

INCREASING ACCESS TO AQUATABS IN THE BOUCLE DU MOUHOUN, CENTRE, AND SUD-OUEST REGIONS OF BURKINA FASO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Access to safe drinking water is a critical issue worldwide and Burkina Faso is no exception. Despite the efforts of the Government to increase access to drinking water, 3 million people in Burkina Faso lack access to safe water and 2,800 children under the age of five die every year from preventable diarrheal diseases caused by poor water and sanitation. The USAID WA-WASH Program was launched in 2011 to increase sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and improve hygiene in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Niger as a way to reduce poverty and water-borne diseases for the well-being of communities. In Burkina Faso, the USAID WA-WASH Program, through the NGO for social marketing and communication for health program (PROMACO in French), supported safe water handling and storage activities by providing communities with chlorinated tablets (Aquatabs) for drinking water treatment at the point of use and establishing a distribution network of water treatment products (Aquatabs) in the Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre, and Sud-Ouest regions of Burkina Faso. A study was then conducted to assess the performance in terms of successes and challenges of the Aquatabs distribution network. Other equally important objectives of the study included: (1) the measurement of the quality and coverage of Aquatabs across the target regions; (2) the identification of the number of Aquatabs distributed via the network; (3) the assessment of Aquatabs stocks at retail outlets; (4) the assessment of Aquatab access at retail outlets; (5) the consideration of other similar products in their respective networks; and (6) the evaluation of the approximate stock of Aquatabs available through the network at the time of data collection.

The study applied quantitative sampling research methods in order to determine the specific effects of the various social marketing activities, the levels of product coverage, and the quality of the delivery system. For each of the three regions, seven data collectors were recruited and trained on data collection using Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) under the supervision of a team leader. The data were collected from January 30 to February 10, 2015. The performance of the social marketing strategy was evaluated in terms of impact, cost-effectiveness, coverage, quality, access, and equity. These concepts and measurements were calculated using the MAP (Measuring Access and Performance) approach and involved a census of the existing sale points in the 132 intervention villages. In terms of ethics, the collection of private information was authorized by participant's verbal consent at the sales points and at the health care facilities. In each village, Aquatabs sale points were identified and questions were asked on the name of the sale point or its owner, the type of business and the opening hours. The other data collected were about current possession of Aquatabs, selling price, purchase price of a 10 tablet strip, date and quantity of last supply, wholesaler name and location, stock availability and sales.

The data collectors discovered some advertisements at the point of sale to distinguish Aquatabs from other water treatment products. They also observed the quality and visibility of the product at the different places. In the program intervention area, the collected data show that the Aquatabs distribution network consists of the following channels/locations: 1200 shops, 44 street vendors, 183 community mobilizers, and a special participation of the community distribution network (CDN). In the three intervention area, data reveal that the Aquatabs distribution network is the busiest in Boucle du Mouhoun with 59.1%, followed by 25.1% in the Sud-Ouest region and 15.9% in the Centre region. The availability rate for the Sud-Ouest and Boucle du Mouhoun regions fall at a little above 50%. Only the Centre region is below the average, at 36%. It was noticed that product availability is consistently low at street vendors' level. In the Boucle du Mouhoun region, 53.6% of the shops had Aquatabs, compared to 52.2% in the Sud-Ouest region and 36% in the Centre region. Respectively, we found that 96.1% in Boucle du Mouhoun, 98.6% in the Sud-Ouest, and 80%

households in the Centre region have Aquatabs. Among mobile retailers, product availability is very weak with only 20.6% in the Boucle du Mouhoun, 0% in the Centre region and 40% in the Sud-Ouest.

Through a questionnaire, the sales point's practices on stock management and storage of Aquatabs were surveyed. The sum of supplied stocks was 41,281 tablets, with a breakdown of 27,726 tablets in the Boucle du Mouhoun region, 2,540 tablets in the Centre region, and 11,015 tablets in Sud-Ouest. The average stock available in the last study was 53 tablets per sales point, which indicates that they do not have a significant stock of Aquatabs. We noticed that, Aquatabs stock turnover is very slow for most of the sales points. This indicates that the sales points wait to sell the entire stock before expressing the need for new ones. The average time for a stock in the sales points is five months. The exposition of Aquatabs product still needs some improvements, especially to attract customers. The exposure of the product at the sales point is 52.8% in the Boucle du Mouhoun, 71.4% in the Centre, and 42.3% in the Sud-Ouest region. Despite the acquisition of advertising posters, it was noticed that the sales points are not sufficiently decorated to the point where they can generate the curiosity of new consumers or attract them.

Despite some room for improvement, mainly considering advertisement and distribution, we found that Aquatabs has made a good start in the three regions of Burkina Faso. Customers were overall very satisfied with the results and are willing to recommend the product. Additionally, Aquatabs has outperformed the effectiveness of several conventional methods (Pure powder, Hydropronidazole, Peachairsun) previously used for water treatment. Effective promotion of Aquatabs for water treatment at the point of use in rural Burkina Faso will help millions of rural dwellers access safe drinking water and contribute more effectively to the development of the country.

This is an executive summary of a report dated March 2015. The full report is available (in English) upon request via our website. For more details about our program activities and other reports please visit <http://wawash.fiu.edu/>.

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