

Time for a Re-Set in Private Sector Partnerships

Roundtable discussion hosted by Rabin Martin
at the 78th World Health Assembly

21 May 2025 | Geneva, Switzerland





Introduction

Rabin Martin, a leading global health consulting firm, convened a multidisciplinary group during the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) to discuss the seismic policy and funding shifts underway in global health and the need for a re-set in how companies approach partnerships across sectors.

The global health landscape is undergoing a major transformation, fueled by significant cuts in development assistance. Many low-income countries are already experiencing severe consequences on health services and the long-term impacts on communities are not yet known. In response, a transition toward national and regional policies emphasizing health sovereignty and reduced reliance on foreign aid is in motion.

These developments have considerable implications for health care companies and the partnerships they create to increase access to their lifesaving products.

In preparing for a transformed landscape, the private sector is re-evaluating its partnerships to ensure that they can withstand financial and geopolitical swings as they strive to address global health challenges and improve health outcomes. *Time for a Re-set in Private Sector Partnerships* provided a timely opportunity to explore how these partnerships will need to adapt to today's new realities – even as the future global health ecosystem is uncertain.

Fostering partnerships to address global health challenges is a cornerstone of our work at Rabin Martin. In our continuing series of candid conversations on partnerships at WHA, *Time for a Re-Set in Private Sector Partnerships* built on our previous roundtables: [Rethinking Solutions to Advance Access and Equity](#) and [Driving Multi-Sector Innovation to Advance Health Equity](#).

NGOs' Perspectives

In the lead up to the roundtable, we surveyed a diverse group of NGOs to gather crucial perspectives from the front lines about the tumultuous funding environment and what they would like to see from the private sector. Their responses helped ground the discussion with health care companies on navigating an evolving global health landscape.

Here is what we asked NGOs:

- “What do you wish companies knew about how the NGO community is responding to major policy and funding shifts?”
- “Where do you think the private sector can be most helpful at this time, beyond providing financial support?”



Here is what we heard:



SUPPORT TRANSITION

Rethink partnerships to reduce disruption through capacity building, in-kind support and joint problem-solving during funding transitions.



FUND FLEXIBLY

Respond to the urgent need for flexible / unrestricted funding.



INCREASE ADVOCACY

Leverage corporate platforms to advocate for global health, elevate NGOs' impact on health and counter negative narratives.



SUSTAIN EFFORTS

Develop collaborative strategies that strengthen programmatic and financial resilience – in turn, paving the way for sustainability.

Key Insights

Time for a Re-set in Private Sector Partnerships explored top-of-mind concerns for global health companies about what it will take to ensure that their partnerships are effective amid upheavals in global health. The dialogue highlighted the changing dynamics affecting demand for products, financing, partner expectations and the need to demonstrate impact quickly.



Diminishing Predictability

The massive reductions in overseas development assistance and threats to crucial institutions, such as Gavi and the Global Fund, are creating unpredictability for the health care industry. Health care companies depend on a high level of assurance about demand for their products and the current environment is raising concerns about the product pathway. Pauses in R&D are possible, with profound, long-term implications on global health.



Rethinking Sustainable Financing

While innovative financing has long been a hot topic in global health, there is now added urgency to cultivate new financing partnerships that draw on domestic sources of financing to help ensure sustainability. At the same time, companies should have realistic expectations about countries' ability to mobilize domestic resources for health – in the short and long term – given competing national priorities.



Rising Expectations for Partners

While recognizing the immediate needs of NGOs to maintain the vital services they provide in low and middle-income countries, companies anticipate becoming more rigorous in assessing current and future partnerships – and, potentially, more conservative in their approach. Companies' expectations about what partnerships can deliver are likely to increase: *Will the project answer our questions? Will it generate the data needed for evidence? How will the project scale and sustain?*



Demonstrating Impact — Quickly

Showing results – including concrete metrics – of investing in global health initiatives is becoming more important to corporate leaders. Companies may want to play it safe as they evaluate new opportunities and opt for quick wins in the short term rather than take risks on projects that have a longer time horizon but could lead to systemic change. The narrative around the inefficiencies in the public and NGO sectors may be contributing to this pressure to support programs that have a fast timeline to achieve impact.

The Path Forward

Disruptions in foreign aid are stalling progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. To maintain momentum, all stakeholders working to improve access to health care and better health outcomes should embrace creative, rigorous and resilient approaches to partnerships, rethinking how they are structured and funded.



PRIORITIZE CATALYTIC AND INNOVATIVE FINANCING MODELS

Seize the moment to experiment with new funding models.

Blended approaches – combining private, public and philanthropic capital – can unlock greater resources to support scalable and sustainable health solutions. Increasingly, companies are using their philanthropy as seed capital to leverage greater financing through collaborations with governments, development banks and local businesses.



ELEVATE THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-LED ORGANIZATIONS

Realize the value of working with community-led

organizations given their comparative advantage of having strong relationships with the government as well as deep insights into local contexts – two elements essential for business development.



INTEGRATE FUNDING ACROSS THE CARE CONTINUUM

Capitalize on the shift from siloed, disease-specific investments to think more expansively about new possibilities for partnerships.

Integrated funding that supports the entire patient pathway – from prevention through treatment and beyond – offers more effective and efficient approaches to improve health outcomes.



BUILD COALITIONS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Now is the time to forge coalitions as a tool for resilience.

When companies have shared objectives, particularly around health system strengthening, collective action through industry alliances can achieve broader impact and scale than individual companies acting on their own – especially during a period of destabilization.

In today's uncertain environment, global health challenges are compounding and the partnerships required to address them must adapt to achieve sustainable gains in health. The path forward requires bold collaborations across sectors and disciplines that are fit for purpose today and prepared for future shocks.

By mobilizing catalytic funding, embracing integrated and holistic care models, investing in community-led solutions, and creating coalitions for greater impact, the private sector can help build resilience and take advantage of a radically changed global health landscape to accelerate progress toward sustainable, equitable outcomes at scale.



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