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Conducting Social Marketing Research in Afghanistan



One of WTP Data Collection Team with WTP Monitor on the way to a mountainous village of Takhar

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COMPRI-A Social Marketing Project
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COMPRI-A Project Overview

- The COMPRI-A Project is a USAID-funded social marketing and behavior change communication program designed to increase access to and use of health products and services for women of reproductive age and children under five by working through the private sector.
- The Project currently focuses on building demand for and providing access to affordable quality birth spacing, safe water and oral rehydration therapy products.





State of Health Data in Afghanistan

- High levels of maternal, infant and child mortality and morbidity rates
- Lack of MoPH health related data
- Limited definitive research conducted throughout Afghanistan...regional versus national
- Limited research human resource capacity within the country



Research Considerations

- All research activities were conducted in full compliance with U.S. federal regulations that govern the protection of human subjects from research risks.
- Ethical Consideration
 - AKU ERC and IRB MoPH Afghanistan
 - Permission (District head/ Community and religious leaders)
 - Informed consent
 - Confidentiality



Research Considerations (cont'd.)

- Since the majority of the subject matter was sensitive by nature and considering where it was being discussed, the protection of our research participants (interviewer and interviewee) was critical.
- No cross gender interviewing was permitted.



Research Activities

- Rapid Assessment Study
- Brand Name Survey
- Willingness-To-Pay (WTP) Study
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Study



Rapid Assessment Study

- Findings from previous studies (REACH, UNICEF) utilized in the development of Rapid Assessment Study.
- Study conducted in Herat and Kabul
- Finding incorporated into marketing plans for re-branded health products.
- A total of 12 focus groups and 40 in-depth interviews with married women ages 15-60 and married men ages 15-60 conducted.



Brand Name Survey

- A total of 100 in-depth interviews were conducted for urban, rural of tow provinces.
- The name shared with different Afghan ethnic communities to see whether these names would be accepted by the various ethnic populations.





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Willingness-To-Pay Study

- The survey conducted in collaboration with a local Afghan research company.
- Undertaken to determine the price ceiling that majority of the consumers (current and potential users) will be willing to pay for product.
- Determine the characteristics of clients who are willing to or not willing to pay a given price.
- 727 respondents interviewed
- Married men and married women between the age 15 to 49 years and mother-in-laws interviewed.





KAP Study

- A formative baseline research conducted on knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of target populations, to contribute to the development of program activities.
- The survey conducted in five diverse regions (urban and rural areas)
- Target populations were surveyed:
 - All men (15-49 years of age)
 - Married men (15-49 years of age)
 - Married women (15-49 years of age)
 - Primary Care-Takers
- The total sample size was 4,000.
 - ~ 50% male and 50% female
 - ~ 50% urban and 50% rural





Research Challenges

- Security Threat Level
- Access to Consumers
(difficult to reach remote areas, illiteracy rate)
- Cultural Sensitivities
(regarding contraceptive use and male dominance)
- Cultural Barriers
(religious, ethnic and gender related)
- Role of Influencers
(mother-in-laws, community leaders)





Research Challenges by Activity

Issues & Challenges	Rapid Assessment	Brand Name Study	WTP Study	KAP Study
Security Threat Level			✓	✓
Access to Consumers		✓	✓	✓
Cultural Sensitivities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cultural Barriers		✓		✓
Role of Influencers			✓	✓



