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Sri Lanka - Commercialisation of Anagi Stoves: Lessons from the Improved Cookstoves Program

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Organization(s): Practical Action Consulting**Country(ies):** Sri Lanka**Primary thematic focus:** Other capacity development focus**In a Nutshell:**

The Anagi stove, with its currently estimated 17% market penetration, is the product of 3 decades efforts to introduce improved cook stoves into the Sri Lankan market. Commercialisation was a process of addressing capacity building needs of urban and rural markets, distributors and manufacturers to introduce clean stoves in every household.

The Story:

Efforts for introducing Improved Cook Stoves (ICS) in Sri Lanka were lead by different organizations, with different objectives over the course of three decades. The initial Design and Testing Phase (1972-1983), lead by CISIR and IDB prioritized the design of a stove which would burn more cleanly and efficiently. As the aim of the ICS Program moved more towards commercialization, the stove design evolved from a smart technology, to a marketable product that met the needs of its target market. The CISIR stove therefore, evolved into the more socially acceptable Sarvodaya, which during the Urban Stoves Project, evolved into the streamlined, lightweight, fast cooking, off the shelf Anagi stove that is widely sold in the country today.

The Promotion and Dissemination phase (1985-1990) was dominated by the Ceylon Electricity Board's (CEB) National Fuelwood Conservation Project (NFCP) which, despite succeeding in training 200 potters, 200 stove installers, and installing 300,000 stoves, the project was unable to create long-term, self-sustaining markets after the project's end. The approach of the NFCP was to utilise the government's district office officials to build the capacity of rural potters in producing the Sarvodaya stoves, and stove installers in installing them. The stoves would then be purchased by the project officials who were in charge of stove promotion and delivered to the user free of charge. Project officials would receive commission on the number of stoves installed in their area. The dissemination model was not successful largely due to the fact that potters and stove installers had to rely on project officials to buy their products and services

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instead of engaging directly with the users. Once these officials pulled out and subsidisation was withdrawn the markets created, collapsed.

The highlighted the need for a commercial strategy to activate market forces a stove design suited for the target market. This laid the foundations for the Urban Stoves Program (USP). The USP was initiated by Practical Action (former ITDG) in collaboration with CEB and support from ODA and the Sri Lankan government. The Program's success can be attributed to its commercialization strategy. Due to the Anagi being an off the shelf product, well established manufacturing and distribution channels for selling similar products in the formal sector (tile factories) were utilized. Through the project, the organizations built the capacity of existing local urban infrastructure in 4 key areas: production, marketing & promotion, training & quality control and monitoring.

By the end of the USP in 1989, infrastructure for producing and marketing 50,000 stoves annually had been established. This inspired the formation of an NGO, IDEA, to lead the ICS movement, which successfully implemented the Rural Stove Marketing Project, which targeted the informal sector, a larger number of potters, unskilled persons and low-income users. IDEA provided technical training for potters and stove installers while at the same time trying to create awareness and develop market channels at a national level. Mass media, public displays, television, radio and school competitions are examples of some of the promotion channels utilized. The RSMP objectives were re-formulated to encompass gender-equality in job opportunities and inclusion of the poorest households through involvement of CBOs, with existing links to the poorest households, incorporating Anagi stove promotion and training in their ongoing activities. The CBOs were provided with facilities to establish a revolving fund to facilitate purchasing of stoves on credit to be paid back in installments. Today there is sustained capacity for the annual production of 300,000 stoves nationwide.

Results and Critical Factors:

Critical success factors:

1. Flexibility of strategies: The success of the Urban Stoves Program is partly attributed to the application of modern marketing strategies while accommodating for a variety of socio-economic, cultural, equity factors and aspirations of a traditional society.
2. Program continuity: Despite the involvement of different organisations led by different objectives and strategies, each phase of development picked up from where the previous one left off- without much duplication of effort and taking on board lessons learnt, ensured program continuity.
3. Exposure to international experience and networks: Through collaboration with international organisations such as ITDG the program benefited from funding and the international experience of its partners on successful commercialisation of products.
4. Involvement of both governmental and non-governmental organisations: The first attempt at ICS dissemination was initiated by the government organization CEB. Although continued dissemination post-project failed, the project's wide reach through the utilization of district offices and a subsidization scheme raised crucial awareness of the ICS movement. Increased involvement and finally ownership of the stove program by the NGO sector ensured continued interest and effort in promoting ICS even after government and private sector priorities changed.
5. Appropriate product design
6. Low-income users should not generally be the primary target of a commercialisation scheme

7. Emergence of large-scale producers: Efforts were made to support the emergence of larger scale production in villages such as Kumbukgete by training clusters of potters.

Concrete accomplishments:

Today, Anagi stoves are manufactured by approximately 185 trained potters spread over 14 districts of Sri Lanka. Over three 3,000,000 stoves have been commercially produced and marketed since 1991. Most of these potters have been trained by IDEA. The stove is used widely and about 300,000 stoves are produced annually.

Five villages in Sri Lanka, those of Ambagaswewa, Lungamuwa, Katupotha, Kumbukgete and Krimetiyana have taken up manufacturing of stoves at scale, as a village-wide means of livelihood. The village of Kumbukgete specifically, situated in the North Western province of Sri Lanka, is currently producing 50% of the total production of ICS in the country.

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