



# Unlocking the Potential for Collective Impact:

FINDING THE HIDDEN BENEFITS OF PARTNERING  
FOR NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

## Event Report

22 Sept 2022

Hosted By:



UN General Assembly Side Event  
Harvard Club of New York City



## Dear friends and colleagues,

It was our delight to welcome all of you to the sidelines of the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly for our event, “Unlocking the potential of collective impact: finding the hidden benefits of partnering for Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).” We thank all of our participants for their dedication to global health and commitment to collaboration and learning. Transparent conversations like the one we shared are a catalyst for collective impact, and we were heartened by the exchange of ideas among our guests and speakers.

Dialogues of this nature promote a shared understanding of complex issues and a harmonization of priorities between key stakeholders. Progress in these areas contributes to the development of connective tissue, which in turn drives sustainable impact. Cultivating this connective tissue must be a priority for any coordinated action against noncommunicable diseases, and together we have made progress in understanding how it can be measured.

The global health community is poised to make immense progress against noncommunicable diseases over the coming years, and we hope that key lessons from the Access Accelerated initiative can shine a light on successful models of collaborative partnership. Together we will continue to build partnerships, empower those living with NCDs, and foster shared ownership of NCD solutions.

Many thanks to the member companies for their contributions to Access Accelerated, and to our partner organizations for their tireless work on NCDs. We hope these conversations helped unpack how and why measurement can inform partnership and drive collective action.

Sincerely,



Martin Bernhardt  
Director  
Access Accelerated



Rachel Nugent  
Vice President, Global NCDs  
RTI International

## Executive Summary

On September 22, 2022, individuals from academia, government, nonprofit organizations, multilateral institutions and the private sector gathered in New York City on the margins of the UN General Assembly annual meeting to discuss collective action in the field of noncommunicable diseases. Participants discussed the specific potential of public-private partnerships with the biopharmaceutical industry and explored pathways for various stakeholders to contribute to NCD action and its effective measurement. RTI introduced the concept of connective tissue, which enhances collective action by developing knowledge, trust, and social capital among stakeholders with common ambitions. Subsequently, we heard diverse perspectives on connective tissue and measuring collective action from our keynote speaker, panelists and moderator, guest speaker and the audience.



## Event Speakers



Event Moderator **Martin Bernhardt** is the Director of Access Accelerated, leading overall strategy and implementation for this multi-year initiative. A social and economic scientist with over 20 years of experience in pharmaceuticals, Martin is a lecturer of Health Economics and Politics at Geneva University's School of Pharmaceutical Sciences.



Event Moderator **Rachel Nugent** is Vice President for Global Noncommunicable Diseases at RTI International. She has more than 30 years of experience in global development as a researcher, practitioner, and policy advisor to governments, and leads RTI in policy analysis, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to prevent and control NCDs.



Keynote Speaker **Kyle Peterson** is the Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Boldly Go Philanthropy, a philanthropic advisory firm. Before launching Boldly Go Philanthropy, Kyle Peterson led all philanthropic activities on behalf of the multi-generation Walton family, including serving as the Executive Director of the Walton Family Foundation.



Panel Moderator **Professor Liesl Zühlke** is a pediatric cardiologist at Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town, a professor at the University of Cape Town, and Vice President of the South Africa Medical Research Council. She is a current board member of both the World Heart Federation and NCD Alliance and has served as President of both the Pediatric Cardiac Society of South Africa and the South African Heart Association.



Panelist **Dr. Jemima Kamano** is a practicing physician, lecturer, and researcher at Moi University School of Medicine in Eldoret, Kenya. She was the first Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH) chronic disease management program lead in Kenya and has served as Principal Investigator for several studies on chronic disease care and prevention.



Panelist **Dr. Emilia de Castro Monteiro** is a physician specializing in disease prevention and risk reduction, Diabetes Program Coordinator at the Ministry of Health in Cabo Verde, and focal point to the WHO Package of Essential Noncommunicable Disease (PEN) interventions for primary care in the country.



Panelist **Dr. Alicia Pomata** is Director of the Paraguay Ministry of Health and Social Welfare's National Cancer Control Program (PRONAC) at the National Institute of Cancer (INCAN). As Director of PRONAC, Pomata has worked closely with City Cancer Challenge to unify diverse stakeholders and improve cancer prevention, detection, and care in Asunción.



