



EVENT REPORT

# Gaps and Opportunities in NCD Financing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Transforming Insights into Impact

15 FEBRUARY 2025



FINANCING  
ACCELERATOR  
NETWORK  
for NCDs



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# EVENT REPORT

## Gaps and Opportunities in NCD Financing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Transforming Insights into Impact.

A satellite session at the 4th Global NCDA Forum.

Hosted by Access Accelerated in collaboration with the World Bank, Results for Development (R4D), and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP).

Access Accelerated is proudly supported by Bristol Myers Squibb, Chugai, Daiichi-Sankyo, Eli Lilly, Menarini, Novo Nordisk, Ono Pharmaceuticals, Takeda, and UCB.

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**Kigali, Rwanda**  
15 February 2025

## BACKGROUND

The 4th Global NCD Alliance Forum, held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 13-15 February 2025, was a critical milestone for advancing the global response to noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory conditions and mental & neurological disorders. As the first NCD Alliance Forum hosted in Sub-Saharan Africa, the event centered on three key sub-themes: **(1)** Inspiring Leadership, **(2)** Mobilizing Sustainable Financing, and **(3)** Powering Up Communities.

Within this context, Access Accelerated, in collaboration with the World Bank, R4D, and AFIDEP, hosted a satellite session titled *“Gaps and Opportunities in NCD Financing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Transforming Insights into Impact.”* The session sought to highlight local perspectives and national stakeholders’ experiences as part of global NCD financing discussions. It presented preliminary findings from an NCD Financing Landscape analysis for Sub-Saharan Africa, conducted as part of the recently-launched **Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs (FAN)** initiative, followed by a panel of ministerial and civil society representatives to share successful country-level strategies for integrating NCDs into public financing systems and strengthening multisectoral investments in NCDs.

Over 100 attendees, including policymakers, civil society representatives, and private sector stakeholders, joined the session. The event provided a valuable platform to engage leading health financing experts, gain a deeper understanding of Africa’s NCD financing landscape, and explore scalable solutions to drive meaningful advocacy and action.

## INTRODUCTION

The session opened with a reflection on the shifting global health landscape. Recent geopolitical and economic challenges, including disruptions to global health funding, have placed increased pressure on countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). As the global health community navigates these uncertainties, the need for pragmatic, collaborative, and locally relevant NCD financing solutions is now greater than ever.

Speakers reaffirmed the urgency of addressing NCD funding gaps and ensuring that financing strategies are integrated into broader health system reforms, particularly those aimed at achieving **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through strong Primary Healthcare (PHC) systems.**



## SPEAKERS



**HERB RIBAND**

Director, Access Accelerated.



**ROBERTO IUNES**

Senior Health Economist -  
Health, Nutrition & Population, World Bank.



**DR. JACKSON OTIENO**

Senior Research and Policy Analyst,  
AFIDEP Technical Co-Lead,  
Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs.



**AURA ADRIANA VILHELMSEN**

Health Equity Lead,  
Novo Nordisk and  
Vice Chair, Access Accelerated.

## PANELISTS



Moderated by: **AMANDA FOLSOM**

Practice Lead, Collaborative Learning,  
Results for Development.



**DR. GLADWELL GATHECHA**

Head of NCDs Division,  
Ministry of Health, Kenya.



**DR. EVODE NIYIBIZI, MD**

Senior Policy Advisor,  
National Health Intelligence Center Manager,  
Ministry of Health, Republic of Rwanda.



**MR. FERDINANT M. SONYUY**

President & CEO, RADA; Secretary-General,  
Cameroon Civil Society NCD Alliance (CACSNA);  
Executive Director, Africa NCDs Network (ANN)  
Secretariat; Technical Advisory Group Member,  
Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs.



# DISCUSSION THEMES

## The Growing Burden of NCDs in LMICs

- LMICs face a multiple burden of disease, balancing efforts to address **NCDs, infectious diseases, and maternal and child health**.
- With demographic shifts and increasing challenges arising from lifestyle changes, pollution and climate change, **NCDs are becoming an “inevitable” and growing challenge**, requiring urgent action.
- Over the past 15 years, the World Bank has invested USD15 billion in 138 health systems strengthening projects across 73 countries, with over half of this investment- **USD8 billion - allocated to projects relating to NCDs**.
- The World Bank has set a bold target to support **1.5 billion people with quality, equitable health services by 2030**, a goal that requires concerted action on NCDs, including the integration of NCD financing into national health priorities.

