

Community health workers who bring family planning services to where people live and work

CHW program in Afghanistan suggests that it plays an important role in post-conflict, developing countries, potentially contributing to health system strengthening. They provide basic services to majority rural population, record and report health information from the villages and provide it to health managers and policy makers for better decision-making, and engage the community in strengthening the health system. When appropriately designed and implemented, community health worker (CHW) programs can increase use of contraception, particularly where unmet need is high, access is low, and geographic or social barriers to use of services exist. CHWs are particularly important to reducing inequities in access to services by bringing information, services, and supplies to women and men in the communities where they live and work rather than requiring them to visit health facilities, which may be distant or otherwise inaccessible.



CHWs "provide health education, referral and follow up, case management, and basic preventive health care and home visiting services to specific communities. They provide support and assistance to individuals and families in navigating the health and social services system" (ILO, 2008). The level of education and training, the scope of work, and the employment status of CHWs vary across countries and programs. CHWs are referred to by a wide range of titles such as a "village health worker," "community-based distributor," "community health aide," "community health promoter," "health extension worker," or "lay health advisor."

Integrating CHWs into the health system is one of several proven "high-impact practices in family planning" (HIPs) identified by a technical advisory group of international experts. A proven practice has sufficient evidence to recommend widespread implementation as part of a comprehensive family planning strategy, provided that there is monitoring of coverage, quality, and cost as well as implementation research to strengthen impact (HIPs, 2014).

What challenges can CHWs help countries address?

1. CHWs address geographic access barriers caused by health worker shortages.
2. CHWs may reduce financial barriers for clients.
3. CHWs can address the social barriers that inhibit family planning use.
4. CHWs reach women whose mobility is constrained by social norms.

What is the impact?

1. CHW programs increase contraceptive use
2. CHW programs may reduce unmet need in countries with large rural populations.
3. CHWs working in coordination with a functioning health system can reduce fertility rates.
4. Programs that link CHWs with clinic-based service delivery can be cost-effective.
5. CHWs can expand contraceptive method choice by providing a wide range of methods safely and effectively.

Brief introduction of ASMO's newly hired staff:

Afghan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) has the honor to welcome the two newly hired professionals who have recently joined the great family of ASMO to help the organization move even further towards the achievements of its goals.



Mr. Tamimullah Akbari

Mr. Tamimullah Akbari as an internal candidate for the position of Sales Officer has gone through a transparent recruitment process and successfully managed to secure the stated position effective May 26, 2019 whereas Mr. Akbari was previously serving as a Sales Executive in ASMO from July, 2018 till May 25, 2019. He has got his Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) with a solid experience

of more than 5 years in Marketing, Sales, and Customer service. He has been working with different national and international organizations in different senior & junior positions with a tracking record of progress and achievements. He is a talented, passionate, and dynamic person with good interpersonal and communication skills equipped with good skills in Marketing and Sales. Mr. Akbari is a pro-active person that will surely contribute much of his expertise into the success of our sales team and social marketing department.



Mr. Abdullah Safi

Mr. Abdullah Safi joined ASMO in June 16, 2019 as a Sale Executive to help ASMO sales team in the assigned activities and to create a momentum to increase sales and generate more revenue.

He has a Bachelor Degree in Economics and more than 5 years of experience in the areas of Sales and procurement. He is an enthusiastic presenter and communicator who understands

how to customize a pitch based on demographic and varying customer needs. He is a flexible learner who enjoys working with variety of products and services to educate customers and assist them in making confident buying decisions. With proven understanding of techniques for generating leads, expanding product offerings, upselling services, and providing unparalleled customers support, Mr. Safi will definitely contribute to the success of ASMO.

ASMO Initiatives series (Mosque Meetings)

ASMO is conducting meetings at mosques around prayer times to promote family planning among men with the cooperation of religious leaders as they are the key players to spread awareness, create demand for family planning products and involve head of families on maternal & child health programs. The intervention also helps build credibility of health messages and remove myths and misconceptions from the prospective of Islamic guidelines. It provides the opportunity for men to obtain information on family planning methods and other key maternal and child health products, express their questions/concerns and get the right answers from Mosque Meeting facilitators.



Key highlights of ASMO staff satisfaction survey.

ASMO staff satisfaction survey has been conducted on April 07, 2019 and completed on April 21, 2019. The main reason for this survey has initiated from ASMO strategic work plan, ASMO Development Assessment and staff suggestions for improving the working environment for the employees.

Therefore, ASMO has conducted the anonymous online staff satisfaction survey via Survey Monkey online (an online survey development cloud-based software as a service company) to see how internal staff are feeling about ASMO and its performance.

To ensure transparency in place, ASMO has recruited external consultant on a short-term basis to facilitate the survey for those employees who were having linguistic problems and/or couldn't understand the questions being asked in English.

