

Interview with Don Levy, Chief of Party, PRISM/Philippines, Chemonics International
Conducted by Neha Suchak, Director of Communications, PSP-One Project/
Abt Associates

Neha: I would like to welcome Don Levy. Don is the Chief of Party for the PRISM project in the Philippines. Don, thank you for taking part in this discussion.

Don: My pleasure.

Neha Question #1: *My first question to you is, what important lessons have you learned during your time in the field of social marketing?*

Don: After more than 25 years of doing social marketing, much of that in the field and back in the United States, I've come to the realization that social marketing is not an end in itself. Unfortunately we tend to believe that the object of social marketing is social marketing, rather than treating it as a contribution to behavior change, a contribution to a paradigm shift, a contribution to market development. We've got to realize that what we are trying to achieve here is more than moving products, selling products, but adjusting lifestyles and getting people to realize that there is something in the benefit of using contraceptives and how we get contraceptives to them, so I think it is critical that we recognize that. It is not an end in itself.

Neha Question #2: *Don what do you consider to be the most difficult challenges for social marketing programs in the developing world today?*

Don: I think we are still trying to justify the effectiveness of social marketing. One only needs to look back at the recent controversy coming out of the World Health organization questioning the social marketing of bed nets. After more than 30 years of implementing social marketing programs there are still questions about whether or not this is sustainable, this is effective, that this is the best way to be reaching consumers in developing countries and getting them to be using products that are in their best interests in addressing their health. That's the issue, we are still trying to justify whether or not social marketing works.

Neha Question #3: *Don, in your opinion, what is the new wave of social marketing? What should practitioners and donors be prepared for in the years to come?*

Don: I think there is a paradigm shift in terms of consumer behaviors around the world. Respective of the fact that you still have billions of people that are at the bottom of the pyramid, certainly poor, there is more disposable income that is available and there are more people that are making the conscious effort that they want to be practicing or they want to have access to social marketing. We need to be able to meet that need. There is this paradigm shift that talks about the blue ocean strategy as opposed to the red ocean strategy, or marketing to the bottom pyramid, that's the bottom line here. We need to need to reach out to those people at the bottom of the pyramid with effective ways of reaching them. That is going to be the major shift in social marketing for the future.

Neha: Don on behalf of the PSP-One project we would like to thank you for sharing your thoughts and perspectives here with us today.

Don: This has been my pleasure again.