best way to assess policy change in terms that allow comparison to more direct service efforts. At Open Philanthropy, we often use this approach in deciding what grants to make or renew.

Beyond evaluation, we think the hits-based model has a couple of major strategic implications. First, since policy change is rare, it's important to be able to take advantage of a window of opportunity when it arises. This means keeping issues and proposals alive when they are on the back burner, as well as having the flexibility, often enabled by unrestricted funding, to

reallocate resources when policy windows open. (CGD's recent work on COVID-19 is a good example of this.)

Second, precisely because policy change is rare and unpredictable, it's difficult to manage. We think that one nonobvious implication of the hits-based model is that it's best to focus work on big issues, where a single policy shift could be sufficient to justify years of an organization's whole budget. The logic here is that the value of different "wins" can differ by orders of magnitude, whereas the predictable probability of success of a given initiative is much more bounded; accordingly, it's worth focusing on the opportunities with the biggest potential impact. Thus, we suspect that leaders of think tanks and funders might benefit from asking of their initiatives: if we got what we are aiming for on this, and then nothing else for the next couple of years, would we be happy? If not, it may make sense to focus on something bigger. Of course, this argument is far from ironclad, and there's space for a multiplicity of strategies.

Thanks to CGD for undertaking this exercise and continuing to move the whole field forward with innovative and original policy scholarship!

## Notes

- 1 "History of Philanthropy," Open Philanthropy, [www.openphilanthropy.org/focus/history-of-philanthropy](http://www.openphilanthropy.org/focus/history-of-philanthropy).
- 2 Holden Karnofsky, "Hits-based giving," Open Philanthropy, April 4, 2016, [www.openphilanthropy.org/research/hits-based-giving](http://www.openphilanthropy.org/research/hits-based-giving).

- 3 See Section 1.3 of Open Philanthropy's writeup for its general support grant to CGD in 2016, [www.openphilanthropy.org/focus/global-health-and-development/miscellaneous/center-global-development-general-support-2016#Track\\_record](http://www.openphilanthropy.org/focus/global-health-and-development/miscellaneous/center-global-development-general-support-2016#Track_record); see footnote #12 for Open Philanthropy's back-of-the-envelope calculations on the debt relief to Nigeria [www.openphilanthropy.org/focus/global-health-and-development/miscellaneous/center-global-development-general-support-2016#footnote12\\_8glr0d1](http://www.openphilanthropy.org/focus/global-health-and-development/miscellaneous/center-global-development-general-support-2016#footnote12_8glr0d1).

# William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Response to Case Studies: A Lesson in How Flexible Funding Drives Think Tank Impact

LARRY KRAMER AND SARAH LUCAS

Larry Kramer is president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Sarah Lucas served as a program officer at the foundation from January 2014 to January 2022. She managed the foundation's grants to CGD during this period as part of the Evidence-Informed Policymaking grantmaking strategy within the foundation's Gender Equity and Governance program.

We welcome the Center for Global Development's (CGD's) impressive effort to better understand its contributions to policy impact. What a wonderfully fitting way to celebrate 20 years of important work!

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation places enormous value on policy research, and it supports research centers in all its program areas, from US education to cybersecurity to global climate change and more. Our Evidence-Informed Policymaking strategy, which sits within the Gender Equity and Governance program, has supported research centers in the United States, East and West Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. The reason is straightforward and compelling: independent policy research institutions are critical in any society that seeks to make evidence-informed ideas influential in policy decisions. Yet determining the actual influence of such ideas is difficult, as many other factors influence policy outcomes as well.

For this among other reasons, we applaud CGD's commitment to transparency in publishing these historical case studies, which make an important contribution to our understanding of both how to measure research institutions' contributions and the limits of any such analyses. For funders, the case studies offer an even more important lesson in the form of a powerful affirmation of flexible core support as an enabler of impact.

It's not news that the Hewlett Foundation believes in the importance of flexible funding and general operating support. That's been a core practice from the beginning: a value at the heart of "The Hewlett Way" of grantmaking.<sup>1</sup> We prioritize flexible core support in the recognition that we know less than grantee organizations working on the front lines of an issue. With decades of experience on which to draw, we know that organizations do better when they have the flexibility to be responsive to opportunities. We know, too, that

long-term core support is needed to build the kind of strong institutions necessary for producing sustained impact. This is especially true for think tanks, which (we have for many years argued) need core support to provide the independence, credibility, and relevance needed to achieve influence.<sup>2</sup> We have, accordingly, long encouraged other funders to offer as much flexibility as possible.<sup>3</sup>

The case studies offered here cogently illustrate and powerfully validate the role of long-term general operating support in enabling critical institutional attributes. As Benjamin Soskis notes in the thematic overview, the studies underscore the importance of “CGD’s responsiveness and adaptability as an institution.” They illustrate how policy impact requires persistence, including through “periods of relative dormancy and even frustration,” staying with an issue long after a typical project or program funding cycle has ended. And they “underscore the significance of CGD’s reputation for rigor and independence and its standing in the field as key assets”—assets that, once established, in turn amplify the credibility and influence of any given research initiative. As the final evaluation of the Hewlett Foundation’s own Think Tank Initiative shows, a finding reinforced by these case studies, flexible core support is critical for institutions to develop essential qualities needed for impact, such as institutional credibility, nimbleness, persistence, and positioning.<sup>4</sup>

Even with such qualities, it will not follow that every effort ends in measurable progress. Aspiring to influence something as multifaceted and complex as policy development necessarily entails accepting that some efforts will be more successful than others and that some may fall flat entirely—something that will be true regardless of the chosen method of driving change, be it research, advocacy, or any other tactic. Such is the nature of trying to sway processes that are, by definition, nonlinear, unpredictable, and subject to factors outside any one actor’s control.

The only way to learn what works in such complex and uncertain terrain is to interrogate past work honestly and transparently and then to articulate (and share) what one learns. Which is just what these case studies do. For example, the “value for

money” case shows CGD struggling with a problem it usually manages well: balancing “insider” access to government and agency officials with retaining credibility as an independent and critical “outsider.” The Global Skill Partnerships case showcases CGD’s incredible tenacity and influence, while also posing genuine questions about the scale and sustainability of its efforts. Learning from these challenges is as valuable as, or perhaps even more valuable than, examples of direct and sustained impact, such as in the identification for development field and the creation of the US International Development Finance Corporation—though these studies, too, are enlightening.

Measuring the impact of research is difficult, and the studies helpfully and thoroughly expose the methodological challenges: determining causation when many actors and contributors are involved, identifying terminal points in policy influence, and so on. Yet focusing on such limitations distracts from the genuine methodological contribution the evaluation makes, including articulating some inherent tensions that usually go unspoken. For example, the case studies illustrate how the very things that enhance impact—like working as part of a coalition or seeding new fields—can make it harder to measure impact. They show how as ideas spread (which is good for impact) it becomes much harder to trace them to a given organization (which is bad for attribution). As noted in the Global Skill Partnerships case study, the “unintended consequence of [CGD’s Global Skill Partnerships idea] getting bigger is that CGD has lost ownership over it.” Or consider the question Soskis leaves us with in arguing that persistence is a key ingredient for impact: “Does a drumbeat that will ultimately lead to policy success sound any different from one that will ultimately have little impact?”

By naming these tensions, and then exploring them rigorously, the authors make an invaluable contribution to understanding just how far one can (and cannot) push a credible evaluative judgment. The only thing missing, in our view, is a case study exploring an area in which CGD made a deliberate decision not to persist. From this we might have learned a good deal about the factors and conditions that should inform such decisions.



Taking the evaluation as a whole, it's hard not to be impressed with CGD's formidable positioning and impact. The case studies document how, in coalition with others and drawing on strong institutional attributes, CGD has seeded and shaped a new US government agency that makes millions of dollars of development investments in low-income countries; built and supported a global framework that can make labor immigration a generator of income and prosperity in both sending and receiving countries; and provided the intellectual and policy

foundation for fields like identification for development and open contracting, fundamentally changing how major development institutions and national governments operate. The case studies also reveal authentic challenges, for which we likewise commend CGD's transparency and commitment to learning. Above all, we hope other funders see these studies like we do, as making a clear and compelling case for general operating support and a substantial contribution to understanding and measuring the impact of think tanks generally.

## Notes

- 1 Larry Kramer, "Letter from President Larry Kramer," William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, October 14, 2014, <https://hewlett.org/letter-from-president-larry-kramer>.
- 2 Ruth Levine, "Friday Note: Think Tanks Need Core Support," William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, February 20, 2015, <https://hewlett.org/friday-note-think-tanks-need-core-support>.
- 3 Sarah Lucas, "How to Fund Think Tanks Flexibly Even When You Can't," William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, October 20, 2017, <https://hewlett.org/fund-think-tanks-flexibly-even-cant>.
- 4 Ian Christoplos, Adam Pain, Jups Kluyskens, and Pierre Fruhling, External Evaluation of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Phase Two, 2014-2019 (Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2019), <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/57710/IDL%20-%2057710.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>.



# Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Response to Case Studies: Understanding the “How” Around Effective Policy Engagement

**GARGEE GHOSH**

Gargee Ghosh is president of global policy and advocacy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

On behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, congratulations for commissioning these evaluations ahead of the Center for Global Development’s (CGD’s) 20th anniversary. These case studies offer a clear-eyed examination of CGD’s work, and we welcome the transparency and openness. We commend CGD not only for its important work but for its commitment to continuous learning.

The foundation is proud to support CGD, which we value for its rigorous, timely, and relevant analysis and its ability to drive policy and practice.

Evaluating think tanks and measuring the power of ideas is never easy—there is no straightforward results-based methodology that can help draw a clear line from action to impact. Evaluators themselves repeatedly caution against making causal attributions. But by detailing interactions between CGD staff and key decisionmakers alongside interviews with key stakeholders, these findings do an impressive job of connecting the dots. While the individual case studies vary widely, the

results show that CGD has successfully informed and influenced meaningful policy outcomes. For us, the insights around CGD’s role in pushing for greater transparency in HIV/AIDS funding ring true, and we welcome the organization’s efforts to strengthen accountability and clarity around data and results going forward.

The case studies also help us understand the “how”—that is, what accounts for CGD’s effectiveness around policy engagement? Not surprisingly, the writers highlighted the high caliber of CGD fellows and researchers as key to the organization’s success, specifically naming their role in arming decision makers with credible and informative briefs. Other keys to success include CGD’s persistence and savviness and ability to pivot quickly in response to rapidly changing external circumstances. We have seen this recently in the context of CGD’s efforts around the impact of the war in Ukraine.

At the same time, the authors raise the challenges that come with navigating the delicate balance between insider and

outsider status. CGD's independence and rigor give it credibility, but access to major decision makers and other stakeholders enables influence. Tensions between these attributes are inevitable.

As CGD has matured into a fully formed and globally recognized institution, it may consider how to more formally nurture an impact-oriented culture. These evaluations provide ample fodder for reflection and extracting lessons on how

CGD has gained traction on policy agendas and should inform the development of internal best practices.

Again, we congratulate CGD for commissioning and sharing what it has learned. Many organizations struggle with how best to create, capture, and share knowledge, but those that do are the better for it—as is the important work we collectively engage in.

CASE STUDY 1.

# Creating a New US International Development Finance Corporation

**EMILY HUIE**

Emily Huie is a senior consultant with Global Health Visions and worked as an independent consultant to CGD while authoring this case study. Huie worked at the National Security Council between 2006 and 2008 and served on staff at the ONE Campaign from 2015 to 2019, during which time she worked closely with CGD and other colleagues on the DFC initiative.

This work would not have been possible without the knowledge and insights graciously provided by Todd Moss, Ben Leo, Jim Mazarella, Rob Mosbacher, Smitya Singh, Andy Olson, Tom Mancinelli, Andy Taylor, Tom Hart, Edward Burrier, Dave Bohigian, Suzanne Granville, and Erin Collinson. The author thanks Benjamin Soskis for his guidance, advice, and thought partnership throughout the work on this project.

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## OVERVIEW

When the world adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a road map for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for people worldwide, the financing gap to achieve the SDGs in developing countries was estimated to be between \$2.5 trillion and \$3 trillion per year.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, the OECD's preliminary data indicated that official development assistance had increased 3.5 percent in real terms, to reach an all-time high of \$161.2 billion.<sup>2</sup> However, this level of development assistance spending leaves quite a gap for domestic resource mobilization and private-sector finance to fill. Given this gap, the discussion around development finance and utilizing government tools to increase private capital investments in developing countries has gained salience in recent decades.

Following its establishment in 1971, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) served as the United States government's primary development finance institution, which aimed to increase private-sector investments with development benefits in low-income countries. The US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and USAID's Development Credit Authority, along with other smaller programs spread throughout various government agencies, also encouraged private-sector investment in developing countries. However, by 2015 OPIC was operating under authorities that hadn't been significantly updated since 1971, and the fragmented nature of the programs across the US government hampered effectiveness and limited the ability to mobilize private-sector investments.

This case study examines the role played by the Center for Global Development (CGD), specifically former chief operating officer and current nonresident fellow Todd Moss and former senior fellow Ben Leo, in developing a policy proposal to address these inefficiencies and outdated authorizations by creating a new full-service US development finance institution. The seeds for this idea were planted in the mid-to-late 2000s when Moss and Leo were both working in government and saw firsthand the limitations of the US government's development finance capabilities. A few years after leaving the government, the two collaborated on an idea for

addressing the inefficiencies in the system and increasing the impact of US development finance tools. Starting in 2011, Moss and Leo began shopping their ideas around and refining their proposal. Over the next seven years, the two shared this proposal with key policymakers and advocates in Washington, DC. In October 2018, the text of the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act was passed as an amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Bill, officially creating the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). What follows is an examination of how CGD's commitment to an idea and steady work over a number of years impacted the legislative process of the BUILD Act and thus the creation of the DFC.

Research for this case study included 12 interviews conducted with key players in the process and a survey of existing literature on both the history of OPIC and the proposals for a new development finance institution. This is not a formal evaluation of whether the DFC is an effective institution or whether its creation was a good policy. Rather, this case study examines the mechanisms of how a research institution such as CGD may have had an impact on this specific policy process and what, if any, evidence there may be for such impact claims. In full disclosure, the author of the case study worked with Ben Leo at the National Security Council between 2006 and 2008 and served as the US policy director at the ONE Campaign from 2016 to 2019, during which time she worked closely with CGD and other colleagues on the DFC initiative. Although some of the observations made in this case study are from the author's recollections of this time period, other individuals corroborated these observations wherever possible.

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## EARLY DAYS: PRE-LEGISLATION

OPIC was created to enable and increase US investment in developing countries and emerging markets that would have a development impact. OPIC generally did this by providing US investors in developing countries and emerging economies with needed resources such as political risk insurance, debt financing, loan guarantees, and project and investment funds financing.<sup>3</sup> OPIC operated on a self-sustaining basis

throughout its existence—raising enough money via interest and fees that it routinely sent money back to the Treasury.<sup>4</sup>

Despite this positive impact, OPIC had frequently come under fire from Republicans and Democrats over the past few decades. One of the most common criticisms was the charge that OPIC provides “corporate welfare,” supporting large companies that don’t need financing from the federal government; those who made this criticism often argued that there is little to no need for US taxpayers to assume the risk of these investments.<sup>5</sup> In addition, these critics argued that OPIC distorted the flow of capital away from viable private-sector alternatives and that in OPIC’s absence, these investments would move forward with private-sector financing.<sup>6</sup> Other critics argued that OPIC projects supported outsourcing jobs and didn’t actually create jobs in the United States.<sup>7</sup> In 2014, the Heritage Foundation (a frequent OPIC critic) published a commentary titled *Time to Privatize OPIC*, in which authors Brett Schaefer and Bryan Riley argued that the Senate should oppose the reauthorization of OPIC, stating, “The American taxpayer can’t afford to continue being treated as a sugar daddy for US and foreign corporations.”<sup>8</sup>

Moss and Leo first drafted a white paper in 2011 entitled “Development without New Money? A Proposal for a Consolidated US Development Bank”<sup>9</sup> as a response both to historical criticisms of OPIC and to President Obama’s 2011 State of the Union address, in which he pledged to produce a plan to “merge, consolidate, and reorganize” various federal export promotion agencies.<sup>10</sup> The fear of CGD and others in the development community, such as the ONE Campaign, was that OPIC would be folded into the Department of Commerce, which they believed would undermine its effectiveness and dilute the benefits the US government received from an independently operating OPIC.

The CGD paper proposed the creation of what Moss and Leo then called a US Development Bank (USDB) that merged a number of entities—OPIC; USTDA; USAID’s Development Credit Authority and private-sector units (including those focusing on business climate, land titling, and other business promotion-related issues); and the international programs of

the Small Business Administration, the State Department’s Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs, and the Treasury Department’s Office of Technical Assistance—and gave the USDB additional authority to take equity positions and place minimal constraints on tied assistance.<sup>11</sup> Moss and Leo proposed that the new USDB would have a similar governance structure to OPIC, operating as an independent government agency, led by White House-appointed management and overseen by a board that included both government and private-sector representatives.<sup>12</sup> In addition, based on their assessment and a deliberate objective of their design, this new entity would be self-financing and require no additional or new annual budget appropriation.

As the Obama administration’s consolidation efforts became bogged down in interagency fighting, other issues, such as the debate around healthcare reform, took center stage. However, behind the scenes, Moss and Leo were quietly seeding the policy proposal across the development community. For example, in 2013, Leo published a piece with George Ingram (lead author), Dan Runde, and Homi Kharas on the Brookings Institution blog, entitled “Strengthening US Government Development Finance Institutions.”<sup>13</sup> In this piece, the authors argued that the fragmentation of development finance tools across multiple US agencies was diluting their impact and causing US businesses to miss out on opportunities in emerging markets, while the US government was underutilizing a vital tool in promoting economic growth and stability in developing countries around the world. While it’s difficult to point to this paper’s measurable impact in the immediate term, it served to broaden ownership of the idea to other think tanks and development groups—which was critical when it came time to mobilize support for this idea on Capitol Hill.

Between 2011 and 2016, Moss and Leo kept up a steady drumbeat of meetings with international development NGOs like the ONE Campaign and the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN), with other think tanks like the Brookings Institution and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and with Hill staffers. According to Moss and Leo, given the niche nature of the development finance issue, their strategy during these years was to keep the idea on the

radar of the broader policymaking and development communities—allowing for the quick movement of a policy proposal when the timing was right.<sup>14</sup> Based on a literature review, it appears that Moss and Leo were the two primary voices keeping this idea circulating through the development community over these years.

In addition to keeping the proposal on the radar of key policymakers, another essential part of their strategy was bringing on key partners in the development community. Having other think tanks, such as CSIS and the Brookings Institution, supporting this idea gave credibility to the proposal and enabled government officials and policymakers to hear from various sources about how much development finance reform was needed and how it would positively impact the development capabilities of the US government. But the advocacy efforts of organizations like the ONE Campaign and MFAN were essential to moving the idea from a policy proposal to a signed law. Leo was the global policy director at the ONE Campaign from 2011 to 2013 when the idea was first being developed. And Moss (and later Leo) met with the US team at ONE several times over the years to discuss this policy proposal and brainstorm how to take advantage of openings and address obstacles in the policy process.<sup>15</sup> MFAN, a coalition of international development and foreign policy practitioners dedicated to modernizing foreign assistance, brought along its membership and advocated in support of the BUILD Act after it was introduced.

Another strength of Moss and Leo's proposal was that it was both expansive and flexible. The original proposal included a broad range of ideas that sought to maximize the impact of US development finance by consolidating the various authorities into one new entity. Moss and Leo's prior experience in government informed their understanding of what was in the "realm of the possible," and yet their initial proposal pushed for bold changes. However, the proposal was also broad enough that there was space for the normal horse-trading negotiations required to gain bipartisan support for legislative efforts. The appendix summarizes the reforms included in CGD's 2015 proposal compared with those included in the introduced versions of the Senate and House bills and, finally, with the text of the passed law.

In 2014, President Obama's Global Development Council report featured a section on harnessing the private sector, including a proposal to create a new development finance institution. The report states, "The United States badly needs to modernize the array of instruments and operating authorities related to development finance and fundamentally reimagine its work to catalyze private sector investment that can produce positive development outcomes." The council's report tracks very closely with proposals Moss and Leo included in their 2013 paper. There they argued for the expansion of OPIC's tools and authorities, reforming OPIC into a proper development finance institution so that it "would be one of the most effective tools in the US arsenal to reduce poverty in developing countries."<sup>16</sup> The Global Development Council report recommended that Congress, as a first step, give OPIC the authority to reinvest a portion of its profits in additional staffing, allow OPIC to make equity investments, mix direct investments with loan guarantees, and deploy a broader set of modern risk mitigation instruments.<sup>17</sup> These recommendations align with the recommendations that Moss and Leo made beginning with their 2013 paper—specifically, the argument in favor of equity authority and enabling OPIC to invest in itself.<sup>18</sup>

The inclusion of the development finance institution proposal in the report was directly related to CGD board member Smita Singh's membership on the Global Development Council.<sup>19</sup> Her initial exposure to the idea was from Moss and Leo's research—which she brought to the Global Development Council as it was developing its recommendations. According to Singh, the idea was attractive because it was actionable; while it would require legislative action, the council believed it was possible to build a bipartisan coalition to support the proposal and pursue legislative action in the short term.<sup>20</sup> Another council member, Gargee Ghosh, also a former CGD staffer, knew both Leo and Moss and was very familiar with their proposals through her position at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.<sup>21</sup>

Between 2013 and 2017, Moss and Leo testified before Congress a combined six times—three specifically about the proposal for a new development finance institution and three other appearances on other issues in which they also raised this proposal.<sup>22</sup>

Moss first testified on this issue to the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Operations, Economic Affairs, International Environmental Protection, and Peace Corps on May 22, 2013. In this testimony regarding updating US foreign assistance tools, he argued that the development finance functions that currently existed across numerous agencies would be more effective if they were consolidated into one institution by turning OPIC into a “full-service US Development Finance Corporation.”<sup>23</sup>

Leo testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy on March 19, 2015. In his testimony, he argued that OPIC was a “highly constrained and underutilized tool” that nevertheless remained a remarkably effective foreign policy instrument for the United States government.<sup>24</sup> In addition, he noted that European and other development finance institutions have reformed and expanded over the years, putting an unreformed OPIC at a competitive disadvantage. His testimony proposed reforming and enhancing OPIC to create an expanded DFC in order to correct this competitive disadvantage.

On July 7, 2016, Moss testified before the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee, arguing that development finance is the “most potent weapon we have for expanding markets and spurring private sector growth.”<sup>25</sup> He specifically argued in this testimony that a reformed OPIC or expanded DFC should be granted equity investment authority in order to make it competitive with other development finance institutions.

In all their congressional testimony, a key argument was that these reforms and expansions would come at no additional cost to taxpayers, as OPIC would be allowed to keep its profits to fund operating costs.

Measuring the impact congressional testimony has on a policy process is difficult if not impossible. At the very least, in this case, these six testimonies demonstrate that Moss and Leo, over the course of four years, were able to raise this issue directly to members of Congress and to ensure that their arguments for expanded development finance capabilities within the US government were officially a part of the congressional record. Tom Mancinelli, foreign affairs staffer for Senator

Chris Coons, noted, “Their testimony served to educate members and inform the American public about what a revised, modernized development finance institution could mean for the effectiveness of our foreign assistance.”<sup>26</sup>

## FROM ABSTRACT IDEA TO LEGISLATION

In March 2015, Moss and Leo published *Bringing US Development Finance into the 21st Century: Proposal for a Self-Sustaining Full-Service USDFC*, a more robust and detailed blueprint that provided a rationale and increased details about how a consolidated new development finance agency could be developed.<sup>27</sup> According to Moss and Leo, the timing of this paper was not coincidental; they had an eye toward the upcoming election cycle and used this paper as a pitch to the presidential campaigns (from both political parties), with the aim of having it included in one (or both) of the major candidates’ platforms. The language wasn’t included in either major party platform, although platforms are often light on development policy language, and Moss and Leo were confident that an incoming Clinton administration would take up the policy.<sup>28</sup> However, they were less confident about how a Trump administration would approach development finance.

President Trump’s first budget proposal in the spring of 2017 proposed closing OPIC entirely. The threat to OPIC and the US government’s development finance capabilities seemed to be stronger than ever.

However, in the spring of 2017, General H.R. McMaster, Trump’s national security adviser, was building his team at the White House, and Jim Mazarella, a longtime senior staffer at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, spanning both the previous Bush and Obama administrations, was hired onto the National Security Council (NSC) staff by Clete Willems, special assistant to the president for international trade, investment, and development. When interviewing for the job as director for international development at the NSC, Mazarella proposed the idea of saving OPIC from the president’s budget proposal based on the development finance reforms put forward in Moss and Leo’s white papers. He outlined this as one of the



key issues he would like to focus on at the NSC, and Willems agreed. According to Mazzarella, “Zeroing out and shutting down OPIC was a bad idea.”<sup>29</sup> However, passing legislation, much less changing the budget proposal, would have been an extremely heavy lift. Nevertheless, Willems agreed to try it, and, according to Mazzarella, “we set about building a coalition using the Moss and Leo outline as the basis, first with OMB [Office of Management and Budget] staff who helped drive the interagency process and then, with OPIC leadership, working with key committees on a bipartisan basis and the DC development community. Each stakeholder had their own interest: working to counter China’s influence in the developing world, making government more effective and efficient, modernizing US development finance with new tools, and a greater focus on development and catalyzing markets in developing countries instead of distorting markets.”<sup>30</sup>

To win over support from within the NSC and from the OMB, Mazzarella leaned into the arguments that this proposal would encourage government consolidation (a top priority for the Trump administration and the OMB)<sup>31</sup> and that the increased capabilities granted to a new DFC would enable the United States to better compete and counteract China’s influence in the developing world, arguments that were particularly res-onant within the administration.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, CGD board member Rob Mosbacher drafted a two-pager for Nadia Schadlow, who, as the deputy national security adviser for strategy, had been brought on to oversee the drafting and adoption of a new National Security Strategy. Through this engagement, Mosbacher was introduced to Willems, who was overseeing Mazzarella’s work, as noted above.

In February 2018, the Trump administration’s budget request for FY2019 included a request for a new development finance institution:

**The Administration is also reviewing Federal development finance activities—currently spread across the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and multiple offices at the United States Agency for International Development and other Federal agencies—to identify ways to reduce duplication and better achieve national security and international**

**development outcomes while supporting U.S. businesses and jobs. The Budget proposes to consolidate these functions into a new Development Finance Institution, including reforms that protect taxpayer dollars.**<sup>33</sup>

The NSC staff working on this issue sought an opportunity for the president to make a public statement supporting development finance reform to build real momentum behind the idea. The opportunity came in November 2018, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam. In his remarks at the summit, President Trump said, “We are also committed to reforming our development finance institutions so that they better incentivize private sector investment in your economies and provide strong alternatives to state-directed initiatives that come with many strings attached.”<sup>34</sup>

Throughout 2018, Mazzarella was running the interagency process behind the scenes. Some government agencies expressed skepticism that this was a good and/or necessary reform; some wanted a Power Africa-type initiative<sup>35</sup> led by the State Department, while Treasury leadership argued that this was government intervention that Republicans should not support.<sup>36</sup> USTDA fought the idea because it did not want to be consolidated into OPIC (it succeeded in these efforts and was not included in the final consolidation). Mazzarella brought Moss and Leo in to meet with his NSC colleagues to discuss the idea and provide counterpoints to criticism. According to Mazzarella, having outside experts speak on the nuances of the issue was helpful, and Moss and Leo provided compelling counterarguments to criticism.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, the OMB came on board because of the consolidation aspects, and the political side of the White House was motivated to support it primarily because of the countering-China argument.<sup>38</sup>

## THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The attempts to bolster OPIC in the face of threats to its survival took many shapes over the years. One effort was made during the legislative process for the Electrify Africa Act. Original text proposals for this legislation in 2015 included a multiyear reauthorization for OPIC, which would have protected the agency from funding threats for the reauthorization



period. While CGD and organizations such as the ONE Campaign were not the originators of this idea, they supported a multiyear authorization to create some stability and safety for OPIC for a defined period. This component was a contentious aspect of the bill, opposed by many Republicans, and it ended up being stripped out of the final version. The fight over the reauthorization provision in the Electrify Africa Act left some, particularly House Republican leadership, hesitant to take on another OPIC-related bill.<sup>39</sup>

However, despite this reluctance, Andy Taylor, a staffer on the House Foreign Relations Committee, began working with Jimmy Walsh, a staffer for Congressman Ted Yoho (R-FL), on draft legislation to reform OPIC into an expanded development finance institution. In the early summer of 2017, discussions between House and Senate staff began about the best possible legislative path.<sup>40</sup> They agreed that the House would take the lead on navigating the conservative political waters.<sup>41</sup> One key to this approach was having Yoho as the original sponsor of the bill. As a member of the Freedom Caucus, he had been instrumental in the passage of the Electrify Africa Act and had become familiar with the arguments about OPIC's reauthorization. Yoho had initially criticized OPIC but was converted to strongly believe that enabling more private-sector money to be used to support development priorities was the right type of policy to pursue.

Mosbacher, a former president and CEO of OPIC; Porter Delany, of the Kyle House Group; and Elizabeth Littlefield, a former president and CEO of OPIC during the Obama administration, were essential players in the recruitment of Congressman Yoho as a champion of this issue.<sup>42</sup> They began meeting with Yoho and his staff as an outgrowth of the Foreign Assistance Taskforce that Congressmen Yoho and Adam Smith (D-WA) co-chaired. During these meetings, they discussed OPIC's current capabilities and, in practical terms, what expanded development finance capability would provide. They also took Yoho to visit OPIC projects to see first-hand how development finance works.<sup>43</sup> These efforts enabled them to capitalize on Yoho's support of the Electrify Africa Act and his newfound interest in mobilizing private investment for development outcomes to win his support for the idea of reforming OPIC

into a more robust development finance institution. Mosbacher's engagement with Yoho was a critical factor in getting him on board.

Congressman Yoho introduced the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act (H.R. 5105) on February 18, 2018.<sup>44</sup> The introduced legislation included many of the provisions contained in CGD's proposal, most notably giving the new DFC equity authority and increasing its maximum contingent liability level. Taylor and Yoho's staff jointly developed the introduced text. This process included consultations with Senate staff and NSC staff, as is standard for this type of legislation. In an interview, Taylor noted that while CGD's papers on the topic informed his thinking while drafting the BUILD text, he was surprised that CGD staff didn't actively engage him during this time frame.<sup>45</sup>

Likewise, on the Senate side, the years of seeding this idea were finally starting to pay off. Because this idea had been percolating around the international development community for several years at this point—and particularly because many assumed that Hillary Clinton would win the presidential election—staffers for Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) were actively looking for legislative ideas that could move in the first 100 days of a new administration. With this in mind, Tom Mancinelli, foreign policy adviser to Senator Coons, began to draft legislative text during the August 2016 recess. He had read Moss and Leo's papers proposing a new DFC as a means of reforming and expanding OPIC and consulted with both throughout the legislative drafting process.<sup>46</sup> According to Mancinelli, these consultations and feedback and advice from Moss and Leo were helpful to address various questions that arose during the legislative drafting process.<sup>47</sup>

The DFC idea was first shared with Senator Bob Corker's (R-TN) staff in 2013 but took a back seat to the Electrify Africa legislation. At some point in 2016, Moss and Leo met with Senator Corker and his foreign affairs adviser Andy Olson to discuss their concerns around the proposal, which were primarily about corporate welfare, ensuring that a new development finance institution wouldn't become a slush fund for US corporations, and guaranteeing that a new institution remained

focused on targeted development and foreign policy outcomes.<sup>48</sup> In response to these concerns, Leo published a blog post entitled “Is OPIC Corporate Welfare? The Data Says...”<sup>49</sup> Moss and Leo, along with colleague Jared Kalow, built a data set of nearly 1,500 OPIC projects implemented over the past 15 years.<sup>50</sup> After examining the data, Moss and Leo concluded that less than 8 percent of OPIC commitments between 2011 and 2016 involved Fortune 500 companies.<sup>51</sup>

It is important to note that Moss and Leo entered the process of working on the BUILD Act having already built credibility with Senators Coons and Corker and their staffs while engaging with them on research about energy poverty in Africa and the US approach to tackling it, between 2013 and 2016, particularly as those offices were working to advance the Electrify Africa Act. And while we don’t know specifically what brought Senator Corker around to support the BUILD Act, he did come around. On February 27, 2018, Senators Corker and Coons introduced S.2463 with similar bill text to the legislation introduced in the House.<sup>52</sup>

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed its version of the bill out of committee on June 27, 2018. The House passed H.R. 5105 on July 17, 2018, and this version of the bill was then referred to the Senate. As is quite common with smaller stand-alone pieces of legislation (which BUILD was), congressional champions sought and found a larger piece of must-pass legislation to attach it to. In this case, it was the FAA Reauthorization Bill (H.R. 302), which was signed into law on October 5, 2018, officially creating a new US International Development Finance Corporation.<sup>53</sup>

A key component in this legislative success was the partnership between CGD and the ONE Campaign and, to a lesser extent, MFAN. MFAN’s support of the BUILD Act communicated to Capitol Hill that this legislation had the support of its membership, a spectrum of international development and policy organizations. At the same time, the ONE Campaign mobilized its grassroots membership and ran a robust campaign supporting the BUILD Act. During the campaign, ONE members made more than 1,600 visits to congressional district offices, made more than 1,500 phone calls to Congress,

and delivered more than 78,000 petition signatures to 454 local congressional offices.<sup>54</sup> In addition, asking members to cosponsor the BUILD Act was a key ask at ONE’s annual lobby day in March 2018, when ONE members had meetings with more than 230 members of Congress.<sup>55</sup>

## ANALYSIS

As with any legislative success in Washington, the passage of the BUILD Act depended on the alignment of a number of circumstances. First, it required having the right people—people who bought into the idea of expanding the United States’ development finance capabilities—in the right jobs at the right time. And second, the success of the BUILD Act can also be partly attributed to the fact that it was supported by many different arguments, which could be used to appeal to a broad bipartisan audience. This alignment also provides the context for questions regarding the extent to which CGD impacted this process—and the counterfactual: would the creation of the DFC via the BUILD Act have happened even without CGD’s work?

### Right people, right place, right time

The BUILD Act would never have come to fruition without congressional staffers like Tom Mancinelli, Andy Olson, Andy Taylor, Jimmy Walsh, and their bosses lending their support to the legislation and driving the effort in the House and Senate. The influence of Jim Mazarella’s work at the NSC cannot be overstated. In a challenging political environment, Mazarella was able to make arguments that resonated to win the Trump administration’s support and coordinate with policymakers and the development community to enable a relatively smooth legislative process.

Additionally, outside of government, groups in the development community like the ONE Campaign and MFAN provided much-needed advocacy support to the effort.<sup>56</sup> CGD and ONE had partnered together in the past, merging CGD’s policy recommendations and expertise and ONE’s advocacy focus. Two years before the BUILD Act, this same partnership contributed to the successful passage of the Electrify Africa Act. Tom Hart, president of the ONE Campaign, said, “The partnership

between CGD and ONE changes US policy... period. We play to each other's strengths, pairing top-notch ideas with impactful advocacy. ONE's efforts to pass the Electrify Africa Act and the BUILD Act would not have been possible without CGD's creative, practical policy proposals. Working with CGD has been integral to many of our successful campaigns."<sup>57</sup>

CGD has little control over the outcomes of the policymaking process. However, in this instance, the organization benefited from Moss and Leo's experience in government, which enabled them to craft a proposal that was feasible and included provisions that would appeal to policymakers across the spectrum. Moss and Leo were also able to inform people in critical positions of the viability and potential impact of this proposal. NSC staff, Hill staff, and other NGOs campaigning on this issue all stated that they relied on CGD's initial proposals in their work on the BUILD Act. So, while CGD can't actively place friendly people in essential positions, the organization has benefited from employees that have a deep understanding of the policymaking process and are able to build and maintain relationships across the political spectrum.

## Flexible argument

The second factor that enabled the BUILD Act's passage was the ability of those advocating for it to adjust their arguments based on the audience. Republicans were attracted to the narrative that a new DFC would provide increased ability to counter China, and that expanded development finance capabilities would increase the government's ability to use private-sector investment to advance development at no cost to the taxpayer. The OMB was satisfied with the consolidations proposed in the bill (even though they didn't all make it into the final version), and Democrats were generally supportive of increasing the United States' ability to increase investments and growth in developing countries.

According to Moss and Leo, the initial policy proposal from CGD intentionally included aspects that would appeal to both Democrats and Republicans. However, in this instance, the argument that garnered the most support from the administration and Republican members of Congress was the increased ability to compete with China. This argument

proved salient because of a broader conversation about the trade deficit and other geopolitical factors. CGD's intentionally bipartisan approach enabled the organization to take advantage of this opportunity and allowed for a quick pivot after the 2016 election, adapting the idea from a potential Clinton administration proposal to a Trump administration proposal.

## The role of CGD

Credit for the passage of the BUILD Act cannot be laid wholly at the feet of CGD and the work of Moss and Leo. However, everyone interviewed for this case study credited the organization's initial work and persistence in promoting the idea as a critical component of the policy process around the BUILD Act and the creation of the DFC. Jim Mazarella said that CGD's papers on development finance provided the intellectual capital that "allowed us to start on second base": the new administration was able to move quickly on the idea because CGD had already done much of the intellectual background work.<sup>58</sup> Multiple Hill staffers credited CGD's published papers as their first source when engaging on this idea. David Bohigian, former executive vice president at OPIC and then the DFC, spoke to Moss while prepping for his confirmation hearing and relied on CGD's white paper when developing strategies for defending OPIC.<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, CGD benefited from having members of the board support this effort in critical ways, namely Smita Singh's placement on President Obama's Global Development Council and Rob Mosbacher's willingness to work on building support with conservative House members.

So, would the BUILD Act have passed and the DFC have been created if CGD had not done this work? Perhaps, but almost certainly not in the fast time frame it was completed in—with legislative text first drafted in the summer of 2016 and the bill signed just over two years later, in October 2018. It is worth noting that in the 115th Congress (2017–2019, when the BUILD Act was passed), 13,556 bills were introduced and only 329 (3 percent) of them were enacted into law.<sup>60</sup> This demonstrates that the likelihood of having legislation enacted into law in a single congressional session is low—many bills require reintroduction in successive sessions before they are passed. Additionally, the fact that the BUILD Act had to be attached

to must-pass legislation (the reauthorization of the FAA) indicates the enormous effort it took to pass this bill in such a timely fashion. So, while we cannot attribute this success directly to CGD, it is fair to note that the process defied the odds, and CGD's role very likely contributed.

Moss and Leo's previous experience in government gave them insights into how to craft smart and effective policy proposals, as well as how to sell those changes to those still in government. Their initial proposal deliberately included a broad range of ideas but was expansive enough to withstand the trade-offs made during the legislative process. For example, the initial proposal included folding the USTDA into a new development finance institution. In the end, USTDA was not consolidated and remained a stand-alone agency, but this was not detrimental to the DFC because there were enough other consolidations and policy wins in the bill that equipped the DFC to pursue a robust development mandate.

While it's difficult to ascertain the precise number of meetings held relating to this policy proposal, anecdotally, it's clear that Moss and Leo both consistently met with policymakers, advocates, and other think tanks to share this idea from 2011 onward. Tom Mancinelli specifically credited their willingness and availability to meet with Hill staffers who had questions about this proposal as instrumental to bringing on cosponsors to the bill on the Senate side.<sup>61</sup> He stated, "Meetings with experts from the Center for Global Development like Todd Moss and Ben Leo were extremely useful as Hill staffers drafted the legislation. CGD experts brought real-world executive branch experience to the table. Their advice and recommendations were trusted by both sides of the aisle, and they also helped tighten our arguments for why reform of US government development finance tools was so necessary."<sup>62</sup> Those interviewed stated that Moss and Leo's willingness and availability to have conversations with policymakers and staffers and discuss the merits of the idea and the positive impact a more robust DFC would have on US development policy over several years was integral to this idea becoming a reality. However, as noted above, one House staffer noted that they were surprised that CGD wasn't more engaged with House staff during the drafting process. This doesn't necessarily counter

the case for CGD's impact. More likely, it indicates that CGD's impact and value add to the policymaking process came in the earlier stages, by developing ideas into policy proposals and educating policymakers at the outset rather than being deeply involved in the later legislative process.

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## CONCLUSION

The DFC is now in its third year of operation. CGD has continued its engagement via the development of its USDFC Monitor—a part of CGD's US Development Policy Initiative—and via blog posts that aim to serve as a platform for information, analysis, recommendations, and discussions around how the DFC is performing and the issues it is facing.<sup>63</sup>

However, efforts to dilute the development mission of the DFC have been ongoing since shortly after the bill's passage. The 2019 European Energy Security and Diversification Act that was folded into the 2020 appropriations bill—passed in December 2020—gave the DFC the ability to invest in high-income countries if they are deemed to provide a significant counter to Russian influence. Subsequently, on June 30, 2021, the House Foreign Affairs Committee considered legislation designed to combat China globally, including a section that would lift the restrictions on the DFC's ability to make investments in high-income countries. This provision was stripped in the committee markup, after significant educational outreach by CGD (Moss and Erin Collinson) as well as by colleagues from the ONE Campaign, InterAction, and MFAN. This effort demonstrates that threats to the DFC's mission still exist. Every loophole that allows the DFC to make investments in high-income countries weakens the DFC's development mandate and limits its ability to provide transformative financing in low- and lower-middle-income countries that would have significant development impacts.