The results are showing that majority of ASMO staff are proud to be working in ASMO, willing to continue their work with ASMO, like their coworkers, having trust on ASMO, strongly believes for having a positive impact with the activities they perform, and taking quality as of their top priority. A good working environment, flexibility, alignment of goals across all levels were other positive aspects being expressed. The employees also stressed on further improvements in the areas of team working, coordination, accountability, empowerment, career growth opportunities, capacity building.

To share the results, ASMO HR Department has arranged a staff meeting on June 23, 2019 shared the results of the survey with the staff and obtained their feedback for further improvements and necessary corrective actions to be taken in line with the results. ASMO senior management thanked full participation of the staff in the survey and expressed their full commitment for further improvements / corrections to ensure a safe, convenient, professional, and learning environment to ASMO staff.



Family Planning Method Series (Condom for the 3th quarter):

Promotion of family planning and ensuring access to preferred contraceptive methods for women and couples is essential to securing the well-being and autonomy of women, while supporting the health and development of communities. Family planning / birth spacing can play a critical role in preventing pregnancy-related health risks in women, reducing infant mortality, helping to prevent HIV/AIDS, empowering women by providing opportunity to continue education, reducing adolescent pregnancies, and slowing population growth.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), there are various Modern Birth Spacing Methods from which we want to introduce you to the below method:

Contraceptive Methods					
No	Method	Description	How it Works	Effectiveness to prevent Pregnancy	Additional Benefits
01	Male condoms	Sheaths or coverings that fit over a man's erect penis	Forms a barrier to prevent sperm and egg from meeting	98% with correct and consistent use 85% as commonly used	Also protects against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
02	Female condoms	Sheaths, or linings, that fit loosely inside a woman's vagina, made of thin, transparent, soft plastic film	Forms a barrier to prevent sperm and egg from meeting	90% with correct and consistent use 79% as commonly used	Also protects against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV

Product highlight (ASMO Branded Asodagi Condom)

ASMO branded Asodagi Condom is to space between births. Asodagi condom is safe with no side effect whereas you can stop using it at any time you want to have a child and/or get pregnant.

Advantages:

- o Receivable without doctor's prescription.
- o Asodagi Condom is a birth spacing product only for men.
- o Prevents sexually transmitted infections including HIV / AIDS.
- o No side effects.
- o It's easy to use.

Keep in mind:

- o Always check the date on the cover of Asodagi condom. Do not use the expired one.
- o Do not open the Asodagi condom before use.
- o Do not apply oils on Asodagi condom as it decreases the strength.
- o Store Asodagi condom at home environment, in cold and dark place. Much heat and cold has negative effects on the condom.
- o Always use new Asodagi condom for sexual intercourse.
- o Use Asodagi condom before each sexual intercourse.
- o Never use thick, hard, tear and sticky condoms.
- o Safely dispose Asodagi condom according to the instruction provided in the leaflet placed in small packs.



SHOPS Plus demonstrates innovative approaches in promoting FP and MCH among Afghan women at the World Social Marketing Conference

Leading global academicians, researchers, policy makers and practitioners in social marketing from all over the world gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland, to share, discuss and debate successes, failures and learnings of social marketing and behavior change in shaping the future of global health. SHOPS Plus showcased how private sector resources can be leveraged for social change in promoting family planning, maternal, and child health through two presentations from Afghanistan:-

- Promoting Family Planning, Maternal, and Child Health through Beauty Parlors in Afghanistan by Soumitra Ghosh, Ebrahim M Heidar, Marianne El-Khoury and Tess Shiras.

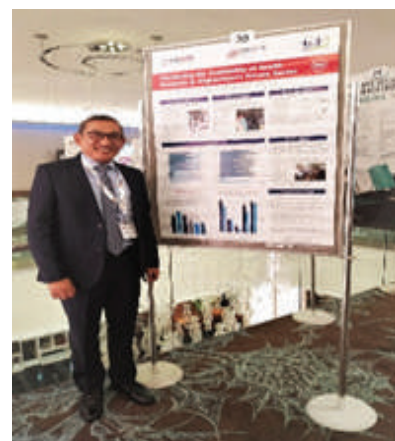
The oral presentation shared baseline survey findings on beauty parlor clients' health attitudes and practices validating the theory of change construct that the pilot intervention by SHOPS Plus Afghanistan rests on. It also provided specific message and operational guidance to make the intervention deliver its intended outcomes.

