



VillageReach Mission, Goals and Strategies for Fiscal Years 2013-2015

Mission

Save lives and improve health by increasing access to quality healthcare for the most underserved communities

Goals

Increase healthcare access to produce positive outcomes and impact in community health

Create shared infrastructure social businesses that grow and thrive

Advance health system innovations to scale/sustainability through adoption by Ministries of Health and other global health institutions

Be the recognized global expert in health system strengthening starting at the last mile and thereby maintain and enhance a sustainable business model for VillageReach

Strategies

Develop last mile health system strengthening innovations (proven in the field)

Leverage the private sector to build shared infrastructure

Drive selected innovations and social businesses to scale and sustainability through collaboration with institutional partners

Build a diverse funding model for VillageReach to support projects in different stages of maturity

Introduction

The world has never possessed such a sophisticated arsenal of interventions and technologies for curing disease and prolonging life. Yet the gaps in health outcomes continue to widen. Much of the ill health, disease, premature death, and suffering we see on such a large scale is needless, as effective and affordable interventions are available for prevention and treatment. The reality is straightforward. The power of existing interventions is not matched by the power of health systems to deliver them to those in greatest need, in a comprehensive way, and on an adequate scale. Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization (2007)

Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have applied tremendous amounts of time and money to develop new medical products, technologies and treatments directed at the healthcare needs of people in low- and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs). Huge progress has been made, yet the health systems in many of these countries remain ineffective, inefficient and

2900 EASTLAKE AVE. E., SUITE 230 SEATTLE, WA 98102 USA
TEL: 1 206 512 1530 & 1 866 203 3175 FAX: 1 206 860 6972

WWW.VILLAGEREACH.ORG

incapable of handling the increases in throughput required to deliver these new interventions, especially to remote, hard-to-reach communities.

For example, vaccine-preventable diseases continue to kill 2.4 million children annually and leave millions more severely impaired despite the existence of low-cost vaccines that are readily available in high-income countries. In response, the global health community has refocused attention on vaccine-preventable diseases. Considerable resources are being directed towards increasing the supply of existing vaccines and developing new vaccines to combat diseases that place a disproportionate burden on LMICs. Current initiatives have focused on the discovery, development and financing of vaccines. Given the successes these efforts are generating, it is now time to address the inadequacies of the health systems into which these and future (and expensive) vaccines must enter. Absent improvements in supply chain and other components of existing health systems, we are facing, what has been termed, an “innovation pile-up.” Ignoring this severe bottleneck will render the billions of dollars that have been and will be devoted to vaccine discovery, development and procurement a profoundly diminished investment. The inadequacy of health systems in LMICs is not limited to vaccine distribution, but applies generally to all medical commodities and related medical care.

The ability of health systems – and the institutions that fund them – to embrace interventions at the last mile has been a long-standing challenge. Because health systems in LMICs are chronically underfunded, interventions that focus on historically neglected areas of the health system, such as strengthening the service delivery level in rural areas, must yield demonstrable results in order to attract sufficient funding and personnel to effect the proposed change at scale. An important consideration of this challenge is to acknowledge that while the investment in improving health systems at the last mile provides complementary value to interventions made higher in the value chain, much of the global health community continues to view last mile interventions as competing for scarce resources. Although current trends increasingly acknowledge the need to address the last mile challenge, focusing on the service delivery level is seldom viewed as a top priority for struggling health systems.

VillageReach was established in 2001, to address the challenges of delivering quality health services to the most underserved communities. VillageReach focuses on the final segment of the health system, often called the “last mile,” where health services are provided. The last mile, especially in rural areas, is generally the most difficult and weakest link in health systems.

