

# 'Innovating for every woman, every child' report published

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A report published Online by The Lancet today -- "Innovating for Every Woman, Every Child" -- attempts to capture how changes in global developments and connectivity will interact in order to improve the health and wellbeing of the most marginalised women and children around the globe. A Comment on the report is also published by The Lancet, written by Tore Godal, (Special Adviser to Prime Minister of Norway on global health); and Richard Klausner (Managing Partner of The Column Group, San Francisco, USA).

The report says that the path to sustainability is the creation of self-sustaining supply-demand systems where local demand is understood, appreciated and locally solved. The authors say: "This is where democratising technologies like mobile phones are showing the way...In the case of mobile phones, the private sector is providing the infrastructure that represents a great opportunity for the [public sector](#) to exploit for [better health](#) of its people."

The report details how 50 projects were received in only 2 weeks this spring by the "Every Woman, Every Child" Innovation Working Group. The first [Grand Challenge](#) for Development called Saving Lives at Birth— supported by the USA, Norway, World Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Grand Challenges Canada—received almost 600 proposals this spring. The Grand Challenges are about transforming seemingly insurmountable development challenges into solvable problems. The Saving Lives at Birth Challenge seeks to nurture innovation to the challenge of protecting mothers and newborns in the

poorest places on the planet during their most vulnerable hours, by harnessing the collective imagination and ingenuity of experts across a broad range of disciplines and expertise. To translate this energy and opportunity into improved health for women and children through self sustaining supply-demand systems now represents the immediate challenge.

The Comment authors say that the UN Secretary General's initiative "Every Woman, Every Child", a global strategy to improve women's and children's health and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Goals, has the key building blocks required to make it a reality.

First, the fundamental commitments in Every Woman, Every Child is coming from the leaders in the 49 poorest countries of which over 40 in less than a year have made concrete financial policy and/or technical commitments. Second, the initiative is a multi-stakeholder strategy in which public sector, [private sector](#), NGOs, academia, professional groups, and the UN all are included, engaged and making explicit commitments. Third, the active participation of parliamentary groups with democratising technologies provides strong links to local political processes. Fourth, a strong culture of accountability is being fostered through an Accountability Commission that in less than one year developed a series of bold recommendations that are now being implemented. Fifth, innovation is given very high priority, especially through public-private cooperation facilitated by its Innovation Working Group.

The Comment authors conclude: "At this transformational time, we have an unprecedented opportunity through innovation to foster true global development to make the world a better, healthier, secure, and prosperous place through the participation and contributions of its most marginalised people."

**More information:** The report can be found online at [www.thelancet.com/journals/lan ... \(11\)61393-7/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lan... (11)61393-7/abstract)

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