



International

CPHIA | 2023

Conference on Public Health in Africa

OFFICIAL SIDE EVENT

Organized by:



AHB
AFRICA HEALTH BUSINESS

In
collaboration
with



Official Side Event Report

Action oriented respectful partnerships for public health in Africa: Partnerships for access to medicines

.....

Monday, November 27th 2023

**Room 2, Old Wing, Mulungushi International
Conference Centre, Lusaka Zambia**

Speakers



Moderator

Dr. Amit N. Thakker
Executive Chairman
Africa Health Business (AHB)



Building action-oriented partnerships for public health

Prof. Nicaise Ndembi
Senior Advisor to the Director General
Africa CDC



Role of government institutions in driving partnerships for access to medicines, diagnostics and medical devices

Hon. Sicily Kariuki
Founder and CEO
Re-Imagine Impact Associates Limited



Pharmaceutical industry's contributions to public health partnerships in Africa

Ms. Tintswalo Shikwambane
Head of Policy and Public Affairs, SSA
Pfizer



Challenges in implementing action-oriented partnerships in resource-constrained settings

Dr. Shailen Desai
Chairperson
Healthcare Federation of Zambia



Role of foundations and NGOs in supporting and catalyzing access to medicines partnerships

Dr. Mary Moehlmann
Engagement Lead LMICs
Access to Medicine Foundation



Catalyzing Change: Fostering Collaborative Partnerships for Enhanced Access to Medicines in Zambia and Beyond

Ms. Udie Soko
Executive Director
Zambian Cancer Society

Background

On the sidelines of the International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA) Pfizer and Africa Health Business (AHB) organized a side session on **Action oriented respectful partnerships for public health in Africa: Partnerships for access to medicines.**

To establish a new public health order in Africa, collaborative and action-oriented partnerships are essential across the entire healthcare ecosystem, involving researchers, manufacturers, policymakers, and healthcare professionals from government, NGOs, development partners, and the private sector. The session aimed to unite stakeholders from multilateral organizations, philanthropies, private and public sectors, and civil society to foster impactful partnerships for access to medicines. Further, the session focused on addressing the urgent need for cross-sector and cross-border collaborations in tackling the multifaceted challenges that impact public health in Africa with a focus on access to medicines.



About Pfizer

Pfizer is a global pharmaceutical company renowned for its significant contributions to the healthcare industry. It is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, headquartered in New York, USA. Founded in 1849, it has a rich history of innovation and research in the healthcare sector. It has a diverse portfolio of pharmaceutical products, including prescription medications, vaccines, biopharmaceuticals, and consumer healthcare products. The company's mission is centred on improving the health and well-being of individuals worldwide. Pfizer provides high-quality, accessible medications that enhance the quality of life for patients.



About Africa Health Business (AHB)

AHB is a Pan-African advisory and consulting firm aiming to increase equitable access to healthcare in Africa. With a focus on the African continent and via private sector engagement, AHB offers market access and implementation support, serve as a health ecosystem enabler and provide stakeholder engagement services.

Executive Summary

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are a transformative force in African healthcare. They expand geographical reach, enhance the quality of services, optimize efficiency, bridge pharmaceutical gaps, diversify funding, stimulate innovation, and ensure long-term sustainability. Successful PPPs are guided by enablers like sustainability, leadership, research alignment, transparency, human resource coordination, and trust-building, creating a blueprint for impactful healthcare collaborations.

The global imperative to address vaccination disparities prompted the Saving Lives and Livelihoods (SLL) initiative, a strategic partnership between the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the Mastercard Foundation. With a target of achieving 70% COVID-19 vaccine coverage across the continent, the SLL Programme has achieved remarkable success. Administering 35 million vaccines since Q4 2021, the program has saved 2 million doses, trained 38,000 health workers, and strengthened healthcare infrastructure. However, global disparities persist, necessitating a continued, inclusive, and accountable platform.

In the landscape of African healthcare, marked by inequalities and underfunding, the role of government institutions is key. The challenges of poor leadership, a weakened healthcare system, and integration hurdles underscore the urgent need for comprehensive solutions. Addressing not only immediate concerns but also foundational elements is needed to foster a healthier and more equitable future across the continent.

