

**Making
more
health**

A TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIP

10 Years & 10 Principles for Effective
Collaboration Between Business and Civil
Society

EXECUTIVE VERSION



**Boehringer
Ingelheim**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Ashoka [Learning and Action Center](#) is a European think tank started in 2018. Its research cuts across all Ashoka programs and initiatives. It screens and analyzes our knowledge about social issues, Ashoka Fellows and system-changing new ideas, and makes the insights actionable for collective solutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective collaboration between business and civil society is indispensable when addressing social problems globally. The Making More Health (MMH) partnership between Boehringer Ingelheim and Ashoka is an instance of such collaboration in the field of global health. Aiming to achieve better access and quality of healthcare for humans and animals alike, the partnership has expanded over the past 10 years in many directions. At the core of the partnership is connecting innovative and entrepreneurial solutions for healthcare provision with business expertise in communities around the world.

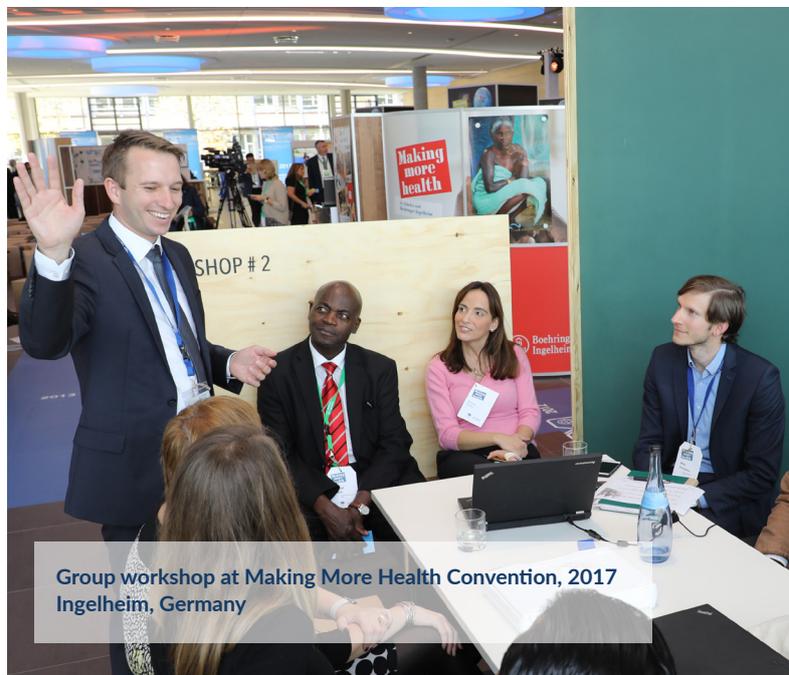
In our full report, "A Transformative Partnership. 10 years & 10 principles for effective collaboration between business and civil society" (click [here](#)), we share the 10-year journey of MMH, the 10 principles for effective collaboration and offer five reflections for the future of cross-sectoral partnerships. Our full report includes case studies, interviews, and comments from key players and stakeholders of Making More health. Join us on the journey towards making more impact on the health of individuals, animals, and communities around the world!

This executive version of the report provides a succinct yet thorough overview of our findings.



About Ashoka

Founded in 1980, Ashoka is the world's leading network of social entrepreneurs, with a network of over 3,700 social entrepreneurs in 90 countries. Every year, Ashoka identifies and supports leading social entrepreneurs worldwide with the most innovative system-changing solutions to address social issues and change society for the better. Ashoka then learns from the patterns and innovations to mobilize a global community that embraces these new frameworks to build an "Everyone A Changemaker" – EACH world.



Group workshop at Making More Health Convention, 2017
Ingelheim, Germany



About Boehringer Ingelheim

Boehringer Ingelheim is driven by the desire to serve mankind by improving human and animal health. As a successful, family-owned company Boehringer Ingelheim plans in generations, working together globally and with integrity.



