

ACCESS IN ACTION: A NEW WAY FORWARD

2024 Highlights



ABOUT ACCESS ACCELERATED

Founded in 2017 on the shared belief that no one should die from a preventable or treatable noncommunicable disease (NCD), Access Accelerated unites leading biopharmaceutical companies and other partners in a forward-thinking global collective dedicated to mounting a sustainable and scalable response to the global challenge of NCDs. Together, we are harnessing the power of multisectoral collaboration to improve the NCD response in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Our vision is a world where all people have access to quality prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care for NCDs.

Our mission is to drive scalable, sustainable progress on NCDs where and when it's needed most. We combine partnership, innovation, and locally led solutions to accelerate progress towards global health goals, so that we can collectively achieve a healthier world.

Learn more about us and our activities at accessaccelerated.org





ACCESS ACCELERATED MEMBER COMPANIES

Without the support of our member companies, Bristol Myers Squibb, Chugai, Daiichi Sankyo, Lilly, Menarini, Novo Nordisk, Ono Pharmaceuticals, Takeda, and UCB, the successes Access Accelerated achieved in 2024 would not have been possible. Their efforts will continue to be instrumental in all our future endeavors.

Backed by a strong commitment to meeting the UN SDGs and achieving global health targets by taking decisive action on NCDs, our member companies bring world-class expertise, innovation, and knowledge to our many successful projects.

In 2024, we were proud to welcome Novo Nordisk as a new member of Access Accelerated. Novo Nordisk's commitment to tackling NCDs significantly enhances our collective efforts and demonstrates the growing recognition within the biopharmaceutical industry of the need to take urgent action.

 Bristol Myers Squibb



Lilly



Member trade organization



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) pose a profound challenge to global health and development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). They claim millions of lives annually, deepen health inequities, and burden already strained economies. The *Access Accelerated 2024 Highlights Report* captures the progress made over the past year to tackle these pressing challenges through partnerships, innovative initiatives, and a commitment to locally driven solutions.

Partnership achievements: Access Accelerated and the World Bank

Between 2017 and 2023, the partnership between Access Accelerated and the World Bank invested over USD\$25 million in 44 global, regional, and national initiatives. These included piloting NCD programs, providing technical assistance and policy advice, and producing flagship reports. These efforts resulted in several notable outcomes, including:

- **Strengthened institutional capacity** in select LMICs to tackle the rising NCD burden
- **Enhanced knowledge** at country, regional, and global levels, and sharing of good practices
- **Improved coverage and quality of NCD services** resulting from the rollout of integrated models of care

The initiatives made possible by this partnership underscore the value of sustained collaboration in addressing systemic health challenges.

Advancing sustainable financing for NCDs

Sustainable financing remains a cornerstone of effective NCD response. Recognizing the persistent funding gap, Access Accelerated launched the **Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs** (FAN) in November 2024, alongside the World Bank and Results for Development (R4D). FAN facilitates local and regional collaboration to foster scalable, context-specific solutions to close the NCD financing gap. FAN started in Sub-Saharan Africa and will expand to Latin America and Asia-Pacific over the next two years, amplifying its reach and impact.

In 2024, Access Accelerated also helped shape the agenda and amplify the global focus on sustainable NCD financing by leading and co-sponsoring key side events at the World Health Assembly in May and as one of the few selected private sector organizations at the Second International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for NCDs and Mental Health in June.

Insights and knowledge sharing

In October, Access Accelerated emphasized the importance of transparency and evidence-based strategies by sharing its experiences at a workshop, co-hosted with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Boston University, that focused on harmonizing metrics and strengthening accountability in global health efforts.

A Lancet analysis of the *2021 Global Burden of Disease Study* revealed stark inequities in NCD mortality between high- and low-income countries. In an April article, Sara Martin, Chair of Access Accelerated, highlighted the need for targeted programs that address these inequities and ensure resources reach the most vulnerable populations.

In 2024, the World Bank produced a range of resources, including investment cases, situation analyses, and policy briefs, with support from Access Accelerated. These tools equip governments, organizations, and communities with actionable insights to strengthen their NCD responses.

Looking ahead

Access Accelerated enters 2025 at a critical juncture, buoyed by the achievements of 2024 and driven by a renewed commitment to transformative action. As global leaders set their sights on NCD targets for 2030 and beyond, Access Accelerated is poised to play a vital role in shaping the path forward while continuing to prioritize the individuals at the heart of its mission: people living with NCDs.



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FOREWORD

BY THE ACCESS ACCELERATED LEADERSHIP TEAM

Access Accelerated was built on the conviction that tackling the world’s most complex and systemic challenges requires a different kind of collaboration—to effectively adapt to an ever-evolving global health landscape and meaningfully improve lives, we must forge robust partnerships that span sectors and engage diverse stakeholders. This approach enables us to expand access to quality care for people living with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) while demonstrating the vital role the private sector can play in advancing the global health goals.

This founding ethos has continued to define our efforts in 2024, as we seek innovative new pathways to address one of the most important barriers to taking on NCDs: insufficient health financing.

