
SMC-MSH Collaboration

Final Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Management Sciences for Health (MSH), SMC, and USAID launched a project with technical assistance from MSH to upgrade SMC supported Blue Star drug outlets in all upazilas (13 in number) of Sylhet district under the USAID Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Health Development (MISHD) program. The focus of this collaboration is Blue Star drug outlets and service providers of all upazilas of Sylhet district numbering 151. The duration of the project period is from 15 March 2017 to 14 July 2017.

The project activities included preparatory and planning meetings, advocacy and sensitization meeting with key stakeholders, a baseline assessment of 151 Blue Star drug outlets, and three training events of the Blue Star providers (BSPs) on the Standards of Model Medicine Shop etc.

During the contract period, MSH had the opportunity to learn the Blue Star Providers (BSPs) through baseline assessment. Furthermore, during three batches of ten days long training, MSH staff had close interaction with BSPs that led to an in-depth understanding of their dynamics. Majority of the trainees found the training informative and helpful, they showed interest to upgrade their drug outlets into Model Medicine Shops and trainees appreciated this initiative taken by SMC.

If the competent and rightful authorities provide support and nurture their capacity, most of these Blue Star drug outlets can be converted into Model Medicine Shops hence patient safety and access to quality medicine can be ensured through safe medicine dispensing. Thus pharmaceutical (retail pharmacy) services can be initiated with a vision of greater public health impact in Bangladesh.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BCDS	Bangladesh Chemist and Druggist Samity
BSP	Blue Star Provider
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DG	Director General
DGDA	Directorate General of Drug Administration
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Administration
JDTAF	Joint Donor Technical Assistance Fund
MISHD	Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Health Development
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
PCB	Pharmacy Council of Bangladesh
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
SMC	Social Marketing Company Ltd
TB	Tuberculosis
TOT	Training of Trainers
UHFPO	Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer
UNFPA	The United Nations Fund for Population
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Background Information

The goal of Management Sciences for Health, Inc.'s (MSH) current technical assistance to Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) is to improve access to and appropriate use of quality medicines and pharmaceutical services through accreditation of private sector retail drug outlets and to strengthen DGDA's regulatory oversight of the private sector's pharmaceutical services.

This initiative is originally being implemented in three phases—the first of which was launched in November 2015 under a grant from Joint Donor Technical Assistance Fund (JDTAF), which ended on January 31, 2017.

Management Sciences for Health (MSH), SMC and USAID had formal meetings on two occasions to assess the feasibility of launching a project with technical assistance from MSH to upgrade SMC supported Blue Star drug outlets in all upazilas (13 in number) of Sylhet district under the USAID Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Health Development (MISHD) program. In this succession, SMC and MSH signed a collaboration contract as sub-agreement of SMC.

Objective of the SMC-MSH Collaboration

To provide technical assistance to Social Marketing Company (SMC) to upgrade Blue Star drug outlets in Sylhet district to facilitate their accreditation as Model Medicine Shops (Level-2) based on MOHFW approved standards.

Target Population and Geographic Focus

Numbers of Blue Star Facilities with their geographic location are as follows:

District/Zilla	Upazilla/Thana	Total
SYLHET	BALAGANJ	23
	BEANIBAZAR	5
	BISHWANATH	7
	COMPANIGANJ	9
	DAKSHIN SURMA	14
	FENCHUGANJ	7
	GOLAPGANJ	4
	GOWAINGHAT	9
	JAINTAPUR	7
	KANAIGHAT	13
	SYLHET SADAR	42
	ZAKIGANJ	12
Grand Total		152

Project Period: From 15 March 2017 to 14 July 2017

Summary of Major Activities Accomplished Under the Contract:

- 1. Preparatory meeting:** One day preparatory meeting was held at the SMC office with the participation of MSH and SMC technical team for finalization of micro level planning.
- 2. Planning and advocacy meetings at central level:** MSH facilitated two meetings with DGDA team led by Director to discuss the SMC-MSH collaboration and its objectives. MSH also conducted two meetings with Pharmacy Council of Bangladesh (PCB) to discuss the project and training related activities. Director General of Drug Administration was also briefed about the project. **Advocacy/sensitization meeting at district level:** MSH conducted a sensitization meeting with key stakeholders in Sylhet to share the objective of the joint collaboration and its scope. The meeting also discussed the role of stakeholders to support the project implementation. The meeting was held

in Sylhet on 18 April, 2017 at Hotel Valley Garden, Sylhet. Sylhet District Civil Surgeon, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (UHFPO) of Sadar Upazila, Superintendent of Drugs, Chair of Community Pharmacy of PCB, Vice-president of central Bangladesh Chemist and Druggist Samity (BCDS) Committee, local BCDS President and General Secretary, representative of Deputy Director of Narcotics Control Department, Health Officer of Sylhet City Corporation, SMC officials, USAID representative, and MSH team were present in the meeting.



Picture 1: Sensitization Meeting in Sylhet

- 3. Conduct baseline inspection of Blue Star Drug Outlets:** From SMC's database the total number of Blue Star Drug Outlets of Sylhet district was compiled and turned out to be 151 in number.
 - i. Orientation on baseline inspection tools and techniques was conducted with two SMC program officers.
 - ii. The baseline inspection in 145 Blue Star Drug Outlets was conducted. Six facilities could not be identified and/or visited due to time and human resource constraints, non-existence of Blue Stars facilities, and unfavorable weather conditions.
 - iii. Data from baseline inspection was analyzed and shared with SMC.



