

AED/POUZN: Creating a Partnership Model to Take Zinc to Scale in India

The Point-Of-Use Water Disinfection and Zinc Treatment (POUZN) project is a USAID Private Sector Program (PSP) initiative managed by AED. POUZN supports the use of zinc treatment with oral rehydration therapy (ORT)/oral rehydration salts (ORS) to reduce morbidity and mortality due to diarrhea. The project goal is to ensure the long-term and sustainable availability, sales and use of zinc treatment and ORT by enlisting the commercial sector to complement public sector efforts in promoting these treatments. More than 500,000 children die annually in India due to dehydration from diarrhea.

Building the Partnership Platform

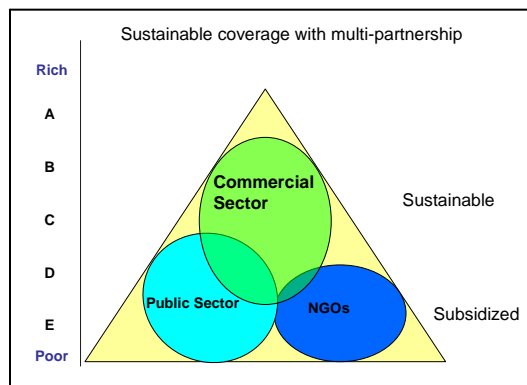
From the outset, POUZN sought to build a *scalable* partnership model involving the commercial, public, and NGO sectors that could put zinc treatment into the hands of Indian consumers, particularly those at the base of the (socioeconomic) pyramid. The three teaming sectors – commercial, public, and NGO – each had distinct roles in promoting the widespread use of zinc for treating and preventing diarrhea.

Indian Zinc Treatment Producers - 2008	Brand	Form(s)
1 Alkem Labs	Alzinc	Tablet
2 Apex Laboratories	Ascazin	Syrup
3 Cipla	Zincris	Syrup
4 Dr Reddy's	Z & D	Syrup/Tablet
5 Emcure Pharmaceuticals	Emzinc	Syrup/Tablet
6 FDC	Zioral 20 DT	Syrup/Tablet
7 Indamedica	Diaraz	Syrup
8 Mankind Pharma	Zincolife	Syrup
9 Mapra Laboratories	Zincup	Syrup
10 Pharmed Medicare	Zincsy	Syrup
11 Raptakos, Brett & Co.	Zevac	Syrup
12 Serum International	Mintonia	Syrup
13 Shalaks Pharmaceuticals	Zenim	Syrup
14 USV	Trustim	Syrup
15 Wallace Pharmaceuticals	Zn20	Syrup
16 Zuventus Health Care	Zinconia	Syrup/Tablet

POUZN began in October 2005 by identifying commercial sector partners willing to invest in growing the market for zinc treatment and ORS. POUZN demonstrated the economic viability and social return of these products to identified partners. By the end of 2008, 16 companies were producing and marketing zinc treatment, and many were co-promoting it with their ORS brand.

Given the role of the public sector in setting policy and regulating the pharmaceutical industry, POUZN encouraged the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to support the adoption of new diarrheal guidelines and to promote the quick approval of zinc as an over-the-counter (OTC) product in order to expand availability and facilitate rapid consumer access. POUZN also engaged BIBCOL, an Indian parastatal manufacturing facility charged with the production of zinc treatment for the public sector. POUZN contracted with BIBCOL to produce a trial batch of 20 mg dispersible zinc tablets, which are expected to be ready in 2009.

NGOs were identified to bring hands-on knowledge of communities and to access hard-to reach groups, including lower income families. The enlisted NGOs brought new awareness about diarrhea prevention and treatment to the community and influenced rural



medical practitioners to improve diarrhea treatment practices. By creating a new market at the base of the pyramid (BOP), the pharmaceutical partners adapted their marketing model to integrate this new segment.

The multiple partnership model was created as a response to the fundamentals of inclusive marketing and addresses the pre-conditions needed to take zinc to scale -- equity in product access (including reaching across urban and rural divides and reaching across economic classes), commercial viability of the product (increasing sales), and sustainable public health impact. POUZN's role in the partnership is that of facilitator and broker.

Building Demand among Private Health Providers

Because the private health sector is responsible for treating an estimated 75% of diarrheal disease cases in India, POUZN targeted private health providers reached by the project's commercial partners for routine promotion. POUZN also collaborated with commercial partners to train medical representatives to increase coverage and promotional intensity for zinc treatment and ORT, to provide access to USAID-generated research, and to train "zinc champions" who would influence their peers.

To reach medical doctors, POUZN coordinated the review and revision of diarrheal treatment guidelines with the national Indian Association of Pediatricians (IAP), and encouraged regional meetings of the IAP to review and disseminate the new guidelines. POUZN also helped to dispel the common misconception that zinc treatment should be used only in cases where a child with diarrhea is also malnourished. Due to early engagement of key opinion leaders to advocate aggressively for zinc treatment, new prescriptions for zinc treatment are increasing, albeit at a slower rate than POUZN's expectations due to the difficulty in modifying the strongly entrenched practice of prescribing anti-diarrheals and antibiotics.