Closing remarks were provided by **Dr. Juan Pablo Uribe, MD**, the Global Director for Health Nutrition and Population at the World Bank and Director of the Global Financing Facility for Women Children and Adolescents. Previously, he served as CEO of Healthcare Providers for United Healthcare/Banmédica for Chile and Peru, and Minister of Health and Social Protection of Colombia.

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## Opening Remarks

The evening began with a welcome from Event Moderators Martin Bernhardt and Rachel Nugent. Martin urged the importance of a whole-of-society approach to tackling NCDs, and remarked on the renewed urgency to drive large-scale sustainable change resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. He explained how driving sustainable change is the ultimate purpose of Access Accelerated, which demonstrates demonstrate a successful model of collective action for NCDs between a network of partners.

Rachel spoke about RTI's role as a measurement partner for Access Accelerated, and key insights that have risen from the organization's measurement framework thus far. After one and a half years working with implementing partners City Cancer Challenge, NCD Alliance, PATH, the World Bank and the World Heart Federation, RTI has gained perspective on the value generated by of collaboration between Access Accelerated partners, member companies and other key stakeholders. A range of benefits emerge when multiple actors pull in the same direction, including some less tangible benefits which resist measurement but matter a great deal to the success of the initiative. For these benefits RTI has developed the term "connective tissue," defined as the social capital, knowledge creation and trust that emerge from the pursuit of collective action. Measuring connective tissue doesn't replace traditional measurement, but rather augments existing systems by capturing the additional value of intangible commonalities among stakeholders.

## Keynote Address

Keynote Speaker Kyle Peterson recounted his theorizing on collaborative efforts back in the "lonely days" of NCDs, and shared key lessons from years of experience in philanthropy and social impact. He spoke honestly about his skepticism for collective impact and the long timelines and rigorous approaches that are required to achieve it. At the same time, he explained that collective action is the only pathway to achieve systems-level change on complex problems like NCDs.



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NCDs are a classic complex problem. It's not like baking a cake, it's like raising a child—you have to figure it out along the way.



## Panel Dialogue

Professor Zühlke moderated the panel dialogue, sharing her perspective as a pediatrician and a scientist. Dr. Kamano explained how collaboration between Moi University, Access Accelerated and the World Bank unlocked sustainable scaling for a nationwide diabetes and hypertension control program in Kenya. Dr. Pomata recounted how City Cancer Challenge served as a glue between fragmented actors in Paraguay's health system and fostered collaboration to develop the first nationally adopted breast and cervical cancer protocols. Dr. de Castro Monteiro explained how collective action within the health system of Cabo Verde had the potential to save money and improve inefficiencies and competition between the private and public sector. A question from the audience prompted speakers to reflect on how national adoption of frameworks such as the UN SDGs drives country funding for measurement and reporting.



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Measurement must be integrated into the entire process from the beginning, and every player needs to be involved to ensure that the framework speaks to the needs of the collective. – *Dr. Kamano*

When we seek an engagement with partners, the most important things are trust and transparency. It's important to put basic questions on the table – what do you want, need and expect? The decisions you make will impact the lives of real people, the people behind NCD statistics. – *Dr. Pomata*

Most of the indicators that we have in SDGs, UHC, etc. help us measure results, not the actions. That's a big problem for us, because we don't know how to measure this action. – *Dr. de Castro Monteiro*



## Roundtable Discussion

Following the panel dialogue, members of the audience shared perspectives on four thematic questions surrounding the measurement of collective action. Representatives from Access Accelerated members and partners facilitated discussion of one key question at each table, with key points listed below:

### **What are key barriers to measuring collective action?**

#### **How can these barriers be overcome?**

The largest barrier to collective action is reaching consensus on how to measure success. The best way to reach this consensus is by convening relevant stakeholders including the impacted communities to define the problem and agree on objectives at the outset of engagement.

### **What are good examples of successful approaches? Are there key lessons on how collective impact can be tracked, measured, and driven?**

Collective impact is driven by urgency and mutual incentives, with transparency and shared ownership.

Key lessons include governance and accountability, simple measurement and planning for sustainability.