In 2024, we sharpened our focus on improving NCD financing in LMICs with the goal of making a tangible difference in health outcomes on the ground. This focus culminated in the launch of one of our most ambitious projects to date: the Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs (FAN). FAN builds on our multiyear partnership with the World Bank as part of a renewed technical partnership and was developed in collaboration with Results for Development (R4D) and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP).

As Access Accelerator Director Herb Riband wrote in *Re:solve Global Health* in December 2024, “LMICs have shown that progress is possible with the right support and partnerships, strong political commitment, efficient resource allocation, and innovative financing models.” By providing regional expertise, cross-country learning opportunities, and catalytic seed funding for NCD financing programs, FAN empowers countries to address critical gaps and implement locally-driven solutions. In this report, you’ll read more about FAN—what it is, how it works, and why it was created.

Meaningful long-term impact takes time, resilience, and sustained efforts. But the clock is ticking. The 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is approaching fast, and with millions of lives lost to NCDs every year, we cannot afford to slow down. The foundations we built in 2024—strengthened partnerships, innovative initiatives, and a reinvigorated sense of purpose—give us momentum as we enter a critical year ahead, especially as the world convenes for the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs.

The pages that follow highlight the breadth of our work—and impact—over the past year. As we scale our efforts, our focus remains on creating solutions that are sustainable, equitable, and deeply rooted in the realities of local communities.

At Access Accelerated, our vision remains clear: a world where no one dies needlessly from an NCD, no matter where they live or who they are. In that spirit, we will continue to push forward as we work to shift the trajectory of global health toward a healthier, brighter future for all.



Access Accelerated Executive Committee



Sara Martin

Chair



Niels Lund

Vice Chair



Ruth Musila

Vice Chair



Herb Riband

Director

A photograph of two women in white lab coats. The woman on the left is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The woman on the right has a serious expression and her arms are crossed. They are standing in front of a teal wall and a window with a grid pattern. The text 'SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT' is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Reflecting on seven years of tackling NCDs in LMICs:
The Access Accelerated and World Bank collaboration

“*The Access Accelerated initiative provides several important lessons worth repeating. First, the key principles (e.g., trust, mutual accountability, alignment to [World Bank] goals; development impact) behind the World Bank-Access Accelerated partnership remain highly relevant and should be considered for future Trust Funds.*”

- *World Bank Trust Fund Completion Report:
“Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases Challenges In Low and Middle-Income Countries”*

The Access Accelerated-World Bank partnership was launched in 2017 in response to the rising burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Despite the urgent and growing nature of this health and economic burden, development assistance for NCDs remains limited, representing less than 2% of total development assistance.[i]

Addressing this gap remains critical to advancing universal health coverage and human capital development: both of which are global priorities endorsed by the World Bank. The technical partnership between Access Accelerated and the World Bank demonstrates a shared commitment to accelerated action on NCDs.

For the 2017-2023 period, Access Accelerated contributed over US\$25 million to a Trust Fund that gave the World Bank flexible, catalytic funding to respond and tailor solutions to country needs in relation to NCDs. This included 44 World Bank activities at the global, regional, and national levels, spanning several dozen LMICs. The Access Accelerated-supported Trust Fund contributed to the World Bank’s broader commitment to NCDs, with the Bank investing over US\$7 billion in NCD-related projects from 1980 to 2020. Notably, half of this funding—amounting to over US\$3.5 billion—was directed toward initiatives launched between 2016 and 2020, highlighting a significant ramp-up by the World Bank in investment during the years of the partnership.[ii]

With the first phase of the partnership now concluded, this collaboration stands as a model for delivering impact and addressing NCDs in LMICs, with important lessons learned as Access Accelerated and the World Bank launch a renewed technical partnership in 2024.

Bringing about change by breaking down barriers

Rapid urbanization, shifting lifestyles, pandemics, conflicts, and debt crises in LMICs have placed significant additional strains on already overstretched health systems. Many of these systems face critical gaps, including insufficient coverage of NCD services, limited financial protection, and chronic underfunding. Access Accelerated funding contributed to the World Bank supporting countries in addressing key knowledge and technical assistance priorities and gaps through activities that included:

- Publication of **global and regional flagship reports** to promote and support the NCD agenda, including the role of patient-facing digital tools in NCD management at the primary care level, an anthology of country case studies demonstrating effective integration of NCD care into primary healthcare systems, and an NCD Systems Assessment Tool designed to help countries prioritize NCD investments
- Technical assistance and policy advice to develop **strategies, plans, investment cases, and assessments**, resulting in a wide range of analytic products aimed at strengthening capacity to address NCDs
- **Piloting integrated NCD programs** in Kenya, El Salvador, and Vietnam

[i] [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](#)

[ii] [World Bank](#)

Notable outcomes included:

- **Strengthened institutional capacity** in select LMICs to advocate for greater funding, tackle the rising NCD burden, assess and address gaps in the care cascade, and explore public-private partnerships
- **Enhanced knowledge** at country, regional, and global levels, and sharing of good practices
- **Improved coverage and quality of NCD services** resulting from the design and rollout of integrated models of care

