

Marissa Leffler



Program Director-Health
UBS Optimus Foundation

Professional history

Marissa joined UBS in 2018 to lead the health portfolio for the UBS Optimus Foundation. The Foundation is dedicated to helping UBS clients fund impactful philanthropic programs that improve children's lives globally with a focus on the areas of health, education, protection and the environment. In her role, Marissa rigorously selects and actively supports programs run by innovative entrepreneurs that use new approaches and technologies to solve problems that prevent children from surviving and thriving.

Prior to UBS, Marissa spent over 10 years at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), where she most recently served as the Innovation Team Leader in the Global Health Center for Innovation and Impact, a center of excellence established to accelerate the development, introduction, and scale up of priority global health interventions. In the Center, Marissa lead the Grand Challenge portfolios of innovations, including the design, launch, and execution of three Grand Challenges to source innovations to address the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the Zika outbreak in Latin America, and barriers to more effective health supply chains. Marissa also managed Saving Lives at Birth: A Grand Challenge for Development, a \$100M multi-donor initiative which aims to identify groundbreaking prevention and treatment approaches for pregnant women and newborns around the time of birth, helping to build a pipeline of over 100 promising innovations. In addition, Marissa brokered and led USAID's engagement in Project Last Mile, a public-private partnership working to apply the Coca-Cola system's logistic, supply chain and marketing expertise to get vital medicines and medical supplies to the people who need them most. Marissa began her career at USAID as a Presidential Management Fellow in the Office of Population and Reproductive Health, where she managed the Office's flagship health policy program.

Education

Marissa received her Master of Public Policy from the Harvard Kenney School and a BA in Public Policy from Duke University.

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