



CII Spotlight: Adele Waugaman

Senior Digital Health Advisor Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact



Q: What is your role at USAID?

A: I am the Senior Digital Health Advisor for the Global Health Bureau, a new role for the Agency. The position was established within CII with a view towards moving beyond the siloed and program-specific investments in digital technologies for global health (or 'digital health') that have characterized the field to date.

Since joining USAID in April 2016, I have focused my efforts in support of three areas:

- internal coordination and harmonization of investments, such as by chairing the Health Informatics Working Group, which includes members of the Global Health and Africa bureaus as well as the USAID Global Development Lab and CIO;
- external coordination and harmonization of investments, such as by co-chairing the Health Data Collaborative's Digital Health & Interoperability Working Group, and helping to stand up and operationalize a new USAID-funded digital health mechanism hosted by PATH;
- capacity and awareness raising for internal and external audiences, such as through the recently released [Fighting Ebola with Information](#) report, and a forthcoming digital health investment tool that will be released as a global good.

Q: How did you end up at USAID?

A: I've had a few pivots in my career, working as a human rights and international humanitarian law advocate, an international affairs journalist, and a communications specialist supporting technology companies. I landed in the 'digital health' space in 2006 as it was beginning to gather rapid steam, and I have stayed with it since. Prior to joining USAID, I served as Senior Director, Technology Partnerships at the United Nations Foundation, where I managed a \$30M partnership with the mobile network operator Vodafone, and subsequently as an independent consultant focused on the intersection of digital technologies across development sectors, working for groups like the World Bank, United Methodist Church, and others. It was my consulting work with USAID public-private partnerships (MAMA and mPowering Frontline Health Workers) and the USAID Global Development Lab (on the [Principles for Digital Development](#)) that led me to the position I hold now.

Q: What makes you passionate about your job?

A: Having worked in the 'digital development' field for ten years, I've watched it grow exponentially. We've seen a number of notable successes in the use of digital technologies to solve entrenched global development challenges, but also a lot of failure. There's a concerted effort to operationalize best practice in digital development across the lifecycle of development programming. Having the opportunity to help lead that change management process for the Global Health Bureau, and for USAID-funded global health activities more broadly, is tremendous. When I joined the Bureau I quickly learned that there is already a lot of important work underway in this regard, and it has been an honor and a pleasure to have a seat at the table to work alongside those experts and champions here in the Global Health Bureau, and elsewhere in the Agency.

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

A: Often times when people think about digital technologies and global health, their minds go to cutting-edge innovations with the potential to transform the way health information and services are delivered. While this aspect of the role of innovation as it relates to global health is tremendously exciting, my interests lie more in identifying what proven technologies can be effectively used in a sustainable and scalable way in places where these solutions are needed. This is a critical long game for global health outcomes