Motivating Community Based Mobilizers for Generating Demand for Family Planning Services in Nepal

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Background

Under the Women’s Health Project, PSI/Nepal has more than 400 trained voluntary non-medical community mobilizers (also known as Didi in local community) in 50 districts of Nepal. They conduct household level interpersonal communication sessions on family planning (FP). According to Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2011, 43% of married women use any modern contraceptive method and 1.3% use an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD). In order to achieve PSI/Nepal’s goal to generate demand for underutilized methods such as IUCDs through household visits, it is important to keep Didis motivated.

Program Intervention

PSI/Nepal designed a monetary incentive scheme to motivate community mobilizers by assessing and recognizing their efforts in conducting effective interpersonal communication (IPC) sessions during household visits. The scheme was aimed to improve the ability and quality of communication of community mobilizers in delivery of counseling and information on modern methods of FP, linking the women to FP services offered by a network of private providers as well as the public sector.

Methodology

In the first phase, four project districts were selected. Thirty nine community mobilizers in Kavre, Dhading, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts, were trained on IPC procedures. District Program Officers (DPOs) who conduct supportive supervision of the community mobilizers were oriented on the criteria and parameters for scoring community mobilizers’ performance under the scheme. In addition, DPOs oriented private sector network providers on reporting referrals by community mobilizers during supervision visits.

The DPOs accompanied community mobilizers during supervisory household visits to observe their performance and score the quality of communication. For example, mobilizers who asked open ended questions, provided balanced counseling and exhibited good listening skills scored higher in the communication parameter. In addition, community mobilizers received immediate guidance on improving communication skills from the DPO.

Community mobilizer performance was scored monthly based on the number of contacts, number of women visiting the clinics for FP counseling and the quality of communication. DPOs generated performance reports of their respective community mobilizers along with areas highlighted for improvement. Community mobilizers were incentivized based on the final score obtained and recognized for their contribution during fortnightly peer meetings.

Key Findings

The average number of counseling referrals per month doubled in Kavre (74 before the scheme vs. 181 after the scheme) and Dhading (71 referrals before vs. 161 referrals after the scheme). In Kailali, there was a 31% increase (135 vs. 178 referrals) while in Kanchanpur referrals increased by 43% (180 vs. 255 referrals). Similarly there were substantial increases in new adopters of IUCD as compared to the previous period in Kavre (more than 100%), Dhading (16%), Kailali (66%) and Kanchanpur (33%) districts.

Lessons Learned

Implementing a monetary incentive scheme for community mobilizers was effective in improving the quality of communication. This improved quality contributed to increased client flow at the service facility. Based on its success in these four districts, this scheme has been expanded to all 50 districts of Nepal.

Table 1: District performance before and after the monetary incentive Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before the scheme (Jan - Oct 2014)</th>
<th>After the scheme (Nov - Dec 2014)</th>
<th>Average Increment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total clients</td>
<td>Average per month</td>
<td>Total clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling at community level (contacts made)</td>
<td>32,936</td>
<td>3,294</td>
<td>7,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients referred to health facilities</td>
<td>4,589</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients visited health facilities</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients received IUCD services</td>
<td>1,908</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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