Several of those interviewed for this case study expressed concerns that the DFC was falling short in achieving its mission to provide private-sector finance for low- and lower-middle-income countries and instead has focused its investments on easier deals in upper-middle-income countries with minimal development impact. CGD championed the BUILD Act and



the creation of the DFC to increase private-sector finance as a tool for improving and furthering development outcomes in low- and middle-income countries—and it appears that this fight continues even after the DFC’s creation. If efforts to

undermine the development mandate of the DFC continue, CGD will have ample opportunities to engage in further efforts to preserve the development mandate and gains made by the creation of the DFC.

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## Appendix to Case Study 1. Reforms included in CGD’s 2015 proposal compared with those included in the introduced versions of the Senate and House bills and those in the passed law

POLICY PROPOSALS	CGD PROPOSAL (2015)	H.R. 5105 (PASSED)	S.2463 (REPORTED TO SENATE)	PL 115-254 (PASSED FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018)
<b>SERVICES OFFERED</b>				
Loans	X	X	X	X
Loan guarantees	X	X	X	X
Risk insurance	X	X	X	X
Seed financing for independently managed investment funds	X			
Advisory services	X	X		
Feasibility studies	X	X		
Equity investments	X	X (with conditions)	X	X
Technical assistance for business-climate reforms	X			X (in coordination with USAID)
Authority to support non-US investors	X	X (priority should be given to US persons)	X (priority should be given to US persons)	
Alternative to above: Authority to support firms from low-income countries and local firms domiciled in the respective developing country	X			
Enterprise funds	X	X	X	X
<b>SIZE, SCALE, STAFFING</b>				
Should NOT have a target size but be able to respond to market demands and development needs	X			
370–2,200 employees (depending on portfolio size)	X			

POLICY PROPOSALS	CGD PROPOSAL (2015)	H.R. 5105 (PASSED)	S.2463 (REPORTED TO SENATE)	PL 115-254 (PASSED FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018)
<b>GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE</b>				
Independent govt. agency managed by a White House–appointed team	X	X	X	X
Overseen by a board of directors including both government and private-sector representatives	X	X	X	X
Equal number of representatives from each political party (private-sector board members)	X	X	X	X
Board membership should cover core competencies such as international development, risk management, human resources and legal matters, global financial institutions, and specific priority sectors (e.g., power and transportation)	X	X	X	X
Performance measurement system modeled on global best practices, with a strong emphasis on transparency	X	X	X	X
Should measure and report on “additionality” (ensuring prioritization of development impact and not competing with private capital)	X	X	X	
Collect and publicly report on a series of institutional efficiency and performance metrics (financial performance, operating budget ratios, and average investment transaction review time)	X	X	X	
Board shall hold at least one public hearing a year		X	X (2 public hearings)	X (2 meetings required)
In conjunction with the above, the DFC shall hold a public hearing		X		
Establish an independent accountability mechanism			X	X
Establishment of risk and audit committees		X	X	X



POLICY PROPOSALS	CGD PROPOSAL (2015)	H.R. 5105 (PASSED)	S.2463 (REPORTED TO SENATE)	PL 115-254 (PASSED FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2018)
<b>CAPITAL STRUCTURE OPTIONS</b>				
1. Status quo structure: Rely on OPIC's existing maximum contingent liability limit of \$29B (unchanged since 1998), with future adjustments on ad hoc basis	X			
2. Revised OPIC contingent liability limit: Limit would be adjusted upward to roughly \$42B (converting current exposure limit from 1998 dollars to 2014 dollars), and going forward maximum contingent liability limit would be inflation adjusted	X			
3. Maximum contingent liability for 5 years after enactment: \$60B will be adjusted after 5-year mark to reflect the % increase (if any) in the average of the consumer price index during the preceding 5-year period		X	X	X (excludes the adjustment clause)
<b>GOVERNANCE CONSOLIDATION</b>				
OPIC	X	X		X
Development Credit Authority	X	X		X
USAID Enterprise Funds	X	X		X
USTDA	X	X		
Economic growth-related grant operations (State/USAID)	X			
Legacy credit portfolio under Urban Environment Program		X		X
Office of Private Capital and Microenterprise		X		X
Sovereign loan guarantees (from USAID)		X		X

# Contributing to Enhancing the “Value for Money” of HIV/AIDS Financing

**CORDELIA KENNEY**

Cordelia Kenney is an independent consultant. Kenney previously worked on CGD’s institutional advancement team from 2015 to 2019. Kenney acknowledges the potential conflict of interest as a former CGD staff member, and has endeavored to present as fair, accurate, and balanced accounting as possible of the evidence included herein. All omissions and errors are the author’s own.

The author thanks Benjamin Soskis for his guidance, support, and feedback throughout the project, all of which greatly enhanced the quality, clarity, and rigor of the resulting case study. The author also thanks CGD’s Brin Datema for facilitating this project. To the 10 current and former CGD researchers and 11 external health economists, advocates, government officials, and other experts, the author holds immense gratitude—for their time, illuminating perspectives, and invaluable contributions, without which this case study would not have been possible.

## OVERVIEW

A core element of the Center for Global Development's (CGD's) global health policy program consists of analyzing the value for money (VfM) of global health investments, or the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of global health funding agencies and their performance incentives. A significant share of CGD's work on VfM in global health has focused specifically on HIV/AIDS financing. Since 2006, CGD has generated a sizable portfolio of publications, events, presentations, and other activities related to VfM in HIV/AIDS financing. That work is the subject of this case study. This study, however, does not offer a comprehensive assessment of CGD's complete portfolio of work on VfM in global health. Given the centrality of VfM in CGD's global health work streams and the sheer volume of VfM-related recommendations CGD has produced over time, a complete analysis of this work is beyond the scope of this present study, though such an effort would likely yield valuable insights into how certain ideas become policies.<sup>1</sup> Where specific areas are ripe for further research within the context of this case study, they are indicated in the narrative.

Instead, more specifically, this study seeks to examine the extent to which CGD's work may have impacted the adoption of a VfM agenda at HIV donor agencies, and to analyze the evidentiary basis for claims regarding the specific mechanisms by which it did so. In particular, this case study focuses on the work carried out through CGD's HIV/AIDS Monitor, Value for Money Working Group, and Next Generation Financing Models in Global Health Working Group, and the impact of those initiatives on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This case study is based on an extensive literature and document review, including both published and unpublished documents, and qualitative interviews with 21 individuals (10 current or former CGD researchers and 11 non-CGD stakeholders).

Among the individuals interviewed for this case study, there was consensus that CGD played a sizable role and helped shape the agenda around VfM in HIV/AIDS financing. Virtually all the individuals used language that described CGD

researchers as "important contributors" and CGD as a "trusted interlocutor" in the VfM discussion. Participants also agreed that CGD was seen as a credible source of evidence and information on VfM in global health. In addition, CGD benefited from and effectively leveraged several important policy windows, such as the Global Fund's adoption of a new funding model following negative media attention in the early 2010s. Concurrently, according to those consulted, CGD acted as an efficient policy entrepreneur to coalesce the policy community around VfM and sustain attention on the VfM agenda in HIV/AIDS financing.<sup>2</sup>

There was also consensus, however, among those interviewed for this case study that it was either difficult to assign direct, singular causal attribution to CGD or that such an attribution was unlikely. Reasons for this thinking included the large number of other actors working in the HIV/AIDS space and the difficulty of tracing the uptake of ideas more generally. In the words of one individual, attribution in global health is "notoriously difficult," made "even harder when talking about an organization that convenes powerful people to talk [... who] might have or might not have spoken anyway."<sup>3</sup> As discussed below, the prioritization of HIV VfM on the global agenda was a result of, and further advanced by, a broad field of actors and array of forces. Although CGD was one player among many in the HIV/AIDS space, it nevertheless carved out an important niche.

At the same time, given the scale of donors' investments in the HIV/AIDS pandemic response, even modest changes in how donors such as the Global Fund and PEPFAR operate have the potential to yield significant results, as one individual pointed out. With that reality in mind and building on the findings from this analysis, it is fair to say that CGD did play an important role, albeit one that is difficult to precisely delineate, in building consensus around the value of VfM in global health. While more difficult to track relative to, say, specific policy changes, CGD's role in changing how people think about global health policy problems, such as the value for money of investments, and their respective solutions may actually be the most compelling example of its impact.

## BACKGROUND

The year 2021 marked the 40th anniversary of the officially recognized start of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Following initial case reports in 1981, the US government, led by then president Ronald Reagan, delayed any meaningful policy action for most of the 1980s. A well-organized AIDS activist movement emerged in response, which played a pivotal role in galvanizing support for research into possible treatments and addressing the needs of people living with HIV. Yet rising infection rates across the world throughout the 1980s and 1990s, combined with the lack of accessible treatment, resulted in AIDS becoming the leading cause of death in many countries by the turn of the millennium. Because of the advocacy of AIDS activists during these two decades, however, a lifesaving treatment, antiretroviral therapy (ART), was developed. The next challenge would become timely scale-up and implementation of treatment and eventually prevention programs.

By the early 2000s, addressing HIV/AIDS emerged as the top priority on the global health agenda.<sup>4</sup> Several bilateral and multilateral agencies and public-private partnerships were created specifically to address the crisis, including the Global Fund in 2002 and PEPFAR in 2003. An unparalleled mobilization of resources to address HIV/AIDS accompanied the creation of these new organizations. In 1990, funding for HIV/AIDS comprised just 5 percent of total development assistance for health (DAH); by 2000, that percentage rose to 11.4 percent, after which it steadily increased to a peak of 33 percent in 2007.<sup>5</sup> After a period of plateauing, HIV/AIDS funding declined to just 23.8 percent of DAH as of 2019.<sup>6</sup> In absolute terms, however, HIV/AIDS has received the largest share of DAH since 2005. Between 2010 and 2019, development assistance for HIV/AIDS declined 17 percent, while total DAH has hovered between \$37 billion and \$40 billion annually since 2011.<sup>7</sup> Given the proportion of DAH that HIV/AIDS financing represents and constraints related to COVID-19, these trends are likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

As AIDS emerged as a global crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, a separate shift was occurring within the international development community around the concept of cost-effectiveness.<sup>8</sup> Cost-effectiveness analysis involves prioritizing interventions

after analyzing the costs of different interventions and comparing those costs relative to associated outcomes. The World Bank's *World Development Report 1993: Investing in Health* was among the most important publications in popularizing cost-effectiveness in the health sector.<sup>9</sup> The report states that its "findings are based in large part on innovative research, including estimation of the global burden of disease and the cost-effectiveness of interventions. These assessments can help in setting priorities for health spending." As an example of the 1993 report's influence, Bill Gates has indicated that it shaped his interest in global health (in 2019, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation contributed 10 percent of total global health spending).<sup>10</sup> Also in 1993, alongside the World Development Report, the World Bank published *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries (DCP1)*, which "[attempted] to systematically assess value for money (cost-effectiveness) of interventions."<sup>11</sup> Subsequent volumes were published in 2006 and 2017, while the World Health Organization (WHO) also released a guide to cost-effectiveness analysis in 2003.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the above DCP1 quotation, "value for money" is not necessarily synonymous with cost-effectiveness, as VfM is a broad umbrella term that incorporates other dimensions beyond cost-effectiveness, such as efficiency and effectiveness. The OECD Development Assistance Committee published a policy brief in May 2012 entitled *Value for Money and International Development: Deconstructing Myths to Promote a More Constructive Discussion*,<sup>13</sup> which builds on the UK Department for International Development's (DFID's) 3Es framework. DFID's framework, published in July 2011, aims to "maximise the impact of each pound spent to improve poor people's lives."<sup>14</sup> While the OECD's and DFID's briefs provided some guidance on VfM, there was no widely accepted definition of VfM in global health by the early 2010s, and the concept itself was rather contentious. Global health institutions applied the term variably, with some focusing only on cost-effectiveness, for example, while others focused on efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>15</sup> Some may not have even used the term VfM but in practice applied related principles such as efficiency. Health and development researchers also debated what "value" meant in the first place.<sup>16</sup>

## BOX 1. CGD'S DEFINITION OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Value for money in the health sector is defined as creating and complying with rules or procedures for allocating resources that elicit the production and use of the health-maximizing mix of services for the available donor, national, and private resources. In keeping with this definition, achieving value for money entails high levels of “technical efficiency” and “allocative efficiency,” which can only be reached by ensuring “incentive compatibility.” These terms are defined as follows:

**Technical efficiency** implies producing as much quality-adjusted output as possible with a given set of inputs, or, conversely, producing a given output with a minimum amount of inputs. For example, measures of technical efficiency would be expressed as “antiretroviral treatment person-years gained per \$1,000.”

**Allocative efficiency** implies the distribution of resources to maximize health or minimize selected diseases across countries, across subpopulations, across diseases, and across interventions. A measure of allocative efficiency would be expressed as “malaria cases averted per \$1,000.”

**Incentive compatibility** implies creating and complying with rules or procedures that align incentives to achieve technical and allocative efficiency based on the disease-prevention and -control goals set by the global health community.

*Source: Value for Money Working Group, More Health for the Money: Putting Incentives to Work for the Global Fund and Its Partners (Washington, DC: CGD, 2013).*

CGD framed the formation of its 2011–2013 Value for Money Working Group as a response to the need for a clearer conceptual “agenda” for VfM in global health.<sup>17</sup> CGD’s resulting definition of VfM centers on the concepts of “technical efficiency,” “allocative efficiency,” and “incentive compatibility” (Box 1).<sup>18</sup> In the United States, a parallel movement was also building around improving health outcomes relative to cost.<sup>19</sup> Organizing principles such as “outcomes-based healthcare” and “values-based medicine” started to grow in popularity and were embedded in pushes for healthcare reform. And building on the critical reappraisals of health systems and service delivery in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet another perspective on the nexus of value and healthcare has emerged, denoted as “value-based health services.”<sup>20</sup>

Another trend in foreign aid financing relevant to this case study is the development and uptake of results-based financing (RBF) approaches in health.<sup>21</sup> Like VfM, RBF has taken on multiple forms, though it does have a widely agreed-upon definition. In essence, RBF links payments, generally from donors, to specific, agreed-upon outcomes or results. Because of this focus on results, RBF has a natural alignment with VfM.

CGD has produced a large body of work related to RBF, including the Cash on Delivery (COD) Aid concept, explained in detail in the 2010 CGD book *Cash on Delivery: A New Approach to Foreign Aid*.<sup>22</sup> CGD’s working group on performance-based incentives and the resulting 2009 book, *Performance Incentives for Global Health: Potential and Pitfalls*, explored early examples of RBF applications in global health.<sup>23</sup> The World Bank labels itself “an early adopter” of RBF in health as well, with the creation of its Health Results Innovation Trust Fund in 2007, and is seen by multiple individuals interviewed for this project as among the primary actors initially driving forward an RBF agenda more broadly.<sup>24</sup>

## CGD INFLUENCE ON PEPFAR: DATA TRANSPARENCY AND THE “AIDS TRANSITION”

### HIV/AIDS Monitor: 2006–2010<sup>25</sup>

During CGD’s first decade of operation, the organization’s HIV/AIDS Monitor (HAM) comprised a foundational component of its work on the health economics of HIV.<sup>26</sup> Directed by Nandini

Oomman, the HAM encompassed research, analysis, and policy recommendations related to the then three largest HIV/AIDS donor agencies: PEPFAR, the Global Fund, and the World Bank's Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP). Principal investigators Caesar Cheelo (based in Zambia), Dirce Costa (based in Mozambique), and Freddie Ssengooba (based in Uganda) led in-country primary research activities, with support from field director William Okedi (based in Kenya); their work was instrumental in CGD's HAM. The primary policy impact claim considered below is CGD's role in informing PEPFAR's decision to publicly disclose data that had not previously been made available. Evidence for the HAM's role in helping to build the research base on HIV/AIDS donor funding and in coalescing a research and policy community around this topic is also considered.

According to multiple individuals interviewed for this case study, CGD work produced during this period generated a "drumbeat" around the issue of data transparency at PEPFAR and a broader interest in the funding practices of the three major HIV donors at the time. All three entities were created in the early 2000s, and publicly available information detailing their budgets and functions was generally limited in their initial years of operation. In the words of one AIDS journalist, "It was very, very hard to get this kind of granular information about where the money was going." In the context of this limited transparency, "the first set of [HAM] activities was to try and shed light even on the structuring and functioning of each of these mechanisms," according to a former CGD researcher familiar with the HAM. At the country level, at the interface between country governments and donors, a CGD research consultant involved in the HAM described implementing organizations and donor agencies like PEPFAR as, at the time, "hav[ing] their hierarchal structures where they would always point you to the global level for things that they did not want you to see." The individual further noted that "anytime you asked for detailed financials, for example, they would readily say, 'Well, this a contractual issue; we cannot divulge information that's in the contract, and if you want to get that cleared, you would have to go to our HQ to get that sort of data.'"

Based on a literature review and according to several individuals interviewed, CGD's October 2007 report *Following the Funding for HIV/AIDS: A Comparative Analysis of the Funding Practices of PEPFAR, the Global Fund and World Bank MAP in Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia*, was the first report to comparatively analyze how these three HIV funders allocated resources.<sup>27</sup> An AIDS journalist stated that this report was "unlike anything else that was out there" in its "rigorous" analysis of available evidence. The funders themselves took notice of this work; a joint DFID-PEPFAR report on Mozambique's human resources for health published in May 2008 and a five-year evaluation of the Global Fund published in March 2009 both cited the 2007 CGD report.<sup>28</sup> Staff from the Global Fund, the World Bank, USAID and other US government agencies, and numerous NGOs attended the 2007 report launch,<sup>29</sup> while senior officials from PEPFAR, the World Bank, and the Global Fund participated in the launch's panel discussion, indicating the sector's appetite for CGD's analysis and donors' willingness to engage with CGD.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, at the launch, the Global Fund's acting deputy director of operations, Elmar Vinh-Thomas, described the report as "something that we will use and we are looking very carefully at your recommendations."<sup>31</sup>

CGD's subsequent April 2008 report, *The Numbers Behind the Stories: PEPFAR Funding for Fiscal Years 2004 to 2006*, analyzed PEPFAR data that had recently become publicly available through another organization's efforts.<sup>32</sup> The Center for Public Integrity (CPI), an investigative nonprofit organization, initially acquired the 2004–2006 PEPFAR data that CGD would use in its 2008 report after suing several US government departments and agencies, including the State Department, for access.<sup>33</sup> According to a former CGD staff member, a CGD research assistant supporting the HAM read CPI's blogs on the previously undisclosed PEPFAR data and brought it to the HAM director's attention. The same former CGD researcher noted that "it wasn't something that was planned. It came our way and we jumped on it." Subsequently, this CGD researcher expressed interest to CPI in obtaining the data to "bring out some answers to other questions we have," which led to CPI agreeing to share the data with CGD.<sup>34</sup> Although the interaction with CPI was serendipitous, a CGD HAM research consultant



added that it complemented the HAM research team's concerted effort to trace donor flows:

We had an organized way of confronting the institutions and saying, "We know this data is there somewhere because it's filtering through, and we can see the headline numbers and we'd like to trace it in terms of where [the funding] goes and how it filters through the different systems from the global level to the national level on to the subnational level." So I think there was a huge, huge impact in that respect in opening up the space for transparency.

Indeed, the 2008 CGD report further amplified CGD's drumbeat around PEPFAR's undisclosed data, which coincided with PEPFAR's reauthorization and creation of a new five-year strategy. Before the report was released, CGD published a note in November 2007 calling for the US Congress to mandate public disclosure of PEPFAR data in the upcoming reauthorization of PEPFAR, the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde Reauthorization Act of 2008.<sup>35</sup> Around the same time, according to an internal CGD report, CGD had educational conversations with congressional staff members who were involved in writing the actual PEPFAR reauthorization legislation.<sup>36</sup> However, it is not clear whether, or the extent to which, these contacts helped shape the content of this legislation. Then in December 2008, CGD released a policy memo addressed to President Obama calling for public disclosure of PEPFAR's "funding and programmatic data."<sup>37</sup> This memo, according to a former CGD staff member, was sent to then special assistant to President Obama Gayle Smith, along with others on the transition team. This CGD staff member then coincidentally "met Gayle on the street; she said we're going to follow up, and someone from the transition team called" to discuss the memo and its recommendations. Additional interviews with US government officials involved in that conversation would be useful to clarify if and how this conversation shaped the Obama administration's thinking around PEPFAR's data transparency. A senior staff member of a peer organization interviewed for this case study, however, supported the idea that CGD played a definite role and stated, "[CGD] really pushed [the Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (OGAC)] to say that this information is really important to the public." Following

CGD's publication of *The Numbers Behind the Stories*, according to this individual,

that then led to OGAC posting all the information... Now I wouldn't say CGD alone; there were other pressures for OGAC to be more transparent, but that was a really important moment because OGAC now is one of the more transparent parts of the US government. I do think that that early push helped a lot; it set a precedent, and then when Ambassador [Deborah] Birx came on [as US Global AIDS Coordinator] she was able to also push and say we should make our data available.<sup>38</sup>

By the time PEPFAR released its five-year strategy for the period of 2009 to 2014 (PEPFAR 2.0) in December 2009, PEPFAR committed to "working to expand publicly available data."<sup>39</sup> In January 2008, PEPFAR's website featured limited financial data; only funding data for FY2005 appear to have been available.<sup>40</sup> By the beginning of 2010, PEPFAR's website had a new link for "obligation and outlay reports" under "key funding information," which featured additional financial data.<sup>41</sup> A former congressional staffer involved with the 2008 reauthorization process stated that CGD was "a group that engaged on ideas, concepts, and understanding the state of work in the field in ways that were very useful." When asked if they thought CGD had a direct role in moving forward the data transparency discussion at PEPFAR, they responded, "Absolutely; we did not interact with them on bill language, for example—it was not their role to engage on that—but they were one of the groups that in terms of the framing of the Committee's approach to the bill in the months leading up to it, I'd say they were probably one of the two or three most influential groups." CGD helped push PEPFAR in the direction of expanding publicly available data by being one of the loudest, most persistent, and most authoritative voices calling attention to the need for greater transparency.

Coinciding with the release of PEPFAR 2.0, PEPFAR also underwent a leadership transition; Ambassador Eric Goosby assumed the role of US Global AIDS Coordinator in June 2009. Ambassador Goosby invited CGD, alongside several other think tanks and foundations such as the Kaiser Family



Foundation (KFF) and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), to “hear his vision for PEPFAR.”<sup>42</sup> CGD’s Oomman met with Ambassador Goosby several other times, including in September 2009, to “discuss specific ways in which CGD could provide input to PEPFAR under his leadership.”<sup>43</sup> According to a former CGD researcher, a Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffer also reached out to CGD for technical assistance on legislative “language on gender” in PEPFAR 2.0, based on CGD’s 2009 report *Moving Beyond Gender as Usual*.<sup>44</sup> While a former congressional staffer involved in the 2008 reauthorization did not credit specific language in PEPFAR 2.0 to CGD, they did think CGD played an active role in this broader shift: “One of the differences between the 2008 legislation and the original legislation creating PEPFAR was the shift in emphasis on gender, and there was a lot of that that came out of conversations with CGD and other partners about also better understanding the demographics of the pandemic and how women were affected.” Additional interviews with contemporaneous PEPFAR officials responsible for the creation of PEPFAR 2.0 would facilitate a better understanding of how these private conversations between CGD and PEPFAR staff may have informed specific policy decisions at PEPFAR.

That said, the relationship building that resulted from CGD’s HAM outreach in itself served a broader function in establishing CGD as a reliable interlocutor. As one former CGD staffer claimed, CGD “became the go-to place for other donors to understand mostly US mechanisms and the Global Fund” and played a leading “role in deconstructing and demystifying PEPFAR for other bilaterals.” Although “it was tough to get people’s heads around [the HAM and it] took a while before they understood the objectives clearly,” CGD over time “slowly built confidence with” contacts at the World Bank, the Global Fund, and US government agencies. Officials at these institutions corroborated this claim. For example, a former senior leader at the Global Fund was quoted in an internal CGD report as describing the HAM as “‘diligent and insightful’ and that they ha[d] ‘a strong sense that this will improve the way in which HIV/AIDS funding rolls out and make all of us more reflective and analytic funders.’”<sup>45</sup> The same CGD document also reported that a senior US Government Accountability Office official indicated that they “expect CGD’s research,

publications and updates will remain an important source of information on and insight into the successes and challenges of implementing PEPFAR.”<sup>46</sup> At a satellite event at the International AIDS Conference in August 2008 in Mexico City, all three executive leaders of PEPFAR, the Global Fund, and the World Bank’s MAP participated in a CGD-hosted panel discussion on national health systems.<sup>47</sup> After the US government created the Global Health Initiative (GHI) in 2009, moreover, CGD’s Oomman was invited to a private dinner “to discuss the GHI going forward” with Ezekiel Emanuel, who was the special adviser for health policy to the director of the Office of Management and Budget from 2009 to 2011.<sup>48</sup> Taken together, these examples show that donor agency leaders welcomed engagement with CGD on its policy analysis of their programs.

There is also a strong case to be made that the in-country component of the HAM, including the relationship-building efforts of the HAM team, helped elevate country perspectives in donor financing considerations, the level of which has historically been insufficient. As mentioned previously, three principal investigators, Caesar Cheelo, Dirce Costa, and Freddie Ssengooba, based in Zambia, Mozambique, and Uganda, respectively, and with support from William Okedi in Kenya, led in-country research activities as fully supported CGD research consultants. By incorporating in-country research activities, CGD acted as “trailblazers” and “played an important catalytic role collecting experiences on what was actually happening on the ground,” according to multiple CGD staffers involved in the HAM. Experts external to CGD have echoed this perspective. At the 2007 launch of the *Following the Funding* report, KFF’s senior vice president and director of global health and HIV policy, Jennifer Kates, described the in-country research component as “unique” and valuable in that it connected donor financing to realities on the ground.<sup>49</sup>

This in-country research component, then, was an essential ingredient in the HAM’s policy relevance and potential policy impact. In the context of how relatively new PEPFAR, the Global Fund, and the World Bank’s MAP still were in the late 2000s, CGD’s “use of country-level analysis helped shape and force a more nuanced discussion of the pros and cons of these mechanisms within the activist arena,” according to

an AIDS activist. This “close eye on different aspects of program functioning,” moreover, made possible through country representation in CGD’s research process, “made it harder to make generalizations about programs and forced reckoning with what was right for different country contexts,” the same individual explained. This reckoning was visible at the June 2010 HAM closing event, which focused on the theme of “country ownership” and featured US government officials, HAM research team members, and Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, then Ethiopia’s minister of health and Global Fund chair.<sup>50</sup> The HAM in general “brought to the surface some of the systemic issues about ownership and programming” and at the June 2010 event in particular featured a “very frank discussion” regarding the relationship between countries and donors.<sup>51</sup>

According to a CGD staffer involved in the HAM, the in-country “impact of the HAM can be felt today,” as evidenced by greater systematization of data collection and sharing and more available programming information relative to before the HAM. The information generated through the HAM equipped country governments to “challenge and discuss” issues with PEPFAR and other development partners, and in turn served as a “wake-up call” for development partners themselves in addressing concerns raised by country governments. Another CGD national consultant involved in the HAM framed it this way:

There was a lot of influence that came [from the HAM work] in rethinking how HIV/AIDS monies could be channeled to the country and looking at the issue of trying to lower the overhead [costs], because the overhead was really, really big. By the time [the money] goes to the health facilities, the beneficiary level, and community organizations, it was really small proportions of what had started off as a big global figure at the top. So that thinking changed.

Evidence that CGD’s HAM analysis was used in country-level policymaking discussions further supports the claim that CGD’s work through the HAM was rendered more policy relevant with the engagement of in-country researchers. A national research consultant involved in the HAM said, “It was probably one of the most listened-to projects in Zambia,”

adding that “policymakers in country started to see some of what we were finding, connecting the dots the way we were, and were suddenly very interested to understand a lot more.” An internal CGD document, for example, reports that CGD’s analysis influenced Zambia’s “design and process of tracking the HIV/AIDS funds within the National Health Accounts in the Ministry of Health (MOH) and in the drafting of the International Health Partnership position paper of MOH” through CGD’s *Following the Funding* report.<sup>52</sup> A CGD national consultant familiar with the MOH’s change in methodology recalled being “consulted quite extensively to figure out how to incorporate HIV/AIDS funding flows into the national health accounts.” This individual further noted that the Zambian MOH began “using the evidence that we had generated” to push PEPFAR to consider sector-wide pooled funding. This engagement, and the HAM work in general, led to “a lot of cross-pollination” with the MOH, national universities, and others in Zambia working on health expenditure tracking. In this regard, HAM analysis had a “huge, direct, and important contribution” in shaping national conversations around tracking HIV/AIDS resources.<sup>53</sup> Additional interviews with Zambian MOH officials responsible for tracking HIV/AIDS funding at the time might further corroborate this claim.

Evidence from Uganda supports a similar conclusion, that CGD, through the research and outreach activities of in-country research consultants, helped shape the terms of national debates around HIV/AIDS financing. One way this involvement manifested was subsequent direct involvement of HAM principal investigators in national policy decision-making processes. Principal investigator Freddie Ssenooba, for example, was appointed as an adviser to the MOH.<sup>54</sup> Building on the HAM work and following his January 2010 op-ed in the Ugandan publication *The New Vision* on Ugandan dependence on US foreign aid, moreover, Uganda-based PEPFAR officials “invited Dr. Ssenooba to advise them on Uganda’s National AIDS policies.”<sup>55</sup> According to a CGD HAM research consultant, Ambassador Goosby circulated this op-ed to all PEPFAR country program offices. An executive director of a health NGO in Uganda also shared with CGD that “HAM evidence is used to dialogue with government on how civil society organizations can be involved in policy debates and on

issues of accountability at [the] local level.”<sup>56</sup> In the opinion of another former CGD researcher, in-country research partners “became expert interlocutors between their own country governments and civil society and the donors. For me, this was a huge win even if not a direct objective of the HIV/AIDS Monitor.”<sup>57</sup> This policy engagement around HAM outputs and the subsequent relationships between principal investigators and country government indicates the policy relevance of the analysis emerging from the HAM.

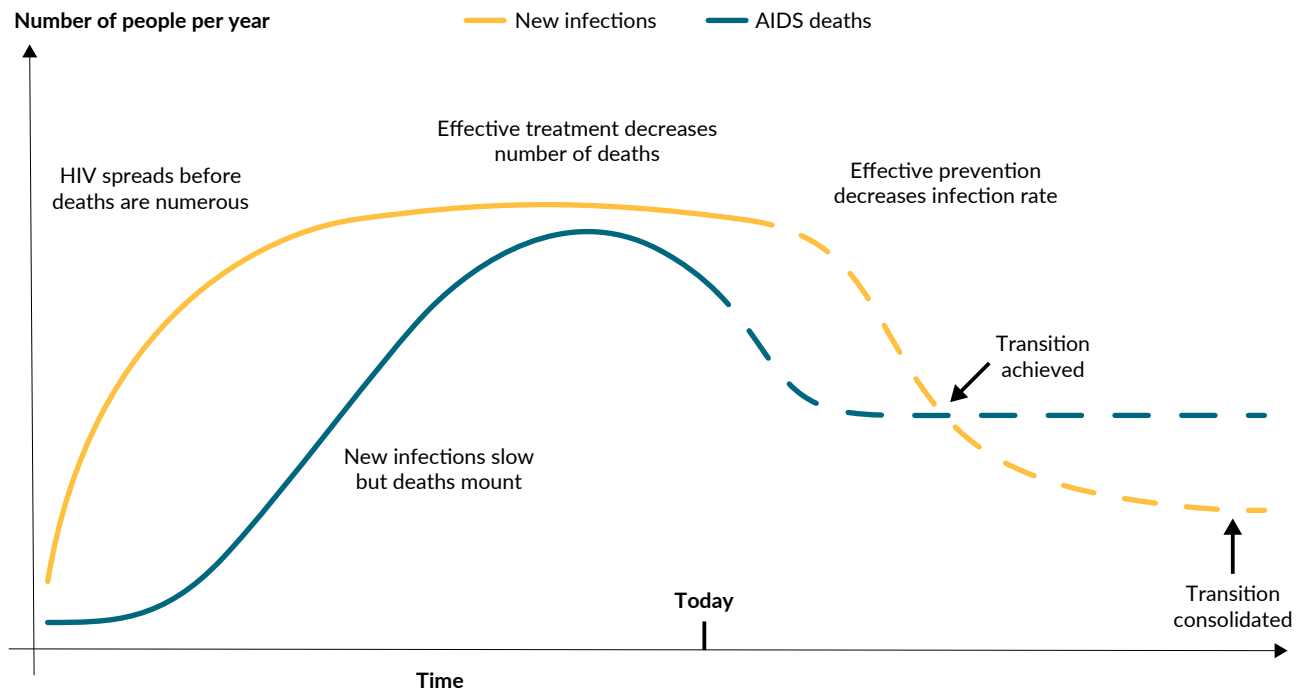
CGD, through its HAM, persistently called for PEPFAR to publicly disclose its data during the period from 2007 to 2010.<sup>58</sup> Senior US government officials engaged with CGD, both at CGD’s public events and in private meetings, on HAM recommendations. And around the same time this engagement was occurring, PEPFAR’s leadership did commit to start sharing more of PEPFAR’s data on its website in PEPFAR 2.0, with additional data becoming publicly available after 2009. By 2015, PEPFAR had created comprehensive programmatic and financial data dashboards that were available to the public.<sup>59</sup> Taken together, these findings suggest a potential relationship between CGD’s HAM and PEPFAR’s policy change vis-à-vis public data disclosure. No conclusive evidence was found, however, demonstrating a direct causal link between CGD’s HAM and PEPFAR’s commitment to data transparency in PEPFAR 2.0. Although the exact nature and extent of CGD’s impact remains indeterminate, a strong case can nevertheless be made for the HAM’s importance in this policy shift. It is plausible that CGD’s private and public convenings with senior US government officials involved in reauthorizing PEPFAR and developing PEPFAR 2.0 informed PEPFAR’s policy changes related to data disclosure. Supporting evidence that would make a stronger case for CGD’s direct, unequivocal role in OGAC’s decision to disclose PEPFAR data could include confirmation from high-level PEPFAR or State Department officials who met with CGD research staff that they, and other US government staff, advocated for greater data transparency internally at PEPFAR following and in a direct response to interactions with CGD.

## The “AIDS Transition,” epidemic control, and data transparency 2.0: 2010–2014

In 2006, coinciding with the beginning of CGD’s HAM, health economist Mead Over joined the organization to continue working on the idea of an “AIDS transition,” the point at which the number of people living with HIV/AIDS begins to fall (Figure 1). Over discussed this idea in a 1997 book co-authored with Martha Ainsworth, *Confronting AIDS: Public Priorities for a Global Epidemic*<sup>60</sup> and in a 2004 book chapter.<sup>61</sup> Over published a CGD book on the AIDS transition idea in 2011 titled *Achieving an AIDS Transition: Preventing Infections to Sustain Treatment*.<sup>62</sup> This book presents evidence that HIV incidence, or the number of people newly diagnosed, was outpacing HIV-related mortality at the time. Over states that, to address this trend, donors and governments need to prioritize reaching an “AIDS transition,” or the point at which HIV prevalence, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS, declines rather than continues increasing. In the book, Over recommends policies and incentives for achieving this transition, including increased investments in prevention efforts and tracking incidence.<sup>63</sup>

Several former and current CGD researchers suggested that PEPFAR’s prioritization of “epidemic control” in its strategy and investments was modeled on CGD’s AIDS transition concept; this claim is explored in the discussion that follows. PEPFAR’s concept of epidemic control does have clear similarities to CGD’s concept of an AIDS transition. PEPFAR defines epidemic control using essentially the same language as CGD does for AIDS transition, which is “the point at which new HIV infections have decreased and fall below the number of AIDS-related deaths,” per PEPFAR’s third strategy, PEPFAR 3.0.<sup>64</sup> In PEPFAR’s latest Country and Regional Operational Plan guidance for PEPFAR countries, epidemic control is the defining aim of the entire document.<sup>65</sup> PEPFAR had incorporated prevention efforts from the very beginning of its activities, but the idea of epidemic control in PEPFAR 3.0 was a marked departure relative to PEPFAR 1.0 and PEPFAR 2.0 strategies. Published in December 2014 under the leadership of then

**FIGURE 1.** Annual infections and deaths from HIV



Source: Mead Over, *Achieving an AIDS Transition: Preventing Infections to Sustain Treatment* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2011).

newly appointed US Global AIDS Coordinator Deborah Birx, PEPFAR 3.0 built on previous language around “creating an AIDS-free generation,” a prevention-focused goal introduced by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the 2011 *PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS-Free Generation*.<sup>66</sup>

While a correlation clearly exists between CGD’s work on achieving an AIDS transition and PEPFAR’s subsequent prioritization of epidemic control, sufficient evidence was not found to make a definitive claim that CGD caused PEPFAR to adopt epidemic control as a priority. Even CGD research staff expressed doubt about the ability to demonstrate a clear, linear, causal relationship: “I can’t prove in any way [our] work influenced Debbie [Birx], but I know she was aware of it.” Early in her tenure, Ambassador Birx prioritized the creation of PEPFAR’s data dashboards, comprehensive data repositories that include routinely updated programmatic and financial reporting. On multiple occasions in public forums, Ambassador Birx has emphasized her background in hard science and her affinity for data-driven and evidence-informed approaches. While CGD may have had a more receptive audience for its policy

recommendations with her arrival in 2014 and, in a former CGD staff member’s opinion, an opportunity for CGD to no longer be “pushing against the tide” at PEPFAR, Ambassador Birx may have already been inclined to pursue greater transparency during her tenure.

Although it is difficult to establish a direct causal link between CGD’s work on the AIDS transition concept and PEPFAR’s prioritization of epidemic control, there is compelling evidence that Ambassador Birx took seriously other recommendations CGD produced and welcomed engagement with CGD. While serving as US Global AIDS Coordinator, she regularly offered remarks at CGD convenings between 2014 and 2018 and participated in numerous private meetings with CGD research staff.<sup>67</sup> At such events, she also frequently commended CGD. For example, at a June 2015 CGD event on women’s economic empowerment, Ambassador Birx included the following statement in her closing remarks:

Before I took this job, the Center for Global Development and a group of other individuals wrote a very constructive document of how PEPFAR could be better. And we took that

very seriously of how we could be better. And across all the analyses, the shared element was transparency and accountability and making that more evident for everyone. So that was... one of our first initiatives.<sup>68</sup>

The document Ambassador Birx referred to was a December 2013 report by CGD's Amanda Glassman and Jenny Ottenhoff that recommended four priorities for effectively implementing PEPFAR's strategy, including improving accountability and transparency.<sup>69</sup> At a later CGD event, the launch of the Next Generation Financing Models in Global Health Working Group report in February 2016, Ambassador Birx also stated:

We were a lucky beneficiary of a Center for Global Development piece before I became the Coordinator... We lined it up with 12 different other reports about how PEPFAR could be improved. And there were three areas where every single report said that we could do a better job. And that was on accountability, transparency, and working towards impact. And so PEPFAR 3.0 is totally built on those three principles, the three principles that outside groups taking a look at us of where we could do a better job really recommended us to do it. And... I'm grateful for the Center for Global Development for taking that time—they have very many smart people, but to take the time and to really look at how we could be better was really quite important.<sup>70</sup>

Ambassador Birx's remarks indicate that CGD's work clearly influenced her thinking and priorities while at PEPFAR. At the same time, she refers to 12 other reports as influential, all of which evidently contain the three themes highlighted: accountability, transparency, and impact. It's possible that Ambassador Birx was including among these reports the RAND Corporation's 2011 value for money in donor HIV funding report, for example (published two years prior to CGD's 2013 report), which also called for greater transparency and efficiency in HIV financing.<sup>71</sup> Given the number of other outside organizations examining PEPFAR's performance by this point in the initiative's history and the similarity in their conclusions, CGD cannot claim sole credit for PEPFAR's emphasis on accountability and transparency under Ambassador Birx. CGD can, however, claim to have been an important and

influential voice within a broader chorus calling attention to these issues.

Some individuals interviewed for this case study also speculated that Ambassador Birx may have been responding to political incentives in adopting an incidence metric specifically. Since epidemic control means bringing incidence below the mortality rate, achieving epidemic control requires monitoring of incidence.<sup>72</sup> In the opinion of one individual interviewed for this case study, "Birx needed a way for Congress to say, 'We're succeeding'" and so may have had an "incentive to pick something like that up." This reasoning would suggest that PEPFAR might have prioritized epidemic control even absent CGD's and others' advocacy. Indeed, at the time, other actors in the HIV/AIDS space were also advocating for greater investments in prevention.<sup>73</sup>

If CGD had been influential in encouraging Ambassador Birx's prioritization of epidemic control in PEPFAR 3.0, one possible reason she may not have publicly acknowledged CGD's role is that a sizable and vocal group of AIDS advocates, researchers, and government officials took issue with the AIDS transition idea. Indeed, when asked about the AIDS transition, multiple people interviewed for this case study, including some staff of aid donor agencies, described the concept as problematic. According to one, the concept "caused misinterpretation and confusion." Since the premise of achieving the AIDS transition rests on bringing down the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS, "AIDS advocates interpreted epidemic control as letting AIDS patients die... or stopping treating people," in the words of one CGD researcher.<sup>74</sup> This individual noted that, technically, there was some validity to this concern, as "a minister of finance could reduce his fiscal burden by allowing AIDS patients to die." Over argued in his 2011 book for bringing down new HIV infections while maintaining treatment for people living with HIV. An individual interviewed for this project, however, pointed out that by conditioning aid on incidence, for which available data were paltry, the implications of the AIDS transition as outlined were such that low-income countries could potentially be disqualified from scaling up ART on the basis of their not reducing incidence (which, again, was a relatively indeterminate metric in the early 2010s, given



data constraints). Tying treatment scale-up to incidence within this context, in this individual's view, burdened countries with "an arbitrary constraint" with life-or-death implications.<sup>75</sup> These critiques of the AIDS transition concept may have limited health aid donors' interest in the concept or their willingness to adopt it.

