

Helping to shape the future of healthcare in Asia ^[1]

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Improving public healthcare continues to be a big challenge for lower income countries across Asia. NCDs are on the rise and tuberculosis (TB) continues to affect poorer communities, particularly in Asia's urban slums. The elimination of malaria also remains a priority as resistance to current treatments is once again emerging from the Greater Mekong Region. This all contributes to the pressure on healthcare spending, which I have written about earlier in the year ([cost of healthcare is rising in ASEAN](#) ^[2]).

The programmes of Novartis Social Business have been in Asia for more than ten years and this year will reach almost 8 million patients across eight countries. Our ambition is to double our reach over the next three years. I believe this can be achieved through not only geographic expansion into new markets but also the use of digital technology to reach more patients and healthcare workers.

We aim to work in the space where each country's public health needs intersect with the strengths of the private sector, NGOs and academia. In this 'sweet spot' I believe there is a lot of potential to encourage innovative approaches to better serve the needs of underserved patients.

To date the Novartis Social Business team have developed there different approaches in Asia:

We partner with governments through programs such as [Novartis Access](#) ^[3] where there is already an public health system that can be used to reach underserved communities

If public health system needs to be strengthened then we look to create broader partnerships with governments, academia and other providers to create PPPs to ensure that the broader healthcare ecosystem can be addressed

Where the public healthcare system is stretched we can partner with private sector and NGOs through programs such as [Healthy Family](#) ^[4].

We know that these are not the only solutions and this is why we are holding our [first Asian stakeholder dialogue](#) ^[5] on November 20, 2018, in Singapore. The event will focus on ways to improve access to healthcare in lower-income countries in Asia. Together with representatives from patient groups, think tanks, governments, private foundations, industry and healthcare practitioners, we will debate on unconventional ways to address health needs, reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases and improve access to primary care.

Ultimately, we want to be able to create business models that can strengthen public health systems for the long-term without being reliant on philanthropic funds. I believe that this is the only way to create healthcare solutions that are sustainable for future generations in Asia.

-Deborah Gildea
Head of Novartis Social Business, Asia

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