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Healthy Markets for Healthy People

SUCCESS STORY

# Dialoguing to Make a Difference

**The new Healthy Markets Community of Practice provides a space for detailed discussions on strengthening family planning markets globally**



PHOTO: A scene from the January 2023 Healthy Markets Community of Practice discussion on Nigeria. Credit: FHM Engage.

“The need to dialogue around health market development approaches for the family planning market is dire because there are so many actors involved in making a market work effectively and efficiently. All of these players need a voice at the table. The Healthy Markets Community of Practice is a start. It’s a virtual table around which we can gather to converse about how we can together make our family planning markets better,” explains Farhan Yusuf, the chief of party for USAID’s Frontier Health Markets (FHM) Engage activity in Tanzania and co-facilitator of the Healthy Markets Community of Practice (HMCoP).

For markets to have widespread beneficial impact – providing an array of high quality goods and services at affordable prices – private institutions, aid agencies, community or civil society groups, academics, public organizations, and governments all have a role to play. Started and led by USAID and UNFPA, the HMCoP evolved in 2023 from the Total Market Approach Working Group to bring these players together to discuss how to strengthen family planning (FP) markets globally. Over the years USAID has encouraged its technical experts at the forefront of private sector for health projects – such as Sustaining Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS Plus) and now FHM Engage – to lead the charge of being the Secretariat for this group of implementers and enthusiasts of private sector approaches.

The change from the Total Market Approach Working Group to the HMCoP not only revitalized the group but now also provides a new lens to consider health market improvements: the Market Development Approach that is being implemented by FHM Engage. The Market Development Approach is strongly reliant on principles of co-creation of market interventions between different market actors to create healthy markets. As such, the HMCoP acts as a conduit for such discussions and partnerships within and across different countries to facilitate healthy markets. Sessions consider how the core functions of demand and/or supply for FP products and services might be strengthened with greater local private sector engagement in specific countries and ponder how supporting functions may be improved to facilitate FP market development in those places.

***“The people on the call are a who’s who of the private sector FP world.”***

— Testimonial from February 2023  
Healthy Markets Community of Practice  
discussion on Tanzania.

In January 2023, the first session of the new HMCoP focused on Nigeria as a country involving various market actors implementing different activities in the country. The February session focused on Tanzania and led to a robust discussion that brought forth a continued Tanzania focus in March. The March convening honed in on the country’s data use, stewardship, product leakage, and financing-related challenges especially for startups in the family planning space. The HMCoP now also includes discussions related to drug shops and pharmacies that were previously done under the Drug Shop and Pharmacy Community of Practice with a focus on sharing best practices and lessons learned in supporting pharmacies and drug shops to provide quality contraceptives.

Overall, the evolution from a working group to a broader Community of Practice with monthly convenings has already doubled the group’s reach, which now attracts more than 200 members including different market actors working in the family planning market.

In addition, with the change in the modality of sessions to more in-depth, country-specific, analytical discussions, market actors implementing private sector market-based approaches are using the sessions as a marketplace to present their work in family planning. This is, in turn, encouraging learning and enhancing the formation of necessary networks and linkages to support sustainable, healthy family planning markets beyond the life of the Healthy Markets Community of Practice.