



Linking Local Partners to Funders

A closer look at Touch's first successfully completed partner transition

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Introduction

The partnership between Touch Foundation and Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation (BMSF) illustrates Touch's belief that international development should not foster dependency but rather empower local partners to create sustainable change. Touch Foundation developed a strong partnership with BMSF and nurtured a sense of familiarity between BMSF and its local Tanzanian partners. Over the course of a number of years and separate grants, Touch successfully transitioned the partnership to a direct relationship between BMSF and the Catholic University of Allied Sciences (CUHAS) in Mwanza, Tanzania.

About Touch Foundation

Touch Foundation combines the best of private and public sector approaches and expertise to improve the health of Tanzanians by strengthening the health system. Touch approaches the health system as an interconnected web of elements, all of which need to be functional to enable effective delivery of care. Health system elements include healthcare workers, infrastructure, supplies and equipment, transportation and referrals, and healthcare management.

Touch strengthens Tanzania's health system at both local and national levels and shares their findings with the global health community. Touch's strategy builds upon its expertise in healthcare worker education and its established *Treat & Train* Network of healthcare and educational facilities across Tanzania's Lake Zone. Touch's single-country focus allows them to develop long-term, enduring relationships that enable the type of sustainable change this case study details.

Touch Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with offices in New York, NY and Mwanza, Tanzania. Touch relies on support from a diverse group of donors, including USAID and McKinsey & Company.

"The collaboration has been very successful and enabled CUHAS to work in the community as one of its core activities. In addition, it has attracted MD graduates to work in the rural areas."

~ Professor Stephen Mshana, CUHAS Deputy Vice Chancellor

About Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation

Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation promotes health equity and seeks to improve the health outcomes of populations disproportionately affected by serious diseases. It does so by strengthening healthcare worker capacity, integrating medical care and community-based supportive services, and mobilizing communities in the fight against disease.

SECURE THE FUTURE is a Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation initiative. Launched in 1999, it is the first and largest corporate commitment to address HIV in Africa. Today the initiative has expanded its focus to include TB and cervical and breast cancers. *SECURE THE FUTURE* is committed to implementing a technical assistance and skills transfer program. This enables them to focus on harnessing and strengthening community-based resources and building capacity to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of community outreach programs.

History of Touch Foundation Partnership with Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation

In 2007, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation (BMSF) funded a joint Touch Foundation/McKinsey & Company study that analyzed the existing health system in the Lake Zone Region of Tanzania. This initial assessment identified systemic issues within the Tanzanian healthcare system and helped Touch test innovative, workable solutions, such as an emergency transport system utilizing taxis.

In 2009, BMSF awarded Touch another grant to support the *Lake Zone Initiative*, a program created to identify local partners for a regional clinical network. This was the precursor to Touch's *Treat & Train* Network of healthcare and educational institutions. This 'Network' concept shapes all of Touch's programs. The Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS) and its associated teaching hospital Bugando Medical Centre (BMC), located in Northwestern Tanzania, became the flagship members. Jointly, they serve a catchment area of approximately 17 million people, representing a third of the population of Tanzania.

In 2011, the *SECURE THE FUTURE (STF)* Technical Assistance Program awarded follow-up funding to Touch Foundation for two programs. Touch worked with Bugando and other partners to implement a faculty exchange and clinical mentorship program that cascaded down to regional and district facilities, further cementing the value of Touch's *Treat & Train* Network. The second program placed *STF* staff on the ground to work with students and faculty to transfer critical skills in Community Health, including HIV/AIDS data collection, diagnostic skills, best practices for treatment, and peer counseling.

In 2013, BMSF's next grant to Touch set the stage for the transfer of the relationship to CUHAS. The program funded CUHAS MD students to conduct field projects at the village level with community-based organizations. Over the 2-year grant period, Touch staff transitioned ownership of the program to CUHAS.

In 2015, CUHAS was successful in applying directly to BMSF for continuing support. Touch worked closely with CUHAS staff to design the project and complete the grant proposal and budget. CUHAS's 3-year grant is addressing the prevalence of cervical cancer and HIV/AIDS among women and the elderly in marginalized communities, with a continued focus on CUHAS student research. Touch will remain involved to help disseminate research findings and provide technical assistance if needed.



A handwashing site at one of the schools reported in Wilson's study

In 2014, Wilson Lucas, a CUHAS MD student, conducted a field study funded by BMSF's grant, working in partnership with a local Tanzania organization, TAHEA (Tanzania Home Economics Association). Wilson designed a research study to assess hygiene in 15 primary schools. Children's ability to learn is often affected by sanitation-related disease if schools lack proper facilities and education on hygiene. Wilson collected data from over 350 schoolchildren in Mwanza, Tanzania to assess their hand washing practices. He also collected data on the routine cleaning of school toilets. His research found that only 30% of the students had access to a hand washing facility, and the facilities that do exist often do not have water and/or soap. His detailed research included recommendations, which included building rainwater-harvesting systems to ensure the availability of clean and safe water.

The Touch Foundation Approach

Touch views the transition from a direct BMSF-Touch funding relationship (with CUHAS as a beneficiary) to a BMSF-CUHAS relationship as a major success and an example of Touch's long-term capacity-building approach. Touch Foundation has been in Tanzania since 2004 and our integral partnerships with local Tanzanian-led organizations are a source of strength. Touch Foundation seeks to transition more funders to our partners, ensuring long-term sustainable change. Our partners' success and self-sufficiency is a measure of our success in strengthening the Tanzanian health system.

Contact Information

Dr. Steve Justus | Chief Medical Officer and SVP | Touch Foundation
+1 917 434 7890 | steve_justus@mckinsey.com

Kira Elbert | Director of Development | Touch Foundation
+1 646 573 8318 | kira_elbert@mckinsey.com