

# Partnering with the Private Sector to Improve Public Health Outcomes



**Abt Associates' engagement** of the private sector in meeting health challenges in the developing world enables us to begin reducing the health care burden on government health workers and improving the targeting of public health resources to meet the needs of the poorest populations.

## Understanding Public and Private Sector Roles

### The Big Picture

Abt examines public and private sector roles and motivations, analyzes policies and regulations, and closely monitors the political, economic, social, and security context to identify where the private sector can best make contributions. This approach enables us to identify market-building opportunities, champions, and potential partners to influence the best health outcomes.

### Evidence Informs Decisions

The Abt team uses empirical information and analysis as well as local perspective and knowledge to guide our decision-making.

### Partnering for Success

Abt links public, private, and community actors. We broker a wide range of partnership initiatives—from communications campaigns to the development and launch of new health products and services. Our team can connect pharmaceutical and other health product manufacturers with public sector partners to grow market segments or product categories while improving the availability of high-quality, affordable products and services for specific population and consumer groups.

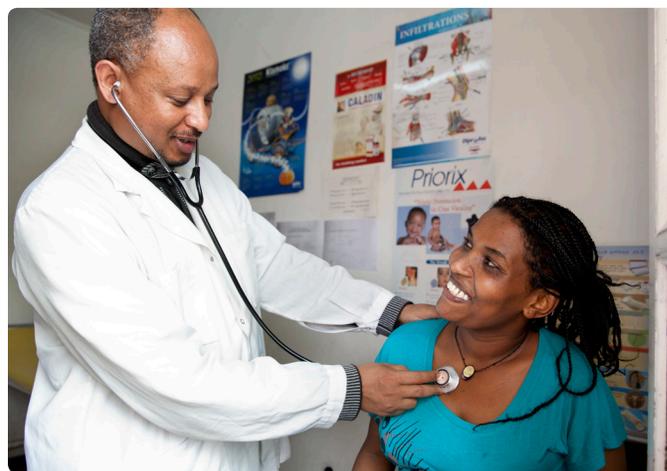


Photo by © Jessica Scranton

## Policy and Advocacy

We have a long history of working with policymakers to implement complex reforms—encouraging them to be stewards of the health system and to involve the private sector in the development of policies and strategies. Our services include assessing the effects of laws and regulations, conducting market segmentation analyses, helping establish quality standards and oversight policies, and developing the necessary mechanisms and skills to contract out public health services.

## Building Capacity of Nongovernmental Organizations

Abt works with nongovernmental organizations in the health sector to strengthen their programmatic and financial sustainability. We provide training to build business, clinical, and research skills; assess internal systems and governance structures; and assist with sustainability planning. Abt also helps launch new products and services, improve the delivery of existing services, and increase the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns.

## Improving Quality of Care

Improving the quality of care is a continuous process that requires engaging stakeholders from primary care providers at health centers and hospitals in the public and private sectors. At the service delivery level, Abt strengthens performance improvement systems, develops tools for standards of care, and implements monitoring programs—all the while building local management and technical capacity. Abt works with local counterparts to create national quality improvement processes and accreditation programs based on national guidelines.

## Networks and Social Franchising

Abt can develop private health networks and franchises, strengthen existing ones, or help transfer management to a local entity. We conduct assessments, develop sustainability and scale-up strategies, and provide guidance on selecting, or adapting to, the most appropriate model—balancing financial viability and health impact.

Beginning in 2009, SHOPS **Nigeria** developed a network of private providers for family planning services which today includes over 400 private facilities and generates over 50,000 couple years of protection per year.

In **Ethiopia**, the Private Health Sector Program (PHSP) Project has helped bring tuberculosis directly observed treatment (TB DOTS) services, HIV counseling and testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), and other services to over 300 private facilities.

## Social Marketing

Our social marketing programs are specifically tailored to the local context as well as to the broader health system; and we work closely with commercial partners to ensure product supply. We assess and strengthen programs or organizations, propose optimal market segmentation and targeting strategies, broker needed public-private partnerships, and launch communication campaigns that stimulate demand, raise awareness, and promote specific behaviors.

Through the Private Sector Partnerships-One Project, Abt designed a social marketing effort in **India** for young, married couples in which trained doctors, traditional doctors, and pharmacists offered contraceptives under the brand name *Saathiya*, or “trusted partner.” Research showed that, among users of modern family planning methods, use was greater among those who had heard of *Saathiya* compared to those unfamiliar with the brand.

## Health Financing

Abt works to improve health care financing options for low-income and underserved populations. Our approach focuses on enhancing access to essential health care services through third-party financing mechanisms including health insurance, saving and loan products, contracting, and vouchers.

## Fighting HIV and AIDS

In **Guatemala**, Abt worked with private professional associations and HIV test kit manufacturers to improve HIV counseling and testing services.

In **Ethiopia**, Abt developed a comprehensive project to engage the private sector in the fight against HIV, AIDS, and TB. Abt supported workplace programs in 65 of the largest private sector organizations and provided training to improve the skills of 220 clinicians in HIV and TB prevention and management. As a result, employees have better access to high-quality counseling and testing and HIV and AIDS and TB services.

In **Cote d’Ivoire**, Abt has been instrumental in designing and implementing a private provider network for antiretroviral therapy services in private facilities in partnership with a private provider association.

## Reducing the Severity of Diarrhea

In **Pakistan**, nearly 1 of every 11 children dies before his or her fifth birthday. Sixteen percent of those deaths are attributed to diarrhea. To address this critical public health issue, Abt partnered with four local pharmaceutical companies to promote expanded pediatric zinc distribution in rural and slum areas during the 2010 diarrhea season. The expansion of these companies’ marketing efforts, combined with Abt’s communications campaign, nearly doubled zinc sales to more than 1.2 million treatments that year.

## Contact

For more information, please contact:

Jeff Barnes  
Principal Associate and Technical Lead  
+1.301.347.5516  
Jeffrey\_Barnes@abtassoc.com

**Abt Associates** is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.

