



# Advocacy Kit for Corporate Engagement On Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) Issues

September 2011







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Surviving childbirth and a healthy infancy and childhood is a fundamental right of every woman and child. Yet, in India, one woman dies approximately every nine minutes from a pregnancy-related cause. A woman in India is 60 to 70 times more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth than a woman from developed countries (White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood, India).

Nearly two million children die each year in India before they reach their fifth birthday (Save the Children), more than any other country in the world. This is because mothers and newborns are not getting the skilled care they need to receive before, during and after delivery. Half of these deaths occur in the very first month of life. Malnutrition is one of the biggest threats, making children susceptible to life-threatening but preventable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhoea. What's even more shocking is that most of these deaths are preventable. Children's lives could easily be saved by simple and low cost solutions.



## 1. The Connections between MNCHN and Good Business:

### Why invest in women's and children's health?

#### *It reduces poverty*

Healthy women are more productive and earn more throughout their lives, provide better education, nutrition and healthcare for their children, and break the cycle of poverty

#### *It stimulates economic productivity and growth*

Maternal and newborn deaths slow growth leading to annual global productivity losses of US\$ 15 billion

#### *It is cost effective*

Essential health care prevents illness and disability, saving billions of dollars annually in treatment costs

#### *It helps women and children realize their human rights*

People are entitled to the highest attainable standard of health

Source: UN 2010

Women and children play a crucial role in development. Investing more in women's and children's health is not only the right thing to do; it also builds stable, peaceful and productive societies. Increasing investment has many benefits:<sup>1</sup>

- *It reduces poverty:* Charging women and children less, or nothing, for health services improves access to care and enables poorer families to spend more money on food, housing, education and activities that generate income. Healthy women work more productively, and stand to earn more throughout their lives. Addressing under-nutrition in pregnant women and children leads to an increase of up to 10% in an individual's lifetime earnings. Poor sanitation leads to diarrhea and parasitic diseases, common causes of nutritional deficits, which reduce productivity and prevent children from going to school.
- *It stimulates economic productivity and growth:* Maternal and newborn deaths slow growth and lead to global productivity losses. By failing to address under-nutrition, a country may have a two percent lower GDP than it otherwise would. In contrast, investing in children's health leads to high economic returns and offers the best guarantee of a productive workforce in the future. For example, between 30 and 50 percent of Asia's economic growth from 1965 to 1990 has been attributed to improvements in reproductive health and reductions in infant and child mortality and fertility rates.
- *It is cost-effective:* Investing in essential health care and prevention reduces illness and disability, saving money in treatment. For less than US \$5 (and sometimes as little as US \$1) childhood immunization can give a child a year of life free from disability and suffering. In many countries, every dollar spent on family planning saves at least four dollars that would otherwise be spent treating complications arising from unplanned pregnancies.
- *It helps women and children realize their fundamental human rights:* People are entitled to the highest attainable standard of health. This fundamental principle of development and human rights is affirmed by many countries in a range of international and regional human-rights treaties to which India is signatory.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts and adapted from: Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon



## **Why and how should the corporate sector engage?**

Most companies have a vested interest in addressing the health and well-being of the communities in which they work, and recognize that doing so is a critical component of any strategy for sustained success. These investments can enhance their visibility and boost reputations with consumers.

As business leaders, you hold tremendous power to advance change and influence policy. Executives can promote healthy behaviours and appropriate use of health services. Companies can also facilitate employee-based social responsibility campaigns. Such leadership inspires public health leaders to be open to, and seek out, partnerships with business. They can even offer health services at the workplace or in the community.

## **Where does an interested company start?**

### **Begin internally**

- How can you support the mothers in your workforce and their children?
- How can you support the families of men in your workforce?
- How can you promote the dissemination of accessible, understandable health information for your workforce and their families?
- How can you support labor policies and practices that promote healthy women and children and allow women and men to adequately care for their children?

### **Assess barriers and opportunities in your core business**

- What are you already doing that could have an impact on MNCHN?
- Can you integrate MNCHN across the span of your company's public relations and advocacy, information and communications technology, equipment, drug research and development (R&D), and logistics and supply chain management?
- What are you doing in your business that could be detrimental to MNCHN?

### **Building partnerships and collaborations**

- Engage with NGOs and institutions active in MNCHN to explore creative business opportunities
- Stay informed. Numerous organizations exist purely to provide information about these issues.

(Adapted from: Maternal and Newborn Health: the Crux of Decent Humanity, The Business Case. Pacific Health Summit Secretariat 2010)

## **Stories of Engagement**

Corporate agencies in India have been involved to some extent with maternal, child health and nutrition. Some of these stories of engagement are given in this section.

### ***i. ICICI Centre for Child Health and Nutrition (ICCHN)***

ICCHN is an interdisciplinary funding, research and resource centre focused on the health and nutrition of vulnerable women, infants and young children across India. Building on the work of the Early Child Health Practice of ICICI Bank's Social Initiatives Group (SIG), ICCHN is one of a number of institutional initiatives [[www.icicifoundation.org](http://www.icicifoundation.org)] committed to building human capacity, increasing participation and promoting human development in India.

