OVERVIEW:
In the Caribbean region, the global health organization Population Services International (PSI) operates through its affiliate hub, Society for Family Health, commonly referred to as PSI/Caribbean (PSI/C). Since 2005, PSI/C - a non-profit social marketing organization - has been working to measurably contribute to the development of favorable environments that facilitate healthy lives among the people of the Caribbean.

PSI/C’s work involves using commercial sector techniques to promote healthier behaviors as well as greater availability of and access to key health information, products and services, especially for low income and high-risk populations.

Locally integrated in twelve countries across the region and internationally connected through PSI's global network, PSI/C is able to develop highly innovative and effective social marketing programs around priority health issues in the Caribbean.

PSI/C began its work focusing on HIV prevention - promoting condom use and availability. The organization has since expanded its activities into addressing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) more broadly and continues to grow with the health challenges faced by the region, looking at ways to assist in addressing growing health priorities in non-communicable disease prevention.

SUMMARY OF PSI/C APPROACH:
Social marketing engages private sector resources and uses private sector techniques to encourage healthy behavior and make markets work for the poor.

APPROACH:
Promoting Healthy Lives – It is PSI/C’s goal to encourage healthy behaviors and empower the Caribbean people, especially vulnerable members of society, to make smart decisions regarding their health. As a non-profit organization PSI/C realizes behavior change among target populations by using commercial marketing concepts and techniques. This approach is referred to as social marketing. Instead of endorsing specific branded products or services PSI/C focuses on capacity, promoting healthier behaviors and greater access to relevant health products and services.

Social marketing techniques provide unique insights into the health needs of target audiences and the barriers that exist between the person and specific health products or services. Careful branding (the creation of a unique name and image representing a positive behavior) and effective communication (the harnessing of the power of mass and social media to reach target audiences) are vital components of the PSI/C approach. This allows PSI/C to position the use of health products and services in relevant and effective ways with messages that promote knowledge and help normalize and reinforce healthy behaviors.

PSI/C believes in social marketing through meaningful, consistent behavior change communication (BCC) activities, which provide the foundation for demand generation. This tool allows for the direct engagement with individuals, communities and/or societies in order to develop communication strategies promoting positive behaviors tailored specifically to them (e.g. Youth at Risk or the Uniformed Population.)

Long-term Market Development – PSI/C is dedicated to working with the public and private sector to leverage innovative approaches and resources, and to harnessing the power of local and regional markets and market mechanisms in order to create effective and efficient, locally rooted social marketing programs and make markets work for the poor.

PSI/C focuses on building strong commercial infrastructure and practices in the region by working with existing wholesalers and retailers, as well as by training individuals and businesses to enable them to be part of the social marketing network.

By generating demand for health products and services (e.g. condoms and SRH services) through its social marketing activities, PSI/C is also able to strengthen local markets - fostering new or enhanced commercial activities, which can in turn alleviate government subsidies and market distortions.
Collaboration and Integration – PSI/C’s success lies in the partnerships it builds and maintains with donors, individuals, groups, government ministries, non-profit and private companies in the region. PSI/C acts:

• As an implementing partner to ministries of health and other public sector and non-profit organizations to achieve national/ regional goals for particular health areas. Increasingly also to private sector organizations that are seeking a collaborator for a Public Private Partnership (PPP) venture or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program.

• As a strategic partner in regional and local technical assistance provision, through proactive and continuous engagement and knowledge sharing, with relevant government ministries and fellow non-profits, to ensure PSI/C operations remain relevant and impactful, and work in concert with the efforts of others.

• As a member of the Caribbean public health community actively engaging with international, national and local governments, donors and partners to advocate for keeping HIV/AIDS and SRH (e.g. condom category campaigns) and other priority regional health issues on national and regional agendas.

Measurable Impact – PSI/C uses primary and secondary data to monitor and evaluate its programs; estimate the health impact of specific interventions; assess value for money and improve intervention cost-effectiveness; and evaluate the health of the markets it works to strengthen. External data informs our strategies on relevance to ensure we are working to address the areas carrying the greatest burden of disease.