Lessons learned:

Foundations for scalability and sustainability

The World Bank's collaboration with Access Accelerated highlights the critical role of multisectoral partnerships in addressing complex health challenges and empowering countries to roll out new ways to tackle the surge in NCDs with a focus on primary care and community levels. Three key lessons emerged:

1. **Trust and alignment drive success:** The principles underpinning the partnership—trust, mutual accountability, and alignment in goals—proved essential for maximizing impact.
2. **Knowledge as a catalytic tool:** The analytic work—ranging from investment cases to situation analyses—underpins World Bank's investment operations and is at the core of policy advice and technical support to countries. Creating platforms to share such knowledge has built productive coalitions.
3. **Innovative collaborative mechanisms deliver impact:** Pooling support from over a dozen pharmaceutical companies through Access Accelerated minimized transaction costs while creating a cohesive platform for collaboration. This approach avoided potential and perceived conflicts of interest and enhanced the efficiency of implementation.

Looking ahead: A new technical partnership

As LMICs continue to face the rising burden of NCDs, the tools, knowledge, and lessons developed through the partnership provide a roadmap for sustained progress. This initiative not only demonstrated the value of leveraging private sector engagement but also reinforced the necessity of strong technical and financial collaboration, along with coalition-building through knowledge sharing, to drive meaningful change.

The next phase of collaboration between the World Bank and Access Accelerated promises to build on this foundation. Through the newly launched Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs (FAN), in collaboration with Results for Development and the African Institute for Development Policy, the new technical partnership aims to help countries close the NCD financing gap by leveraging regional expertise, fostering knowledge sharing, and providing catalytic seed funding to advance NCD financing programs.



“

The Access Accelerated partnership is an excellent example of a strategic partnership with the private sector which encouraged innovations, built capacity, and empowered clients to roll out new ways of doing business to tackle the surge in NCDs with a focus on the primary healthcare and community levels.”

- World Bank Trust Fund Completion Report: “Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases Challenges In Low and Middle-Income Countries”

2024 SPOTLIGHT: HEALTH FINANCING FOR NCDs

Health financing for NCDs is at a critical point. Chronic underfunding has taken a toll on many health systems and the people that rely on them—and the resulting NCD burden is most acutely felt in LMICs.

This is why Access Accelerated has made sustainable NCD financing a priority focus of our efforts, both now and in the future. It's time for new approaches to respond to this pressing need and support LMICs as they work to effectively and sustainably address NCDs.

THE TRUE COST OF INACTION

“*We know that financing for NCDs is perhaps the most significant gap in the NCD response. We also know that the resources devoted to addressing NCDs at global, national and local levels are minuscule compared to the magnitude of the problem.*”

*Herb Riband
Director, Access Accelerated*

Deaths from NCDs are projected to reach 52 million by 2030. Beyond this devastating human toll, the economic impact is staggering. Between 2010 and 2030, these diseases are expected to cost the global economy US\$47 trillion in healthcare expenses and lost productivity.

Yet, current government spending and development assistance is clearly inadequate to meet the rising demand for NCD prevention, treatment, and care and mitigate the impact of the NCD crisis. Over the past two decades, development assistance allocated to NCDs has stagnated at less than 2%, leaving millions of people without the support needed to prevent and manage these conditions. Compounding this challenge, recent reports from the World Bank underscore a troubling trend: declining government investment in health, including NCDs. In many LMICs, per capita health spending is shrinking, jeopardizing decades of progress in health outcomes, economic growth, and human development.

How is Access Accelerated answering the call?

Health financing has been a priority for Access Accelerated since the beginning, but by further sharpening our focus in 2024, we've woven NCD financing into all of our activities over the past year. This culminated in the November 2024 launch of the new Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs (FAN) as part of our technical partnership with the World Bank. Find out more about this new initiative in the following pages.



A NEW ERA FOR HEALTH FINANCING: THE LAUNCH OF THE FINANCING ACCELERATOR NETWORK FOR NCDs (FAN)

The need for more effective and sustainable health financing for NCDs can no longer be ignored, but addressing this need demands bold solutions.

The Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs (FAN) was launched in November 2024 as part of the technical partnership between Access Accelerated and the World Bank, in collaboration with Results for Development (R4D) as Network Manager. At every step of the way, the design and implementation of FAN has centered on local needs to enable it to be a powerful tool to close the NCD financing gap and contribute effectively to addressing the growing global NCD burden.

Taking a regional approach to a global challenge

FAN is driven by an innovative regional model. By establishing NCD Financing Accelerators in different regions of the world, each hosted by respected institutions with invaluable local knowledge and connections, the network can work hand-in-hand with governments and local stakeholders, supporting them with technical and financial support needed to build sustainable NCD financing systems. We believe that because solutions are locally led, they will ensure local buy-in and have staying power.

What FAN offers

Regional expertise, data, and on-demand technical support

FAN provides countries with the evidence, data, and expertise necessary to successfully design, implement, and scale NCD financing initiatives.

Cross-country learning

FAN creates a sustained, supportive community of learners that grows and evolves based on the needs and priorities of its members.