Other pushback to CGD's AIDS transition work was rooted in the way the idea was communicated and framed, which reveals a deeper, core tension between the idea of health as a human right and prioritizing interventions that are optimally cost-effective. One self-identified "prevention advocate" indicated that they thought Over's work on prevention was important: "It's absolutely true you cannot treat your way out of a pandemic, and we shortchanged prevention for years—also totally true." But, they added, "it is the ways that you say that and the arguments that you make that change if you start to do that in collaboration with folks in country." In this individual's view, the language around the AIDS transition idea "felt more abstracted" relative to the work CGD had done through the HAM (which was carried out in large part through in-country collaborations) and "hurt prevention advocacy because it seemed so diametrically opposed to treatment." In addition to substantive critiques of the concept itself, critiques of the rhetoric used to communicate the concept of an AIDS transition may also have served as a disincentive for donor agencies to embrace it, publicly or otherwise.

No individual external to CGD, when asked, indicated that they had an impression of a clear causal link between CGD's AIDS transition work in 2011 and PEPFAR's shift to epidemic control by 2014; one individual stated that PEPFAR's adoption of epidemic control was "definitely not attributable" to Over or CGD. Instead, in this person's view, *opposition* to the AIDS transition concept may have helped fuel PEPFAR's shift in focus. In the context of flatlining budgets following the 2008 financial crisis, there was appetite among the AIDS activist community to find an avenue for resisting the potential resulting "retreat" from PEPFAR. This mobilization, taken together with the landmark HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 052 trial in 2011—which showed that early HIV treatment effectively

prevents transmission—provides one compelling alternative explanation for PEPFAR's shift.<sup>76</sup>

Following the publication of the HTPN 052 results, PEPFAR's Scientific Advisory Board, of which both Over and Ambassador Birx were members, released recommendations directed at OGAC and Ambassador Goosby, then PEPFAR coordinator.<sup>77</sup> The number one recommendation in the report centered on scaling up treatment. According to an AIDS activist interviewed for this project, actors both within PEPFAR and outside the US government, including the Global AIDS Alliance, Keep a Child Alive, amfAR, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and Health GAP (Global Access Project), were

trading information back and forth about what was possible with HTPN 052 in terms of beginning to get basically double benefit for treatment—for clinical benefit and for individuals—and made a very concerted push to both USG [US government] and UNAIDS to mobilize around this idea of "let's get out of this rhetoric of a treatment mortgage" and into this moment of "we can achieve epidemic control without a vaccine using treatment as prevention."

Consequently, PEPFAR adopted "treatment as prevention." On World AIDS Day in December 2011, President Obama announced a new treatment goal of reaching 6 million people by 2013, 2 million additional people relative to the US government's previous treatment goal, noting that "treatment is also prevention."<sup>78</sup> In light of these other developments, it is implausible that CGD was wholly responsible for PEPFAR's adoption of epidemic control as a goal. Given Over's participation in PEPFAR's Scientific Advisory Board,<sup>79</sup> the similarities in language used to define "AIDS transition" and "epidemic control," and Ambassador Birx's acknowledgment of the general influence of CGD's research on her thinking, however, it is entirely possible that CGD contributed to PEPFAR's prioritization of epidemic control.<sup>80</sup>

More broadly, CGD succeeded in becoming a respected and authoritative voice on VfM considerations such as efficiency and effectiveness at PEPFAR. CGD's reputation within the US government as a valuable partner on these topics supports the idea that while CGD may not have had direct, causal policy

impact on HIV/AIDS financing, it nevertheless contributed to the *thinking* around such policy decisions. In September 2013, for example, staff of then Senator Bob Corker (R-TN) requested a meeting with CGD’s Over and Glassman, which also included Senator Bob Menendez’s (D-NJ) health staff, to discuss improved data collection at PEPFAR.<sup>81</sup> Another former US government official stated that CGD’s “critiques are important because they’re usually well-founded,” suggesting that PEPFAR officials were receptive to CGD’s analysis.<sup>82</sup> This individual, who was involved in PEPFAR’s 2013 reauthorization process, also stated:

I don’t know what direct influence CGD had on congressional staffers, but I will say there was a milieu that was created around efficiency and effectiveness that CGD played a big role in... They influenced me a lot and I in turn was influential in the program for those years and in that 2013 reauthorization process. I want to give CGD a lot of credit for helping to strengthen that milieu and putting ideas into the mix that were important. [CGD, particularly Over, Rachel Silverman, and Glassman] had a positive role in beginning to put some pressure on and examine [how PEPFAR was tracking VfM] further, as did CHAI.<sup>83</sup>

As was suggested with respect to Ambassador Bix’s remarks, though it is clear that CGD was not the sole voice PEPFAR looked to on these issues, it is also clear that US government officials regarded CGD as a valuable source for analysis and research. As another example, a former senior US government official said, “I don’t know if I can draw a straight line from CGD work and the [Finance and Economics Working Group, an interagency subcommittee], but it certainly was one of the influences. CGD helped promote a dialogue, creating kind of a drumbeat” around PEPFAR’s priorities as they related to VfM. This individual spoke specifically about PEPFAR’s adoption of expenditure analysis in 2010–2011, which linked expenditures to outputs, effectually shifting PEPFAR’s focus from inputs to results. Again, this statement supports the claim that CGD had an important role in PEPFAR’s adoption of VfM considerations, yet it is difficult to assign clear causal attribution to CGD’s work for specific PEPFAR policy changes. The influence of CGD’s

work on PEPFAR, then, can be understood as multipronged and somewhat diffuse.

## Further context and qualifications to claims

Additional contemporaneous shifts in the broader political and economic landscape also played to both CGD’s advantage and disadvantage in advancing certain policy recommendations and building effective inroads at key US government agencies. The aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, for example, threatened diminished funding for public agencies such as PEPFAR. During the Bush administration (2001–2009), PEPFAR had also been heavily criticized by AIDS advocates and the broader global health community for the initiative’s “ABC” (abstinence, being faithful, using condoms) approach, which went against available evidence regarding HIV transmission. These existing criticisms might have undermined PEPFAR officials’ receptivity to further critique. Consequently, at the start of the Obama administration in 2009, a policy window for greater engagement and receptivity around CGD’s VfM-related recommendations emerged. In the words of one individual, “There was a lot of interest to reform the initial program as Bush laid out... it was clear that there were problems that needed to be fixed.” From a country perspective, the HAM was also “quite timely,” as the International Monetary Fund had recently launched the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative in 2005, a complement to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.<sup>84</sup> With the enhanced “fiscal space” from debt cancellation came the risk that “donors might not provide as much financing,” making it an opportune time to “mak[e] the case that HIV [was] a high priority” that also required a coordinated response.<sup>85</sup>

While CGD, through the HAM, established a track record of analyzing the performance of HIV donor agencies—including assessing donors’ effectiveness and efficiency<sup>86</sup>—the HIV/AIDS research and advocacy community was a crowded field in the 2000s and 2010s. Individuals interviewed for this case study pointed to KFF, CHAI, Results for Development, amfAR, the Global Health Council and its members, UNAIDS, Friends of the Global Fight, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (which funded CGD and CHAI), as other important



organizations active in the HIV/AIDS space. What set CGD apart, however, according to individuals at and external to CGD, was its combined analytical rigor, credibility, and independence. A former CGD researcher stated that “there were lots of advocacy partners, but the advocacy partners may not necessarily have had the evidence, and I think we played that role of providing some of that evidence” (see also Box 2). KFF’s Jennifer Kates echoed this sentiment at a 2007 HAM report launch, describing HAM as playing a “really critical” function in “trying to bring an objective look at donor responses,” namely PEPFAR, the Global Fund, and MAP.<sup>87</sup>

## CGD INFLUENCE ON THE GLOBAL FUND: INTERNAL STRATEGY SHIFTS AND RESULTS-BASED FINANCING

Although many of the analyses and policy recommendations of the HAM included the Global Fund,<sup>88</sup> the most relevant activities in terms of potential policy impact on the Global Fund occurred in the 2010s after the HAM wound down. With the addition of health economist Amanda Glassman as director of global health policy in 2010, CGD’s portfolio of work on global health further coalesced around priority-setting and VfM. For example, CGD’s Priority-Setting Institutions for Global Health Working Group<sup>89</sup> and its 2012 report<sup>90</sup> outlined the need for greater guidance around resource allocations for health using cost-effectiveness analyses and health technology assessments, which led to the creation of the International Decision Support Initiative (iDSI) in 2013. iDSI is “a global network working to increase the value and impact of health spending” and was, until 2020, led by Kalipso Chalkidou, now head of health finance at the Global Fund.<sup>91</sup>

Following the Priority-Setting Institutions for Global Health Working Group, the next major working group related to VfM in health that CGD convened focused specifically on the Global Fund and met during 2012–2013 in Washington, DC; Geneva, Switzerland; and Bellagio, Italy. CGD’s motivation to focus on the Global Fund was related to organizational changes occurring at the Global Fund in 2011. In advance of its fourth

### BOX 2. THE ROLE OF CGD’S HIV/AIDS MONITOR IN SHAPING HIV DONORS’ POLICIES

“It was definitely collective action towards greater accountability. This is such a huge set of players that... I think it will be hubris to expect that we were the only ones that actually influenced [donors]. I think we were definitely early trailblazers in terms of using whatever data we could get to shed light substantively on how donors were dispersing funds and to what end.”

– Former CGD Researcher

replenishment, the Global Fund announced plans for a new funding model in late 2011 and subsequently launched the model in April 2013.<sup>92</sup> Glassman chaired this CGD working group, named the Value for Money: An Agenda for Global Health Funding Agencies Working Group,<sup>93</sup> which had the “ultimate goal... to develop a consensus on a clear, pragmatic, and implementable Value for Money agenda that is relevant for the major global health funders.”<sup>94</sup> Other groups were interested in this topic as well and were actively doing related research. For example, the UK’s DFID promoted a VfM approach in health financing and published official guidance in 2011.<sup>95</sup> RAND also published a report in December 2011 on VfM in PEPFAR and the Global Fund’s funding of ART, which cites two of CGD’s HAM reports.<sup>96</sup>

Value for Money Working Group members represented organizations such as UNAIDS, DFID, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Gavi, and the World Bank. Although no one from the Global Fund was a member of the working group, the first working group meeting in April 2012 included presentations on institutional initiatives on VfM from the Global Fund, PEPFAR, DFID, the Gates Foundation, and others.<sup>97</sup> The subsequent working group meeting in November 2012 was hosted at the Global Fund Secretariat offices in Geneva, and the Global Fund, along with other organizations, also participated in the third and final working group meeting in April 2013 in Bellagio.<sup>98</sup> The Global Fund’s active involvement in the working

group suggests a cooperative relationship between the Global Fund and CGD over the course of this period.

The resulting September 2013 working group report, *More Health for the Money: Putting Incentives to Work for the Global Fund and Its Partners*, includes recommendations directed at the Global Fund to “get more health for its money” across the four phases of its funding cycle (allocation, contracts, cost and spending, and performance and verification).<sup>99</sup> CGD launched the report at a United Nations General Assembly side event in New York, which featured a keynote address by Christoph Benn, the Global Fund’s director of external relations.<sup>100</sup> At the launch, Benn announced the Global Fund’s plans to pilot a Cash on Delivery (COD) Aid model in Rwanda (which was launched in 2014), along with other changes related to grant management.<sup>101</sup> CGD developed the concept of COD Aid, a type of results-based financing (RBF), in 2010; as mentioned earlier, RBF, sometimes termed performance-based financing (PBF), aligns with a VfM approach but is not synonymous with VfM, as it has a narrower focus on results and outcomes (as opposed to other VfM considerations, such as efficiency and cost-effectiveness).<sup>102</sup> Benn also discussed a then ongoing COD Aid pilot in Mesoamerica targeting malaria elimination. Even though Benn did not explicitly credit CGD or the working group for the Global Fund’s decision to pilot COD Aid approaches, and CGD did not claim credit for this decision, it is clear that CGD nevertheless had a direct impact on the Global Fund, given that COD Aid is a CGD-branded idea.

At the same time, it is difficult to locate a clear causal mechanism by which CGD informed the Global Fund’s decision to move in the direction of RBF/PBF and VfM more generally. In reference to the Global Fund’s COD Aid pilots, a senior staffer at the Global Fund thought that CGD “really ha[s] been instrumental in thinking more on the cash on delivery and we have gone on to do cash on delivery for malaria elimination, but to be honest it’s slightly different than the traditional CGD approach, which is much more indicator-based and this is much more process-based.”<sup>103</sup> Based on further comments from this person, it seems likely that CGD’s main contribution in informing the Global Fund’s decision to pursue RBF

approaches was CGD’s convening capacity and strong relationships with other key actors:

I think that CGD was influential to some extent in galvanizing us to do more on the World Bank–style [PBF] where we entered together into that and we got together with the Health Results [Innovation] Trust Fund, and I do think that CGD helped us do that and played an important role because they’re based in the US and they had good relations with the Bank.

Around the same time as CGD’s Value for Money Working Group was active, the Global Fund made several other changes that reflect a greater prioritization of VfM relative to its first decade of operation, though again, CGD’s specific role, if any, in facilitating this shift is unclear. Among the 12 guiding principles in the strategic framework of the Global Fund’s 2012–2016 strategy was “good value for money.”<sup>104</sup> By contrast, the Global Fund’s preceding strategy mentioned VfM only briefly, and not as part of a guiding principle: “A process has been established to monitor the portfolio on a regular basis, including the quality and value for money of Global Fund-financed interventions, the balance of interventions within each disease, the integration of relevant scientific innovations, and gender.”<sup>105</sup> Up to the early 2010s, according to a Global Fund staff member, the Global Fund did not have a formal definition for VfM; it “was more haphazard.” Another Global Fund staff member shared that 2011 marked a turning point: the Global Fund introduced a “value for money checklist” that year. According to the Global Fund’s May 2011 *Report of the Executive Director* to the board, the checklist would “help teams negotiating Round 10 grants ensure that different aspects of value for money—including effectiveness, efficiency and additionality—are considered in the negotiation process.”<sup>106</sup> Then in 2014, the Global Fund launched a three-year Special Initiative of Optimizing Value for Money and Financial Sustainability, which encompassed country-level technical support across three dimensions.<sup>107</sup> Another Global Fund staff member explained that a direct causal link between CGD’s activities and changes to the Global Fund’s policies vis-à-vis VfM would be hard to find because changes have been more piecemeal:

If we look back at, say, for example, the work on value for money and the recommendations there on allocations, on contracts, on performance management, etc., it's possible to see elements of that incorporated into Global Fund thinking and certainly the language of value for money being used more. But in terms of going all the way in terms of shifting and changing allocation methodologies, the kind of contracts we have for grant agreements, I think it's more kind of smaller, incremental changes.

As another example of how CGD's influence may have played out further upstream, the Global Fund also appointed a new head of the Strategic Investment and Partnerships Department in March 2013, who had the additional role of chief economist, a new position at the Global Fund. The Global Fund's press release announcing the appointment stated: "Dr [Michael] Borowitz will also serve as the Global Fund's Chief Economist, overseeing broad efforts to implement a value-for-money perspective as the Global Fund moves forward with a new funding model."<sup>108</sup> Several individuals interviewed for this case study perceived this appointment as a response to CGD's VfM working group. A Global Fund staff member familiar with the decision to establish the chief economist position said that the role "shifted to [a] more technical role due to pressure from CGD and DFID."

Other available evidence, however, suggests that CGD's impact on the Global Fund in the short term through this working group and its associated activities was limited. VfM may have seemed conceptually contentious, abstract, or irrelevant in the context of global health, where the goal of many organizations is saving lives and maximizing resources for health (see Theme 4 below for further details). As one individual at a peer institution stated, "The value for money frame doesn't always connect to the mission of an organization easily," and it's possible that CGD did not do enough to address that gap. In a related vein, CGD may have failed to consider how its recommendations would actually be operationalized. One individual at the Global Fund thought that the 2013 report was "not influential at all" at the Global Fund because it "wasn't embedded in the machinery of the Global Fund" or "responsive" to how the Global Fund worked, rendering it less practical.<sup>109</sup> It's also

worth reiterating that CGD did not claim any credit or involvement in the Global Fund's initial RBF pilots.<sup>110</sup>

Shortly after the VfM working group's conclusion, CGD launched another working group focused on the Global Fund, this time co-chaired by CGD's Glassman and the Global Fund's Maria Kirova. The Global Fund's willingness to co-convene the working group suggests a deeper level of mutual trust and interest on the Global Fund's part in CGD's recommendations relative to the previous working group. The Next Generation Financing Models in Global Health Working Group convened twice in Geneva and once in California over the course of 2015, and Global Fund staff members comprised 40 percent of the working group.<sup>111</sup> The working group produced five background papers and hosted two additional technical workshops.<sup>112</sup> CGD's Silverman and Over also regularly visited the Global Fund headquarters to "provide feedback on proposed grant designs, and share lessons learned from the Working Group process," again suggesting a higher level of engagement between CGD and the Global Fund relative to the previous working group.<sup>113</sup> This shift in approach was intentional. A Global Fund staff member involved in the working group commented that "it was decided to do a more technocratic thing, which was something more applied [relative to the 2012–2013 VfM working group] about how we could actually use these principles" in the Global Fund's grantmaking. This shift, in this individual's view, reflects the need to "pick the right people" to participate in the working group who "are interested" in the goals of the group, understand the Global Fund's operational constraints, and can implement recommendations. The shift in approach was also linked to a shift in the orientation of the working group toward doing something more "from our perspective," according to this individual.

The working group's 2015 four-part report, *Aligning Incentives, Accelerating Impact*, includes conceptual and implementation frameworks for operationalizing a transition from expenses to results as the basis of payments at the Global Fund.<sup>114</sup> The report was launched at an event in February 2016 that featured a keynote address from Ambassador Birx.<sup>115</sup> CGD also presented the report to about 80 members of the Global Fund Secretariat at an internal Global Fund event in November

2015.<sup>116</sup> In reference to the report, a Global Fund staff member involved in the working group stated that Global Fund reviewers found it “very helpful in moving our thinking along in this area.”<sup>117</sup> Global Fund staff provided extensive review of and input on the final report; among points of feedback on CGD’s draft report, Global Fund staff recommended greater nuance and detail on how to actually implement the proposed next-generation financing models.<sup>118</sup> At the working group’s conclusion, a Global Fund staff member expressed desire for ongoing “technical support” from and “access to” CGD, indicating that the Global Fund viewed CGD as a valuable partner.<sup>119</sup> In particular, the Global Fund was in the process of developing a Payment for Results (PfR) Policy (it was never operationalized, though). The Global Fund’s 2020–2022 allocation funding request instructions include a brief description of PfR approaches,<sup>120</sup> and its newest strategy for the period 2023–2028 includes a commitment to “enhance the use of PfR modalities to strengthen efficiency and impact... [O]perations will be streamlined to support use of PfR modalities.”<sup>121</sup>

At the country level, taking a more applied approach resulted in greater value and applicability of working group activities, according to an individual interviewed for this case study. They credited CGD with helping to shift the thinking around and incorporation of VfM, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness at the national level. They further characterized engagement with CGD as having a “multiplier effect” whereby engagement with CGD on these topics led to further engagements nationally and regionally: “[I was] called on to the [CGD] meetings to give perspectives from a country; [it] gave me an opportunity to learn what the thinking is globally, to also share my experiences from a country perspective, and through that interaction I was then able to come back home and be able to bring in the new thinking, bring in the new ideas that were smart, were prescriptive to some extent, that were easily welcomed.”

In the years following the 2015 working group report, the Global Fund made further changes that reflect an even greater focus on VfM relative to pre-2015. By 2019, the Global Fund had published technical guidance on VfM, and VfM had become “a key principle that guides the Global Fund’s investments throughout the Global Fund grant life cycle.”<sup>122</sup> According to

### BOX 3. DFID–GLOBAL FUND PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT EXCERPT (2016)

#### Maximising lives saved

Given the wide variation in the cost effectiveness and impact of different interventions, utilising the most cost-effective interventions and products can significantly increase the effectiveness and Value for Money of our efforts. The Global Fund must implement rigorous processes to ensure that the specific interventions and products used in preventing and tackling the three diseases are the most cost-effective possible. The Global Fund will set clear expectations to countries that they will use the highest value interventions, evaluated **using internationally accepted standards for economic evaluation**, develop a Value for Money framework for countries to guide the design and implementation of Global Fund grants in the most cost effective manner, and report on the framework’s progress and impact.

Source: DFID, Performance Agreement: United Kingdom and The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (London: DFID, 2016). The excerpt (with emphasis added) is the first of 10 “areas [...] for further improvement.”

a current Global Fund staff member, funding requests now include an “explicit question on value for money and then the entire request will be assessed” against VfM considerations. Perhaps feeding into this focus, DFID’s 2016 performance agreement with the Global Fund requires the Global Fund to prioritize VfM and “develop a Value for Money framework” (Box 3). The Global Fund’s 2017–2022 strategy, presented at the organization’s April 2016 board meeting, states that the Global Fund will “support grant implementation success based on impact, effectiveness, risk analysis and value-for-money,” including, potentially, “a pay for performance scheme in some contexts” as an operational objective under “Strategic Objective 1: Maximize impact against HIV, TB and malaria.”<sup>123</sup> When asked about CGD’s role in shaping this language, a Global Fund staff member thought that it was directly related to the Next

Generation Financing Models in Global Health Working Group and was “due to pressure from CGD and DFID.”

While DFID evidently directly influenced the Global Fund’s adoption of VfM via the performance agreement, CGD played a less direct but still definite role in the Global Fund’s application of VfM principles through CGD researchers’ relationships with DFID staff. More specifically, CGD had a direct role in shaping the language used in DFID’s 2016 performance agreement with the Global Fund. The 2016 agreement stated that the UK “expect[s] to see at least 15% of Global Fund investments in developing countries only being released in proportion to concrete, proven results.”<sup>124</sup> After CGD’s Glassman spoke with a DFID staff member in August 2016 about the performance agreement (which was in draft stage at the time), Glassman provided input on the draft language, some of which was reflected in DFID’s finalized performance agreement (for example, the bolded text in Box 3).<sup>125</sup> In addition to CGD’s indirect influence on the Global Fund via CGD’s input on DFID’s performance agreement with the Global Fund, CGD had further indirect influence by providing technical input to the Global Fund’s November 2015 board meeting. In advance of the meeting, at which the Global Fund approved a new strategic framework,<sup>126</sup> Glassman sent talking points on the Global Fund’s performance verification to Ambassador Birx (the US government representative to the Global Fund).<sup>127</sup> In June 2015, CGD hosted a small private roundtable with staff from civil society organizations, US government agencies, and international organizations to provide input on the upcoming board meeting as well, the summary of which was shared with Ambassador Birx.<sup>128</sup>

In the case of RBF/PfR specifically, there is also compelling evidence that CGD had a demonstrable direct impact at the Global Fund. An individual interviewed for this case study who participated in the Next Generation Financing Models in Global Health Working Group credited one of the working group’s meetings with being the birthing place for a “successful” performance-based pilot in Ukraine.<sup>129</sup> The pilot comprised paying healthcare workers involved in an opiate substitute therapy (OST) program to incentivize uptake of OST, which was seen as “definitely successful” by this individual and

their Ukraine-based colleagues.<sup>130</sup> Ukraine’s funding request to the Global Fund for the period of 2020–2022 states that “the OST RBF pilot has proven its effectiveness in increasing number of clients, retention rate and linkage to ART [for OST clients living with HIV and on ART...] This model needs to be brought to additional scale to make implementation locally accepted and the model can then be brought to scale by state funding.”<sup>131</sup> And in September 2022, the Global Fund’s senior fund portfolio manager for India, Richard Cunliffe, directly attributed the Global Fund’s adoption of a PfR modality in India to CGD. He further stated that the India portfolio is “achieving excellent results on the strength of recommendations from [CGD]. Thanks to [CGD’s Over, Glassman, and Nancy Birdsall].”<sup>132</sup>

At the same time, the Global Fund does not have stand-alone guidance in place for RBF/PfR, as it does for VfM, despite plans for creating a policy in 2016. One Global Fund staff member interviewed framed RBF/PfR as “certainly [an] interest and a trend,” while another Global Fund staff member stated that “there’s lots of discussion about it” that is “never-ending.” Indeed, in the Global Fund’s Technical Evaluation Reference Group’s (TERG’s) 2020 strategic review, the TERG recommends further exploration and use of PfR mechanisms.<sup>133</sup> In terms of actually adopting and implementing a formal PfR policy, however, a Global Fund staff member cited “high transaction costs” associated with changing the Global Fund’s funding model or approach as the main barrier. A third Global Fund staff member indicated that “our department will be coordinating a working group on this very soon, so there will be a big wave coming for us to think about how to design this properly.” In reference to an unpublished internal Global Fund document produced in June 2019 entitled “Payment for Results Modality: Working Paper,” which lays out the case for and logistics of a PfR modality, this individual stated, “I think CGD work was directly linked to this document.”

Multiple people interviewed also thought of the World Bank as one of the main drivers of the PBF and RBF agenda in the development sector generally, along with DFID; the Global Fund also pursued RBF partnerships with the World Bank during this time.<sup>134</sup> While the Global Fund’s engagement with other actors suggests that it may have considered RBF approaches



absent CGD (though not COD Aid specifically, as CGD developed the COD Aid model), there is evidence that CGD played an important role in the Global Fund's thinking around RBF.

Despite these indications of influence, a few people interviewed for this case study observed that CGD's work on VfM in the context of the Global Fund during the 2010s may have been a bit disconnected from the actual feasibility of operationalizing CGD's recommendations. A current Global Fund staff member stated that while CGD's work on RBF and VfM "has been cited quite extensively, including in the Global Fund," such as in internal meetings and documents, "the tricky bit in the middle," or the actual operationalization of recommendations, can be challenging. Put another way, the same individual stated, "There's a bulk of good work that can be referenced and cited and serve as a sort of inspiration, and then there's a big gap." An external actor stated in reference to CGD's 2013 and 2015 working groups, "My impression is that things weren't picked up" on account of the complexity of the Global Fund. "The board has a lot of political actors with different agendas... the [Global Fund] Secretariat is very complex." Another individual who advises the Global Fund described the overall orientation of the Global Fund as "quite conservative," "risk averse," and "sensitive" to critique, particularly in the context of the Global Fund's replenishment cycles and fundraising efforts.

In perhaps the most telling example of this kind of constraint, CGD more recently critiqued the Global Fund on its accountability and performance monitoring processes, with apparently limited traction. In May 2019, CGD's Glassman, Chalkidou (who was CGD's director of global health policy at the time), and Silverman, along with academic researcher Rocco Friebe, <sup>135</sup> published the commentary "On Results Reporting and Evidentiary Standards: Spotlight on the Global Fund," which outlined several critiques of the Global Fund's approach to results reporting. <sup>136</sup> A Global Fund staff member stated that this article "generated a lot of internal discussion." CGD continued to work on this performance verification, measurement, and evaluation agenda; at the request of a Global Fund staffer, Glassman and Silverman produced a private memo in October 2019 entitled "Results, Accountability and Performance

Monitoring at the Global Fund," which they shared with the Global Fund board chair, Donald Kaberuka, <sup>137</sup> and vice chair, Roslyn Morauta. The memo critiques the Global Fund's practice of using national results rather than tracking its own metrics, stating that this approach evades accountability and that "to claim credit for the entirety of the response in this context both overstates the Global Fund's impact and makes it impossible to understand the specific role the Global Fund is playing within the broader ecosystem." Among the recommendations outlined, CGD states that the board "should therefore call upon the Secretariat to clearly and empirically link financed activities to intermediate and national results."

Nevertheless, CGD's work on VfM seems to have played an important educational role at the Global Fund in "translating" the concepts of VfM, RBF, and related principles such as cost-effectiveness. A former CGD staff member involved in the 2013 working group perceived "the value for money agenda [as] more changing how [the Global Fund] thinks about it, how they think about investing, how they think about allocations, which takes time." <sup>138</sup> Another individual external to CGD expressed a similar sentiment: CGD's 2013 and 2015 working group reports "made very explicit and very clear where the Global Fund was spending money in a way that wasn't going to get as much health for the money as it could have done on behalf of countries." They added that CGD "played a really important role in shining a light on those inconsistencies and discrepancies in VfM" in terms of how the Global Fund spent funds. A Global Fund staff member expressed a similar sentiment, stating that "CGD's work has been very instrumental to challenge our thinking. At the individual level, we follow very closely the webinars organized by CGD, the blogs, the papers. That kind of influence is not quantifiable, but it's very there for us to think through 'How do we take that into the Global Fund settings?'" These comments suggest that CGD's impact on shaping the VfM agenda at global health institutions like the Global Fund may not be evident so much in tangible policy shifts at these institutions but rather in more subtle and longer-term shifts in attitude and thinking.

In October 2020, Chalkidou was appointed head of health finance at the Global Fund, alongside the creation of a

department dedicated to health finance. The Global Fund’s press release announcing her new role states that “Chalkidou’s appointment, along with the creation of a new Health Finance Department, represents a step-change in the Global Fund’s focus and capabilities in health finance.”<sup>139</sup> A Global Fund staff member interviewed for this case study stated that the Global Fund created this new department to “[consolidate] the internal expertise and mandate around health finance in one place and then the department is tasked to incorporate [VfM] throughout the Global Fund’s grant cycle.” They added: “We work together trying to really take the [VfM] as a core principle and then link everybody’s work with similar vision and measurable indicators to make it more systematic. We’re working on it, but we don’t have a coherent framework to push this from every part of the organization. So that’s what we’re doing right now.” Another Global Fund staff member characterized the impetus to create the department in terms of addressing what was an unsystematized way of thinking about VfM, and recognition of the need to think more strategically about other financing streams for HIV, TB, and malaria (e.g., domestic financing).

It is possible to interpret Chalkidou’s appointment and the creation of the Health Finance Department as signaling that the Global Fund has become more receptive to VfM principles and more willing to engage with CGD on its recommendations for improved performance (two former CGD staff members interpreted Chalkidou’s appointment as such). Four teams comprise the new Health Finance Department, one of which is specifically dedicated to bolstering VfM considerations at the Global Fund.<sup>140</sup> Among the department’s stated aims is to “spend better to help countries achieve more for health, by using money more efficiently”—language that aligns closely with the recommendations in CGD’s 2013 Value for Money Working Group final report entitled *More Health for the Money: Putting Incentives to Work for the Global Fund and Its Partners*.<sup>141</sup> A Global Fund staff member cited use of the phrase “more health for the money” in the Global Fund’s 2023–2028 strategy as further evidence that the Global Fund’s uptake of CGD’s ideas has been broad and incremental: “You’ll be able to identify elements of where there’s been some influence from CGD, but not complete adoption of recommendations

#### **BOX 4. GLOBAL FUND STRATEGY (2023–2028) CONTRIBUTORY OBJECTIVE D, SUB-OBJECTIVE 3**

Global Fund Strategy (2023–2028), Mutually Reinforcing Contributory Objective D. Mobilizing Increased Resources, Sub-Objective 3. Strengthen focus on VfM to enhance economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and sustainability of Global Fund–supported country programs and systems for health.

- ▶ Further embed VfM approaches throughout the grant lifecycle and support countries as they implement VfM reforms at national and regional levels...
- ▶ Build upon existing costing efforts to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, equity and sustainability of Global Fund and national investments...
- ▶ Enhance the use of Pfr modalities to strengthen efficiency and impact...

Source: Global Fund, *Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World: Global Fund Strategy (2023–2028)* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2021).

and more... incremental sort of additions to the core business model rather than fundamental changes to the core business model.”<sup>142</sup>

The 2023–2028 strategy, approved in late 2021,<sup>143</sup> does indeed reflect some of CGD’s ideas around VfM. For example, the fourth “mutually reinforcing contributory objective” in the new strategy, “Mobilizing Increased Resources,” invokes CGD’s VfM language: “Just as important as more money for health is *more health for money*. More efficient, effective and equitable use of existing resources and a renewed focus on VfM will be critical for achieving the Strategy’s aims and for the sustainability of investments” (emphasis added).<sup>144</sup> Among five sub-objectives within this contributory objective is to “strengthen focus on VfM to enhance economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and sustainability of Global Fund–supported country programs and systems for health” via three priority areas (Box 4). Relative to the Global Fund’s previous



strategy, VfM considerations in the 2023–2028 strategy are more explicitly asserted.

Other external factors may have also encouraged the Global Fund's increasing receptivity to VfM and to engaging with CGD's work on VfM. A 2011 Associated Press article levied partially inaccurate accusations of corruption and drug theft against the Global Fund.<sup>145</sup> Together with other organizational changes, the early 2010s were a period of "crisis at the Global Fund," accompanied by public interest in the manner in which the Global Fund spent its funds.<sup>146</sup> In response, and while CGD's Value for Money Working Group was active, the Global Fund experienced several consecutive leadership shifts. Michel Kazatchkine stepped down as executive director in early 2012, despite having been reelected in 2011 for a three-year term.<sup>147</sup> Around the same time, the Global Fund announced the creation of a new position tasked with carrying out the Global Fund's Consolidated Transformation Plan.<sup>148</sup> Then, in 2013, former US Global AIDS Coordinator Mark Dybul assumed the role of executive director. A former CGD staff member thought in this context that "there was a political moment for sure that there was a sense that something in the Global Fund needed to change." A former DFID staff member also thought that within this context, there was pressure from the Global Fund's donors more generally to consider VfM. Given this perception, it becomes more challenging to disentangle CGD's distinct role; how much of the Global Fund's adoption of VfM language, for example, reflected a broader trend toward VfM and cost-effectiveness? Further complicating the story are yet more changes in Global Fund leadership that occurred in 2018, when former Standard Chartered CEO Peter Sands became the executive director. Contrasting his background with Dybul's (who led the Global Fund from 2013 to 2017), it is possible that this leadership shift also indicated a greater focus on financial management in the latter half of the 2010s relative to the Global Fund's initial years of operation.

## KEY THEMES AND LESSONS LEARNED: MAKING SENSE OF AVAILABLE AND MISSING EVIDENCE REGARDING CGD'S IMPACT AND INFLUENCE ON VfM IN HIV/AIDS FINANCING

There is some compelling evidence of instances in which CGD's research and analysis had direct influence on key leaders and key policy decisions at PEPFAR and the Global Fund. Most individuals interviewed for this case study, however, thought that CGD could not claim sole credit for, or could not say definitively what the precise nature of CGD's role was, in shaping the VfM agenda at these two institutions. Multiple people attributed challenges in pinpointing precise examples of CGD's impact to the time elapsed (most activities covered in this case study took place 5 to 15 years ago). At the same time, most individuals also emphasized that they *did* think CGD played an important role in moving the VfM agenda forward in HIV/AIDS financing, even if other actors also deserved credit. For example, one individual stated that in relation to VfM in global health, "CGD is at the top of the pyramid of who do people listen to, who do people respect, whose blessing would make the most difference. But that doesn't mean the world stops without [CGD]." Another individual external to CGD stated that "CGD has really staked out territory in [VfM] as a main focus and throughline in its work such that I think it's probably one of the only organizations that's calling attention to and focusing on that as a theme."

CGD's policy impact on the VfM agenda in global health, then, can best be understood as somewhat upstream from specific policy changes in that CGD's core contribution centered around building momentum, and shaping the dialogue, around VfM, which in turn may have impacted subsequent policy decisions at key institutions. The following five themes emerged during the course of completing this case study regarding CGD's strengths and limitations in influencing the VfM agenda in HIV/AIDS financing.

## Theme 1. CGD was an important actor in advancing the VfM agenda in HIV/AIDS financing and did so most significantly through its convening power and by leveraging its relationships

The most powerful vehicle for CGD's broadly defined impact, according to multiple individuals interviewed for this case study, was the organization's ability to convene key players, including through its working groups.<sup>149</sup> One person interviewed for this study in a senior position at a peer institution stated that "in general, CGD does a really good job of bringing together diverse stakeholders to talk about these issues and to highlight where the problems are and what changes can be made." Another external actor thought that at their institution, CGD staff members were "seen as highly effective conveners and people who produced good technical work on those specific things." A Global Fund staff member thought that it was "great" that CGD is able "to bring partners together, to bring evidence to challenge our thinking." A former CGD staff member framed CGD's approach as one of "collective action" achieved through the organization's convening role.

In relation to CGD's working group reports, another external actor thought that while the resulting report was branded as a CGD product, "all the other players had a stake in it." They added that CGD's model was "collaborative," "consultative," and "in-depth," which facilitated "more ownership" over the report's recommendations and "more impetus" to enact policy changes based on the recommendations, or to enhance policymaker and other key stakeholder buy-in. However, CGD's engagement around donor transitions, sustainability, and VfM was perceived to have effectively ceased; an individual interviewed for this project thought that the "momentum was not maintained" and indicated that they "would like to see it reinvigorated." Another external actor pointed to staff turnover at places like the Global Fund as reason to find additional ways to "foster those technical linkages" and maintain momentum.

CGD was also broadly effective at being attuned to and leveraging policy windows while also building relationships to

### BOX 5. AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE OF CGD'S TENDENCY TO CAPITALIZE ON POLICY WINDOWS

"I think CGD has done something very strategic a number of times, and that is prepare a white paper for a new leader of an international organization. So, capitalizing on this idea that directions are set at the beginning of someone's tenure, and CGD unprompted has slid a white paper in front of new leaders on a number of occasions. I'd like to believe that it has been very useful to those leaders coming in and saying, 'Here's an outside party that knows me well and is giving me some advice as a new leader. What are some of the things I should consider?' It would be difficult to go back and say how many things actually happened as a result of that. But I've always thought that that was something that was very innovative and very smart."

– Non-CGD Health Policy Expert

advance approaches informed by its analysis (see, for example, Box 5). In the context of leadership shifts at the Global Fund, PEPFAR, and other global health institutions, CGD sought to inform incoming leaders' thinking and priorities through publications, convenings, and other activities.<sup>150</sup> A core determinant of CGD's ability to do so was the organization's relationships with key external partners. For example, one former CGD staff member who had a policy outreach role said that at CGD, "policy impact relies on the researcher to have the connections, to have the capacity, to have the time to take it all the way from the research to the boardroom." In this person's opinion, CGD did not have—nor need to have—a "full advocacy apparatus" but rather leaned on partnerships with organizations equipped with advocacy capabilities.

CGD's staff itself was central to the organization's strong relationships and ability to act as an effective convener. One individual external to CGD, for example, said of the HAM that it "seems like [CGD] had some very smart people who were really able to pursue and play out investigations of key issues... it was a very potent team; there was no other team quite like it."

They added that CGD ought to “think about what the program structure was that allowed CGD and Nandini [Oomman] and her colleagues to be so innovative and responsive.” Indeed, CGD staff and consultants involved in the HAM acknowledge “a lot of prior planning done before the project” to ensure the “right mix of rigor as academic researchers and policy knowledge” among recruited personnel. In particular, in the view of one CGD national consultant involved in the HAM, the project had a “strong comparative advantage” not only in researchers’ understanding of donor flows but also in its applied approach; the HAM was “not just about generating research knowledge, but also thinking through how you place it into the right hands.”<sup>151</sup> Another CGD national consultant involved in the HAM commended the HAM project design in demonstrating “how to bring local leadership and scholarship to continue beyond its own funding arrangement,” contrasting the HAM model with shorter-term consultancies in which personnel may not be based in or from the country under study.

## **Theme 2. Persistence and consistency in CGD’s approach facilitated policy community cohesion and a strong internal and external frame around VfM<sup>152</sup>**

CGD seems to have adapted to the typically long gestation period of socializing and implementing new ideas through its persistence in working on VfM, achieving impact through incremental change over time. While more difficult to track relative to, say, specific policy changes, CGD’s role in changing how people think about global health policy problems may actually be the most compelling example of its impact. CGD has been able to achieve this influence, in the words of one current CGD staff member, through a “process of osmosis,” whereby CGD has consistently produced and disseminated work focused on VfM in HIV/AIDS financing. A former DFID staffer framed this persistence in relation to CGD’s work on the Global Fund as a “sustained and quite tenacious desire to find ways to influence the Global Fund’s decision making about interventions to fund with countries.” Another external actor said that CGD “create[s] a drumbeat around an issue that can then heighten attention to it.” Yet another external

actor thought that “CGD has been consistently interested [in the health economics of HIV]; other actors have waxed and waned.”

Although cost-effectiveness and other VfM principles had been circulating in the health sector since at least the 1990s, these concepts received pushback during that time and continue to be challenged (see Theme 4 below). CGD’s consistent messaging and persistence in advancing dialogue around VfM generally as well as priority setting in health and cost-effectiveness of health products specifically helped disrupt the status quo. A health researcher suggested that an important role of CGD “isn’t always charting a new direction, but it can be providing reinforcement for a choice that the organization [such as the Global Fund or PEPFAR] is interested in making but that is potentially a change to the status quo that requires some activation energy to overcome.” Similarly, a Global Fund staff member thought that “a lot of consultants will churn out reports that propose small incremental changes but don’t really challenge the status quo of the way people think. Certainly CGD doesn’t take that softly cautious approach; they put forward bold, well-thought-out ideas.” A former CGD staffer linked CGD’s persistence to helping to make these concepts more routine considerations: “Being equipped with good analysis, like the ones that CGD had put out, have enabled those conversations [about VfM in global health] to happen over and over and over again to the point where they’re no longer taboo and they’re just part of the mainstream dialogue.”<sup>153</sup>

## **Theme 3. CGD’s “insider/outsider” approach, which includes a “watchdog” function of publicly funded institutions and challenging the status quo at times, was not always popular or well received; intraorganizational politics further limited the possibility of operationalizing CGD ideas**

A general perception shared among some individuals interviewed was that CGD seemed to attempt an unenviable task of balancing the roles of constructive critic and trusted “insider.”

