Engaging Private Sector Non-Graduate Medical Practitioners in the Public Health Program of Bangladesh using Social Marketing Approach

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Social Marketing Company, Bangladesh
SMC and private sector: critical driving force in the health and family planning sector in Bangladesh

- Social Marketing Company (SMC) is one of the largest privately managed social marketing organizations in the health and family planning globally
- SMC is regarded as one of the most successful investments of USAID in the health sector
- SMC is the significant contributor of national health and family planning program representing 34 percent of all modern method users
- About 37 percent of the population get their curative health services from the private sector informal providers like Blue Star

Engaging NGMP in the Public Health Program using Social Marketing Approach
What is Blue Star?

- A network of 6,000 non-graduate health providers privately practicing at community level
- Set up by SMC in 1998 primarily for offering injectable contraceptives
- Blue Star Providers have now trained by SMC to provide a range of health services
- The overall objective is to create a network of skilled community level private providers to offer public health products and services to improve health status in the community
Who are Blue Star Providers?

The Blue Star providers:

- Have at least tenth grade education
- Have at least six months of medical training
- Have at least three years of practicing experience with adequate female and child client flow
- Willing to ensure quality of service and compliance of program policy and standard
- Willing to receive periodical training to build and improve their skills on public health issues
Service offered by Blue Star providers

- The only formally trained source of injectable contraceptives administration (intramuscular and subcutaneous) in the private sector
- Nutrition counselling and distribution of Micronutrient Powder (MNP) for the children under five years
- Growth monitoring and nebulisation services for children
- Identify and refer suspected Tuberculosis (TB) cases to the service delivery points
- Refer potential LAPM clients to the service delivery points
Program accomplishment between 2012 and 2016

The program have done the following accomplishment:

- Increased number of injectable contraceptive administration by 38 percent (from 4.36 to 6.03 million)
- Increased use of micronutrient powder by the children under five years by 80 percent (from 8.8 to 15.8 million sachets)
- Increased referral of suspected TB cases to the service delivery centres by 220 percent (from 33,428 to 107,000 cases)
- Referred 40,000 potential Long Acting and Permanent Method (LAPM) clients to the service delivery points
Benefits of the customers from Blue Star program

- Easy access to health services in low performing underserved areas
- More women and children friendly service delivery outlets in the community
- Clients can get services at very affordable price (US$1 for each vial of injectable administration)
- Sustainable source of family planning and health services at the community level
Benefits of the providers from Blue Star Program

- The providers have better acceptance in the community
- Improved their skills through continuous training
- Increased image at the community level
- Eight out of ten clients perceive that the Blue Star providers provide better health services
- About 95 percent providers mentioned that their income has increased after being a part of the Blue Star program
Capacity Building of the Blue Star Providers

- SMC organize basic and periodical refreshers training to build the capacity of the providers
- Training is designed and implemented in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh
- The training focuses on family planning methods including injectable administration procedure, counseling skills, maternal, child health and TB
- Upon successful completion of the training, providers receive a certificate signed by Government and SMC
- In addition, on-site technical assistance is provided by the field level professional staff on periodical basis
Client flow of the providers

- The average number of patients of Blue Star providers for general services is slightly over 200 per week
- The average number of clients for family planning service is 34 per week
- The average injectable contraceptive clients is 10 per week
- Average income of injectable users is relatively lower (US$ 187 per month)
Promotional activities of Blue Star outlets

- SMC over brand Blue Star outlets as part of promotional activities
- Both below the line and above the line promotional activities are included in the communication strategy
- Branded signboard is placed in front of their service outlets
- Leaflets, loudspeaker announcement are widely used to promote the providers as well as outlets
- Mass media like print media, television and radio commercials are also used to promote the network
Integrated Program Mix

- Product prices are determined by the target group’s willingness and ability to pay
- Subsidizes the price of the donated products (SOMA-JECT and Sayana Press) to reach the low-income populations
- SMC has a well-established and efficient distribution network in Bangladesh which is carried out through twelve offices located in major divisions and district towns in the country
Systematic Planning

- The program designed after a comprehensive formative study and learning experiences from other countries
- From the very beginning, the donor agency USAID provided technical and financial assistance to implement the program
- The program has a very well defined monitoring and evaluation framework
- Furthermore, the program conducts periodical studies and evaluations as and when required to take informed decisions
Results and Learning

- The program has achieved its all major objectives
- The injectable has become an increasingly popular method among women and its use increased from 7.2 percent in 2000 to 12.4 percent in 2014
- More than 6,000 Blue Star providers are located across the country and has become alternative source of supply of contraceptive and other public health priority services
- Blue Star outlets are being considered as woman and child friendly service delivery points
The involvement of community level non-graduate private health providers is very instrumental to expand family planning public health priority services at the community level.

- Offering public health services through full-time paid health care providers is a cost intensive process whereas engaging private sector providers to offer public health services is less expensive and sustainable.

- Continuous training and monitoring is essential to ensure quality of care by the providers.

- Media support for the Blue Star providers was critical to increase acceptance and client flow.
THANK YOU