Impact

Goals

Increase healthcare access to produce positive outcomes and impact in community health

Create shared infrastructure social businesses that grow and thrive

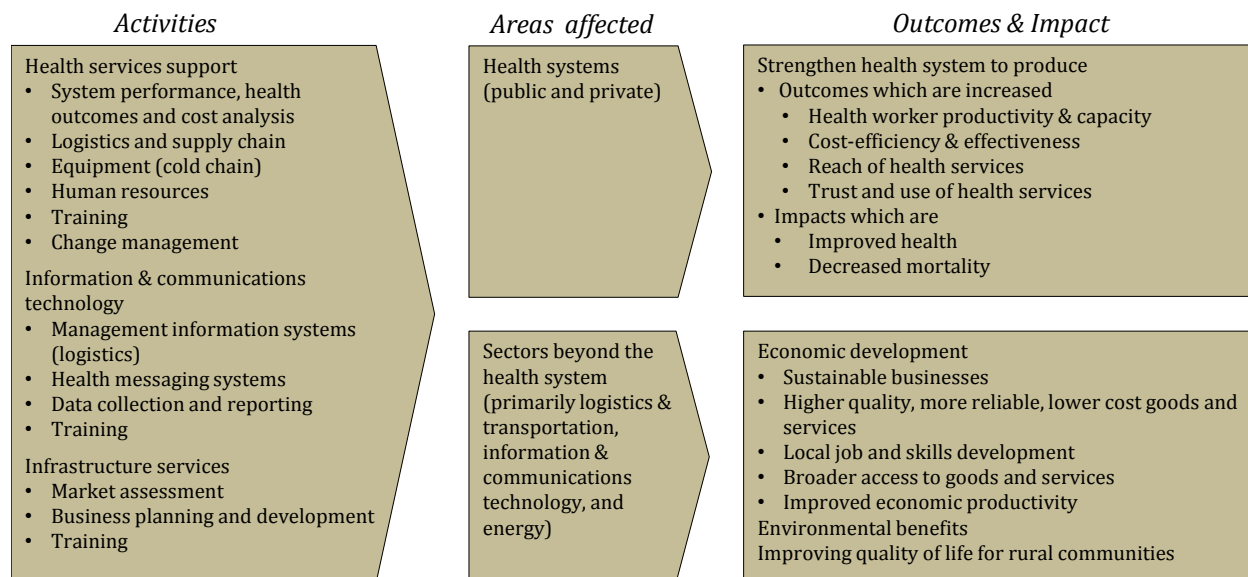
Strategies

Develop last mile health system strengthening innovations (proven in the field)

Leverage the private sector to build shared infrastructure

VillageReach partners with governments, communities, the private sector and other organizations to strengthen existing health systems. VillageReach seeks to establish a foundation or platform of support services upon which healthcare can be delivered more effectively, efficiently and with greater reach. The diagram below provides a framework for the anticipated outcomes and impacts flowing from VillageReach’s activities. Because VillageReach’s goal is to produce these outcomes

and impact, the framework has been used to define specific strategic objectives and success metrics described later in this document.



With over a decade of experience working in remote, rural regions, VillageReach focuses its efforts on key system strengthening activities which it has proven can produce significant improvements in outcomes and impacts, particularly for health:

Health Services Support. VillageReach assesses current gaps in health systems at the last mile that limit the quality and reach of healthcare. For example, existing distribution practices and management roles/responsibilities often limit health worker and system capacity. VillageReach assists health system managers and workers in implementing system improvements.

Information & Communications Technology (ICT). Robust health system performance depends on adequate ICT support. VillageReach defines requirements for and conducts evaluations of ICT systems, and develops personal voice and data communications solutions and health information systems that increase health worker capacity and improve health system efficiency. VillageReach’s use of internet and mobile application technologies provides health systems with critical support for personnel to ensure effective information capture and reporting.

Infrastructure Services. VillageReach seeks to build capacity in three key infrastructure sectors: transport and logistics, ICT and energy. Significant gaps in these sectors are typical in the rural areas of middle- and low-income countries and severely limit not only health system performance, but also prevent other elements of community and regional economies from functioning adequately to support their populations. With the development of private sector enterprises, VillageReach has created a model to scale sustainable infrastructure services necessary for health system improvement. Relieved of the burden of building and operating non-core activities, public and private health systems can devote their resources to the provision of healthcare.

