

PRESS RELEASE



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Taking medicines to the last mile

- GSK collaborates in innovative pharmacy initiative to provide access to underserved communities in South Africa

Ensuring access to affordable, quality medicines for those living in the hardest to reach places has proven to be one of the most difficult and enduring challenges in global health. This is why development and global health leaders from both the public and private sectors are joining forces to announce the launch of Lulama, an innovative financing partnership that will strengthen independent, community pharmacies in under-served areas, and enable access to quality, life-saving medicines to those who need them most.

Pharmacies play an important role in the health care sector in developing countries. For many people, pharmacies are the first point of contact with the health sector and the primary point of access for medicines and other day-to-day goods. However, inadequate business skills, poor systems and lack of access to working capital prevents these pharmacies from stocking sufficient high quality and affordable medicines to meet the needs of the populations they serve.

To overcome this challenge, Absa Bank, Aspen Pharmacare, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), Imperial Health Sciences, Pfizer and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have come together to design and implement Lulama, a comprehensive and sustainable community pharmacy development project that combines the skills, systems and processes of the private sector, with the development support of the public sector.

A pilot project for Lulama will be launched in South Africa in September with 30 pharmacies shortlisted to participate in the initial phase.

"Ensuring access to quality medicines in under-served areas has been one of the most difficult bottlenecks to overcome in global health", said Ariel Pablos-Mendez, Assistant Administrator for Global Health at USAID. "This innovative financing partnership offers us the chance to overcome this barrier using a sustainable, market-based approach, and demonstrate that the public and private sectors can effectively work together to achieve social impact."

Davis Gichuhi, GSK's Pharmaceutical General Manager for South and Southern Africa added "We believe GSK can help transform not only the health status of Africa but also its economic development. Through this partnership, we are making strides to get more medicines of value to more people who need them."

Pfizer South Africa Country Manager, Jennifer Power, explains that involvement in the project is consistent with the company's commitment to "collaborate with stakeholders who share the same ideals to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care to those most in need".



Iain Barton, Imperial's Group Executive: Healthcare, adds "Lulama will enable participating independent pharmacies to benefit from business management training and economies of scale, ensuring more competitive pricing. We are very excited about this potential to improve healthcare delivery and patient outcomes."

By providing pharmacies with working capital, access to an affordable product bundle of high quality medicines and consumer goods, as well as training in business and logistics management, Lulama will encourage the development and improve the sustainability of small pharmacies in under-served areas, thus allowing them to better serve their communities and improve health outcomes.

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