



GBCHealth

Mobilizing Business for a Healthier World

Reaching the Health Millennium Development Goals: *The Critical Role of India's Business Sector*

November 13, 2013

Investment Case #2 Corporate Support to Reduce Child Pneumonia Deaths

Pneumonia is the single leading cause of child death in India. In 2012, 45 million children under five contracted pneumonia and 300,000 children died from complications caused by pneumonia. Most of these deaths occurred in children under the age of two and 30 percent were among newborns. Children in India are extremely vulnerable to pneumonia because they do not routinely receive the vaccines that can prevent the leading causes of pneumonia or the antibiotics that can treat pneumonia. Further, as severely malnourished children are up to nine times more likely to die from pneumonia, Indian children are particularly vulnerable.

[Interventions with greatest impact](#) on reducing childhood pneumonia deaths include:

1. Vaccination: The pneumococcal, pentavalent and measles vaccines are highly effective at preventing the leading causes of pneumonia. Making these vaccines available to the children most at risk of pneumonia could reduce deaths by more than 30 percent.

2. Treatment: Identifying and treating children with pneumonia with appropriate child-friendly antibiotics close to home could reduce deaths by 35 percent. Frontline health workers must be trained and equipped to diagnose and treat children with the WHO recommended amoxicillin dispersible tablets.

3. Nutrition: Exclusive breastfeeding could reduce pneumonia deaths by 23 percent, yet less than half of Indian babies are exclusively breastfed for the first six months.

4. Hand Washing with Soap: Studies have shown that hand washing with soap can reduce the number of pneumonia-related infections among children under 5 by more than 50 percent.



5. Education: Children of mothers who cannot read and who have had little or no education are at far greater risk of early death. Educating the 40 percent of women in India who are illiterate to recognize the danger signs of childhood pneumonia and to seek care quickly is an urgent priority.

6. Indoor Air Pollution: Halving household air pollution with proper ventilation could reduce instances of severe pneumonia by 70 percent.

How Can a Corporation Help?

- **Infrastructure, Product Development & Service Delivery:** ensure that quality, affordable products to prevent and treat pneumonia are manufactured and distributed to the most vulnerable communities, especially vaccines (pneumococcal, pentavalent and measles), antibiotics (amoxicillin in child-friendly formulations), oxygen, diagnostic devices (e.g. respiratory rate timers, pulse oximeters), soap and clean cooking alternatives.

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Pneumonia is the single leading cause of child death in India; a child dies every two minutes



5

30% of all pneumonia deaths are among newborns



7

60% of Indian families use solid fuels for cooking - a high risk factor for pneumonia

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The Critical Role of India's Business Sector

Investment Case #2

Corporate Support to Reduce Child Pneumonia Deaths

How Can a Corporation Help?

- **Advocacy, Awareness, Education and Behavior Change:** support communications campaigns to increase awareness of the danger signs of pneumonia and the importance of seeking care quickly.
- **Innovation:** provide funding and/or technical assistance to experiment with innovative approaches (e.g. integrating the delivery of vaccines, with community management of pneumonia and good nutrition and hygiene and development of rapid diagnostic tests for pneumonia).



Since 2011, this vaccine has been introduced in nine States and national introduction is now recommended. Other partners include GAVI and the governments of India.

“EROX AMOXICILLIN DISPERSIBLE TABLETS”

Manufactured by Indian pharmaceutical company, Micro Labs, this antibiotic is the WHO recommended treatment for children with pneumonia. Each tablet dissolves in breast milk or water making it easy for small children to swallow. Making this antibiotic available to children with pneumonia would dramatically reduce child deaths. Other partners include UNICEF and the governments of India.

“THE GONDAPPA CAMPAIGN”

To increase rates of hand washing with soap in India, Hindustan Unilever launched the Gondappa campaign with a video that has been viewed more than 13 million times online. The company has “adopted” the village of Thesgora in Madhya Pradesh, which has one of the highest rates of childhood death with the goal of eliminating child mortality. This is part of Unilever’s global campaign to change the hand washing behaviors

of 1 billion people by 2015 and to build a bottom of the pyramid market for Lifebuoy soap.

“WORLD PNEUMONIA DAY”

On November 12th every year India celebrates World Pneumonia Day with the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) sponsoring many advocacy events all over the country. In 2012, the IAP launched a national campaign, “Say No to Pneumonia” to create awareness among parents, healthcare professionals and policymakers on the importance of preventing pneumonia and ensuring that it is diagnosed and treated early.

“SANKALP FORUM & GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CLEAN COOKSTOVES”

Indian business solutions company Intellectap created the Sankalp Forum in 2009 to recognize and support high impact social enterprises. In 2013 the Sankalp Forum announced a \$US 15,000 award for innovation in clean cooking solutions that would reduce household air pollution and the risk to family health from traditional chulhas burning wood, coal and dung.

Next Steps

If your company is interested in supporting an existing program, in establishing a new initiative or forming a new partnership with other stakeholders to prevent child deaths from pneumonia, please contact Shuma Panse at spanse@gbchealth.org or Rahul Bhargava at rbhargava@mdghealthenvoy.org.

Examples of Corporate Support

Corporations who have stepped up to fight pneumonia include India’s leading vaccine manufacturers, consumer goods companies, pharmaceutical companies, social entrepreneurs and professional associations. The following are several of the leading, best practice examples of corporate engagement to prevent child deaths from pneumonia:

“PENTAVAC VACCINE”

One of the world’s leading vaccine makers, the Serum Institute of India, produces pentavalent vaccine which protects children against five diseases including diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Hepatitis B and one of the leading causes of pneumonia – haemophilus influenzae B or Hib.



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