While many viewed this function as important in spotlighting areas for improvement at major institutions, it was also seen as a somewhat fraught position that was also constrained by CGD's operating model (that is, research- rather than advocacy-focused). CGD's constructive orientation was generally viewed by individuals interviewed as helpful in the long term for advancing the VfM agenda at global health institutions. An AIDS journalist, for example, described CGD as a "valuable" and "fairly unique" resource in terms of acting as a "fairly neutral entity pressing on the issue" in relation to PEPFAR's data transparency and providing "evenhanded recommendations" that were "very useful."

A few other individuals, however, saw CGD's approach as suboptimal, while still others pointed to the need for astute awareness of the political environment. For example, a current Global Fund adviser stated:

What I like about the CGD analysis is the conceptual clarity and integrity in that analysis. It's not trying to produce something that tells an audience what they want to hear. And I think one of the risks that think tanks can go down is producing stuff that gets traction in an organization by telling them what they want to hear—which may not be the right set of policies and reforms that that organization needs, and that can be counterproductive in terms of improving the impact and results. I think a challenge for CGD is there's always going to be people who want to protect and preserve the status quo, both in terms of ways of doing things and in terms of the raw political power and control over who gets to decide what gets done.

Through the HAM, CGD working groups, and other activities, CGD has produced a significant volume of work analyzing the Global Fund<sup>154</sup> and other global health institutions, oftentimes critically appraising their actions. This relationship requires a "delicate" balance between being a constructive, independent critic and concurrently "understand[ing] how an organization works and its chemistry and... what its barriers are in terms of how you provide information to it or about it," according to a senior staff member at a peer institution. To achieve the intended outcomes, then, CGD must understand

## BOX 6. LIMITATIONS TO CGD'S OPERATING MODEL IN TERMS OF OPERATIONALIZING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

"Rarely does [CGD] go all the way to an operational plan like it did with 3ie. The first step is 'we need something' and the second step is 'let's design the thing that we need and launch it.' Because when it's making recommendations on new financial models for the Global Fund, CGD has not been then doing step 2, which is 'okay, let's design the new financing model and create the blueprint so it can be implemented.' I think it very rarely goes [to] that second step, which means then it's BCG or McKinsey or somebody else who's going to draw that up, and frankly I have much less confidence in their ability to do that and even less confidence in their ability to do that in a disinterested way. But at the same time, I totally get that CGD may not want to be perceived as self-interested because they're creating gravy trains that they would then feed at. I think that's a really difficult thing. And it makes the attribution problem all that much harder."

– External Stakeholder

the organizational structures and political environments at the institutions it seeks to have an impact on and also have strong relationships with individuals embedded within those institutions.

While CGD generally seemed to excel at the latter, two individuals interviewed critiqued CGD's ability to do the former. One suggested that "sometimes CGD can be slightly impractical because there's the theoretical idea of paying [based] on indicators and then how you have to do things practically given the politics and the institutions and the way things work." Another thought that "some of their models are very theoretical and not engaging with the reality and ways things work on the ground." In reference to the long-term impact of CGD efforts and work left to be done, an external actor framed this challenge in terms of considering "how do we then get all

this nice technical work that we have done to be understood by the political powers so that whatever outcome that comes out of it is impactful and for the good of the people?" Even then, however, organizations may be unable to operationalize or act on CGD recommendations because of bureaucratic entrenchment, high transaction costs, or other organizational constraints that are beyond CGD's abilities to directly address (see, for example, Box 6).

With regard to specific legislation, a former congressional staffer commented that "any organization that's trying to make clinical recommendations, they're going to run into the reality of politics, and what emerges is [a] sort of melding of member priorities and issues. So the final draft of a bill rarely looks like the first thing somebody put on paper, and that's the way the process works. CGD tries to stay out of that fray, but that's where you run into issues like that" (i.e., competing political priorities). Here again, factors largely out of CGD's control ultimately mediate the policy outcome, while CGD's mandate as a nonpartisan, independent nonprofit necessitates distance from the legislative process. In this context, CGD can best position itself to achieve policy impact through attentiveness to the political realities surrounding particular policy recommendations and priorities.

#### **Theme 4. Political dynamics and conflicting philosophies in the global health sector limited traction of VfM principles<sup>155</sup>**

Political dynamics and differing philosophical orientations in the global health sector created a challenging environment at times for CGD's recommendations related to VfM. A former CGD staff member described the shifting global health funding landscape as a contributor to a general wariness of critique across the sector, which created an impetus to "preserve gains" in health outcomes and financial support achieved since the early 2000s. This dynamic led to CGD "running into fears in the sector that pointing out the fact that we may need to do more with less is admitting that we can do more with less, and nobody wants to do more with less." Several other individuals mentioned what they perceived as a broader resistance to the concept of VfM in health on the

basis that VfM requires putting a dollar value on human life (Table 1). The dominant imperative in the global health sector has been increasing available resources, which VfM could be viewed as undermining by shifting attention away from the need for more resources. Another former CGD researcher involved in the Value for Money Working Group stated that "the priority-setting report made clear this way of thinking is still very underutilized by the health sector in general."

For some, the VfM lens was, and to some extent remains, perceived as antithetical to the goals of global health. In the context of the HIV/AIDS response, AIDS activists in the 1980s and 1990s advocated for access to care for all, viewing health primarily through a human rights lens; this orientation drives much of the health sector today. Proponents of a "health for all" approach have expressed concern that using cost-effectiveness or VfM approaches contradicts or at the very least undermines efforts to realize the vision of health as a human

**TABLE 1** Comments from individuals interviewed on the fraught perception of VfM in global health

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"Funding has been getting tighter and so there's this kind of existential threat between making changes, reforming areas that need tweaks, and that being evidence that it's not working and maybe funding needs to be pulled back." (former CGD staffer)

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"You still see this view that it's somehow distasteful to be talking about being careful how you spend money when people are dying, but that's what makes it all the more important." (former DFID staffer)

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"[The VfM agenda has a] slightly conservative tinge; not very cheerful but perhaps the world that we're living in now with COVID, fewer and fewer resources, so we have to make some hard choices, but nobody likes to make the hard choice—everyone wants to say yes." (former CGD staffer)

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"[VfM is] less salient in terms of how it sounds from the perspective of 'Am I saving lives?' It sounds very technical and I think that sometimes may make it a little bit more esoteric, a little bit removed from the real power it has." (peer institution senior staffer)

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right. One dimension of the pushback to CGD’s “AIDS transition” concept was the perception that the idea implicitly suggests letting people with HIV die, either directly through domestic disinvestment in treatment or indirectly by conditioning treatment scale-up on potentially difficult-to-show declines in incidence (Figure 1).

Another dimension of resistance to the idea was this deeper, more foundational schism around the goals of global health. Some health advocates, researchers, and experts perceived the framing of resources for HIV/AIDS in Achieving an AIDS Transition as deeply harmful to health and development because more resources are needed, “full stop,” and the lines of reasoning in Over’s book were perceived as undercutting efforts to increase resources for HIV/AIDS to a level sufficient to actually control the pandemic (Box 7).<sup>156</sup> Several individuals interviewed, both internal and external to CGD, commented on this resistance to the AIDS transition idea, underscoring the tension between the “health for all” and “value for money”

vantage points. For example, an AIDS activist critiqued CGD’s rhetorical choices around “the unsustainability of treatment” in its AIDS transition work, which in their view, although explicitly prevention-focused, “was really iterations of ‘how do we get out of being on the hook for treatment?’” They added:

To go down that road is to accept it’s a bad thing to be treating a lot of people with a chronic disease... Anytime somebody approaches, paraphrases, or just flat out says we can’t treat our way out of the AIDS epidemic, they’re saying something that is both true and morally reprehensible... sometimes we don’t do things because they’re sustainable; we do them because of justice and mercy and human rights.

This dynamic also points to historic inequities between aid donor and aid recipient governments, which have shaped imbalanced and unjust distributions in power and resources, including lifesaving health interventions such as ART.

## BOX 7. EXAMPLE OF CRITICAL RESPONSES TO CGD’S WORK ON THE AIDS TRANSITION

“There are trade-offs to be made in policy decision-making: there is no denying that in the context of limited resources. However, AIDS activists challenged the notion that the sum of resources on the table in the late 1990s was fixed: we boosted funding for AIDS, TB, and I would contend for things like immunization (via Gavi), which came along with the wave that AIDS activists created at the end of the last century... .

“We need more money for global health and development—full stop. I am not going to fight for crumbs from the table of Congress or European parliaments: I will always make the case that we need more because Congress will always give less than you ask for... .

“AIDS activism can be an engine for greater achievements in health and development overall... . The worst part of this whole two-year jihad against AIDS activists by the ‘experts’ like Mead [Over], Bill Easterly, Roger England, and others is that their biggest success will be killing the social movement that brought us such successes, however modest, over the past decade. The powerful only need to hear once or twice from the ‘experts’ that the powerless (e.g., people with HIV, gay men, drug users, poor women) are ‘rent-seekers’ [or] are ‘the problem’ and they have the excuse they need to go back to doing business as usual.”

– Gregg Gonsalves, Yale University

Source: Comment on June 2010 CGD blog post, “Yet Another Inconvenient Truth: AIDS Treatment Is a Costly Way to Save Lives.”

## Theme 5. The HIV/AIDS research and advocacy space is crowded, making definitive impact claims difficult; yet CGD nevertheless established itself as an authoritative and trusted analytical voice on VfM in the work of global health institutions like PEPFAR and the Global Fund

Perhaps the greatest challenge to assessing any CGD claims of impact in moving the VfM agenda forward at global health institutions is the sheer number of other actors working on HIV/AIDS. As alluded to earlier, HIV/AIDS became the top global health priority by the early 2000s; its prioritization in turn spawned numerous organizations and agencies created for the sole purpose of addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis. Consequently, CGD is “one small actor in a big field with multiple actors,” in the words of an external actor interviewed, which makes adjudicating impact claims especially challenging. CGD did seem to carve out a unique position, though. For one, substantial unrestricted support from one of CGD’s founders, Ed Scott, enabled the organization to maintain an independent stance largely unmediated by funders’ interests or priorities (a relative rarity in the nonprofit sector, given funding challenges).<sup>157</sup> This context in turn facilitated CGD’s ability to “push the envelope” with its ideas and recommendations and to take critical positions on major institutions.

CGD’s applied economic lens on health broadly and HIV/AIDS specifically was also a differentiating factor, though other entities such as the World Bank also focused on health economics. That said, individuals interviewed agreed that CGD’s analytical rigor was a definite strength. A global health researcher familiar with CGD’s work, for example, described CGD as “the preeminent think tank in this space” that was “definitely a positive facilitator” of greater incorporation of economic modeling in health. An adviser to the Global Fund echoed an appreciation of the quality of CGD’s work and its application in their role: “When you look at things like the value for money work, I think the quality of the analysis is absolutely exceptional... from my reading of the CGD reports

and analysis, I certainly found it really, really helpful when I was getting up to speed on the issues and challenges facing the Global Fund.” A former congressional staffer differentiated CGD from other organizations in similar terms:

CGD’s voice is often the sort of practical but grounded in science perspective, grounded in evidence. That’s a space that’s not too common in Washington—not that others are not grounded in evidence, but they may not have as much work going into particular reports. The fact that I remember as much about CGD as I do is a sign of their influence, because there were a lot of players and actors; there were lots of thoughtful people in Washington wanting to have an opinion, and some of them kind of blend into the background.

Indeed, a core distinguishing feature of CGD’s work during this period was its combination of timeliness, practicality, and rigor in its pursuit of filling information gaps in the field of HIV/AIDS financing. In reference to their own subsequent work on HIV/AIDS, an AIDS journalist described CGD’s HAM as “again and again the thing I have gone to as a record of what was happening at the time.” They added:

[It] definitely felt like I’ll either find out what I should be thinking about or I’ll find out more about something I am thinking about from this publication... At some pivotal moments where the conversation around PEPFAR, around global AIDS spending, was circling around a theme without a lot of granularity or specificity, the Monitor and those reports provided the granularity and specificity that was sorely needed and that really wasn’t duplicated that much right at that moment. CGD was early in some of these issues and grounded in countries... That kind of work is hard to ascribe impact to but is really, really crucial because it informs a lot of other actors... to be that trusted source, to create those resources that people use to make arguments and to cite and take thinking one step further... it can be a little intangible, but it’s knowledge production that’s really valuable.

At the same time, individuals interviewed for this case study pointed to numerous other organizations as influential in



helping to improve transparency around HIV/AIDS financing practices and to advance a VfM agenda in global health. Put another way, “a lot of groups were doing this together for many different reasons.” DFID was among those most frequently mentioned, while other bilateral agencies, including those in Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany, were all also referenced. With regard to influence on PEPFAR, CHAI was cited as playing a technical supporting role in helping PEPFAR to think through operationalizing VfM considerations, while activist groups such as the Global AIDS Alliance and Health GAP were also cited as influential. The Gates Foundation also played a critical role by funding CGD, CHAI, and other organizations working on the intersection of health economics and HIV. Given the Gates Foundation’s budget and programmatic footprint, several individuals interviewed credited it with helping to shape the VfM agenda. Other actors listed as important contributors or having a significant impact were KFF, Results for Development, the World Bank (specifically for its work on RBF), consulting firms, and implementing groups.

One other important, unique legacy of CGD’s work in this space, according to an individual interviewed, was the precedent it set in “showing what was possible” in terms of impacting policy decisions at global health institutions. While, again, CGD cannot be given sole credit for PEPFAR’s public disclosures of previously unreleased data, for example, CGD was a persistent, authoritative voice within the group of actors calling for greater transparency at PEPFAR. CGD’s approach to making the case for greater transparency was also somewhat unique. In the words of one individual external to CGD interviewed for this project,

CGD is part of a very successful intervention in changing transparency and changing what the [US government] provides in term of information on how it’s spending some of its global health money. And [CGD’s] contribution was, first, to show that it was possible to some extent and, secondly, whenever you’re doing your own reporting, you create a situation where the entity that’s being reported on might want to control that itself. So I think it created pressure in

a couple of affirmative ways that were again neutral, which was also important.

## CONCLUSION

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that CGD played an important, catalytic role in helping to advance VfM principles at global health institutions, namely the Global Fund and PEPFAR. Virtually all individuals interviewed for this case study used language that highlighted CGD researchers’ role as “important contributors” in moving the VfM agenda forward. Individuals also agreed that CGD was seen as a credible source of evidence and information on VfM in global health and that CGD was effective at creating a “drumbeat” around VfM. At the same time, the community of actors working on HIV/AIDS was large relative to other health areas, while a much smaller but still significant community of health economists was working on VfM in health. Trends in the broader political and economic environment in which ideas were situated also mediated the receptivity of donors to act on specific CGD recommendations. Further research that can more finely trace the uptake of specific recommendations outlined in CGD working group or HAM reports would help clarify CGD’s unique role in this space and its direct causal impact on policy changes.

The indirect policy impact CGD achieved through its impartial, rigorous analysis may have been “hard to pin down empirically” and less quantifiable relative to other policy impact claims considered in this case study series. The kind of “ground-truthing” CGD did through its work on HIV/AIDS financing during the 2000s and early 2010s, however, was nevertheless demonstrably of value to, and used by, decision makers at global health institutions. Looking forward, multiple individuals interviewed lamented that CGD has seemed to move back from this space and would like to see the organization reengage. In the context of “flatlined budgets and missed targets,” a former CGD staff member recommended that the organization work to revitalize conversations around VfM and take advantage of the current policy window created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Notes

- 1 It would also be valuable to trace the evolution of idea to policy and then to implementation, as the space between policy and implementation is often rife with challenges that curtail potential policy impact.
- 2 The term “policy entrepreneurs” refers to individual policy actors who leverage policy windows to advance a particular policy. See John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984). Note: This case study is not a formal, structured policy analysis, though it does draw from analytical frameworks and models where indicated.
- 3 Put another way by an individual interviewed for this project: “People would rather meet in Bellagio but that doesn’t mean they wouldn’t have met.” The Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center in Bellagio, Italy, is a convening center for policymakers, academic researchers, practitioners, and other leaders. It has frequently been the meeting location for global health leaders. See [www.rockefellerfoundation.org/bellagio-center](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/bellagio-center).
- 4 For a discussion of how HIV/AIDS transformed global health, see Allan Brandt, “How AIDS Invented Global Health,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 368 (2013): 2149–2152.
- 5 Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, *Financing Global Health Viz Hub* (“Flows of Development Assistance for Health”), <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/fgh>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 This case study does not include an in-depth analysis of the origins, applications, or history of the concept of cost-effectiveness, as that is beyond the scope of this project.
- 9 World Bank, *World Development Report 1993: Investing in Health* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5976>.
- 10 See Daphna Berman, “An Accidental Health Economist Talks Education, Bill Gates, and Why Impact Evaluation Isn’t Enough,” *World Bank Blogs*, May 15, 2018, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/accidental-health-economist-talks-education-bill-gates-and-why-impact-evaluation-isn-t-enough>. For the Gates Foundation figure, see <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/fgh>.
- 11 Dean T. Jamison, W. Henry Mosley, Anthony R. Measham, and Jose Luis Bobadilla, eds., *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), <http://dcp-3.org/dcp2>.
- 12 T. Tan-Torres Edejer, R. Baltussen, T. Adam, R. Hutubessy, A. Acharya, D.B. Evans, and C.J.L. Murray, eds., *Making Choices in Health: WHO Guide to Cost-Effectiveness Analysis* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2003), <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42699>.
- 13 The brief outlines five core components of VfM—economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and cost-effectiveness—and underscores the importance of gaining conceptual clarity around VfM. Penny Jackson, *Value for Money and International Development: Deconstructing Myths to Promote a More Constructive Discussion* (Paris: OECD, 2012), [www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/49652541.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/49652541.pdf).
- 14 Department for International Development (DFID), *DFID’s Approach to Value for Money* (London: DFID, 2011), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49551/DFID-approach-value-money.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49551/DFID-approach-value-money.pdf).
- 15 See Chapter 2 of CGD’s 2013 Value for Money Working Group report, *More Health for the Money: Putting Incentives to Work for the Global Fund and Its Partners*, [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/More-Health-for-the-Money.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/More-Health-for-the-Money.pdf).
- 16 The internal writeup of the first meeting of CGD’s Value for Money Working Group, convened in May 2012, features a lengthy discussion of this issue.
- 17 CGD’s 2011 proposal to the Gates Foundation for a grant to support this working group lists the following as the project’s primary goal: “[To] develop a consensus on a clear, pragmatic and implementable value for money agenda that is relevant for the major [global health] funders.”
- 18 As noted by CGD in its grant proposal to the Gates Foundation, this definition draws from Bautista-Arredondo and colleagues’ 2008 analytical framework for optimized resource allocation in HIV prevention programming. See Sergio Bautista-Arredondo, Paola Gadsden, Jeffrey E. Harris, and Stefano M. Bertozzi, “Optimizing Resource Allocation for HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes: An Analytical Framework.” *AIDS* 22, suppl. 1 (2008): S67–S74.
- 19 For instance, see Atul Gawande, “The Cost Conundrum,” *New Yorker*, May 25, 2009, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/06/01/the-cost-conundrum](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/06/01/the-cost-conundrum).
- 20 See World Health Organization (WHO), “From Value for Money to Value-Based Health Services: A Twenty-First Century Shift” (Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 2021), [www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020344](http://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020344). This approach attempts to “[look] at how to value health more holistically by working through [three] levers which act at the system level—setting a health benefits package, strategic purchasing and integrated people-centered health services—to advance [universal health coverage objectives].” This policy brief also cites an article coauthored by CGD researchers: Kalipso Chalkidou, Amanda Glassman, Robert Marten, Jeanette Vega, Yot Teerawattananon, Nattha Tritasavit, Martha Gyansa-Lutterodt, Andreas Seiter, Marie Paule Kieny, Karen Hofman, and Anthony J. Culyer, “Priority-Setting for Achieving Universal Health Coverage,” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 94, no. 6 (2016): 462–467, <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.15.155721>.
- 21 This case study does not include an in-depth analysis of the origins, applications, or history of results-based financing, as that is beyond the scope of this project.
- 22 Nancy Birdsall and William D. Savedoff, *Cash on Delivery: A New Approach to Foreign Aid* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2010), [www.cgdev.org/publication/9781933286600-cash-delivery-new-approach-foreign-aid](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/9781933286600-cash-delivery-new-approach-foreign-aid). CGD’s Amanda Glassman, prior to joining CGD, led operationalization of the COD Aid approach while with the Inter-American Development Bank on the Salud Mesoamerica Initiative. See [www.cgdev.org/blog/results-based-funding-health-progress-poorest-communities-mesoamerica](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/results-based-funding-health-progress-poorest-communities-mesoamerica).
- 23 Rena Eichler, Ruth Levine, and the Performance-Based Incentives Working Group, *Performance Incentives for Global Health: Potential and Pitfalls* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2009). As one indication of CGD’s lasting impact on RBF, the Urban Institute’s November 2016 policy brief on RBF extensively cites CGD work and thanks CGD’s Amanda Glassman and Bill Savedoff for “expert opinions” and comments. See Matthew Eldridge and Rebecca TeKolste, *Results-Based Financing Approaches: Observations for Pay for Success from International Experiences* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2016), [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/85601/results-based-financing-approaches\\_1.pdf](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/85601/results-based-financing-approaches_1.pdf).
- 24 “Banking on Impact: What You Need to Know about Results-Based Financing,” World Bank, June 28, 2019, [www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/06/28/banking-on-impact-what-you-need-to-know-about-results-based-financing](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/06/28/banking-on-impact-what-you-need-to-know-about-results-based-financing).
- 25 Analysis of the HIV/AIDS Monitor’s policy impact included in this case study is not exhaustive but rather limited to its influence on PEPFAR. CGD’s HIV/AIDS Monitor was initially supported by a \$1.8 million grant from the Gates Foundation (2005–2010). CGD secured additional funding from the Packard Foundation to focus on reproductive health, Canada’s International Development Research Centre for in-country activities, the Rockefeller Foundation to support a Bellagio conference with research staff, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

- 26 According to a former CGD staff member, the impetus to create the HAM came from the rapid deployment and scale of investments from PEPFAR, the World Bank, and the Global Fund: they were “pouring billions of dollars into one health issue; it presented a kind of natural study.” For all published HAM work, see [www.cgdev.org/initiative/hivaids-monitor](http://www.cgdev.org/initiative/hivaids-monitor).
- 27 Nandini Oomman, Michael Bernstein, and Steven Rosenzweig, *Following the Funding for HIV/AIDS: A Comparative Analysis of the Funding Practices of PEPFAR, the Global Fund and World Bank MAP in Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2007), [www.cgdev.org/publication/following-funding-hivaids-comparative-analysis-funding-practices-pepfar-global-fund-and](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/following-funding-hivaids-comparative-analysis-funding-practices-pepfar-global-fund-and).
- 28 See Jim Campbell and Barbara Stilwell, *Mozambique: Taking Forward Action on Human Resources for Health (HRH) with DFID/OGAC and Other Partners* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2008), [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pnqdw703.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnqdw703.pdf), and James Sherry, Sangeeta Mookherji, and Leo Ryan, *The Five-Year Evaluation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria: Synthesis of Study Areas 1, 2 and 3* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2009), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/3020/terg\\_fiveyearevaluationsynthesisofsas\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/3020/terg_fiveyearevaluationsynthesisofsas_report_en.pdf).
- 29 2007 CGD report launch attendee list.
- 30 The Global Fund’s acting deputy director of operations, Elmar Vinh-Thomas; the World Bank’s lead operations officer for human development in East and Southern Africa, Jean-Jacques de St. Antoine; and PEPFAR’s principal deputy coordinator and chief medical officer, Thomas Kenyon, participated in the 2007 report launch event. See [www.cgdev.org/event/what-are-donors-doing-aids-money-comparative-analysis-pepfar-global-fund-and-world-bank](http://www.cgdev.org/event/what-are-donors-doing-aids-money-comparative-analysis-pepfar-global-fund-and-world-bank).
- 31 Transcript of CGD *Following the Funding* report launch event, October 10, 2007.
- 32 Nandini Oomman, Michael Bernstein, Steven Rosenzweig, and Jonathan Pearson, *The Numbers behind the Stories: PEPFAR Funding for Fiscal Years 2004 to 2006* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2008), [www.cgdev.org/publication/new-pepfar-data-numbers-behind-stories](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/new-pepfar-data-numbers-behind-stories).
- 33 See two November 2006 blog posts for further details on CPI’s pursuit of these PEPFAR data: <https://publicintegrity.org/health/behind-the-scenes-questions-lawsuits-and-eventually-some-answers> and <https://publicintegrity.org/health/bushs-aids-initiative-too-little-choice-too-much-ideology>.
- 34 The Numbers behind the Stories report found that only 29 percent of PEPFAR funding went to in-country partners, while the rest went to predominantly US-based organizations. According to an August 2018 CGD blog post authored by Sarah Rose and Rachel Silverman, less than 40 percent of PEPFAR’s funding went directly to in-country partners in 2018 (see [www.cgdev.org/blog/pepfars-new-targets-local-implementation-commendable-theory-complicated-practice](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/pepfars-new-targets-local-implementation-commendable-theory-complicated-practice)). This figure suggests that a decade after the report’s publication in 2008, PEPFAR had made modest progress in directing a larger share of its funding to in-country partners.
- 35 See Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, Pub. L. No. 110–293, 122 Stat. 2919 (2008), [www.congress.gov/110/plaws/publ293/PLAW-110publ293.pdf](http://www.congress.gov/110/plaws/publ293/PLAW-110publ293.pdf). See also Michael Bernstein and Sarah Jane Staats, *PEPFAR Reauthorization: Improving Transparency in US Funding for HIV/AIDS* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2007), [www.cgdev.org/publication/pepfar-reauthorization-improving-transparency-us-funding-hivaids](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/pepfar-reauthorization-improving-transparency-us-funding-hivaids).
- 36 CGD final grant report for a grant supporting the HIV/AIDS Monitor, August 2010. As a 501(c)(3) organization, CGD does not engage in direct lobbying regarding specific legislation.
- 37 Nandini Oomman and Steve Rosenzweig, “Memo to President-Elect Obama: Make US HIV/AIDS Money More Effective by Releasing Data,” *CGD Blog*, December 1, 2008, [www.cgdev.org/blog/memo-president-elect-obama-make-us-hivaids-money-more-effective-releasing-data](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/memo-president-elect-obama-make-us-hivaids-money-more-effective-releasing-data).
- 38 Another individual external to CGD stated that “it was not tolerable to have that money coming into countries with no information on what that money was being spent on,” suggesting that absent CGD, PEPFAR would have still moved in the direction of greater transparency.
- 39 Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator, *The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Five-Year Strategy* (Washington, DC: PEPFAR, 2009), <https://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20151105061426/http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/133035.pdf>. See also the accompanying PEPFAR Office of the Spokesperson December 2009 media note: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/dec/132837.htm>. Country ownership was also a prominent theme of PEPFAR’s 2009–2014 strategy; CGD has claimed a role in informing this emphasis, though this case study does not investigate this particular claim in depth. For example, in a 2010 grant report, CGD stated: “The HIV/AIDS Monitor recommended that PEPFAR make governments a true partner in programs. PEPFAR’s new strategy highlights the transition to country ownership, with the key concept of supporting ‘true partnerships with governments in order to assist them as they lead and guide the response to their epidemics.’” Further investigation of this claim could yield additional insights into the nature and extent of CGD’s policy impact on PEPFAR.
- 40 “FY 2005 Data – Planned Funding Amount and Percentage by Program Area,” Library of Congress Web Archive, <https://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20080112002749/http://www.state.gov/s/gac/progress/other/data/program>.
- 41 Library of Congress Web Archive, <https://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20100131164202/http://www.pepfar.gov>. The review of PEPFAR’s archived webpages was not exhaustive; further review would help clarify exactly how much, and what, additional PEPFAR financial and programmatic data become publicly available between 2007 and 2010.
- 42 CGD staff activity report to CGD’s board, November 2009 and April 2010.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 See Kim Ashburn, Nandini Oomman, David Wendt, and Steven Rosenzweig, *Moving Beyond Gender as Usual* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2009), [www.cgdev.org/publication/moving-beyond-gender-usual](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/moving-beyond-gender-usual). The report was launched in July 2009 and featured remarks from PEPFAR’s senior technical adviser, Nomi Fuchs-Montgomery. For a recording of the event, see [www.cgdev.org/event/beyond-gender-usual-how-hivaids-donors-can-do-more-women-and-girls](http://www.cgdev.org/event/beyond-gender-usual-how-hivaids-donors-can-do-more-women-and-girls). In PEPFAR 2.0, PEPFAR commits to “expanding PEPFAR’s commitment to cross-cutting integration of gender equity in its programs and policies, with a new focus on addressing and reducing gender-based violence.”
- 45 CGD final grant report, August 2010.
- 46 This individual was further quoted as saying, “The HIV/AIDS Monitor publications helped us understand the issues surrounding PEPFAR implementation... which in turn helped us define the scope of our research.” While it is not entirely clear what “scope of our research” refers to, it could be inferred that the Government Accountability Office, in its “watchdog” capacity, used HAM outputs to help identify areas for improvement within PEPFAR operations.
- 47 August 2008 CGD satellite event flyer.
- 48 CGD final grant report, August 2010.
- 49 Transcript of CGD *Following the Funding* report launch event, October 10, 2007.
- 50 “What Is Country Ownership Anyway? Rethinking Global Health Partnerships,” CGD event, June 21, 2010, [www.cgdev.org/event/what-country-ownership-anyway-rethinking-global-health-partnerships](http://www.cgdev.org/event/what-country-ownership-anyway-rethinking-global-health-partnerships).

- 51 Nandini Oomman, "Country Ownership and Rethinking Global Health Partnerships: From Dependence to Symbiosis," *CGD Blog*, June 25, 2010, [www.cgdev.org/blog/country-ownership-and-rethinking-global-health-partnerships-dependence-symbiosis](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/country-ownership-and-rethinking-global-health-partnerships-dependence-symbiosis).
- 52 A work summary prepared by a CGD staff member used for internal review purposes.
- 53 CGD's 2010 final grant report includes further discussion regarding country-level impacts and lessons learned from CGD's research activities in Zambia, Uganda, Mozambique, and Kenya. Country-level case studies would further clarify the precise mechanisms by which CGD work directly informed country-level policies and practices.
- 54 CGD final grant report, August 2010.
- 55 Ibid. Dr. Ssengooba's 2010 op-ed, "How long will we depend on the U.S. for HIV money?" is available at [www.newvision.co.ug/news/1298400/depend-us-hiv-money](http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1298400/depend-us-hiv-money). Quoted material is taken from the grant report.
- 56 CGD final grant report, August 2010. Quoted material is taken from the grant report.
- 57 According to a former CGD staff member involved with the HAM, "It was the only initiative at that time [at CGD] that actually had primary evidence from countries to inform policy changes at this level."
- 58 According to CGD's 2010 final report, between 150 and 200 people on average attended HAM events; subscribers to the HAM newsletter also "included key AIDS and [global health] donor officials and country government officials in Africa and Asia." A former CGD staff member interviewed for this case study also indicated that HAM research staff were frequently "asked to join many different fora to have input," including universities, media requests, and international conferences such as the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in 2008 (see [www.cgdev.org/media/video-xvii-international-aids-conference](http://www.cgdev.org/media/video-xvii-international-aids-conference)).
- 59 See <https://data.pepfar.gov/library>.
- 60 Martha Ainsworth and Mead Over, *Confronting AIDS: Public Priorities for a Global Epidemic* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1997), <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/211211468779168446/confronting-aids-public-priorities-in-a-global-epidemic>.
- 61 Markus Haaker, ed., *The Macroeconomics of HIV/AIDS* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2004), [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/AIDS/eng/index.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/AIDS/eng/index.htm).
- 62 Mead Over, *Achieving an AIDS Transition: Preventing Infections to Sustain Treatment* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2011), [www.cgdev.org/publication/9781933286389-achieving-aids-transition-preventing-infections-sustain-treatment](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/9781933286389-achieving-aids-transition-preventing-infections-sustain-treatment).
- 63 This section does not represent a comprehensive nor exhaustive investigation of the extent to which specific policy recommendations put forward in *Achieving an AIDS Transition* were taken up.
- 64 Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator, *PEPFAR 3.0: Controlling the Epidemic: Delivering on the Promise of an AIDS-Free Generation* (Washington, DC: PEPFAR, 2014), [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/PEPFAR-3.0-%E2%80%93-Controlling-the-Epidemic-Delivering-on-the-Promise-of-an-AIDS-free-Generation.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/PEPFAR-3.0-%E2%80%93-Controlling-the-Epidemic-Delivering-on-the-Promise-of-an-AIDS-free-Generation.pdf). Together with The PEPFAR Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control (2017–2020), PEPFAR 3.0 is PEPFAR's current strategy. See Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator, *The PEPFAR Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control* (2017–2020) (Washington, DC: PEPFAR, 2017), [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/PEPFAR-Strategy-for-Accelerating-HIV/AIDS-Epidemic-Control-2017-2020.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/PEPFAR-Strategy-for-Accelerating-HIV/AIDS-Epidemic-Control-2017-2020.pdf).
- 65 PEPFAR, *PEPFAR 2021 Country and Regional Operational Plan (COP/ROP) Guidance for all PEPFAR Countries* (Washington, DC: PEPFAR, 2021), [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PEPFAR-COP21-Guidance-Final.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PEPFAR-COP21-Guidance-Final.pdf).
- 66 "PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS-free Generation," PEPFAR Office of the Spokesperson, November 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/11/201195.htm>.
- 67 For example, Ambassador Birx participated in a panel at Publish What You Fund's 2014 Aid Transparency Index launch (recording available at [www.cgdev.org/event/publish-what-you-fund%E2%80%99s-2014-aid-transparency-index-launch](http://www.cgdev.org/event/publish-what-you-fund%E2%80%99s-2014-aid-transparency-index-launch)), gave a keynote address at a 2016 event on the role of finance ministries in the HIV response (recording available at [www.cgdev.org/event/how-can-finance-ministries-support-sustainable-hiv-response](http://www.cgdev.org/event/how-can-finance-ministries-support-sustainable-hiv-response)), and spoke at a 2018 event on PEPFAR's DREAMS program (recording available at [www.cgdev.org/event/fighting-hiv-empowering-adolescent-girls-and-young-women-learning-event-pepfar%E2%80%99s-dreams](http://www.cgdev.org/event/fighting-hiv-empowering-adolescent-girls-and-young-women-learning-event-pepfar%E2%80%99s-dreams)).
- 68 Lauren Post and Allison Grossman, "Making Measurement and Evaluation Relevant to Women's Economic Empowerment," CGD Blog, June 2015, [www.cgdev.org/blog/making-measuring-and-evaluation-relevant-womens-economic-empowerment](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/making-measuring-and-evaluation-relevant-womens-economic-empowerment).
- 69 Amanda Glassman and Jenny Ottenhoff, *Clear Direction for a New Decade: Priorities for PEPFAR and the Next US Global AIDS Coordinator* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2013), [www.cgdev.org/publication/clear-direction-new-decade-priorities-pepfar-and-next-us-global-aids-coordinator](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/clear-direction-new-decade-priorities-pepfar-and-next-us-global-aids-coordinator). A private stakeholder meeting CGD convened in July 2013 shaped this December 2013 report's content.
- 70 For the recording of Ambassador Birx's remarks, see [www.cgdev.org/event/defeating-aids-tb-and-malaria-designing-next-generation-financing-models](http://www.cgdev.org/event/defeating-aids-tb-and-malaria-designing-next-generation-financing-models).
- 71 Sebastian Linnemayr, Gery W. Ryan, Jenny Liu, and Kartika Palar, *Value for Money in Donor HIV Funding* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), [www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR1158.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1158.html).
- 72 With lifesaving ART, people with AIDS are able to live longer and the mortality rate has plateaued. Incidence is also falling in most countries, though rates vary considerably. See "Trends," IHME HIV Atlas, [https://hiv.ihme.services/trends?age\\_group\\_id=22&cause\\_id=298&gender\\_id=1%2C2&location\\_id=1&measure\\_id=6&metric\\_id=1](https://hiv.ihme.services/trends?age_group_id=22&cause_id=298&gender_id=1%2C2&location_id=1&measure_id=6&metric_id=1).
- 73 See Emily Bass, *To End a Plague: America's Fight to Defeat AIDS in Africa* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2021).
- 74 This individual also stated that Ambassador Birx received "backlash from AIDS advocates" for epidemic control and that this backlash corroborates the conceptual similarity between the AIDS transition and epidemic control.
- 75 This individual noted that given how few people were accessing ART at the time (relative to the total number of people living with HIV, as an estimated 75 percent of people living with HIV globally in 2010 were not receiving ART), maintaining rather than scaling up treatment would have been "devastating." See "Data" tab, "Estimated Antiretroviral Therapy Coverage among People Living with HIV (%)," WHO, [www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/estimated-antiretroviral-therapy-coverage-among-people-living-with-hiv\(-\)](http://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/estimated-antiretroviral-therapy-coverage-among-people-living-with-hiv(-)).
- 76 For further details, see "Study Summary," HIV Prevention Trials Network, [www.hptn.org/research/studies/hptn052](http://www.hptn.org/research/studies/hptn052).
- 77 PEPFAR Scientific Advisory Board, *PEPFAR Scientific Advisory Board Recommendations for the Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator: Implications of HPTN 052 for PEPFAR's Treatment Programs* (Washington, DC: PEPFAR, 2011), <https://web.archive.loc.gov/all/20160213015610/http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/177126.pdf>.
- 78 See "President Obama on World AIDS Day," White House, December 1, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/12/01/president-obama-world-aids-day#transcript>.



- 79 Over also participated in the Scientific Advisory Board's Data Working Group, where he and CGD's Rachel Silverman contributed to the development of four interrelated recommendations in 2012 focused on data transparency. Among the recommended actions were to "strengthen, streamline, and publicly disclose PEPFAR's collection and management of key program indicators" and to "establish and maintain a PEPFAR public access knowledge portal." (See the October 2012 Data Working Group presentation entitled "Recommendations by the Data Working Group [DWG] to the PEPFAR Scientific Advisory Board [SAB]," <https://studylib.net/doc/13043017/recommendations-by-the-data-working-group--dwg--to-the>. See also Mead Over, "Improving PEPFAR's Data Management and Disclosure," CGD Blog, November 13, 2012, [www.cgdev.org/blog/improving-pepfar%E2%80%99s-data-management-and-disclosure](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/improving-pepfar%E2%80%99s-data-management-and-disclosure), and Mead Over and Rachel Silverman, "Institute of Medicine Pushes PEPFAR on Data Collection, Disclosure," CGD Blog, February 25, 2013, [www.cgdev.org/blog/institute-of-medicine-pushes-pepfar-data-collection-disclosure](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/institute-of-medicine-pushes-pepfar-data-collection-disclosure)). These recommendations were then formalized in early 2013, shared with Ambassador Goosby, and presented at a Scientific Advisory Board meeting in June 2013; subsequently, they were posted for public comment on PEPFAR's website. (March and June 2013 emails to Scientific Advisory Board members. It is unclear whether these four recommendations were formally implemented following this engagement.)
- 80 The concept of "epidemic control" did seem to gain traction with time; CGD's continued involvement in contemporaneous discussions around epidemic control indicate that CGD was viewed as an authoritative voice on the topic. For example, the UNAIDS Science Panel convened a meeting in October 2017, to which Over was invited. The resulting "consensus document," "Making the End of AIDS Real: Consensus Building around What We Mean by 'Epidemic Control,'" highlights four metrics for capturing epidemic control, noting that "advantages and limitations of each measure were explored, leading to greater shared understanding of both the added value a measure of 'epidemic control' could bring to the HIV response and the unintended consequences such a measure could have if it is not carefully presented and explained." Of note, the concept of an "AIDS transition" is not referenced. See [www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/glion\\_oct2017\\_meeting\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/glion_oct2017_meeting_report_en.pdf). See also P.D. Ghys, B.G. Williams, M. Over, T.B. Hallett, and P. Godfrey-Faussett, "Epidemiological Metrics and Benchmarks for a Transition in the HIV Epidemic," *PLOS Medicine* 15, no. 10 (2018): e1002678.
- 81 CGD Policy Pitch Tracker (internal document).
- 82 This remark was made specifically in reference to a 2012 CGD blog post on PEPFAR's pilot in Mozambique (Victoria Fan, "Expenditure Analysis: Unlocking PEPFAR's Value for Money Potential?" *CGD Blog*, August 1, 2012, [www.cgdev.org/blog/expenditure-analysis-unlocking-pepfar%E2%80%99s-value-money-potential](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/expenditure-analysis-unlocking-pepfar%E2%80%99s-value-money-potential)), which was cited as exemplary of these kinds of critiques.
- 83 This individual also underscored references in the 2013 reauthorization to engagement with local partners and efforts to build local capacity, which aligned with CGD's recommendations related to country ownership. This alignment, absent other corroborating evidence, does not confirm a causal relationship, though it is suggestive of CGD's possible role in informing.
- 84 See "Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative—Questions and Answers," International Monetary Fund, last updated July 28, 2017, [www.imf.org/external/np/exr/mdri/eng/index.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/mdri/eng/index.htm), for more details on these two initiatives.
- 85 CGD HAM researchers pointed to other compounding factors at the country level as well, such as a contemporaneous corruption scandal in the Zambian health sector that fueled an argument against commingling funds.
- 86 CGD may have been among the first to systematically analyze HIV donors' funding practices. Additional research on other major HIV/AIDS organizations active in the 1990s–2000s would shed light on this claim of priority.
- 87 Transcript of CGD *Following the Funding report launch event*, October 10, 2007.
- 88 HAM activities focused on the Global Fund were not analyzed in depth in this case study. According to a former CGD staff member who worked on the HAM, impact on the Global Fund through HAM activities was "less clear" and involved "more process-related changes that are still important." For example, CGD has claimed that its 2010 report *HIV/AIDS Monitor: Are Funding Decisions Based on Performance?* influenced the Global Fund to adjust its required reporting frequency from three to six months. According to a final grant report CGD submitted in August 2010, "the Global Fund's Director of Strategy, Performance and Evaluation requested Nandini [Oomman] and other CGD staff to discuss the process and preliminary results of their Five-Year Impact Evaluation."
- 89 See "Priority-Setting Institutions for Global Health," CGD, September 10, 2014, [www.cgdev.org/working-group/priority-setting-institutions-global-health](http://www.cgdev.org/working-group/priority-setting-institutions-global-health).
- 90 Amanda Glassman and Kalipso Chalkidou, *Priority-Setting in Health: Building Institutions for Smarter Public Spending* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2012), [www.cgdev.org/publication/priority-setting-health-building-institutions-smarter-public-spending](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/priority-setting-health-building-institutions-smarter-public-spending).
- 91 See <https://idsihealth.org>. iDSI was initially funded by the Gates Foundation and DFID; iDSI is now housed in the London-based CGD Europe office.
- 92 Global Fund, *The Global Fund's New Funding Model* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2013), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/1467/replenishment\\_2013newfundingmodel\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/1467/replenishment_2013newfundingmodel_report_en.pdf).
- 93 See "Value for Money: An Agenda for Global Health Funding Agencies," CGD, August 25, 2014, [www.cgdev.org/working-group/value-money-agenda-global-health-funding-agencies](http://www.cgdev.org/working-group/value-money-agenda-global-health-funding-agencies).
- 94 This working group and associated activities were funded by a \$1.25 million, two-year grant from the Gates Foundation and a small grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for an April 2013 consultation meeting in Bellagio, Italy. Quoted material is taken from CGD's November 2013 final grant report. According to the report, "CGD researchers examined the array of past and current uses of the term 'Value for Money' and articulated a vision of 'Value for Money' as achieving the maximum impact on health per dollar spent."
- 95 DFID, *DFID's Approach to Value for Money* (London: DFID, 2011), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49551/DFID-approach-value-money.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49551/DFID-approach-value-money.pdf).
- 96 Sebastian Linnemayr, Gery W. Ryan, Jenny Liu, and Kartika Palar, *Value for Money in Donor HIV Funding* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), [www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR1158.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1158.html). This report cites CGD HAM reports *Following the Funding and Are Funding Decisions Based on Performance?* RAND "prepared [the report] for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation;" further details regarding the motivation behind creating this report would help shed light on which other HIV researchers and advocates pursued a VfM agenda in HIV financing and why.
- 97 CGD final grant report, November 2013.
- 98 CGD also hosted private meetings and events, including a private July 2013 event cohosted with the vice chair of the Global Fund's board, Mireille Guigaz, with other Global Fund board members also present.
- 99 Value for Money Working Group, *More Health for the Money: Putting Incentives to Work for the Global Fund and Its Partners* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2013), [www.cgdev.org/publication/more-health-money-putting-incentives-work-global-fund-and-its-partners](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/more-health-money-putting-incentives-work-global-fund-and-its-partners).

