



*Power of health in
every mother's hand*



☎ 16227

www.aponjon.com.bd



Health information for
expecting and
new mothers through
mobile phone

Content

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Aponjon: an mHealth service in Bangladesh



mBillionth Award South Asia 2013
Winner, m-Woman & Children

www.mbillionth.in

mHealth is becoming one of the most effective tool for behavioral change communication across the globe. Aponjon, the first national scale mHealth service in South Asia, has proven itself to become one of the most effective services in delivering effective messages with high client satisfaction. “Aponjon” (“the dear one” in Bangla) is a mobile phone based health information service for expecting and new mothers in Bangladesh run under the auspices of the global program, **Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action (MAMA)**. Aponjon services are operated under the programme agreement between the governments of United States of America and Bangladesh.

Aponjon service was introduced in September, 2011 in 13 locations of four districts in Bangladesh with 1403 subscribers on a pilot basis. On completion of a successful pilot, Aponjon kicked off its national scale operation in December, 2012 in more than 24 districts of Bangladesh. Currently available all over the country through mobile network, the service continues to grow its outreach operation, with a target to cover all 64 districts of the country. Aponjon aspires to reach more than 2 million expecting women and new mothers by 2015.

The face of MAMA in Bangladesh

The Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action (MAMA) is a global public-private partnership initiative to deliver health education messages to pregnant women and new mothers using mobile phone technology. MAMA (www.healthunbound.org/mama) was launched in May 2011 by The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Johnson & Johnson, in collaboration with the United Nations Foundation, the mHealth Alliance, and BabyCenter LLC. The initiative is being implemented in Bangladesh, India and South Africa.

The goal of the initiative is to contribute to a reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality by improving health-seeking and preventive behaviors of pregnant women, new mothers, and their families, which will contribute towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5.

Dnet (www.dnet.org.bd), a Bangladeshi social enterprise which works for promoting access to information and knowledge through the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs), is the owner and lead agency of Aponjon. In collaboration with a core group of partners, Dnet is leading the implementation of MAMA initiative in Bangladesh under the brand name of ‘Aponjon’.

Our Tagline: **“Power of Health in Every Mother’s Hand”**

MAMA Bangladesh leverages on wide-ranging partnership with government agencies, private sector and NGOs. Dnet keenly fosters partnerships with a number of reputed institutions in Bangladesh for reaching out to families across the country, including urban slums and rural parts of the country.