Catalytic seed funding to advance NCD financing programs

FAN offers seed funding to in-country initiatives and programs with strong potential to impact NCD financing, fueling innovation, supporting policy and program development, and enabling the scale-up of successful approaches.



Sub-Saharan Africa leads the charge

Sub-Saharan Africa is host to the first regional NCD Financing Accelerator via the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP). This region faces the fastest-growing rates of NCD incidence and mortality globally, yet only 7.2% of government spending is allocated to health—well below the global average of 12.4%.

AFIDEP’s role will be pivotal in making the FAN vision a reality and addressing the funding gap in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. As the host of the first accelerator, AFIDEP will lead efforts to unite country leaders, empower local stakeholders, and develop solutions tailored to the region’s unique challenges. Their first priority is conducting a comprehensive analysis of Sub-Saharan Africa’s NCD financing landscape. Engaging policymakers, government officials, and other key players, this analysis will identify critical challenges, opportunities, and priorities. The resulting findings will then guide a learning agenda designed to deliver impact across the entire continent.

A model for change

By fostering collaboration in a way that prioritizes region-specific needs, lifts the voices of governments and local stakeholders, and understands each region’s strengths and gaps, FAN will support scalable solutions that can ultimately be adapted globally.

Progress made in Sub-Saharan Africa will pave the way for planned new NCD Financing Accelerators in the Latin America & the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions over the next two years. With the world working to achieve the 2030 SDGs, FAN is a timely and important initiative, and a reminder that while the challenges of addressing NCDs are considerable, so too are the opportunities for innovation and impact.



 [Learn more about FAN at ncdfinancing.org](https://ncdfinancing.org)



“*The growing evidence of the impact of NCDs in Africa, not just on health but across all aspects of society, calls for forward thinking and innovation on the continent, to save lives and ensure wellbeing and prosperity.*”

*Dr. Rose Oronje,
Director of Public Policy & Knowledge
Translation, AFIDEP*

AGENDA 2024: HOW ACCESS ACCELERATED IS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR STRONGER NCD FINANCING

Throughout 2024, Access Accelerated prioritized the urgent need for stronger and more sustainable financing for NCDs. That meant shining the spotlight on this issue at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in May and the second International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for NCDs and Mental Health in June, where the issue of effective, sustainable, and people-centered health financing was front and center—demonstrating a strong appetite among the global health community to address NCD financing gaps.



Gina Lagomarsino of Results for Development and Dr. Elizabeth Wangia of the Ministry of Health, Kenya speaking at an Access Accelerated side-event during WHA.



Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly

May 2024

Geneva, Switzerland

In May, global health leaders gathered in Geneva for the World Health Assembly, where Access Accelerated led and co-sponsored two pivotal side events focused on addressing the financing gap for quality NCD care in LMICs.

One session, “Cracking the Code: Innovative Solutions to Unlock NCD Financing in LMICs,” brought together policymakers, health leaders, and financing experts to explore collaborative and practical strategies for NCD financing. The second, co-hosted with the NCD Alliance, the World Bank, and the World Diabetes Foundation, was a roundtable titled “Sustainable Resourcing for NCDs: Paving a Way Forward by Learning from Progress at Country Level.”

SESSION REPORT

Cracking the Code: Innovative Solutions to Unlock NCD Financing in LMICs

An insightful exchange unfolded at the Access Accelerated-hosted side event during the World Health Assembly, emphasizing the urgent need for deeper collaboration between global health and financing communities. A recurring theme was the silos that separate health and finance stakeholders, which often hinder sustainable NCD financing in LMICs.

Keynote speaker Dr. Elizabeth Wangia, Kenya's Director of Health Financing, offered an inside look at her country's approach. By integrating NCD financing into Kenya's broader health agenda, the government is ensuring that NCD priorities are embedded into overarching national development frameworks.

Representatives from the World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) shared how their partnerships with LMIC governments are helping countries to reach people and innovate and scale financing models to address global health challenges, including a strong focus on NCDs. The World Bank highlighted its new technical partnership with Access Accelerated as an innovative example of supporting countries to catalyze locally focused NCD financing, through technical support, cross-country learning opportunities, and catalytic seed funding for NCD programs.

Several strategies stood out:

- **Public-private partnerships:** Leveraging public-private partnerships to unlock funding while reducing government risk.
- **Resource optimization:** Leveraging existing funding more efficiently to achieve significant outcomes without large-scale new investments.
- **Local leadership:** Empowering countries to tailor solutions to their unique contexts, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all global approaches.
- **Country-to-country learning:** Equipping LMICs with the tools and knowledge they need to learn from neighboring countries about the ways to implement effective NCD financing solutions.