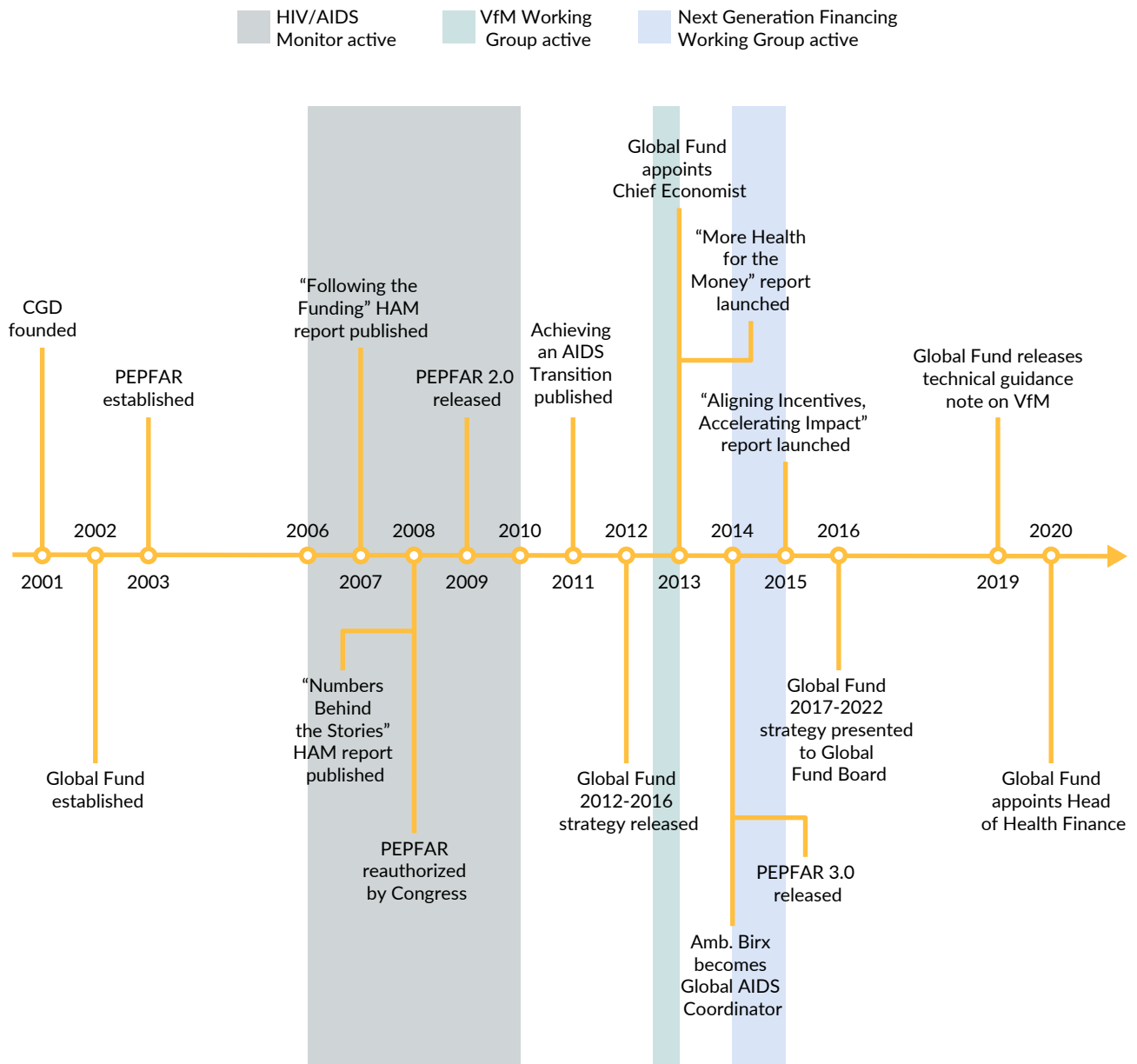
- 100 See "More Health for the Money: Progress and Potential at the Global Fund," CGD event, September 25, 2013, [www.cgdev.org/event/more-health-money-progress-and-potential-global-fund](http://www.cgdev.org/event/more-health-money-progress-and-potential-global-fund).
- 101 For a summary of the event, see "More Health for the Money: Highlights from the Launch Event," CGD Blog, October 7, 2013, [www.cgdev.org/blog/more-health-money-highlights-launch-event](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/more-health-money-highlights-launch-event). For further details regarding the pilot in Rwanda, which linked payments to HIV outcome indicators, see Global Fund, "Rwanda Pilots Innovative Financing Mechanism," press release, February 10, 2014, [www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2014-02-10-rwanda-pilots-innovative-financing-mechanism](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2014-02-10-rwanda-pilots-innovative-financing-mechanism). See also Nicolas Bidault, Matias Gomez, and Filippo Iarrera, "Introduction to Results Based Financing at the Global Fund" (presentation, Inter-agency Working Group, London, June 2014), [www.rbfhealth.org/sites/rbf/files/Event/Cash%20Upon%20Delivery%20at%20the%20Global%20Fund.pdf](http://www.rbfhealth.org/sites/rbf/files/Event/Cash%20Upon%20Delivery%20at%20the%20Global%20Fund.pdf), and Rachel Silverman, "Major Progress at the Global Fund: A One-Year 'More Health for the Money' Update for World AIDS Day," CGD Blog, December 1, 2014, [www.cgdev.org/blog/major-progress-global-fund-one-year-more-health-money-update-world-aids-day](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/major-progress-global-fund-one-year-more-health-money-update-world-aids-day).
- 102 Nancy Birdsall and William D. Savedoff, *Cash on Delivery: A New Approach to Foreign Aid* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2010), [www.cgdev.org/publication/9781933286600-cash-delivery-new-approach-foreign-aid](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/9781933286600-cash-delivery-new-approach-foreign-aid).
- 103 This individual further noted that this approach was in alignment with the WHO's malaria-elimination certification process.
- 104 Global Fund, *The Global Fund's New Funding Model* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2013), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/1467/replenishment\\_2013newfundingmodel\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/1467/replenishment_2013newfundingmodel_report_en.pdf). The document further states: "The Global Fund will invest strategically in areas with high potential for impact and strong value for money."
- 105 Global Fund, *A Strategy for the Global Fund: Accelerating the Effort to Save Lives* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2007), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/2525/core\\_globalfundstrategy2006\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/2525/core_globalfundstrategy2006_strategy_en.pdf).
- 106 Global Fund, "Report of the Executive Director" (presented at Global Fund Twenty-Third Board Meeting, Geneva, May 2011), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/3935/bm23\\_03executivedirector\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/3935/bm23_03executivedirector_report_en.pdf).
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- 108 Global Fund, "Global Fund Appoints Michael Borowitz as Head of Strategic Investment and Partnerships," press release, March 12, 2013, [www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2013-03-12-global-fund-appoints-michael-borowitz-as-head-of-strategic-investment-and-partnerships](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2013-03-12-global-fund-appoints-michael-borowitz-as-head-of-strategic-investment-and-partnerships).
- 109 Several people interviewed noted possible risk intolerance at the Global Fund around further pilots of RBF approaches. For example, one individual stated that they "got a lot of pushback" from audit functions "when [they] tried to move that model to other countries."
- 110 CGD final grant report, August 2016.
- 111 Seventeen of 43 working group members, excluding co-chairs, were affiliated with the Global Fund at the time of the working group meetings. See "Next Generation Financing Models in Global Health," CGD, August 19, 2015, [www.cgdev.org/working-group/next-generation-financing-models-global-health](http://www.cgdev.org/working-group/next-generation-financing-models-global-health). This working group and associated activities were funded by a \$914,025, 20-month grant from the Gates Foundation
- 112 Two of these background papers are available online. See Liam Wren-Lewis, "Designing Contracts for the Global Fund: Lessons from the Theory of Incentives" (Working Paper 425, CGD, Washington, DC, 2016), [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/CGD-Working-Paper-425-Wren-Lewis-Contracts-Global-Fund\\_0.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/CGD-Working-Paper-425-Wren-Lewis-Contracts-Global-Fund_0.pdf), and Han Ye, "Global Health Donors Viewed as Regulators of Monopolistic Service Providers: Lessons from Regulatory Literature" (Working Paper 424, CGD, Washington, DC, 2016), [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/CGD-Working-Paper-424-Han-Ye-Health-Donors.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/CGD-Working-Paper-424-Han-Ye-Health-Donors.pdf).
- 113 CGD final grant report, August 2016.
- 114 Rachel Silverman, Mead Over, and Sebastian Bauhoff, *Aligning Incentives, Accelerating Impact: Next Generation Financing Models for Global Health* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2015), [www.cgdev.org/publication/aligning-incentive-accelerating-impact-next-generation-financing-models-global-health](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/aligning-incentive-accelerating-impact-next-generation-financing-models-global-health).
- 115 For a recording of the event, see [www.cgdev.org/event/defeating-aids-tb-and-malaria-designing-next-generation-financing-models](http://www.cgdev.org/event/defeating-aids-tb-and-malaria-designing-next-generation-financing-models).
- 116 CGD final grant report, August 2016. CGD's Silverman presented the working group report at the Global Fund.
- 117 October 9, 2015, email exchange between the Global Fund and CGD, shared by CGD.
- 118 October 9, 2015, feedback document from the Global Fund to CGD on a draft of the Next Generation Financing Models Working Group final report, shared by CGD.
- 119 November 2015 email exchanges between the Global Fund, the Gates Foundation, and CGD, shared by CGD.
- 120 See Global Fund, *Funding Request Instructions: Allocation Period 2020–2022* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2020), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/5731/fundingrequest\\_transition\\_instructions\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/5731/fundingrequest_transition_instructions_en.pdf), and Global Fund, *Funding Request Instructions: Program Continuation* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2020), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/7356/fundingrequest\\_programcontinuation\\_instructions\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/7356/fundingrequest_programcontinuation_instructions_en.pdf).
- 121 Global Fund, *Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World: Global Fund Strategy (2023–2028)* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2021), 51, [www.theglobalfund.org/media/11612/strategy\\_globalfund2023-2028\\_narrative\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/11612/strategy_globalfund2023-2028_narrative_en.pdf).
- 122 Global Fund, *Value for Money Technical Brief* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2019), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/8596/core\\_valueformoney\\_technicalbrief\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/8596/core_valueformoney_technicalbrief_en.pdf). The Global Fund's brief references and aligns with DFID's definition of VfM, which encompasses economy, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and sustainability. See DFID, *DFID's Approach to Value for Money* (London: DFID, 2017), <https://govshop.com/media/opportunities/documents/7154857ce96d90fce51c5a49e3d8617eattachment-j.pdf>. (As of October 2022, the Global Fund's Technical Brief was replaced with a Placeholder Document stating, "Document Unavailable.") CGD's definition of VfM differs slightly: "Value for money in the health sector is defined as creating and complying with rules or procedures for allocating resources that elicit the production and use of the health maximizing mix of services for the available donor, national, and private resources [...] which entails high levels of 'technical efficiency' and 'allocative efficiency,' which can only be reached by ensuring 'incentive compatibility.'" Source: CGD working group report *More Health for the Money*. See also Box 1.
- 123 Global Fund, *The Global Fund Strategy 2017–2022: Investing to End Epidemics* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2016), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/2531/core\\_globalfundstrategy2017-2022\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/2531/core_globalfundstrategy2017-2022_strategy_en.pdf).



- 124 DFID, *Performance Agreement: United Kingdom and The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria* (London: DFID, 2016), [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/552983/perf-agreement-global-fund.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552983/perf-agreement-global-fund.pdf). The 2019 performance agreement, by contrast, does not mention payment by results: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/813633/GF\\_Performance\\_Agreement\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/813633/GF_Performance_Agreement_.pdf), though it maintains an emphasis on VfM.
- 125 August 2016 email exchange between CGD and DFID staff.
- 126 Global Fund, "Global Fund Board Approves New Strategic Framework," press release, November 17, 2015, <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2015-11-17-Global-Fund-Board-Approves-New-Strategic-Framework/>.
- 127 November 16, 2015, email exchange between CGD and US government representatives.
- 128 CGD, "Recommendations for USG Input and Engagement around the 5-Year Strategy Development Process of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria" (joint memo to US government staff and roundtable participants following roundtable discussion on US government input on the Global Fund), June 10, 2015. According to a CGD researcher, CGD met with Ambassador Birx on two other instances at her request in 2015 to discuss the Global Fund's strategy development process, which resulted in the creation of the talking points referenced in the text.
- 129 Global Fund, *Single TB and HIV Concept Note Ukraine 2015–2017* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2014), [https://ecua.org/mvdev/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/10/UKR-C\\_ConceptNote\\_0\\_en.pdf](https://ecua.org/mvdev/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/10/UKR-C_ConceptNote_0_en.pdf).
- 130 Alliance for Public Health, *Annual Report 2018* (Kyiv, Ukraine: Alliance for Public Health, 2018), <https://aph.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ar2018en.pdf>.
- 131 Global Fund, *Ukraine Funding Request Full Review* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2019), [https://moz.gov.ua/uploads/skeditor/документи/Національна%20рада%20з%20питань%20протидії%20туберкульозу%20та%20ВІЛ-СНІД/Матеріали%20засідань/Матеріал%20від%2026-30.06.2020/UKR\\_fundingrequest\\_fullreview\\_v05\\_26June20\\_Eng.pdf](https://moz.gov.ua/uploads/skeditor/документи/Національна%20рада%20з%20питань%20протидії%20туберкульозу%20та%20ВІЛ-СНІД/Матеріали%20засідань/Матеріал%20від%2026-30.06.2020/UKR_fundingrequest_fullreview_v05_26June20_Eng.pdf).
- 132 Richard Cunliffe. Twitter, September 19, 2022. The full tweet reads: "The India portfolio has moved to a Payment for Results modality with @MoHFW\_INDIA and achieving excellent results on the strength of recommendations from @CGDev. Thanks to @MeadOver @glassmanamanda @nancymbirdsall."
- 133 Euro Health Group, *The Global Fund: Strategic Review 2020 Final Report, vol. 1* (Søborg, Denmark: Euro Health Group, 2020), [www.theglobalfund.org/media/10498/terg\\_strategicreview2020\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10498/terg_strategicreview2020_report_en.pdf).
- 134 For examples of the World Bank's engagement with the Global Fund on RBF/PfR, see World Bank, "World Bank and Global Fund Deepen Partnership with Co-Financing Agreement," press release, October 22, 2019, [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/10/22/world-bank-and-global-fund-deepen-partnership-with-co-financing-agreement](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/10/22/world-bank-and-global-fund-deepen-partnership-with-co-financing-agreement).
- 135 Dr. Friebel is also a nonresident fellow at CGD.
- 136 R. Friebel, R. Silverman, A. Glassman, and K. Chalkidou, "On Results Reporting and Evidentiary Standards: Spotlight on the Global Fund," *Lancet* 393, no. 10184 (May 11, 2019): 2006–2008, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)33055-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)33055-1). See also William Savedoff, Amanda Glassman, and Janeen Madan, *Global Health, Aid and Corruption: Can We Escape the Scandal Cycle?* CGD Policy Paper 086 (Washington, DC: CGD, 2016), [www.cgdev.org/publication/global-health-aid-and-corruption-can-we-escape-scandal-cycle](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/global-health-aid-and-corruption-can-we-escape-scandal-cycle), and Aneta Wierzynska, Sarah Steingrüber, Roxanne Oroxom, and Sebastian Bauhoff, "Recalibrating the Anti-corruption, Transparency, and Accountability Formula to Advance Public Health," *Global Health Action* 13, suppl. 1 (2020): 1701327.
- 137 Donald Kaberuka is also a member of CGD's board of directors.
- 138 To more rigorously assess the extent to which the Global Fund has adopted a VfM approach, a former CGD staff member suggested tracking proposals submitted by countries to the Global Fund over time to assess if and how proposal content changed with time. While beyond the scope of the present case study, this activity would provide a very helpful complement to the evidence presented here.
- 139 "Global Fund Appoints Head of Health Finance," Global Fund, October 2, 2020, [www.theglobalfund.org/en/updates/other-updates/2020-10-02-global-fund-appoints-head-of-health-finance](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/updates/other-updates/2020-10-02-global-fund-appoints-head-of-health-finance).
- 140 "Mobilizing Scarce Resources for Global Health—the Global Fund Rolls Up Its Sleeves," Aidspace, October 12, 2021, [www.aidspace.org/en/c/article/5758](http://www.aidspace.org/en/c/article/5758).
- 141 See "Mobilizing Scarce Resources for Global Health—the Global Fund Rolls Up Its Sleeves," Aidspace, October 12, 2021, <https://www.aidspace.org/en/c/article/5758>, and Value for Money Working Group, *More Health for the Money: Putting Incentives to Work for the Global Fund and Its Partners* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2013), [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/More-Health-for-the-Money.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/More-Health-for-the-Money.pdf).
- 142 The Global Fund's 2023–2028 strategy was approved at the November 2021 Global Fund board meeting. See Global Fund, *Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World: Global Fund Strategy (2023–2028)* (Geneva, Switzerland: Global Fund, 2021), [www.theglobalfund.org/en/strategy-development/global-fund-strategy-2023-2028](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/strategy-development/global-fund-strategy-2023-2028).
- 143 Global Fund, "Global Fund Board Approves New Strategy Placing People and Communities at Center to Lead Fight Against HIV, TB, Malaria, to Build Systems for Health, Equity and Strengthen Pandemic Preparedness," press release, November 10, 2021, [www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2021-11-10-global-fund-board-approves-new-strategy](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2021-11-10-global-fund-board-approves-new-strategy).
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- 145 For a summary of the AP article and its subsequent correction, see "AP Reports on Global Fund Malaria Drug Thefts, Issues Correction," *KFF Daily Global Health Policy Report*, April 21, 2011, [www.kff.org/news-summary/ap-reports-on-global-fund-malaria-drug-thefts-issues-correction](http://www.kff.org/news-summary/ap-reports-on-global-fund-malaria-drug-thefts-issues-correction). For the Global Fund's response to the article, see Global Fund, "Global Fund Refutes Misleading Associated Press Article on Drug Theft," press release, April 20, 2011, [www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2011-04-20-global-fund-refutes-misleading-associated-press-article-on-drug-theft](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2011-04-20-global-fund-refutes-misleading-associated-press-article-on-drug-theft).
- 146 Andrew Jack, "Global Fund: Reforms Offer Chance of More Support for Regions in Need," *Financial Times*, November 29, 2012, <https://amp.ft.com/content/a9544060-3322-11e2-aa83-00144feabd0c>.
- 147 Eliza Villarino, "Michel Kazatchkine Wins Second Term as Global Fund Chief," *Devex*, January 12, 2011, [www.devex.com/news/michel-kazatchkine-wins-second-term-as-global-fund-chief-72053](http://www.devex.com/news/michel-kazatchkine-wins-second-term-as-global-fund-chief-72053).
- 148 Global Fund, "The Global Fund Appoints Gabriel Jaramillo as General Manager," press release, January 24, 2012, [www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2012-01-24-the-global-fund-appoints-gabriel-jaramillo-as-general-manager](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2012-01-24-the-global-fund-appoints-gabriel-jaramillo-as-general-manager).
- 149 CGD's blogs were also mentioned by multiple non-CGD stakeholders interviewed as a "really accessible and important" tool for "get[ting] their information out." These individuals also noted that they use CGD blogs and other shorter-form CGD publications frequently in their work at their respective organizations.

- 150 See, for example, CGD's 2006 report by the Global Fund Working Group, convened in advance of the then impending leadership transition at the Global Fund: Global Fund Working Group, *Challenges and Opportunities for the New Executive Director of the Global Fund: Seven Essential Tasks* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2006), [www.cgdev.org/publication/challenges-and-opportunities-new-executive-director-global-fund-seven-essential-tasks](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/challenges-and-opportunities-new-executive-director-global-fund-seven-essential-tasks). See also CGD's report to the then incoming US Global AIDS Coordinator: Amanda Glassman and Jenny Ottenhoff, *Clear Direction for a New Decade: Priorities for PEPFAR and the Next US Global AIDS Coordinator* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2013), [www.cgdev.org/publication/clear-direction-new-decade-priorities-pepfar-and-next-us-global-aids-coordinator](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/clear-direction-new-decade-priorities-pepfar-and-next-us-global-aids-coordinator).
- 151 This individual also noted that, given the 10-plus years since the HAM concluded, the "long-term memory" of HAM researchers was a "very strong testament to the power of the project in the way that it was designed and executed." This sentiment was echoed by external actors as well (see Theme 5).
- 152 Within the Shiffman and Smith framework for policy change, "internal frame" refers to consensus around the definition of a problem, while "policy community cohesion" refers to global "coalescence" of key actors. See Jeremy Shiffman and Stephanie Smith, "Generation of Political Priority for Global Health Initiatives: A Framework and Case Study of Maternal Mortality," *Lancet* 370, no. 9595 (October 13, 2007): 1370–1379, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(07\)61579-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61579-7).
- 153 While beyond the scope of this present study, two related working groups that bear mentioning include the Working Group on the Future of Global Health Procurement ([www.cgdev.org/working-group/working-group-future-global-health-procurement](http://www.cgdev.org/working-group/working-group-future-global-health-procurement); see final report here: [www.cgdev.org/better-health-procurement](http://www.cgdev.org/better-health-procurement)), which focused on the "efficiency, quality, affordability, and security of global health procurement" in the context of donor, disease, and health system transitions; and the Working Group on Incorporating Economics and Modelling in Global Health Goals and Guidelines ([www.cgdev.org/working-group/incorporating-economics-and-modelling-global-health-goals-and-guidelines](http://www.cgdev.org/working-group/incorporating-economics-and-modelling-global-health-goals-and-guidelines); see final report here: [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/understanding-opportunity-cost-seizing-opportunity-report-working-group.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/understanding-opportunity-cost-seizing-opportunity-report-working-group.pdf)). Both groups included participation by and engagement of Global Fund staff. CGD's Peter Baker and Y-Ling Chi, both of whom work with iDSI, led a proposal for priority setting at the Global Fund, including "strategic collaboration with the Global Fund on a country-led 'Value for Money Leadership Platform'" (October 2020 iDSI/CGD presentation prepared for DFID). According to CGD, this proposal was anticipated to be funded prior to the UK government's significant reduction to its aid budget (see William Worley, "Tracking the UK's Controversial Aid Cuts," Devex, last updated August 5, 2022, [www.devex.com/news/tracking-the-uk-s-controversial-aid-cuts-99883](http://www.devex.com/news/tracking-the-uk-s-controversial-aid-cuts-99883)).
- 154 For a list of CGD publications focusing on the Global Fund, see [www.cgdev.org/tags/global-fund](http://www.cgdev.org/tags/global-fund).
- 155 This case study examines the evidence for CGD's mechanistic impact on the VfM agenda at global health institutions. It does not analyze, and does not attempt to make a judgment on, the humanitarian consequences and/or relative merits of CGD ideas or recommendations.
- 156 In 2010, a year before *Achieving an AIDS Transition* was published, only an estimated 25 percent of people living with HIV were receiving ART (see "Data" tab, "Estimated Antiretroviral Therapy Coverage among People Living with HIV (%)," WHO, [www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/estimated-antiretroviral-therapy-coverage-among-people-living-with-hiv\(-\)](http://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/estimated-antiretroviral-therapy-coverage-among-people-living-with-hiv(-))).
- 157 This project did not involve an analysis of CGD's funding portfolio, though such an analysis would likely yield further insights into how CGD pursued policy impact. It should also be noted that CGD received restricted funding for the HIV/AIDS Monitor, Value for Money Working Group, and Next Generation Financing Models for Global Health Working Group.

## Appendix to Case Study 2. Timeline of Major Events



Note: Not an exhaustive timeline of all potentially relevant events.

CASE STUDY 3.

# Developing Global Skill Partnerships

**HANNAH POSTEL**

Hannah Postel is a postdoctoral research fellow at Stanford University and worked as an independent consultant to CGD while authoring this case study. Postel was a member of the CGD migration team from 2015 to 2017.

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## OVERVIEW

Since its founding in 2001, the Center for Global Development (CGD) has worked to “reduce global poverty and improve lives through innovative economic research that drives better policy and practice by the world’s top decision makers.”<sup>1</sup> This mission entails focusing on all aspects of development-related policy, not just foreign aid. One important—and often overlooked—such topic is international migration. Unlike trade and foreign direct investment, migration is little discussed in development spaces. When it is, more often than not it is treated as the antithesis to development; migration happens when development fails. In this paradigm, migration also hinders development through so-called brain drain, or taking skilled people away from poor origin countries.

CGD is one of the few development organizations that has tried to better understand and focus on migration as *part and parcel* of the development process. That is, it has promoted the idea that migration can be a tool for development. CGD researchers have shown that the potential welfare gains from increased migration far exceed those from trade, foreign aid, or foreign direct investment.<sup>2</sup> As former senior fellow Lant Pritchett and former senior policy analyst Farah Hani have argued, “The gains to human well-being from more and better flows of workers between countries are an order of magnitude larger than feasible ‘interventions’ to people in situ.”<sup>3</sup>

CGD has also long prioritized the mission of “ideas to action.” As a so-called “think and do tank,” CGD encourages its staff to create both solid empirical research and policy innovations. In the migration field, this has entailed looking for ways to tangibly capture some of the welfare gains mentioned above. One such policy proposal, the Global Skill Partnership (GSP), is the brainchild of Michael Clemens, senior fellow and director of migration, displacement, and humanitarian policy. The model was designed to maximize benefits from migration for all involved (origin countries, destination countries, employers, and the migrants themselves) while minimizing potential negative effects. It is one tool in a broader range of CGD proposals aiming to bring together the migration and development fields for mutual benefit. Almost 10 years since its genesis, the Global Skill Partnership model has gained significant policy

attention and is now being piloted in multiple contexts. Establishing the GSP as an effective tool for mutual benefit is an important first step toward further integrating migration and development policy.

What follows is not a formal program evaluation, but rather an effort to contextualize CGD’s promotion of the GSP concept with particular focus on its impact to date. The report is largely based on interviews with CGD staff and external stakeholders, including funders, project implementers, and strategic partners. A former member of the CGD migration team, the author draws on both her knowledge of the broader migration and development space and specific past experiences with the GSP idea.

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## GENESIS OF THE GSP IDEA (2005–2012)

According to founding president Nancy Birdsall, CGD’s focus from the start was on “telling the rich world what they could do to encourage development,” specifically beyond foreign aid.<sup>4</sup> Migration caught her attention as potentially impactful, not least because remittances were starting to gain more attention from major development players like the World Bank. However, she found the sole focus on remittances frustrating, especially considering migration’s role as a poverty-reduction strategy. Remittances were a “safe harbor” for the rich world, requiring minimal action on their part. Yet these same rich countries were resistant to the idea that more migration could be good for the world. Birdsall therefore saw both a topical and a strategic gap for CGD to fill.<sup>5</sup>

At this time, migration and development were largely considered separately in both the academic and policy spheres. In 2007, sociologist Hein de Haas noted a “lack of any credible coherence between aid and migration policies.”<sup>6</sup> The two areas were addressed by different government agencies and different international organizations and had different geographic focuses. While migration policymakers in wealthy destination countries focused mainly on domestic concerns (such as integration and border control), development practitioners worked mostly on mobilizing remittances and diasporas to

benefit origin countries.<sup>7</sup> It was not until 2006 that migration and development were addressed as linked on the global stage, with the formation of the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.<sup>8</sup>

At the time, attempts to look beyond remittances to study how rich countries could encourage migration in support of development were rare.<sup>9</sup> The World Bank launched its Research Program on International Migration and Development in 2003 to strengthen the migration-development knowledge base, but the program focused almost exclusively on remittances. A 2009 conference announcement highlighted a new push to “go beyond remittances.”<sup>10</sup> On the migration side, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) was founded in 2001 to “improve immigration and integration policies through authoritative research and analysis” but employed a more US- and Europe-focused approach. Of 90 research publications issued in MPI’s first five years, only two centered on the link between migration and development. Both focused on remittances.<sup>11</sup> It is therefore unlikely that another organization would have filled this gap if CGD had not done so.

In 2005, Birdsall requested that the newly hired research fellow Michael Clemens look into migration issues. Senior fellow Lant Pritchett was also pursuing the angle of labor mobility as a highly impactful development strategy. In 2006 Pritchett published his book *Let Their People Come* through CGD, in which he argued that “the gains to people in poor countries from labor mobility are enormous compared to everything else on the development agenda.”<sup>12</sup> Birdsall acknowledged that this idea was “bound to be controversial,”<sup>13</sup> and a *New York Times* article described Pritchett’s proposed temporary guestworker program as “equally offensive to the left and the right.”<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact that the same *Times* profile noted that the book was published “to little acclaim—none at all, in fact,”<sup>15</sup> it was foundational to CGD’s emerging work on migration. More broadly, *Let Their People Come*, one of CGD’s first books, demonstrated an enthusiasm for innovation and going against the grain. It also set the stage for early collaborations between Pritchett and Clemens and kicked off a growing focus on development for *people* versus for *places*.<sup>16</sup>

In 2008, the World Bank asked Pritchett to contribute a background paper to the forthcoming *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography*.<sup>17</sup> The paper, coauthored with Clemens and Claudio Montenegro from the bank’s Development Research Group, was entitled “The Place Premium.”<sup>18</sup> It highlighted the massive arbitrage opportunity inherent to international labor migration, quantifying the enormous wage gap across borders. The paper found that “the wages of a Peruvian worker willing to work in the United States are about 2.6 times as much as the same person would make in Peru.”<sup>19</sup> This background paper ended up framing the entire *World Development Report*; the opening sentence states that “place is the most important correlate of a person’s welfare.”<sup>20</sup>

Socializing the “place premium” concept in the broader development space both (1) directly led to further CGD research on the topic and (2) laid the groundwork for CGD policy innovations capitalizing on the potential welfare gains described. The *Journal of Economic Perspectives* approached Pritchett to write a paper expanding on *Let Their People Come* and “The Place Premium.” Pritchett asked if his CGD colleague Clemens might be interested instead. Clemens wrote what was to become his most-cited paper on migration, entitled *Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?*<sup>21</sup> As summarized in a CGD blog post from Clemens, the 2011 paper argues that “a modest increase in emigration out of low-income countries—just 5% of the people now living there—would expand the world economy by several trillion dollars every year... . Minor reductions in the barriers to labor mobility would add more value than the *total, global elimination* of all remaining policy barriers to goods trade and all barriers to capital flows, combined. This creates the greatest single opportunity for global economic prosperity in our age.”<sup>22</sup>

This work established Clemens and Pritchett as two of the leading economists advocating for expanded immigration. In an academic setting, the work might have stopped there, once the idea itself had been articulated. However, given CGD’s focus on “ideas to action,” the next step became exploring how it might be possible to realize these huge gains to international labor mobility. In 2012, Birdsall requested that Clemens



prepare three policy proposals for the CGD board meeting, highlighting tangible ways policymakers could use migration as a development strategy. One of these proposals was what would become the GSP.

Clemens had been noticing a “fundamental incompatibility” prevalent in migration policy conversations: origin countries oppose skilled emigration given brain drain concerns, but destination countries want only skilled immigration. He thought that “rather than taking it off the table, full stop, we should develop policies to help adjudicate” the issue.<sup>23</sup> An earlier paper of his studied the emigration of African health-care workers, finding that increased access to overseas jobs actually encouraged more young people to enter the domestic healthcare field.<sup>24</sup> Combining these two concepts, Clemens hypothesized that fears of brain drain were driven more by financial concerns than emigration per se: origin countries were upset that money dedicated to training their citizens “disappeared” overseas. So, Clemens thought, what about taking a part of the enormous gain from migration and using it to finance part or all of the training? Rich countries could thereby pay for the education of more skilled workers in poorer countries, directly addressing brain drain concerns.

CGD’s network of researchers helped develop and incubate the original GSP proposal. Upon hearing the idea, Pritchett suggested adding another “track” to the proposal: that is, training workers both to migrate and to stay home. This could further help ameliorate brain drain concerns and create a multiplier effect by increasing human capital in local labor markets. This “home track” is one of the main elements making a GSP distinct from other labor mobility programs.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Birdsall highlighted the importance of working with CGD policy outreach and communications staff to refine how to pitch the GSP concept more broadly.<sup>26</sup> A 2012 panel at the Global Economic Symposium was the first public discussion of the GSP model.<sup>27</sup>

## BOX 1. WHAT IS A GLOBAL SKILL PARTNERSHIP?

A Global Skill Partnership is a bilateral agreement between equal partners. The country of destination agrees to provide technology and finance to train potential migrants with targeted skills in their country of origin, prior to migration, and receives migrants with precisely the skills they need to integrate and contribute best upon arrival. The country of origin agrees to provide that training and receives support for the training of nonmigrants too—increasing rather than draining human capital.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH, HONING OF THE IDEA, AND INCUBATION PERIOD (2012–2016)

This initial outreach set the stage for further institutionalization of the GSP concept, in particular the first written description of its tenets and goals. In 2011, World Bank labor mobility expert Manjula Luthria invited Clemens to speak at the launch of the International Labour Mobility program at the World Bank’s Center for Mediterranean Integration in Marseilles, which she oversaw. Luthria thought the focus on employment and economic growth in North Africa could facilitate conversations about labor mobility with Europe, though countries were still reticent due to fears of brain drain. Luthria therefore commissioned a study investigating the potential of the GSP approach for an EU-funded program training North Africans at home. She hoped this might help shift the narrative and show countries that “it’s not brain drain or no migration.”<sup>28</sup> This paper from Clemens was the first written output on GSPs and was eventually revised into the foundational statement of the GSP model’s promise and principles: *Global Skill Partnerships: A Proposal for Technical Training in a Mobile World*.<sup>29</sup>

Though the EU–North Africa program mentioned above did not come to pass,<sup>30</sup> Luthria helped facilitate an opportunity for Clemens to travel to Australia to study the Australia–Pacific

Technical College (APTC), an initiative that possessed some GSP-like characteristics (more on the APTC below). Clemens had read about the APTC online and was using it as an example of a GSP-like arrangement in public presentations. He came across a blog post by Stephen Howes (former chief economist of AusAid) noting that the APTC had not succeeded as a labor mobility arrangement.<sup>31</sup> Curious, Clemens emailed Howes to learn more and to see if Howes had any interest in coauthoring an article investigating APTC's attempts to facilitate labor mobility.<sup>32</sup> Clemens traveled to Australia in January 2013, where he met Howes and began interviewing sources for their coauthored paper. Though the final product did not explicitly recommend a GSP, Clemens and Howes proposed some key GSP elements to improve APTC labor mobility outcomes (more details below).<sup>33</sup> This was the first connection of the theoretical GSP principles to the tangible details of an extant skills-training-cum-labor-mobility program.

Apart from this collaboration, the GSP concept did not originally attract widespread support. According to Clemens, funders were largely skeptical, saying the proposal sounded "like something the private sector should be doing."<sup>34</sup> During this period, Clemens and his team had many discussions with employers and officials in origin countries and destination countries, but early interest did not pan out.<sup>35</sup> Clemens noted that there was a sense that "somebody needs to first prove this can work," given the large up-front time and financial investments necessary.<sup>36</sup>

The idea was particularly hard to sell in destination countries because it was being pitched at a time of very politically fraught migration policies. As Clemens explains, "the very whiff of brain drain" scared off development agencies because they saw their role as preventing the need for migration.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, destination country politicians couldn't touch the issue of expanding migration pathways, particularly with migrant arrivals rising through 2015. Clemens noted that "it was hard to find anybody in any room who could envision such a project."<sup>38</sup> The amount of work entailed in partnering with local training institutions, training trainers, and building long-term partnerships was not palatable to policymakers, especially in the context of a migrant "crisis."

Origin country governments and the private sector were also unconvinced. The former felt they needed a lot of up-front investment to make a GSP worthwhile, as many lacked the necessary institutional capacity.<sup>39</sup> For example, Nigeria's labor ministry was excited by the idea but ran out of money before it could complete its health migration strategy, much less implement a GSP.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in many countries there was a reasonable skepticism about such projects, given thousands of years of extractive migration channels.<sup>41</sup>

On the private-sector side, there are very few immediate incentives for a company to invest in a GSP. This is particularly true for smaller businesses, as the long timeline and intensive start-up costs can be risky.<sup>42</sup> The prevailing sense during this period was that GSPs were an interesting idea but that no one felt comfortable investing until there was solid proof that the proposal could work.