About Making More Health

Since 2011, Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim have built upon a collective global vision: increase access to health care for people, animals, and their communities. As a result, their joint Initiative - Making More Health (MMH) - supports the systems-changing solutions of social entrepreneurs and combines diverse approaches along the continuum of care in a holistic approach for social and business impact.

THE 10-YEAR JOURNEY OF MAKING MORE HEALTH

How does social change happen? The social sector plays a pivotal role, to be sure, but the private sector can also play a part in solutions, and many business leaders are eager to learn how. By creating well-matched partnerships between organizations in both sectors, changemaker companies can serve communities in a more holistic, meaningful way – while preparing their organizations to address complex social challenges in our changing world.

In 2010, Boehringer Ingelheim celebrated its 125th anniversary. The company’s leadership wanted to launch something special that year— a new healthcare initiative that would transform society for the better. To bring this idea to life, Boehringer Ingelheim needed a partner with global scale, long-range vision, and an entrepreneurial edge. Ashoka, respected as the world’s largest community of social entrepreneurs, made the

ideal match. Together the two organizations co-created Making More Health (MMH), an initiative focused on achieving a world where “everyone has more health” by centering the needs of communities and beneficiaries. MMH works with leading social innovators to address health access and affordability, and the underlying causes of these issues.

While the power of this partnership seemed obvious to the MMH team, getting more and more people to buy in initially proved to be a challenge. So, the team began offering new opportunities, such as employees participating in on-the-ground experiences that enabled them to understand the partnership from a community perspective. As a result, employees began seeing how MMH connected to their work. It was a milestone moment in the partnership, and more evolutions were around the corner.

Phase 1 (2011-2014) focused on identifying and supporting the social innovators.

Phase 2 (2014-2017) focused on the development of changemaking skills such as intrapreneurship and leadership among Boehringer Ingelheim employees.

Phase 3 (2017-2020) focused on creating stronger local ecosystems and cross-sectoral collaboration between Boehringer Ingelheim, social entrepreneurs, and their local communities.

Phase 4 (2021-2024) will continue expanding the partnership and including additional stakeholders with the purpose of advancing the systemic approach.

Moving forward, the partnership aims to increase the number of Boehringer Ingelheim employees engaged in its programs and to work across the healthcare ecosystem in order to develop revolutionary models for business and partnerships in the field of health.



Structure and Strategy

MMH's approach can be summed up as “global framework, local strategies.” Within the larger framework, there is plenty of room to test and adapt projects on a community or country level.

The global framework rests on three main pillars:

- **Social Innovation.** MMH selects cutting-edge social entrepreneurs in the health field to become Making More Health Fellows and receive support that grows their impact. In this two-way exchange, Fellows also provide Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim with important insights and understanding of trends in the health sector.
- **Changemaker Culture.** MMH is not just about external impact, but also internal impact. It has evolved to include multiple initiatives that involve the company's employees: Executive in Residence, Leadership Weeks, the Bag to the Future competition, and online intrapreneurship courses. Through these opportunities, employees can further develop leadership skills and illustrate intrapreneurial spirit.
- **Cross-sector collaboration.** The MMH Accelerator, co-designed by Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim, helps to scale the work of social entrepreneurs to new areas and levels of impact. The result: better health access in communities worldwide, and a strengthened foundation for sustainable business at Boehringer Ingelheim.

Results

Over its 10-year journey, MMH has not only pioneered new programs, but seen impressive results. In 10 years, nearly 9.3 Million direct beneficiaries have been touched by the program through the support of more than 100 social entrepreneurs and 5,000 Boehringer Ingelheim employees engaged in the partnership. It has boosted the ability of local organizations to make connections regionally and globally. It has supported social entrepreneurs, employees, and both Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim as organizations.

(*) [Click here](#) to see the last impact report on Executive in Residence program.



Ashoka / MMH Fellow Jane Waitera (right), founder of Positive Exposure, with team member (left).

MMH Fellows

The community of 100+ Making More Health Fellows —and counting — are creating a broader movement for health. As MMH Fellows, these social entrepreneurs are validated in their work both via social and business impact and become part of a global network of innovators in health, which has allowed some to scale to other countries.