As the world looks towards the 2030 SDGs, the discussions were a reminder that progress is possible, but only if stakeholders move beyond fragmented efforts to embrace unified, actionable strategies. Sustainable solutions depend on partnerships that bridge industries, governments, civil society, and multilateral organizations, with each sector coordinating its resources, expertise, and influence to drive systemic change

Maximilian Martin, Lombard Odier



[Learn about actionable opportunities for NCD financing and watch the full recording of the event](#)



Roundtable discussion on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly in 2024
©QDucrest

SESSION REPORT

Sustainable resourcing for NCDs: Paving a way forward by learning from progress at country level

A roundtable event on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly, hosted by Access Accelerated, NCD Alliance, World Bank, and the World Diabetes Foundation, offered a dialogue centered on proven, real-world solutions that have already shown results. From excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol to other strategies for domestic resource mobilization, the session underscored that many of the answers may already exist.

Kenya highlighted an example of how their government has successfully mobilized domestic resources to fund its health benefits package and Social Health Insurance Fund. By minimizing out-of-pocket costs and streamlining access to care, these reforms help reduce the financial strain on patients and families and ultimately help drive better outcomes and lower long-term costs.

One of the key takeaways from the discussion was the value of international collaboration in advancing NCD financing. Participants highlighted the potential of platforms where governments can exchange expertise in disease control, health system integration, and resource optimization. Such peer-to-peer learning opportunities were seen as critical for scaling effective strategies globally.

Looking ahead, attendees called for bold global commitments, including the establishment of measurable financing targets for NCDs. There was broad consensus that the global health community must unite around a few core priorities, aligning efforts ahead of the 2025 UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs.



[Download the event highlights](#)



Second International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for NCDs and Mental Health

*June 2024
Washington, DC*

In June, the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO) co-hosted the second International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for NCDs and Mental Health in Washington. The meeting brought together a diverse mix of policymakers, global health leaders, and a few select private sector stakeholders, including Access Accelerated.

A core theme of the dialogue was the strengthening of partnerships toward a unified mission. The collaboration between the World Bank and WHO was widely praised, and the joint presentations by health and finance ministries from a number of countries underscored a growing commitment to a whole-of-government approach. This multisectoral effort was further strengthened by the participation of the private sector, NCD organizations, civil society, and individuals with lived experience, underscoring the need for inclusive and comprehensive solutions.

Speaking at the dialogue, Access Accelerated Director Herb Riband emphasized the essential role of the private sector in developing innovative solutions to the ongoing NCD financing challenge. He also highlighted the importance of creating knowledge-sharing platforms where countries could exchange best practices and data-driven strategies to optimize their health investments and address the growing burden of NCDs.

While substantial progress has been made since the launch of the SDGs and the first High-Level Meeting on NCDs in 2011, the dialogue revealed a growing urgency to develop concrete financing solutions at the national level. Countries and stakeholders stressed the importance of setting specific financing targets to meet the health-related SDGs by 2030. The UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in September 2025 is seen as a critical opportunity to secure the financial commitments needed from member states to confront this pressing challenge.

Participants acknowledged the limitations of traditional financing models, stressing the importance of creative, locally relevant approaches to funding NCDs and mental health. The announcement of a third global financing dialogue in 2026 highlights an unprecedented level of international collaboration focused on addressing NCD financing.

IN CONVERSATION:

DR. ELIZABETH WANGIA, DIRECTOR OF NCD FINANCING, KENYA MINISTRY OF HEALTH



“

Let us know what other people are doing and let us share what we are doing, because when we share, we get more insights also and make ourselves better.”

With one in five people globally living with at least one NCD, Dr. Elizabeth Wangia, Director of NCD Financing at Kenya’s Ministry of Health, underscores the pressing need for sustained, long-term strategies to address this persistent challenge.

Dr. Wangia’s perspective is deeply personal—her own mother’s battle with cancer highlighted the devastating financial burden chronic diseases can impose. These costs often push individuals and families into poverty, making sustainable financing solutions not just important but absolutely critical. She emphasizes the need to protect patients and their families from financial hardship by addressing high out-of-pocket expenses. This

involves generating evidence to guide health financing decisions, identifying critical funding gaps, and targeting resources where they are needed most.

For Dr. Wangia, progress begins with strong advocacy for health investments and is sustained through the effective implementation of NCD financing policies. Achieving this requires fostering collaborative partnerships, enhancing technical support, and promoting joint learning across countries.



[Watch the conversation with Dr. Wangia](#)



INSIGHT

HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRESS IN GLOBAL HEALTH?

In any undertaking, understanding what works and what doesn't is just as critical as the efforts themselves. Transparency is a central pillar of Access Accelerated, and we go beyond merely tracking metrics: we openly share both our successes and areas for improvement, which fosters accountability, supports smarter investments, and generates actionable insights.

Measuring progress took center stage at a workshop hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Boston University in 2024, where stakeholders—including Access Accelerated—explored ways to harmonize approaches, reduce redundancies, and strengthen accountability in the pursuit of better health for all. In this article, Access Accelerated Director Herb Riband sheds light on that event while exploring a vital question: *How can we more effectively measure and report access and impact in global health?*

Advancing global NCD prevention, treatment, and care: the importance of measuring what matters and capturing key learnings



By Herb Riband
Director, Access Accelerated
Originally published: October 24, 2024

Access Accelerated, through its strategic partnerships and diverse initiatives, has worked since 2017 to expand access to lifesaving NCD prevention, treatment, and care in LMICs. To ensure these efforts are translating to meaningful impact, rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) and transparent reporting have been a central part of our efforts, working with leading organizations including RTI and Boston University, and now Results for Development (R4D).

