



# Adapting to Client's Need: Experience from Extended Outpatient Consultation Timing in Health Facilities of a Social Health Enterprise Model in Bangladesh

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## INTRODUCTION

- Advancing Universal Health Coverage (AUHC), funded by USAID, supports the Surjer Hashi Network (SHN) of primary health care clinics in Bangladesh.
- Since the 1990s, USAID supported these clinics through NGOs; since 2017 the clinics were consolidated into SHN and managed as a social enterprise and AUHC supports SHN's transition into a financially sustainable pro-poor enterprise.
- Extended hour outpatient consultation service is one of the strategies that was designed, prototyped, and scaled up to meet the needs of SHN clients, as well as to improve the revenue base and visibility of SHN.

## PURPOSE

- The purpose of the extended hour outpatient consultation services is to provide services to different heretofore unreached segments of the population, including new and existing clients beyond working hours.



## SIGNIFICANCE OF EXTENDED HOUR INITIATIVE

- SHN's outpatient services were historically available from 9am to 5pm, while other primary healthcare clinics are open later into the evening, particularly in urban Bangladesh.
- As SHN needs to expand its revenue base in a highly competitive primary healthcare market, one option as outlined in its Strategic Plan, is to attract clients who cannot visit clinics before 5pm due to limited sick leave or other constraints; SHN's target population of low-income working clients. SHN's "extended hour" model was thus designed for three additional hours of outpatient service, 5pm-8pm.

## LEARNING FROM PROTOTYPING EXTENDED HOUR OPERATION

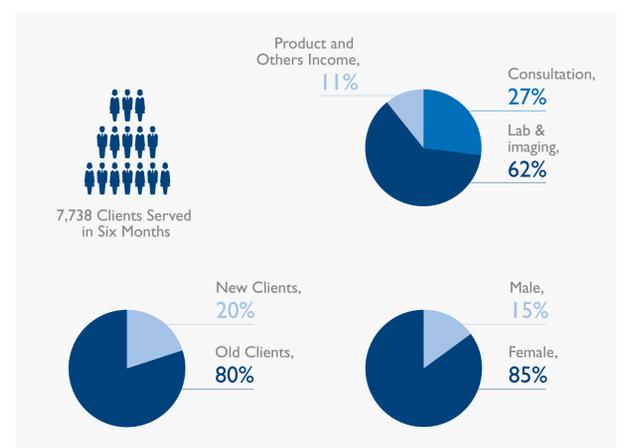
PROTOTYPING MODEL	TESTING	PROTOTYPING INSIGHTS	KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AUHC prototyped the extended hours for three months in six clinics to offer services in the evening</li> <li>These clinics extended their operating hours by three hours from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, beyond regular hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% of the clients that came during the extended hours were new clients</li> <li>34% clients were working men and women, and students</li> <li>24% of the clients were male</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clinic and staff readiness</li> <li>Accessibility/location – to ensure both visibility and ease of access for the potential clients.</li> <li>Clinic's acceptability and image</li> <li>Local competition</li> <li>Marketing and communication – both internal and external</li> </ul>

## SCALE-UP OF EXTENDED HOUR INITIATIVE

- Based on the learning from prototyping, extended hours for outpatient services was initiated in 45 SHN clinics in July 2021 and by December 2021, 45 clinics successfully introduced outpatient services during extended hours. Services available include doctor consultations (for limited curative care, non-communicable diseases, antenatal care, family planning, and child health care), pharmacy (drugs and commodities), and lab and imaging services.
- The staffing model used for this initiative involved reallocating work hours of existing staff without incurring any significant additional staff costs. This worked well for clinics where staff worked in shifts past 5pm already.
- The community was made aware of the extended hours through SHN clinics' satellite teams, community service promoters, and local level marketing efforts.

## RESULTS

- The analysis presents the performance of 45 clinics based on routine service data for extended hour out-patients service (5pm-8pm) implemented from July 2021 to December 2021.
- 45 clinics served a total of 7,738 clients in six months, out of which 20% were new clients, during the extended hours.
- The clinics received new male clients (15%) during extended outpatient service hours.
- In comparison to the total projected revenue for the clinics, the 45 clinics aggregately achieved around 62% of the projected revenue during July-December 2021; among these, six clinics achieved over 100% of their projected revenue.
- Extended out-patient service revenue was comprised of consultation (28%), lab & imaging (60%), and product and other income (12%).
- Total outpatient revenue in these 45 clinics increased by 5% during this time.



Service utilization during extended hours, 5-8pm, in 45 SHN clinics over Jul-Dec 2021.

## CONCLUSIONS

- SHN improved its revenue base by attracting additional clients during extended hours, including new working clients, which was the primary objective of this initiative. The results though fell short of expectations, as SHN and clinic staff had to focus on other competing priorities during this time.
- Based on this early experience, SHN will need to focus on enhanced marketing efforts and clinic readiness, including lab services, in order to institutionalize this strategic initiative.
- SHN's provision of outpatient services during evening hours, as is common with other primary healthcare clinics in Bangladesh, can help its pro-poor mandate, while contributing to the financial sustainability of a social enterprise.