



Photo Credit: Dnet

Aponjon

Aponjon, a mobile based health intervention, aims at improving maternal, neonatal and child health practice and health seeking behavior.

The MaMoni HSS program partners with Dnet to implement Aponjon, a partnership to provide health information to pregnant mothers, new mothers, and their family members. Aponjon delivers customized health messages tailored to suit different stages of pregnancy to pregnant women and mothers with children under 1 year of age. Launched in 2012, Aponjon has a subscribers' base of more than 1.5 million.

Aponjon, meaning 'Dear One' in English, delivers information twice a week either through SMS, or voice messages of sixty seconds. The voice messages are a mix of "mini-skit" messages, with local actors playing the roles of a doctor, pregnant woman, mother and mother-in-law; and direct messages. In the dramatic format, characters enact scenarios in an entertaining and educational way. Dialogues range from the doctor explaining the importance of iron-rich food, to reminding the pregnant woman that it is time for her medical checkup. Messages around medical emergencies and warning signs are in the direct, straightforward format.



Aponjon also has a unique service targeting husbands and other household members, which reinforces messages provided to the mother and encourages family involvement in healthy decision making around pregnancy, birth and infant care. This service adds one additional message per week, increasing the total from two to three messages per week. In addition, Aponjon offers a counselling line to subscribers which serves as a direct channel to communicate with a doctor around health problems.

Aponjon with its tailor-made messages suitable to different stages during pregnancy has been quite well received. In three years it has acquired more than 1.5 million registered subscribers across the country. Though the service mode was SMS and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) initially, one can now avail the service through website and mobile application.

Aponjon has heavily leveraged various partnership modalities with NGOs and other civil society actors with nationwide networks. For instance campaigns have been a major area of collaboration since the launching of Aponjon in 2012.

Aponjon has had BRAC, Smiling Sun, SMC as its outreach partners. BRAC covers 19 districts and 139 upzillas. Aponjon also launched its website and runs TV commercials to reach out to mass people, as well as online social media campaign using YouTube.

Aponjon has also introduced the first mobile app, called Aponjon Shogorbha in Bangla language with the most comprehensive information for the expecting mothers. Also worth mentioning is Aponjon's branded buses, and a host of IEC materials including leaflet, poster, wall painting, billboard etc. Aponjon also organizes courtyard meetings and fair where free medical checkup is offered to create mass awareness.



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About MaMoni Health Systems Strengthening (MaMoni HSS) Project

The MaMoni Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) project is a four-year Associate Award under the global Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP). The focus of this project is strengthening the systems and standards for maternal, newborn and child health, family planning and nutrition (MNCH/FP/N) that will result in declines in maternal, newborn and child mortality in Bangladesh. The project supports the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOH&FW) to introduce and leverage support for scale-up of evidence-based practices already acknowledged in Bangladesh.

MaMoni HSS is primed by Jhpiego in partnership with Save the Children (SC), John Snow, Inc. (JSI), and Johns Hopkins University (JHU)/Institute of International Programs (IIP), with national partners, International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), Dnet, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The project covers 40 upazilas in six districts and serves around 12.2 million people. The six focus districts are Habiganj, Lakshimpur, Jhalokathi, Noakhali, Pirozpur and Bhola.

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