In March 2017, nearly 400 community health champions from 44 countries, representing multiple sectors, gathered in Johannesburg to share global and country-specific evidence and lessons and identify opportunities and challenges—financial and human resources, programmatic, and socio-political—for institutionalizing community health as an integral component of primary health care in order to transform the future and ensure that every mother, newborn, and child not only survives but thrives in the Sustainable Development Goals era.

Champions of community health—including government officials, civil society and private sector leaders, policymakers, sub-national managers and practitioners, researchers, representatives of bilateral and multilateral organizations and donors—outlined 10 critical principles that they recommend countries focus on to accelerate progress in health.

1. Engage with and empower communities to build viable and resilient community health systems with strong links to health and other relevant sectors.

2. Empower communities and civil society to hold the health system accountable.

3. Build integrated, resilient community health systems based on recognized frontline health workers.

4. Implement national community health programs at scale, guided by national policy and local systems context, to ensure impact.

5. Ensure sufficient and sustainable financing for community health systems.

6. Program to reduce health inequities and gender inequalities.

7. Ensure that communities facing humanitarian crisis receive essential healthcare, particularly at the community level.

8. Invest in the development of inclusive partnerships to leverage and coordinate diverse civil society and private sector actors to support national acceleration plans and enable communities to shape and support the implementation of policies.

9. Integrate community data into the health information system, including investment in innovative technologies.

10. Employ practical and participatory learning and research to identify, sustain, and scale up effective community interventions while providing opportunities for country-to-country lesson sharing and informing a shared global learning agenda.

In order to achieve the ambitious community health systems agenda embodied in these principles, there needs to be investment and engagement of implementers and researchers in real-time research, monitoring, evaluation, and learning. This should include a focus on how to:

- Adapt and support proven community interventions to fit context, sustain and scale up effective approaches for engaging and empowering communities in diverse systems, and;
- Improve the coverage, quality, and equity of key community health services at scale.