As with any startup, CII was founded with an ambitious vision, an appetite for risk, and an excitement for new frontiers. Established in 2012 as a cross-cutting center of excellence for innovation and market-based approaches, we have focused on initiatives forged in partnership internally and across the private, nonprofit, and academic sectors.

One of our first initiatives was helping launch the Saving Lives at Birth Grand Challenge, which generated a portfolio of 150 health innovations benefiting 3M women and children and raising over $160M in external grants and investment. Sourcing innovations is not enough, so we have also supported delivery and demand for health products across disease areas. We’ve collaborated with USAID colleagues to design launch plans for an antiseptic to lower newborn infections in Nepal, embedded human-centered design to reach young women in southern Africa with HIV prevention, and improved market incentives for faster access to HIV treatment. We’ve also aimed for systems-level change, such as by coordinating USAID’s Digital Health Vision to encourage integration of digital tools across ~$4 billion in health programming and by developing a strategy now underway to increase oxygen access in 50 countries.

Over the years, CII has enabled private sector partnerships, facilitating USAID’s role in the Project Last Mile partnership with Coca-Cola and others that builds Ministry of Health (MOH) supply chain and strategic marketing capabilities; and co-founding Aspen Management Partners for Health (AMP Health), which enhances leadership and management capabilities in MOH.

This last decade has brought dramatic changes, from technological leaps to the COVID-19 pandemic. Embarking on our second decade, we are energized by opportunities for innovative financing and market-based approaches to draw in new resources or savings; for centering voices from our partner countries in our work; and for exploring how emerging technologies can help us bridge data siloes. Even as we have adapted to evolving needs, many aspects of CII have stayed the same: applying our specialized expertise across innovation, market access, and digital health; our collaborative approach; our openness to new ideas and strategic risk-taking; and, most importantly, our tight-knit, entrepreneurial, and committed CII team. We do not know what the future will bring, but we look forward to facing it with bold visions, strategic risk-taking, and continued excitement for the unknown.
OUR MISSION

USAID’s Center for Innovation and Impact (CII) incubates new ideas, puts them into practice, and scales effective approaches through partnership and institutional change. Our expertise in innovation, market-based solutions, and digital health helps us accelerate impact against critical health issues.
CII’S WORK AT A GLANCE

Collaborating across USAID, CII aims to maximize global health impact by incubating new ideas, putting them into practice, and scaling effective approaches through partnership and institutional change.
As the world faces a third year with COVID-19, we continue to source solutions that confront the pandemic directly while also responding to its indirect consequences in the overall health system. Highlights of CII’s COVID-19 response include:

- Increased access to medical oxygen by developing and beginning to implement a strategy allocating $75M in funding to support expansion of bulk liquid oxygen and supporting dozens of countries in strengthening oxygen ecosystems.

- Guided $10M in regional vaccine manufacturing support, which complements investors’ $200M+ in supplier financing, to ensure vaccines produced in sub-Saharan Africa are safe, effective, and available as quickly as possible.

- Applied Coca-Cola’s expertise in route-to-market, cold chain, and marketing through the Project Last Mile (PLM) partnership for improved vaccine distribution and uptake; and supported local businesses in making nearly 2M units of personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Mapped >3,000 digital tools in use across 135 countries that can be adapted to meet COVID-19 response needs and presented tailored briefs to 20 country teams.

- Helped unlock $35M in working capital to shore up private clinics in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda providing essential health services, including for malaria, to 5M patients through the ODAPHI blended finance facility.

While significant progress has been made in global health, there are still significant barriers to reaching the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In line with our USAID health priorities, we work across the Bureau for Global Health and with other partners to deploy innovative practices that can confront near-term health challenges and build long-term resilience. Situated in the Bureau for Global Health’s front office, CII identifies common needs, shares learnings across health areas, and forges cross-sector collaborations to make progress on shared health goals.

CII works across the Bureau for Global Health and with external partners to deploy innovative practices and forge cross-sector collaborations.
SPECIALIZING IN INNOVATION, MARKET ACCESS, AND DIGITAL HEALTH

INNOVATION
We partner to source groundbreaking solutions and strengthen innovation capacity by:
• Supporting transformative innovations with funding and technical expertise
• Strengthening the innovation ecosystem to better meet country-defined health needs
• Speeding the adoption of cutting-edge approaches across disciplines and sectors

MARKET ACCESS
We support introduction and scale-up of critical health products and services through:
• Strategic planning and human-centered design to accelerate uptake of health products or services
• Market shaping to develop incentives for efficient markets that increase access to health commodities
• Innovative financing to crowd in new funding and enable results-based structures

DIGITAL HEALTH
We apply a strategic digital health lens by:
• Shaping policy for investment in digital health systems
• Aggregating co-investment and advancing coordination across communities of practice
• Encouraging use of global goods, including knowledge products
Across health sectors, geographies, and specializations, CII incubates new ideas, puts them into practice, and scales effective approaches through partnership and institutional change. Throughout our work, we look for opportunities to engage with the private sector and share our experiences as cross-cutting enablers.

