# EXPANDING EFFECTIVE CONTRACEPTIVE OPTIONS IN ZAMBIA AND MALAWI:

# UNDERSTANDING THE CONSUMER

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# INTRODUCTION

The **Expanding Effective Contraceptive Options (EECO)** project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), seeks to introduce new contraceptive and dual protection methods to better meet the reproductive health needs of women and girls worldwide. The EECO partnership team, led by WCG and including Population Services International (PSI), emphasizes engagement at all levels of the value chain, while putting the needs and preferences of the end user first.

A deep understanding of the consumer and market environment is critically important in product introduction. This case study focuses on the process of gathering and analyzing consumer insights and market data to develop a marketing strategy for the ***Woman's Condom*** in Malawi and Zambia.

**Acknowledgements**

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# BACKGROUND

Cynthia is a 20-year-old woman who lives in Lilongwe, Malawi, with her parents. She completed secondary school some years ago but wasn't able to continue with her studies as her family didn't have the money to support her. She's working now and completing a certificate program to improve her qualifications.

She recently started a steady relationship with a man named Ben who is around her age. They've had sex a few times already, but because they both work, they don't have a lot of time to spend together. One of her biggest fears is becoming pregnant before she finishes her studies. For contraception, she relies mostly on the male condom, which Ben is responsible for purchasing and wearing, but they use condoms inconsistently. Living in an urban area, Cynthia is at higher risk of HIV infection than her rural counterparts; however, fear of HIV infection does not drive Cynthia's condom-use decisions and it is not something Cynthia discusses with Ben. She's heard about the female condom but has never used one since no one says anything good about them. She's used injectables before, but is hesitant to use hormonal contraceptives in general since she's heard stories from her friends about side effects. She also doesn't want to use hormonal contraceptives before she's been able to prove that she is fertile. Cynthia is nervous about the methods available to her and would like greater choice.

Cynthia is one of more than 214 million women in developing regions who have an unmet need for family planning (FP).[1] For over half of these women, method-related reasons such as side effects, infrequent sex, and perceived health risks are cited as the biggest issues related to non-use.[2] Studies suggest that the critical factors for meeting women's needs are a combination of access to a broad choice of methods, improvement in the quality of information and services available, a consistent supply of contraceptive products, and the reduction of social barriers to use.[3]

In addition to risk of unintended pregnancy, women like Cynthia are at high risk for exposure to HIV/AIDS. One of the most common means of transmission of HIV is through unprotected sex with an infected partner. In Malawi specifically, HIV prevalence is twice as high in urban areas as compared to rural areas, and higher among women than men. Comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS is low among youth in Malawi (41% of young women and 44% of young men) and condom use among youth with multiple partners is inconsistent, and lower among women (52% of male youths versus 36% of female youths with multiple partners report condom use at last sexual intercourse)[4].

For these reasons, it is particularly important to provide dual protection methods that meet the needs of women and their partners to prevent both unintended pregnancy and risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as HIV/AIDS.

The EECO project strives to address each of these critical issues, with an emphasis on broadening the reproductive health products and services available to women like Cynthia.

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[1]Guttmacher Institute, Adding It Up: The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health 2017, fact sheet, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2017, https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/adding-it-up-contraception-mnh-2017.

[2]Hussain R et al., Unmet Need for Contraception in Developing Countries: Examining Women's Reasons for Not Using a Method, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2016, http://www.guttmacher.org/report/unmet-need-for-contraception-in-developing-countries.

[3] Singh, Darroch, & Ashford. Adding it up: The cost & benefits of Investing in sexual and reproductive health. 2014. Guttmacher Institute. https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/fi les/report_pdf/addingitup2014.pdf

[4] National Statistical Office (NSO) [Malawi] and ICF. 2017. Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16. Zomba, Malawi, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. NSO and ICF.

## THE PROJECT

Expanding Effective Contraceptive Options (EECO) is a USAID-funded project designed to support the introduction of new contraceptive and dual protection methods that will help address method-related reasons for non-use. Each product possesses important benefits; some are non-hormonal, others are long-acting and reversible, and others are discreet or used only on demand. With several woman-initiated methods offered, the products have the potential to help overcome access barriers such as a limited number of skilled providers and/or provider biases that limit women's uptake of contraception.

EECO takes a product-agnostic approach, convening and fostering relationships between various stakeholders in the value chain and relying on formative research and follow-up with providers and consumers to market products effectively. In the project-planning phase, the team analyzed research on both the emotional and physical needs of consumers, while assessing the contraceptive landscape in each of the target countries. Based on these analyses, project partners identified each product's most likely target audiences, its perceived positive and negative traits, the distribution and communication channels that have the most appeal for each method, and the type of training and advocacy required for each. These approaches will be tested throughout the project and the results can be extrapolated to bring products to scale or to expand introduction to additional countries.

By project's end, EECO will have produced roadmaps for product introduction, including the generation of stakeholder support and consumer demand for woman-initiated family FP and dual protection methods. Pilots in Zambia, Malawi, Madagascar and Niger will provide women with more choices to prevent unplanned pregnancy, through access to four new product lines: new barrier methods; hormonal intrauterine systems; and a progesterone vaginal ring (PVR). The first of these pilots started in Malawi and Zambia in mid-2014 with the launch of the **Woman's Condom**.