Foundations and NGOs play an important role in catalyzing access to medicines partnerships in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). The Access to Medicine Foundation, collaborating with investors and global health stakeholders, utilizes the Access to Medicine Index to assess and enhance pharmaceutical companies' contributions. The foundation's rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework ensures accountability, contributing to measurable impact in addressing healthcare disparities.

The pharmaceutical industry, exemplified by Pfizer's 'Accord for a Healthier World,' is instrumental in balancing business interests with public health objectives. Pfizer's commitment to equitable access reflects a broader industry dedication to bridging gaps between business targets and the health needs of communities, exemplifying a strategic alignment with the unique challenges of African public health systems.

In Zambia, the Zambian Cancer Society showcases the vital role NGOs play in building and sustaining partnerships to improve access to medicines. NGOs serve as the voice of the patient, advocating for policy changes, raising awareness, and participating in collaborative partnerships with diverse entities. Their flexible operations enable swift adaptation to emerging health challenges, showcasing the power of collective action.

Implementing action-oriented partnerships in resource-constrained settings poses challenges. Limited financial resources, human resource constraints, infrastructure deficiencies, technological limitations, and political/

regulatory challenges underscore the need for strategic planning and adaptive solutions. Overcoming these challenges requires a collective commitment to resilience, innovation, and a comprehensive approach. As such, multistakeholder efforts are required to address the complex healthcare landscape in Africa. Collaborative partnerships, guided by inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability, are key to overcoming challenges, achieving measurable impact, and fostering a healthier, more equitable future for all.

Building action-oriented partnerships for public health

For the African context, implementing action-oriented partnerships for health systems strengthening presents challenges that require strategic planning. These challenges often stem from limitations in financial, human, and infrastructural resources.

- 1. Limited Financial Resources:** Funding is often insufficient to support the comprehensive implementation of partnerships. This limitation may impede the execution of planned initiatives, hinder scalability, and restrict the ability to address emerging health needs in real-time.
- 2. Human Resource Constraints:** Human resources for health shortage can hinder the effective implementation of partnerships, limiting the capacity for planning, coordination, and execution of programs.
- 3. Infrastructure Constraints:** Inadequate infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, transportation, and communication networks, poses significant challenges. This deficiency can impact the delivery of services, the collection of data, and the overall efficiency of partnership initiatives.
- 4. Limited Technological Access:** Access to technology, including reliable internet connectivity and information systems, is often constrained. This can impede data collection, communication, and the implementation of technology-driven solutions that are integral to health sector partnerships.
- 5. Political and Regulatory Challenges:** Resource-constrained settings may grapple with political instability and regulatory hurdles that can hinder the smooth implementation of partnerships. This includes challenges related to policy frameworks, legal requirements, and governance structures.

One of the key challenges that needs to be addressed is the global vaccine disparity. This needs to be addressed through an inclusive, efficient, agile, and accountable platform. The Africa vaccination rate currently stands at 31%, with seven member states having fully vaccinated more than 70% of their total population. **Mauritius, Seychelles, Rwanda, Morocco, Liberia, Cabo Verde, and Botswana** are among the countries with more than 70% of their total population fully vaccinated.

The Saving Lives and Livelihoods (SLL) initiative, a strategic partnership between the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the Mastercard Foundation, aims to rapidly elevate COVID-19 vaccination efforts across the continent, setting a target of attaining 70% coverage by the end of the project implementation period. In the context of standard-support implementation, the SLL Programme has made significant achievements, administering a cumulative total of approximately 35 million vaccines since the fourth quarter of 2021 across 27 implementing Member States. The weekly average of doses administered, spanning from June 2022 to the end of the fourth quarter of 2022, is around 600,000.

The program's urgent-support mechanism has notably saved approximately 2 million doses from expiration. Moreover, the SLL Programme has contributed to the empowerment of the healthcare workforce by training and deploying 38,000 health workers, with a commendable allocation of 25% of jobs to youth and 55% to women. In line with this, the SLL Programme has strengthened the healthcare infrastructure by investing in the procurement of cold-chain equipment across 32 member states. Beyond vaccine administration, the initiative has significantly augmented the scientific capacities of the continent. Notably, the number of African genomic-sequencing laboratories has increased from 2 to 39. Additionally, the SLL Programme has fostered collaborative efforts, establishing data-sharing agreements with 28 member states and deploying the innovative DHIS2 cloud data system. As of week 26, in 2023, the initiative had realized remarkable success, achieving more than 70% vaccine coverage in key countries, including **DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.**

The SLL Programme has played a key role in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and improving African public health. Through its efforts, it has achieved significant milestones in vaccine administration, trained and deployed health workers, and strengthened health systems. However, there is still a need to address global vaccination disparities through an inclusive, efficient, agile, and accountable platform.

Role of government institutions in driving partnerships for access to medicines, diagnostics, and medical devices

The reality within the landscape of African healthcare is characterized by inequalities in access to essential services, increasing the challenges faced by diverse populations. This situation is further compounded by a disproportionately high disease burden that exerts pressure on healthcare infrastructures, underscoring the urgent need for interventions. Additionally, the underfunding of healthcare initiatives amplifies the existing disparities and hence hindering the provision of adequate and equitable healthcare services. The effects of poor leadership within the healthcare sector further exacerbate these challenges which impacts the formulation and execution

of effective policies and initiatives. Compounding these issues is the presence of a weakened healthcare system, struggling to meet the demands of diverse and widespread health concerns. This situation is acutely evident in the insufficient capacity to respond promptly to health crises, leading to a ripple effect across the entire healthcare continuum. Barriers such as disparate information systems, fragmented services, and varying standards of care contribute to the overarching challenge of creating a cohesive and interconnected healthcare ecosystem. This challenges demand comprehensive and sustained efforts to address not only the immediate issues of access, disease burden, and funding but also the foundational elements of leadership, system resilience, and integration. Acknowledging and navigating this landscape is essential for effective solutions that can pave the way for a healthier and more equitable future across the continent.

- **Benefits of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

PPPs have transformative force in addressing the multifaceted challenges that characterize the African healthcare landscape.

One of the advantages is capacity of PPPs to significantly expand geographical reach. By leveraging the resources and expertise of both public and private entities, these partnerships facilitate the establishment of healthcare initiatives in underserved and remote areas, ensuring that essential services are accessible to a broader section of the population.

PPPs have a profound impact on the quality of healthcare services delivered. The collaborative nature of these partnerships fosters the exchange of best practices, innovative technologies, and specialized skills, contributing to an improved standard of care. This improvement in quality is fundamental to addressing the pressing health needs of communities.

Efficiency in healthcare operations is a key part of sustainable healthcare delivery. PPPs streamline processes, optimize resource utilization, and introduce effective management practices, resulting in enhanced operational efficiency. This, in turn, enables healthcare institutions to deliver services in a more timely and cost-effective manner.

Access to essential medicines is a cornerstone of effective healthcare. PPPs, by combining the strengths of public and private sectors, bridge gaps in pharmaceutical distribution networks, ensuring a more reliable and widespread availability of medications to those who need them.

The financial aspect of healthcare is often a bottleneck in resource-limited settings. PPPs offer a diversified funding approach, combining public investments with private capital. This synergy not only attracts more substantial financial resources but also introduces innovative funding models such as blended finance, creating a sustainable financial ecosystem for healthcare initiatives.

The collaboration between public and private sectors within PPPs stimulates innovation in healthcare delivery. From adopting technological advancements to implementing new approaches, these partnerships foster a culture of innovation, ensuring that healthcare systems remain adaptable and responsive to evolving needs.

PPPs contribute to the long-term sustainability of healthcare initiatives. By establishing robust collaborations, these partnerships create frameworks that last beyond short-term projects, fostering a continuum of care that can withstand challenges and adapt to the evolving healthcare landscape.

- **Enablers of Partnerships**

Navigating the landscape of PPPs in healthcare demands a strategic approach founded on best practices. These best practices serve as a compass, guiding stakeholders towards building resilient, impactful, and sustainable healthcare partnerships.

Sustainability stands as the cornerstone of successful partnerships. Embracing a long-term perspective ensures that initiatives endure beyond initial phases, providing lasting benefits to communities. A commitment to sustainability involves not only the continuity of services but also the preservation of partnerships' positive impact over time.

Leadership is paramount in steering the course of partnerships towards shared goals. Robust governance structures, marked by clear delineation of roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes, establish a foundation of trust. Effective leadership ensures that partnerships remain agile, responsive, and aligned with the overarching healthcare objectives.

The integration of cohesive **research initiatives** enhances the evidence-based foundation of healthcare partnerships. Collaborative research efforts contribute to informed decision-making, improved program design, and the identification of innovative solutions. By aligning research goals, partners can collectively address emerging healthcare challenges.

Transparency and clear evaluation processes are essential components of successful partnerships. Regular assessments, coupled with transparent reporting mechanisms, facilitate accountability, and allow stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness of interventions. These processes are integral for adaptive management and continuous improvement.

The success of partnerships hinges on the **collective capabilities of human resources**. Aligning the skills, expertise, and capacities of personnel from both public and private sectors ensures a harmonious collaboration. This alignment not only maximizes the potential of the partnership but also promotes knowledge exchange and skills development.

Building and sustaining trust between public and private entities is a delicate yet crucial aspect of successful partnerships. Proactive efforts to bridge the trust gap involve open communication, transparency in decision-making, and mutual respect. Establishing a foundation of trust fosters a collaborative environment conducive to achieving shared objectives.

Incorporating these best practices into partnerships serves as a blueprint for success in healthcare collaborations. As stakeholders engage in building and sustaining partnerships, the adoption of these enablers ensures resilience, adaptability, and a collective commitment to addressing the complex challenges inherent in the African healthcare landscape.

Role of foundations and NGOs in supporting and catalyzing access to medicines partnerships

Foundations and NGOs have a key role in catalyzing partnerships to improve access to medicines, particularly in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). The Access to Medicine Foundation is a key player, collaborating with stakeholders to enhance medicine accessibility in LMICs. The foundation strategically engages with various partners, including 138 investors, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), pharmaceutical companies, and other global health investors. This collaboration amplifies efforts to address healthcare disparities, contributing to the Access to Medicine Index's comprehensive evaluation framework. Specifically, the Access to Medicine Foundation collaborates with stakeholders to align efforts with the unique challenges faced by LMICs in Africa. This collective approach ensures a multifaceted response to the complex issues surrounding access to medicines. The Access to Medicine Foundation employs the [Access to Medicine Index](#), a rigorous evaluation tool, to assess and benchmark the performance of pharmaceutical companies in addressing global health challenges. This evaluation framework facilitates transparency, holding organizations accountable and providing a basis for continual improvement. The Access to Medicine Foundation employs a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that gauges the outcomes of collaborations.

To ensure measurable impact, foundations and NGOs should adopt similar evaluative approaches, emphasizing the importance of accountability in achieving public health goals. The collaborative efforts with investors and stakeholders reflect a holistic approach, while the application of the Access to Medicine Index serves as a guide for evaluating and enhancing the effectiveness of these partnerships in advancing global health objectives.

Enhancing Equitable Access: Pharmaceutical Industry's Role in Public Health Partnerships

The pharmaceutical industry plays a vital role in shaping public health partnerships across Africa. Its contributions are multi-faceted, ranging from research and development to the facilitation of equitable access to medicines. Pfizer's 'Accord for a Healthier World' program represents a concerted effort to ensure universal access to high-quality, safe, and effective healthcare solutions. Launched with the core belief that every individual deserves access to high-quality healthcare solutions, the program focuses on providing safe and effective medical interventions. This initiative reflects Pfizer's dedication to addressing healthcare disparities and contributing to a healthier world by ensuring universal access to essential medicines and healthcare services. Through collaborative efforts and strategic partnerships, the 'Accord for a Healthier World' program serves as a beacon of Pfizer's mission to improve health outcomes for communities worldwide.

One of the critical challenges addressed is the delicate equilibrium between business interests and public health objectives. Pfizer's engagement in partnerships is characterized by a strategic alignment with the needs of African public health systems and communities.

In navigating the intricate landscape of public health partnerships, the pharmaceutical industry, with Pfizer at the forefront, showcases a commitment to bridging the gap between business imperatives and the pressing health needs of communities. The 'Accord for a Healthier World' program serves as an inspiring model, reflecting the industry's dedication to fostering a healthier and more equitable world.