HOW WE WORK: INCUBATE, PRACTICE, SCALE

INCUBATE NEW IDEAS
We anticipate needs, design cutting edge initiatives, and publish thought pieces and global goods that draw on experiences from the private sector and domains beyond health to explore how transformative ideas can be applied to global health goals.

PUT IDEAS INTO PRACTICE
We move from theory to action, piloting projects, launching initiatives, and demonstrating use cases. Learning with intention, we collect and share our insights with the global health community to inform program planning and investments.

SCALE EFFECTIVE APPROACHES
We embed proven approaches into health programs, shape policy guidance, invest in systems change, and train stakeholders so they can integrate these practices into their work.
CII aims to generate near-term impact and draw out long-term learnings at each stage of incubate, practice, and scale.

**INCUBATE**

Since launching health Grand Challenges over a decade ago, we have sourced and funded a pipeline of over 150 new solutions from innovators around the globe. For example, Grand Challenge funding was catalytic for Simprints to scale its biometric fingerprint patient ID system to track patient records and deliver health services. With the onset of COVID-19, Simprints drew on these capabilities to quickly offer contactless patient tracking with facial recognition.

**PRACTICE**

Through our funding, convening power, and technical expertise, CII has helped forge partnerships between innovators, built a learning community, and connected innovators with experts. Innovators from the Saving Lives at Birth (SL@B) Grand Challenge portfolio have already benefited 3M women and children and leveraged $160M in external investment.

**SCALE**

To address ecosystem challenges in the digital health space, CII led the development of USAID’s Digital Health Vision, which aims to shift incentives for all actors to drive more strategic, coordinated investments defined by partner country priorities. This systems change approach encourages adapting existing digital health solutions as new needs arise, such as for the COVID-19 response, and discourages unnecessary duplication of digital tools.
INCUBATE

We identify and showcase opportunities to crowd private sector dollars in close collaboration with other donors, investors, and market access leaders. Our 2018 Blended Finance Roadmap is a practical resource to help USAID and other donors extend or deepen health impact with a range of blended finance instruments. Our 2019 Unleashing Private Capital report assesses financing challenges and proposes options for both health innovators and investors to match growth and greater impact with risk-adjusted returns.

PRACTICE

In 2019, we used outcomes-based financing to improve the quality of care in private clinics in India by launching the world’s first global health development impact bond with internal and external partners. In just three years, this Utkrisht Development Impact Bond (DIB) enabled over 400 facilities to meet certification targets. Today, we continue to enable innovative finance approaches by collaborating with country teams to apply the Blended Finance Roadmap to support faith-based health providers and improve maternal and child health.

SCALE

Small and medium-size private health facilities have struggled to operate with severe disruptions from COVID-19 and many need working capital to stay open and safely provide malaria and other essential services. CII partnered with the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and the Health Finance Coalition (HFC) as part of the Open Doors Africa Private Healthcare Initiative (ODAPHI). ODAPHI is a blended finance loan guarantee facility with the Medical Credit Fund (MCF) that has unlocked over $35M for private facilities. ODAPHI aims to provide loans and technical assistance to 150K health facilities serving nearly 5M patients in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda.
In 2021, Design for Health launched Design for Health: Human-Centered Design Looks to the Future, a first-of-its kind supplement in the peer-reviewed journal Global Health: Science and Practice (GHSP). As use of design in global health grows, so too have questions about its application, appropriate use, value proposition, and integration within global health programs and methodologies. This supplement seeks to clarify the value of human-centered design in global health, document lessons learned, and distill and demystify design.

In the global health context, human-centered design (HCD) is an approach to building products, services, and programs that meet the needs of users and other critical stakeholders to achieve equity and health impact. By placing end-users and other impacted stakeholders at the center of product, service, and program development, HCD strives to ensure that people’s needs, desires, and abilities inform all key decisions.

In 2017, CII and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched Design for Health with the goal of accelerating innovation while maintaining a focus on the needs of the people interacting with the global health programs. Design for Health is a group of funders, implementers, and designers committed to increasing the understanding, use, and value of design to help achieve global health goals.

To better understand the complex relationship between climate and health and the potential role of artificial intelligence (AI)/advanced analytics (AA), CII partnered with teams across USAID to investigate this intersection. AI/AA can improve our understanding of how climate and health are interconnected over different time horizons, interpret climate and health data to predict health outcomes, and recommend interventions to better prevent or respond to resulting health issues. Despite the promise of AI/AA, to date, its usage in this space remains nascent, particularly in lower middle-income countries (LMICs), where the requisite data, analytical systems, and ecosystem conditions may not yet exist.

As global attention increasingly focuses on data, climate, and health topics, CII is identifying potential action pathways for stakeholders across these domains to achieve shared goals. For example, investment in enablers can build machine learning capacities and connectivity between climate change and global health practitioners, improving readiness to address climate-sensitive risks to human health.
CII-supported innovators have continued to build on initial funding to expand their impact, draw in new funders, and adapt to emerging needs. A recent evaluation of the $30M Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge (CZFT) found that funded innovators developed interventions effective across a range of diseases, not just for the Zika outbreak. CZFT did this by providing catalytic funding, fostering partnerships, identifying funding sources, and tailoring the program to meet the needs of innovators.

