

Corporate Social Responsibility

THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S UNIQUE ROLE IN
IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH



COMMERCIAL MARKET STRATEGIES
NEW DIRECTIONS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH





What is corporate social responsibility?

In today's global economy, corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities are an important part of corporate business, with more and more companies recognizing that giving back to their employees and to the communities where they operate is a critical strategy for long-term success.

The American organization Business for Social Responsibility defines corporate social responsibility as *operating a business in a manner that exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of business.*

At Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) we define corporate social responsibility in a way that is pertinent to projects that seek to promote family planning and reproductive health. Our CSR activities seek to *expand a company's core business activities to include an investment in improving the health status of employees and the communities in which they operate.*

Why is corporate social responsibility important?

Developing partnership programs to improve health can be beneficial to both USAID and the private sector. For the private sector, programs that improve the health status of local stakeholders can enhance a company's corporate image, improve relations with employees and positively affect a company's position in the local community. These benefits always relate (directly and/or indirectly) to strengthening a company's bottom line.

For USAID, the "win" in working with the private sector is leveraging access and resources to achieve a positive health impact. In addition, developing public/private partnerships to promote family planning and reproductive health initiatives can:

- Improve the health of employees and the local community;
- Increase support for family planning and reproductive health among corporate leaders;
- Leverage more private sector resources;
- Build congressional support for USAID health programs; and
- Defuse political criticism of family planning efforts.

What can corporate social responsibility achieve?

Because the private sector can often function with less bureaucracy than the public sector, private corporations can sometimes take on issues that may be too sensitive for governments to handle on their own. For example, in the case of HIV/AIDS, Coca-Cola has been able to initiate cutting-edge interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa — paving the way for effective collaboration with international donors and local governments. Corporate Social Responsibility activities almost always include community programs. These programs can complement local government programs and can help generate new ideas for community participation and corporate responsibility among other businesses, NGO's and community leaders.

What Can CMS do in Corporate Social Responsibility?

Commercial Market Strategies can assist companies with the design and development of reproductive health programs that meet their social and financial needs. Toward that end, CMS can provide technical assistance to companies on a range of family planning and reproductive health initiatives.

CORPORATE POLICIES

Corporate policies establish company guidelines on issues such as labor conditions, employee benefits and health policies. Companies have found that adopting and enforcing such policies results in increased employee satisfaction, greater employee retention and improved recruitment. CMS can assist companies to construct and incorporate important reproductive health issues into their business guidelines and corporate codes of conduct.

WORK-BASED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMS

Employers can provide on-site education and counseling on family planning and reproductive health and can also improve access to reproductive health products in or near the workplace. To this end, CMS can

- Help companies understand how best to approach work-based programs;
- Help establish guidelines and protocols to implement activities; and
- Provide the technical expertise in reproductive health necessary for project success.

GHANA: CMS brokered a successful partnership between the Ghana Social Marketing Foundation (GSMF) and Unilever to enhance the quality of HIV/AIDS information and education provided to Unilever's 5,000 palm plantation employees and the two communities surrounding the plantations (estimated at 100,000). CMS is also working with a large Ghanaian firm, Frandesco, to start a clinic that will incorporate reproductive health and family planning services, at one of its manufacturing plants. The proposed clinic would serve the employees of Frandesco as well as the surrounding community (estimated at 10,000).



A Salt Manufacturing plant in Ghana, owned by FRANDESCO; employees of this company may be getting family planning services at their on-site clinics.

BRAZIL: Instituto Ethos is an association of Brazilian businesses interested in furthering corporate social responsibility. CMS worked with Ethos on the publication of a women's reproductive health manual for distribution to the employees of over 200 member companies.

Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) is a USAID-funded project that aims to increase access to and demand for reproductive health and family planning in developing countries through the private sector.



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If you would like additional information about Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives at CMS please contact us at:

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

With the growth of corporate social responsibility, more and more companies have expanded their activities to include the surrounding community. CMS can help companies identify community needs and help develop programs to fulfill those needs. Outreach activities can include:

- Teaming up with local NGOs to provide reproductive health services;
- Pooling resources with other local organizations to establish a clinic; or
- Implementing community development projects in conjunction with other donors, NGOs or government.

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

A company conducts cause-related marketing when it actively promotes a particular cause as an extension of its company values and its core business. These campaigns usually involve the use of mass media, advertising and public relations (a good domestic example of cause-related marketing is the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade). CMS can demonstrate how a campaign promoting improved health might be in-line with a company's core values and enhance their corporate image. In addition, CMS can provide technical assistance and expertise to develop marketing and promotional messages that address health themes.

Contact CMS

Contact CMS to explore how our reproductive health and private sector expertise can increase the health impact of your programs. Visit our web site, www.cmsproject.com, for more information about the project, our current country programs and CMS research publications (available for download).