



THREE INSIGHTS

# HYGIENE AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE: BUSINESS COALITIONS TO FIGHT COVID-19

DATE: WEDNESDAY 23/09

FORMAT: WEBINAR #1

## SPEAKERS

■ **Anila Gopalakrishnan**,  
Global Social Mission  
Director - Hygiene & Water,  
*Unilever*

■ **Githinji Gitahi**, Group CEO,  
*Amref Health Africa*

■ **Dr Mercy Mwangangi**,  
Medical Officer, *Ministry  
of Health, Kenya*

■ **Myriam Sidibé**, Founder,  
*Brands of a Mission*, and  
Chair and Co-Founder,  
*National Business Compact  
on Coronavirus, Kenya*

■ **Dr Scott Ratzan**, Lecturer,  
Public Health and Health  
Policy, *The City University*

*of New York*, and Executive  
Director, *Business  
Partners for Sustainable  
Development*

**Moderator:** *Maggie Rarieya*,  
Head Of Secretariat, *NBCC*

IN THIS SESSION OUR PANELLISTS DISCUSSED THE THEME OF THE DAY, *SURVIVE AND THRIVE*, IN RELATION TO THE ROLE OF BUSINESS COALITIONS IN ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC CRISES SUCH AS THE ONE WE ARE CURRENTLY FACING.

Our speakers touched on topics related to forming successful multi-sector partnerships during a pandemic; the relationship between the goals of international organisations and the priorities of local communities; and what are the lessons that business can learn from engaging and participating in collaborative initiatives with governments and institutions from civil society.

## KEY INSIGHT #1

### CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO FIGHT A CRISIS

Dr Mercy Mwangangi started the panel describing how a coalition formed by

governments, businesses, civil society actors, and international organisations was instrumental to contain COVID-19 in Kenya. The initiative benefited from speed and unity around one clear goal, which was to fight the virus and its consequences with a systemic and collaborative approach. Dr Mercy pointed out that the private sector brought agility to the coalition, building washing stations across the country and procuring protective equipment as well as helping to boost government's healthcare messages through their brands and social networks. As Anila Gopalakrishnan remarked: "coalitions can result in rapid action for a pandemic response; also, given the skillset of what the COVID-19 crisis requires, coalitions are actually the most effective way to fight the pandemic."

*“COALITIONS CAN RESULT IN RAPID ACTION FOR A PANDEMIC RESPONSE; ALSO, GIVEN THE SKILLSET OF WHAT THE COVID-19 CRISIS REQUIRES, COALITIONS ARE ACTUALLY THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO FIGHT THE PANDEMIC.”*

**Anila Gopalakrishnan**, Global Social Mission Director - Hygiene & Water, **Unilever**

### KEY INSIGHT #2

#### INTEGRATING INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES AND LOCAL EXPERIENCES IS KEY TO SUPPORT A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

Dr Scott Ratzan argued that it takes a lot of convincing to galvanise actors from different sectors to agree common initiatives to drive the kind of behaviour change needed to confront the virus. In his view, for the fight against COVID-19, the role of international organisations, like the United Nations and the International Chamber of Commerce, have been vital to coordinate a global response and to input the trust and the reach that many companies look for when engaging in multi-sector collaborations. Going back to the NBCC, Kenya, Myriam Sidibé highlighted the key role of multilateral institutions in financing and in sharing global best practices with companies and governments working on the ground in local communities to flatten the curve. Looking ahead, the ongoing battle against COVID-19 demands that such actions lead to a sustainable recovery. In Myriam's words: “the real challenge is going to be our ability to sustain this behaviour change and to leverage these mechanisms, so that more companies are going to join us and understand what were the initial preventive measures of hand washing, physical distancing, surface hygiene... for us to be able to curb the pandemic, we must progress to embed this changes into our everyday lives.”

### KEY INSIGHT #3

#### IT IS CRUCIAL THAT BUSINESSES EXTEND THE LESSONS THEY LEARN IN COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES TO THEIR SUPPLY CHAINS

Githinji Gitahi explained the practical difficulties of putting in place a coalition like the NBCC, Kenya. For instance, partnerships must have targets that are jointly formulated and measured; in order for local priorities to function as a north star, partners must take the opinion of all stakeholders seriously; governance rules need to be erected and externally monitored; and leadership has to be dynamic, collaborative, and resilient. For Githinji: “the challenge is how to create the administrative capacity, the systems, and the trust that are needed, so that you can deploy all the assets that are brought together by the members of a coalition.” In this respect, for companies, being part of successful coalitions can be in itself a learning journey. Also, businesses can leverage their knowledge internally by improving the protection systems and the resilience of their supply chains. As Anila showed us, Unilever has been for decades a global partner in several social, economic, and environmental initiatives, including NBCC, Kenya. Thus, it is no coincidence that the company has been able to rapidly develop numerous programmes, such as the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition to support their smaller suppliers and host communities during the COVID-19 crisis.

### THANKS

We are grateful to our panellists for giving their time and expertise.

### RESOURCES

[Hygiene & Behaviour Change Coalition](#)

[National Business Coalition on Coronavirus, Kenya](#)

[Vaccine Literacy for COVID-19: Convince](#)

[Vaccine Confidence Project](#)