Boehringer Ingelheim Employees

MMH offers Boehringer Ingelheim employees a host of opportunities. “Leadership Weeks” and “Executives in Residence”(*) encourage employees to be changemakers within the company. During on-the-ground experiences in communities across the world, employees find themselves outside their comfort zones, confronted by new challenges that help them become more empathetic leaders. They gain a better understanding of the challenges of economically marginalized communities, and of context- or culture-related issues that might influence the delivery of medicines and healthcare.

Employees can develop new local projects anywhere in the world after taking part in any MMH program, with very little bureaucracy. It is up to them to take the MMH framework, channel their intrapreneurial spirit, and go for it. Not every idea is a success, but each one allows employees to learn and reconnect with the real needs of communities.

Boehringer Ingelheim

Through MMH, Boehringer Ingelheim's approach to building alliances has shifted— moving beyond philanthropy and corporate social responsibility to holistically create better access to health. The partnership has created powerful connections between different departments at Boehringer Ingelheim, and today it is part of the Corporate Strategy department. Some of Boehringer Ingelheim's teams started working with MMH Fellows directly and together are building new models for health access. In a traditionally structured pharmaceutical company, innovation comes from the top. Through MMH, innovation can come from every direction.

Ashoka

The partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim has helped Ashoka grow in size, reach, and impact. The partnership funding allowed the nonprofit to expand to new countries and to support new social entrepreneurs in health. MMH has also improved Ashoka's understanding of the health space and how to better serve it through social entrepreneurship. MMH has directly influenced the organization's activities and served as inspiration for the program Changemaker Companies while helping Ashoka fine-tune its approach to partnership management. Ashoka learned how to better engage companies in advancing its "Everyone a Changemaker" mission, activating diverse individuals and organizations through intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship alike.

The next 10 years

The journey of MMH does not stop here. Having started a new phase of the collaboration in 2021, Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim look towards driving ecosystem change with a target of touching at least **30 million human lives** (supporting 250 social entrepreneurs and 12,000 employees), bringing new partners on board, strengthening the community-level engagement, and broadening the awareness and interest for MMH globally.



"Autofabricantes" organization, from the MMH Fellow Francisco Díaz (Spain)



10 PRINCIPLES TO BUILD SUCCESSFUL CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS.

Partnerships between nonprofit and for-profit organizations are essential – but their success is anything but predictable. With different goals, operating models, and organizational cultures, it is easy to see why long-lasting collaborations across the two sectors are rare.

Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim's Making More Health (MMH) partnership is an exception. Over the last 10 years, the partnership has launched new healthcare solutions, directly supported over 100

social entrepreneurs in the field, and influenced both organizations' visions for creating positive impact in society.

What made the difference? Why has this partnership proved to be both successful and sustainable? Based on in-depth qualitative research, we have drawn out 10 main principles for effective collaboration that not only shaped the success of MMH but can serve as a guide for other cross-sector partnerships.

1. Start from core value alignment and commitment.

A true partnership starts with an eye-to-eye vision. By matching their values, a business and an NGO can overcome “funder-service provider” dynamics to form a balanced, collaborative partnership. Boehringer Ingelheim and Ashoka started out with several shared values: innovation, entrepreneurship, and the commitment to create value for society.

2. Foster flexibility to maintain creativity.

Values and overall goals should be firm, but when it comes to processes and activities the partnership will require some flexibility. After all, that is where innovation comes in.

Instead of forecasting far ahead, a “learning-by-doing” approach allows a team to grow the partnership organically. Embracing flexibility encourages people to make the partnership their own, bringing in new ideas and initiatives. It can allow for changes in management, budget, and structure. Our learning: start with a few core activities, plenty of ambition, and the confidence that success will come over time.

3. The best team is the right team.

The right advocates can transform a partnership and take it to the next level. Invest time and energy to build a strong, aligned team. An internal corporate leader, ideally at a senior level, is essential – someone who will take risks and invest their credibility. Or several individuals, at multiple levels of leadership, can take on this role to strengthen and promote the partnership.