HIV/AIDS:
With about 1% [0.9%–1.1%], the Caribbean remains the region with the highest [adult] HIV prevalence outside of sub-Saharan Africa. As part of its HIV prevention effort, PSI/C has developed Got it? Get it. (GIGI) a powerful, youth oriented, Caribbean-flavored brand that promotes condom use and signifies condom availability.

Launched in 2005, PSI/C has continuously developed the regional recognition of the GIGI brand and now maintains over 2,500 condom outlets that are strategically placed for access by high-risk populations. PSI/C supports sales of over 15 bands of condoms and since the program’s inception has sold over 1,000,000 male and female condoms. In addition to this PSI/C has distributed over 170,000 condoms to members of the various target groups.

Through its condom social marketing program (this includes BCC activities) PSI/C has reached over 160,000 members of its target populations to date, through the implementation of over 11,566 interpersonal communication activities.

This includes:
• 40,000 Males at Risk (MAR) aged 25-49, includes Men with Multiple Sex Partners and Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)
• 70,000 Commercial Sex Workers (CSW) a subset of the group Females at Risk (FAR)
• 28,000 Uniformed Population (UP), males and females working for military, as police, fire fighters, immigration and customs officers and security guards.
• 30,000 Youth at Risk (YAR) aged 15-24, includes male and female.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH:
PSI/C has been applying its knowledge about the key target groups to the expansion of its work into the promotion of SRH services as well as the improvement of their quality. This includes expansion into voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), family planning and other reproductive health services. Synergies have been sought with the BCC work already going on in the field, through the implementation of a demand generation and referral system. With this PSI/C is also continuing to build on its partnership with International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) affiliate members.

In Antigua, Belize, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, PSI/C continues to partner with IPPF affiliate clinics to increase the demand for their services coming from vulnerable and most at risk populations. By taking a comprehensive look at demand generation, which includes referrals of target populations provided during BCC outreach, service discount cards when needed, accompaniment, service improvement and client satisfaction monitoring at the clinic, and marketing of services both traditionally through TV and radio as well as through various online touch points. Since 2011 PSI/C has supported over 5,000 SRH services in this way.
HEALTH IMPACT:
PSI/C adheres to the highest of standards in monitoring its health impact on the region. Globally, PSI has established a system for the assessment of disease burden by country or region and sets coefficients/parameters for the delivery of services and sale of products that decreases the burden of diseases.

Every VCT test, STI screening or treatment, and contraceptive or condom sale assists to decrease the national burden of disease. PSI/C and its partners assist by attributing to the disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) 1 averted. PSI/C estimates that in 2010, 42 HIV & TB DALYs were earned through its products and services as well as 99 Reproductive Health DALYs.

OUTLOOK:
PSI/C is committed to growing with the challenges faced by the populations it serves and continued regional and local integration of its operations. The GoIt? Get it! campaign will remain a major focal point; PSI/C will concentrate on the sales of GIGI Apparel to promote brand loyalty, and building on the ongoing dialogue with young people online through GIGI digital activities. PSI/C will keep strengthening its SRH activities in future by increasing quality of services in the clinics it already works with and continuing to build demand with a view to expanding its base of affiliate clinics.

PSI/C also recognizes the need to capitalize on its institutional strengths and core competencies to widen and deepen its impact on the health and well-being of the Caribbean people by addressing health financing innovations at the community level and responding to the growing burden of disease that stems from non-communicable diseases in the region.

OPERATIONS:
PSI/C employs 18 full time staff. Headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago, PSI/C currently operates in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, Suriname and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Two program managers and one country manager operate from Jamaica, Suriname and Belize respectively.

PSI/C operates with support from contracts received by KfW the German Development Bank, the US Department of Defense, USAID through the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Alliance, UNICEF, UNFPA, and self-generation. PSI/C is working toward the financial sustainability of its programs, which it hopes to achieve through the efficient management of program resources, the recovery of meaningful percentage of operation costs through sales revenues of promotional items related to its campaigns, and through various partnership endeavors. Any cost recoveries made in these ways flow back into the programs and are used to provide additional health impact in the region.

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References:
1 The DALY (Disability-Adjusted Life Year) is a measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death. It is a widely used, credible metric that was first developed by the World Bank and is now routinely relied upon in the public health community. For more details please consult: http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/metrics_daly/en/index.html