Challenge: Security Threat Level

Harsh Weather

Taliban Threat

Drug Lords

Landmines

Kidnapping Threat

Bad Road System

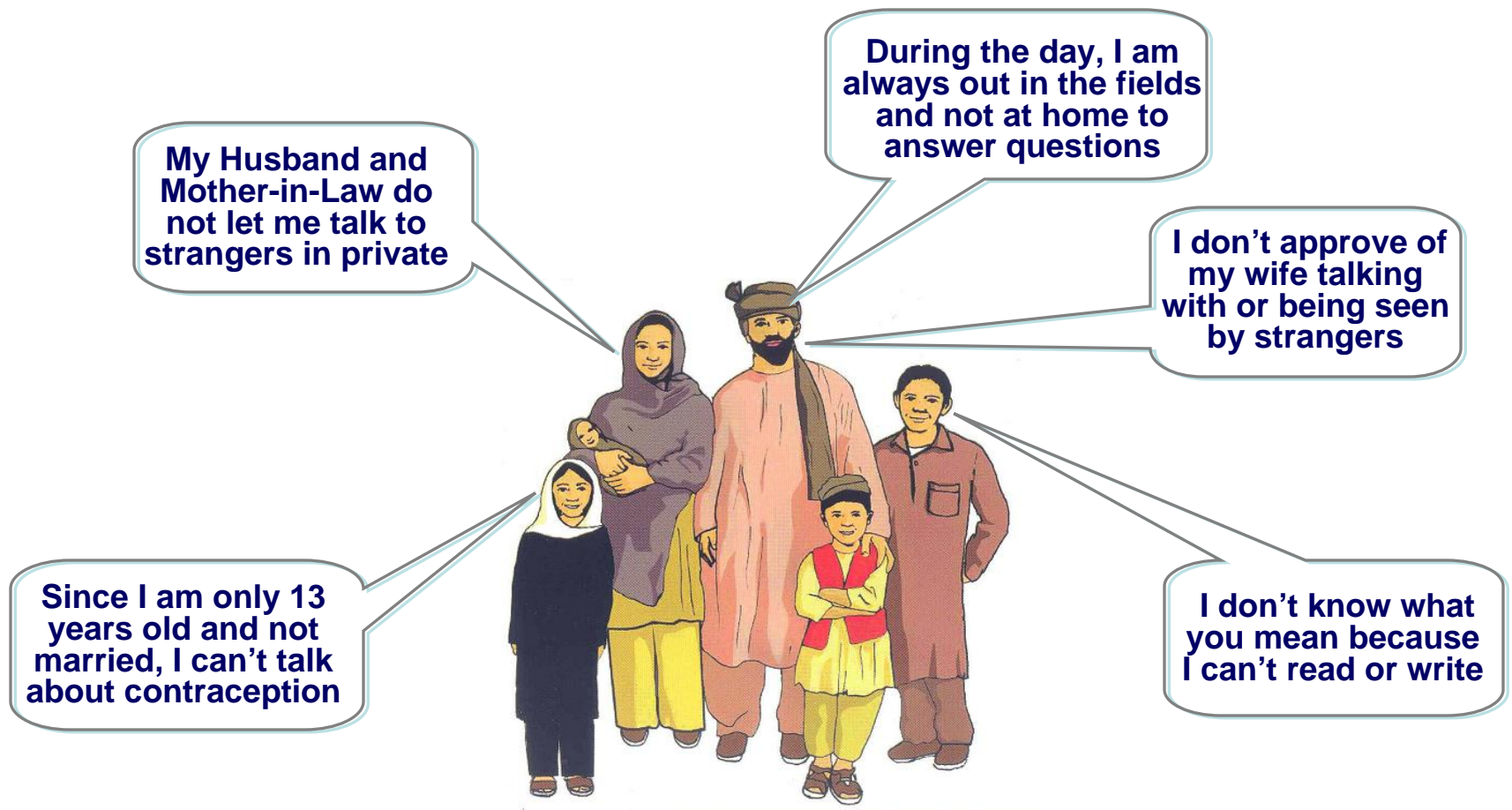
Tribal Rivalries

Coalition Friendly-Fire





Challenge: Access to Consumers





Challenge: Cultural Sensitivities

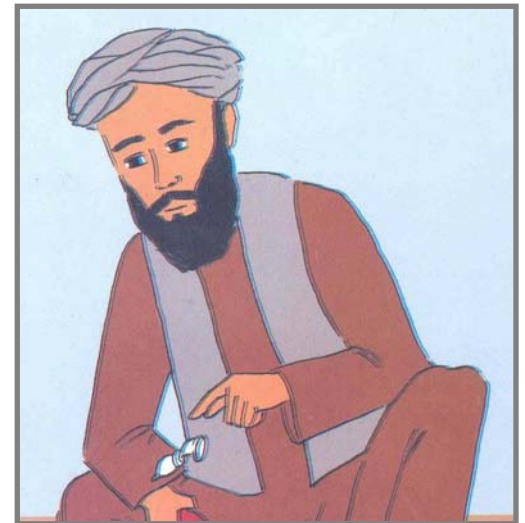
Men desire for small family size but confused with perceived religious constraints

Inter-spousal communication is lacking especially for family planning

Preference for sons is still prevalent

Men's use of contraceptives is reluctantly talked about (the macho factor)

Absolutely no cross gender interviewing allowed





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Challenge: Cultural Barriers

Male dominated society

Heavy dependence on religious opinion

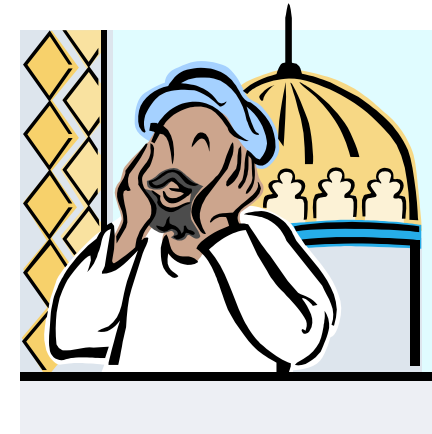
Tribal affiliations

Limited gender equity

Misconceptions of the Holy Quran

Limited independence of woman (physical & mental)

Male-focused purchasing power





Challenge: Role of Influencers





Lessons Learned

- Conducting sensitive surveys in a conservative and security challenged country, such as Afghanistan (where potential adverse reactions may occur) need to involve extensive interviewer sensitivity training, government and community level buy-in prior to field implementation.
- Achieving buy-in from local community or key influencers will greatly impact access to women and/or primary care takers.
- A low profile approach to data collection in the high security areas is critical.



Lessons Learned

- More in-depth research including both partners is required regarding male involvement in FP.
- High illiteracy rate mandates the use of more graphic-driven data collection tools.
- Importance of correct interpretation and communication of Holy Quran by religious leaders.