**Mother and Child’s Aponjon,
Call 16227 for Registration**

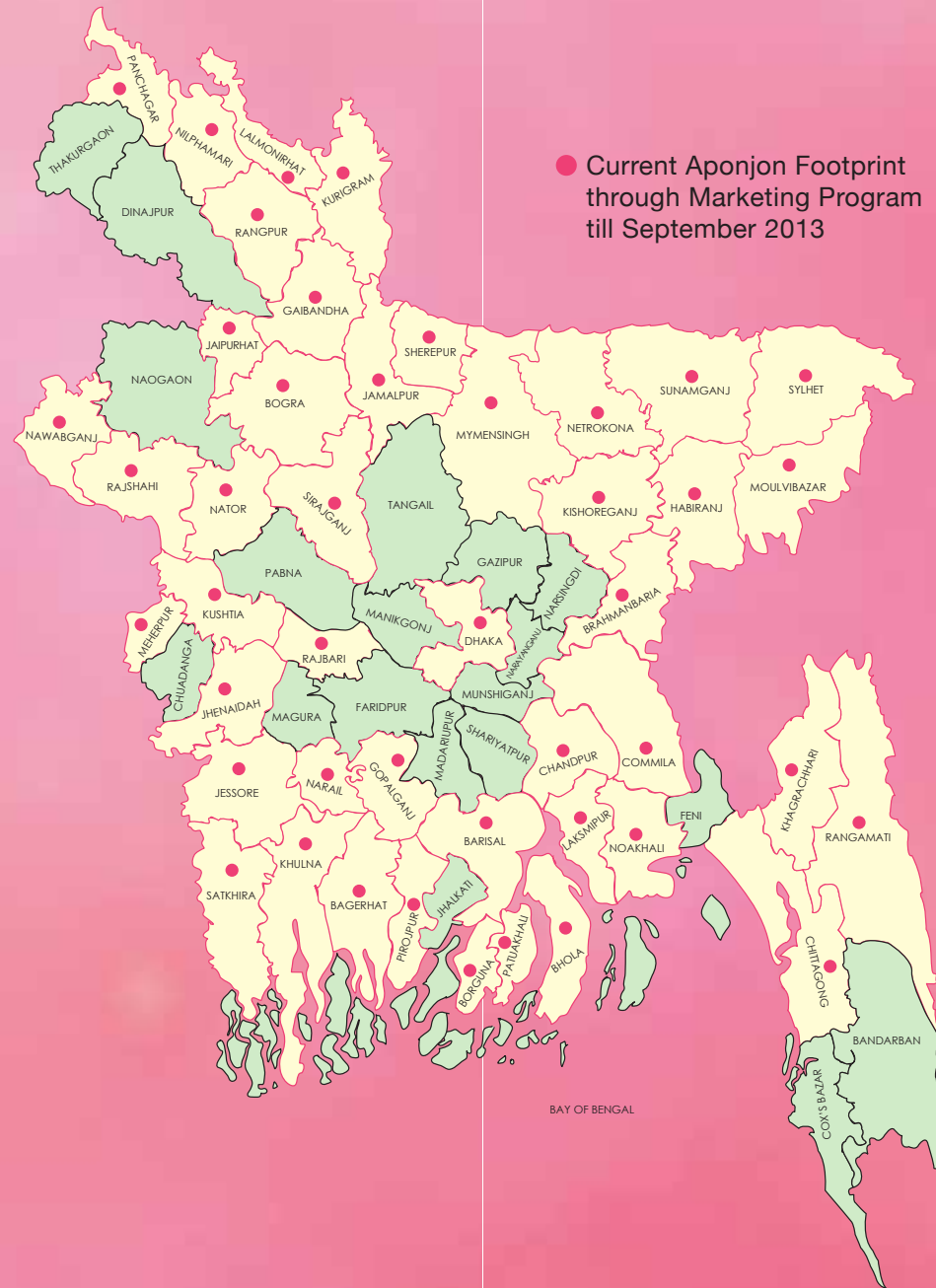


Partnership: Driving force of Aponjon

Aponjon received financial support in form of seed grants from USAID and Johnson and Johnson.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) of the Government of Bangladesh is the official government partner of Aponjon. The initiative is built upon the existing USAID and Government of Bangladesh's (GoB) maternal child health and family planning programs and is being managed through Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP).

Aponjon relies on multiple sources of support for ensuring financial sustainability. The private sector is one of the important contributors to Aponjon Bangladesh. Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited, a leading manufacturer of pharmaceuticals in Bangladesh, is the first founding partner of Aponjon. Other than that, Lal Teer Seeds Ltd. of Multimode Group is also a corporate partner of Aponjon, providing In-kind support to the program. Aponjon also has retail partnership with Agora Superstores Ltd. of Rahimafrooz Ltd. for retailing the Sponsor-a-mother gift pack at their superstore outlets.



Aponjon went national in 2012

Aponjon started its operations at a national scale on 18 December 2012 after the conclusion of a successful pilot. The pilot service ran since September 2011 in 13 locations of four districts with 1403 subscribers.

Every day, Aponjon is acquiring new subscribers, taking the service closer to the targeted coverage of 2 Million mothers by 2015. This has been made possible through training and deployment of local community agents from Aponjon's outreach partners - BRAC, MaMoni Project, National Health Services Delivery Project (NSHDP), Social Marketing Company (SMC), Fair Price International (Info Lady) and Union Information Service Center (UISC) of the Government of Bangladesh.





Aponjon Flip-chart

Community agents from the Outreach partner organizations are working in their areas to register expecting and new mothers and their gatekeepers (family members) to the service. The service is available to subscribers of all telecom operators in Bangladesh.

In addition to the media campaign, extensive Below the Line campaign is also running at the remote areas of the country at public places including health centers. Moreover, Aponjon brand promoters have been deployed for visiting health centers to reach the people who have the need and interest for the service and register them on the spot.

A customer service center reachable through the unique short code 16227, is operational from morning till late night to assist customers for registration process and to respond to their queries. In addition, to serve the active Aponjon clients over telephone, a counseling line, named 'Aponjon Counseling Line' has also been set up. The 'Aponjon Counseling Line' is connected through the current customer service center and has doctors with specialist knowledge of obstetrics and pediatrics answering to health queries and providing solutions to Aponjon clients.

To popularize the service and to reach out to the mass audience, a media campaign was run in print media, television, radio and outdoors. This campaign successfully managed to reach the target audience and motivate a large number of them to take the service. The campaign saw a huge boost in the calls to the customer service center for queries and registration and also a large number of self-registrations through SMS.



**Mother and Child's Aponjon,
Call 16227 for Registration**



Research before going to scale

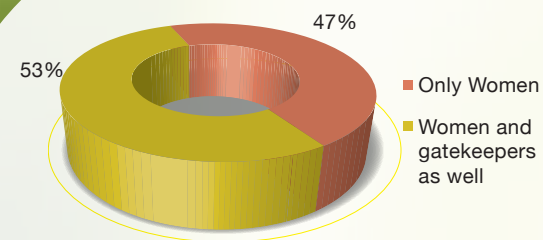
Aponjon research team went to the people in the field, and evaluated the service to understand acceptability and feasibility of scaling, incorporating further improvement of the service through a formative research. Those study findings were representative of 1403 women and their gatekeepers receiving the service during that period. Their feedback on the service was collected through periodic phone surveys and in-depth interviews.

A significant number (53%) of gatekeepers (family members who can influence behavioral changes) opted to receive the service alongside the women of their families. Families were found directing advice on immunization, nutrition, family planning, hygiene, breastfeeding and household healthy practices towards pregnant members, infants and mothers.

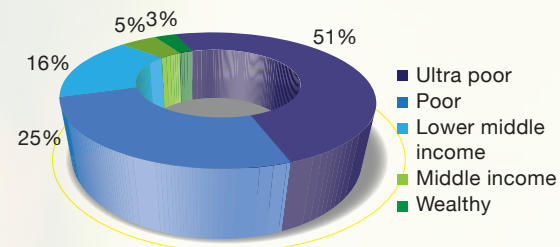
Findings from formative research were very useful in improving service design, content, technology platform, and outreach approach of the service prior to national launch.



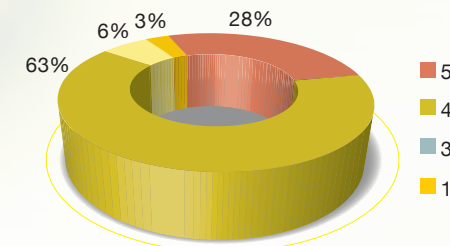
Glimpse of finding from formative research



A significant number (53%) of gatekeepers received weekly one message along with the women during the pilot. Families were following advice on immunization, nutrition and healthy behavior to infants and mothers.



Aponjon served the underprivileged with the help of the community agents. Subscribers from ultra-poor category received free service.



Aponjon clients rated their trust on content very high in a Likert Scale.

A testimonial of a pregnant woman:

The mobile messages are reminding me of things that I must do before my baby is born. For example, though I knew that I should check my blood group and prepare a blood donor before the delivery I was delaying for no reason. But when I received the message from “Aponjon” to do the blood test and find a blood donor, I felt the urgency and immediately did it

A happy gatekeeper (husband) said:

I like the message where they say- as a father you have some responsibilities, if you find any problem with your child's health, go to health complex; if your child catches a cold or fever then go to doctor.



Aponjon service at a glance



Continuous strive for improvement:

Aponjon drives continuous efforts to bring improvements to the service. A number of regular initiatives play roles to identify improvement areas as well as record client responses regarding acceptability of the current service, new requirements and demands.

Aponjon Monitoring and Evaluation Team conducts regular phone surveys and annual sample surveys to determine client satisfaction levels and identify improvement areas for the service. Under a comprehensive monitoring plan (PMP). There are indicators for knowledge uptake and behavioral change which are also monitored periodically. Findings from these surveys serve as pre-requisite for increasing emphasis on specific areas of the service and to introduce new dimensions to it.

Apart from the in-house research, a third party research organization named TRAction conduct detailed studies on the Aponjon service impact.

Aponjon also conducts regular Content Surveys to identify satisfaction level of current contents among urban and rural clients and also to identify new demands and requirements for change. Changes required from the field are placed before a meeting of a Technical Committee on Content (TCC), consisting of national and international experts on health and communication. Then, finally requirements from field and technical inputs from the Technical committee helps bring revisions to the content being provided to the subscribers.

Aponjon also has a national level 'Aponjon Advisory Board' chaired by the Secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and consisting of members representing all international NGOs, donors, government officials from the ministry as well as national and international health and communication experts. The board sits periodically, receives updates of Aponjon and also suggests prospective way forward guidance.