What gets measured, gets done

It's not just about tracking numbers and generating reports; it's about learning, generating evidence, and understanding what works in order to more effectively mobilize resources and drive the policy changes needed to improve health and well-being for millions. Measurement and reporting provides clarity on what is succeeding, what isn't, and where adjustments are necessary to achieve our ultimate goal: improving access to quality NCD prevention, treatment, and care for underserved populations.

Critically, these efforts also serve as a tool for collective accountability. Our work involves a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, healthcare workers, civil society, the private sector, and the people whose lives we aim to improve. By measuring and sharing our progress, we demonstrate our joint commitment to fulfilling the promises we make.

Towards a more harmonized approach

In 2024, Access Accelerated was pleased to join the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Boston University, which organized workshops in Boston (June 2024) and Berlin (October 2024) aimed at harmonizing access and impact measures. These workshops brought together a diverse group of stakeholders—from private sector companies, industry associations, standard setters, ratings agencies, and investors to multilateral organizations like the World Health Organization and the World Bank—to discuss perspectives on how we measure and report impacts in global health.

Key discussions focused on how the pharmaceutical industry measures its impact on people, reviewing reporting standards and metrics, and addressing data gaps that hinder meaningful reporting. A recurring theme was the proliferation and fragmentation of existing reporting frameworks. Multiple frameworks, varied and overlapping requirements, and different standards create an administrative burden for companies and their global and local partners, potentially detracting from their ability to focus resources on the greater goal: improving health outcomes for people and societies. Many participants expressed a desire to reduce redundancies and develop a more harmonized approach to measuring access and reporting on impacts.

Access Accelerated was pleased to play a key role in these discussions, sharing insights from our own MEL approach that not only focuses on measuring outcomes but also on using these learnings to foster the design and implementation of future access strategies and initiatives.

A measurement framework for a complex challenge

As we move forward with our renewed technical partnership with the World Bank to help LMICs improve financing for NCDs, Access Accelerated remains committed to building a robust MEL framework with support from R4D. We recognize the need for continued collaboration with key stakeholders, including the World Bank, R4D, and global and local partners, to ensure our MEL efforts remain effective, efficient, and relevant as we launch the next phase of our work.

Over the years, our measurement framework evolved to better capture both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of our collective impact. While data points and quantitative metrics are critical for understanding the scope of our work, they are not enough. The complexity of multi-stakeholder collaborations requires a robust and thoughtfully designed measurement framework. By evaluating harder-to-measure aspects like systems-level changes and the ripple effects on partners, local stakeholders, and communities, we can provide a more holistic view of how efforts are improving access to quality NCD prevention, treatment, and care in LMICs.

The path forward in measuring impact

By simplifying and harmonizing reporting frameworks—and ensuring that different measurement systems are interoperable, so that data systems can communicate efficiently—we can free up resources for companies and global and local partners to focus on using the evidence, data, and insights to deliver impactful programs that improve health outcomes for people and societies.

“

By evaluating harder-to-measure aspects like systems-level changes and the ripple effects on partners, local stakeholders, and communities, we can provide a more holistic view of how efforts are improving access to quality NCD prevention, treatment, and care in LMICs.”

IN CONVERSATION:

FARID FEZOUA, GLOBAL DIRECTOR HEALTH AND EDUCATION, IFC



“*The onus is on us to address this challenge.*”

With over a decade of experience advancing healthcare delivery in Africa, Farid Fezoua, Global Director of Health and Education at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), stresses the urgent need for a multisectoral approach to strengthen health financing systems for NCDs. He reflects on the stark reality in many regions, where late-stage diagnoses are all too common, leaving patients with few options for treatment.

Prevention and early detection are critical to changing this narrative. “These deaths are preventable,” he argues, “if we give ourselves the ability to build the right capacity, detect these diseases as early as possible, and address them within the referral system.” Achieving this requires solutions that are both affordable and accessible, with robust health financing as the foundation.

The IFC is supporting governments in identifying sustainable and innovative financing mechanisms, such as blended finance, to strengthen their NCD responses. However, Fezoua emphasizes that the responsibility should not fall solely on governments. He calls for development partners and the private sector to join forces, seizing this critical moment to prioritize LMICs and ensure universal access to life-saving care for everyone.



[Watch the conversation with Farid Fezoua](#)



INSIGHT: BRIDGING THE HEALTH ACCESS DIVIDE

A 2024 analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021, published in *The Lancet*, brought a mix of optimism and urgency. While high-income countries reported falling mortality rates from NCDs, low-income countries—hindered by limited resources and systemic inequities—remained challenged by the rising NCD burden.

Sara Martin, Chair of Access Accelerated, reflected on these stark disparities in a piece originally published in April 2024. By understanding the root causes of such inequities, Sara suggests that we can design smarter, more targeted programs to tackle the factors that perpetuate these gaps—laying the groundwork for a more equitable future.