Child survival and early child development are among the most significant and urgent challenges facing India today. High levels of child deaths persist in many parts of the country, due primarily to diarrhoea, pneumonia, and conditions in the neonatal period – most of which are preventable. Chronic and



widespread undernutrition, expressed in indicators such as low birth weight and childhood stunting, is a crucial underlying determinant of child mortality. In this context, ICCHN supports and works collaboratively on a range of initiatives with potential to translate into large-scale and sustainable improvements in child survival and development in India. Based in Pune, ICCHN's team is engaged in field-based action-research projects in different regions of the country, facilitates state-civil society resource partnerships to strengthen public systems and programmes, and develops a variety of knowledge, policy and capacity building initiatives to address key sectoral gaps. ICCHN seeks to deepen the understanding of the complex determinants of child mortality and malnutrition in India, contribute to the development of innovative and effective strategies to address them, and strengthen local communities, civil society institutions, and public health systems to decentralize access to and ownership of the knowledge and essential services needed to bring about sustainable change.

In the year 2008-2009, ICICI Foundation made a grant of INR 150 Million to ICCHN by way of its Corporate Social Responsibility budget from the ICICI group of companies.

Source: Extracts from ICCHN website, <http://icchn.org.in/html/aboutus.html>

### ***ii. LifeSpring hospitals***

LifeSpring hospitals is a chain of small hospitals that deliver affordable, high quality maternal health care to low income mothers on a financially sustainable, for-profit basis. Founded in 2005 in Andhra Pradesh, they specialize in deliveries, antenatal and postnatal care, and family planning services for India's working class poor in urban areas. Formed as a private limited company in 2008, LifeSpring is a 50-50 joint venture owned by Hindustan Latex limited (HLL) Lifecare Ltd. (a Government of India enterprise) and Acumen Fund (a US-based social venture capital fund).

LifeSpring fills a crucial gap for those mothers too poor to access good quality facilities, and ensures that more babies are delivered by qualified physicians, helping reduce child and maternal mortality rates. Through close attention to monitoring and evaluation, the hospital chain maintains high standards of care and uses indicators such as post-operative infections, mortality and morbidity rates as a means of quality control. During monthly health camps held at their hospitals, free medical consultations and vitamins are provided to all pregnant women in the community. Free of charge paediatric consultations and vaccinations for children are also provided. LifeSpring plans to set up 200 hospitals across India in the next five years and expand geographically from Andhra Pradesh to additional states across India. LifeSpring hopes to provide 82,000 women with high quality maternity and reproductive health services.

Source: [www.lifespring.in](http://www.lifespring.in)

Investing in women's and children's health, A primer on the contribution of the private sector as a partner in the Global Strategy on women's and children's health. International Business Leaders Forum, 2010

### ***iii. Bhavishya Alliance for improved maternal and child health and nutrition***

Bhavishya Alliance was created in India with the goal of contributing to halving the rate of child under-nutrition by 2015, with an emphasis on children between ages 0-3. The Alliance rests on the principle that effective multi-sectoral partnerships between government, corporate and civil society can co-create solutions for addressing the complex problem of child under-nutrition and can make a major contribution to radically reducing the prevailing rates in India. The Alliance has on its board prominent representatives from the corporate sector – Hindustan Unilever, Tata Industries, ICICI Bank and HDFC.



Bhavishya Alliance works on the presumption that its efforts may or may not change the situation entirely in a particular geography, but the learning shall showcase concrete models that can influence wider change. First, pilot projects were implemented through government and NGO structures with technical and resource support from companies, demonstrating synergetic effects and achieving clear impacts. Now, the Alliance is advocating for and facilitating replication and scaling up of appropriate programmes based on learning and success from the pilot models.

Examples of projects include:

a) Healthy Lokshakti – An initiative for maternal and child health

An initiative by ICICI Lombard, ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth (IFIG), ICICI Centre for Child Health and Nutrition (ICCHN) and VACHAN create an example on importance of strengthening maternal and child health services aimed at reducing maternal and infant morbidities and mortalities.

b) Behaviour Change Communications on infant feeding (Project Yashoda)

An initiative jointly led by ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth, Hindustan Unilever, UNICEF, Rajmata Jijau Health and Nutrition Mission and ICDS Maharashtra.

Source: Investing in women’s and children’s health, a primer on the contribution of the private sector as a partner in the Global Strategy on women’s and children’s health. International Business Leaders Forum, 2010

Population Foundation of India (PFI) has developed a reproductive health package (module) for corporate social responsibility that helps companies to develop, implement and monitor programs for reproductive and child health.



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## Acronyms & Abbreviations

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CHC	Community Health Centre
DALYs	Disability Adjusted Life Years
DLHS	District Level Household Survey
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment
FRU	First Referral Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOI	Government of India
HLL	Hindustan Latex Limited
IBLF	International Business Leaders Forum
ICCHN	ICICI Centre for Child Health and Nutrition
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IFA	Iron Folic Acid
IFIG	ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth
IIPS	International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai
IMR	Infant Mortality Ratio
JSY	Janani Suraksha Yojana
MCH-STAR	Maternal and Child Health Sustainable Technical Assistance and Research
MCNHN	Maternal, Child, Neonatal Health and Nutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
PFI	Population Foundation of India
PHC	Primary Health Centre
RCH	Reproductive Child Health
SBA	Skilled Birth Attendant
SRS	Sample Registration Survey
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRAI	White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood India



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