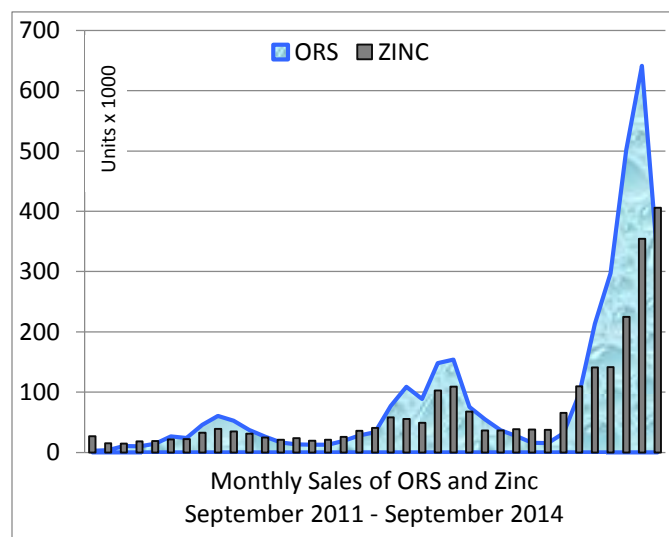


Creating Sustainable Rural Markets to Save Lives

FHI 360 worked with its partners in 18 districts of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, India to initiate and develop a market for Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) and zinc to improve treatment of childhood diarrhea through private sector channels.

Diarrhea is the second leading cause of illness and death among children under 5 worldwide and is responsible for approximately 175,000 deaths in India annually. Zinc and ORS have been endorsed by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, local health authorities and the Indian Association of Pediatricians as the first line treatment for childhood diarrhea.

The private sector is the dominant source of health care in India, including in rural areas. FHI 360 partnered with local NGOs and pharmaceutical marketers to create and increase demand and use of ORS and zinc by private providers and caregivers, while ensuring continued and scaled up supply of the products in the private market.



Working with partners to reach the last mile

Before the project began, there was limited availability of ORS in the private market, and virtually no zinc. FHI 360 mentored partners to reach over 30,000 providers with both information and products through repeated sales calls. In one year, the project developed a direct supply chain to seed the market and incite trial, ultimately converting providers to regular use of ORS and zinc and creating an attractive market for both the implementing partners and other pharmaceutical companies.

Leveraging the cascade of influence for effective behavior change

To reinforce and sustain positive behavior among private providers and caregivers, the project also leveraged existing relationships among providers, and between providers and caregivers to disseminate messages aligned with national guidelines.

- **Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs)** are health care specialists who are renowned in their field and serve as “role models.” FHI 360 engaged KOLs as spokespersons in symposia with other providers and in mass media campaigns.
- **General Practitioners (GPs)** are often located in urban areas. FHI 360 enlisted them as “champions” to educate paramedical staff and convert rural providers. FHI 360 set up “ORS and zinc corners” in large clinics to sensitize caregivers in the waiting rooms and to remind medical staff of the products.

- **Rural Health Providers (RHPs)** are the epicenter of the action for both the supply and demand of ORS and zinc. Field Sales Officers (FSOs) tailored their sales call to providers to promote and reinforce positive behaviors and supply products. Additional intensified provider activities include:
 - Round table meetings with GPs to convince providers who were still reluctant to use ORS and zinc
 - Diarrhea helpline (toll free) to link RHPs to immediate advice by pediatricians for critical cases

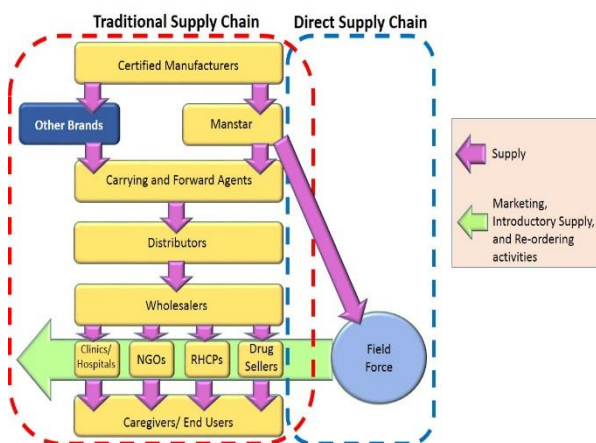
- **Drug sellers** were also routinely visited by FSOs who encouraged them to keep ORS and zinc at top-of-mind for treatment of diarrhea and ensured constant product availability. The project rewarded bulk orders through incentive plans, and installed creative displays in prominent locations to both remind and educate customers.

- **Caregivers** are the ultimate target of this systematic intervention. The project sought to improve knowledge about appropriate treatment to both facilitate adherence and shape demand. FHI 360 reached out to caregivers through community-based activities, including:
 - Home visits to sick children and follow up by a well-trained mobile RHP (*Sehat Mitra*) in order to engage the entire family in the treatment plan and prevention activities
 - Promotional wall paintings in high visibility locations in hundreds of villages
 - A mobile “van show” mobilizing communities and showing a popular cartoon with fun and engaging promotional messaging
 - Radio broadcasts by a popular station featuring educational messages and interviews with prominent pediatricians



Sehat Mitra (mobile RHP)

Sustaining and expanding the market for life-saving commodities



The project’s approach expanded demand and product reach to the remotest villages, with direct sales by FSOs meeting most of the initial demand. Thanks to those market priming activities, the project was then able to insert the partners’ products into the existing distribution system, creating a progressive supply scheme blending traditional and direct supply chains to ensure maximum possible depth of sustainable distribution. The approach utilized in this project for ORS and zinc can easily be adapted to increase and sustain the use of other life savings commodities in the areas of maternal, reproductive, newborn, and child health.

The goal of Diarrhea Alleviation through Oral Rehydration Salts and Zinc Therapy (DAZT) is to reduce childhood morbidity and mortality from diarrheal disease in India. DAZT is managed by the US Fund for UNICEF. FHI 360 focuses on the private sector, while Micronutrient Initiative focuses on the public sector, UNICEF on knowledge management, and Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health on Monitoring and Evaluation. For more information, please visit <http://www.fhi360.org/projects/diarrhea-alleviation-through-zinc-and-oral-rehydration-therapy-dazt> or contact csaade@fhi360.org