## THE METHODS

**Woman's Condom:** a new type of female condom, offering non-hormonal protection against unintended pregnancy and STIs. Developed by PATH, the product's unique design features allow for easy insertion and removal, a secure fit, and good sensation. It has a European CE mark, UNFPA/WHO pre qualification and other international certifications.

**SILCS Diaphragm:** a non-hormonal, discreet, pericoital, barrier method developed by PATH. Its one-size-fits-most design eliminates the need for a fitting by a provider, while other design features make it easy to insert, use and remove. It has U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval, a European CE mark and is registered in ten European countries, as well as Morocco and Nigeria.

**Progering:** a three-month PVR designed by Population Council. Clinical trials have established that it is highly effective and does not affect a woman's ability to produce breast milk, nor does it harm the breastfeeding infant. Progering is currently registered and commercially available in eight Latin American countries.

**LNG IUS:** A levonorgestrel (hormone)-releasing intrauterine system, developed by Medicines360. Approved by the U.S. FDA, the LNG IUS is inserted into the uterus by a provider, and is proven to be highly effective at preventing pregnancy for up to 3 years.

## THE EECO TEAM:

***WCG*** leads the team, bridging the private sector and non-profit worlds, and linking upstream product developers/suppliers and downstream marketing and distribution partners. WCG leads regulatory and quality assurance efforts, intensive medical detailing and data collection.

***Population Services International (PSI)***, the social marketing partner, works through existing service delivery and product distribution networks to market and distribute the EECO products.

***Every1Mobile (E1M)***, the m-health partner, creates mobile communities and uses mobile social networking to increase awareness about the methods.

***International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)***, the research and gender partner, conducts consumer and provider research, focusing on product acceptability and contraceptive decision-making.

***Evofem Biosciences***, the biotechnology partner, develops and markets products that are woman-initiated, non-invasive, and rapidly reversible.

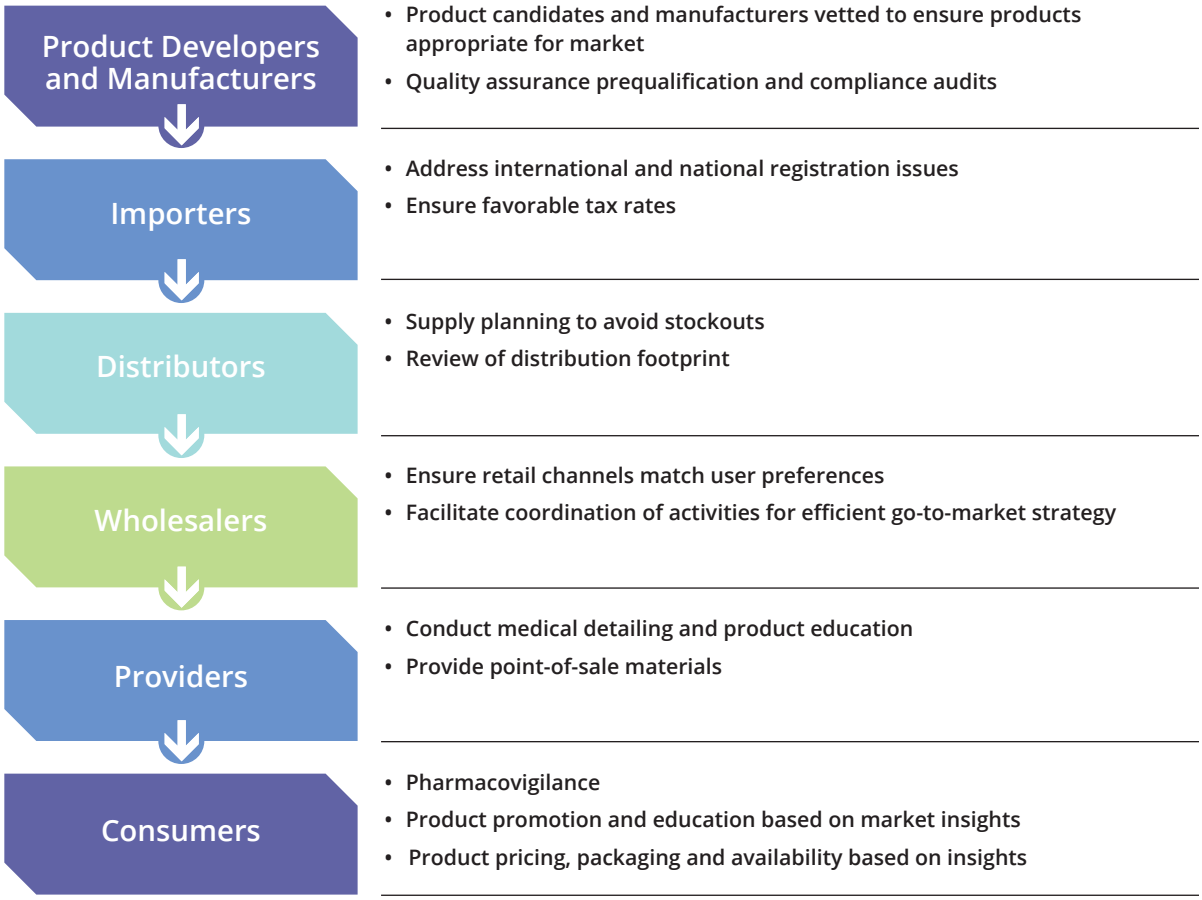
# THE PROCESS

Recognizing that the successful introduction of new products involves multiple players and an understanding of market dynamics, the project lead (WCG) assembled a team which covers the entire product life cycle — from development to end use.

The EECO team engages with each organization involved in bringing the EECO products to market and determines how best to improve the value chain. For example, EECO examines how to better coordinate market players, share information and conduct stakeholder advocacy.

EECO's comprehensive value chain[3] approach and its focus on activities that are driven by consumer insight can be applied to bring any new reproductive health product to market.

## FIGURE 1: EECO Value Chain Interventions




[3] A **value chain** is a set of activities that a firm performs in order to deliver a valuable product or service for the market. The original concept from business management was first described by Michael Porter in his 1985 book, Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance. It can be applied to whole supply chains and distribution networks. Analyzing the upstream and downstream flow of information, inputs and outputs between actors and capturing the value generated along the chain is the new approach taken by many top businesses and management strategists.

## THE PRODUCT

The ***Woman's Condom***, designed by PATH, was created following an iterative, human-centered design process to address concerns that women had with previous generation female condoms. The ***Woman's Condom*** is made of a soft and thin material, and does not contain the inner ring that other female condoms have. When inserted, the ***Woman's Condom*** adheres to the interior of the vagina through four small dots of soft, absorbent foam. These dots hold the condom securely in place during use and release from the vaginal walls on removal. To ease insertion, the ***Woman's Condom*** features a rounded capsule on the end of the condom. Upon insertion, the capsule dissolves in less than a minute. The ***Woman's Condom*** is non-hormonal and intended for one-time use.

In 2008, PATH transferred production of the ***Woman's Condom*** to the Dahua Medical Apparatus Company of Shanghai, China. Dahua has received approval to market the product in China, Europe, and South Africa.

PHOTO: Glenn Austin/PATH

In addition, the EECO team has registered the product in Zambia and Malawi.

In 2016, the ***Woman's Condom*** achieved prequalification by the World Health Organization (WHO) /United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). WHO/UNFPA prequalification allows United Nations agencies and other international purchasers to procure the product for public-sector distribution.

## HYPOTHESIS

EECO's hypothesis is that the introduction of a 'luxury' female condom, coupled with targeted marketing and education around female condoms in general, will lead to increased interest in trying any female condom product, and will therefore lead to more protected sex.

## UNDERSTANDING CONSUMERS

### "DELTA" MARKETING PROCESS

Successful marketing relies on a deep understanding of target consumers: their needs, wants, behaviors, and habits. To facilitate the introduction of the ***Woman's Condom*** in Zambia and Malawi, the EECO team conducted an extensive situation analysis followed by a four-day marketing workshop in each country. EECO partner PSI uses a propriety tool called DELTA as the framework for developing consumer-focused marketing plans (refer to figure 2). A DELTA framework allows the team to continuously monitor, evaluate and react to the market by gathering information and reviewing resources and capacity.

During the DELTA workshops in Zambia and Malawi, the EECO team used this framework to ensure that:

- strategic priorities are met in a consistent manner while meeting deadlines and adhering to budget constraints;
- marketing objectives align and clearly support agreed deliverables;
- there is an in-depth understanding among participants of the issue (e.g. health problem) that is being solved;
- the market environment, from both private and public sector, is considered in the strategy planning and marketing objectives;
- there is insight and knowledge about numerous perspectives including consumers, providers and traders;
- the branding for the chosen target audience supports the strategic priorities and target audience needs;
- financial resources are allocated in line with the work plan;
- any gaps in knowledge are identified and addressed in comprehensive research and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans.

**FIGURE 2:** DELTA Process

## INSIGHTS AND RESEARCH

### LITERATURE REVIEW

As the first step in better understanding the needs and preferences of consumers, EECO partner ICRW conducted a review of available and relevant literature for Malawi and Zambia where the ***Woman's Condom*** would be introduced. The research methodology included gathering insights from product developers about lessons learned, as well as a literature search on the ***Woman's Condom*** and other female condoms. In total, ICRW reviewed more than 200 articles.

The literature review revealed that use of female condoms is low in sub-Saharan Africa. Limited funding, competing budget priorities, and lingering questions about the product category have hindered access and use[4]. In addition, women cite concerns with specific design features of female condoms that affect ease of use and comfort. The review identified consumer-level insights related to female condom use, seen in Table 1, below.

Additionally, EECO formative research conducted by ICRW together with PSI in Malawi and Zambia highlighted that women are more concerned with pregnancy prevention than with prevention of STIs, likely due to the fact that pregnancy is a visible condition, whereas many STIs can be hidden or treated without being seen by partners, peers, or family members.

**TABLE 1: Findings from formative research on female condoms by category**

| | |
|---|---|
| USERS | • Younger women<br>• Higher socio-economic status (SES)<br>• Higher perceived risk of pregnancy/HIV<br>• Use of condoms within marriage strained/stigmatized due to fear of accusations of marital infidelity |
| POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES | • Acceptability improves with use over time<br>• Increased decision-making by women in sexual encounters<br>• Absence of side effects<br>• Enhanced sexual pleasure<br>• Protection against HIV/STIs<br>• Convenience (men)<br>• Curiosity (men)<br>• Enhanced sexual sensation (men)<br>• Perception of better safety and comfort (men) |
| BARRIERS | • Generally low knowledge and practice of consistent and correct condom use<br>• Due to years of targeting of female sex workers with female condoms, the product category may be stigmatized within the general population<br>• Lack of familiarity (men)<br>• Partner's difficulties inserting method (men)<br>• Concern about losing control over sexual encounters (men) |

[4] http://www.path.org/publications/files/DT_wc_global_rpt.pdf

## MARKET RESEARCH

Following the literature review, the EECO team garnered supplementary evidence on women's contraceptive and dual protection needs and knowledge gaps, as well as information on the contraceptive market, including male and female condoms, in the respective countries. This locally generated qualitative and quantitative data, in conjunction with the knowledge of local FP and marketing experts, provided descriptive information that was used during the DELTA workshop to identify and further understand the target audience for the ***Woman's Condom***.

Custom market research in both countries deployed a proprietary tool to help assess users' emotional needs as they relate to the ***Woman's Condom***. A South Africa-based market research firm was employed with the purpose of providing need states research to connect consumers to the EECO products and their branding.

The market research firm measured need states using a tool based on a psychological framework. The tool explores, measures, and analyzes functional drivers, emotions and perceptions of brands and products. This framework is based on the Jungian concept of archetypes. In Jungian psychology, archetypes are consistent patterns of behavior that exist in the unconscious of every person across all cultures. These archetypes can be used to personify a brand and help organizations identify how their brands should act and communicate in order to meet the emotional needs of consumers. Every archetype possesses its own set of values, ambitions, behaviors and needs.

***Need states*** research and marketing helps build a product's long-lasting relationship with consumers by addressing their emotional needs for that product. While functional needs, e.g., price, are easy to identify, it is often harder to understand emotional needs. These needs are usually unconscious and tied to a range of psychological factors, such as social identities and personality drivers. A need states analysis is commonly used by commercial organizations to develop a deep understanding of their consumers and to position products accordingly.

In Zambia, the need states research placed the ***Woman's Condom*** in the "fun-loving" needs category. This category is associated with extroverted behaviors, pointing to younger women who want to have fun and not worry about the consequences. In Malawi, the need states analysis indicated that men and women who used the ***Woman's Condom*** were more likely to fall into a 'practical' need state. This category is associated with introverted and hardworking young women who tend to worry about their future. Women in this category tend to be in steady relationships and they view sex as a necessary part of a relationship, perhaps even as an obligation.

# ANALYSIS: FROM RESEARCH TO MARKETING

## AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION

While all women could effectively use the EECO products (unless medically contraindicated), focusing on a subset of women, called a "market segment", is essential to creating a compelling marketing campaign. A single woman in her teens has very different needs and behaviors than a married woman in her forties with several children. Thus, it is difficult to have a strong marketing campaign that speaks to both. Segmentation does not mean excluding women that are not part of the segment from being able to use the product; rather, it helps provide focus and better targeting to reach key groups.

Taking lessons from the commercial sector, the EECO marketing team analyzed the family planning and dual protection needs, need states, and ability and motivation for use among different types of women. Based on this information, they selected a market segment for the ***Woman's Condom*** in each country.

Once the target audiences were identified, consumer profiles were developed for each product. The profiles go beyond simple demographics. They draw from the available research to capture psychographics as well, including the target audiences' fears, aspirations, habits, values, likes and dislikes. As in the commercial world, profiles keep marketing activities focused on ensuring a product or service meets customers' needs and desires. The profiles create a fictional customer with a photo, name, and personality who represents common traits of the target audience. The profile also ensures the integrity of the value chain approach by helping to keep focus on the customer. *Please refer to Appendix A for the target audience profiles from Malawi, "Cynthia," and Zambia, "Clara".*

In both Malawi and Zambia, secondary target audiences were also identified for the products. These audiences included the sexual partners of the target audiences, retailers and private health professionals who would be supplying the products.

A ***market segment*** is:

- distinct from other groups;
- homogeneous within the segment;
- commonly responsive to marketing strategies and influences.

## PRODUCT POSITIONING AND BRANDING

With a strong audience profile as a foundation, the EECO team moved to the next step in commercial marketing: positioning the product and creating a brand for each product in each country.

A ***positioning statement*** is the core of a brand strategy. It identifies the most compelling and unique benefit that the product stands for in the mind of the target group.

A ***brand*** can be defined as a summation of everything the target audience knows and feels about a product. This includes knowledge and emotions that result from things like using the product, being exposed to it via media, or even hearing about it from friends. A brand is an intangible object, something that lives in the hearts and minds of the target group. A strong brand has a personality that speaks to the target audience's need state.

## STRATEGY 1:

## Leveraging an existing brand

Zambia
***Maximum Diva***
**Woman's Condom**

In Zambia, the ***Woman's Condom*** is being marketed as a companion to the male condom brand ***Maximum***, as ***Maximum Diva***. Benefits to branding the product as a "line extension" of the existing brands include:

- reduction in business complexity; having fewer, bigger brands is in line with best business practice
- existing brand awareness and trust can be leveraged with lower investment required
- easier to win retailer support and shelf space as buyers' risk perception is lower due to familiarity with the brand name
- the target groups and needs fit under the existing brands
- the positioning statements for the brands were updated to reflect the benefits that differentiate the new products from other methods available in this category, e.g., non-hormonal products

**Market segment:**
Single women aged 19-24, lower SES

**Key Insight:**
"I want to be protected (from pregnancy and STIs), but I take risks and don't like to be told what is good for me. Sometimes using a condom compromises the pleasure of sex, and brings up issues of trust. I just want to have fun without having to worry."

**Positioning:**
"Using ***Maximum Diva*** allows me the freedom to explore life without worrying about the consequences."

## STRATEGY 2:

### Develop a new brand

Malawi
***Whisper***
**Woman's Condom**

In Malawi, there was no clear fit for the ***Woman's Condom*** under an existing brand, so a new brand was developed. Market research revealed that potential consumers viewed the ***Woman's Condom*** as quieter and less intimidating to insert than other female condoms. They also suggested it would be less difficult to negotiate than the male condom and thus would be more discreet and easier to use. The team brainstormed several potential brand names related to this insight: Sensational, Whisper, Silk, and Softmate.

These names were then tested with the target audience and assessed for fit with the chosen positioning. Ultimately, ***Whisper*** was chosen as the new brand name.

**Market segment:**
Unmarried urban females in relationships, aged 20-24

**Key Insight:**
"I know that in a few years I will have achieved all the success I'm working for now but I'm not quite yet ready to settle down. Now is not the time to get pregnant. If I could discreetly find a quality method that doesn't cause side effects and allows me and my partner to enjoy sex, I'd be really happy."

**Positioning:**
"***Whisper*** is the easy-to-use contraceptive choice that guarantees an intimate sexual experience free of consequences and full of pleasure."

## STRATEGY 3:

### Focus on Pregnancy Prevention

Formative and market research in Malawi and Zambia found that the target audience was likely to be more concerned with pregnancy prevention rather than HIV prevention. In the studies and focus groups, pregnancy was perceived as a more immediate and greater cause for concern than HIV/STIs. Many respondents said they were more afraid of pregnancy because of its immediate and visible consequences. For that reason, branding decisions in both countries focused foremost on use of the ***Woman's Condom*** for preventing pregnancy, with the additional attribute of HIV prevention.

*Please refer to Appendix B for more information on the Maximum Diva and Whisper brands.*

## NEXT STEPS

Following the development of branding and positioning grounded in research and audience insight, the EECO team created marketing activities around the 4Ps of commercial marketing: product, place, price and promotion.

Similar exercises were also undertaken targeting health care providers, which are an important secondary target group. The information garnered from provider insights on the ***Woman's Condom*** formed the basis for WCG's medical detailing program in Malawi. The details of the provider research and the medical detailing program will be shared in a separate case study.

The ***Whisper*** and ***Maximum Diva Woman's Condoms*** launched in Malawi and Zambia in October 2015 and March 2016, respectively. Research initiatives are underway to better understand whether the branding and positioning outlined in this case study resulted in uptake of the ***Woman's Condom*** by the target audience. In Zambia, EECO partner Innovations for Poverty Action is conducting a population-based impact evaluation to assess whether the introduction of the ***Woman's Condom*** created increased use of condoms overall, or if it cannibalized the existing male and female condom market. In Malawi, WCG and PSI/Malawi are partnering to conduct a post-market research assessment to better understand the experiences of retailers and consumers with ***Whisper***. The results of these activities will be shared in separate case studies.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An M&E plan was developed specifically to measure brand and product uptake. Key indicators will measure brand equity, awareness, availability, and sales. While use is the ultimate indicator of successful uptake, these data are not specifically collected on an ongoing basis under the EECO project; rather, use will be measured by subsequent country-level demographic health surveys. These indicators capture the *emotional* and *functional* drivers and barriers to trial and consistent use and will relay information to the EECO team as to whether the market segmentation has been successful.

# LESSONS LEARNED: UNDERSTANDING CONSUMERS

***Estimating the size of the market:*** As part of a holistic approach, EECO considered not only need, but current supply and demand for contraceptive products in both Zambia and Malawi. It is challenging to estimate the size of a market and quantify potential demand for a new contraceptive product in the absence of historical trend data. The team was able to broadly quantify demand for the new products by analyzing third party demographic data (e.g., contraceptive use figures in the Demographic and Health Surveys, PSI sales figures) and evaluating likely distribution channels (e.g., private sector franchise clinics, urban pharmacies). An important variable in this quantification was the volume of contraceptive clients served by the selected channels, taking into account critical programmatic inputs (e.g., promotional campaigns and budget). The team also analyzed existing female condom use and sales figures for previous versions of the product and took into consideration the volume of female condom marketing and promotional activities previously undertaken in each country. In forecasting initial procurement needs, the team further revised estimates, procuring conservative amounts initially.

For more accurate demand estimates and procurement forecasting, it would have been useful to have a better understanding of the size of the primary target audience for each country and product. Methods exist for gathering this information; however, such an exercise was not undertaken as part of the initial market research. Budget allowing, this additional information would be useful when scaling up the ***Woman's Condom*** or when launching these or other new products in additional countries.

***Applying the "art" of marketing:*** The use of market research provided a very strong foundation for the branding of products and the design of marketing campaigns that speak to the end user. However, the research findings were at times difficult for non-marketers to understand and apply. It was critical that experienced marketers provide input on the design of the market research. These same marketers facilitated the marketing workshops, which included an array of key stakeholders, some of whom had significant marketing expertise, while others had more public health, service delivery or program management experience and expertise. To ensure that all participants understood the research and its value, the facilitators led an early session on research interpretation, highlighting and facilitating discussion about key findings.

### Procurement Forecasts

**Malawi: 15,000 condoms**

Malawi set conservative distribution targets for the ***Woman's Condom*** based on existing stigma around female condoms and estimated ability to generate demand and uptake among consumers.

**Zambia: 165,000 condoms**

Zambia's set more aggressive distribution targets for the ***Woman's Condom*** based on the estimated appeal among their target audience and their purchasing power at the selected retail outlets.

***Treating providers and retailers ("the trade") as a key market audience:*** The market approach to product launch supports the value chain by soliciting and considering input from providers and retailers, as well as end users. This market approach enabled the team to identify trade-specific strategies in addition to consumer strategies. Trade considerations are particularly important to the successful launch of any product sold at retail outlets. Providers and retailers are the frontline suppliers and as such they have tremendous influence over the success or failure of the products in the market.

***What matters most to women:*** Addressing the practical and emotional needs of the end consumer was always at the heart of the project. It was important to understand the lives of the end users intimately, their contraceptive choices, and all their key influencers. The EECO project was designed to take all market players and influencers into account, to provide women with the right product and the right environment to use the product.

***How to introduce new products that have been stigmatized:*** The negative association that previous female condoms had with commercial sex workers meant that messaging and marketing of the ***Woman's Condom*** had to overcome these perception barriers. However, it was equally important that the market value of the existing female condom not be compromised while promoting the new product. The objective was *category growth of all female condoms*, not cannibalization of users of other products. This meant the promotional focus had to address emotional needs that can be met by using the ***Woman's Condom***, rather than comparing features of the ***Woman's Condom*** versus other female condoms.

As mentioned previously, market research revealed that men and women were more concerned about pregnancy prevention than STI prevention. In recognition of this concern, the EECO team placed greater emphasis on the pregnancy prevention aspects of the ***Woman's Condom*** rather than on its additional purpose of STI prevention. This lesson learned has significant implications for the field of sexual reproductive health, specifically for integration of HIV and FP services. Service delivery partners should seek to understand what drives the sexual and reproductive health decisions and behaviors of their target audience and position products and services accordingly.

In addition, the formative market research conducted by ICRW and PSI highlighted potential provider bias against promotion or counseling of female condoms. Providers who had negative experiences promoting or counseling on previous generation female condoms expressed hesitation to take on a more expensive version of a female condom product. To address this issue, the EECO team launched an intensive medical detailing program that specifically focused on behavior change among providers of female condoms. Provider and supply-oriented lessons learned from this experience are documented in a separate case study in this series.

## CONCLUSION

With a user-centered, value chain approach, EECO began the process of introducing the ***Woman's Condom*** by gaining a thorough understanding of the consumer. Using commercial techniques and best practices, positioning and branding were developed for the ***Woman's Condom*** in Zambia and Malawi. By directing our efforts to the needs of specific segments of consumers, we hope to see increased uptake followed by consistent use of this new method. Ultimately, attracting users to a woman-initiated, dual protection method will lead to increased protection from unintended pregnancies as well as STIs and HIV/AIDS.

## MAXIMUM DIVA WOMAN'S CONDOM

### TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILE

CLARA

Clara (nickname—Diva), is a young single lady aged 24, of low to middle income; she is a student at the local university in her final year. She lives in an urban town but rents a room at a conveniently located boarding house.

She is very fashion trendy, loves drinking alcohol, and has more than one sexual partner. Her partners range from her high school boyfriend whom she loves and is always seen with in public to her older married man who provides her with her material needs in exchange for sex. She is usually at school or at the shopping malls during weekdays and out clubbing almost every weekend. She lives a carefree life and she is admired by her peers for all the expensive material things she owns.

Clara relies on her partners to make decisions about condom use. High stigma from partners and peers impacts her willingness to initiate condom use on her own. Even so, she still has a fear of HIV/STIs and unplanned pregnancy. Clara hopes to graduate with a well-paying job, get married and have children one day. Right now, Clara is motivated by money and the promise of a good life.

## WHISPER WOMAN'S CONDOM

### TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILE

CYNTHIA

Cynthia is a 20-year-old woman who lives in an urban area with her parents. She completed secondary school some years ago but wasn't able to continue with her studies as her family didn't have the money to support her. She's working now and completing a certificate program to improve her qualifications.

She recently started a steady relationship with a guy named Ben who is around her age. They've had sex a few times already but because they both work they don't have lots of time to spend together. One of her biggest fears is becoming pregnant before she finishes her studies since having a baby would end her studies. For contraception, she relies mostly on the male condom, which Ben is responsible for purchasing/wearing but that they only use inconsistently. She's heard about the female condom but has never used one since no one says anything good about them. She's used injectables before but is hesitant to use hormonal contraceptives in general since she's heard stories from her friends about side effects. She also doesn't want to use hormonal contraceptives before she's been able to prove that she is fertile.

She trusts the advice from her friends and medical professionals. Sometimes she'll use Google to answer questions about health and contraceptives.

## The 4Ps

Marketing strategies are typically formulated around four key elements known as "the 4 Ps": product, price, place and promotion. While the Promotion P is perhaps the most widely known and associated with marketing, product, price and place also impact individual decision-making and are therefore critical elements to any good marketing strategy. Product refers to the actual product or service. Price refers not only to the monetary consideration but also to the emotional or psychological incentives and barriers to purchasing and using a product. Place refers to where the customer can access the product and service and the intermediaries who can facilitate that access.

# MAXIMUM DIVA

## PRODUCT

***Maximum Diva Woman's Condom*** is sold in a two-pack. Initial research from focus groups suggested that consumers who are accustomed to ***Maximum Male Condoms,*** which are sold in 3-packs, would be unwilling to purchase just one unit of ***Maximum Diva*** at a time. However, due to the size of the ***Woman's Condom***, packaging 3 units in one box became too bulky and lost its appeal as a sleek and discreet product. The project team discussed various configurations with the ***Woman's Condom*** manufacturer, Shanghai Dahua, to decrease packaging size, including folding the condom ring to make it smaller. Due to the particular process used to form the ring, this was not possible.

## PROMOTION

Promotion of ***Maximum Diva*** to users had three main objectives:

**Objective**

- Create awareness of product and increase awareness of brand
- Initiate use of the product
- Drive demand of product and ongoing use

To support these objectives, SFH developed three main promotional messages:

- Explore your wild side with a trusted product. Use ***Maximum*** to prevent unplanned pregnancy.
- STIs are not sexy, step up the game. Use ***Maximum*** always.
- Trust yourself, trust the ***Diva*** in you.

## PRICE

To appropriately price the ***Maximum Diva Woman's Condom***, the Society for Family Health conducted willingness-to-pay studies with consumers and analyzed the prices of a 'market basket' of consumer goods. The price of the ***Maximum Male Condom,*** which is sold in a 3-pack, was also an important consideration.

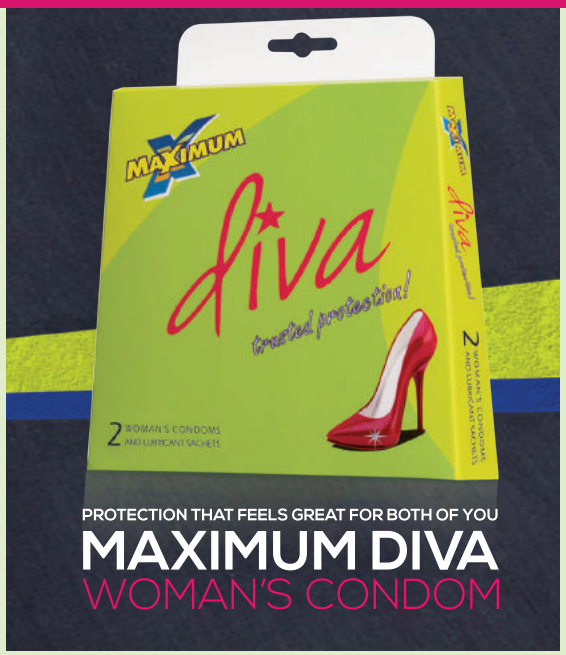
The amounts listed below reflect the price at which the product is sold to retailers. Retailers are free to set their own price to consumers depending on their desired profit margin and their particular client's ability to pay.

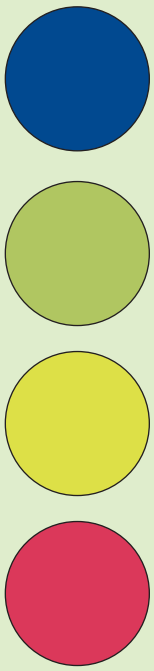
| Brand | Price/Box | Price/Condom |
|---|---|---|
| Maximum Male Condom | K 5 (3 condoms) | K 1.66 |
| Maximum Diva Woman's Condom | K 10 (2 condoms) | K 5.00 |

At K10.00 for a box of two, the ***Maximum Diva Woman's Condom*** is priced significantly higher per condom than the Care FC2 female condom, slightly higher than the ***Maximum Male Condom***, and less than other goods such as water, soda, bread, and beer. Willingness-to-pay surveys and feedback from retailers suggested that the price would be within the target audiences' ability and willingness-to-pay for condoms.

## PLACE

***Maximum Diva*** was initially launched in Lusaka only. As the sister product to the ***Maximum Male Condom***, the team decided that ***Maximum Diva*** would be made available anywhere that ***Maximum Male Condoms*** are sold, including pharmacies, retailers, shops, bars, convenience stores, chain stores, institutions, and other "hot spots" where our target audience and their partners are likely to purchase condoms.





- **Maximum Diva Brand Name:** Market research in Zambia showed strong brand loyalty to the male condom brand, *Maximum*. The EECO team leveraged this umbrella brand to launch the 'sister' product, *Maximum Diva*. The word "Diva" emerged many times throughout the research as a descriptor for the archetype user: "Clara" who is confident, sassy, and empowered.
- **Diva Packaging:** "Clara" cares about her physical looks and is attracted to the idea of being a 'diva'. The pink high heel and the bright, bold color palette are emblematic of "Clara's" fun-loving and confident nature.
- **Promotional Materials:** Market research showed the need to engage men in the conversation about the *Woman's Condom*. Radio ads, billboards and brochures featured young men who described their attraction to a *Maximum Diva* woman. A Zambian singer and reality TV star, Cleo "Ice Queen", was chosen as the brand representative for *Maximum Diva* and is featured on the promotional materials as well as select outreach events.

## The 4Ps

Marketing strategies are typically formulated around four key elements known as "the 4 Ps": product, price, place and promotion. While the Promotion P is perhaps the most widely known and associated with marketing, product, price and place also impact individual decision-making and are therefore critical elements to any good marketing strategy. Product refers to the actual product or service. Price refers not only to the monetary consideration but also to the emotional or psychological incentives and barriers to purchasing and using a product. Place refers to where the customer can access the product and service and the intermediaries who can facilitate that access.

# WHISPER

## PRODUCT

***Whisper Woman's Condom*** is sold in a one-pack. This decision was made based on research with focus groups in Malawi that suggested that limited disposable income would not allow consumers to purchase more than one ***Whisper*** pack at a time. In addition, there was concern about the size of the product, and that more than one unit per pack would not allow for discretion when purchasing the product.

## PROMOTION

Given the high level of stigma against female condoms in Malawi, key promotional messages were developed to address underlying barriers to use in this category, rather than targeted messages to raise brand awareness.

Key messages for consumers include:

- ***Whisper*** is made of a thin but strong material that conducts your body heat so that you and your partner can hardly feel it during sex. Talk with your partner about ***Whisper*** and give it a try.
- ***Whisper*** was designed to make insertion easy so that it doesn't interrupt your intimate moments. Talk with your partner about ***Whisper*** and give it a try.
- ***Whisper*** is worn by her so it ensures a sexual experience full of pleasure without the worry of an unplanned pregnancy. Talk with your partner about using ***Whisper***.

## PRICE

PSI Malawi conducted willingness-to-pay studies to determine an appropriate price for ***Whisper***. An important consideration for price was the positioning of the product as a "luxury" brand compared to FC2s, which are highly stigmatized. By pricing ***Whisper*** at a higher level than the FC2, the team hoped to target a different segment of the condom market and to differentiate ***Whisper*** from previous generations of female condoms.

| Brand | Price/Box | Price/Condom |
|---|---|---|
| Whisper Woman's Condom | MWK 150 (1 condom) | MWK 150 |
| Care FC2 | MWK 40 (2 condoms) | MWK 20 |

The amounts listed above are the price at which the product is sold to retailers. However, it should be noted that retailers are free to set their own price to consumers depending on their desired profit margin and their particular client's ability to pay.

## PLACE

***Whisper*** is distributed in the urban centers of Lilongwe, Blantyre, and Mzuzu with distribution to retailers managed by the WCG Medical Detailing team. Outlets include select pharmacies and drugstores, supermarkets, and clinics including franchised Tunza clinics. WCG detailers coordinate with PSI/Malawi to identify, recruit and maintain points of sale for ***Whisper***. To raise awareness about the availability of ***Whisper*** at these outlets, Interpersonal communication agents were recruited and trained to promote the product in locations where target audiences congregate (e.g. around universities).

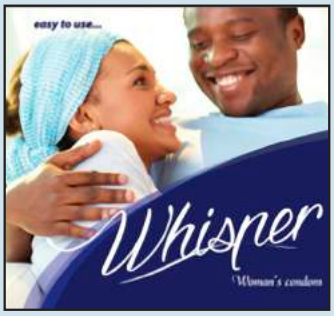
# Whisper

## WHISPER WOMAN'S CONDOM

A non-hormonal contraceptive method that protects against unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

## RECOMMENDED FOR WOMEN WHO:

- Prefer a non-hormonal method that they control themselves
- Want contraception only when necessary
- Want dual protection from pregnancy and STIs
- Can't or don't want to use an Intrauterine Device (IUD)
- Want to minimise time spent with a health provider




- **Whisper Brand Name:** Market research in Malawi revealed that consumers were attracted to the Woman's Condom because it was quieter and less intimidating to insert than other female condoms. The brand name, *Whisper*, speaks to an intimate sexual experience that is personal and discreet.
- **Whisper Packaging:** The archetype user of Whisper Woman's Condom is "Cynthia", a practical girl who hopes to delay pregnancy in order to finish her studies. She will use *Whisper* with her steady partner, "Ben". The final packaging for *Whisper* shows a loving couple sharing an intimate moment. This image also engages men in the conversation about female condoms.
- **Promotional Materials:** Market research showed a preference for pregnancy prevention over concerns about STI prevention, promotional materials such as brochures, posters, danglers, and billboards used the phrase "It pays to plan" to appeal to "Cynthia's" practical side and her desire to move ahead in the world.

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