Behavior change communication model for male decision-influencers in family planning promotion.

“A promising practice from Pathfinder International’s Takamol project in Egypt”
Background

- Roughly 74.8 million people live in Egypt.
- Young and soon-to-be married people representing 40% of the population.
- Poor women are 2.5 times more likely to have a child die before the age of five than wealthy women.
- 57.4% of rural women do not regularly access maternity services during pregnancy.
- Between 1980-2008, government campaigns to encourage FP helped increase contraceptive prevalence rates for modern FP methods from 22.8% to 57.6%.
- Recent health reforms to integrate Maternal and Child Health (MCH), FP, and RH have aimed to offer women more comprehensive care.
Significance

• Still, more than 80% of women in both Lower and Upper Egypt report that the decision to use a contraceptive method is a joint decision between a woman and her husband.

• Based on this information, Pathfinder International’s five-year USAID-funded “Takamol” project for MCH/FP/RH integration sought to address male populations as agents in FP decision-making, in addition to efforts targeting women’s decision-making.
Takamol Project

Integration of MCH/ FP/ RH

Assist MOHP achieve its goals:
  - improving health outcomes
  - achieving sustainable reduced fertility
  - continue improvements in key indicators of maternal and child mortality
  - strengthen program planning and implementation capacities

- 5 year USAID funded project
- US$ 47.1 million
- Started in March 2006
- Ended in April 2011

11 governorates + Poor urban
179 PHC units
21 Hospitals in LE
24 Hospitals in UE
Takamol Model

Result 1: Increase Use of Quality Integrated MCH/FP/RH Services at the PHC Level
Result 2: Increase Use of Quality Integrated MCH/FP/RH Services in Hospitals

Cross-cutting themes:

Gender
Private-Public Partnership

Result 3: Positive Behavior Change in Target Communities

Result 4: Improved MOHP Capacity to Sustain Performance of Integrated MCH/FP/RH Services
Mobilizing the Community

- Create Demand
- Adopt Healthier Behaviors
- Support PHC clinics
Takamol Community Mobilization Approach

- Religious Leaders
- Literacy Facilitators
- AEW
- Media
- CDAs

Intermediaries

Believers

Youth

Women

Men
**Program intervention/activities**

- To target men, Takamol employed a behavior change communication (BCC) intervention model combining Religious Leaders (RL), Community Leaders (CL), and Agricultural Extension Workers (AEW) to educate and engage men about FP and gender issues.
- The model sought to ensure that male target populations were engaged by multiple levels of social and cultural authority, discussing MCH/FP/RH issues with facilitation from respected leaders and in the company of their peers.
- The intervention model aimed to encourage acceptance of FP through targeted IPC and small group interactions and, by extension, create enabling home environments for discussion of birth spacing and FP methods between husbands and their wives.
Methodology

- Takamol targeted 179 clinics and their respective catchment areas in underserved areas of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- The total catchment population was 2.6 million.
- Takamol trained 388 RLs on MCH/FP/RH increasing their knowledge by 67%, and 386 AEWs, increasing their knowledge by 55%.
- Other informal CLs such as literacy facilitators and outreach workers were similarly trained.
- RLs, CLs, and AEWs held regular monthly seminars for men or included health messages in weekly sermons.
- Men learned about FP, the advantages of birth spacing, and RH issues including the dangers of early marriage and early childbirth.
Household Surveys

• Takamol assessed the effects of these activities through household surveys:
  • Questions on husbands’ attitudes toward MCH/FP/RH issues.
  • Pre-and post-intervention information on a representative sample of MWRA in 30 communities subject to Takamol interventions.
  • Baseline and end line, one year after community activities ended.
  • 280 MWRA were interviewed in each community.
  • Lower Egypt: 1200 interviews at baseline and 1199 post intervention
  • Upper Egypt: 6158 interviews at baseline and 6148 post-intervention.
Results/key findings

- Takamol reached the majority of village men in its intervention areas with messages on MCH/FP/RH and gender equality.
- RLs and AEWs proved to be particularly effective intermediaries due to the trust they enjoyed in their communities.
- Following intervention men were more open to discussing FP and birth spacing with their wives, which in turn affected women.
- 60% of women in Lower Egypt reported having discussions about FP with their husbands in post-intervention surveys, compared to only 46% of women at baseline.
- In Upper Egypt, 69% of women reported having discussions about FP post-intervention, compared to 48% at baseline.
- In Lower Egypt, those who had these discussions with their husbands were almost twice as likely to be using a contraceptive method as those who did not.
- In Upper Egypt, these women were almost four times more likely.
Conclusion

• Takamol RL/CL/AEW BCC intervention model targets multiple levels of social and cultural authoritative ‘messengers’ and is effective at creating behavior change among male FP decision-influencers.

• By educating men on MCH/FP/RH matters through respected authorities and in familiar settings, men gain access to information in a forum encouraging questions.

• This helps men overcome reluctance to discuss “women’s issues” and encourages them to take a more active interest in FP, as well as social factors influencing RH outcomes such as early marriage and childbirth.

• As increased discussion among spouses about the reasons and choices of contraceptives is likely to be associated with increased use of FP methods, intervention models incorporating RLs, AEWs, and other informal CLs have promising implications for FP promotion efforts.
Thank You

The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives...