

Brief 4: Private sector engagement

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER 6

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1. The economic burden of malaria

It is in the interests of the private sector to advocate with the government for sustained political commitment and budgetary support for malaria elimination, not only because of the human toll of malaria but also as part of a strategy for economic growth.

Malaria infection not only negatively affects private sector company employees, but also has a wider impact on the local and national economy because the overall labour force is weakened by sickness and absenteeism, commerce is slowed, investments and tax revenues are reduced, and public health budgets are diminished. Households in Africa lose an estimated 25 to 28 per cent of income to malaria due to missed days of work, decreased productivity, etc. In addition, the average African household spending on malaria treatment may be over 10 per cent of income, greatly inhibiting a household's ability to contribute to economy-stimulating consumer activities¹.

In economic terms, the burden of malaria shrinks a country's gross domestic product (GDP), which is the measure of a nation's total economic activity, negatively contributing to country outcomes².

2. Ways the private sector can engage in malaria prevention

Advocacy with private sector businesses can yield important in-kind and monetary dividends to mass ITN distribution campaigns and other aspects of malaria prevention and treatment. For example:

2.1 Adoption of workplace policies and other actions to protect employees from malaria

COUNTRY CASE STUDY

According to a Zambian Ministry of Health official, the demonstrated success of mining companies' malaria interventions was part of the inspiration behind the Zambian government's malaria programme³. Mining companies in the mineral-rich Copperbelt Province were experiencing high rates of absenteeism, injuries at work due to workers being weak from malaria, and higher costs because of the need to hire replacement staff. To counteract these issues, many companies developed their own malaria prevention and treatment programmes and documented their success. Some of the areas in which these private sector companies operate experienced large decreases in malaria prevalence, according to the International Council on Mining and Metals⁴.

1. www.k4health.org/sites/default/files/What%20is%20the%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20Malaria.pdf;
www.who.int/healthsystems/publications/abuja_declaration/en; apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/87052.

2. www.malariafreefuture.org/malaria

3. www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2013/05/What-Will-it-Take-for-Zambia-to-Eliminate-Malaria#.VvVAQOIrLIU.

4. www.icmm.com/page/100577/news-and-events/news/articles/icmm-assesses-mining8217s-contribution-to-zambia8217s-national-and-local-economy.

Companies can be asked to adopt employee-friendly policies encouraging their workers to use and care for nets and to cooperate with registration for a distribution campaign, as well as giving them time off to pick up ITNs at distribution sites on designated days or to attend antenatal care services to receive an ITN during pregnancy. Support for employees to do this may be particularly important in urban centres with their large concentration of wage employees.

Businesses whose workers are housed in company facilities, such as plantations that hire seasonal workers and mines that may have worker hostels, can provide ITNs or other malaria prevention such as indoor residual spraying in their housing facilities and encourage workers to use the ITNs provided or comply with the spraying operation. Worker compliance with net use helps communities to achieve the goal of 80 per cent net use in an effort to interrupt transmission.

Many companies have cooperated with mass distribution campaigns by distributing ITNs to their employees and communities near their facilities. This has occurred in Angola where diamond-mining concerns in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces assumed responsibility for ITN distribution in the nearby communities.

2.2 Work independently or in partnership with other organizations

Companies are often motivated to promote malaria prevention in communities where they have investments, but can also be encouraged to do so on a national scale. In some countries, telecommunications companies have been important supporters of campaigns providing resources and free services, such as SMS messaging, to support campaign objectives. Telecommunication companies can be encouraged to send no or reduced cost messages to their customers, reminding them to sleep

COUNTRY CASE STUDY

Marathon Oil and its business partners Noble Energy, GEPetrol and SONAGAS, teamed up with the Government of Equatorial Guinea through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to design the Bioko Island Malaria Control Project (BIMCP) in 2004. Since then, this partnership has reportedly invested USD 61 million resulting in a reduction in the transmission of malaria on Bioko Island and leading to a nearly 70 per cent drop in malaria infection in children two to 14 years of age. The BIMCP is implemented principally by the non-profit organization Medical Care Development International⁵.

In Senegal, BICIS Bank (BNP/Paribas) supported the printing of a popular children's comic book on malaria and the airing of spots/messages on the video screens in their branches, urging customers to sleep under ITNs every night⁶.

In Cameroon, MTN, in addition to sending reminders to its customers via text messages to sleep under a net, used its foundation to produce a music video designed to sensitize the people to prevention and treatment of malaria. Called "The Time has Come" it was sung in French, English and local languages and was broadcast on the country's major television stations⁷.

In Kenya, the logistics firm, DHL, used its trucks to help to distribute 3.5 million nets. This was undertaken as part of a partnership between DHL's parent company, Deutsche Post World Net and UNICEF⁸.

5. www.malariafreefuture.org/marathon-oil.

6. www.pmi.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/malaria-operational-plans/fy-15/senegal_mop_fy15.pdf?sfvrsn=4.

7. www.biztechfrica.com/article/mtn-foundation-intensifies-fight-against-malaria-c/5815/#.VvVtxeIrLIU.

8. www.unicef.org/corporate_partners/index_39593.html.

under nets and to cooperate with distribution campaigns. MTN Cameroon, for instance, made an in-kind contribution of net-use reminders via text messaging to its customers, as part of the “K.O. Palu” (“Knock Out Malaria”) campaign⁹.

Some companies that reach consumers through advertising negotiate television and radio commercial packages with stations. These companies may be willing to donate this discounted advertising air time for public service announcements promoting the distribution campaign and behaviour change.

Both small and large businesses can be important contributors to the fight against malaria, irrespective of whether they work independently or partner with international organizations, national governments or non-governmental organizations.

2.3 Provide a service opportunity for business associations

Appeals to action can be made through companies’ membership of business associations, as well as through service organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs. Some Ministries of Health already have cooperative Memoranda of Understanding in place with private sector firms on which mass ITN distribution campaigns can build. In approaching businesses, foundations and related associations, it is good practice to be prepared with fact sheets and/or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that can be handed out to their representatives. This supporting documentation must convincingly make the case why participation in a campaign, or in malaria reduction and elimination on a continuous basis, is in the interest of their firms, the economy and society as a whole.

CASE STUDY: ROTARY

Rotary is an international community service organization with clubs on six continents. Rotarians are well positioned to bring leaders and stakeholders together to shape visions into productive action. Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation are well known for their leading role in the global initiative to eradicate polio. In addition to this “corporate” cause, Rotarians have been key players in other health efforts such as safe water and malaria control.

Concerning malaria, Rotarians helped found the Alliance for Malaria Prevention and aided many other efforts. Officially organized as the Rotarian Action Group on Malaria, Rotarians sponsor individual projects in dozens of countries across Africa www.remarag.org. The Rotarian Action Group advocates for Rotary Clubs to become engaged in malaria elimination. Rotary Australia World Community Service leads efforts in East Asia with projects in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. Rotarians support the entire country malaria programme of Papua New Guinea, including management and implementation of Global Fund supported activities. (www.ram.rawcs.com.au/).

2.4 Practise good corporate citizenship

There are good reasons for business professionals to respond favourably to requests that they take action to support a mass distribution campaign. Many companies seek to practise what is known as good corporate citizenship. This is the belief that companies should embrace social responsibilities and not be solely focused on maximizing profits. Exercising social responsibility, businesses seek to develop a positive relationship with the society and community in which they operate by creating higher standards of living and quality of life, while still preserving profitability for shareholders.

9. malariajournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1475-2875-12-36.

Many large companies have set up foundations through which they support social and health causes.

Business leaders will need to know how their support will be acknowledged during the campaign. Such acknowledgements may include company logos on campaign printed material or credits on video and radio public service announcements (PSAs or spots), as well as during the campaign launch. A campaign's communication team may also work with a company to send press releases to journalists and news outlets to generate coverage of private sector support to the campaign or broader efforts towards reduction and elimination of malaria.

Private sector representatives can be invited to become members of the national coordinating committee overseeing the ITN campaign planning and implementation, or of the communication subcommittee. For example, in the case of the energy and mining company, ESCOM, operating in Angola, a company representative for social responsibility actively participated in coordination and planning meetings at the national level. ESCOM assumed responsibility for organizing the mass ITN distribution in communities near its operations.

It is also worthwhile inviting private sector representatives to contribute to a campaign's communication planning, because many consumer-orientated companies have ample experience in advertising and public relations, the knowledge of which may be transferable to a campaign, especially in its branding strategy and media spots.

**SEE BRIEF 5:
BRANDING AND PROMOTING
SOCIAL NORMS**

2.5 Provide grants and funding

Companies can also provide grants to underwrite the costs of campaigns. The Global Fund and the United States President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) have been channels for these kinds of large cash donations, generally made by multinational corporations.

BHP Billiton, through its foundation, Sustainable Communities, provided the Global Fund with USD 30 million over five years to support malaria prevention, diagnosis and treatment in Mozambique. BHP Billiton is the major shareholder in the Mozal aluminium smelter located in Boane, Mozambique; the giant smelter accounts for 30 per cent of Mozambique's official exports¹⁰.

The petroleum giant, Chevron, supported the malaria programme implemented by Angola's Ministry of Health with a USD 5 million donation to the Global Fund¹¹.

Another petroleum company, Esso Angola, has contributed more than USD 6 million to support malaria projects in Angola through grants from the ExxonMobil Foundation. These grants were given to USAID on condition that PMI uses the funds to fight malaria in Angola¹².

10. <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/news/2014-03-26-mozambique-aims-to-reach-universal-malaria-protection-in-2014/>

11. <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/blog/2012-07-02-the-global-fund-angola-and-chevron-together-against-malaria/>

12. <https://www.pmi.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/malaria-operational-plans/fy17/fy-2017-angola-malaria-operational-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=7>; www.usaid.gov/angola/angola-celebrates-world-malaria-day.