Both organizations should keep team turnover as low as possible, and make sure enough people are staffed to the partnership. Onboarding and building relationships take time. Mutual understanding and trust will make all the difference. And engaging employees at every level of the company, especially changemakers, will propel the partnership even further.

4. Gather strength from local communities and partners.

To develop projects that respond to a community's needs, employees at both partnering organizations need direct exposure to everyday reality and concrete challenges in these communities. The partnership should address these needs holistically and engage local partners, who have the most expertise, in developing such programs.

For example, field experience at the community level in India and Kenya has played a central role in engaging Boehringer Ingelheim's employees in MMH. Do not underestimate the value of connecting people from different contexts to learn from one another.

5. Invest time and energy in aligning working styles.

The NGO world and the business sector can have very different priorities, working patterns, and ways of thinking. For example, Boehringer Ingelheim relies on hierarchy and formal processes, while Ashoka's processes encourage higher risk and agility. To find a "middle ground" that suits both organizations, we take a "team of teams" approach, applied to everything from project management to flexible reporting frameworks.

What is a "team of teams"? We form teams based on the skills each member offers and the needs for a particular project. Teams dissolve, regroup, and change in a goal-oriented way. Agreeing on expectations— like timeline and resources, for example— will help both partners find a comfortable dynamic.

6. Think of the effects of the partnership on both partners equally.

Learning should go both ways in a healthy partnership between a business and NGO. Focus not only on how the company can be influenced by the work with NGOs, but also on how NGOs can learn and benefit from best practices of companies.

Organizational sizes, stability, and different financial powers will all come into play. Addressing these points directly and honestly can ensure a mutually beneficial partnership.

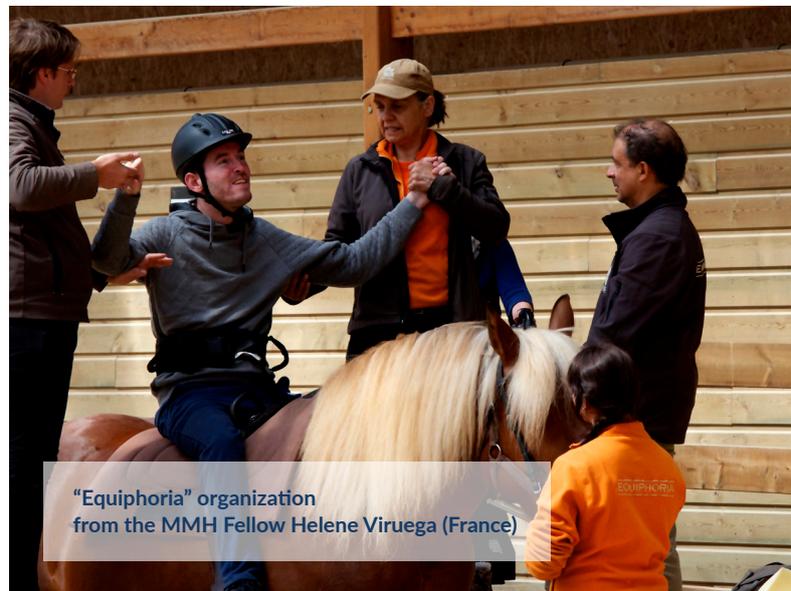
7. Create channels for follow-up and long-term engagement.

Even if organizations design on-the-ground experiences, it is hard to connect them to employees' everyday activities in a way that's ongoing, not sporadic. But developing regular internal events and programs can help keep the explorative spirit alive among staff.

Connecting local experiences and internal creative programs with a company's core business and a nonprofit's main activities will require extra effort and change — but is worth the investment.



Ashoka / MMH Fellow - Peter Awin, founder of Cowtribe (Right), with Head of Corporate Sustainability Development Eduardo Lioy (Left), Boehringer Ingelheim



"Equiphoria" organization from the MMH Fellow Helene Viruega (France)

8. Increase the impact of the partnership by seeking new partners.

A successful partnership “pays it forward” by bringing in others. Once the partnership feels stable, you can consider how to engage third parties who could help increase your holistic impact.

