03

Delivering Results

Resilient Health

Around the world, people are facing mounting and increasingly complex threats to their health. Historic rainfall is driving outbreaks of infectious disease, extreme heat now claims nearly half a million lives each year, and more frequent, extreme weather is destroying infrastructure and disrupting supply chains, leaving communities without access to essential care. Meanwhile, seismic disruptions in global health have put decades of development progress at risk. These crises call for new partnerships that can build a resilient approach to today's health threats.

Stories from the Field

Denilson Guevara arrives in the small community of Kanku to collect reports on malaria cases. (Image credit: The Rockefeller Foundation)

"Now they have maybe one or two cases a year"

Dr. Manuel Espinoza

Honduras

Data helps fight malaria in far-flung communities.

When a malaria epicenter festered in an isolated community in remote Gracias a Dios, a region that accounts for 95% of Honduras's malaria cases, some residents were contracting the disease two or three times. "Let's map out where malaria occurs," proposed Dr. Manuel Espinoza of the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), and gathered a team of 40 community members to tackle the challenge. After mapping the data, they uncovered a crucial piece of information: the homes with repeated cases were located near a wet, swampy area—in other words, the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. With an investment of less than $100 for some shovels and machetes, a local team was able to drain the swamp and cut the problem off at the source. "Now they have maybe one or two cases a year," Espinoza said.

CHAI's data collection work, supported in part by the Foundation, is one tool in countering the spread of mosquito-borne diseases, which are worsened by climate change. By setting up systems to collect, evaluate, and act on data from remote locations with limited access to public health services, CHAI hopes to eliminate malaria from Honduras and four other Latin American countries.

SNAPSHOT

Climate change poses the public health threat of our time and demands a holistic transformation across systems of health, energy, education, and food. The Rockefeller Foundation and our partners believe we can no longer afford the separations between health and climate finance, data, and networks, and that integrating them is urgent and essential. As our team completes work on long-standing projects, we are also developing initiatives that bridge divides to partner, develop solutions, and act to meet this era's health threats.

By the Numbers

4,200
health workers in Africa and Asia trained or equipped with tools to deliver integrated primary healthcare services, including immunization, screening, and essential health messaging.

12 million
people across Africa, Asia, and Latin America received actionable information empowering them to protect themselves and their families by getting vaccinated or seeking other primary healthcare services.

Highlights

Pandemic prevention through early detection

The Rockefeller Foundation supports initiatives imagining a world where countries work together to minimize the impact of pandemic threats through collaborative surveillance by gathering, connecting, and acting together. This year, the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence achieved a significant milestone: 85 countries are now using the WHO Hub's "Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources" system to detect and respond to public health threats. In addition, through a collaboration across 100 Member States, the WHO Hub supports genomic sequencing and analysis procedures for pathogens worldwide through the International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN).

