Stimulating the Private Sector’s Participation in HIV/AIDS-Specific Condom Marketing Surabaya, Indonesia

Rita Leavell, MD
Anton Schneider

Executive Summary

During the early stages of the HIV/AIDS global epidemic in 1992, with HIV/AIDS prevention activities focused primarily on high risk behavior groups, the Social Marketing for Change (SOMARC) Project was asked to develop a condom social marketing pilot project in Surabaya, Indonesia, that would increase the availability and accessibility of affordable, high quality condoms in red light districts. Since condom use and knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission were very low, other objectives of the project were to increase awareness of condoms as protection from HIV/AIDS and to encourage condom use among commercial sex workers and their clients.

A review of the Surabaya situation showed that many brands of condoms were available in the market, but the supply was inconsistent and of varying quality. To ensure that condom supply would be sustainable, the project maximized the use of commercial channels by developing a “joint venture” with two commercial condom firms. The firms pledged to ensure distribution of condoms which met WHO quality standards and to launch brand promotion campaigns nationally, with emphasis on Surabaya and later Jakarta. The SOMARC project tested the condoms independently, provided promotional point-of-sale materials, consumer promotional packs, and funding for a special temporary distribution task force.

While the condom firms spent for brand advertising, SOMARC provided “generic” condom promotion and public relations for HIV/AIDS prevention, including a radio spot, posters, TV Public Service Announcements (PSAs), HIV/AIDS information leaflets, and condom sampling packs. Public relations included a series of newspaper articles, seminars, a TV forum discussion, and an HIV/AIDS seminar for doctors, SOMARC worked with local NGO’s to provide outreach and training activities, including condom sampling and use instruction, to commercial sex workers.

After two years the condom program showed favorable results: commercial sex workers’ use of condoms increased 22 percentage points—from 18% to 30%. And, despite funding constraints, the program has continued to expand condom distribution in red light districts — increasing condom stock — from 17 to 50% in shops and brothels.2.
UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Involving the private sector in a social marketing endeavor can make a dramatic difference in helping to spread important messages about HIV/AIDS as well as put condoms in the hands of those who are at the greatest risk.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Indonesia is at a critical stage in its evolution—moving from presentation in high-risk groups to the general population. As of August 1996, more than 400 confirmed HIV infections were reported in Indonesia. It is estimated that there are currently between 65,000 and 100,000 persons with HIV/AIDS in the country, with a doubling time of approximately six months. Conditions exist in Indonesia that are conducive to rapid, widespread transmission: a thriving commercial sex industry with a broad client base, high rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), low condom use, minimal knowledge of STD/HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention and treatment and extensive mobility within the country.

With prompt and appropriate action, Indonesia could be in a position to greatly limit the impact of HIV/AIDS on national development and establish itself as an example to other countries at similar stages of the epidemic. However, if prevention activities are not greatly accelerated now, Indonesia, with the fourth largest population in the world, will incur serious health, social and economic consequences.

TARGETS

Cities

As Indonesia’s second largest city, Surabaya is a major commercial center for shipping and trucking. An HIV/AIDS risk analysis identified Surabaya as having many of the factors conducive to rapid sexual transmission of HIV, including a large commercial sex worker (CSW) population (10,000 plus), and mobile clientele (more than 30,000 sailors/month).

An ethnographic study of the CSW industry in Surabaya identified six major red light districts in Surabaya and surroundings and potential activities for intervention. High rates of STDs (15-25 percent) were reported in a survey of the CSW population. In a recent survey, condom usage among CSWs in Surabaya red light districts was reported at 30 percent. As found in other similar situations, it was the client, not the CSW, who generally determined condom use and, for the most part, condom use was low.

AUDIENCES

The primary target audience for an HIV/AIDS condom marketing campaign was identified as:

- Men, ages 18-45, especially male clients of CSWs in Surabaya.
- Secondary targets of the project were:
- Male and female CSWs as part of outreach training activities.
- Policy level influentials such as government officials, brothel owners, religious leaders, etc., who needed to be convinced of the risk of HIV/AIDS and need for prevention activities, including condom use.

Jakarta was targeted as the second city for the test based on experience in Surabaya.
**Political Environment**

In Indonesia, condoms are officially recognized only as a family planning method. The Family Planning Association of Indonesia (BKKBN) has spent much time and effort to promote the image of the condom for the responsible family man, and condom advertising is allowed in all media for using condoms for family planning. The BKKBN/SOMARC Dua Lima condom achieved top-seller status in a three-year marketing effort with advertising for family planning.

However, the government policy was that condom use for illicit sexual activities, such as those which spread HIV/AIDS, could not be advertised, even though government officials agreed that condom promotion was necessary to curb the rate of infection and spread messages in the media that tie condoms to HIV/AIDS prevention.

**Indonesia's Condom Market**

Indonesia has a relatively small but active commercial condom market. Condom use is estimated at only .9 percent in the 1994 Demographic Health Survey, but this is probably because so many other family planning methods are available. Total government and commercial purchases are estimated at approximately 400,000 to 500,000 gross per year (60 million units) with about 30 million units sold in the commercial market.

Simplex's 1991 entry into the market and the more recent entry of Durex, both heavily supported by promotional campaigns, have significantly increased the private brands' contribution to the total market share. Concerns had been raised about poor quality of both imported and local condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention in Indonesia, but technical assistance from WHO and USAID via SOMARC has resulted in national condom's standards (WHO recommended) which took effect in April 1994.

Currently, more than 30 condom brands are in the market, both local and imported. Three brands — Young-Young, Simplex and Durex — have the majority of the market. Prices range from Rp. 250 to 1,000 per piece (US $0.11 to $0.44) and depend on the package size and place of sale. Recent brand surveys have shown that Indonesian males of lower and middle economic levels find condoms affordable and relatively easy to obtain.

The condom is a low profit item which relies on consumer pull and good margins to the trade. For CSWs who charge clients a fee of as little as Rp. 1,500 ($0.65) for a sexual engagement, the lowest prices condoms are not affordable. Encouraging condom use among this group by facilitating accessibility is the best means of lowering the risk. A plan is in place to use free samples and subsidized products to reach this critical target audience.

**Commercial Partners**

SOMARC invited condom manufacturers in Indonesia and throughout Asia requesting an expression of interest for partnership in an HIV/AIDS prevention project. Two firms, PT Vonix Latexindo and London Rubber, met the requested criteria: planned or current presence of a commercially viable brand(s) in the Indonesian market, willingness to submit their condoms for quality testing, and the ability to pledge significant money for brand promotion and distribution.
PT Vonix Latexindo of Indonesia entered the project with four brands in the "Simplex" line. PT Vonix manufactures condoms in Indonesia and exports them to Asia and Europe.

London Rubber, manufacturer of Kingtex and Durex entered the market promoting their Kingtex brand in Indonesia. It pulled support of Kingtex in 1995 and refocused on its global brand Durex. In 1995 and 1996, it supported Durex through a broad range of promotional activities and put additional funds into building the commercial market. Durex has since become one of the top three market leaders. Both Vonix and London Rubber have pledged funds of more than $100,000 annually for promotional and advertising efforts.

Vonix and London Rubber were interested in the HIV/AIDS prevention effort because:

- They recognize the potential of the Indonesian condom market for growth, especially once HIV/AIDS becomes a more public concern. Because so many family planning methods are available in Indonesia, the condom has not been a major growth product for family planning.
- They were familiar with SOMARC, primarily marketing to support Dua Lima, a condom which was the market leader. Dua Lima's program communications emphasized birth spacing and male responsibility and as the only condom advertising, rapidly developed brand awareness. (Note: The Dua Lima distributor preferred to keep that market niche and avoid the potential HIV/AIDS market.)
- They did not want to directly advertise their products for HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). With SOMARC's willingness to promote condoms generically against HIV/AIDS, they were willing to join in promotional efforts to support distribution of information about condom use for HIV/AIDS prevention.
- They were intrigued by SOMARC's willingness to fund a temporary promotional team to help sell in the red light areas.

SOMARC, PT Vonix, and London Rubber entered an agreement whereby SOMARC would focus on generic condom promotion for HIV/AIDS prevention and support enhanced availability and the condom manufacturers would concentrate on brand advertising, with no need to reference either HIV/AIDS or family planning. SOMARC market research would help them develop their own communications strategies and identify distribution targets. The manufacturers agreed to distribute HIV/AIDS-related materials developed by SOMARC and provide at least 100 gross (14,400 units) of condoms free for sampling annually. They also agreed to special discount prices for NGOs.

**Distribution**

As a baseline for distribution, SOMARC commissioned a 1992 retail mapping survey to identify potential outlets in the six red light districts and to measure the extent of condom distribution. Approximately 30 percent of potential outlets (shops, kiosks, bars, and drug stores) carried condoms, but of these, London Rubber's Kingtex condom had the best distribution — 65 percent. The survey confirmed a wide range of brands available on a sporadic basis. (Note: many of the brands were of questionable origin and quality.) Based on the mapping survey, the condom manufacturers' distributors were then given maps identifying potential condom outlets. The distributors were told to provide extra attention to penetrating distribution in red light districts.
COMMUNICATIONS

CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS

Research conducted in 1992 (SRI Omnibus) revealed that while awareness of HIV/AIDS was high among men in Surabaya (90 percent), few felt at risk (9 percent) and less than one-third believed using a condom would prevent HIV/AIDS. Eighty-four percent understood that HIV/AIDS could be contracted from sex with an infected person. Additionally, men believed condoms were primarily for pregnancy prevention (not their responsibility with a CSW) and many believed there were other ways to prevent HIV/AIDS besides condom use (qualitative research by Consensus 1992). Condom use reduced pleasure and only a convincing straightforward argument would induce them to use one. One motivating factor for married men was the obligation to protect their family from any diseases they might contract. For single men, the motivating factor was a health concern.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Based on consumer behavior, SOMARC’s communications strategy was to increase perceived risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, to make condom use a social/community norm in red light areas, and to link condom use with HIV/AIDS protection.

SOMARC experience in Africa and Latin America indicates that condom use for “protection” against HIV/AIDS and pregnancy addressed jointly in communication and advertising strategies without weakening the condom’s image. Frequently, social marketing condom brands are promoted under a dual-target, general “protection” theme.

In line with the current GOI policy that condom advertising messages not be linked with HIV/AIDS prevention, the condom manufacturers were encouraged to concentrate on funding advertising for brand awareness — a known market stimulus — while SOMARC concentrated on condom/HIV/AIDS awareness public relations activities.

The government also encouraged condom promotion to high-risk behavior groups, especially in red light areas. In execution, SOMARC believed that condom information could be placed within all literature and general mass media information about HIV/AIDS and STDs if executed tastefully. Additionally, within the focused geographic areas such as “red light” areas, SOMARC determined messages could probably be explicit among acknowledged high-risk behavior groups, but must be carefully executed in messages reaching the general public. Additionally, because it is not a visual medium, SOMARC believed radio may not be as effective a delivery mechanism as television, but far less controversial.

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

Consequently, a radio spot was developed with the theme, “Protect your family from HIV/AIDS — use a condom,” and placed on radio stations in Surabaya.

In 1995, Simplex brand ads were aired on TV with no objection. Durex began a series of regional satellite buys with spots on MTV Asia and sponsorship of MTV programming, along with a range of promotional activities.

Also in 1995, MACS909 Advertising Agency developed, produced, and aired a TV PSA called “Taboo” which promoted the acceptance of condom use. The ad's simple message presents the question “Taboo?” showing a condom. The message...
goes on to explain that condoms are not at all taboo, but that they can prevent taboo things from happening, such as unwanted pregnancy, disease, and HIV/AIDS.

The agency also developed a second ad called “Globe” — specifically produced for World HIV/AIDS Day 1995 — promoting condoms as an important means to protect the health of the global population. The agency contract, funded through this task order, allowed The Future’s Group International to place television media beginning in July/August 1995 for both PSAs.

Currently, SOMARC is working on a new advertising campaign strategy to combat the pervasive belief among men that women do not like using condoms. At press time, the campaign will include women holding condoms with a tag line “We expect you to use them.”

**Promotion**

After product launch, SOMARC shared costs with the Vonix distributor to field a special promotional team in the targeted areas. The team wore special T-shirts and caps. They distributed a three-pack of condoms combined with a free cigarette lighter. This item provided an entrée to the small shops and provided product visibility and an inducement for trial. The Vonix team also worked with NGO outreach workers to promote condoms in bars, discos, streetwalker areas, and potential outlets.

SOMARC provided Simplex distributors calendars for small shops with taglines encouraging condom use and also Simplex leaflets with HIV/AIDS information.

Since program inception, more than 14,000 condoms have been distributed annually in special envelopes marked “Pleasure but Safety” with condom use instructions. The NGOs also distributed samples at night in streetwalker areas and the red light districts. A local Islamic youth group agreed to give HIV/AIDS awareness seminars in nearby areas and to distribute the “Simplex” logo HIV/AIDS leaflet.

Also distributed were posters with the message “Pleasure but Safety” and a logo “Stop HIV/AIDS — Use a Condom.” (Note: at the suggestion of the CSWs, the message will be changed to “Pleasure and Safety). The posters were well received by the CSWs, brothels, and local government officials because of their input into its development. Leaflets with HIV/AIDS information and prevention measures were created for CSWs, CSW clients, and the general public.

Consumer and trade promotions included development of consumer “pair packs,” training of peer outreach workers in condom use, and condom sampling. SOMARC worked with several NGOs and other informal groups to supply condoms for instruction demonstration and trial use.

Opportunities exist throughout the red light areas to reinforce condom messages. To maximize the effectiveness of the message, the support of all workers in the red light areas, especially managers, pimps, bartenders, etc., is essential. As it is, there is so little general acceptance and familiarity with condom use that CSWs are in the difficult position of having to do the entire job of “making the sale” in the few minutes before the sexual encounter. This is a huge and often impossible task for these young women and future project activities will focus on raising the expectations that clients should wear condoms prior to the sexual encounter.
Some future plans include signs in brothels about the expectation of condom use, including condoms in the price of a sexual engagement and use of other materials which will increase the pre-sale of condoms and make them more visible at the point of contact.

Physicians provided the training in conjunction with the provincial Department of Health and a local hospital. Prior to the training, many of these physicians had only limited familiarity with their use. Training for both physicians and CSWs encouraged promoting familiarity and acceptance of condom use. Over 500 CSWs were trained in how to negotiate with a client to use condoms. An additional 250 pimps and bartenders in the Dolly/Surabaya area were also trained in how to encourage and support condom use.

Incentives were offered to make sure the training was successful. A stereo Walkman and cash prizes were offered for the past two years to the CSW who collected the highest number of condom sachets during a two week contest period.

**Public Relations**

Public relations activities to increase general public awareness of HIV/AIDS included a series of newspaper articles, various seminars for local health, government and business leaders, a half-hour TV forum discussion broadcast locally, and an Islamic led HIV/AIDS awareness day.

On March 16, 1995, SOMARC held a press seminar in Surabaya attended by 40 health reporters from East Java newspapers, magazines, and television stations. The object of the seminar was to inform reporters about the risk of HIV/AIDS and combat poor understanding and awareness of the disease among the general population. Seminar leaders addressed the need for journalists to cover the issue more frequently and write more educational articles about how condoms can help prevent transmission. The seminar was well attended and resulted in excellent coverage, including 12 published articles and additional TV reports.

An HIV/AIDS seminar for doctors, held on August 26, 1995, provided a forum for physicians to learn some of the important facts and information about HIV/AIDS. Held in cooperation with the Indonesian Medical Association (IDI), the seminar reached 132 physicians. In the week leading up to the seminar, 27 newspaper articles were published about the topic of HIV/AIDS.

A national Condom Debate, held in conjunction with IDI on December 2, 1995, received excellent media coverage, ending up with more than 80 participants representing IDI members, government officials, NGOs, legislators, and about 40 reporters. The opening speech was delivered by the Minister of Health.

In addition to the debate, SOMARC also sponsored a number of activities during the World HIV/AIDS Day on December 1, 1995. Some of these events in Jakarta included a musical drama, poetry readings, singing and dancing activities, and distribution of 200 T-shirts to street vendors with the message "Being Careful Is Important." In Surabaya, T-shirts were distributed to brothel complexes and street vendors, and the program sponsored a traditional play and music.
Encouragement for behavior change is a long-term activity, especially in the absence of a large mass media HIV/AIDS information campaign. However, during the first years of project implementation, signs of success have included gradually increasing condom sales, consistent availability of quality condom brands in more outlets, and increased awareness of condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention.

In 1996, SOMARC commissioned Survey Research Indonesia to conduct a retail audit of shops in Surabaya and Jakarta to:

- Update the red light district mapping for the area surrounding Dolly, Surabaya and Krammat Tunggal and Mangga Besar, Jakarta.
- Survey 150 outlets in Surabaya and 200 outlets in Jakarta to determine distribution of condoms, detailed by brand stocked and type of outlet, and compare this data with previous surveys conducted for the Surabaya pilot in 1992 and 1994.

Research results also revealed that condom availability in the red light districts of Surabaya and Jakarta is quite good, although there is still room for improvement. On average, more than 1 out of 3 shops in these areas now stock condoms. In the Dolly area of Surabaya, every other shop sells condoms.

This survey revealed that while many more shops in red light districts were carrying condoms than in 1992-1993, there was little increase between 1994-1996. This was due to a delay of funding, originally anticipated in October/November 1995, which did not occur until late 1996. (Funding of the detail task force was critical to retail coverage, and retail coverage is critical to sales. The absence of funding meant that the task force could not be maintained and the results could have been stagnant sales. When the task force resumed in 1996, sales began to climb steadily.)

Despite the lack of funding, it was encouraging to note that the condom manufacturers, primarily using their own funds, have continued sell-in and resupply to outlets created in 1993-1995. The report also indicates that Durex has made considerable progress in 1995-1996, as a result of an intensified promotional campaign supporting this global commercial brand, including strong mass media support.

In Surabaya, Simplex is the dominant brand, found in 70 percent of outlets stocking condoms, followed by Young-Young (64 percent) and Durex (48 percent). In Jakarta, Young-Young is the dominant brand (89 percent), followed by Romantic (32 percent), Simplex (28 percent) and Durex (22 percent).

Less encouraging is the fact that many retailers feel that the demand for condoms is not increasing. In Surabaya, 85 percent of retailers felt that consumer demand for condoms was either decreasing or stagnant, whereas in Jakarta, 75 percent held this opinion. This suggests that at this time, condom promotional activities need to prioritize consumer demand issues over distribution. This includes generating awareness and familiarity with condoms, increasing acceptance, instituting "condom only" policies in brothels, making it "taboo" to have sex without a condom in all encounters where there is a risk of infection, providing additional training, and encouraging the general community to accept condoms as an important health measure to prevent STDs/HIV and unwanted pregnancy.
To date, there have been a number of additional measures of achievement for the SOMARC program in Surabaya and Jakarta:

- The Government of Indonesia (GOI) has participated in policy dialogue relating to potential restrictions on mass media promotion of condoms for STD prevention, and supports implementation of contraceptive social marketing (CSM) initiatives for STD/HIV prevention.
- The Government of Indonesia (GOI) is maintaining and enforcing WHO condom quality standards.
- GOI and CSM companies cooperate in design and implementation of contraceptive social marketing initiatives.
- Condom usage figures among CSWs in Surabaya have increased from 18 percent to 30 percent.

Despite funding constraints, the program has made progress or held its ground regarding outlet penetration. Penetration in bars, discos and brothels has risen from 17 percent to 50 percent.

Social Marketing for Change

Social Marketing for Change (SOMARC) is a contraceptive social marketing project which provides moderate- to lower-income couples in 43 developing countries with greater access to contraceptives. Products are sold through private sector outlets, such as pharmacies, street kiosks and doctors offices at a price that is affordable to these women. The U.S. Agency for International Development funds SOMARC III, which is managed by The Futures Group International.

SOMARC gives women the opportunity to purchase contraceptives rather than having to depend on receiving them from government clinics, which often involve long waits and product outages. SOMA RC programs also ease the burden of governments to supply contraceptives to all low income women. Projects are designed to stimulate local businesses and sustain development - using local professionals and using or creating indigenous distribution companies, advertising agencies, public relations firms, market research firms and promotion agencies. SOMARC provides extensive training to each of its local partners to improve their technical and business capabilities.