Keep in mind that engaging new partners will require time and resources – it should happen little by little, and only with partners have a compatible vision and way of working that already matches the dynamics in place. Warning: Opening up the partnership increases complexity—of coordination, alignment, and decision-making—but humility and commitment go a long way.

9. Communicate the partnership internally and connect it to relevant priorities.

Communication efforts increase the attention that staff allocates to the program, but also that of external stakeholders that work on similar topics. Using established frameworks and language for your field also helps people understand better what you are doing.

Since a complex partnership can be difficult to explain, plenty of strategic communication – around roles, activities, and results– will be key to build support and momentum.

10. Develop a representative impact measurement framework.

What makes a partnership successful—and how do you measure that success? Answering this question will probably require many conversations. The goal is to arrive at metrics that meet both organizations’ needs, rooted in their shared values.

Do not be afraid to let the impact measurement framework evolve over time. Look at the bigger picture and adjust the concrete indicators set at the start as needed. And avoid becoming hyper-focused on indicators, especially since not all valuable impact can be quantifiably reflected. Alongside measurement tools, authenticity and self-reflectiveness can help a partnership stay on track towards meaningful impact.



“Edible Garden City” company,
from the MMH Fellow Bjorn Low Hoek (Singapore)



Ashoka/ MMH Fellow Elisabeth Raith-Paula organization MFM
(My Fertility Matters), Germany

5 REFLECTIONS TO GUIDE CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS.

Making More Health is a partnership that aims to increase the access and quality of healthcare for both humans and animals, it is an example of long-term commitment across organizations and sectors to improve global health. Its experience, development, success, and shortcomings can inspire and support the evolution of other similar partnerships across sectors. After this 10-year journey, and 10 main principles for effective collaboration, here are some reflections on what all these insights can mean more broadly and how we can use them as socially conscientious organizations moving into the future.



1. Adjust the principles to each organizational reality.

There is no one-size-fits-all recipe for success. The MMH team is constantly adapting as we go. As you seek to apply the 10 principles, ask: What are my organization's needs, interests, and way of working? Every company's culture is different, but we can always find inspiration across different examples.

2. Think of the bilateral learning and development in the partnership.

Who benefits more, the company or the social impact organization? In a successful and sustainable partnership, benefits always go both ways. The traditional mindset tells us that corporations primarily as sources of funding for NGOs, and that NGOs are "guides" that will show corporations the "right" path. How do we have a more meaningful exchange? Start by discussing the strengths of each organization, and how each can change for the better through this partnership.



3. Focus on the people you are actually looking to serve.

Partnership management involves plenty of day-to-day work: activities, milestones, meetings. But resist getting too caught up in deliverables. Remember the issue your partnership aims to address. Returning to this north star – by putting beneficiaries at the center— helps partners to stay on track with priorities, next steps and ultimate goals.

4. Balance structure and flexibility.

Flexibility is a must, but so are structure and strategy. A mix of experimentation and guidance helps people feel safer and more confident as they explore different ways to make impact. The right balance also leads to higher motivation and engagement within the team.

5. Real change takes time.

Changing organizations and systems is no light lift. Culture and processes tend to be deeply engrained. That is why one-time projects can't reach deeper levels of change. To reframe the way that organizations work on health and other global issues, we need to commit for the long haul. When flexible teams invest in understanding the issues they seek to impact on a systemic level, and regularly engage multiple stakeholders, the needle begins to move. Catchy slogans don't predict impact— the nitty, gritty daily work that requires constant communication, evaluation, and fine-tuning will make the difference over decades.

Our hope is that these insights can serve not only MMH and its associated stakeholders, but also a wide variety of other businesses and civil society organizations that work on building strong and effective partnerships. We are all still learning, but one thing is for sure: we will need more and more of these collaboration in the future



Horas da Vida, Brazil
founded by MMH Fellow
Joao Paulo Nogueira Ribeiro



MMH Community Lead Manuela Pastore
receives gift in Community partner Karl
Kübel Foundation - Coimbatore, India