## Opportunities to Address NCDs

- Addressing NCDs requires both technical and financial support. Catalytic investments are essential to provide new solutions where market failures exist and to strengthen promising regional and local initiatives.
- Primary healthcare is a cornerstone of the response. While many changes are needed to tackle NCDs, strengthening PHC is among the most critical.
- Beyond financing, innovative approaches are equally important. Initiatives like the Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs (FAN) can help unlock new solutions by providing technical and financial assistance, fostering regional collaboration, and driving catalytic investments to bridge financing gaps.
- Knowledge alone is not enough—impact comes from action. Efforts must focus on effective implementation.

“FAN is a critical initiative that puts action on the ground, close to countries, with regional perspectives so we can gather, catalyze, and galvanize knowledge and experiences from different countries.”

**ROBERTO IUNES**

World Bank

## Landscaping Preliminary Findings: Addressing Structural Gaps in NCD Financing

As part of the Financing Accelerator Network for NCDs' first major initiative, Dr. Jackson Otieno, AFIDEP Senior Policy Analyst and FAN Technical Co-Lead, presented key findings from a two-month study on NCD financing across six Sub-Saharan African countries. The study examined the current state of financing, focusing on resource mobilization, pooling, strategic purchasing, and governance.

Identified gaps include:

- **Over 60% of NCD financing in Sub-Saharan Africa comes from out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures**, reaching as high as 90% in some countries.
- Key barriers include **a lack of comprehensive NCD resource mobilization policies, weak civil society and private sector engagement, limited data and research on financing flows, and absence of accountability frameworks for NCD financing**.
- There is a need for **better coordinated pooling mechanisms** to reduce fragmentation and ensure sustainable financing sources.

Recommended actions include:

- Anchor NCD financing in national policy frameworks that promote investment and donor support.
- Aggregate NCD financing pools.
- Establish procurement best practices and coordination mechanisms.
- Build private sector participation in health financing systems.
- Improve data collection and tracking mechanisms for NCD financing flows.

## PANEL DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

### Case Study: Kenya's Transformative Journey in PHC and NCD Financing

Strengthening primary healthcare (PHC) is essential for improving access to NCD prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Kenya has made significant strides in integrating NCD care within its PHC framework under the broader Universal Health Coverage (UHC) agenda. For the first time, Kenya has established a dedicated PHC fund to provide free, comprehensive primary care services. This approach demonstrates that NCD management can be effectively delivered at the community and dispensary levels.

#### Key Developments:

- **Legislative progress:** Kenya established the PHC Act, which gave rise to a PHC Fund, supported by both government and donor financing.
- **Expanding access:** With 2,800 health centers and over 7,000 dispensaries, Kenya is extending NCD services to the community level.
- **Service integration:** Essential services at primary care now includes diabetes and hypertension screening, laboratory services and essential NCD medicines, and rehabilitative care such as physiotherapy for stroke patients.
- **Community Health Workers (CHWs):** Kenya's 170,000 CHWs receive monthly stipends and intensive training to provide NCD care at the community level.
- **Financing challenges:** Despite progress, reliance on government funding has led to medicine shortages and delays in stipend payments.



### Rwanda's Data-Driven Approach to NCD Financing

Rwanda has acknowledged the challenges posed by limited data on health and NCD spending and the need for stronger tracking and reporting mechanisms to inform policy and financing decisions. In 2023, the country established the **National Health Intelligence Center** to enhance data utilization and guide NCD financing strategies.

- **Strengthening health intelligence:** The National Health Intelligence Center was established to triangulate data across different health levels, transforming information into actionable insights that guide evidence-based budget allocations.
- **Community-based health insurance:** Rwanda has integrated cervical and breast cancer screening into its financing mechanisms, ensuring broader access.
- **Digital transformation:** A national initiative is digitizing Rwanda's health information systems, from community, primary to tertiary levels. This data-driven approach enhances investment efficiency, improves resource allocation, and reduces misallocation of spending.

By leveraging real-time data, Rwanda ensures that financial resources are directed where they are needed most.

*"When talking about the amount of money that is needed to address NCDs, we must ask ourselves: "Why, where, and for what?" To come up with an effective budget for tackling NCDs at the country level, evidence is essential."*

#### **DR. EVODE NIYIBIZI**

Ministry of Health, Rwanda

## PANEL DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

### Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in NCD Financing

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in advocating for increased NCD financing, budget transparency, and accountability. However, to be effective, they must have the capacity to understand budget cycles and engage in NCD financing policy shaping. Currently, CSOs are often excluded from budget shaping and monitoring, limiting their influence on NCD financing. Strengthening their involvement is key.

