Expecting the unexpected: applying the Develop-Distort Dilemma to maximize positive market impacts in health

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Even with the best of intentions, many interventions that are intended to develop a market for disadvantaged populations often end up distorting it in ways that make it more difficult to deliver or pay for the services once the intervention is over.

‘Develop-Distort Dilemma’
"I'M SORRY. WE COULD HAVE STOPPED CATASTROPHIC CLIMATE CHANGE... WE DIDN'T."

COPENHAGEN 2009 ACT NOW - CHANGE THE FUTURE
‘Develop-Distort Dilemma’

(1) **ignorance**, and notably the inability to know about all possible outcomes
(2) **error**, and particularly the problem of habitual action based on expectation from past results or results obtained in another location
(3) ‘**the imperious immediacy of interest**’
where the need to act is paramount, and excludes the consideration of other consequences of the action
(4) **Outcome** a new component of the context
Health system as a complex adaptive system

• made of separate parts
• relationship and interconnectedness between the parts
• constantly changing
• governed by feedback
• intervening in one part of the system will almost always have ripple effects in other parts of the system
• self-organize
• adapting based on experience
We are faced with the paradox of non-evidence-based implementation of evidence-based programs.

Drake, Gorman & Torrey, 2002
Stages of the Implementation Process

1. Exploration and Adoption
2. Program Installation
3. Initial Implementation
4. Full Operation
5. Innovation
6. Sustainability
Figure 5
Core Implementation Components
that can be used to successfully implement evidence-based practices and programs

Integrated & Compensatory

- Staff Evaluation
- Program Evaluation
- Facilitative Administrative Supports
- Systems Interventions
- Selection
- Preservice Training
- Consultation & Coaching
‘Immediacy of interest’ has frequently sacrificed longer-term efforts for building processes for learning and flexible implementation—the critical approach needed to identify and respond to unintended consequences and to sustain efforts to deliver and scale-up health services (Peters et al. 2009; Subramanian et al. 2011).
False Sense Of Security in using evidence

Changing context
Feedback effect
Emergent properties of human

Temporary nature of intervention
Other outcome
Effect on subsequent events
Does the proposed intervention develop or distort the market?

Eventual goal is to produce a tool that provides an opportunity for meaningful and systematic dialogue for practitioners, researchers and theorists to ensure that well-intentioned health development interventions lead to sustainable and more productive health systems and to reduce the undesirable distortions of such efforts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (research organization and title)</th>
<th>Main research question</th>
<th>Intervention strategy</th>
<th>Primary health services outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh [International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b)]: Using information technology for integrated informal and formal health care provision</td>
<td>Can an innovative and locally relevant network of providers supported by technology systems be developed to improve quality, utilization and equity of health services?</td>
<td>Application of mobile technology and computer-assisted guidance with network of informal and public health providers</td>
<td>Population- and facility-based measures of utilization and quality of health care (e.g. outpatient utilization rates; percentage of patients of village doctors receiving an antibiotic; percentage of patients having one of 20 common conditions whose treatment follows standard guidelines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core activities</td>
<td>Current key market players</td>
<td>Future key market players</td>
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<td>- Linking informal providers to formal health system through telemedicine network (eClinic)</td>
<td>Telemedicine company – (TRCL)</td>
<td>TRCL and other telemedicine firm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Introducing computer-assisted case management (HealthBox) to improve informal provider prescribing practices</td>
<td>International non-profit research organization – Research Triangle Institute (RTI) for adaptation; icddr,b for introduction</td>
<td>Ministry of Health (MOH) or local government for scale-up and maintenance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Networking informal providers through social franchise (Shastya Sena)</td>
<td>icddr,b</td>
<td>icddr,b or other accrediting body</td>
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<th>Core funding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core funding</td>
<td>Department for International Development (DFID) – Future Health Systems (FHS); RTI</td>
<td>Market revenue + central health funds</td>
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<tr>
<th>Supporting functions activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Training, community-awareness</td>
<td>icddr,b</td>
<td>MOH or local government</td>
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<td>- Co-ordination and oversight</td>
<td>icddr,b</td>
<td>MOH or local government</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Infrastructure support</td>
<td>icddr,b</td>
<td>MOH or local government</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>icddr,b</td>
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<td>FHS</td>
<td>MOH + FHS or other research funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Changing community trust in technology and care-seeking practices</td>
<td>icddr,b</td>
<td>TRCL or similar company</td>
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<td>- Committing support towards information and communication technology in development</td>
<td>Government of Bangladesh</td>
<td>Government of Bangladesh</td>
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<td>TRCL or similar company</td>
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Result

- Future engagement and responsibilities of the stakeholders in each setting were not discussed in great detail.
- The future delivery of the core intervention was briefly addressed.
- Formal rules received little attention in the original design of the interventions.
result

• FHS teams provide significant support in research and development, including monitoring and evaluation, product innovation and information sharing. In addition, all FHS activities contain a significant training component.

• Future funding for all of these activities is not very well secured at the time of initiating the research
result

• did not provide information on the process of identifying an appropriate entry point to the health market system, both in terms of the stakeholders and the focus of the intervention
• do not describe how they anticipate stimulating market change, although each of them proposes a theory of change—a framework describing the country team’s vision for long-term outcomes.
• How the research teams, through their role as facilitators, would ensure the transfer of responsibility and ownership to local stakeholders and local sources of funding.
• Discussions with local investigators revealed that uncertainty over future funding was a major concern for each of the country teams.
KEY MESSAGES

It is important to understand both current and future market players, as well as the formal and informal rules that influence health providers, communities and government officials.
KEY MESSAGES

Policy makers, implementers and those conducting research or facilitating health system change need to recognize market perturbations, whether positive or negative, and better manage them to improve health systems.
KEY MESSAGES

We recommend using the DDD framework from the early stages of project design in order to identify potential opportunities to develop the market and the potential distortions that should be managed or avoided.