- Monitoring the Availability of Health Products in Afghanistan's Private Sector by Soumitra Ghosh and Ebrahim M Heidar, Dr. Homayoon Habibi and Salaruddin Jalal

The poster presentation showcased how annual monitoring surveys conducted by SHOPS Plus Afghanistan program that uses lot quality assurance sampling (LQAS) can assess changes in the availability and disruptions of products in the market efficiently and affordably. Demonstrating its value through a significant improvement in the availability of priority healthy products of the program over a period of one year, it highlighted utility of such data by ASMO and other partners in Afghanistan to inform activities aimed at increasing health product supply in the private sector.

Both the presentations were well attended and received by the audience. The one demonstrating how effective integration and mobilization of beauty parlors can help promote a variety of health issues including child health products sustainably, was attended by Nancy Lee, the co-author of Social Marketing – Changing Behavior for Good, with the marketing guru Philip Kotler. Impressed by the evidence-based strategy adopted by the intervention, she promised to track and cover it as one of the best practices under third P of marketing i.e. "Place" in the next edition of her book.

Yana Manyuk, Social Marketing Specialist of Sight and Life, a Swiss Foundation, nutrition think tank and global leader in improving vitamin-A nutrition, liked use of non-conventional channels in promoting child health. Sight and Life invited SHOPS Plus to contribute an article with the findings from the pilot in Afghanistan, focusing on consumer centered innovation to create demand for healthy and nutrition behaviors, to its winter edition of the Sight and Life magazine 2019.



A young Afghan medical student turns family planning advocate

Hekmatullah Malikzada, a young, talented, medical student decided to take up part-time internship assignment of a private provider detailer at the Afghan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) to promote family planning among general practitioners in Kabul. He got trained by the master trainers of the MoPH and senior medical staff of ASMO on family planning, maternal and child health and how best to share information with the private practitioners and their patients and accomplices to bust the myths and misconceptions and help them to adopt healthy behaviours. It is well-known that the health providers are credible sources of obtaining health information and advice in alleviating the concerns of the intending FP users and help them to adopt FP by counselling and providing method specific information. However, inadequate knowledge and lackadaisical attitude of the private providers with respect to FP methods, patients counselling on FP, deny large number of women and married couples dependent on private sector provisions, an opportunity to clarify such issues, gain accurate information and confidence to adopt FP. ASMO is implementing a pilot in Kabul training solo private providers and sensitizing their clients and accomplices on FP and MCH information and educational materials, under USAID-funded global Sustaining Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) Plus project which harnesses public-private engagement to improve health outcomes in family planning, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health.

Hekmatullah pays regular visits to the providers, supplies them with Information, Education, and Communication materials and sample of FP methods as well as sensitizes the potential patients in the providers' chamber on FP addressing specific concerns. Being aware of his community health problems as well as common barriers among the private providers, Hekmatullah, is trying to reduce barriers in accessing health information and improve uptake of family planning provisions, including offering referrals to nearby health outlets.

"It is so satisfying to sensitize the doctors and their patients and seeing how they are so willingly accepting family planning for the health of the entire family. It gives me practical experience of knowing the real issues on ground and how to handle them. It will make me a better doctor after passing out" – says a visibly happy and motivated Hekmatullah. As a young Afghan man, Hekmatullah is a game changer, striving to transform the communities through better health for a better future for the Afghan men, women and children.



Findings of qualitative study of beauty parlor (Beauty Parlor Operational Research)

Key Findings from 12 Qualitative Interviews with BP Staff and Owners.

BP staff found the program valuable and are comfortable talking with clients

- Nearly all respondents noted that they have learned a lot themselves and that they are communicating new information within their social networks. For example, one respondent is also a kindergarten teacher who is sharing the information with children's mothers.
- Several respondents noted that they are now taking iron folate and one respondent who was previously drinking un-purified water started using Aquatabs tablets.
- All respondents said that they feel comfortable and happy when talking to the clients about family planning and safe drinking water and anaemia prevention products.
- Findings confirmed that all participants seemed enthusiastic about both the pilot and training. In addition, the training certificate seemed valuable to the respondents. Some of the respondents had the certificate hanging in their salon.



Reported challenges include negative reactions from select clients and limited time to talk with clients

- Three respondents noted that some clients have not received the intervention information well and are not interested in listening. For two of these respondents, this has been more of a challenge: some clients have told the staff that they are "brainwashed" or "shameless" for discussing contraception. Despite this challenge, all three of these respondents maintained that the program was still going well overall and they are happy to participate.
- Two respondents noted that when they are busy they cannot dedicate time to talking with clients about health topics.
- Staff report talking to clients about health topics from 10 minutes (3 respondents) to one hour (2 respondents).

Most BP staff seem interested in selling products and say clients are interested in buying them

- It appears that the product samples are a big help in starting conversation on health topics and engaging clients in the conversation
- In seven interviews, respondents said that their clients expressed interest in buying health products
- One respondent said that many clients take photos of the samples so that they can find them in a shop later



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