At CGD in early 2016, there was no sense that a GSP would become a reality in the near future. Though Clemens and other members of the migration team continued to promote the GSP concept at conferences and other public events, most of their time and attention shifted to other projects. Birdsall recalls that "for three or four years I don't think there was any [outside] interest there at all, [but] the most amazing thing was how Michael kept plugging away at it."<sup>43</sup>

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## HEAVY OUTREACH AND IDEAS SOCIALIZATION (2016–2018)

Focus on migration as a political issue sharpened considerably after the 2015 spike in migrant arrivals to Europe. Across the Atlantic, the weaponization of immigration in the 2016 US presidential election campaign also raised the salience of the topic. These global developments shaped how both CGD and the international community pressed forward. It became clear that global migration governance was severely lacking, a gap the United Nations attempted to fill with a nonbinding agreement called the Global Compact for Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration (GCM). CGD's pitch to the GCM revolved around GSPs, and policy outreach efforts increased accordingly through the GCM's adoption in December 2018. As the

first-ever international agreement on migration, the GCM was seen as a “once-in-a-generation chance to shape migration cooperatively, for mutual benefit.”<sup>44</sup>

The UN General Assembly meeting in 2016 kicked off the GCM process. Peter Sutherland, the former UN special representative on migration, was working to put together a report to inform the meeting. CGD made an effort to be involved in this process through conversations with Sutherland’s advisers and facilitated Clemens’ GSP proposal being cited (albeit in a footnote) under the recommendation “strengthen the architecture to govern labour mobility.”<sup>45</sup> Clemens and former research associate Hannah Postel were also cited elsewhere for their work on facilitating temporary labor migration from Haiti and acknowledged in the report’s list of experts consulted. One of Sutherland’s advisers noted that there was “significant carryover” from the researchers involved with the Sutherland report to those consulted when the full text of the GCM was being decided. This adviser also highlighted that the GCM drafters were particularly interested in soliciting fresh ideas and concrete proposals, and they knew that Clemens’s work was similarly solutions-oriented.<sup>46</sup>

CGD pitched GSPs at every major migration policy gathering. For example, the Global Forum on Migration and Development had existed for years but took on a more prominent role as the sounding board for GCM ideas and proposals following the 2016 UN General Assembly. CGD was able to secure a roundtable discussion fully dedicated to the GSP concept at the 2017 Global Forum on Migration and Development in Berlin. Clemens participated in the sixth thematic consultation for the GCM, in a session on “irregular migration and regular pathways, including decent work, labor mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant measures.” The migration team also built on existing relationships to socialize the idea even further: for example, the Canadian government officially recommended building pilot GSPs into the GCM framework.<sup>47</sup>

Momentum for the GSP concept had built further by December 2017, when UN secretary-general António Guterres included the “promising idea” in his contribution to the first

draft of the GCM.<sup>48</sup> This recommendation built on a Clemens paper commissioned by the UN, entitled *Migration Is a Form of Development: The Need for Innovation to Regulate Migration for Mutual Benefit*. The paper was commissioned as an intended contribution to the GCM and built on months of CGD interchanges with the compact drafting team. Until the GCM was signed in December 2018, CGD policy outreach on migration focused almost completely on GSPs. Clemens and former research associate Katelyn Gough attended nearly every GCM preparatory meeting and further spread the word at high-level international meetings like Wilton Park. These efforts involved many cold emails, seeking out individuals at events, and encouraging GCM drafters to be as specific and action-oriented as possible.<sup>49</sup> A member of the Sutherland advisory team noted that CGD was highly effective at developing innovative ideas and educating people on their merits. She perceived CGD as taking a less active advocacy approach than other organizations—for example, in terms of trying to build alliances among UN member states. But she noted that this approach “worked well in an ecosystem,” as a complement to other actors.<sup>50</sup>

This effort paid off when GSPs became—according to Clemens—the only concrete policy proposal included in the GCM.<sup>51</sup> Objective 18e calls for states to “build global skills partnerships among countries that strengthen training capacities of national authorities and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and trade unions, and foster skills development of workers in countries of origin and migrants in countries of destination with a view to preparing trainees for employability in the labour markets of all participating countries.”<sup>52</sup> The specificity and detail of the GSP proposal is notable compared to the other recommendations for Objective 18 (e.g., “engage in bilateral partnerships and programs”). The former Sutherland adviser notes a few other concrete recommendations in the GCM (mainly in terms of protecting migrants in transit). But she agrees that there are very few specific policy proposals in the final text, and that there is a “a very recognizable link” to Clemens’s work.<sup>53</sup>

A number of changes in the policy landscape also helped facilitate successful socialization of the GSP concept. Clemens

hypothesizes that immediately following the 2015 migrant “crisis,” no one wanted to discuss opening more legal channels for migration in fear that “more people show up.”<sup>54</sup> However, as time passed and the crisis did not recur, countries realized they needed to put new structures in place to regulate future migration flows. Concurrent with the development of the GCM, policymakers began thinking about the medium to long term again. States now recognized that the post-2015 emergency measures were only a Band-Aid but were dissatisfied with the existing policy options.<sup>55</sup> The desire for innovative, longer-term policies created fertile ground for CGD’s policy outreach. Perhaps more surprisingly, the rise of global populism and the belief that foreign aid needs to benefit the national interest also helped socialize the GSP concept. As a program that not only educates workers in origin countries but also fills destination country labor needs, a GSP can be compelling to individuals across the ideological spectrum.<sup>56</sup>

Even more broadly, global demographic shifts have caused destination countries to recognize the need to diversify beyond traditional migration channels. Migration from long-standing countries of origin (e.g., India, the Philippines, and Mexico) has slowed as their populations age and become wealthier. Destination countries started to “compete” against each other to attract skilled workers; for example, the EU’s 2020 New Pact on Migration and Asylum acknowledges that the region is “currently losing the global race for talent.”<sup>57</sup>

In addition, the international community was looking for ways to bridge the GCM with the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030).<sup>58</sup> GSPs fit this mandate well by providing both skills training and likely poverty alleviation in developing countries with a “safe, regular, and orderly” migration channel.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, after 18 months of intense migration policy debate, few other concrete policy options had emerged.<sup>60</sup>

CGD’s outreach surrounding the GCM (and the ensuing mention in the GCM text) was likely effective in several ways. First, CGD’s involvement in the drafting process—as an organization offering expertise and policy specificity—opened doors for further discussions of potential GSP implementation. Gough met with members of the GCM drafting team on

multiple occasions, including to discuss the practicalities of implementing a GSP and how the GCM language could best capture these considerations.<sup>61</sup> Second, inclusion in the GCM removed some of the “chicken or egg” discourse around needing to show proof of the GSP’s efficacy before anyone would be willing to pilot it. According to Gough, this also gave some GCM signatory governments political ammunition for legitimacy and government sponsorship of a future GSP.<sup>62</sup> CGD policy fellow and assistant director for migration, displacement, and humanitarian policy Helen Dempster disagrees, suggesting that interest in GSPs has occurred despite rather than because of GCM inclusion, particularly for governments skeptical of the compact.<sup>63</sup>

The extended GCM outreach campaign also enabled CGD to work behind the scenes on ways to pitch the GSP concept and develop possible adaptations. This effort stemmed directly from many conversations about what it would take for states to implement a GSP pilot. Gough was consistently in touch with both the GCM drafting team and interested government representatives via phone and email, and in person when possible. Hearing these parties’ questions and concerns, CGD adapted accordingly. The team homed in on (1) detailing the GSP esque aspects of successful private-sector initiatives; (2) highlighting how tailorable the idea is to different contexts; (3) reassuring policymakers that a GSP can, in many cases, be implemented without a change to migration statute; and (4) proposing the “aid in the national interest” approach to bring both liberals and conservatives to the table. These strategies have all proven useful in different country contexts.<sup>64</sup>

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## PILOTS (2019–PRESENT)

When asked what she attributes recent interest in GSPs to, Dempster notes that “sustained hammering is effective!”<sup>65</sup> In early 2019, Dempster joined CGD as the first full-time migration team staff member focused solely on policy outreach. A senior-level hire who had previously worked in migration policy and thus knew all the major actors and understood the landscape, Dempster has been able to jump-start the implementation of multiple GSP pilots. In part this is simply because no one from the migration team (typically comprised

of Clemens, a research assistant, and a program coordinator) had ever had the time and/or mandate to spend so much time on policy outreach. By contrast, Dempster estimates that half her time has been spent “catalyzing the GSP idea” through in-person contact with policymakers, including near-weekly trips to Brussels.<sup>66</sup> By many accounts, Dempster is also well known and respected in the field.<sup>67</sup> For example, upon reaching out to a Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation staffer she knew from a previous job, Dempster was promptly invited to speak in an agency strategy session on the topic. Dempster’s position in the CGD Europe office has likely helped these efforts, as Europe has been a more receptive policy landscape than the United States.

We can broadly categorize existing GSP pilot programs into two types: preexisting programs that were adapted to more fully embrace the GSP model, and programs that were created from scratch with the explicit aim of implementing GSP principles.

## Preexisting programs

**GIZ-Kosovo.** Germany has implemented youth training and employment programming in Kosovo since 2017, with the aim of reducing Kosovar youth unemployment (currently over 50 percent).<sup>68</sup> The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) recently began to trial elements of a GSP in the construction sector, building on an existing private healthcare training partnership. While the GSP-like dimensions of the Youth, Employment and Skills in Kosovo (YES) project were not implemented, a new project building on the networks created and lessons learned is already under development.

The GSP model was introduced to the project by a GIZ staff member who had previously conducted a study about applying the model in the Philippines. He noted that while the on-the-ground Kosovo construction work was “quite grassroots,” it reminded him of the GSP model with its focus on training Kosovar workers to find work both at home and abroad. When he began working on the project, it didn’t yet have a skill partnership model incorporated, but he wanted to explicitly engage with the GSP idea and evolve the project accordingly.

This suggests that the GSP model is sufficiently fleshed out that it may no longer require active intervention from CGD to implement.<sup>69</sup> As the project evolved, GIZ staff aimed to keep the GSP principles in mind and incorporate lessons learned from previous private-sector skill partnerships. Despite the limited reach of the Kosovo pilot, project staff noted that skill partnerships could be a “big story” for development agencies since they combine many elements of interest.<sup>70</sup>

**APTC.** The Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC, previously known as the Australia-Pacific Technical College) was established in 2007 to foster skills creation and labor mobility across the Pacific. Since the program was announced in 2005 at the 36th Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting, five training schools on different Pacific Island nations have taught almost 17,000 students.

The APTC’s original focus was to train Pacific Islanders for employment in high-demand sectors both at home and abroad. Its two major goals since its inception have been to “build up human capital on the islands, and to provide skilled workers for shortage occupations in Australia.”<sup>71</sup> Migration from Pacific Island nations has traditionally been seasonal and lower-skill,<sup>72</sup> a trend the APTC aims to diversify. The training institutes provide Australian-recognized credentials across a range of qualifications (certificates, diplomas) and industry sectors (automotive, manufacturing, construction, electrical, tourism and hospitality, and healthcare).

Though labor mobility has always been a part of the APTC model, only 2.9 percent of graduates had migrated overseas by 2014 (1.2 percent to Australia). CGD’s 2014 evaluation of the APTC called for the inclusion of a more formal “away track” in response to the low numbers of graduates working internationally.<sup>73</sup> An internal Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) evaluation of the second APTC stage built on these recommendations, which eventually became a major part of the third stage redesign. Beginning in 2018—following CGD’s 2014 recommendations—the APTC’s third stage has included this “away track.” CGD’s collaboration with Stephen Howes, professor of economics at the Australian National University and the former chief economist at AusAid (DFAT’s



precursor) was an important element of what current APTC leaders see as “quite a strategic partnership” between CGD and the university.<sup>74</sup> Howes noted that GSPs are a “very radical idea,” and radical ideas typically “take a long time to socialize and create uptake,” especially when sponsored by national governments.<sup>75</sup>

## GSP creation from scratch

**PALIM.** The original impetus for the Pilot Project Addressing Labour Shortages through Innovative Labour Migration Models (PALIM) program came from the Flanders region of Belgium, which since 2017 had been facing a shortage of information and communications technology workers. The Flemish leadership was interested in finding qualified foreign workers to fill these gaps and jump-start business growth and productivity. This desire dovetailed quite nicely with the European Commission’s 2018 communication on fostering legal migration pathways, which highlighted the desire to “make legal pathways a compelling part of our partnership approach with third countries.”<sup>76</sup> The European Commission also set up the Mobility Partnership Facility to fund member state pilot programs on legal migration. The Belgian Ministry of Development Coordination tasked its development agency, Enabel, with assembling a proposal for a pilot project.

PALIM was designed as a “by the book” GSP, following GSP principles as closely as possible while adapting to the “complex reality” of Belgium, Morocco, and the system of partnerships that developed. When Enabel was tasked with developing a pilot program on legal migration pathways, such a project “could have been anything” given the broad mandate from the ministry. Raffaella Greco Tonegutti, Enabel’s labor mobility specialist, had heard about the GSP model in a previous position and thought it might be a match for Enabel’s focus on piloting and testing development innovations. She contacted CGD to propose that Enabel become the first EU actor to fully implement the GSP model in practice.<sup>77</sup>

The program trained 120 workers beginning in late 2019; more than half found jobs in Morocco and the rest continued with

more specialized training courses or are currently seeking employment in both Belgium and Morocco. The job-matching aspect of the project—especially for the Belgian companies recruiting abroad—was unfortunately complicated due to COVID-19 border closures. PALIM concluded on April 30, 2021, but support to the participants will continue through the new EU-funded project Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM).<sup>78</sup> Notably, THAMM is a scaled version of the GSP that includes three origin and three destination countries.

## The importance of sustained CGD outreach

As detailed in the previous section, the “away track” innovation in APTC’s curriculum derived from Clemens’s 2014 paper with Stephen Howes. Howes continued to push the idea during an evaluation of the APTC to which he served as an adviser, and he achieved the labor mobility track’s inclusion in 2018. This success speaks to the importance of CGD’s strategic partnerships. CGD had been actively building bridges with the Australian government since 2006—through a funding partnership and Australia’s participation in the Commitment to Development Index—which laid the groundwork for Clemens to connect with Howes.<sup>79</sup> Publishing the 2014 paper in partnership with Howes at the Australian National University was also key to the adoption of the “away track.” CGD was relatively unknown in Australia, so the work wouldn’t have had the same impact without this collaboration.<sup>80</sup> With his colleague Richard Curtain, Howes was able to “take [Clemens’s] ideas and run with them” to encourage government uptake.<sup>81</sup>

In a slightly more haphazard fashion, the other two pilot projects that have been initiated occurred because staff members at other organizations had heard about the GSP concept in previous jobs. Though at the time they were unable to move the concept forward, their new positions further facilitated engagement with and trial of GSPs. The key takeaway here is that patience has been a virtue for CGD and that seeding ideas widely can ultimately bear fruit both directly and indirectly.



## SUCCESS MEASUREMENT AND TAKEAWAYS

How can we measure the success of GSPs? Most fundamentally, success would entail a merging of migration and development policy at the national and/or international level, through recognition that each affects the other and policy should take this into account.<sup>82</sup> An interim step would be that GSPs become a main tool or new model in the migration-development policy toolbox. Country governments are the actors most relevant to this goal, as they control their borders, but some elements of the GSP—such as capacity building and training—can be implemented by nongovernmental and private-sector organizations. The most proximate success metrics are (1) amount of new country uptake and (2) success/scale-up of ongoing pilot projects.

Progress on the first is promising. CGD has begun to follow up on pre-COVID connections and is responding to an increased demand for healthcare partnerships. Dempster notes that the idea was “taking off” by late 2019, and she held workshops for policymakers in seven European countries. By late 2020, there had been an “explosion of interest in healthcare partnerships.” Though most countries had healthcare worker shortages pre-COVID, now there is both (1) an increased need and (2) a renewed understanding of the role migrants play within the healthcare system. For example, the UK is proposing a number of upcoming healthcare partnerships, of which at least two will be GSPs. The EU’s agenda on fostering legal migration pathways (described above in the context of PALIM) is a concomitant impetus. Since this agenda also includes a funding mechanism to kick-start such pathways, this lowers member states’ risk burdens and is likely another factor driving increased interest.

There is also interest in expanding the core GSP remit. The UK government is starting to think about how it could apply the GSP concept to refugee populations. CGD has also been involved in discussions about targeting climate-vulnerable countries, with a focus on how policymakers could use GSPs to build skills for low-carbon transitions. As discussed above, often a “brain circulation” component drives these

conversations, for example, “having the right people in the right places” with previous relevant experience and knowledge of the GSP concept. Finally, though most of the interest to date has been on Europe-Africa partnerships, CGD is beginning to explore the possibility of a United States GSP with the Northern Triangle.

Dempster notes a concurrent narrative change, with countries slowly recognizing the need to shape migration for mutual benefit.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, the focus on legal pathways for labor migrants has grown and in some cases (e.g., the EU’s Talent Partnerships) mirrors the CGD approach.<sup>84</sup> Dempster has also noticed a shift away from arguments that development will stop migration, noting that “connecting migration to development has arguably been the biggest impact of CGD outreach in this space.”<sup>85</sup>

Despite all these successes, a number of challenges remain:

1. **Timeline.** GSP projects are hugely time-intensive and produce results that are far from immediate. The co-CEO of one of the CGD migration team’s longest-running funders is concerned about the use of pilot projects “as a mode,” as they are highly capital- and labor-intensive.<sup>86</sup>
2. **Scale.** These programs start small. For example, in CGD’s work facilitating temporary labor migration from Haiti, just 62 workers moved over three years.<sup>87</sup> The small scale is, of course, a valid concern for funders and implementers. However, given the long timeline discussed above, it makes sense that participation would remain low at the start. And the benefits to those who do travel are enormous.<sup>88</sup> Dempster notes that some policymakers are open to the idea of a GSP only if CGD can prove such a program will reduce irregular migration. This is impossible with the model’s current scale and results timeline.
3. **Complexity.** GSPs require a relatively large network of committed players. Starting such a network from scratch is difficult—for example, if a country is interested in principle, how does it begin? There is no single body set up to facilitate increased labor migration (including to conduct up-front planning and support countries during implementation). Creating and maintaining

partnerships is both crucial to the program's success and extremely difficult. And while the benefits of bundling a labor mobility program with skills training are clear, the fact that both elements are necessary for a GSP to succeed makes its implementation more complex and opens more potential for it to not work.

- 4. Funding and sustainability.** Costs are extremely high per worker, especially during the pilot phase. For example, the PALIM project cost €1.5 million and required full-time staffing to develop, for 40 people who ended up moving. Currently, all these projects are funded primarily by official development assistance. This is not sustainable in the long run; a successful GSP must eventually transition to a more sustainable financing model. Dempster explained the current sense that development assistance can be used to bring companies on board and provide free (to them) workers in the beginning, but once the partnership is established the private-sector partners can begin picking up more of the costs.<sup>89</sup> This is currently being attempted by the APTC, but with minimal success thus far.<sup>90</sup>
- 5. Political constraints.** Despite CGD's work to develop a political narrative that can be palatable across the aisle, the fact remains that countries have sole sovereignty over their borders. If a government does not wish to admit migrants, it has no obligation to do so. Clemens hopes that the success of programs like the GSP can help people change how they think about migration, but others—including one of the CGD migration team's main funders—are not as convinced. Open Philanthropy's co-CEO Alexander Berger believes that the "constraints [to program growth] are fundamentally political rather than economic."<sup>91</sup> While Clemens and Dempster believe that the GSP can help build a broader political constituency for labor migration, Berger sees this (currently limited) constituency as necessary for bringing such projects to scale.

More broadly, it is unclear what role CGD will continue to play as GSPs become more widespread. Dempster believes the migration team may continue to actively promote the model

for the next few years. External take-up has increased; in fact, sometimes CGD does not even hear about a specific proposal that's been floated. In one way, this is a definite sign of success. However, Dempster also suggests that an "unintended consequence of [the GSP idea] getting bigger is that CGD has lost ownership over it." If CGD does step back from active GSP outreach, there will be no central organization to help interested partners get up and running.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, if CGD takes less active ownership over the GSP name and concept, this may confuse implementers and potentially hinder future uptake. For example, an initiative spearheaded by the International Organization for Migration and the International Labor Organization (with other international organization partners) also has a program entitled "Global Skills Partnerships." Though the two programs are practically distinct, the shared terminology—and separate ownership of the concept—has already confused potential implementers.<sup>93</sup>

Relatedly, Clemens has driven much of the idea's generation and outreach. According to Birdsall, "A lot of this success comes down to Michael as an individual. He has worked hard to make [GSPs] matter—to come up with policy solutions and to push to make sure they happen." Berger agrees, noting that Clemens epitomizes the CGD model of "bridging big ideas with practice." However, having programs that are managed and driven forward by a single individual can also raise concerns, as the work portfolio becomes highly dependent on one person's personality, professional exigencies, and personal connections. Channeling impact through a single individual creates many complexities.

Overall, though, this case study finds that the development of the GSP model in practice has embraced the CGD approach to great success. Dempster suggests that "perhaps similar migration pathway expansions would have occurred without CGD as developed countries acknowledge aging demographics, labor force shortages, and the need for development partnerships."<sup>94</sup> But CGD has raised the profile of the idea, demonstrated its importance, provided a concrete option to test, and directly supported governments in these efforts. Perhaps CGD's biggest impact has been to make expanded labor mobility pathways more development-friendly. Without

CGD's focus on the development aspects of nondevelopment policies, countries might have chosen direct labor recruitment schemes with minimal development benefits. And beyond the

tangible elements of a GSP, CGD has demonstrated that innovation in this very thorny policy space is possible.

## Notes

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- 2 Michael Clemens, "Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?" (Working Paper 264, CGD, Washington, DC, 2011), [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/1425376\\_file\\_Clemens\\_Economics\\_and\\_Emigration\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/1425376_file_Clemens_Economics_and_Emigration_FINAL.pdf); Michael A. Clemens, Claudio E. Montenegro, and Lant Pritchett, "The Place Premium: Wage Differences for Identical Workers across the US Border" (working paper, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/9230>; Michael A. Clemens and Hannah Postel, "Temporary Work Visas as US-Haiti Development Cooperation: A Preliminary Impact Evaluation," *IZA Journal of Labor & Development* 6, no. 4 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40175-016-0070-x>.
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- 8 "United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD)," International Organization for Migration, [www.iom.int/united-nations-high-level-dialogue-international-migration-and-development-hld](http://www.iom.int/united-nations-high-level-dialogue-international-migration-and-development-hld).
- 9 Two syntheses of the papers presented at the Annual Migration and Development Conference (begun in 2008 and run by the World Bank, French Development Agency, and CGD) highlight (1) the preponderance of remittances-related topics in the early years and (2) the ensuing diversification toward other areas of the migration-development relationship. One of these syntheses, written by Clemens with Hillel Rapoport and Çağlar Özden in 2014, is aptly entitled "Migration and Development Research Is Moving Far Beyond Remittances."
- 10 Sonia Plaza, "Diaspora Conference: What a Successful Event!" World Bank *PeopleMove* blog, July 22, 2009, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/diaspora-conference-what-a-successful-event>.
- 11 Author's calculation from research listed on the Migration Policy Institute website (<https://migrationpolicy.org/research>).
- 12 "Migration and Development: Temporary Workers Are Key," CGD, September 18, 2006, [www.cgdev.org/article/migration-and-development-temporary-workers-are-key](http://www.cgdev.org/article/migration-and-development-temporary-workers-are-key).
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Jason DeParle, "Should We Globalize Labor Too?" *New York Times Magazine*, June 10, 2007, [www.nytimes.com/2007/06/10/magazine/10global-t.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/10/magazine/10global-t.html).
- 15 Ibid. The author of the *Times* profile, Jason DeParle, has since published a book on migration's benefits to developing countries, entitled *A Good Provider Is One Who Leaves*.
- 16 From the *Times* article above: "Pritchett assails a basic premise—that development means developing places. He is more concerned about helping Nepalis than he is about helping Nepal. If remittances spur development back home, great, but that is not his central concern. 'Migration is development,' he says."
- 17 The report focused on the roles of "density, distance, and division" in economic geography and argued for more inclusive/integrated development effects across—not just within—a geographic division. Though migration was considered, the report mainly focused on urbanization, territorial development, and regional integration.
- 18 The paper was originally entitled "The Great Discrimination," following the argument that international barriers to movement are the largest source of global wage discrimination. The title was not well received by reviewers—as place of birth was (and still is) not considered a relevant basis for discrimination like gender or race—and revised to "The Place Premium."
- 19 Clemens, Montenegro, and Pritchett, "The Place Premium," emphasis added.
- 20 World Bank, *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009), 1, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5991>.
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- 23 Interview with Michael Clemens, May 12, 2021.
- 24 Michael Clemens, "Do Visas Kill? Health Effects of African Health Professional Emigration" (Working Paper 114, CGD, Washington, DC, 2007), [www.cgdev.org/publication/do-visas-kill-health-effects-african-health-professional-emigration-working-paper-114](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/do-visas-kill-health-effects-african-health-professional-emigration-working-paper-114).
- 25 Most "direct-recruitment" labor mobility schemes are born from wanting to fill gaps in destination country labor markets and do not explicitly consider the potential development benefits of such programs.
- 26 Interview with Nancy Birdsall, June 23, 2021.
- 27 Interview with Michael Clemens, March 2, 2021.
- 28 Interview with Manjula Luthria, August 3, 2021.
- 29 Michael Clemens, *Global Skill Partnerships: A Proposal for Technical Training in a Mobile World* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2014), [www.cgdev.org/publication/global-skill-partnerships-proposal-technical-training-mobile-world](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/global-skill-partnerships-proposal-technical-training-mobile-world).
- 30 A related project, focused on overseas employment for Moroccan youth, is now underway. See "Accessing Overseas Employment Opportunities for Moroccan Youth," World Bank, <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P150064>.
- 31 Stephen Howes, "Note: Australia-Pacific Technical College," *Devpolicy Blog*, July 23, 2012, <https://devpolicy.org/note-australia-pacific-technical-college20120723>.
- 32 See the section "The Importance of Sustained CGD Outreach" for more on the broader CGD networks that facilitated this contact.

- 33 Michael Clemens, Colum Graham, and Stephen Howes, "Skill Development and Regional Mobility: Lessons from the Australia-Pacific Technical College" (Working Paper 370, CGD, Washington, DC, 2014), [www.cgdev.org/publication/skill-development-and-regional-mobility-lessons-australia-pacific-technical-college](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/skill-development-and-regional-mobility-lessons-australia-pacific-technical-college).
- 34 Interview with Michael Clemens, March 2, 2021.
- 35 This happened for a range of reasons, all fairly idiosyncratic to the specific situation. For example, a program working to bring North African nurses to Germany was unable to deliver the planned training due to a legal challenge regarding the program's ability to include "cultural education" for the North African trainees. (Ibid.)
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- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 African Union, Report of the "Assessment of the Capacity Building Needs of African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities to Manage Migration" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: African Union, 2018), [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40609-doc-Report-Capacity\\_Building\\_Needs\\_Assessment-9\\_Jan\\_2019.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40609-doc-Report-Capacity_Building_Needs_Assessment-9_Jan_2019.pdf).
- 40 A 2021 joint report by CGD and the World Bank outlines what a potential healthcare partnership between Nigeria and the UK could look like, noting that the Nigerian National Policy on Human Resources for Health Migration is still in draft form. Samik Adhikari, Michael Clemens, Helen Dempster, and Nkechi Linda Ekeator, *Expanding Legal Pathways from Nigeria to Europe: From Brain Drain to Brain Gain* (Washington, DC: World Bank and CGD, 2021), [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/expanding-legal-migration-pathways-nigeria-europe-brain-drain-brain-gain.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/expanding-legal-migration-pathways-nigeria-europe-brain-drain-brain-gain.pdf).
- 41 Interview with Helen Dempster, March 7, 2021.
- 42 Dempster thinks "a lot of it [comes down to] trust." If firms have never hired from a specific location, it is more difficult to feel certain that any hired workers will match their needs, no matter how desperate the shortage.
- 43 Interview with Nancy Birdsall, June 23, 2021.
- 44 Kate Gough, "The Global Compact on Migration Is Now Being Negotiated. Here Are Three Sticking Points," *CGD Blog*, February 20, 2018, [www.cgdev.org/blog/global-compact-migration-now-being-negotiated-here-are-three-sticking-points-negotiations](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/global-compact-migration-now-being-negotiated-here-are-three-sticking-points-negotiations).
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- 46 Interview with Sarah Rosengaertner, August 11, 2021.
- 47 Government of Canada statement at Thematic Session 2: Addressing Drivers of Migration, New York, May 22-23, 2017. [https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/canada\\_ts2\\_p1.pdf](https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/canada_ts2_p1.pdf).
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- 49 Interview with Kate Gough, May 8, 2021.
- 50 Interview with Sarah Rosengaertner, August 11, 2021.
- 51 Interview with Michael Clemens, March 2, 2021.
- 52 "Objective 18e," *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (UN General Assembly resolution, December 19, 2018), 27, <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd416/files/docs/gcm.pdf>.
- 53 Interview with Sarah Rosengaertner, August 11, 2021.
- 54 Interview with Michael Clemens, March 2, 2021.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Interview with Helen Dempster, March 4, 2021; interview with Kate Gough, May 8, 2021.
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- 58 "Towards a Global Compact for Migration: A Development Perspective," Migration Policy Institute, [www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/international-program/global-compact-migration](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/international-program/global-compact-migration).
- 59 Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Hannah Postel, and Elisa Mosler Vidal, *Poverty, Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Geneva, Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2017), <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/11743.pdf>.
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- 61 Email from Kate Gough, August 20, 2021.
- 62 Interview with Kate Gough, May 8, 2021.
- 63 Email from Helen Dempster, August 10, 2021.
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- 65 Interview with Helen Dempster, March 4, 2021.
- 66 Ibid. (The comment refers to pre-COVID travel.)
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- 68 "Creating Employment Perspectives for Youth in Kosovo," GIZ, last updated March 2021, [www.giz.de/en/worldwide/66634.html](http://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/66634.html).
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- 70 Interview with GIZ program staff, March 26, 2021.
- 71 M.A. Clemens, "Global Skill Partnerships: A Proposal for Technical Training in a Mobile World," *IZA Journal of Labor Policy* 4, no. 2 (2015): 12.
- 72 Satish Chand and Helen Dempster, "A Pacific Skills Partnership: Improving the APTC to Meet Skills Needed in the Region," *CGD Blog*, August 2, 2019, [www.cgdev.org/blog/pacific-skills-partnership-improving-aptc-meet-skills-needed-in-region](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/pacific-skills-partnership-improving-aptc-meet-skills-needed-in-region).
- 73 Michael Clemens, Colum Graham, and Stephen Howes, "Skill Development and Regional Mobility."
- 74 Interview with APTC and DFAT staff, April 19, 2021.
- 75 Interview with Stephen Howes, August 16, 2021.
- 76 European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Enhancing Legal Pathways to Europe: An Indispensable Part of a Balanced and Comprehensive Migration Policy* (Brussels, Belgium: European Commission, 2018).
- 77 Interview with Enabel staff, April 1, 2021.
- 78 The THAMM project includes THAMM-Enabel, a component building on PALIM (€5 million out of the total €30 million in funding). The program comprises several components and provides training in the information and communications technology, hospitality, and tourism sectors. Despite COVID-19-related delays, THAMM has already trained 162 people, with 48 benefiting from job placements and 129 benefiting from legal migration pathways. (Email from Enabel staff, May 26, 2021.)
- 79 Email from Michael Clemens, May 10, 2021.
- 80 Interview with APTC staff, April 19, 2021.
- 81 Interview with Stephen Howes, August 16, 2021.

- 82 Dempster has a slightly different perspective, seeing this as the focus of the overall migration program. For GSPs in particular, she highlights two distinct and more narrow goals: (1) proving that innovation in this space is possible and spurring other ideas, and (2) harmonizing skills qualification and recognition across borders (e.g., enabling a nurse qualified in Ghana to access a wider range of labor markets). (Email, December 8, 2021.)
- 83 Often referred to as the “triple-win,” that is, a win for destination countries, origin countries, and migrants themselves.
- 84 “Talent Partnerships,” European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/talent-partnerships\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/talent-partnerships_en).
- 85 Email from Helen Dempster, December 8, 2021.
- 86 Interview with Alexander Berger, April 14, 2021.
- 87 Clemens and Postel, “Temporary Work Visas.”
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Interview with Helen Dempster, March 2, 2021.
- 90 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia Pacific Training Coalition Stage 3 (APTC 3) Strategic Review: Executive Summary*, (Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021), [www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/apct-3-strategic-review-executive-summary.pdf](http://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/apct-3-strategic-review-executive-summary.pdf).
- 91 Interview with Alexander Berger, April 14, 2021.
- 92 Dempster notes that this was never intended to be CGD’s role either. However, the organization “stepped into a void” given the lack of broader infrastructure and took on these responsibilities out of necessity to help the GSP concept become reality.
- 93 Interview with Helen Dempster, March 2, 2021.
- 94 Ibid.

CASE STUDY 4.

# Supporting the Field of Biometric Identification for Development

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## OVERVIEW

For millennia, governments have sought to identify those who live in their territories, including through the use of civil registries recording births, deaths, marriages, and other major life events. Identification has long been necessary for the collection of taxes, the maintenance of internal security, and for the management of elections, among other purposes, although many countries have lacked a central system of registration that joins these different uses together.

In the last decades, digital technologies have transformed these mechanisms of identification. During the same period, governments have increasingly applied the tools of identification to development-related areas, such as “banking and finance, public payroll management, social transfers and pensions, health-care and health insurance and voter rolls.”<sup>1</sup>

This case study examines the role that the Center for Global Development (CGD) has played in that shift, specifically assessing the organization’s impact and influence on identification for development as a coherent and unified development field, as opposed to a collection of isolated country-level initiatives.

The case study is based on 15 interviews with CGD researchers, funders, officials at development agencies, and scholars, all active in the identification for development field, and on a review of the existing literature that touches significantly on identification for development. The case study seeks to gain a mechanistic understanding of CGD’s direct impact and indirect influence on the field, but it stops short of assessing how the policies and practices that CGD helped to advance have shaped development or humanitarian outcomes.

It pays particular attention to the impact of a few key reports published by CGD, especially those co-written by CGD senior fellow Alan Gelb, and to CGD’s contributions to the establishment and development of the World Bank’s Identification for Development (ID4D) initiative, which has become the leading global institution for the promotion of best practices associated with and technical assistance related to ID for development. The study’s ultimate conclusion is that although

the field of identification for development would likely have developed even without CGD’s involvement, CGD can claim significant credit for the speed with which that field has coalesced and matured, and for the ways in which it has constructively engaged and brought into conversation a variety of stakeholders.

The growth of identification for development as a field was possible because of the emergence of new identification systems and the increased variety of their applications. In the last several decades, technological advances, including significantly increased precision in biometric systems, have made it possible to ensure statistical uniqueness in very large populations, which has been recognized as an important factor in minimizing leakages and fraud in service delivery.<sup>2</sup> Demand for identity management systems was also driven by security requirements introduced after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and know-your-customer (KYC) standards imposed on the financial services industry.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1990s and 2000s, many countries began to experiment with applying digital identification, and specifically biometric ID, for development purposes. A proliferation of government and privately run programs of financial inclusion, for instance, required increased attention to the verification of users’ identity. In 1999, South Africa pioneered a version of what historian Keith Breckenridge has termed the “biometric state,” developing a national ID system out of older registries to implement and deliver a cash grant program.<sup>4</sup>

And yet biometric ID was still dominated by, and largely associated with, the security fields. As one foundation staffer who became heavily involved in identification for development recalls, even as late as 2015, “when we spoke about ID in the US or Europe, people would look at us very condescendingly and with a lot of scorn, like, “ID? Are you in 1984?”<sup>5</sup>

But even then, the tide had begun to turn, and the change has been dramatic over the last ten years. There has been “a paradigm shift,” one World Bank official noted, “about looking at ID not as a system of control but as a system of empowerment and service delivery.”<sup>6</sup>

There were several groups of researchers, industry leaders, and development officials whose efforts and interests converged to help propel that shift. The biometrics and other related industries, such as those that manufacture smart cards and other credentials, encouraged the application of digital identity verification and authentication mechanisms to development-related areas. Technologists championed the promise of biometrics. Within the development field, the community that had long emphasized civil registration, often through a rights-based conception of legal identity, appreciated the transformative potential of biometric ID, although some within it were concerned that the technology would lessen reliance on (and thus investment in) civil registration and the accompanying systems for vital statistics. Advances in digital and biometric ID technologies gave a particular boost to those within the development field who emphasized the need for systems easily accessible by adults (without prior government-issued documents), since it allowed for an identity base to be created distinct from a credential-based civil registration process.<sup>7</sup>

## AADHAAR AND SDG 16.9

Two specific initiatives provided a particular boost to the field of identification for development. One very significant development in the field's recent history was the establishment of India's unique identification program, Aadhaar, the world's largest identity platform, in 2009. The expressed motivation for the program was long-running frustration with the leakages and fraud that were estimated to eat up more than a third of Indian government services and subsidies that were meant to target the poor. Led by Indian tech entrepreneur Nandan Nilekani, the program did not rely on previous civil registries or use ID cards, as many large-scale identification programs had in the past. Instead, Aadhaar relied on a vast decentralized enrollment network that used a combination of minimal demographic data, fingerprints of all 10 fingers, and an iris scan. Following successful enrollment, each individual was given a unique 12-digit number that served as the primary credential to underpin digital authentication for a range of governmental subsidies, transfers, and services, including

applications through the "India Stack." By 2016, the program had exceeded more than 1 billion enrollments; the figure now stands at more than 1.3 billion.<sup>8</sup>

There is no doubt that Aadhaar drew enormous amounts of attention to the field of biometric ID. It became, as one scholar of identification phrased it, "the 500-pound gorilla in the room," such that many believed that the field of identification for development would "rise or fall on what happens in India."<sup>9</sup> And, in fact, Aadhaar sparked the interest of many of those who would become leading advocates of identification for development. Robert Palacios, who would help establish the World Bank's ID4D initiative, had been involved in early biometric ID applications in India in 2008 and was engaged in early discussions with a group of experts associated with Nilekani. Himanshu Nagpal, who would champion support for identification for development at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also reports that the minimalistic and foundational design and successful implementation of Aadhaar in India helped convince him of the importance of biometric ID.<sup>10</sup>

Aadhaar was crucial for the growth of the field of identification for development in another important way as well. As CGD's Gelb explains, it was the first substantial identification program to release performance data; past large-scale identification programs had most often been part of national security systems that resisted disclosure. The release of these data allowed for the type of quantitative analysis that helped provide "proof of concept" for a system on the scale of Aadhaar and increased the legitimacy of the identification for development field more generally.<sup>11</sup>

But even as Aadhaar provided enormous momentum to the field, it also focused attention on the field's vulnerability and highlighted the need for the analysis and normative guidance that CGD and its partners would soon provide. The program provoked controversy, both within and outside the country, due to its unclear legal foundations (it was initiated without authorizing legislation) and the potential to use biometric ID for ethnic targeting, profiling, surveillance, and exclusion. As one foundation official explained, "Once Aadhaar reached national scale, it became clear that other countries would

also utilize digital and biometric technology to identify citizens. This highlighted the urgent need to develop policies and design principles to ensure that such systems were implemented responsibly and with proper safeguards.”<sup>12</sup>

The exceptional nature of Aadhaar—the program was tied neither to national status nor to a particular function, as most other identification programs had been in the past—also complicated its potential as a model. In addition, its prominence worried some of those especially committed to promoting systems of civil registration, since it exemplified the way in which advances in biometric ID technology allowed certain identification programs to move forward even when there were severe shortcomings in civil registries. There were also concerns about the program’s transportability to other nations, and about how other countries might adapt and learn from both its successes and its limitations. All these issues CGD took on, which helped to sustain Aadhaar’s potential to boost the identification for development field.<sup>13</sup>

The other significant development that both signaled the coalescence of a field of identification for development and attracted more interest and attention to that field was the inclusion of identity within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all UN member states in 2015. SDG target 16.9 sets out to “provide legal identity for all, including birth registration” by 2030.<sup>14</sup> This was the first time that identity was formally recognized in a development document. CGD’s involvement in the campaign to include identity in the SDGs was minimal; the civil registration community, including those affiliated with several UN agencies, took the lead. SDG 16.9 undoubtedly played a significant role in helping to establish the identification for development field. Nations that signed on to the SDGs would need to monitor progress on legal identity—though birth registration was the only indicator explicitly attached to the target, and there was no consensus as to the definition of legal identity.<sup>15</sup> “The very fact that [countries] all have to produce statistics that basically report to these standards means there’s a common conversation and it creates a market” for research and analysis on identification, notes scholar Breckenridge.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, as will be further discussed below, the inclusion of identity within the

SDGs helped convince at least one of the funders who would become a major backer of identification for development of the promise of the field.<sup>17</sup>

Yet the important question for this case study when considering both Aadhaar and SDG 16.9 is whether the momentum generated by these two developments would have by itself done enough to solidify the field of identification for development, such that CGD’s contributions were ultimately extraneous. This does not seem likely, based on the accounts of those consulted for this case study. With respect to Aadhaar and SDG 16.9, both developments increased the prominence of identification for development but left open a host of issues that required further analysis and research and left intact tensions within different segments of the field that required active management.