For example, with its CZFT award, innovator Premise entered the global health space by launching a digital platform with citizen-led contributors completing Zika monitoring tasks for small incentive payments. Contributors in Cali, Colombia destroyed more than 70,000 mosquito breeding sites, 65 percent of the city’s total. Premise was then well-equipped to respond to the COVID-19 global health emergency, which they did by analyzing vaccine hesitancy, monitoring misinformation, and mapping cold storage equipment. The company raised $85M in venture capital funding in 2021, and sustains ongoing activities in global health.

African manufacturers produce just one percent of the COVID-19 vaccines administered in the region, and as of July 2022, less than 20 percent of the population had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The pandemic highlighted Africa’s reliance on vaccine imports, which can leave the continent susceptible to supply shortages.

Through the Global VAX initiative, CII is guiding USAID’s efforts that aim to provide $10 million to strengthen the enabling environment and global market dynamics for vaccine production in Africa. This includes bolstering regulatory approval systems, supporting trainings, and conducting strategic planning and market shaping analyses. These activities can leverage and de-risk the much larger investments in the hundreds of millions of dollars by the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and other investors in African vaccine manufacturers. Together, these combined efforts can ensure vaccines made in Africa are quality-assured, safe, effective, and available as quickly as possible.
Through the “Map & Match” project, CII and its partners mapped nearly 3,000 digital health tools deployed across 135 countries. These materials identified opportunities to adapt existing infrastructure to meet urgent COVID-19 needs and contribute to systems strengthening and resilience. The project team developed 22 detailed country reports and identified trends in digital health investments across countries, funders, software platforms, and implementers. CII is in the process of contributing the full data set to WHO’s Digital Health Atlas, which could quadruple the size of this publicly available repository.

CII also developed the Digital Solutions for COVID-19 Vaccination Service Delivery, a primer that identifies key parts of vaccine service delivery systems where digital tools add value, and how data generated by these solutions can help reach more people with life-saving vaccinations. The Primer was delivered through workshops to USAID country colleagues to support emergency COVID-19 response planning, and these tools will be made publicly available to support vaccination efforts around the world.

**SCALING EFFECTIVE APPROACHES**

**MAPPING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**SCALING EFFECTIVE APPROACHES**

**LEVERAGING PRIVATE SECTOR SKILLS FOR COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESS**

Project Last Mile (PLM) is a pioneering public-private partnership between USAID, The Coca-Cola Company and Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund) that leverages Coca-Cola’s private sector expertise. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, PLM has been working to assess and strengthen supply chains for vaccines in partner countries. The partnership allows USAID to fund project teams of subject matter experts, consultants, and vendors from the Coca-Cola system specialized in marketing or cold chain equipment maintenance to meet vital global health needs.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** PLM, with USAID and the National Department of Health, supported demand generation activities for COVID-19 vaccine uptake, extending support to test a range of traditional and non-traditional communications mechanisms to reach key target segments.

**TANZANIA:** Partnering with Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC) and USAID, PLM supported last mile distribution and cold chain planning and activated faith-based networks to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine. PLM also supported the printing of over 10,000 faith-based demand creation toolkits with funding from USAID.

**ESWATINI:** PLM is providing cold-chain strategic support to strengthen the country’s readiness to store and distribute vaccines, which has enabled the expansion of cold-chain storage by up to 30% to store up to 1.5 million doses, with zero doses lost to cold chain breaches to date.
FORGING PARTNERSHIPS AND SHARING EXPERIENCES

Expanding Private-public Partnerships

AMP Health in 5 new countries

Project Last Mile

Highlighting Innovators

WHO Compendium report

Grand Challenges annual meeting

VinFutures Prize

Appreciating Recognition

Apolitical’s Agile 50 award

NextGen Public Service award

Thought Leadership

OECD Development Cooperation 2021 report

USaid blog posts

Human-Centered Design Supplement

Devex Prescription for Progress conference

Global Digital Health forum

COVID-19 digital tools e-course
WE (STILL) BELIEVE IN THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

With a bias for action, we blend public health expertise with experience in pharmaceutical strategy, finance, digital technologies, and management consulting to work hand-in-hand with our technical colleagues across USAID’s Bureau for Global Health.

We also recognize how much we have to learn. CII has embarked on a diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) growth and development journey through workshops, trainings, and visioning sessions. We have outlined principles and a draft action plan for how we operate internally and externally — we aim to elevate DEIA intentionality even as we acknowledge it’s a work in progress.

At CII, we strive to live up to our values, which emphasize pushing through ambiguity and risks, driving innovation, crowding in new voices, leading with empathy and through collaboration, staying humble, furthering DEIA, and bringing our authentic selves to work every day. We enter our second decade grateful for the opportunity to pursue life-saving impact, bolstered by our colleagues and partners, and energized by the art of the possible.

WE (STILL) BELIEVE IN THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE