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REUSE AND IMPROVE: THE CASE OF TOTOHEALTH TANZANIA

TotoHealth Tanzania Ltd is a social enterprise that has developed and rolled out a multi-component intervention aimed at improving maternal and child health through focusing on safe deliveries and newborn survival. The model includes use of an SMS system to provide information and education on maternal and newborn health. The system makes links to community and health facilities and delivers life-saving products and newborn necessities through a Clean Delivery Kit and a Newborn Survival Pack for mother and baby.

TotoHealth Tanzania’s experience of adopting the SMS messaging platform developed by partners Wazazi Nipendeni provides interesting lessons on the importance of reusing and improving upon the work of others, even when attempting to adapt a successful model from another country.



Women and their families can purchase Newborn Survival Packs (NSPs) containing essential supplies for their newborn babies.

Maternal and newborn health are pressing issues in Tanzania – in particular, neonatal and infant mortality rates are high. Only 63 per cent of women give birth in health facilities, many of which have only the most basic of supplies needed to provide a safe delivery. The remaining 37 per cent of women, including those in rural areas and the poorest households, deliver their babies at home – often without the simplest necessities to

care for a newborn or the knowledge to identify and seek care for birth defects and other problems associated with infants.

TotoHealth Tanzania Ltd is a new social enterprise, and is a partnership between TotoHealth Kenya and a new team in Tanzania. By adapting and applying the Kenyan model, TotoHealth Tanzania aims to help achieve Tanzania’s vision of ending preventable maternal and child deaths by 2035.

ADAPTING THE MODEL

With funding provided by HDIF, TotoHealth Tanzania planned to take the initiative to scale, partly by replicating and adapting a platform that had enrolled more than 16,000 mothers and fathers in Kenya and which could provide information via SMS specific to a woman's stage of pregnancy or development of her newborn. However, a successful SMS messaging service was already being used in Tanzania; Wazazi Nipendeni, a multichannel platform created with support from USAID, was operating nationally in close coordination with the Ministry of Health, using message content approved by key agencies in the Tanzanian government. TotoHealth assessed Wazazi Nipendeni's message content against that of TotoHealth Kenya and found it an acceptable alternative. Importantly, it had the additional benefits of an existing large SMS subscriber base and the nationally recognised branded platform.

TotoHealth partnered with Wazazi Nipendeni to add new modules based on content from the original TotoHealth SMS message platform related to identifying and caring

for disabilities. This added value to the Wazazi Nipendeni platform, which did not previously have content on these important issues. Both existing subscribers and new subscribers enrolled by TotoHealth Tanzania were then instantly able to access the content.

There were other aspects of the TotoHealth Kenya model that also required adaptation. As a social enterprise, the model intended to generate revenue through the sale of Clean Delivery Kits (CDKs) to health facilities and Newborn Survival Packs (NSPs) to individual women and households; NSPs contain essential supplies for newborn care. However, TotoHealth Tanzania quickly found that importing products from Kenya was too expensive and did not allow for affordable pricing or a margin that would cover the organisation's operating costs. In order to control costs, TotoHealth identified new sources for their products, including some Tanzanian suppliers, and has begun negotiating new channel partnerships with large-scale hospitals, district health offices and others in need of a reliable source of CDKs. These potential partners are interested in buying NSPs to distribute to women as an incentive to give birth in a health facility. Toto Health has also engaged the widely used mPesa mobile banking platform to create an eWallet, allowing women, family members and others to collect or save money specifically for the purchase of NSPs. It is promoting NSPs with new branding and by leveraging the Tanzanian cultural practice of giving gifts to new mothers.

Between July 2016 and December 2017, TotoHealth enrolled more than 32,000 women to receive maternal and newborn health information through its partnership with Wazazi Nipendeni, distributed 660 Clean Delivery Kits and sold 75 Newborn Survival Packs. Assuming it can secure the partnerships with the large hospitals and district health offices needed to achieve scale, the adaptations that TotoHealth has put in place should see the enterprise on track to achieve its projected income. The arrival of new partners and recent adaptations to the marketing of NSPs – including branding and the eWallet through mPesa – should begin showing positive effects in 2018.

PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT: RE-USE AND IMPROVE

- ▣ **Identify the existing technology tools (local and global), data and frameworks** being used by your target population, in your geography or in your sector. Evaluate how these could be reused, modified or extended for use in your programme.
- ▣ **Develop modular, interoperable approaches** instead of those that stand alone. Interoperability will ensure that you can adopt and build on components from others and that others can adopt and build on your tool in the future.
- ▣ **Collaborate** with other digital development practitioners through technical working groups, communities of practice and other knowledge sharing events to become aware of existing tools and to build relationships that could lead to the future reuse and improvement of your tool.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

▀ **The Principles for Digital Development are as relevant to the adaptation of a successful model to a new context as they are to the development of a completely new model.** In its expansion into Tanzania, TotoHealth wisely built on the success of its concept in Kenya. However, it did not at first fully explore and ‘understand the ecosystem’ – a key aspect of the Design for Scale Digital Development Principle. At the time TotoHealth was launching, the mHealth landscape in Tanzania was less developed than in Kenya, but there were successful operators that TotoHealth could have leveraged, such as Wazazi Nipendeni. TotoHealth greatly improved its chances of success by establishing this partnership and making important adaptations to the innovation – for example, revising its cost/revenue model and its delivery and marketing channels.

▀ **Reusing and improving a successful innovation requires an open mind.** When adapting a model that has been successful in another context, it might be difficult to see what changes are necessary. The ‘Reuse and Improve’ Digital Development Principle can encourage a designer to tear down their assumptions and let go of ideas that might no longer work – colloquially, you may have to ‘kill your darlings’. TotoHealth’s decision to partner rather than enrol people to its own SMS platform provided the opportunity to improve and expand Wazazi Nipendeni with additional modules and get started on a path to a larger scale. This lesson is further validated with the decision to revise the cost/revenue model. By leveraging the mPesa platform to develop an eWallet, TotoHealth is able to address the challenges of pricing NSPs affordably for low-income Tanzanians while maintaining a margin that will contribute to the financial viability of the model.



A new mother receives her Newborn Survival Pack (NSP) from a TotoHealth representative at a healthcare facility.

ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

The Principles for Digital Development are designed to institutionalise lessons learned in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in development projects. They were written by and for international development donors and their implementing partners, but are freely available for use by all. The principles are 'living' guidelines, intended to serve as guidance rather than edict, and are meant to be updated and refined over time.

Further reading

<http://totohealth.org/tz>

<http://digitalprinciples.org>

www.thehealthcompass.org/project-examples/wazazi-nipendeni-report

(All links accessed 2 May 2018)

Credits

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Disclaimer: All opinions included here represent those of HDIF and not those of DFID.

HDIF'S APPROACH TO DIGITAL INNOVATION

HDIF's Digital Approach sets out actionable steps for using the Principles for Digital Development to support cross-sector technology adoption and scaling-up for innovation-related practitioners (including HDIF and its partners) and policymakers in Tanzania. The prevalence of digital innovation in the HDIF portfolio presents an opportunity to generate learning from grantees who are putting the principles into practice in a Tanzanian context.



The Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF) aims to identify and support innovations that have the potential to create social impact in education, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) across Tanzania. With a focus on market driven solutions, HDIF catalyses the development, testing and scaling of innovative models of service delivery, information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D), and product solutions in health, education and WASH.

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HDIF aims to contribute to the global dialogue on the principles through the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL), the stewards of the digital principles, who facilitate lesson-sharing around digital development and promote their adoption globally. The HDIF digital framework for learning borrows from DIAL's materials and content. For more information see <https://digitalimpactalliance.org/>

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