



**GBCHealth**

Mobilizing Business for a Healthier World

# Reaching the Health Millennium Development Goals:

## The Critical Role of India's Business Sector

November 13, 2013

### High Impact Investment Opportunities for Corporations

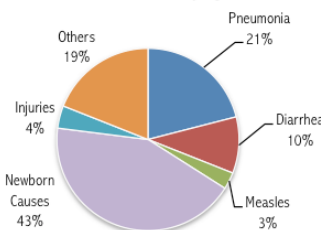
With 778 days left to achieve the [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#), the world is focused on India, the country where national progress will contribute significantly to the achievement of global goals. Despite India's success in achieving three of the MDGs, making great gains in education, halting new HIV and tuberculosis infections and increasing access to safe drinking water, the pace of change in preventing child and maternal deaths (MDGs 4 and 5) and improving basic sanitation (MDG 7) has been too slow to meet the critical targets.

Globally, one in every five children who dies before reaching her fifth birthday is an Indian child and one in every five women who dies of pregnancy-related causes is an Indian woman. 1.4 million children die annually, half during their first month of life and 300,000 on the very day they are born. Pneumonia and diarrhea cause one third of all child deaths and malnutrition is an underlying cause of more than half of all child deaths. 56,000 pregnant women die annually, most during childbirth. Half of the population does not have access to a toilet and poor sanitation and hygiene are major barriers to India's achievement of all of the health MDGs.

In the countdown to the MDG deadline - December 31, 2015 - new partners with innovative, high impact and sustainable approaches are needed to accelerate the rate of progress to the levels required for MDG achievement. Success will depend on the degree to which India's thriving business community engages and focuses its efforts where they will have the most impact on lives saved.

In response to this [urgent need for accelerated action](#) to achieve the MDGs, GBCHealth, a global coalition of more than 200 companies

Children under 5 in India are dying because of...



focused on health, has partnered with the Confederation of Indian Industry, the Reliance Foundation, the International Center for Research on Women, the American India Foundation, the MDG Health Alliance and the United Nations Foundation to engage corporations in India in the challenge to reduce mother and child deaths and improve sanitation and hygiene. The forum is in support of the UN Secretary-General's [Every Woman. Every Child](#) movement, an unprecedented global mobilization to advance women and children's health.

To [achieve MDG 4](#) child deaths must fall from their current level of 1.4 million to 1 million by 2015; maternal deaths must drop from 56,000 to 40,000 by 2015 and an additional 280 million people must have access to a toilet. Corporations can have greatest impact on these reductions in mortality and improvements in sanitation when they invest in programs that target the leading causes of death and poor sanitation in the regions where the needs are greatest.

More than 60 percent of maternal and child deaths in India are concentrated

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**4** Deaths of children under 5 must fall to 1 million by 2015 to achieve MDG 4



**5** Maternal deaths must fall to 40,000 by 2015 to achieve MDG 5



**7** 280 million more Indians must have access to a toilet to achieve MDG 7

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in four states - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan - with further concentrations in specific districts within these and other states across India.

To ensure that investments are targeted to the areas where the most lives can be saved, the Government of India has prioritized 184 districts for accelerated action under the [Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn and Child Health + Adolescents \(RMNCH+A\)](#) strategy. The [High Priority Districts](#) include 19 in Uttar Pradesh, 17 in Madhya Pradesh, 10 in Rajasthan, 9 in Maharashtra, 8 in Gujarat with the remainder spread across 18 states and territories.

It is important to note that with the movement of rural populations to urban areas, rates of child and maternal mortality and malnutrition in many urban areas are now comparable with rural rates. Companies seeking to reduce mortality should look closely at investments in urban slum populations as well as rural communities.

The Government of India is committed to improving maternal and child health. In 2012, they cohosted the Child Survival Call to Action with the US and Ethiopian Governments and in 2013 they hosted their own national [Call to Action for Child Survival](#) and Development. Since then the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been working to implement new policies and programs that will accelerate mortality reductions in the critical states and districts working in partnership with UN agencies and civil society.



To support companies as they consider how to invest in programs with maximum MDG impact, the following seven investment cases have been prepared. Each investment case targets a critical MDG area and presents a case for corporate action, offering examples of existing corporate partnerships that are having impact.

Investment cases include:

1. Newborn
2. Pneumonia
3. Diarrhea
4. Nutrition
5. Women's Empowerment, Reproductive and Maternal Health
6. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
7. Frontline Health Workers

As India implements new legislation that requires certain companies to invest two percent of their annual profits in specific areas of corporate social responsibility (CSR), these case studies can also serve as guidance to help companies comply with the law in ways that accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in India.

India has made progress in reducing deaths in children under five from 2.5 million in 2001 to 1.4 million in 2012 - an annual rate of decline of 3.7 percent. But in the words of Dr. M.K. Bhan, "The steady decline in under-5 mortality in a large country like India is laudable; however, acceleration through greater investment, focus and innovation is needed in regions and districts that are doing less well. This goal can be achieved, as shown by some of India's neighbours" ([Lancet, 2013](#)).

The next two years are a time of great opportunity for the private sector in India to contribute to a rapid acceleration of progress in the health of women and children. The critical factor is ensuring that new investments are targeted to fight the leading causes of mother and child death in the regions where deaths are concentrated. If business rises to this challenge and works in partnership with all stakeholders India can achieve the health related Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

### Next Steps

If your company is interested in learning more about investing in achievement of the health related Millennium Development Goals, please contact Shuma Panse at [spanse@gbchealth.org](mailto:spanse@gbchealth.org) or Rahul Bhargava at [rbhargava@mdghealthenvoy.org](mailto:rbhargava@mdghealthenvoy.org).



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