



CII Spotlight: David Milestone

Acting Director
Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact



Q: What is your role at USAID?

A: I'm acting director of the Center for Innovation and Impact (CII). In my role, I support our Innovation and Market Access teams in bringing a business-minded approach to our global health work. When I'm performing at my best, I'm staying out of the way of our incredible team and allowing them to GSD — get stuff done.

Q: How did you end up at USAID?

A: As a former engineer and management consultant, I never imagined a career in the public sector. At the time I learned of CII, I was working in India on innovation and business strategy initiatives for Stryker, a large medical device company best known for making knee and hip replacements, hospital equipment, and neurotechnology. I love the intersection of business, technology, and public health — providing healthcare to those hardest to reach in a sustainable and innovative way was not just personally rewarding but also intellectually challenging. When I got the chance to be part of CII's related, business-minded approach complementing the incredible work of USAID, I jumped at the opportunity.

Q: What makes you passionate about your job?

A: Definitely the people. Our small but mighty team not only inspires and impresses me daily with their dedication and expertise but, more importantly, makes coming to work fun. I've had many jobs with many folks of all walks of life — from NGOs to the private sector — and this isn't always the case. Being an "innovation" hub can come with, deservedly, a lot of skepticism. The term has come to mean everything and nothing. Our team has taught me so much about building trust through adding value; respecting and learning from the technical and strategic expertise that resides across the bureau.

Q: What topic(s) in global health interest(s) you the most and why?

A: Innovative financing to support global health innovation. According to the WHO, we need ~\$130B to achieve the SDGs in health. That may sound like a lot but it's paltry — less than one half of one percent (<0.5%) — compared to the \$280T in global private wealth (according to Credit Suisse's latest Global Wealth report). As such, there is incredible potential for USAID to work catalytically and in partnership to unlock this funding. The sky's the limit, but it requires us to think and act in new ways.

Favorite Quote: "There is no passion to be found playing small — in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living." - Nelson Mandela