

# Public-Private Collaboration Commits to Accelerate Access to Health Services in Africa, Reaching 1.7 Million People

Jan 16, 2020

- Healthcare companies and philanthropies to fund training of thousands of community health workers as part of larger initiative led by Last Mile Health and Living Goods to advance universal health coverage

BASEL, Switzerland and NEW YORK, Jan. 16, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Johnson & Johnson, Lilly, Novartis, Pfizer, GSK and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have joined forces with Last Mile Health and Living Goods to increase access to community-based primary healthcare for nearly 1.7 million people in up to six African countries, as part of their shared commitment to accelerate universal health coverage. The Health Worker Training Initiative is a three-year investment, generously matched by The Audacious Project, and totals USD \$18 million.

Harnessing the synergy of cross-industry collaboration is key to advancing universal health coverage. Living Goods and Last Mile Health have pioneered the community health worker model and are continually exploring novel approaches to training and retaining community health workers. By teaming up with Johnson & Johnson, Lilly, Novartis, Pfizer, GSK and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, precious resources and acumen can be maximized. All are united by the belief that community health workers play a catalytic role, and all share a commitment towards advancing universal health coverage.

Leveraging the unique expertise of each organization will drive tech innovation and deepen impact. In addition to financial contributions, industry partners will contribute disease-specific expertise and experience in the discovery and development of new tools, which will supplement the community health worker models pioneered by Last Mile Health and Living Goods, in partnership with government.

Investing in community health workers produces some of the best returns in health. Community health workers can yield a 10:1 return on investment, due to a healthier population, increased employment, and lower odds of health crises. In addition, community health workers can help primary healthcare systems serve the majority of a population's health needs, which means community health workers are one of the most efficient and effective ways to achieve universal health coverage. This partnership is a response to the growing call to action globally to advance universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goal 3.

"Focused investment in community health workers can accelerate progress to make universal health coverage a reality," said Dave Ricks, chairman and CEO of Lilly and president of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations. "Public-private collaboration is critical to help governments lower barriers to quality care and innovative medicines that save and improve people's lives."

"Community health workers are the critical frontline to sustainably impact the health of communities in resource poor settings," said Vas Narasimhan, CEO of Novartis. "Novartis is committed to strengthening healthcare systems and is proud to be part of this coalition to use digital technologies to reimagine the future of community health delivery."

The three-year investment will cover three areas:

- Supporting the training and deployment of 2,500 digitally-enabled community health workers, reaching nearly 1.7 million people by 2022. Community health workers will be trained and deployed in Liberia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and up to two additional countries.
- Supporting Last Mile Health's Community Health Academy, which is an open source, digital learning platform for community health workers and health systems leaders used worldwide. Training curricula for community health workers initially focuses on diarrheal diseases, family planning, malaria and pneumonia, with further modules expected to address non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension.
- Contributing expertise and personnel to Living Goods' new Kenya Performance Lab to develop mobile-based tech innovations that will improve community health worker productivity, strengthen supply chains and better identify obstacles to coverage. The Lab will leverage the knowledge and assets of partners in areas including data science, behavior change, performance management, analytics and technical health expertise. Innovations would be introduced in Kenya and then scaled to other countries within the broader initiative.

Together, these pieces of the investment aim to scale up access to life-saving primary healthcare while building stronger, tech-enabled community health programs for the future.

"Well-trained community health workers play an integral role in providing quality care in low-resource settings," said Andrin Oswald, Co-chair of the CEO Roundtable Executive Council and Director of Life Sciences Partnerships at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "The Gates Foundation is committed to working with partners across sectors to achieve universal health coverage, which is necessary to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and reducing the burden of diseases that disproportionately affect pregnant women and young children. We thank the companies involved in this initiative for their efforts to increase data-driven solutions to train and deploy effective community health workers."

"This partnership will play a critical role in helping to scale and empower the world's most promising health resource—community health workers—so that they can thrive and effectively save lives," said Dr. Jane Aceng, Uganda's Minister of Health. "Ensuring community health workers have the right training, digital technology, medical equipment and supervision is critical for ensuring they can help transform health outcomes, no matter where people live."

Each of the six investors will contribute USD \$1.5 million total over the next three years. This funding will be matched by the Audacious Project through an existing USD \$50 million matching commitment to scale community health workers in Africa, resulting in an USD \$18 million total investment.

This investment will also support the sustainability of community health worker programs. Living Goods and Last Mile Health partner with governments to deploy digitally-empowered community health workers. Not only will this partnership support community health workers to reach more patients, but the curricula and tools developed through the investment will support improved community health worker performance for years to come.

"We are inspired that healthcare companies are taking collective action to strengthen community health systems in the public sector across sub-Saharan Africa to advance universal health coverage," said Liz Jarman, CEO of Living Goods, and Dr. Raj Panjabi, CEO of Last Mile Health. "This partnership is much more than a financial commitment; it joins a growing movement of philanthropists, companies, and governments that have committed to scale digitally-empowered community health workers and build stronger primary healthcare systems across Africa to ultimately save more lives."

To learn more about the community health movement and efforts to advance universal health coverage in partnership with governments, watch this [video](#) produced by Freethink.

#### About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Sue Desmond-Hellmann and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

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#### About GSK

GSK is a science-led global healthcare company with a special purpose: to help people do more, feel better, live longer. For further information please visit [www.gsk.com/about-us](http://www.gsk.com/about-us).

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#### About Johnson & Johnson

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#### About Last Mile Health

Last Mile Health partners with governments to design, scale, strengthen, and sustain high-quality community health systems, which empower teams of community and frontline health workers to bring life-saving primary healthcare to the world's most remote communities. To learn more, visit [lastmilehealth.org](http://lastmilehealth.org).

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#### About Lilly

Lilly is a global health care leader that unites caring with discovery to create medicines that make life better for people around the world. We were founded more than a century ago by a man committed to creating high-quality medicines that meet real needs, and today we remain true to that mission in all our work. Across the globe, Lilly employees work to discover and bring life-changing medicines to those who need them, improve the understanding and management of disease, and give back to communities through philanthropy and volunteerism. To learn more about Lilly, please visit us at [lilly.com](http://lilly.com) and [lilly.com/newsroom](http://lilly.com/newsroom).

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#### About Living Goods

Living Goods is a nonprofit that saves lives at scale by supporting digitally empowered community health workers who deliver care on call – making it easy for families in need to get the care they need. Beginning its operations in Uganda in 2007 and expanding into Kenya in 2015, Living Goods works with governments and partners to ensure community health workers have access to the digital technology, medical treatments, supervision and compensation to cost-effectively deliver high quality, impactful health services. At the end of 2019, Living Goods was supporting more than 10,000 CHWs to deliver care to more than 7 million people. Learn more at [www.livinggoods.org](http://www.livinggoods.org).

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#### About Novartis

Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world's top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach more than 750 million people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 109,000 people of more than 140 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at [www.novartis.com](http://www.novartis.com).

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#### About Pfizer Inc.: Breakthroughs that change patients' lives

At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to bring therapies to people that extend and significantly improve their lives. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacture of health care products, including innovative medicines and vaccines. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as one of the world's premier innovative biopharmaceutical companies, we collaborate with health care providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more

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