- **Tracking and accountability:** Clear targets and accountability mechanisms must be established to ensure NCD financing remains a priority in budget processes.
- **Capacity building:** CSOs need support to enhance their understanding of budget cycles and strengthen their role in shaping and tracking NCD financing levels and expenditures.
- **Sub-National engagement:** Active participation at district and local levels is critical to ensuring funds reach frontline health services effectively.

By equipping CSOs with the necessary tools and knowledge and engaging them in the budget process, they can play a more strategic role in ensuring sustainable NCD financing and driving policy change.



### Partnerships as a Catalyst for NCD Financing

Strong partnerships between governments, development agencies, and civil society CSOs are critical to driving impact in NCD financing.

*The Power of Collaborative Planning:*

- **Fostering shared ownership and accountability:** Collaborative approaches shift NCD strategies from being perceived as solely “government plans” to collective efforts with shared responsibility among all stakeholders.
- **Enhancing resource allocation through joint planning:** By planning together, stakeholders can allocate resources more effectively and gain a clear understanding of each partner’s contributions.
- **Strengthening participation and transparency:** Inclusive participation harmonizes goal-setting, reinforces accountability at all levels, and eliminates the need for shadow reporting by embedding transparency from the start.
- **Promoting equity:** Tools like the NCD Navigator—a dashboard mapping resource distribution developed by PATH with support from Access Accelerated—identify funding gaps and guide partnerships to underserved areas, ensuring more equitable allocation of resources.
- **Reducing fragmentation:** Aligning donor and partner funding with national priorities, rather than vertical, disease-specific investments, reduces fragmentation and creates pathways for sustainable financing.
- **Building cross-ministerial collaboration:** Strengthening the relationship between Ministries of Health and Finance presents a critical opportunity. In Kenya, a new project aims to solidify this collaboration to improve the efficiency and impact of NCD financing.





# SUMMARY OF KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key considerations for effective partnerships:

- **Ministry of Health as a coordinator:** A strong coordinating role ensures alignment and efficiency across stakeholders.
- **Regular review processes:** Ongoing evaluations help identify successes and areas for improvement.
- **Clearly defined goals and roles:** Each partner should have well-defined goals outlining what success looks like and terms of reference.
- **Monitoring and adaptation:** Continuous assessment of what works and what needs adjustment enhances long-term impact.

By planning, implementing, and monitoring together, stakeholders can build a more coordinated, transparent, and sustainable approach to NCD financing.

## Summary of Key Takeaways

1. **Primary Healthcare (PHC) as a Platform for Scaling NCD Financing:** Strengthening PHC can ensure that NCD prevention and care are integrated into existing health systems, reaching communities and providing a pathway for NCD financing.
2. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Real-time data is critical for effective policy formulation, budget allocation, and tracking how resources are used to improve NCD outcomes.
3. **Multisectoral Leadership and Partnerships:** Sustainable NCD financing requires strong government leadership, CSO engagement, and private sector participation.
4. **Innovative Approaches to Financing:** FAN was recognized as a promising model that supports countries by providing technical expertise, fostering country:country collaboration, and contributing catalytic seed funding to mobilize additional investments in NCDs.



## CONCLUSION

It is clear that there is no single solution to the challenge of NCD financing. However, key factors for driving progress include knowledge sharing, the adaptation of existing solutions to similar settings, the introduction of new innovative solutions, and effective implementation via multisectoral partnerships, including CSOs and the private sector.

The session underscored that securing funding is only part of the solution—the true measure of success lies in ensuring that financial resources translate into improved health outcomes for people living with (or at serious risk of developing) NCDs. Moving forward, multi-stakeholder collaboration, evidence-based policymaking, and sustainable financing will be essential in bridging existing gaps and achieving long-term positive impacts.

“If we always meet each other with an open mind and are ready to learn from each other’s experiences and perspectives, we can do great things.”

**AURA WILHELMSSEN**

Health Equity Lead, Novo Nordisk and  
Vice Chair, Access Accelerated.







## Join FAN in making a difference

Countries and local stakeholders are invited to engage with FAN by sharing insights, participating in exchanges, accessing technical support, and applying for catalytic seed funding.

Experts, the private sector, and civil society organizations can contribute their knowledge and experience as part of the Technical Advisory Group and are encouraged to join dedicated partnerships facilitated by FAN to foster locally driven solutions in-country.

Take the first step at:  
[www.ncdfinancing.org](http://www.ncdfinancing.org)