VillageReach has shown that these activities will increase access to quality healthcare through the following:

Increase health worker *Productivity and Capacity*. Low and middle income countries face significant challenges regarding the limited number of available health workers and retention of the current workforce. While VillageReach may in certain cases conduct programs to increase the number of trained health workers, most of VillageReach's activities are directed at increasing the productivity and job satisfaction of existing health workers by improving the infrastructure, supplies and services required to provide quality health services. Specifically, VillageReach:

Builds local capacity through participatory processes to improve leadership, health worker competencies and practices, work environment, and community engagement;

Improves infrastructure and management by applying basic commercial principles to healthcare service supply and delivery; and

Uses data to support decision making and enable evidence-based advocacy.

Improve *Cost-Efficiency and Effectiveness of health systems*. By streamlining and integrating processes in existing health systems and programs, VillageReach strives to improve the overall cost-efficiency and effectiveness of the system, thereby reducing waste and freeing up scarce resources for investment in other health services.

Extend the *Reach of health services*. A significant percentage of LMIC populations live in rural areas with the least developed medical services delivery infrastructure. VillageReach focuses on strengthening the last mile of the health services delivery channel (i.e., from province to district to health center to communities). By focusing on rural and other remote health centers, VillageReach strengthens the system from the "bottom-up," thereby expanding access and extending the reach and reliability of primary health services.

Increase *Trust and Use of health services*. Over time, communities receiving reliable services will come to trust and rely on the health system, thereby improving the overall health of the community. By improving productivity, effectiveness and reach, VillageReach simultaneously seeks to increase the use and satisfaction of health services by the community.

The health impact VillageReach seeks is to save lives and improve health. Although it is difficult to measure impact definitively, VillageReach believes the above outcomes have a direct correlation to achieving its impact goals.

Infrastructure services offered by the local private sector can support the health system, as well as, help develop the local economy. While VillageReach's mission focuses on strengthening the health system, by working to create a vibrant and growing private sector that can support the health system, a number of economic development, environmental and other benefits (as outlined in the diagram above) occur as a result. Social business prospects will likely continue to flow from program activities. Infrastructure services that are good candidates for a social business are not healthcare specific, but have a market beyond that of the health centers (e.g., propane is needed for health centers, but also for restaurants and home use). Because the customer base for these businesses will generally grow beyond the health system, services can be provided under favorable terms to health centers. These businesses will be linked through contractual and other arrangements to the health system so they benefit and strengthen the health system while also developing sustainable commercial activity in some of the least developed regions of the world. This commercial activity is expected to provide communities with employment income, technical training, and ideally draw attention to the viability for follow-on investments by social and for-profit investors seeking competitive returns on investment.

Sustainability and Scale

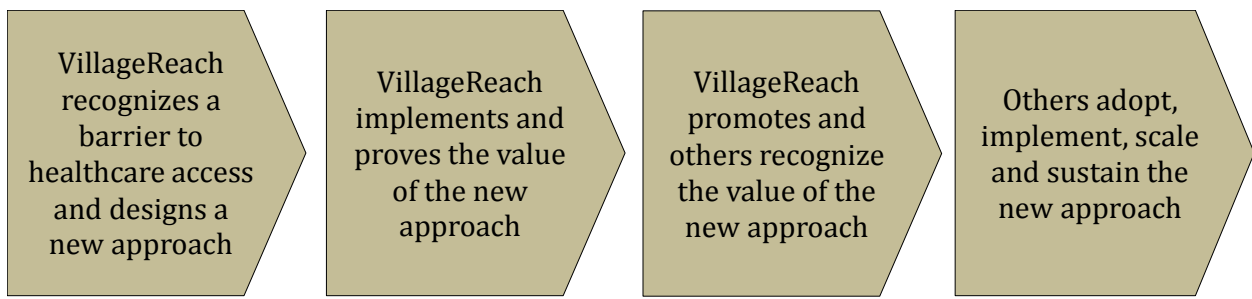
Goal

Advance health system innovations to scale/sustainability through adoption by Ministries of Health and other global health institutions

Strategy

Drive selected innovations and social businesses to scale and sustainability through collaboration with institutional partners

Success is judged not only by producing the outcomes and impact described above, but by their longevity and number of people positively affected. Because of the disparity between VillageReach's size and the scope of the problem it seeks to address, VillageReach must find ways to leverage its work such that others sustain the improvements and take them to scale. To effect broad and long lasting changes in health systems, VillageReach has adopted the following theory of change:



As mentioned above, VillageReach focuses on the last mile of the health system which is just beginning to receive significant attention from organizations seeking to strengthen health systems. As a result, with a multi-discipline approach, VillageReach has been able to develop new approaches to long-standing problems and demonstrate how these new approaches can produce significant improvements in health system performance. By analyzing and documenting these improvements, VillageReach encourages the broader global health community to adopt and adapt the new approaches. Through this approach VillageReach is able to create lasting change on a far larger scale than it can with its own, limited resources. Key attributes of this approach include:

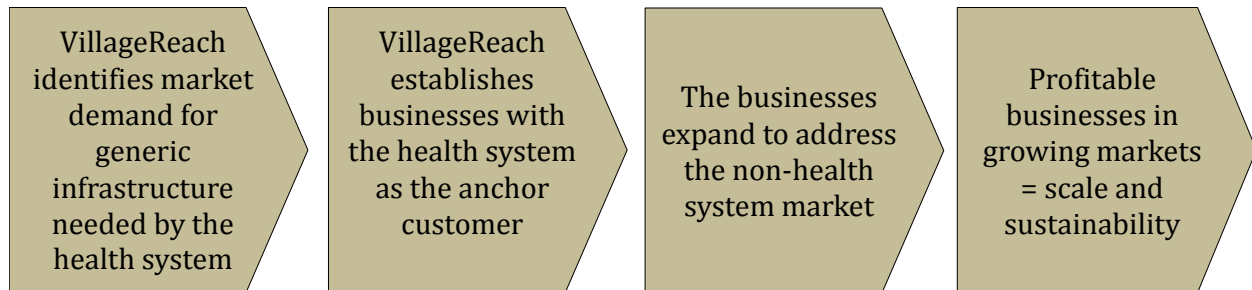
Locally appropriate yet scalable. VillageReach creates solutions that are proven to work in one country and are expected to work in many other countries. Although adjustments to fit the local environment will occur, the core set of VillageReach's practices and tools has been designed to be utilized in multiple locations.

Document and publish the VillageReach approach to support replication. Although VillageReach expects to expand the geographic reach of its activities, there will always be more need than it can address. To respond to this need, VillageReach will document its practices and tools to guide other organizations that wish to replicate them. Documentation and tools will be posted on www.villagereach.org.

Advocacy. Despite its small size, VillageReach has taken an active role in global health community dialogue through speaking engagements, publishing papers and other activities. With these efforts and the documented results of programs it is conducting directly, VillageReach is able to bring about broader adoption and replication of its last mile solutions.

With its advocacy efforts and consulting engagements, VillageReach is indirectly achieving desired outcomes and impacts by influencing others to act.

VillageReach has adopted the following theory of change for developing private sector infrastructure to support the health system:



VillageReach seeks to fill gaps in infrastructure services needed by the health system to function effectively and efficiently. By creating vibrant private sector infrastructure services in remote, rural regions, health system managers have the option to outsource certain infrastructure services.

Organizational Stability and Growth

Goal

Be the recognized global expert in health system strengthening starting at the last mile and thereby maintain and enhance a sustainable business model for VillageReach

Strategy

Build a diverse funding model for VillageReach to support projects in different stages of maturity

Given the growing understanding of the need for organizations with expertise in and focus on health services distribution and support, particularly in remote, hard-to-reach areas, VillageReach is working to scale-up its operations enabling it to be an important contributor in addressing the healthcare needs of remote, underserved communities. VillageReach will continue to focus on applying its core expertise where the need is great, but addressed by only a few or no other organizations. VillageReach efforts fall into two categories:

Self-defined programs. To continue to produce innovative and effective solutions, VillageReach must allocate a portion of its time and resources to self-defined programs where it has the ability to try new approaches. With these programs VillageReach is directly achieving desired outcomes and impacts.

Contractual engagements. As larger global health organizations have sought VillageReach's last mile expertise, it has entered into a number of paid, contractual engagements. These engagements enhance financial stability, develop greater expertise, broaden exposure and, most importantly, enable VillageReach to promote its solutions in a leveraged manner that amplifies its ability to effect change for remote, underserved communities.