### **What are the key elements to ensure the sustainability of collective action?**

1. Clear focus on mission and key beneficiaries
2. Patient-centric and community-centric approaches
3. Adaptive strategy for continuous improvement
4. Strong relationships built on transparency

### **How should we design architecture of collaborative action to achieve collective impact?**

Build around a common goal by defining the issue before proposing a solution. Leverage the strengths of partners and institutions, with support from a neutral coordinating mechanism.





## Closing Remarks

The evening came to a close with remarks from Dr. Juan Pablo Uribe, who reiterated the potential that action on NCDs holds for improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable, and recounted his experience transitioning from country-level initiatives to the global health arena.

Dr. Uribe characterized the field of global health as one crowded with many different initiatives, each seeking a sustainable solution to one or more pressing issues. For his observation of the high number of global health initiatives, Dr. Uribe offered multiple interpretations. Optimistically, one could look at the abundance of initiatives and infer that there is great interest in the field of global health for proactive problem solving. Objectively, the number of initiatives reflects the diversity of global health priorities. However, Dr. Uribe also warned that a surplus of adjacent initiatives might be a sign of competition overcoming collaboration in the field of global health.

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It's important to have this data, these frameworks and indicators, don't get me wrong – you can have the best data and indicators, but without trust, generosity, and humility there is no true collaboration.

## Paving the Way

Access Accelerated is paving the way for collective action on NCDs, and is committed to measurement and evaluation for the benefit of future global health initiatives. Measurement is critical to extracting knowledge and lessons from such pursuits and driving systems-level change that will improve the NCD landscape. We are witnessing exciting developments in the measurement of collective action, with an emerging understanding of connective tissue and how we can measure intangible benefits such as trust, communication, and shared purpose. Achieving collective impact takes time and dedication, as does the process of measurement, evaluation, and learning.

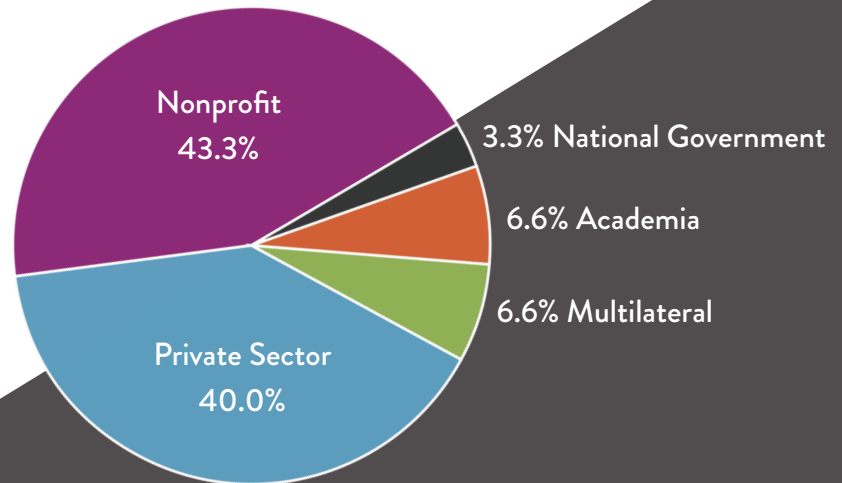
We look forward to hosting another event on the theme of measurement in March 2023 alongside Chatham House and the Boston University School of Public Health, where we hope to establish a new science of access and drive forward collaborative thinking in the field of noncommunicable disease. Also on the horizon are an upcoming publication elaborating the concept of connective tissue, and an Access Accelerated Legacy Report where we will share key insights and lessons learned from six years of collective action on NCDs.

## Event Attendance

60 INDIVIDUALS  
ATTENDED

19 COUNTRIES  
REPRESENTED

40 ORGANIZATIONS  
REPRESENTED



## Social Media Amplification

With participants and speakers building online awareness, the event was embraced on social media by a wide audience of development practitioners and within the global health community. This attention and engagement helps amplify such an important conversation online, and contributes to momentum for collective action on NCDs.

### LinkedIn Post

3,279 Impressions  
488 Clicks  
46 Reactions  
6 Shares  
5 Comments



### Top Tweet

2,265 Media Views  
287 Media Views  
59 Engagements  
10 Retweets



16.65%  
ENGAGEMENT RATE