Fostering Collaborative Partnerships for Enhanced Access to Medicines in Zambia and Beyond

Cancer patients grapple with specific hurdles, encompassing issues of affordability, distribution inefficiencies, and limitations in healthcare infrastructure. These systemic challenges are barriers to timely and equitable access to essential medicines. In the context of Zambia, NGOs, such as the Zambian Cancer Society, actively engage in building and sustaining partnerships with government agencies, international organizations, and private entities. Such NGOs are the voice of the patient. Committed to improving the lives of cancer patients, the society engages in a range of impactful activities. These include advocating for increased awareness and education about cancer prevention and early detection, providing support services for individuals affected by cancer, and actively participating in collaborative partnerships with government agencies, international organizations, and private entities. Through these efforts, the Zambian Cancer Society aims to enhance access to medicines, promote effective treatment options, and foster a comprehensive, compassionate, and community-driven approach to tackling cancer in the Zambian context.

NGOs act as catalysts, bridging gaps between various stakeholders and leveraging their unique positions to drive collaborative efforts. NGOs contribute by advocating for policy changes, raising awareness, and providing on-the-ground support. Their ability to operate flexibly allows them to adapt swiftly to emerging health challenges. Successful collaborations often involve NGOs facilitating communication and cooperation between diverse entities. By highlighting these partnerships, NGOs demonstrate the power of collective action in addressing public health issues, showcasing how collaborative efforts can amplify impact, enhance resource mobilization, and contribute to holistic solutions for health challenges.

Key takeaways

1. There is a need for multifaceted collaborations to address the complex challenges within the African healthcare landscape. PPPs in African healthcare are not merely collaborative ventures but transformative catalysts capable of reshaping the foundations of healthcare delivery. Recognizing and harnessing these benefits is integral to crafting policies and frameworks that leverage the strengths of both public and private entities, thereby forging a path towards a more resilient, accessible, and sustainable healthcare future for the continent.
2. The pharmaceutical industry, exemplified by Pfizer's 'Accord for a Healthier World,' demonstrates that balancing business interests with public health objectives is achievable. This model reflects a commitment to bridging gaps between business imperatives and the health needs of communities. The pharmaceutical sector plays a vital role in shaping public health partnerships, contributing to equitable access to medicines, and exemplifying strategic alignment with the unique challenges of African public health systems.
3. NGOs are an important catalyst for building and sustaining partnerships to improve access to medicines. NGOs act as the voice of the patient, advocating for policy changes, raising awareness, and participating in collaborative partnerships with diverse entities. Their flexible operations enable swift adaptation to emerging health challenges, showcasing the power of collective action and the crucial role NGOs play in addressing healthcare disparities.

Speaker Quotes

"Medicines are the second highest expenditure in African families, after food. Access to medicines is a fundamental human right, where we must leave no one behind. We cannot underestimate the collaborative power of alliances and must work across sectors. This is what the accord is about, and several African countries have bought into this mechanism including Senegal, Tanzania and Rwanda." - **Ms. Tintswalo Shikwambane**

"Collaboration is the currency with which we must assure the health of every person on the continent. Public and private sectors must form a seamless partnership. Patient organizations must be on the table where this partnership is structured." - **Dr. Amit N. Thakker**

"Action-oriented respectful and equitable partnerships is what Africa needs. Africa vaccination rate stands at 31% with only 7 member states having fully vaccinated 70% of their total population. Global vaccination disparities need to be addressed via an inclusive, efficient, agile and accountable mechanisms" - **Prof. Nicaise Ndembi**

"High disease burden, underfunding, over-reliance on donor support, poor leadership and governance and weak integration of mixed health systems undermine access to healthcare. In Kenya, PPPs have unlocked additional resources for the health system that have improved access to care even in the most remote areas." - **Hon. Sicily Kariuki, EGH**

"We drive change by building multi-stakeholder consensus, tackling opportunities and progress, sharing best practices and strategic change making. The access to medicines index that is an accountability tool that makes manufacturers of medicines and policy makers measure their efforts in easing of access to medicines." - **Dr. Mary Wambui Moehlmann**


"Healthcare Federation of Zambia is bridging the trust gap between public and private sectors, a necessary step for effective PPPs in health to be established." - **Dr. Shailen Desai**

"Bankruptcy should not be as the result of trying to access to medicines - this is the reality that many cancer patients face. Innovative mechanisms to finance and provide access to medicines are required so that patients afflicted with cancer and other expensive to treat diseases can access the care they need." - **Ms. Udie Favour Soko**



This report from Africa Health Business is a product of Africa Health Business Limited. Copyright © 2023 Africa Health Business Limited. All rights reserved.



 +254 704 838 150

 info@africahb.com

 www.africahb.com

 @AfricaHealthBiz

 Africa Health Business