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Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector

The Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) project is USAID’s flagship initiative in private sector health. It works to involve nongovernmental organizations and for-profit entities to address the many health needs of people in the developing world.

SHOPS focuses on increasing availability, improving quality, and expanding coverage of essential health products and services in family planning and reproductive health, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, and other areas through the private sector.

Expertise in the Private Health Sector

The SHOPS team brings broad technical expertise in private sector health. It provides technical assistance in:

- Assessments** – conducting analysis of the private health sector landscape to better understand the role the private sector plays in a country and identify areas for improvement
- Behavior change communication** – promoting healthy behaviors and overcoming barriers to change among the general public and private health care providers
- Health financing** – increasing access to health services for the poor through a variety of financing options including vouchers, contracting, and insurance
- mHealth** – using mobile technology to improve health outcomes
- NGO sustainability** – strengthening the capacity of organizations to be financially independent and build organizational and technical competencies
- Pharmaceutical partnerships** – introducing new products and expanding markets through social marketing and partnerships with manufacturers
- Policy** – promoting policy dialogue, reform, and regulatory change to enhance the climate for the private health sector
- Provider access to finance** – working with financial institutions to increase lending to private providers while strengthening their business skills
- Provider networks** – making private provider networks and franchises stronger and more effective
- Quality improvement** – improving the quality of products and services in the private sector



Vicki MacDonald

Harnessing the Private Sector

“The private sector is too often overlooked when it comes to meeting the health priorities of low income people. SHOPS helped us extend our service offering to those who need it most.”

Liza Kimbo, Director
LiveWell Health Clinics, Kenya



Why the private sector?

Engaging the private sector is critical to meeting priority health goals in developing countries. The sector plays an important role in many countries and is an integral part of the health system serving urban and rural areas, rich and poor. It offers valuable resources and can help relieve the demands placed on the public sector. Investing in the private sector improves the delivery of health services, strengthens the health system, and results in better health outcomes.

Ways to engage the private sector

Understand the sector

As a first step toward sustainability of its national HIV/AIDS response, the government of Namibia asked SHOPS to conduct an assessment of its private health sector. The analysis revealed ways to improve the viability of nongovernmental organizations and the provision of HIV/AIDS services offered by the private sector.

Strengthen health care businesses to expand quality services

In Nigeria, SHOPS has enabled providers to access finance and business training, increasing their ability to expand their businesses and improve services. Working with USAID's Development Credit Authority, SHOPS brokered a partial risk guarantee with Diamond Bank. This resulted in a newly developed loan product for private health care businesses that offer reproductive health, family planning, and maternal and child health products and services.

Prepare for graduation and sustainability

Faced with the impending withdrawal of USAID funding



for health programs, Paraguay sought to increase the demand for services of its Social Security Institute, a currently underutilized resource. SHOPS supported the Social Security Institute to increase its role in family planning service delivery by procuring equipment, training providers, and conducting a qualitative study to increase demand for its family planning services.

Tap into mobile technologies

The explosive growth in mobile phone access in low-resource settings around the world provides unprecedented opportunities in public health. SHOPS is supporting the use of mobile technology in Africa and Asia to educate consumers with health information, to strengthen health care provider training, and to improve program management through better data collection tools.

To access the capabilities of SHOPS, USAID missions and bureaus can buy into the leader agreement or issue their own associate awards. For more information, contact:

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For more information about the SHOPS project, visit: www.shopsproject.org



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