POUZN also addressed the issue of pharmaceutical company representatives being inclined to promote more profitable products than zinc. The project convinced selected partners to expand promotion to general practitioners in addition to pediatricians to increase the overall coverage of doctors who treat diarrhea in young children.

Targeting Frontline Rural Medical Practitioners (RMPs)



To reach frontline health providers in rural, underserved populations that suffer from the highest incidence of diarrhea, POUZN trains local NGOs familiar with the community to "detail" local RMPs with communication tools and messages on improved diarrhea management. This was critical in light of care-seeking behavior study results from Uttar Pradesh (UP), in which POUZN found the majority of rural mothers consult these non-formally trained RMPs and would not adopt a new treatment (such as zinc) unless recommended by the RMP.

Initial results showed that in only four months, 30% of RMPs had converted to prescribing zinc treatment and 50% of rural drug stores were stocking zinc. Expansion of this community model in

2009 will target 144 blocks in 12 districts in UP, and POUZN will train 29,000 RMPs and identify 7,200 chemist shops to stock zinc.

Reaching Mothers and Caregivers through Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

POUZN developed and implemented an interpersonal communication strategy to reach mothers and caregivers by targeting SHG members who are active in their community and tend to be early adopters of new products and practices. The local NGOs encourage SHG members to: 1) bring one non-member to a group meeting to discuss zinc and ORS for diarrhea treatment; and 2) promote zinc and ORS directly with other women in their village. Pharmaceutical partners, donors, foundations and NGOs are all following this approach closely to learn of its impact with caregivers and its potential to increase sales and health impact.

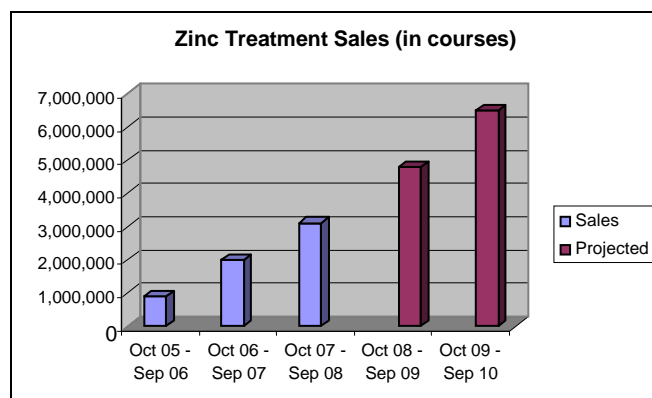
RESULTS

Maximizing Public Health Impact through Efficient Investment

POUZN/India successfully leveraged funds from the private sector to support POUZN objectives of reaching scale with zinc treatment. During the first project year, the private sector contributed \$1.3 million of their own funds to support expenses related to detailing work by their representatives, promotional materials, training, distribution, market research, PR, and professional meetings. During the second project year, the private sector invested \$1.1 million. The related donor investment for program activities over this two-year period was approximately \$480,000, representing a 5-to-1 return on USAID investment. In essence, through POUZN, USAID provided “seed funds” to encourage a substantially greater investment by the private sector in support of the project goals. Currently, seven active partners are investing in growing the market, and several of them are expecting to invest in rural marketing following POUZN’s innovative rural strategy.

Increasing Commercial Sales

Sixteen Indian pharmaceutical companies have produced and marketed zinc for diarrheal treatment, with zinc sales increasing steadily and dramatically since October 2005.



Interestingly, by the end of 2008, 89% of zinc sales were in syrup form, versus only 11% for dispersible tablets. Qualitative research conducted by POUZN revealed that both health professionals and caregivers preferred the syrups to dispersible tablets.

To increase demand for zinc treatment, POUZN continues to adapt appropriate strategies for urban and rural health providers. Zinc producers’ medical representatives repeatedly contact 15,000 pediatricians,

75,000 general practitioners and over 50,000 drug sellers with messages on improved diarrhea treatment. Selected commercial partners are pursuing the POUZN rural strategy to expand improved diarrhea treatment in high incidence areas, and POUZN projects that 6,250,000 courses of zinc treatment will be sold by September 2010.

Expanding Supply to Other Countries

Indian zinc manufacturers are exporting zinc treatment to Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, they are a source of technology transfer, which is exemplified by the training provided in pharmaceutical Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and quality assurance (QA) to Shelys, a zinc manufacturing and marketing partner in Tanzania.

**For more information on the POUZN India country
program, contact:**

Deepak Saksena
Country Director - POUZN
AED
2-C/2, Taj Apartments ,Parkwood Estate, Rao Tula Ram Marg
New Delhi-110022, India
Tel: +91.11.26182133 / 34, 26182085 / 86
Fax: +91.11.26182086
Cell: +91.99.580.99362
Email: dsaksena@aed.org
www.aed.org