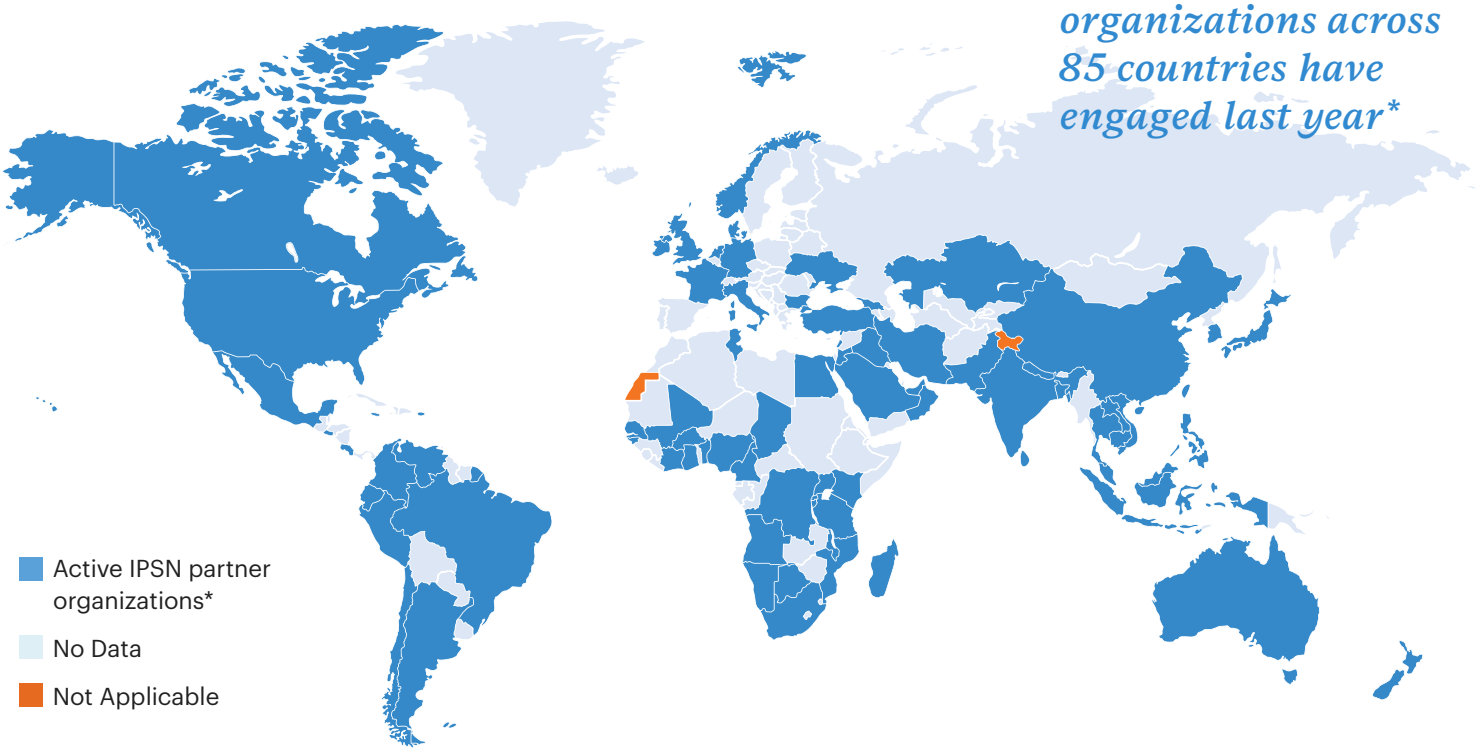
The Rockefeller Foundation supports local institutions to develop Uganda's Health National Adaptation Plan

A data-driven health adaptation plan has been established in Uganda as their new Health National Adaptation Plan (H-NAP) 2025-2030 becomes a national strategic plan to protect health and health systems from climate-related threats, including floods, droughts, and rising temperatures, all of which intensify health risks such as waterborne and vector-borne diseases.

Developed by the Ministry of Health and the Makerere University School of Public Health, with contributions from the Ministry of Water and Environment, and with support from The Rockefeller Foundation and the World Health Organization, the H-NAP outlines strategic actions to fortify Uganda's health systems, including climate-smart governance, workforce training, and enhanced disease surveillance. This plan, informed by extensive climate vulnerability assessments across 716 health facilities and more than 1,400 Ugandan health workers, will help the country's efforts to build climate-resilient health systems through innovative, multi-sector collaboration.

IPSN PARTNERS SPAN ALL REGIONS OF THE GLOBE

*235 partner organizations across 85 countries have engaged last year**



Highlights

Making health the argument for climate action

At a time when 3.3 billion people face heightened health risks due to climate change, the Foundation sought to tell their story and catalyze action. After ongoing advocacy efforts by The Rockefeller Foundation and our partners, member states of the World Health Organization cemented climate change as one of six key priorities in the new WHO global strategy. They also unanimously supported a resolution, championed by the Foundation, calling for stronger health systems.

The Foundation-supported *COP29 Special Report on Climate Change and Health*, which includes extensive data on health impacts and outcomes from our grantees and partners, was used as evidence by the WHO in the landmark legal proceedings before the International Court of Justice. The hearing has the potential to inform subsequent judicial proceedings and lawsuits worldwide.

