



## Improving health in rural India

Commercial innovation to address health needs at the bottom of the pyramid

For more than 800 million men, women and children across India living on USD 1-3 a day, the idea of accessible and affordable medicines is often as remote as their rural homes.

Arogya Parivar (“healthy family” in Hindi) is a for-profit social initiative developed by Novartis to reach the underserved millions living at the bottom of the pyramid in rural India. After just five years, Arogya Parivar is proving to be both a force for improving health in rural communities and a sustainable business.

### Social responsibility meets business growth

Arogya Parivar provides opportunities to expand business in an innovative and responsible way. The program offers education on diseases, treatment options and prevention as well as increases access to affordable medicines.

- Health educators, usually local women, raise awareness about local diseases and preventive health measures. They also refer sick people to doctors and cooperate with local NGOs to further spread their message. Each educator covers a few villages every day, with an Arogya Parivar branded cap, shirt and banner, making them easily recognizable.
- Sales supervisors serve as the initiative’s local sales force. They interact with local pharmacies and collaborate with doctors, hospitals and NGOs to organize health camps where villagers can receive treatment and preventive care.
- Arogya Parivar focuses on the diseases most prevalent in rural India. The product portfolio covers 11 therapeutic areas and offers 80 pharmaceutical, generic and over-the-counter products as well as vaccines to treat and prevent conditions ranging from tuberculosis and diabetes to pain and colds.
- To be included in the portfolio, products need to be simple to use and relevant to local patients. Further, products and services are tailored to meet the needs of underserved rural populations with a low disposable income, usually earned on a daily basis. For instance, an oral anti-diarrheal formulation, approved by the World Health Organization, is now available in smaller, more affordable sizes.
- Arogya Parivar is a commercially viable program. It began returning a profit within 30 months and since 2007, sales have increased 25-fold. This means that the initiative is sustainable, and its scope can be expanded in India and elsewhere.

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## A marketing mix adapted to low-income populations

Arogya Parivar is a first for the healthcare industry in India, which has typically focused on the urbanized middle class with its increasing spending power. The program is based on four pillars known as the “4 As”: awareness, acceptability, availability and adaptability.

- Awareness: health education programs increase disease awareness and inform the community about the importance of good health. In 2012, 2.5 million villagers received health education.
- Acceptability: medicines are available in small packs at affordable prices. The overall objective is to keep weekly treatment costs below USD 1.25.
- Availability: strong linkages with over 45 000 doctors and new distribution networks ensure medicines are available in 28 000 of the most remote pharmacies.
- Adaptability: all communications, product packaging and training are adapted to local conditions.

## Encouraging results and further expansion

In five years, Arogya Parivar has become an essential public health tool, operating in 10 states across India.

- The program offers improved healthcare for 42 million people living in 33 000 villages, expanding their access to affordable products, improved health infrastructure and community education.
- Similar programs are being piloted in selected Asian and sub-Saharan African countries.
- Arogya Parivar also provides jobs, income, skills enhancement to the health supervisors and health educators who work on the program – opportunities that seldom occur in rural India.
- Moving forward, one of the objectives is to strengthen the product portfolio through alliances with external collaborators and offer additional services such as micro-financing to healthcare providers.
- Arogya Parivar is consistently recognized in global rankings and awards. Most recently, it received the “Award for Social Marketing” from the CMO Asia Awards and was named “Best long-term rural marketing initiative” by the Rural Marketing Association of India, India’s largest industry association.

For more information: [www.novartis.com/corporateresponsibility](http://www.novartis.com/corporateresponsibility)