Sample voice message

Your baby is now 12 weeks old

This is your daktar apa (a trusted character in the form of a female doctor) speaking. In another two weeks or so, when your baby will be 14 weeks or 3 and half months old, it will be time for his or her third dose of vaccination. He or she will also have a couple of drops in the mouth – to boost his protection against Polio. In total, your baby will be immunized against 7 diseases in three cycles during the span of these initial three and half months. Make sure your little one gets all the doses on time, to be fully protected. Try to go to the health center even if your baby has a cold, cough or a minor illness.

'Aponjon' will be right beside you.



Aponjon Counseling Line – a new dimension of service

Heeding the popular demand from the registered clients, Aponjon started a new dimension of the service – the ‘Aponjon Counseling Line’. The counseling line is attached to the existing Aponjon Customer Service Center and connects through the same hunting number – 16227 via an IVR option.

The Aponjon Counseling Line, a 24 hours services that has doctors specializing in Obstetrics and Pediatrics, who receive calls from the existing subscribers of Aponjon service and respond to their queries. Queries made to the counseling line range from general medical advice to referral to nearby medical centers and doctors. The service has been greatly applauded and appreciated by the clients and has made a huge impact on the credibility of the service.

Services from the Aponjon Counseling Line:

- Consultation and advice for home management of mild medical problems
- Dissemination of information on medical issues and their explanation
- Advice on safety of specific medicines and over the counter drugs for expecting mothers, new mothers and their children
- Referral to health care providers and health facilities according to location
- Health tips
- Prescription interpretation
- Investigation reports interpretation



Unique Features of ‘Aponjon’

- Contextual to culture and environment in Bangladesh
- Option to choose automated push message around self-initiated pull message for voice message service
- Week-by-week messages specific to the pregnancy cycle or age of baby
- Customized messages targeting urban and rural mothers and their family members
- Personalized messages for family members/gatekeepers (husband, mother-in-law, mother and others)
- Option to choose convenient time of the day to received voice message
- Option for registered subscribers to call Aponjon counseling line and talk directly to doctors
- Availability of trained local community agents at household level to register subscribers
- Options to register through SMS and IVR
- Assisted registration through Customer Call Centre
- Pro-poor design to deliver the service to at least 20% of ultra-poor subscribers for free
- High quality service at low price
- Aponjon contents in dialects
- 24 hours counseling line only for Aponjon subscribers



Driving sustainability at scale

Aponjon aspires to become financially viable and self-sustainable in the long run and thrive with newer maternal and child health services getting added to its landscape. At the same time, it is committed to remain pro-poor and inclusive. Towards that, Aponjon team is testing out various means of achieving sustainability at scale.

The service is designed to offer two different charging models (commonly referred to as 'differential charging') to the subscribers in order to ensure maximum inclusion of families from all socio-economic strata of the country. While all subscribers receive the service at a subsidized price, it is offered free of charge to the under privileged segment of the society.

By using innovative financing models, Aponjon is poised to become the first epitome of financially sustainable health information service utilizing mobile phones to improve health outcomes at national scale.



Pro-poor design to deliver the service to at least 20% of ultra-poor subscribers for free

The following initiatives are expected that Aopnjon would reach the stage of self-sustainability :

- Financial support from USAID and Johnson and Johnson.
- Corporate philanthropy, from Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited and Lal teer; also partnership with Agora. More corporate partnerships to be added.
- Revenue from voice advertisement of relevant products and services included in Aponjon messages.
- Income from “Sponsor a mother” program, which invites individuals or corporate houses to buy Aponjon subscriptions for a mother during her period of pregnancy up until the time her child turns one year.
- Cross-promotion, which would allow reduction of overall cost of the program.
- New initiatives like extension of service up to 5 year of child's age to increase client's stay period with the service.
- Income from premium services for middle and high income population.
- Revenue from advertisements through initiatives like mobile application of Aponjon.



You can contribute

You can be one of the proud sponsors. It just costs BDT 1,000/- (or \$15) to sponsor one mother through our website from inception of pregnancy to her child's first birthday.

To sponsor a mother, please visit our website on:
www.aponjon.com.bd/sponsor-mother

Sponsor a mother gift packs are also available at selected Superstore outlets in Bangladesh.



Aponjon Team



আপনজন

স্বাস্থ্য হাতের মুঠোয়

Global Partners



National Partner



Outreach Partners



Corporate Founding Partner



Corporate Partner



Retail Partner



Leading Agency



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