During this period, few institutions focused on research or advocacy related to identity systems in a sustained way. One that did was the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). In the early 2000s, according to Mia Harbitz, who coordinated the IDB’s activities in the areas of identity management and registries, encounters with challenges in the administration of conditional cash transfers in Latin America, and a growing appreciation of the difficulty many people experienced in accessing government benefits because they were unable to prove who they were, led the IDB to begin to conceive of identification documents for beneficiaries of bank loans and social programs as potential tools of inclusion. IDB staff began an informal research scan but found little available scholarship. “We scoured the Internet and the library service,” Harbitz recalls, “and found only one publication on birth registration.”<sup>18</sup> IDB formalized civil registration as a working area in 2002, led by Harbitz, and over the next decade, she and her colleagues published a variety of materials on legal identity as a precondition to social inclusion, with a strong focus on civil registration and legal identity.<sup>19</sup>

In September 2014, Harbitz, along with representatives from the government of South Korea, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the IDB, helped organize the first International Identity Management Conference,

held in Seoul.<sup>20</sup> The conference reflected growing interest in identification in relation to development, and although it focused on civil registration, it addressed other forms of ID as well.<sup>21</sup>

An academic community of historians, sociologists, and political scientists was also beginning to direct more attention to identification. In 2012, Breckenridge and Simon Szreter, their interest stoked by the contemporary growth in the field, published an edited volume about the history of registration, which took particular note of registration's role in the history of development. With the encouragement of Jaap van der Straaten, chief executive of the Civil Registration Centre for Development, a network of scholars developed around this inquiry, and though they were attuned to the ways in which, in the past, registrations systems were not merely instruments of administrative control but were employed by private citizens for their uses, when analyzing expanding state systems of identification they maintained a largely critical perspective, paying particular attention to the dangers such systems posed to privacy, individual rights, and civil liberties. This community was formalized as the Bhalisa network (after the Zulu word for "registry"), which allowed scholars to meet independent of the global multilateral institutions and national governments whose systems they often scrutinized. In 2015, the first meeting of the network was hosted by van der Straaten in the Hague, and subsequent meetings have been held at Wits University in Johannesburg, where Breckenridge teaches, and at Cambridge, where Szreter works.<sup>22</sup>

Both the 2014 Seoul meeting and the Bhalisa network are key elements of the counterfactual that considers how the field of identification for development might have progressed if CGD had not engaged in the field. Like nearly all counterfactuals, this one is impossible to answer definitively, but the perspectives of those consulted for this case study suggest that the field would have taken considerably longer to coalesce and would likely have featured less constructive dialogue between various major players. The Bhalisa network has provided important scholarship on identification systems, but its focus has remained largely admonitory and it has to a large extent maintained a critical distance from government and

multilateral development agencies, which has inhibited its ability to shape practice. The IDB and the other agencies that convened in Seoul lacked the reach and resources of the World Bank, whose engagement with identification for development CGD helped to encourage and deepen.<sup>23</sup>

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## CGD RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Even as many countries began to use biometric ID in ways that promoted development, a research base that put these various applications into conversation, determining common challenges and best practices, and that could promote the coalescence of a field of identification for development, was slower to emerge. There was, as mentioned above, a community of scholars generally critical of government-run ID systems, along with a number of NGOs dedicated to privacy rights that sought to highlight the dangers of biometric ID and often to halt the spread of its use by government. And there had also been research by development officials and agencies that focused primarily on civil registration but paid less attention to emerging technologies that were transforming the field. But, as one funder who had sought early guidance on the subject explained, there was no think tank with a focus on the intersection of identification and development before CGD entered the space.<sup>24</sup>

This was the gap that CGD could fill, seeking to apply a systematic, methodologically rigorous analysis to identification systems and their relationship to development that extended beyond the bounds of civil registration. CGD would be positioned in reference to both an advocacy community that defined its relationship to digital ID in largely critical terms, and a community of vendors and technologists who served largely as industry boosters. CGD would be open to promoting the potential benefits of identification for development but also attentive to the risks involved, and the organization could devote itself to solidifying the research base for the emerging field. As one funder described it, CGD would play a "seminal role... in building the field from an intellectual discussion perspective."<sup>25</sup>

The CGD researcher who has done the most to advance the field of identification for development is senior fellow Alan Gelb. Before joining CGD, Gelb served as director of development policy at the World Bank and chief economist for the bank's Africa region. One of the areas that Gelb worked on at the bank was the development and management of resource-rich countries; he became particularly interested in programs that allowed resource revenue to be channeled directly to residents.<sup>26</sup> When he moved to CGD in February 2010, he continued to work on the issue, through the "Oil to Cash" project led by Todd Moss, and soon expanded into an investigation of identification more generally. In order to distribute rents effectively, and to get subsidies to individuals, states had to determine who their citizens actually were. This, Gelb soon realized, proved a considerable challenge in many places; as he has written, there was no way "to identify citizens as unique and, once identified, no way to rigorously authenticate them for payment." He became especially interested in biometrics as one means of meeting this identification challenge and in the ways in which biometric ID could be applied to the field of development.<sup>27</sup>

So Gelb began a research program at CGD on identification, publishing a series of reports and papers with other researchers: on cash transfers using digital ID, on the links between ID and the SDGs, on Aadhaar, and on ID systems in the context of elections, among other topics.<sup>28</sup> The most influential of these was a 2013 paper that Gelb wrote with CGD policy analyst Julia Clark, surveying some 160 cases in which biometric ID had been used for economic, political, and social purposes across more than 70 low- and middle-income countries. The report provided analysis related to a wide range of issues confronting the nascent field of identification for development, including challenges and risks related to exclusionary practices, threats to privacy, and cost-efficiency. In its catalogue of the various development uses that nations had made of identification, the report also helped to shift the understanding of identification for development from one centered on rights to one centered on identification systems as tools whose usefulness and purpose could—and, in fact, had to, in order to win governmental approval—be demonstrated. The paper's main thrust, however, was staked to the promotion of "the value of

adopting a strategic developmental approach to identification, rather than seeing it simply program-by-program as a cost and adopting ad hoc approaches," as many government and development officials had in the past. In making this point, Gelb and Clark introduced the distinction between functional biometric ID systems, which were tied to specific applications, and foundational systems, which were elements of an integrated framework spanning multiple applications.<sup>29</sup>

Although the authors did not explicitly make the case for foundational over functional systems, just articulating and formalizing that distinction, and providing a framework for understanding the differences, represented an important step in pushing the field toward support for the foundational approach, as one World Bank official explained.<sup>30</sup> That, in turn, Gelb argues, proved key to the maturation of the identification for development field, since consideration of foundational systems encourages more systematic, cross-sectoral analysis of identification. Much like foundational systems moved beyond an ad hoc, case-by-case engagement with identification, Gelb and Clark's paper did so analytically.<sup>31</sup>

According to several of those interviewed for this case study, the paper became one of the most influential in the nascent field of identification for development; it was certainly the CGD research product most frequently cited by those interviewed.<sup>32</sup> Several mentioned that the functional/foundational distinction that it developed became fully integrated as a key term in the identification for development field. Yet in assessing the impact of the paper, those interviewed often blurred considerations in which the paper reflected the maturity of the field and in which it actively propelled that maturity, making it difficult to attribute specific impact claims to it.<sup>33</sup> "It's rare that I remember the year papers were published," one World Bank official noted, correctly recalling the publication date, "but this one is continuously quoted." Others interviewed regarded the paper as providing a key foundation for the coalescence of identification for development as a field. As Joseph Atick, one of the founders of the digital ID field and the current executive chairman of ID4Africa, explains, "Gelb and Clark... basically documented evidence that was in the



air but needed to be documented or else we would lose the reference point.”<sup>34</sup>

The paper also impressed Robert Palacios, another of the early leaders in the identification for development field, who was just beginning to plant the institutional seeds that would become the World Bank’s ID4D initiative. “I thought it was the only good piece on the subject out there at the time,” Palacios recalls, noting that it helped provide intellectual guidance and a “great framework” for the bank’s work on identification, and especially its ID4D initiative (discussed below). This paper, Palacios explains, represented the sort of research that bank officials believed was valuable in promoting identification for development but that before the establishment of the ID4D initiative they did not have the capacity to undertake on their own. “I don’t think any of us would have written the first paper, and none of us would have had time to do the Identification Revolution book. Time is an important factor,” he says. Gelb and his CGD colleagues were able to focus on providing an initial evidence base for the field of identification for development in a way that those within development agencies at the time could not.<sup>35</sup>

As alluded to above, a second, larger report, written by Gelb and researcher Anna Metz, was published by CGD as a book in 2018, *Identification Revolution: Can Digital ID Be Harnessed for Development?*<sup>36</sup> The book took on many of the themes of the paper, but in a more comprehensive manner and with greater emphasis on ID systems. It addressed both the benefits and risks that digital identification, including biometrics, posed for development, analyzing the broader enabling environment beyond software or hardware that could sustain identification systems, and providing a handful of robust “frontier” case studies in digital ID. Although all those consulted for this case study recognized the book as an impressive work of synthesis and scholarship, there was less certainty expressed about its ultimate impact on the emerging field. In these assessments, it was more often assumed to have reflected rather than activated the coalescence of the identification for development field, although it is possible (though difficult to conclusively demonstrate) that its comprehensiveness provided a boost of legitimacy for those seeking to promote the field.

Another way in which Gelb’s research helped to solidify the status of identification for development as a field was by helping to secure more substantial streams of funding for it. Those overseeing the work at the two largest private institutional funders of identification for development, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Omidyar Network, both cited Gelb’s work as key in making the field a more attractive one for philanthropic investment. When Himanshu Nagpal arrived at the Gates Foundation as a senior program officer focusing on emerging technologies in October 2015, he considered adopting a focus on digital ID for development, having had his interest sparked by the promise it had shown in the Aadhaar program. Hoping to learn more about the topic, he scanned the existing literature and found Gelb and Clark’s paper to be “the best historical and landscaping” text available. “I learned my early ropes from that paper,” he recalls.<sup>37</sup>

As Nagpal became the leading internal advocate at the Gates Foundation to fund identification for development, he turned to the 2013 paper, as well as to several other of Gelb’s publications, in order to help promote the identification for development agenda within the foundation and to meet some internal pushback to funding it. These reports, as well as the Identification Revolution book, proved “key” in convincing the Gates Foundation to support identification for development, he recalls, not merely because of Gelb’s and CGD’s credibility and reputation within the foundation but also because the research itself helped Nagpal make a case that the field was ripe for investment. “Alan’s work did not convince me [identification for development] is important,” notes Nagpal. But “Alan’s work helped me tremendously in convincing others this is important.” It is definitely possible that the foundation would have supported the field absent Gelb’s work, yet given the range of possible program areas Gates Foundation program officers confronted, and how easily one area deemed risky or lacking a sufficient evidence base could be replaced by another, a strong case can be made for the impact of any contribution, such as CGD’s analysis, that gave a particular area credibility within the foundation.<sup>38</sup>

As discussed below, the Gates Foundation would ultimately become the first major funder of the World Bank’s ID4D



initiative. Beginning in 2016, as part of a “Citizens and States” project, the Gates Foundation also funded a series of country-based case studies produced by CGD and led by Gelb, on digital ID, payment systems, and mobile connectivity. The work was grounded in surveys and conducted in partnership with local research organizations, such as MicroSave Consulting; CGD managed the cross-country analysis and outreach to multilateral institutions. The foundation regarded CGD as well suited for the work because of its independence (the World Bank, for instance, as one program officer suggested, would have difficulty critiquing government policy in a public manner in countries where it was also negotiating the terms of ID system rollout) and its ability to produce actionable research in a relatively quick time frame (as opposed to research institutions that worked primarily with randomized controlled trials, with a much longer turnaround time).<sup>39</sup> Several of those consulted for this case study suggested that a number of the country-based case studies produced by CGD helped inform policymakers in the region who were considering expanding or reforming national ID initiatives, such as Pakistan’s recent commodity subsidy programs<sup>40</sup> and Bangladesh’s pilot programs using the country’s digital ID platform to improve financial inclusion and government-to-person payment systems. However, additional research is necessary to determine more precisely what the nature of the case studies’ impact might have been.<sup>41</sup>

As part of his outreach work, Gelb also engaged in multiple discussions with government officials or their representatives who were considering designing identification systems. One notable example is the work Gelb did with the government of Somalia, which had one of the least-developed national ID systems in Africa. The country had first moved toward the development of a more robust system when its president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, sought to hold elections in which individuals voted directly, as opposed to indirectly through clans. This would require reliable voter rolls, which Somalia lacked. The government also realized that an ID system could help in other areas, notably to strengthen KYC compliance for the financial sector to facilitate remittance flows, yet it had little sense of how to begin.<sup>42</sup>

According to Gelb, an official from an NGO that was close to the president’s office, Terra Incognita, reached out to Gelb and let him know that they had been closely studying his work and were hoping he would help them put together a proposal that could be sent to the World Bank or another organization to assist with developing an ID system.<sup>43</sup> Gelb agreed; he encouraged them to pursue a more foundational ID system and helped to edit a proposal that was ultimately sent to the World Bank. At the end of 2016, the bank joined with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to conduct “a joint pre-assessment for a first-ever national and voter identification program for Somalia.” The World Bank ultimately agreed to support the design and implementation of a foundational ID system in Somalia, with ID4D offering diagnostic and then technical assistance. It’s quite possible that the Somali government would have ultimately received World Bank support for a foundational ID system without Gelb’s assistance, but it also seems likely that Gelb’s involvement helped to speed this process up and to guarantee that Somalia would seek to establish a multipurpose system applicable beyond voting rolls. More research, however, is necessary to determine how much causal weighting should be granted to Gelb in this case.<sup>44</sup>

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## THE WORLD BANK’S ID4D INITIATIVE

The World Bank’s ID4D initiative, officially launched in mid-2014, is now the leading institutional forum for the promotion of best practices associated with and technical assistance related to identification for development; a significant proportion of the impact that CGD can claim in the identification for development field has been achieved through its role in shaping and partnering with the ID4D initiative. The history of the initiative’s founding is instructive; indeed, CGD’s and the World Bank’s engagement with the identification field emerged out of the same stimuli, and the two organizations developed what one World Bank ID4D official termed a “symbiotic” relationship, which boosted CGD’s reach and strengthened ID4D’s effectiveness and impact.<sup>45</sup>

There were significant challenges to setting up a formal structure within the World Bank to address identification for development. First, in some countries, many bank officials did not have close relationships with the officials and institutions that had previously developed the most experience and closest associations with identification, such as ministries of the interior, which also encompassed security and policing matters or electoral commissions; World Bank officials more traditionally dealt with institutions involved in finance, infrastructure, health, or education. As Gelb notes, bank officials who wished to dive into the identification space were initially required to “deal with a whole new set of counterparts that you’ve never had relationships with, and that made many people feel uneasy.”<sup>46</sup>

Second, identification for development is a cross-cutting issue, and as such, it did not fit neatly into the preexisting sectoral divisions around which the bank, and its regional and country work, had long been organized. Much as Gelb and CGD researchers had begun to approach identification for development with a wider lens, focusing less on single applications and more on foundational systems, the bank would ultimately structure its program on identification for development as a cross-cutting, cross-sectoral initiative. In these ways, CGD’s research focus and ID4D’s institutional configuration aligned with and reinforced each other.<sup>47</sup>

As noted earlier, Robert Palacios had first become interested in biometric ID through his work in India with a subsidized health insurance program that used a biometric smart card and with the Aadhaar program. When he became global lead in the World Bank’s Social Protection group in 2010, Palacios worked with other bank staff to deepen the bank’s engagement with identification, including with Mariana Dahan, who initially coordinated the work. The group reached out to practitioners with expertise in the field, including technologists from Silicon Valley and leading biometric entrepreneurs such as Joseph Atick, who would later establish ID4Africa, and to researchers such as Gelb. Palacios contacted Gelb after reading his work on the possibility of using biometric ID to distribute oil revenues; according to several of those consulted for this study, Gelb’s deep experience with the bank as

an institution and the trust he enjoyed from high-level bank officials proved especially valuable. Yet Gelb’s status as a non-World Bank researcher was also helpful, as he was regarded by many of those inside and outside the bank as a neutral analyst in the identification for development field.<sup>48</sup>

Palacios, Gelb, and Clark organized a workshop in September 2011 for bank staff on biometric ID technology in developing countries, which explored some of the identification-related projects that the bank had already adopted that used biometric technology.<sup>49</sup> Clark, now at the World Bank’s ID4D initiative, credits this workshop with “generating momentum for a more holistic and cross-sectoral World Bank approach to the topic.” Palacios also asked Gelb and Clark to research how many projects at the bank already involved identification. Gelb and Clark determined that there were several projects that did so, but there was little coordination or communication between them. At the time, the bank’s engagement with identification mirrored the functional approach that many countries had taken to identification, embracing one-off programs without developing a cross-sectoral, “foundational” system.<sup>50</sup>

As an initial move toward such a system, the bank decided around this time to convene technical specialists from six of the initial bank cross-sectoral verticals (Transport and ICT, Health, Governance, Social Protection, Finance, and Gender) to form a working group to study identification for development. This working group institutionalized the mandate for a cross-sectoral approach to identification for development and served as the institutional seed out of which the more robust ID4D initiative would germinate.

The working group produced a steady stream of research, with Gelb and CGD researchers closely involved. In September 2012, Gelb and Clark presented at a workshop in Bangalore, India, organized by the World Bank on the implementation of social programs. According to Gelb, the conference, which brought together representatives from more than 25 countries, was one of the first to look at identification for development across a broad range of countries. In Bangalore, Gelb and Clark presented material that would become their 2013 paper, discussed above. From 2014 to 2016, the World Bank

produced a number of country assessments of ID systems, including several in partnership with Gelb (in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania). During these seminal years, CGD's and ID4D's engagement with identification for development advanced in tandem.<sup>51</sup>

It was not until 2014 that ID4D became a structured initiative within the bank, with a formal governance structure of directors meeting monthly and a working group of technical specialists from all the involved global practices. Around this time, Gelb shared with ID4D a database of ID systems, including information on data privacy laws, that CGD had been compiling from secondary sources for the last several years, to help with ID4D's own data collection efforts; CGD's database would serve as the foundation of ID4D's significant data collection program.<sup>52</sup>

In October of the following year, ID4D brought in Vyjayanti Desai, a longtime bank official with an extensive operations background, to manage the initiative. Desai's arrival was cited by many of those consulted for this case study as an important moment for the identification for development field. One of the most important developments early in Desai's tenure was the establishment of a Multi-Donor Trust Fund to support the ID4D initiative's work, so that it would not need to rely on World Bank country trust funds, which had proved much less reliable. The Gates Foundation became the first donor to the fund in fall 2016; the Omidyar Network joined the following year, with the governments of Australia (2018), the UK (2019), France (2020), and Norway (2021) contributing as well.<sup>53</sup> According to the program officer responsible for the Gates Foundation grant, Himanshu Nagpal, Gelb's research was essential in securing it, and in convincing colleagues the field was ripe for investment. "If Alan had not done that work, I could not have sold it internally. I would not have been able to recommend a \$10 million investment at the onset... If that work was not there, then the agenda would have been pushed back by a few years, [or] it might've started much smaller in terms of ID4D, and then fizzled out, because often if you don't give enough runway, programs can expire."<sup>54</sup>

There is another significant contribution CGD made to the development of the World Bank's ID4D initiative worth noting. Two key staffers to the ID4D team, Julia Clark, now senior economist at ID4D, and the lead author of ID4D's *Practitioner's Guide*,<sup>55</sup> and Anna Metz, a program officer, had, prior to joining the World Bank, also worked closely with Gelb as researchers (and coauthors) at CGD. ID4D benefited not merely from Gelb's research expertise but from the training and mentorship that he provided at CGD as well.<sup>56</sup>

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## THE FORGING OF THE PRINCIPLES ON IDENTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At the time of ID4D's establishment, identification for development was not, like many of the other key agendas that the World Bank focused on, "fragmented across many [development] institutions," which meant that there were significant "multipliers" to the global advocacy role that the bank's ID4D initiative was able to play. Through ID4D, CGD's impact was in turn also amplified.<sup>57</sup>

One of the most significant contributions of the World Bank's ID4D initiative, and one in which CGD researchers played a major role, was the convening of organizations to draft the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development, first released in February 2017 and revised in February 2021.<sup>58</sup> Prior to the release of these principles, there was little normative guidance on best practices in building ID systems to support development outcomes that had even moderately wide acceptance.<sup>59</sup> Many of the early leaders in the field, including Gelb, recognized this lack. It is very likely that even absent Gelb's efforts, the bank would have chosen to develop principles to guide identification for development. But even if Gelb cannot take credit for originating the project itself, there was a strong belief among those consulted for this case study that he played a vital role that few if any others might have been able to assume in helping to convene a broad range of organizations to craft those principles.

Gelb describes the idea of devising principles to guide the field of identification for development as an extension of the thinking he hoped to encourage with his work on identification systems, an approach that moved beyond a focus on individual applications and that encouraged a more normative framework. In several of his early papers on identification for development, including “Identification for Development: The Biometrics Revolution,” Gelb and his coauthors discussed emerging best practices, which balanced the risks and rewards of biometric ID systems. While researching what would become *Identification Revolution*, Gelb and future ID4D program officer Anna Diofasi (now Metz) began to think more rigorously about distilling those observations into a more formal system of general principles. In February 2016, they published an essay, “Using Identification for Development: Some Guiding Principles,” that they claim represents the earliest public version of such principles.<sup>60</sup> But, according to Gelb, this “guiding principles” essay would have had little effect on practice in the field as a stand-alone document. He appreciated that achieving broader impact would require working through an institution with greater resources, leverage, visibility, and convening power and a broader operational mandate.<sup>61</sup>

Around the same time that Gelb and Diofasi were developing their “guiding principles,” several other leaders in the emerging field of identification for development were also coming to the realization that the field needed normative guidelines alongside the technical standards that had already been developed.<sup>62</sup> One of these individuals was Omidyar Network’s C.V. Madhukar, who in 2016 became the global lead for the foundation’s digital identity work as the organization became increasingly more engaged in the field. In 2015, in conversations with another senior Omidyar Network partner, Mike Kubzansky, Madhukar had discussed the field’s lack of normative standards or safeguards. “Even as the evidence pointed to the importance of formal identification,” Madhukar later wrote, “we began to notice that in many cases, there was an inadequate understanding among key stakeholders on what ‘good’ looks like in this space.” Kubzansky and Madhukar agreed—and communicated to ID4D staff—that it would be worthwhile to encourage the production of such standards

and that the Work Bank’s ID4D initiative was best positioned to convene organizations to begin the effort.<sup>63</sup>

The World Bank ID4D initiative had in fact already considered creating a set of guidelines. It took the step of bringing together a group of organizations to develop the principles and asked Gelb to help with the drafting and convening. Gelb worked closely with his former CGD colleague Julia Clark (who would join ID4D as a full-time staffer in 2016), using the CGD “principles” as a foundation, to create an initial draft. Beginning in April 2016, the World Bank brought together more than 15 stakeholder organizations, including representatives from UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, the African Development Bank, the Gates Foundation, the World Bank, and the Omidyar Network, to jointly craft a revised version.<sup>64</sup> (CGD was the only research organization among the group.) The World Bank and CGD were identified as the facilitators of the project,<sup>65</sup> and though it was clear that the bank’s convening power was crucial in the process, it was important to the organizers that the principles not be conceived as belonging to the World Bank or to CGD specifically. Rather, they were principles developed and adopted by the wider development community. In that respect, the drafting of the principles was itself an exercise in field building. “It brought together a number of stakeholders around the table for a shared vision,” explains Desai.<sup>66</sup>

Working closely with ID4D, Gelb played a central role in that process, drafting potential language, facilitating meetings of stakeholders, managing the disagreements that emerged between them, soliciting feedback, and then incorporating comments in subsequent revisions. Among those interviewed for this case study, there was wide agreement regarding both Gelb’s centrality to the process and the skillfulness with which he managed the various, sometimes contending perspectives of the organizations consulted.<sup>67</sup> Madhukar explains, “I know in every one of these meetings that we had on writing up the principles... [Gelb] would play a critical role in listening to everybody, getting the right wording, putting that in.”<sup>68</sup> Another stakeholder called Gelb “the mature statesman” who could find consensus among multiple stakeholder perspectives. Another funder commented, “The process [Gelb and Clark] ran was just

magnificent. It was extremely inclusive; everyone was heard, and every input was considered carefully.”<sup>69</sup>

The entire process took more than eight months, involving many informal discussions (over the phone and email) and culminating with a few formal meetings, including in Rwanda to coincide with the 2016 ID4Africa meeting (see below) and in Washington, DC. The group initially compiled a larger number of principles but decided to whittle the list down to 10, which were officially launched as the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development in February 2017. Twenty-five organizations endorsed the original principles, while as of January 2022, another five have endorsed a revised version, released in February 2021.<sup>70</sup> Especially significant was the fact that several major UN agencies, including UNDP, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, IOM, the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, and the World Food Programme, signed on to the principles. As one UN official who was a participant in the negotiations over the principles recalled, the UN stakeholders believed it was “a very, very good idea for some UN agencies to be involved” in the process, because there were no extant standards or guiding principles to address government-run digital ID schemes, and identification and civil registration were vital to many of these agencies’ agendas. Despite some reservations based on disagreements over the weighting given to birth registration versus the registration of unregistered adults, the UN representatives were convinced of the significance of the principles in promoting best practices for the field.<sup>71</sup>

What might have happened if Gelb had not assisted with the drafting of the principles? As discussed above, the World Bank would almost certainly have initiated the process of developing them, even without CGD’s early efforts. Yet, given CGD’s centrality to the process, and the process’s delicacy, it’s highly likely that it would have taken much longer, with the potential to flounder on some of the more contentious issues, without Gelb’s involvement; it’s even possible that no formal principles would have been formally issued, or that they would have been less widely adopted.

Therefore, CGD can take some credit for the impact the principles have had on the field; this in fact represents the strongest case for impact on the identification for development field that CGD can point to. Soon after their launch, ID4D began to incorporate the principles into its work. According to Desai, they “became much of a north star for the work that we were starting to do at the country level... It’s fundamental to all our engagement and discussion and dialogue.” As Clark explains, “Since the principles were created, they have been heavily integrated into the design of projects and countries’ strategic frameworks, and in some cases referenced explicitly in World Bank financing agreements.” Similarly, according to one individual involved in the identification for development field, other development organizations have informally tied financing to the satisfaction of the principles. “If you violate some of these principles you are not likely to get funded,” the individual states.<sup>72</sup> Daniel Radcliffe, deputy director of Financial Services for the Poor at the Gates Foundation, suggests that the principles were also key in recruiting additional funders to the identification for development field who were concerned about the risks of ID technology. The principles “gave the Gates Foundation and other donors confidence that the World Bank and the broader field were getting serious about harnessing the benefits of digital ID, while also mitigating the risks posed by these systems,” he explains. It is difficult, however, to prove with any definiteness that absent the principles, those funders would not have supported the field.<sup>73</sup>

In March 2021, Desai and Clark outlined several examples of countries that have used the principles “to design new ID systems or reform existing ones”:

**In Nigeria, the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has used the Principles to shape its Strategic Roadmap to reform and improve the national ID system. Among other reforms, this includes plans to address many of the current challenges that people face to registration (e.g., removing legal barriers related to eligibility and reducing documentation requirements) and minimize data collection (for example, country intends to reduce the number of attributes collected from 80 to 10 as part of the new approach).**



In the Philippines, the Principles helped anchor the PhilSys Implementation Plan,<sup>74</sup> which adopts inclusive registration pathways for Filipinos without any documentation, architecture based on open source and open standards, and privacy enhancing technologies, such as tokenization to protect the permanent unique identifier. Others, such as Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Samoa, Somalia, South Africa, Timor-Leste, and Togo have also included and localized the Principles into their ID policies and strategies.<sup>75</sup>

In a video prepared by ID4D, the director-general of Nigeria's National Identity Management Commission called the principles "a guiding framework" for Nigeria's digital ID ecosystem project.<sup>76</sup>

As the above examples suggest, the principles have become key elements in the establishment of identification systems for nations working with the World Bank. But there is evidence that the reach of the principles has become even broader, achieving something close to normative status. In Ethiopia and in South Africa, governments incorporated the principles into the design or redesign of their ID systems, even though they were not at the time working with the World Bank on identity, or even consulting with ID4D officials unofficially. In an initial explication of its identity management policy, South Africa, for instance, explained that the principles that would guide the policy framework "are influenced and derived from the... principles on identification for sustainable development."<sup>77</sup>

Additionally, the principles have been invoked by multilateral institutions, NGOs, and civil society organizations as an advocacy tool to promote best practices in digital ID for development.<sup>78</sup> In 2019, for instance, Privacy International cited the principles in an affidavit in support of the Nubian Rights Forum's petition to the High Court of Kenya to challenge the implementation of the government's planned digital ID system, based on issues involving data privacy and security, among others.<sup>79</sup>

At least one interviewee, who has considerable experience in the identification for development field, did introduce a note of caution when discussing the impact of the principles, noting that one could not assume that government practice itself

would be reshaped by them. "When you come to designing a project and getting into the nitty-gritty details, it's very difficult to anchor some of these principles in reality," the source explained, "but they work superbly when it comes to presenting the field, presenting the issues."<sup>80</sup> If it is not yet clear how identification practices have been reshaped by the promulgation of the principles, the extent that they have been formalized in regulatory frameworks and invoked in legal challenges already signals their potential to have a significant impact on government policy in the years to come.

## ID4AFRICA

Similar to his role with the World Bank's ID4D, Gelb supported the creation and development of ID4Africa. ID4Africa is an organization founded in 2014 that brings together governments, development partners, and the ID industry to shape and promote best practices in the field of identification for development. ID4Africa was started and is currently directed by Joseph Atick, another pioneer in the digital ID field with long experience as a tech entrepreneur and an expert in biometrics.

As conceptualized by Atick, ID4Africa was created to serve as a deliberate complement to the World Bank's ID4D even before the initiative was officially launched; as an NGO, ID4Africa could move faster and be more responsive and flexible than the bank (Atick has compared it to the Marines and the bank's ID4D to the Navy) and could initiate and support country-level efforts to develop identification systems that the bank and other development partners could later formalize, especially if there was a possibility of the country applying for a World Bank loan. ID4Africa would also serve as a forum where vendors and biometric industry representatives, government officials, donors, and development partners could come together to discuss common issues and concerns, institutionalizing a cross-country analysis of identification for development in Africa that Atick and Gelb have mentioned is especially helpful to engage industry issues like vendor lock-in.<sup>81</sup> In 2015 in Tanzania, ID4Africa held its first annual gathering, with 300 participants. At its most recent in-person meetings, it brought



together some 1,500 participants from 46 African countries (it has functioned remotely since 2020).<sup>82</sup>

Much like the World Bank's ID4D initiative, ID4Africa has had a symbiotic relationship with Gelb and CGD. Gelb sits on the organization's advisory board, has frequently provided key content (including keynote addresses and the lead paper for its almanac, which is distributed to all participants), and continues to advise Atick. At the same time, ID4Africa general meetings served as powerful dissemination vehicles for CGD research, allowing it to reach leading government officials in dozens of countries and providing a forum for informal conversations and consultations.<sup>83</sup> It's also worth noting ID4Africa's role in Nigeria's development of a national identification system, which used the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development as a framework and which was cited by several of those consulted for this case study as a leading example of ID4D's impact in the field through the dissemination of the principles; the principles were frequently discussed at ID4Africa general meetings, and the two leading figures on Nigeria's National Identity Management Commission, Aliyu Aziz and Hadiza Dagabana, are the country's ID4Africa ambassador and deputy ambassador, respectively.<sup>84</sup> Here, as with the World Bank's ID4D initiative, the evidence suggests not that ID4Africa could not have been established without Gelb but that his deep engagement with ID4Africa played an important role in bolstering the organization's own impact in the region. It is difficult to disentangle the lines of causality between them, but it is clear that CGD, the World Bank's ID4D initiative, and ID4Africa have been symbiotically related and together have made significant contributions to advance the field of identification for development.

## CONCLUSION

Given the broader technological and political trends that have emerged over the last several decades, which have encouraged the spread of identification as an instrument of development, it is quite likely that many countries would have ultimately embraced more multipurpose national identification systems, which would have in turn encouraged a more systematic

analysis of identification for development, even without CGD's engagement. Yet it is not necessarily the case that a coherent field of identification for development would have emerged out of this growth, with a substantial evidence base; a strong normative framework to accompany technical guidelines; and networks linking government and development officials, researchers and advocates, and industry leaders. At the very least, the above account suggests that CGD and the work of Alan Gelb can claim a significant degree of credit for the current strength of that field. In fact, the compounding, mutually reinforcing influence of both the institution and the individual is a key theme of this case study. As one funder noted, "You replace Alan with somebody else in CGD, they may not be able to do it. You put Alan without CGD, he may not be able to do it. It's the platform of CGD and Alan" together that resulted in the significant impact their work produced.<sup>85</sup>

Sources repeatedly explained that influence in terms of the "credibility" of both CGD and Gelb, which extended to the identification for development projects Gelb worked on. This credibility in turn seemed to stem from how each could claim both insider and outsider status. They were close enough to development agencies on both a multilateral and country-based level to offer actionable guidance but sat at enough remove that their research and analysis were largely considered independent and judicious, positioned somewhere between the role of critic and booster.<sup>86</sup>

In the last half decade, the field of identification for development has continued to grow, as existing institutions expand their operations and new institutions enter the field. Most notably, in January 2018, the UN secretary-general's Executive Committee requested that the deputy secretary-general's office "convene UN entities to develop, in collaboration with the World Bank Group (GFF/ID4D), a common approach to the broader issues of registration and legal identity." This led to the establishment in September 2018 of the UN Legal Identity Task Force, in which "13 UN agencies, under the chairmanship of UNDP, UNICEF and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, are working together to try to assist Member States achieve SDG target 16.9."<sup>87</sup>

The fact that the identification for development field is now more crowded also makes it more difficult to isolate CGD's ongoing, distinct contributions to the field's coalescence and growth. In an indirect and admittedly imprecise way, however,

CGD, as one of the pioneers in the field, can take some credit for a situation in which credit is now that much harder to allocate to any one institution.

## Notes

- 1 Alan Gelb and Julia Clark, "Identification for Development: The Biometrics Revolution" (Working Paper 315, CGD, Washington, DC, 2013), 52, [www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/1426862\\_file\\_Biometric\\_ID\\_for\\_Development.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/1426862_file_Biometric_ID_for_Development.pdf).
- 2 Statistical uniqueness refers to a situation in which the probability that any one individual can have multiple identities is very small.
- 3 For more on this context, see Alan Gelb and Anna Diofasi Metz, *Identification Revolution: Can Digital ID Be Harnessed for Development?* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2018), 9–23, [www.cgdev.org/publication/identification-revolution-can-digital-id-be-harnessed-development](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/identification-revolution-can-digital-id-be-harnessed-development).
- 4 Keith Breckenridge, *Biometric State: The Global Politics of Identification and Surveillance in South Africa, 1850 to the Present* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- 5 Interview with funder.
- 6 Interview with Jonathan Marskell, June 30, 2021.
- 7 Email from Alan Gelb, December 13, 2021.
- 8 See Shankkar Aiyar, *Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12-Digit Revolution* (Chennai, India: Westland Publications, 2017); Gelb and Metz, *Identification Revolution*, 169–178. Aadhaar figures, as of December 16, 2021, are taken from [https://uidai.gov.in/aadhaar\\_dashboard](https://uidai.gov.in/aadhaar_dashboard).
- 9 Interview with Keith Breckenridge, May 18, 2021.
- 10 Interview with Robert Palacios, May 14, 2021; interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021.
- 11 In 2013, Alan Gelb and Julia Clark published a policy paper that used the Aadhaar data to provide estimates of the feasibility of achieving (statistically) unique identification in large populations (determining, ultimately that it was feasible), and that derived estimates of the accuracy of the biometric technology that could be scaled to countries with different-sized populations. See Alan Gelb and Julia Clark, *Performance Lessons from India's Universal Identification Program* (Washington, DC: CGD, 2013), [www.cgdev.org/publication/performance-lessons-india-s-universal-identification-program](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/performance-lessons-india-s-universal-identification-program); Gelb and Clark, "Identification for Development," 10; interview with Alan Gelb.
- 12 Aiyar, *Aadhaar*, 75; interview with Daniel Radcliffe, May 13, 2021.
- 13 Gelb and Metz, *Identification Revolution*, 172; Gelb and Clark, "Identification for Development," 1.
- 14 "Goal 16," UN, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>.
- 15 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 30, 2021; Gelb and Metz, *Identification Revolution*, 2–3.
- 16 Interview with Keith Breckenridge, May 18, 2021.
- 17 C.V. Madhukar, "Thank you, ON!" LinkedIn Blog, June 15, 2021, [www.linkedin.com/pulse/thank-you-cv-madhukar](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/thank-you-cv-madhukar); email from UN official, December 17, 2021.
- 18 Interview with Mia Harbitz, July 8, 2021.
- 19 See, for instance, Bettina Boekle-Giuffrida and Mia Elisabeth Harbitz, "Democratic Governance, Citizenship, and Legal Identity: Linking Theoretical Discussions and Operational Reality" (working paper, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC, 2009); Steve Brito, Ana Corbacho, and René Osorio, *El registro de nacimientos: La llave para la inclusion social en América Latina y el Caribe* (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2013). The Asian Development Bank also began to publish on the field. See Caroline Vandenabeele and Christine V. Lao, eds., *Legal Identity for Inclusive Development* (Manila, the Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2007), [www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29046/legal-identity.pdf](http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29046/legal-identity.pdf). Interview with Mia Harbitz, July 8, 2021.
- 20 No representative from CGD attended the conference.
- 21 *Proceedings of the International Identity Management Conference, Seoul, Korea September 23–25, 2014* (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2015), <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/International-Identity-Management-Conference-Proceedings.pdf>.
- 22 It's important to note that the Bhalisa network and the network outlined in this report with CGD, ID4D, and ID4Africa at its hub were not entirely separate domains and overlapped at several points. CGD's Alan Gelb, for instance, attended all three of the Bhalisa meetings and presented work at them. Email from Alan Gelb, January 4, 2022; Keith Breckenridge and Simon Szreter, eds., *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012); interview with Keith Breckenridge, May 18, 2021.
- 23 These two strands do converge, since Harbitz met with Robert Palacios and others in the early period of the establishment of the bank's ID4D initiative, and after her retirement from the IDB in 2015, she was hired as a consultant by the World Bank to assist with its identification for development work. Interview with Mia Harbitz, July 8, 2021.
- 24 Interview with C.V. Madhukar, June 23, 2021.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Gelb's views on this subject were published in Alan Gelb, *Oil Windfalls: Blessing or Curse?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- 27 Email from Alan Gelb, November 22, 2021; internal CGD memo from Alan Gelb.


- 28 Alan Gelb and Caroline Decker, "Cash at Your Fingertips: Biometric Technology for Transfers in Developing and Resource-Rich Countries" (Working Paper 253, CGD, Washington, DC, 2011), [www.cgdev.org/publication/cash-your-fingertips-biometric-technology-transfers-developing-and-resource-rich](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/cash-your-fingertips-biometric-technology-transfers-developing-and-resource-rich); Mariana Dahan and Alan Gelb, "The Role of Identification in the Post-2015 Development Agenda," CGD, July 1, 2015, [www.cgdev.org/publication/role-identification-post-2015-development-agenda](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/role-identification-post-2015-development-agenda); Alan Gelb and Julia Clark, "Building a Biometric National ID: Lessons for Developing Countries from India's Universal ID Program," CGD, October 15, 2012, [www.cgdev.org/publication/building-biometric-national-id-lessons-developing-countries-india%E2%80%99s-universal-id-program](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/building-biometric-national-id-lessons-developing-countries-india%E2%80%99s-universal-id-program); Alan Gelb and Anna Diofasi, "Biometric Elections in Poor Countries: Wasteful or a Worthwhile Investment?" (Working Paper 435, CGD, Washington, DC, 2016), [www.cgdev.org/publication/biometric-elections-poor-countries-wasteful-or-worthwhile-investment](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/biometric-elections-poor-countries-wasteful-or-worthwhile-investment).
- 29 Gelb and Clark, "Identification for Development," 20, 52.
- 30 Interview with Vyjayanti Desai, May 14, 2021.
- 31 There was also a convergence with practitioners and vendors such as Joseph Atick who had been promoting multiple-application digital ID systems for several decades. Interview with Alan Gelb, June 22, 2021.
- 32 Gelb has also pointed out that the paper is cited in the [Wikipedia entry](#) for "Biometrics." Internal CGD memo from Alan Gelb.
- 33 The foundational category has met with some opposition from those who wish to focus on bolstering nations' civil (and especially birth) registration systems, because they believe it unfairly implies that such systems are themselves deficient in being insufficiently foundational.
- 34 Interview with Jonathan Marskell, June 30, 2021; interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021.
- 35 Interview with Robert Palacios, May 14, 2021.
- 36 Gelb and Metz, *Identification Revolution*.
- 37 Interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021.
- 38 Omidyar Network's Madhukar has similarly suggested that Gelb's research helped make identification for development "more acceptable" for funders. Interview with C.V. Madhukar, June 23, 2021; interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021.
- 39 Interview with Daniel Radcliffe, May 13, 2021.
- 40 "PM Imran Announces 'Biggest Welfare Package in Pakistan's History' to Mitigate Inflation Impact," Dawn, November 3, 2021.
- 41 Interview with Syed Ali Mahmood, senior program officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, November 24, 2021; email from Mitul Thapliyal, partner, Microsave, December 15, 2021.
- 42 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 30, 2021; Gelb and Metz, *Identification Revolution*, 12, 25.
- 43 I have not been able to speak to anyone at the organization who could verify this account or to assess how important Gelb's assistance was in developing the successful proposal.
- 44 Gelb and Metz, *Identification Revolution*, 12, 200; interview with Alan Gelb, June 30, 2021; "Country Engagement," ID4D, <https://id4d.worldbank.org/country-action/map>.
- 45 Interview with Julia Clark, May 13, 2021.
- 46 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 22, 2021.
- 47 Annie Lowrey, "World Bank to Lift Lending to Developing Countries," *New York Times*, April 1, 2014; interview with Alan Gelb, June 22, 2021.
- 48 Interview with World Bank staff.
- 49 Program of September 2011 workshop, supplied by Julia Clark.
- 50 Interview with Julia Clark, May 13, 2021; email from Alan Gelb, November 22, 2021.
- 51 Draft agenda from International Conference on Implementing Social Programs; interview with Robert Palacios, May 14, 2021; interview with Alan Gelb, June 22, 2021.
- 52 Email from Alan Gelb, November 22, 2021; "ID4D Data: Global Identification Challenge by the Numbers," ID4D, <https://id4d.worldbank.org/global-dataset>.
- 53 "Partners," ID4D, <https://id4d.worldbank.org/who-is-involved>; email from Vyjayanti Desai, November 1, 2021.
- 54 Interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021.
- 55 ID4D, *Practitioner's Guide* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2019), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/248371559325561562/pdf/ID4D-Practitioner-s-Guide.pdf>.
- 56 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 22, 2021; interview with Vyjayanti Desai, May 14, 2021; interview with Robert Palacios, May 14, 2021.
- 57 Interview with Vyjayanti Desai, May 14, 2021.
- 58 "Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development: Toward the Digital Age" (February 2021), ID4D, <https://id4d.worldbank.org/principles>.
- 59 Interview with Julia Clark, May 13, 2021.
- 60 Alan Gelb and Anna Diofasi, "Using Identification for Development: Some Guiding Principles," CGD, February 22, 2016, [www.cgdev.org/publication/using-identification-development-some-guiding-principles](http://www.cgdev.org/publication/using-identification-development-some-guiding-principles).
- 61 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 22, 2021.
- 62 Interview with UN official; interview with Jonathan Marskell, June 30, 2021.
- 63 Interview with C.V. Madhukar, June 23, 2021; Madhukar, "Thank you, ON!"
- 64 As the World Bank described the process, the principles "were developed through a consultative process coordinated by the World Bank Group and Center for Global Development." World Bank, "Inclusive and Trusted Digital ID Can Unlock Opportunities for the World's Most Vulnerable," August 14, 2019, [www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2019/08/14/inclusive-and-trusted-digital-id-can-unlock-opportunities-for-the-worlds-most-vulnerable](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2019/08/14/inclusive-and-trusted-digital-id-can-unlock-opportunities-for-the-worlds-most-vulnerable). Alan Gelb, Vyjayanti T. Desai, Julia Clark, and Anna Diofasi, "Ten Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development," CGD Blog, February 8, 2017, [www.cgdev.org/blog/ten-principles-identification-sustainable-development](http://www.cgdev.org/blog/ten-principles-identification-sustainable-development).
- 65 See February 2017 *Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development: Toward the Digital Age*, [www.oas.org/es/sap/dgpe/PUICA/docs/web\\_final\\_ID4D\\_IdentificationPrinciples.pdf](http://www.oas.org/es/sap/dgpe/PUICA/docs/web_final_ID4D_IdentificationPrinciples.pdf).
- 66 Interview with Vyjayanti Desai, May 14, 2021.
- 67 The clashes often centered on how to prioritize birth registration versus the registration of unregistered adults.
- 68 Many of those consulted for the case study also cited the important role played by former CGD staffer Julia Clark in helping to draft the principles. Interview with C.V. Madhukar, June 23, 2021.
- 69 Interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021; interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021.
- 70 Interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021; "Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development: Toward the Digital Age" (February 2021), ID4D, <https://id4d.worldbank.org/principles>.
- 71 Interview with UN official; email from Julia Clark, November 24, 2021.
- 72 Interview with Vyjayanti Desai, May 14, 2021; interview with Julia Clark, May 13, 2021; interview with anonymous source.
- 73 Interview with Daniel Radcliffe, May 13, 2021.

