

Field Report

SDC staff visit



Prepared for

SDC

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the visit

SDC organizes face-to-face reunions of their thematic staff once every two years to discuss sectoral strategic orientations and engage in exchange of experiences and practices. This year, the SDC health team from the whole of the Eastern and Southern Africa division (including staff from HQ) decided to meet in Nairobi from April 8th to April 10th, 2019.

The team requested to have a half-a day field visit within Nairobi to learn from the Kenya experience in healthcare delivery. Since the theme for the staff gathering in Nairobi was “innovation in health,” visiting innovative health projects was deemed a viable learning and information sharing opportunity.

Cardno was tasked with the responsibility of taking the staff around Nairobi to show case its innovative interventions under the PSP4H programme implemented between 2014 and 2018. The health interventions visited were City Eye Hospital, Pharmnet and Afya Poa.

1.2 Cardno’s Health Interventions

City Eye

Ophthalmology has largely been neglected in Kenya; the few public and NGO facilities that offer eye care are overwhelmed, while private facilities are too expensive for most to afford. Yet India has successfully scaled-up eye care hospitals that offer affordable, quality services for literally tens of thousands of low-income clients. City Eye Hospital (CEH) is a full-service eye clinic serving both low- and high-end markets, which is attempting to replicate India’s successful Aravind Eye Hospital model in Kenya. PSP4H is assisted CEH to improve access among the working poor to quality, low-cost eye care services.

Afya Poa

Achieving equity in health and health financing is a policy priority for the Government of Kenya’s (GOK). There is general agreement among key health sector stakeholders that Kenya desires universal health coverage, but there continues to be disagreement over how this should be implemented. In recent years, there have been attempts to provide insurance to informal workers but this has mostly been limited to life insurance. Attempts to provide other micro-health insurance products have not been successful due to the lack of understanding of this market segment, inadequate actuarial data, small risk pools, unaffordable prices, poor delivery mechanisms and uncondusive regulatory framework.

Jawabu Empowerment Ltd. developed an affordable and appropriate health insurance product – Afya Poa – for the informally employed, who constitute over 80% of Kenya’s workforce. The product is a combination of health insurance and health savings account (HSA). The health insurance covers inpatient needs for the whole family. PSP4H partnered with Jawabu to introduce this new product into the market place.

Pharmnet

Lower income groups in Kenya suffer from poor quality medicines due to: 1) a highly fragmented and inadequately regulated retail pharmacy sector; 2) counterfeit and substandard drugs in the market (estimated at ~30% by WHO), most of which end up at the bottom of the pyramid; and 3) proliferation of unlicensed outlets operated by unqualified personnel. Private drug sellers are often the first point of healthcare contact for low-income Kenyans. Currently, consumers cannot differentiate unqualified, unlicensed outlets selling substandard medicines from qualified, licensed outlets selling quality-assured medicines.

The PSP4H market intervention assists the Kenya Pharmaceutical Association (KPA) to improve access to quality essential medicines among low-income groups through a branded retail pharmacy network called PHARMNET.

1.3 Kahawa West Visit

| Entrepreneur visited | Highlights |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pro-Act Maternity and Medical Center - Members of Afya Poa use it as one of their outlets to access affordable quality health services 2. Westy pharmacy – A member of the Pharmnet Network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The way health systems are financed is a critical determinant for reaching universal coverage since they determine whether health services exist and are available and whether people can afford to use health services when they need them. Some of the quick wins for the network include brand visibility and organization of the fragmented pharmaceutical retail sector into a single branded retail network providing quality assured medicines, which also helped the regulator to clamp on quacks and ensure the market is free of counterfeit. |

1.4 Upper Hill and Mbagathi Road

| Entrepreneur visited | Highlights |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. City Eye Hospital | <p>The delegates were shown around the City Eye hospital in order to give an understanding of how it was set up in 2015, how Cardno / PSP4H supported them during this process; the services now being offered and their successes and aspirations going forward.</p> <p>The team were taken to the diagnostic and treatment rooms, the glasses workshop, retail shop, operating theatre and recovery wards. Following the visit, the team were taken to the high-end sister clinic where appointments are booking based and the clientele tends to be the middle upper quintile sector of the market. The host explained that during the set-up of City Eye Hospital the high-end clinic subsidized its operations. City Eye Hospital is now generating enough revenue to cover all operations costs and make a profit in return. This demonstrates the economic opportunity of focusing on the working poor that constitutes the mass market. Their strategy is simple – treat high number of patients by ensuring operations are streamlined and efficient. By comparison they receive considerably more patients than the sister clinic.</p> <p>City Eye receives regular technical support from Avarind Eye Hospital in order to adopt best practice, keep operations lean, and fit for purpose. Going forward they intend to scale up to other areas of Kenya. Their biggest challenge now is availability of human resources that can help take this vision forward.</p> |

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| <p>4. Highrise Pharmnet</p> | <p>The team of delegates were taken to a Pharmnet branded pharmacy that received support from the PSP4H / Cardno programme. Cardno provided training, branding and established the Pharmnet network with the Kenya Pharmaceutical Association (KPA). The pharmacy shared the benefits they received and reiterated the value of being connected to other like-minded pharmacy owned.</p> <p>The owner spoke of his hope that the network leadership team would eventually establish pooled procurement to ensure that products are bought and sold at competitive prices. This will help to ensure the customers continue to get quality products at affordable prices.</p> |
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Conclusion

The following are key few take home points that we discussed as we went around the field trip interacting with our partners.

- Simple well designed straight forward strategies delivered quick wins

From our activities during the first two phases of PSP4H, Afya Poa's Outreach Programme, which was a quick intervention model, was very simple, basic, and straight to the point. This created awareness of the product and improved its uptake showing lots of success in terms of solving the initial problem and sustainability.

For City Eye Hospital, adopting the low-end model looked basic and many people thought that Dr. Kibata would revert to the high-end model eventually, but the model has survived the test of time.

- Partner engagement and dedication heavily influenced growth of the business hence its sustainability
- Knowing your business well and understanding areas that you need support/ intervention ensures that the support received is targeted and solves a particular constraint
- Even when targeted footfall is achieved, demand creation is a continuous activity to attract new clients and keep the business growing and sustainable
- Lastly, sufficient investment of both time and resources played an important role in the success of the interventions.