The NCD burden: Unequal access, unequal impact



By Sara Martin

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NCDs like cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases cast a long shadow over global health and our collective economic prosperity. While these conditions affect us all, their impact is not evenly felt. LMICs shoulder a disproportionate burden, with over 75% of NCD-related deaths occurring in these regions.

The latest analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021, published in *The Lancet*, reveals a declining trend in NCD mortality rates across high-income countries and regions, while low-income counterparts continue to grapple with this burden. What's fueling these inequities? The answer is complex. Economically and socially disadvantaged groups tend to be more exposed to harmful products, lack health education and awareness, and are more vulnerable to the serious financial consequences of illness, including unemployment and poverty. Moreover, they may face limited access to quality healthcare: the high cost of care (including burdensome out-of-pocket payments), geographic remoteness of health centers, and under-resourced health systems all create major barriers to quality prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, further impacting health outcomes.

As a result, people in LMICs are 1.5 times more likely to die prematurely from NCDs compared to those in high-income countries. This disparity is a stark reminder that health and its consequences are not just about individual choices but are influenced by factors far beyond any one person's control. It particularly underscores the need to bridge the gap between healthcare advancements and their equitable access, as emphasized by the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021 analysis.

Health equity: the key to achieving the SDGs

Now we stand at a critical crossroads: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its focus on 'Health for All' and leaving no one behind, clearly demands a strong commitment to health equity. This means ensuring that everyone, regardless of geography, race, gender, income, or education levels, has the opportunity to reach their full health potential. Indeed, equity is central to achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all. Without addressing NCD inequities, progress toward the SDGs, including universal health coverage, will be impossible.

Health equity is a powerful accelerator

Fortunately, there is increasing awareness among leaders of this divide and a growing appetite to address it. To bolster this groundswell, the NCD Alliance (NCDA), through the support of Access Accelerated, published two resources on addressing health inequities in the context of NCDs: (1) a conceptual framework and (2) a practical guide for community advocates. Building on the foundation that began with Access Accelerated's support, I am pleased that the company I work for, Bristol Myers Squibb, is now supporting NCDA to roll out the framework and build the health equity case for people living with NCDs.

The conceptual framework serves as a highly useful in-depth introduction to health equity in the context of NCDs, and outlines eight key areas for action, including ensuring involvement of people living with NCDs in policy decisions, access to people-centered and integrated care, creating health enabling environments, mobilizing financing and resources, addressing stigma and discrimination, prioritizing health literacy, and generating evidence to inform



policies and programs. The practical guide, meanwhile, walks community advocates step by step through the process of creating an NCD Equity Report that can then be leveraged to develop effective, evidence-based advocacy strategies

A whole-of-society approach to NCD equity

One major challenge in achieving NCD equity is that many of its influencing factors lie outside of the healthcare sector entirely. Social determinants, like income, education, and the environment, play major roles in shaping health outcomes. From health education to the affordability and ease of access to care to the financial burden of illness, these all influence health equity. That means that it's not enough to attempt to address NCD inequities in a single-sector silo: solutions will rely on sectors like education, urban planning, environment, and finance working together. While multisectoral action among government sectors is critical, governments will also need to look beyond the public sector and forge meaningful collaborations with partners in civil society and the private sector.

Putting equity into action

Access Accelerated has long had equity at the forefront of our work, by supporting projects that are sensitive to the needs of underserved and hard-to-reach communities. This has included, for example, [a project by the World Heart Federation that worked to address the considerable burden of cardiovascular disease faced by women of African descent in Colombia](#). In Kenya, another [project focused on improving access to care for people living in rural areas](#).

Access Accelerated has also collaborated with partners, including the World Bank, in their efforts to generate evidence and investment cases to inform policies aimed at improving equitable access to NCD care. A World Bank study, supported by Access Accelerated, shed light on the [impact of NCDs in Kosovo](#). Among the landmark findings, it revealed a concerning disparity in NCD care access, with the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, as well as rural populations, struggling to reach essential care.

Pulling the right levers: NCD financing strategies for health equity

The moral case for investing in health equity is plain to see: it's the right thing to do. But it's also good for the economy. After all, healthy people are more productive and contribute more to a nation's economic prosperity. Likewise, by preventing and managing NCDs—the world's leading cause of death and disability—we can reduce the significant financial burden these diseases place on individuals, communities, and healthcare systems.

But achieving these economic and financial gains calls for dedicated financing to ensure continued access to NCD services for vulnerable and marginalized communities. While the future of development assistance for health remains uncertain, there is an opportunity to support countries to raise domestic financing by leveraging innovative financing mechanisms and public-private partnerships to bridge financing gaps. Other measures, such as health financing reforms focused on current budget spending, would enable governments to enhance overall health spending efficiency and allow for more equitable resource allocation.

