



# Demand Generation

## Adapting the Demand Generation Implementation Kit for Underutilized, Life Saving Commodities: HC3 Case Study Series

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### Saving Lives by Generating Demand for Zinc among Young Mothers in the Ihorombe Region of Madagascar

The number of deaths caused by diarrhea can be reduced with the use of commodities such as oral rehydration salts (ORS) to prevent dehydration and zinc supplements to reduce the duration and severity of diarrheal episodes. Despite the availability and promotion of these commodities as a first-line treatment for childhood diarrhea, a large number of Malagasy children do not receive timely or appropriate treatment for diarrhea.

In the Ihoisy District of Ihorombe, a south-eastern region of Madagascar, the prevalence rate of diarrhea is around 11.4 percent (NSMMDG 2012-2013). In this region, zinc is used as a supplemental treatment for simple diarrhea in only 1.8 percent of cases, compared to ORS in 18.9 percent of cases. Often, these medications, although affordable and effective, are not accessible to the women and children who need them the most. The most common obstacles preventing them from receiving treatment include a lack of knowledge of ORS and zinc, lack of access and information on why they should use them, how/when to use them and deep-rooted customs and traditions.

Under the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) initiative, to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations Commission on Life Saving Commodities for Women and Children (UNCoLCS), a pilot project titled *Demand Generation Strategy for the Use of Zinc in Ihoisy* was implemented from October 2015 to August 2016 to increase knowledge of the use of zinc to treat simple diarrhea and contribute to reducing child mortality in the Ihoisy region of Madagascar. Salfa-Lorel, a Madagascar public health non-governmental organization, implemented the project with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through the Health Communication Capacity Collaborative (HC3) project.

Since Madagascar did not have a national demand generation strategy for zinc in place, the project used the resources of the *Demand Generation*



*Child with diarrhea taken care of by traditional healers. © 2016 Salfa-Lorel.*

**Implementation Kit (I-Kit) for Underutilized Life Saving Commodities** to develop a strategy. The project followed the six steps proposed in the I-Kit for designing and implementing demand generation for zinc:

1. Analyze the situation
2. Define the vision
3. Choose the target group
4. Select key messages
5. Determine interventions and activities
6. Plan for monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Salfa-Lorel found each step in the I-Kit's detailed strategy development process very helpful, particularly the analysis of the target group behaviors, the creation of key messages and the development of the M&E plan. Thanks to the I-Kit's exercises on choosing appropriate channels, three main channels were selected to deliver messages to the target audiences: a radio talk show, a direct training program for the beneficiaries and a mobilization program for resource persons, such as community leaders and traditional birth attendants.

#### Key Results

Salfa-Lorel held 15 workshops and training sessions between October 2015 and August 2016, resulting in 223 young mothers (ages 14 to 25) from four communes being trained to use zinc to treat diarrhea in children under five. Each participant was invited to share their knowledge with at least two or three other

people, thus raising awareness among at least 669 additional people.

Community leaders also received training in the use of zinc to treat diarrhea in children under five. The project originally planned to train 50 community leaders, but 86 of them participated, demonstrating the overwhelming demand for this training and the population's willingness to assume responsibility for their health. During the workshop, each community leader officially expressed their commitment to work on implementing the action plans developed during the workshop. This act constituted a voluntary acceptance by the community leaders to participate in the project and to respect their role and responsibilities during the implementation phase. A total of 30 engagement plans were drawn up, 70 percent of which were carried out.

Traditional birth attendants received training in how to treat diarrhea in children under five, including when to refer to health facilities for severe cases of diarrhea.

Journalists were trained to conduct radio talk shows to increase awareness and knowledge about the use of zinc to treat diarrhea. The Audio Visieul d'Expression Chrétienne (AVEC) radio station covers the Ihoisy district, which has 214,535 residents, as well as four other isolated districts with 329,675 residents: Iakora, Ivohibe, Ranotsara and Betroka. Eight radio talk show programs were produced and broadcast 46 times on the AVEC radio station. Approximately 60 percent of the individuals attending the awareness-building sessions led by community leaders said they had heard the talk shows.

The active participation of those involved (community leaders and young mothers) was one of the project's



Young mothers attending an ORS-zinc workshop (Irina-Ihoisy). © 2016 Salfa-Lorel.



Two community leaders attending an ORS-zinc workshop (Irina Ihoisy). © 2016 Salfa-Lorel.

strong points. Collaboration with local leaders was very effective and facilitated the identification of young mothers, community leaders and traditional birth attendants for recruitment into the project.

### Challenges

Although the project was well implemented overall, some challenges arose in developing the radio talk shows, as the I-Kit does not provide details about how to design radio programs. Journalists had trouble presenting the talk show format because they lacked creativity and information on how to conduct a talk show effectively. Additionally, the role play activity carried out during the journalist training was insufficient to ensure the quality of the talk show programs.

To address these challenges, Salfa-Lorel developed guidelines on how to facilitate and produce a radio talk show in order to simplify the production process for journalists. The Salfa-Lorel project team participated in the production of the first radio talk show to ensure the correct format was followed. Feedback was collected from listeners following each radio show to help the journalists achieve better results in subsequent shows. Salfa-Lorel shared the broadcast and communication plans with the radio station's team to help them avoid repeating topics and to help journalists select the most appropriate guests for each show.

### Next Steps

The pilot project was conducted in only one district. As a next step, Malagasy stakeholders should take the results of this pilot project and create a strategy for demand generation for zinc, as well as a national demand generation and implementation strategy that reinforces knowledge, access and use of all life-saving commodities, in alignment with the EWEC initiative.

As a step-by-step guide for developing communication strategies aiming to improve access to and increase the use of zinc, the I-Kit contains multi-disciplinary tools that are very easy to use, as well as advice and data specific to the use of zinc for children under five. Future users of the I-Kit will be able to develop, improve or carry out rapid monitoring of interventions and activities for the demand generation for zinc at minimal cost and effort.

### Resources

- [Every Woman, Every Child](#)
- [Demand Generation I-Kit for Underutilized, Life Saving Commodities](#)

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