



EVENT 3:
PRESCRIPTION FOR PROGRESS, A DEVEX LIVE EVENT
TERRA GALLERY AND EVENT SPACE, SAN FRANCISCO, OCTOBER 30, 2018

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS

MSD for Mothers is an initiative of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A





Prescription for Progress, a Bay Area event produced by Devex LIVE on October 30, 2018, was designed to address the practical hurdles associated with using global health innovations to scale and strengthening health systems.

The event brought together 100 stakeholders across industries to discuss how to scale global health innovations, how to break down silos and partner across sectors, and how to generate investment in health systems.

SCALING HEALTH INNOVATIONS

Innovative financing models will be needed to close the annual \$2.5 trillion investment gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

At *Prescription for Progress*, the breakout session “The essential role of partnerships in strengthening health systems,” was the third in a series of conversations organized by Devex and MSD for Mothers exploring how to leverage new funding models for sustainable development.

In previous meetings, we heard from government representatives, donor agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private sector companies, and more.

During this third session, we engaged venture capitalists and technologists in the conversation around innovative financing for global health.

“Today we have new players at the table. For us to accelerate our impact, MSD for Mothers can’t do this alone. No one has been able to crack the idea of scale and sustainability yet so we need to search for this together.”

— Mary-Ann Etiebet, Lead and Executive Director, MSD for Mothers

One of the key questions participants discussed during the session was how blended finance and other tools can get investors more interested in investing in global health.

Here are some of the key takeaways from the discussion:

1. Improve metrics and data.

Skepticism remains about blended finance deals and whether capital is really being unlocked. We need improved metrics and data to measure the social impact of innovative financing models. Companies will invest in these models more when we have standardized systems for measuring and communicating our progress. Getting this right is crucial – investors need to know how they can truly have impact while retaining their capital. This also encourages re-investment in the next round.



Mark Allen, MSD for Mothers' Director of Strategic Partnerships, explains how data and digital innovation are helping improve quality of care in maternal health.

2. Generate a conversation and bring perspectives together.

Bringing stakeholders together can highlight the range of perspectives, and give an overview of what works and what doesn't in different places, allowing for greater impact. Silicon Valley has great potential to solve

global challenges, however there is not enough conversation happening between the traditional and non-traditional development players. It is only through a combination of perspectives – including the private sector – that we can make progress on global health goals, and tools like blended finance can be deployed to drive this kind of collaboration.



3. Share objectives and improve communication.

Although specific organizations are starting to gain expertise around the innovative finance models available, there are still gaps in their knowledge of how these work in practice. This is leading to missed opportunities. We need to make sure we are sharing our experience of using innovative finance mechanisms with each other, including our findings and lessons learned. For businesses to invest in non-profit innovations, they need to see a proven business model.

KEY FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- Which innovative financing models would encourage Silicon Valley to enter the global health space?
- What specific data needs to be collected and analyzed to attract investors?
- How do we drive the right people to support the right initiatives and tackle the right issues?

SUMMARY

If global health innovations are to be scalable, the private sector will need to be part of the solution. This sector has the ability to move quickly and create multi-disciplined teams that can solve problems much faster than we are doing now.

Although there is some skepticism around innovative finance, there is unanimity that only by bringing in different perspectives can global health progress be achieved at scale, and innovative finance models can be good vehicles to drive sustained scale.

Silicon Valley has much to bring to global health, and this extends beyond capital. The global health community needs to think of a wider range of ways to engage people from the tech industry to address issues in this sector.

More work needs to be done to get the private sector and the traditional global health community speaking the same language, especially when it comes to the social return on investment. A big steppingstone would be to generate concise data to measure these returns on innovative finance investments.



— *Sidd Goyal, Nivi CEO*, explains how providing real-time information on family planning services helps build trust among the company's customers.