PSI is a global health organization dedicated to improving the health of people in the developing world by focusing on serious challenges like a lack of family planning, HIV and AIDS, barriers to maternal health, and the greatest threats to children under five, including malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition.

PSI works in partnership with local governments, ministries of health and local organizations to create health solutions that are built to last. In 2013, PSI received money from USAID to increase exclusive breastfeeding in Pakistan.

BACKGROUND

PSI IN PAKISTAN

Greenstar Social Marketing Pakistan Limited was established in Pakistan in 1993 as an affiliate of PSI and a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization. The organization's mission is to improve the quality of life among low-income people throughout Pakistan by increasing access to and use of health products, services, and information.

In order to help meet this gap in provision of health services, Greenstar offers a range of over 20 socially marketed products and services for family planning, reproductive health, mother and child health, tuberculosis, nutritional supplements for children and safe water. Greenstar’s products are distributed through a nation-wide network of over 7,000 franchised clinics, 75,000 retail outlets and community-based distribution. The private sector social franchise health outlets are strengthened by Greenstar’s training and health services team, which enhances skills of service providers and quality of services.

PEOPLE

More than 8,900 staff work for PSI and its affiliates. PSI’s expatriate staff is about 1% of the overall workforce. Support services and advocacy are provided by staff in Washington, D.C., and Amsterdam, Netherlands. As a Senior Advisor for Global Social Marketing, I work in building capacity and tools on marketing planning, strategy and execution. I was asked to help build a strategy on exclusive breastfeeding.

SITUATION: EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING

The benefits of breastfeeding are greatest in the first six months of life (optimal nutrition, reduced morbidity and mortality due to infections other than HIV, and delayed return of fertility). Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) during the first 6 months of life carries greater benefits than mixed feeding with respect to morbidity and mortality from infectious diseases other than HIV. If every new mother breastfed, 1.3 million lives could be saved and 21.9 million DALYs could be averted annually.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

1. Breastfeeding helps a mother and baby to form a close, loving relationship, which makes mothers feel deeply satisfied emotionally. Close contact from immediately after delivery helps this relationship to develop.
2. Babies cry less, and they may develop faster, if they stay close to their mothers and breastfeed from immediately after delivery.
3. Mothers who breastfeed respond to their babies in a more affectionate way. They complain less about the baby’s need for attention and feeding at night. They are less likely to abandon or abuse their babies.

BARRIERS TO BREASTFEEDING

- Breastfeeding has become known in Pakistan as something poor people do – higher income women use formula, which is considered “modern”
- People believe that bottle/formula feeding is healthier
- Concerns about the woman’s ability to produce enough milk
- Mother-in-law does not support EBF
- Not in total control of what baby is fed (mother-in-law or others may do some of feeding)
- Working outside the house means that breastfeeding isn’t always possible

DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

- How should PSI develop a program to ensure an increase in exclusive breastfeeding?
- How would you apply the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) in this program?