- 74 “In its approved Implementation Plan dated 06 March 2019, the project framework has brought forward four (4) outcomes to contribute in achieving the abovementioned impact. This framework was anchored to the Ten Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development Towards the Digital Age, zeroing in inclusion through universal coverage and accessibility, design that is robust, secure, responsive and sustainable, and governance that builds end-user trust by protecting privacy and user rights.” Philippine Statistics Authority, “Philippine Identification System (Philsys) Project Information Memorandum: Systems Integrator,” May 6, 2020, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/philippine-identification-system-philsys-project-information-memorandum-systems-integrator>. See also Philippine Statistics Authority, “Procurement of Consultancy Services as a System Integrator for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, and Maintenance of the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys),” 5, [https://procurement.psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/002%20Vol2%20SI%20BID%20DOCS\\_1.pdf](https://procurement.psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/002%20Vol2%20SI%20BID%20DOCS_1.pdf). (“The PhilSys will adopt and create international best practices in terms of inclusion, design, technology neutrality, performance, interoperability, cost-efficiency, data protection, privacy, and cybersecurity. In doing so, the PhilSys will observe the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development as a guiding framework for maximizing its developmental impact while mitigating risks.”)
- 75 Vyjayanti Desai and Julia Clark, “10 Principles for Good ID: A 2021 Refresh,” *World Bank Blogs*, March 3, 2021, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/10-principles-good-id-2021-refresh>.
- 76 According to Joseph Atick, the government incorporated a data protection law into its national ID system in part due to a push from ID4D, and with the principles as a guideline. “Nigeria is the leading country that’s absorbing all the principles,” he states. Interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021. The ID4D “Practitioners” video can be found at <https://id4d.worldbank.org/id-stories>.
- 77 ID4D later provided technical advice for Ethiopia’s ID system. South Africa, Department of Home Affairs, “Draft Official Identity Management Policy,” December 31, 2020, [www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/202101/44048gon1425.pdf](http://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202101/44048gon1425.pdf); interview with Robert Palacios, May 14, 2021; interview with Vyjayanti Desai, May 14, 2021.
- 78 In the ID4D “Practitioners” video, Melanie Khanna, the section chief for statelessness for UNDP, called the principles “another arrow in our quiver when it comes to the tools we have at our disposal to advocate with governments,” though she did not make any firm impact claim on their behalf.
- 79 Affidavit of Thomas Fisher to High Court of Kenya, <https://privacyinternational.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Kenya%20affidavit%20website%20version.pdf>.
- 80 Interview with Mia Harbitz, July 8, 2021.
- 81 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 30, 2021; interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021.
- 82 Interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021.
- 83 Interview with Alan Gelb, June 30, 2021.
- 84 Interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021.
- 85 Interview with Himanshu Nagpal, May 21, 2021.
- 86 Interview with Joseph Atick, May 27, 2021.
- 87 The European Union has also recently announced a digital ID program. “European Digital Identity,” European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-digital-identity\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-digital-identity_en); “United Nations Legal Identity Agenda,” UN, <https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda>.

# Contributing to the Development of the Open Contracting Movement

**JAMES LADI WILLIAMS**

James Ladi Williams worked as a research associate at the Urban Institute while authoring this case study for CGD.



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## OVERVIEW

In October 2012, more than 140 people from government, business, civil society, and academia gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, to launch a global movement united by one goal: bringing greater transparency to public procurement processes. Governments worldwide spend about \$9.5 trillion each year on public contracts to provide services for citizens, but these contracts often are prone to fraud, are poorly managed, and fail to deliver value for money.<sup>1</sup> The newly formed “open contracting”<sup>2</sup> movement, launched at the First Global Meeting on Open Contracting, sought to check this trend. Given the huge scale of government procurement, the movement sees open contracting as offering an opportunity to curb fraud and waste and improve government efficiency, yielding benefits not just for citizens (e.g., better public services and accountability) but also governments themselves (e.g., cost savings on procurement deals).

The movement aims to bring unprecedented transparency to government contracts, from the pre-award stage when a government tender is developed and solicited, to the moment an award is made, through the execution of the contract.<sup>3</sup> What’s more, it seeks to strengthen public disclosure of contracting processes and increase the participation of civil society and private actors, in view of equipping them with data they can use to enhance contracting processes and foster improvements in service delivery outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of the movement’s launch meeting, stakeholders had agreed on an agenda to establish open contracting as a global norm. But this conversation raised several questions that needed to be addressed in order for the movement to achieve its aims, such as how to determine if and when contract transparency might do more harm than good to the public interest.

Prior to this launch meeting, researchers at the Center for Global Development (CGD) had become interested in understanding the power of the publication of government contracts to improve outcomes of government procurement, particularly in the construction sector.<sup>5</sup> This interest soon evolved into a body of work addressing contract transparency in public

procurement more broadly, which intersected with the priorities of the emerging open contracting movement. Led by CGD senior fellow Charles Kenny,<sup>6</sup> this body of work, begun in mid-2012 and comprised of publications and working group convenings, focused not only on explaining why open contracting was a worthwhile idea but also on bringing clarity to unresolved questions that stood in the way of its widespread acceptance.

This case study focuses on the intersection between CGD’s work and the open contracting movement. It seeks to analyze the claims of causal attribution that can be made about how CGD’s work supported the emergence of the open contracting movement as well as the movement’s continued progress. The case study relies primarily on 13 interviews with individuals involved in the open contracting movement and with knowledge of CGD’s work on the topic, including both individuals affiliated with CGD and outside professionals with expertise on government transparency issues. It also draws on a close reading of materials produced by CGD and other research and advocacy organizations on the topic of open contracting.

The case study finds that CGD’s work helped meet the movement’s early need for compelling evidence on the viability of open contracting, providing an intellectual foundation that many of those interviewed for the report perceived as a catalyst for global advocacy for open contracting. CGD’s reputation as a credible analytical actor emerges as a key factor facilitating this outcome. However, the study’s findings—along with the difficulties of tracing specific mechanisms of impact and the multitude of actors involved in the movement—call for a measured assessment of CGD’s influence on the movement. While CGD can claim credit for strengthening the case for open contracting, its work was more of an accelerant and amplifier of a complicated change process already underway, rather than a precondition for the observed progress of the open contracting movement. In other words, the movement grew faster than it would have in the absence of CGD’s work, but CGD’s work was likely not a necessary and/or sufficient condition to drive the movement’s progress.

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## THE OPEN CONTRACTING PARTNERSHIP

The Open Contracting Partnership (OCP) is a multistakeholder initiative that aims to “open up the entire process of planning, awarding, and delivering” government contracts. The partnership evolved from the activities of the World Bank’s Governance for Extractive Industries team, which was created to develop innovations in the governance of extractive industries and which soon saw contract transparency become a core focus of its work—on account of the salience of contract transparency issues in the extractives sector and growing interest, among other World Bank teams, in transparency of government procurement more broadly. Following the movement’s launch meeting, stakeholders concluded that it was important to establish a central partnership that would serve as a platform for collective action, collaboration, and learning.

As a result, a steering committee, comprised of the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Integrity Action, the governments of Colombia and the Philippines, Oxfam America, and Transparency International, was formed to develop the partnership. These organizing partners agreed that the World Bank would serve as an interim secretariat for the partnership. Therefore, the OCP started out as an in-house initiative of the World Bank in June 2013 and began working with in-country coalitions to implement the open contracting agenda. In 2015, the OCP spun out of the World Bank to become an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting contract transparency,<sup>8</sup> a move seen by the movement’s organizers as crucial for defining open contracting as “a collectively-owned global movement, not merely a product of the World Bank.”<sup>9</sup>

The creation of the OCP was a critical moment for the open contracting movement because the partnership helped bring coherence to what was initially a very diffuse set of actors making arguments for increased transparency in public contracting (e.g., Transparency International, Oxfam, CoST, the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative, Publish What You Pay, and a host of national governments committed to the cause). The partnership now serves as the anchor

institution for the global movement, providing a platform for collective action, collaboration, and learning, as key stakeholders envisioned.

Consistent with its mission, the OCP developed the Open Contracting Data Standard, which provides governments with a structure and guidance on how to publish contracting data—at all stages of the contracting process—in accessible and useful ways.<sup>10</sup> The partnership also facilitated consultations, featuring stakeholders from government, civil society, business, development organizations, and others, to develop a set of global open contracting principles that articulate norms and best practices to serve as a guide to those advancing the open contracting agenda globally.

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## OVERVIEW OF CGD’S OPEN CONTRACTING INTERVENTIONS

CGD’s work on open contracting centered on a number of publications and working groups that addressed evidence gaps in the field. This section provides an overview of that work and is followed by discussions of impact claims associated with each initiative. As the report will later show, the publications and working groups described below helped give greater momentum to the open contracting movement.

The working paper “Publishing Construction Contracts as a Tool for Efficiency and Good Governance” was the first CGD publication on contract transparency.<sup>11</sup> Written by Kenny in November 2011, the paper drew attention to myriad problems in the global \$1.7 trillion construction sector, including poor-quality construction, cost overruns, and corruption. The report attributed these challenges to poor governance of the sector, and then offered evidence from other sectors and the construction sector itself to demonstrate the potential of increased transparency and oversight through contract transparency (i.e., open contracting) to improve development outcomes. The paper discussed the barriers to contract publication, suggested avenues to mitigate those barriers, and concluded with a discussion of how CoST, a global initiative that works with government, private-sector institutions, and civil society to improve transparency and accountability in

public infrastructure, could offer a model for improving transparency in the sector.<sup>12</sup>

The second CGD publication extended the scope of CGD's work on the topic beyond the construction sector and addressed contract transparency in public procurement more generally. The 2012 publication *Publish What You Buy: The Case for Routine Publication of Government Contracts*,<sup>13</sup> written by Kenny and Jonathan Karver, discussed the benefits that contract transparency could have on the efficiency of contracting processes, the quality of government investment decisions, and public service delivery. This paper not only made the case for contract publication, but it also addressed two issues often cited by opponents as objections to open contracting reforms: concerns about the administrative burdens that contract publication would create for government bureaucracies and concerns that the risk of exposing confidential information would discourage firms from bidding for government contracts.

What's more, the paper argued that contract publication is beneficial for poor and rich countries alike, with benefits transcending country borders. For instance, greater transparency in contracting processes could reduce contracting costs and create more favorable environments for international bidders on government contracts. The report's authors argued that contract publication had an international public good component so significant that it would be worth creating an international institution to encourage countries to take up the practice and support them in implementing it.

Two years later, CGD convened the Working Group on Contract Publication, an 18-person group representing experts from government, civil society, and the private sector, to clear a path forward to address the concerns that contract publication raises, such as the related administrative burdens, confidentiality issues, and the risk that contract publication would engender collusion among bidders. Chaired by CGD's Kenny, this was the first of two working groups CGD convened on the topic, and the contract transparency working group process culminated in a CGD publication, *Publishing Government Contracts: Addressing Concerns and Easing Implementation*.<sup>14</sup> This paper built upon arguments made in the previous papers

and reiterated the benefits of open contracting, providing supporting evidence from country experiences; it assessed the legitimacy of concerns raised about open contracting and marshaled evidence to demonstrate viable ways to address those concerns. Like the 2012 CGD publication on this topic, this report also restated the movement's need for an institutional home.

Then in 2018, CGD convened the Working Group on Commercial Transparency in Public Contracts, with the charge to bring clarity to the question of when it makes sense, from a public interest standpoint, to publish or redact commercially valuable information contained in public contracts. At the end of the deliberations, the working group produced a report, *The Principles on Commercial Transparency in Public Contracts*,<sup>15</sup> that detailed 10 principles to guide decisions on when to exempt certain information from publication on account of commercial sensitivity concerns. The report ultimately concluded that information should be kept confidential only when it is in the public's interest to do so and offered detailed guidance on how governments should make that determination.

CGD's working group process was itself an important influence on the nature of the reports the groups produced, and, as discussed below, was a major factor in the ability of those reports to gain traction. The working group model is one that CGD often uses to weigh in on pertinent development issues by bringing together diverse actors to deliberate on the issue at hand and publish recommendations for follow-up action. This model has in the past been credited for enabling CGD to "harvest the wisdom of a well-connected group of experts" to create momentum and change how an issue is viewed, as an assessment from Arabella Advisors phrased it.<sup>16</sup>

A thread that runs through CGD's portfolio on open contracting is the marshaling of evidence to evaluate open contracting on its merits and to make the case for reform. Consistent with this approach, CGD conducted an evaluation of Ukraine's "ProZorro" procurement reform. In 2015, Ukraine introduced e-procurement through its ProZorro platform, which provides full access to all public contracting data via the Open Contracting Data Standard; the CGD working paper "Examining

the Impact of E-Procurement in Ukraine”<sup>17</sup> sought to measure the impact of the reform on competition and prices. The study found that the reforms helped increase the number of bids in addition to yielding greater savings, a more diverse pool of bidders and winners, and a reduction in the amount of time required to procure goods and services.

In between producing these major publications, CGD experts also published several blog posts in which they highlighted lessons learned from the experiences of countries implementing open contracting,<sup>18</sup> offered insights on working group deliberations,<sup>19</sup> and discussed key developments in open contracting.<sup>20</sup> More recently, CGD experts have published commentary making the case for contract transparency in the context of procurement of COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to note that CGD’s work focused on determining what is possible to put in the public domain and the circumstances under which publishing contracts might be damaging. This work had very little, if anything, to do with the equally important technical question of how to publish information on platforms and in formats that people can use.<sup>22</sup>

## CGD AND THE CREATION OF THE OPEN CONTRACTING PARTNERSHIP

Given how important the OCP is to the open contracting movement, any inquiry into CGD’s place within the movement must begin with the organization’s connection to the establishment of the partnership. Although the OCP owes its existence to the multistakeholder collaboration coordinated by the World Bank and partners such as GIZ, CGD’s work intersects with the OCP’s origin story in two ways.

First, CGD articulated the vision for an entity like the partnership that now exists to coordinate the movement’s agenda globally. Specifically, in one of CGD’s earliest publications (2012) on open contracting, *Publish What You Buy: The Case for Routine Publication of Government Contracts*, CGD researchers Charles Kenny and Jonathan Karver suggest the creation of “an international institutional structure” that would support

proactive contract publication, with a mandate to “advocate for contract publication and monitor implementation by governments which had committed to publish what they buy.”<sup>23</sup> According to Kenny, this report was one of the first, if not the first, to make a public case for an anchor institution for open contracting.<sup>24</sup> The report saw such an institution playing a number of roles in support of the global movement toward contract publication, including advocating for the idea, developing practical guidelines for its implementation, building the capacity of civil society actors to use contracting data to hold their governments to account, and monitoring the impact of contract publication on service delivery.

A year after CGD made this call for an international institutional structure, the World Bank created the OCP, which later (in 2015) spun out of the bank to become an independent entity. This is very much a realization of CGD’s vision. Today, the OCP focuses on four main activities consistent with CGD’s vision for an international institutional structure for the movement, as articulated in *Publish What You Buy: advocating for a global norm of open contracting*, supporting on-the-ground implementation of open contracting reforms, building a community of practice, and sharing best practices.<sup>25</sup> However, this is not to suggest that the World Bank’s decision to create the OCP was inspired by CGD’s recommendations or that CGD had a direct hand in its creation; neither claim was backed by those interviewed for this case study. But the creation of the OCP speaks to CGD’s foresight in identifying a legitimate need of the movement and lifting up means of meeting it. To further illustrate how CGD and the OCP’s origin story connect, it is telling to note that the World Bank’s first major publication on open contracting, *Open Contracting: A New Frontier for Transparency and Accountability*,<sup>26</sup> cites CGD’s *Publish What You Buy* multiple times in building a case for open contracting. Not only that, CGD’s Kenny is also recognized as a contributor to this World Bank report, which also discusses the role of the OCP, then an in-house initiative of the World Bank, in realizing the impact of open contracting.

The second point of connection between CGD and the OCP’s origin story came when the OCP was set to become an independent nonprofit entity. Though the OCP’s creation and

CGD's work on the topic ran parallel to each other, these efforts intersected during the launch event for the OCP, held on November 19, 2014.<sup>27</sup> This launch event marked the OCP's transition from a World Bank initiative into a stand-alone, independent effort—and it is not a coincidence that CGD chose this event as the occasion to release its seminal paper on open contracting, *Publishing Government Contracts*, the output paper of the CGD Working Group on Contract Publication. “The paper was explicitly meant to provide some more empirical underpinnings for OCP and help boost its prospects as a stand-alone endeavor,”<sup>28</sup> CGD's Kenny explains. And as demonstrated below, the report had the envisioned effects, “giving the [newly independent] Open Contracting Partnership a credible face to the world.”<sup>29</sup>

But it wasn't just the report that was significant; the working group process that led to its development offered an entry point for CGD to help shape the thinking around the OCP's creation. Because there was an overlap in the membership of the CGD working group that developed the report and those more generally involved in conversations on what the OCP should look like in practice, some interviewees saw this sequencing of events as a likely avenue for CGD to have influenced the OCP's work. According to Michael Jarvis, who led the OCP while it was nested within the World Bank, “People took the insights from that [CGD working group deliberations] into parallel conversations that were happening about the strategy of open contracting partnership,” and “what are the best arguments, how do we want to frame this.”<sup>30</sup> These conversations were happening right before the OCP was set to spin out of the World Bank to become an independent nonprofit organization, and there were strategic decisions to be made about how to position the organization in a way that would allow it to achieve its goals.<sup>31</sup> However, while members of the CGD working group took part in conversations concerning strategic decisions about the framing of the OCP's work, it's difficult to pinpoint who made what recommendations that were adopted as part of the OCP strategy, let alone attribute causal impact to CGD.

Nevertheless, what we should note here is that while CGD cannot claim responsibility for the formation of the OCP, it can,

in its role as a convener and knowledge producer, claim some role in influencing both the content of the partnership and the intellectual environment surrounding its emergence. The discussion that follows explores these ideas in greater detail.

## UNDERSTANDING CGD'S INFLUENCE ON OPEN CONTRACTING

There is no doubt that the creation of the OCP was a key moment for the open contracting movement. But to gain a more complete perspective of what CGD's work has meant for the movement, we need to look beyond the creation of the OCP itself. This is because focusing on the creation of OCP alone risks ignoring the significant contributions that CGD made to the movement beyond the workings of the partnership.

A central finding of this case study is that CGD's research during the movement's early days provided an intellectual foundation that served as a catalyst for global advocacy for open contracting. In particular, CGD's contributions are perceived by many of those interviewed for this study as demonstrating the viability of the idea of open contracting, lending credibility to it, making clear what it would take to implement it, and fostering synergies among key stakeholders.

### Making the case for open contracting

By the time CGD began its work on open contracting, a consensus narrative of the benefits of open contracting had already emerged. In its publications, CGD articulated a case for open contracting that rested on several arguments that echoed the position of the movement's leaders, most notably the OCP. Taken together, the CGD papers argued that publication of government contracts can lead to better government investment decisions by incentivizing government officials to pursue contracts in the public interest; that publishing contracts would foster competition and increase the quality of tendering processes, potentially benefiting governments in terms of cost savings; and that open contracting would empower citizens and civil society to monitor service delivery and hold providers to account. None of these arguments was new per se.



Yet even though there was consensus on the *why* for open contracting, several questions about the *how* remained unaddressed at the time of the movement's inception. When asked to comment on the challenges of implementing open contracting, participants at the First Global Meeting on Open Contracting in South Africa raised a number of issues, including the need for a clear definition of what information should remain confidential in published contracts, how to balance disclosure and confidentiality while ensuring respect for human rights, and how to gather evidence to demonstrate that contract transparency leads to better development outcomes.<sup>32</sup>

Put simply, the movement had a need for insight on what it would take to implement open contracting, and this is precisely the challenge CGD's working groups and publications took on. A big part of filling this gap involved deconstructing opposing arguments and addressing salient concerns about confidentiality, costs, and national security that cast doubt on the viability of open contracting. Opponents argued that it would cost governments too much to publish contracts and that publication would be an overwhelming administrative burden, especially if those contracts contain confidential information.<sup>33</sup> Businesses also worried about the risk of exposing trade secrets due to contract publication. Moreover, there were legitimate concerns about exposing confidential information contained in contracts related to national security.

In response to these arguments, CGD marshaled evidence to prove that it was possible to pursue open contracting in ways that addressed these concerns of varying legitimacy (see, for example, Box 1). "The most important thing that I saw happen in the working group was grappling with these questions of confidentiality, national security arguments, and cost to the government of making it public," says Bill Savedoff, a former CGD senior fellow who sat on the CGD Working Group on Contract Publication.<sup>34</sup> By analyzing the experiences of countries such as Australia and Colombia that were already implementing contract publication schemes, CGD demonstrated that publication costs were not as high as opponents imagined, that redaction processes could address confidentiality concerns, and that national secrecy concerns apply to only a

## BOX 1. MAKING THE CASE FOR OPEN CONTRACTING

"I think because nobody really thought that it was possible. Right? Like why in the world would governments agree to publish their contracts? Why would the private parties agree? Nobody wants that kind of stuff published. And so some of his [Charles Kenny's] work actually demonstrated that it was possible, which is actually what is extraordinary."

– Beth Schwanke, University of Pittsburgh and Former CGD Senior Policy Counsel and Director of Policy Outreach

small number of contracts.<sup>35</sup> According to Patrick Heller of the Natural Resource Governance Institute, this work spoke to CGD's ability to "crystalize arguments in fairly succinct and compelling ways."<sup>36</sup>

Reflecting on the working group proceedings, Savedoff notes, "I think it really drew those issues and came up both with analytical arguments and empirical evidence that made the case very well."<sup>37</sup>

And there is some evidence it worked, as proponents of open contracting started to head off some of the challenges and arrive at clear answers to them, with some success. "We were able to knock out those arguments one by one," recalls Jarvis. "The work of CGD helped in terms of countering these claims of commercial confidentiality," he adds.<sup>38</sup> Through its working groups and publications, CGD helped parse a litany of arguments, distinguishing between the opposing arguments that merited serious consideration and those arguments that did not hold up to scrutiny.

More than this, CGD's insights helped introduce more nuance to the claims of the open contracting movement. Specifically, CGD's work played a role in shifting the movement's narrative from its original call for governments to publish all contracts to a recognition that there are cases in which contract transparency may harm the public's interest. As CGD's Kenny sees



it, CGD's work "helped delineate some of the areas where it would be harder to get to complete openness... and that was probably important too, because it turned it [open contracting] from being a 'publish everything' effort into something a bit more nuanced."<sup>39</sup> This view is supported by the OCP publication *Mythbusting Confidentiality in Public Contracting*, in which the partnership accepts that "not all contracting information will be published all the time," noting that "there are occasions when information will be redacted in the public interest."<sup>40</sup> It is noteworthy that this report makes 20 references to the CGD paper *Publishing Government Contracts: Addressing Concerns and Easing Implementation*.

Because the question of impact lies at the heart of our inquiry, it's also important to note that while sources interviewed perceived CGD's reports on and arguments for open contracting as compelling, it has proven difficult to identify specific occasions in which an encounter with CGD research led major actors to embrace open contracting.

Still, comments from several interviewees suggest that the evidence base CGD built provided proponents with ammunition they needed to strengthen the case for open contracting and engage with government and business stakeholders who were explicitly opposed to the idea of open contracting, had reservations about the concept, or simply did not give open contracting the attention its proponents felt it warranted. "We cited some of the materials [CGD] produced in campaigns we were involved in," Heller notes. As another example, an Oxfam review of the contract disclosure policies of 40 oil, gas, and mining companies cites CGD's report to counter the claim that the increased transparency that open contracting calls for would cause businesses to become unwilling to bid for public contracts.<sup>41</sup>

The transformation of the OCP into an independent nonprofit organization was a critical node in the narrative of the movement's evolution and progress. And the fact that leaders of the newly independent OCP—Gavin Hayman, executive director, and Kathrin Frauscher, deputy executive director—leaned on CGD's report for evidence during such a critical juncture demonstrates the significance of CGD's work to the movement.

When asked what he thought were the movement's defining moments, one of the first things Hayman mentioned was the CGD publication *Publishing Government Contracts: Addressing Concerns and Easing Implementation*. Hayman came into contact with the publication in 2014, before he formally assumed the role of executive director. For him, the report was "the first major asset" that demonstrated the huge potential for open contracting to "genuinely make a difference in the world."<sup>42</sup>

On meeting Charles Kenny at the report's launch event, co-organized by the OCP and CGD in Washington, DC, in November 2014, Hayman approached Kenny and said to him: "I just want to thank you for this report because this is now the evidence base for everything we will do in our initial advocacy and work."<sup>43</sup> These affirmations of the report's value are by no means trivial. When Hayman took charge of the OCP, he and his team had their work cut out for them. They faced the daunting task of promoting the uptake of open contracting practices in a crowded field of skeptics, a task made no easier by the fact that pertinent questions about how to implement open contracting did not yet have clear answers at the time. Another complication was the reality that, as a newly independent organization, the OCP did not yet have a track record it could leverage to effectively make the case for open contracting. Concurring with these views, Frauscher, the OCP's deputy executive director, described the CGD publication as "one of the fundamental stepping stones" that helped the movement "to make open contracting what it is now."<sup>44</sup>

These findings point to another dimension of CGD's influence on open contracting: it mattered that the analytical insights discussed earlier came from CGD, as opposed to an advocacy organization (see, for example, Box 2). Some sources could easily imagine a scenario in which an organization like Transparency International were to publish a paper that presented the same evidence as the CGD report, and they anticipated that, in that scenario, the report would have been categorized as "a civil society ask"<sup>45</sup> and generated less buy-in due to the tendency for policy communities to view advocacy groups as lacking the same level of rigor and nuance on matters of policy.<sup>46</sup> What's more, others suggested that even the OCP itself would have had a hard time addressing the concerns about

## BOX 2. CGD AS A NEUTRAL ANALYTICAL ACTOR

“CGD has been a more neutral analytical actor in the governance space and I think has been able to analyze some of the arguments that are in favor of a much more rigorous commitment to contract transparency—and with a lens of objectivity that is helpful for the rest of us in being able to cite, and refer to as we have campaigned on some of these issues.”

– Patrick Heller, Natural Resource Governance Institute

commercial confidentiality “in a way that felt independent enough to have this legitimacy to it.”<sup>47</sup>

Testimonials from multiple sources suggest that the credibility of both Kenny and CGD itself made stakeholders more attentive and receptive to the arguments for open contracting. Heller suggests that “there are probably people who have, thanks to CGD’s work, been more open and attentive and receptive to these arguments, that would not have been in the absence of CGD’s work.” One factor that made this outcome possible, according to sources interviewed, is that CGD was already perceived as a credible entity by several of the audiences crucial for the promotion of open contracting, particularly government, the private sector, and multilaterals. On the one hand, CGD’s convening of a diverse cast of actors in its Working Group on Contract Publication is a testament to the organization’s wide-ranging credibility. On the other hand, that process and the resulting publication helped to “promote the idea [of open contracting] as something worth looking at, worth testing out, and worth learning more about,”<sup>48</sup> former CGD senior fellow Todd Moss explains. From this perspective, CGD’s impact resulted not just from what CGD said about open contracting and how CGD said it, but also, importantly, from the mere fact that it was CGD that said these things about open contracting.

As several interviewees put it, CGD’s research filled a clear gap that had not been previously addressed.<sup>49</sup> a need for

compelling evidence on the viability of open contracting. With respect to academic arguments, CGD carved out a space for itself as an “early mover”<sup>50</sup> in making the case for open contracting, so much so that several interviewees credited the organization with creating an intellectual climate that made the promotion of open contracting more feasible.

Therefore, a strong case can be made that the OCP would likely have evolved differently had CGD not convened its working group and released the associated publication when it did. This idea is revisited in later sections of the case study.

## Making the case for commercial transparency in public contracting

There is evidence that CGD’s work has made a difference beyond the way it influenced the OCP. In particular, the evidence base in the CGD reports has been widely circulated as a core foundation for advocacy by other actors making the case to their governments or other global communities. Sources interviewed for this study recalled meetings in which different stakeholders referenced the CGD publications to promote open contracting,<sup>51</sup> while others made general comments affirming the report’s usefulness.<sup>52</sup> “It was welcome evidence and something that started to get deployed in advocacy campaigns and used as a reference point,” Jarvis explains.

Here, it is worth taking a closer look at CGD’s second flagship investment in open contracting issues: the CGD Working Group on Commercial Transparency in Public Contracts. Convened in 2018, the working group aimed to offer guidance on “when it is in the public interest to publish or redact information that is potentially commercially valuable.”<sup>53</sup> The working group focused on this issue because, as has been mentioned earlier, commercial sensitivity is an often-cited reason for refusing to publish contracts or for redacting material from contracts that are published.<sup>54</sup>

Like the working group that preceded it, this one also brought together leaders from business, civil society, and government to tackle an unfilled gap: a lack of understanding of, and consensus on, the circumstances under which public contracts may be justifiably redacted on commercial confidentiality grounds. This working group process culminated in the

*Principles on Commercial Transparency in Public Contracts* report, which laid out 10 principles to guide implementation of policy on commercial transparency.<sup>55</sup>

The influence of this piece of work is best appreciated when considered in the context of the extractives industry, which has long grappled with—and made recent progress on—contract transparency issues. Some actors in the extractives industry have internalized some of the principles lifted up in the CGD report, most notably the recommendation to apply a “public interest test” to requests to redact contract information. In 2019, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which “implements the global standard to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources,” made contract transparency a requirement under its standards.<sup>56</sup>

In the assessment of the Natural Resource Governance Institute’s Rob Pitman, CGD’s report was a valuable input to the policy dialogues that helped bring about this outcome (see, for example, Box 3). In fact, Pitman noted that the output paper of the Working Group on Commercial Transparency in Public Contracts was important in helping advocates “reach a tipping point in EITI,” leading to the global contract transparency requirement in 2019.<sup>57</sup> Heller of the Natural Resource Governance Institute echoes this sentiment, noting that the CGD reports and convenings were helpful “as part of the momentum” and “strength of the arguments” that have led to progress in the extractives space.<sup>58</sup>

Again, it is worth considering the catalytic role that CGD has played as a convener of working groups set up to tackle issues critical to the implementation of open contracting. According to those interviewed for this study, it mattered that CGD brought together groups of people, representing various interests, who otherwise may not have had the space or a reason to be in dialogue with each other regarding contract transparency in particular. And it helped that the commercial transparency working group process included people from companies and initiatives with private-sector backgrounds beyond extractives. By Pitman’s account, this “allowed people from the extractives sector to see that they were actually

### **BOX 3. CGD’S INPUT TO POLICY DIALOGUES AROUND CONTRACT TRANSPARENCY IN THE EXTRACTIVES INDUSTRY**

“I think that CGD has done a really good job of advancing a more nuanced discussion about commercial sensitivity that hasn’t always been present in discussions on the publication of contracts. Specifically, that commercial sensitivity shouldn’t be seen as the monolithic impediment to disclosure that it is often portrayed as, but rather should be weighed up in a public interest test. For transparency advocates working on oil, gas and mining, the CGD paper is one of the first reference points for those who are making this case.”

– Rob Pitman, Natural Resource Governance Institute

leading on something [commercial confidentiality issues] and that people were interested in learning from their experience.”<sup>59</sup> And, Pitman notes, this made it difficult for extractives companies with good practices to “peddle back on contract transparency in global discussions” around the EITI.<sup>60</sup>

As was the case with CGD’s earlier work on open contracting, the *Principles on Commercial Transparency* report also demonstrated CGD’s capacity to introduce nuance where it was lacking in discussions about contract transparency in the extractives industry. Reflecting on the contract transparency debate in the extractives space, Pitman observed that CGD helped drive home the point that “commercial sensitivity shouldn’t be seen as the monolithic impediment it is often portrayed as” but should instead be assessed against the public interest.<sup>61</sup> According to Pitman, this perspective, once downplayed in the campaigns of contract transparency advocates in the extractives sector, is “now making it into their thinking” and informing country plans for disclosing extractives industry contracts under the new EITI requirement—with the Working Group on Commercial Transparency

in Public Contracts document often serving as the evidentiary basis for this case.<sup>62</sup>

This is yet another instance in which interviewees noted the strength of the arguments CGD marshaled, but it still proved difficult to map out who exactly was influenced by them and how those arguments informed the actions of key actors in the movement. In fact, Kenny offered a different perspective on the relationship between CGD's work and the EITI's decision to adopt a contract transparency requirement. He suggested that "the influence probably goes as much the other way round" because the EITI had, long before the OCP was established, been an advocate for contract transparency and succeeded in publishing information on contracts in the extractives sector. The EITI was, in fact, one of the examples that CGD's research referenced to make the argument that open contracting reforms were feasible, leaving open the question of how crucial CGD's work might have been to the EITI's decision to adopt its contract transparency requirement. Therefore, it's impossible to say with certainty that CGD was the source or main impetus for the EITI's adoption of the contract transparency requirement, but interviews suggest that a case can be made that it was one of the factors.

Outside the extractives industry, one source noted that CGD's paper with the 10 principles helped bring coherence to and provided an intellectual backing for transparency arguments being made by the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multistakeholder initiative that brings government and civil society leaders together to promote transparent, participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance. Sanjay Pradhan, executive director of the OGP, described the CGD paper as sound documentation of principles that should underpin open contracting, noting also that the report "became the reference point" encapsulating the OGP's understanding of open contracting.<sup>63</sup> Not only did the 2019 *Open Government Partnership Global Report* highlight open contracting as a priority policy area for promoting transparency, but it also cited the CGD's principles as "a strong starting point" for the long journey to establish open contracting as a global norm.<sup>64</sup>

These findings are in contrast to comments by some sources suggesting that the principles, though valuable on their own merit, had limited influence in the real world, unlike the output of the Working Group on Contract Publication, which was widely seen as having played a major role in strengthening the legitimacy of open contracting.<sup>65</sup> Two factors possibly explain the variation in the perceived influence between the two reports. One deals with the different gaps addressed by the two reports; it could be that the first report addressed a more important gap (that is, a need for compelling evidence on why and how to pursue open contracting in the first place) than that addressed by the second report (that is, a need for technical guidance on commercial transparency—an important, but narrower scope of concern). This would mean that the report that addressed the bigger issue attained greater policy impact than the one that addressed a relatively smaller issue. The other factor is timing. The second report was published in 2019, and it's possible that not enough time has passed to observe its influence, unlike the case of the earlier report, whose content dates back as far as 2011.

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## PUTTING CGD'S INFLUENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

According to those interviewed for this study, CGD's working groups and resulting publications were not only intrinsically valuable but influential contributions to the content and effectiveness of the open contracting movement. Much of that influence is concentrated in the movement's early days, or seeding phase, when the idea of open contracting was only slowly starting to build momentum. In this context, CGD made timely research contributions that provided intellectual planks upon which others could build.

Though the narrative presented here points to the nature of CGD's influence on the movement, there is still much more to learn, through further research on the specific ways different actors leveraged CGD's research and what resulted from those uses. Additionally, because there were multiple actors involved in actual "movement building" work (working with governments, leading advocacy campaigns, etc.) to elevate open contracting, it is difficult to isolate causal impacts

attributable to CGD in such a crowded field. Given this, it is best to see CGD's work as one input to a complicated process of policy change.

By 2016, open contracting had gained real momentum, marked by its prominence in the global transparency agenda and the increase in the number of countries that had made public commitments to implement open contracting. The 2016 UK Anti-Corruption Summit, during which 14 countries committed to implementing open contracting, was another important milestone in that year.<sup>66</sup> “There was something about that 2012 to 2016 period where we had world leaders who were talking about open government: they were committing and there was still an upswing of momentum to which open contracting contributed but also benefited from and that helped it sustain itself into that later period,” Jarvis commented.<sup>67</sup>

CGD's role in furnishing evidence supported this momentum, but not to a degree that would warrant granting it strong causal attribution in bringing about the rise in the number of countries committing to open contracting reforms. This is because CGD had very limited direct contact with countries that signed commitments, unlike, say, the OCP, which was heavily involved in encouraging governments to commit to open contracting.<sup>68</sup> Having said this, the earlier discussion would suggest that although CGD's work did not play a central role in the increase in country commitments, it helped shape the broader policy context in ways that supported that outcome.<sup>69</sup> In other words, CGD's work strengthened the credibility and boosted the salience of open contracting. Given this, it makes sense to think of CGD's role as influencing the influencers—or those with greater proximity to the actors that needed to be influenced in order for open contracting to take root.

Further, the fact that there were many actors seeking to advance open contracting also makes it difficult to isolate CGD's impact on the movement, but at the same time there is an open question about whether CGD's work would have been as influential as it was absent the rich cast of actors advocating for open contracting. The CGD working groups are a microcosm of this dilemma. Members of CGD's working groups that helped produce the seminal reports represented diverse

organizations, industries, and perspectives on open contracting. And any of those working group members could have acted as causal agents in their own capacity by building on the working group process and report to establish or deepen relationships and spread arguments for open contracting. As Beth Schwanke, former CGD senior policy counsel and director of policy outreach, explains, “Each of the people in the working group really becomes a stakeholder in the document and takes it back to their own organization and wants to move it forward in various ways.”<sup>70</sup> This suggests that any success CGD had in boosting the salience of open contracting is tied to the working group process, which, as former CGD senior fellow Todd Moss explains, is “a way of catalyzing and crowding in supporters, allies, and influence.”<sup>71</sup> But by its very nature, in the diversity of stakeholders it cultivates, the working group process makes it difficult to isolate CGD's own distinct impact. In the case of the commercial transparency working group, one source reflected that “the relationships that came out that process have proven invaluable already.”<sup>72</sup> This source explained that her organization, The B Team, a nonprofit organization that advocates for better business practices, likely would not have gained exposure to influential open contracting stakeholders or established key relationships in the open contracting field were it not for the networking opportunity that the working group provided. This kind of connection matters for understanding different perspectives, determining how to align business and civil society priorities, and engaging in day-to-day advocacy.<sup>73</sup>

But in general, when asked to reflect on the sequence of events following the conclusion of the CGD working group proceedings they had participated in, many working group members could not offer precise responses because they found it difficult to recall specific events or did not keep track of developments after the group's work ended. Ultimately, then, while we cannot observe the infinite number of channels through which CGD's work may have influenced the open contracting movement, CGD's influence on the movement appears to have had as much to do with its convening power as it does with its intellectual products.



## AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

In most interviews, sources shared their views on how the open contracting movement might have evolved in the absence of CGD's work on the topic. Such counterfactual reflections provided an entry point to isolate CGD's contributions and gain a better understanding of the importance of those contributions vis-à-vis the movement's momentum.

A strong case can be made that the movement would have hit the same milestones it did even in the absence of CGD's contributions, but likely on a delayed timeline. This is primarily because the case for open contracting would have been a weaker one without CGD's work, meaning that it would have required more time and investments in initial case building to gain traction.<sup>74</sup> "I think if you were looking at where we are in 2021, we would probably have still gotten to a similar point without the CGD element but it would have taken longer to get us there," says Jarvis. So even if "open contracting wouldn't look too much different today"<sup>75</sup> without CGD's work, it nonetheless "sped up that process"<sup>76</sup> and helped the movement grow faster than it perhaps otherwise would have.

Notwithstanding the significance of CGD's body of work on open contracting, it is not difficult to imagine a counterfactual scenario in which another entity or a collective of entities produced a report that addressed the gap that CGD's research filled. In fact, some sources speculated that the OCP might have taken on the challenge of filling the evidence gaps,<sup>77</sup> although, at the time, as has been mentioned before, the OCP's research likely would not have carried the same weight.

But timing matters. It is undeniable that CGD's work landed at a time when there was a clear but unmet need in the field, enabling the organization to have the catalytic effect that many testimonials allude to. Without the evidence base CGD helped build, the OCP would have had a harder time hitting the ground running, in terms of mobilizing funds for its work. As Frauscher, OCP's deputy executive director, explains, "It was incredibly helpful to have a credible source that showed the scale of the problem and why funders have to pay attention to it, and why an organization such as OCP could help tackle that issue... I do think we had higher chances or were able to secure early funding because we had the paper and Charles that we could reference."<sup>78</sup>

In a counterfactual world in which CGD did not intervene the way it did and when it did, the lack of evidence on the promise of open contracting, and the associated funding implications, might have translated into a tepid launch for the organization charged with promoting open contracting globally. "I think a best-case scenario for us probably would've been us having to take a year to really build the evidence base ourselves," says OCP's Hayman. "The reality then, though, is we may not have been able to seize on that kind of initial momentum and really start with a bang."<sup>79</sup>

Ultimately, then, CGD's work was more of an accelerant and amplifier of a complicated change process already underway, rather than a precondition for the observed progress of the open contracting movement.

## Notes

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