People walk through floodwaters after heavy rainfall in Hadeja, Nigeria, on Sept 19, 2022. (AP Photo)

Community Dialogue in Salima, Malawi, after cinema screening on cholera prevention, transmission, and treatment. (Photo courtesy of UNICEF)

Working at the intersection of behavioral science and public health

Public health outcomes are deeply influenced by human behavior, yet significant funding and technical barriers continue to hinder the integration of behavioral research into health systems. When done effectively, such integration can help overcome obstacles to healthy behavior during crises and improve health outcomes for people, communities, and countries.

To address this gap, The Rockefeller Foundation's Global Vaccination Initiative (GVI) funded a project aimed at deepening understanding at the intersection of behavioral science and public health. From January 2023 to December 2024, the initiative supported pilot programs in four African countries, working with ministries of health to test behavioral approaches. As a result, universities in Burkina Faso, Namibia, and Zambia have introduced behavioral science courses focused on public health—Namibia has even launched a postgraduate program in the field. Meanwhile, Zambia's Ministry of Health has piloted the integration of behavioral insights into its antenatal care data systems. As more countries adopt behaviorally informed strategies for managing outbreaks, stronger collaboration between health and academic institutions will drive more effective policies and long-term improvements in public health.

Thailand

Award-winning research identifies source of pathogens.

As a girl, Dr. Kwanrawee Joy Sirikanchana didn't like "dirty things." She was shy and didn't consider herself adventurous. That has changed. Now the award-winning scientist is leading groundbreaking wastewater research aimed at detecting diseases early and at the source by using intestinal markers to determine whether animals or humans are contributing pathogens and, if so, which kind.

The Thai government is especially excited about implementing the research Sirikanchana directs at Bangkok's Chulabhorn Research Institute, a biomedical and chemistry research institute and Rockefeller Foundation partner since 2017. WHO has called antimicrobial resistance one of the world's top public health threats, with the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in humans, animals, and plants creating antimicrobial resistance that contributes to almost five million deaths annually.

Sirikanchana, a mother of two, says women often have less time to develop their careers because of family responsibilities. "But women bring particular experiences and viewpoints to research," she says. "They should be given full support to get the best outcomes."

Dr. Kwanrawee Joy Sirikanchana collecting water samples from the Chao Phraya River. (Photo Courtesy of Dr. Sirikanchana)

Stories from our Convenings

Building a common ground for climate and health work

Building on our work in developing the Guiding Principles for Financing Climate and Health Solutions, in 2024, The Rockefeller Foundation co-hosted six high-level convenings with the COP28 Presidency, Global Fund, the Green Climate Fund, and the WHO to galvanize the climate, finance, and health communities around shared priorities. This work is now embedded within the Baku COP Continuity Coalition for Climate Change and Health, established by five COP host countries at COP29 (the United Kingdom, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, and Brazil), to ensure that health remains central in climate action.

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Making public health information clear, credible, and concrete

The Mercury Project, a $25 million initiative seeded by The Rockefeller Foundation in 2021, brings together 133 members from diverse disciplines to better understand how people perceive the world, how these perceptions influence health behaviors, and how to develop science-based health decision-making. Regular convenings enable participants to collaborate, learn, and investigate that question. Their initial gathering led to the creation of a research framework. Since then, monthly meetings and yearly week-long convenings have enabled researchers to discuss their successes and challenges, and to collaboratively develop new solutions.

LESSONS IN ACTION

Learn first, join second, build last.

To bridge the divide between different communities, the Foundation is taking a "big tent" approach that brings people together from across sectors and geographies and gave space for shared priorities to emerge. We know from experience that sometimes the fruits of those partnerships take time to form, but that they are worth it in the long run. By focusing on cultivating dialogue and learning, we saw understanding begin to grow among philanthropic funders, researchers, and policymakers on how climate, finance, and health intersect.

Looking Ahead

Driving Climate-informed Health Action

Even in the hottest year on record, only 23 percent of national health officials currently use meteorological data in their health planning. That's why the Rockefeller Foundation and Wellcome are partnering with the World Health Organization-World Meteorological Organization Climate and Health Joint Programme to rapidly integrate meteorological insights into health decision-making processes in low- and middle-income countries. This includes solutions like health-relevant early warning systems and forecasts for climate-related health threats.