Critical milestones on the horizon

The future will see valuable opportunities to create fresh inroads and advance efforts. For Access Accelerated, this crucial time will mean even more emphasis on creating innovative, locally driven solutions to support countries' capacities to strengthen sustainable domestic NCD financing, meaning countries are more able to deliver affordable, quality health services and overcome the barriers that stand between disadvantaged groups and NCD care. By prioritizing equity in NCD responses, we can ensure that no one gets left behind.

RESOURCES: GENERATING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE IN THE NCD RESPONSE



Gaps in NCD data and evidence continue to undermine effective responses in combating NCDs. Without the necessary information, investment in NCD programs remains insufficient while policymakers struggle to design effective and targeted interventions. Knowledge sharing catalyzes progress, enabling countries to learn from one another and adopt innovative, evidence-based solutions.

In 2024, the World Bank, with support provided by Access Accelerated, published a number of valuable resources. These resources represent a snapshot of the work being done to close knowledge gaps in NCD management and control. Access Accelerated is committed to ensuring that this knowledge continues to be shared widely, where it can support governments, organizations, and communities as they work to overcome the challenge posed by NCDs.

Resource: Digital Journey in Primary Health Care - Empowering Patients with Noncommunicable Diseases in Vietnam

In Vietnam, where NCDs like diabetes and hypertension place a significant burden on public health systems, digital tools offer promising solutions. However, a 2024 World Bank study, supported by Access Accelerated, revealed significant gaps in the availability and functionality of patient-facing digital tools at the primary care level. While investment in digital health is growing, NCD-specific applications remain limited. Even when such applications are available, they often focus on basic functionalities, such as appointment booking and basic health monitoring, neglecting disease self-care and management.

The study highlighted opportunities for wearable technologies and SMS interventions to bridge gaps in accessing health information and empower individuals to manage their own care. However, the adoption of digital solutions for NCDs remains a challenge for innovators, patients, and healthcare providers. Adopting a people-centered approach to digital health—one that prioritizes safety, security, and accessibility—could help overcome barriers to uptake. These findings provide critical insights for Vietnam and other LMICs striving to leverage technology for better NCD outcomes.

 [Read the full study.](#)





Resource: Integrating Non-communicable Disease Management into Primary Healthcare

The report *Integrating Non-communicable Disease Management into Primary Healthcare*, published by the World Bank with Access Accelerated support, offers an in-depth analysis of NCD integration into primary care systems across six countries: Argentina, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Peru, Rwanda, and Vietnam. This knowledge product captures best practice examples of successful strategies, challenges encountered, and lessons learned in integrating NCD management into the foundation of health systems.

Designed as a resource for governments, this report is both a roadmap for action and a companion piece to the *Non-Communicable Disease System Assessment Tool*. Together, these resources equip countries with the insights needed to advance their health system capacities.

 [Access the report](#)

Resource: The Non-Communicable Disease System Assessment Tool for Identifying Priorities for Investment

While the World Bank committed over USD\$3.5 billion to NCD-related projects between 2016 and 2020, the escalating NCD burden calls for even greater financial prioritization. More and more countries are demanding greater funding to mount an effective NCD response. To address this, the 2024 launch of the *NCD System Assessment Tool for Identifying Priorities for Investment*, developed with Access Accelerated support, provides countries with a framework for evaluating critical investment needs.

This tool helps governments pinpoint priority areas for strengthening their health systems and optimizing resource allocation. By focusing on the most pressing needs, countries can maximize the impact of their health budgets, ensuring funds are channeled toward interventions that improve outcomes for people living with NCDs.

 [Download the assessment tool](#)

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025: A PIVOTAL YEAR FOR NCD ACTION

Access Accelerated stands at a critical moment in our mission to transform the global response to NCDs. Buoyed by the successful initiatives of 2024 and a reinvigorated sense of focus and determination, we now carry that momentum into what promises to be a landmark year.

In February, the Global NCD Alliance Forum will be hosted in Sub-Saharan Africa for the first time, shining a much-needed spotlight on the critical role of regional leadership in shaping global and local responses to both NCDs and NCD financing. In May, the World Health Assembly promises to be another watershed event, as priorities and strategies align in preparation for the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs later in the year. Together, these gatherings will serve as important platforms for a collective push forward toward a future free from preventable NCD deaths.

In 2025, we will see the new Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs complete its first year of life, a milestone that will offer valuable insights and learnings to support the launch of the Latin America & Caribbean regional NCD Financing Accelerator. As FAN solidifies its foothold in Sub-Saharan Africa and continues to expand around the world, it represents a meaningful step toward strengthening locally led solutions, sharing knowledge, and driving sustainable financing in regions where the need is the most profound.

This year offers an opportunity to provoke thoughtful dialogue, share progress stories, and showcase measurable impact, and we intend to make the most of it. The private sector's role in bridging funding gaps and addressing country-specific needs will be more crucial than ever, as the challenges before us demand even greater collaboration across sectors.

There will be challenges ahead, but the future is full of promise. As global leaders convene to set a long-term vision for NCDs towards 2030 and 2050, Access Accelerated has a vital role to play. We remain resolute in our commitment to build powerful partnerships and accelerate sustainable action that will have a lasting impact on those who will always be at the heart of our work: people living with NCDs.

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