Picture 2: During Baseline Data Collection

- 4. Partnering with Challenge TB:** MSH involved Bangladesh Tuberculosis Control Partners e.g. USAID supported Challenge TB project, BRAC, and HEED Bangladesh in the basic training to capacitate Blue Star drug outlet dispensers to identify and refer presumptive TB cases.
- 5. Training of Trainers (TOT):** MSH Training consultant Mrs. Momtaz Shirin conducted the training of trainers session on 23rd April, 2017 at the Supernova conference room of Management Sciences for Health (msh), Gulshan-1 office from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Three MSH staff and three SMC staff participated in the session.
- 6. Basic Training for Blue Star Providers:** MSH facilitated three batches of 10 days long basic training for the eligible 71 Blue Star Providers (BSPs) from 2 May 2017 to 20 June 2017. The original plan was to provide training to 75 BSPs but from the baseline assessment, only 71 eligible trainees were identified based on following criteria:
 - a) They must be a grade C pharmacist,
 - b) The participant's drug outlet must have a DGDA drug license,

- c) The premise size of the drug outlet must comply with the Model Medicine Shop's minimum premise size that is 120 square feet, and
- d) Willingness to participate in the training.



Picture 3: Trainees with Trainers of Batch 1



Picture 4: Trainees with Trainers of Batch 2



Picture 5: Participants in class room presentation

Besides master trainers MSH invited district health and DGDA officials as guest trainers. Each participant was given a certificate of accomplishment jointly from MSH and SMC.

Observations from Training of 71 BSPs:

The training was conducted in reciprocator manner where trainers and trainees have had enough avenues to discuss and exchange their own opinions, views and experiences. Some of their salient features are given below:

- Majority of the trainees found the training informative and helpful
- Although at the beginning, resistance to some points of the Standards came from the trainees but over the time with evolved knowledge about the medicine and Standards, they were convinced with the Standards that they have to comply with.
- Most of the trainees showed interest to upgrade their drug outlets into Model Medicine Shops (level-2)
- Trainees felt that they need more of this sort of training which will enrich to perform their duties professionally
- Trainees appreciated this initiative taken by SMC

- Trainees suggested some changes in the Model Medicine Shop Standards which they think would be very difficult to make operational in their own context
- 7. Consensus on Up-gradation of BSP Drug Outlets:** Alongside the training, the trainees were oriented with the Inspection tool of the baseline assessment. After familiarizing with the inspection units, the trainees decided upon a grace period they need to upgrade their own drug outlets. The duration of the grace period was discussed and agreed with the trainees and MSH staff. A copy of the understanding paper was shared with each individual trainee. SMC will follow up the Blue Star drug outlets regularly to monitor and supervise their progress toward up-gradation.
- 8. Project Close out Sharing Meeting:** A sharing meeting with the key stakeholders was held after the completion of training on 12 July 2017 at SMC Boardroom, Level-13, SMC Tower. Notable guests i.e. Ms. Brenda Doe, AOR, USAID, Dr. Samina Chowdhury, USAID, Bangladesh office, Mr. Ashfaq Rahman, MD & CEO, SMC; Dr. Zubayer Hossain, Senior Manager, MSH Arlington office, Mr. Toslim Uddin Khan, GM (Program), SMC were present in the meeting.



Picture 6: Dissemination workshop

Findings from Baseline Assessment:

Key findings of the BSPs obtained from the **Baseline assessment** are as follows:

- The average years of assessed Blue Star drug outlets are in operation is 18 years (min 7 months, max 46 years), reported to have average 12 hours of operation time daily and 7 days a week
- Among 145 BSPs , 36% reported to complete Secondary School Certificate(SSC), 15% of them reported to complete their bachelor degree, 5% reported to have master degree.
- Of these 145 Blue Star drug outlets, more than 88% have DGDA license and 82% (n=128) of those who have DGDA license with validity until 2019.
- Total 60% of the BSPs have Grade C pharmacy registration issued by the Pharmacy Council of Bangladesh
- Total 55% of these drug outlet owners are member of Bangladesh Chemist and Druggist Samity (BCDS).
- Around 90% of the Blue Star drug outlets have premise size of at least 120 square feet. At the same time, 75% of these outlets are permanent structure having a seating arrangement for at least one patient (86%, N=145). All of these drug outlets have direct electric connection, of which 67% have backup generator/IPS system where more than 54% of these drug outlets are well ventilated and 38% of the total drug outlets have separate store room for medicine storage.
- Of all 145 drug outlets 37% have refrigerator where 33% of these refrigerators are used to store medicine only.
- Almost every drug outlets (93%) reported that they store and sale medicines that are registered by the DGDA and 42% of respondents reported that they do not sale physician's sample in their drug outlets.
- A good number (65%) of BSPs label their dispensed medicines and counsel the patients after dispensing the medicines.
- For documentation, 94% of BSPs preserve their medicine invoices in their drug outlets for 6 months to 1 year.

- 97% of the drug outlets reported to stock and sale traditional/alternative medicines where 99% of these reported that they do not sale medicines under schedule C (narcotics).
- Other than selling medicines, they tend to provide health services like check blood pressure, monitor sugar level, body temperature, body weight, nebulization, pregnancy test etc. They have also reported to give first aid and some treatment for common ailments. All of these BSPs are DGFP certified to push injectable contraceptives introduced by the SMC.

Recommendations:

Comparing the present condition of the Blue Star drug outlets with the Standards of Model Medicine Shop, it is plausible that upon regular follow up and support, these drug outlets have potential to turn into Model Medicine Shops. In that case, if the competent and rightful authority provide support and nurture their capacity, most of these Blue Star drug outlets can be converted into Model Medicine Shops hence patient safety can be ensured through safe medicine dispensing. Thus access to quality medicines and pharmaceutical (retail drug outlets) services can be initiated with a vision of greater public health impact in Bangladesh.