

Brief 5: Branding and promoting social norms

UPDATED MATERIAL TO ACCOMPANY CHAPTER 6

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1. National brand creation

The primary objective of creating a national brand for the malaria programme is to develop a nationwide identification with the effort to rid a country of the burden of malaria, as well as a sense of collective responsibility for this effort. In establishing its branding strategy, the malaria programme should seek to communicate positive images and associations with the idea that the reduction and eventual elimination of malaria is a worthwhile goal and that everyone should do their part to achieve it. Branding usually consists of adopting a unique logo, slogan and core messages, musical theme (jingle) and/or song to be used in diverse communication activities.

Branding aims to have a positive influence on a diverse audience, unifying under a single concept the multiple individuals and groups who can make a significant contribution toward the national goal of malaria reduction/elimination. Beginning with the head of the country, government officials and national health authorities, the audience includes malaria partners, the donor community, international organizations, the mass media, those working in the country's health system, religious and traditional leaders, educators, community leaders and household members. Branding should permeate and connect communities, families and individuals.

Through positive association and identification with the malaria reduction and elimination effort, branding motivates action, such as seeking early treatment in case of symptoms, adhering to

regular intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy (IPTp), sleeping under an insecticide-treated net (ITN) at all times and caring for and repairing ITNs.

As part of the branding exercise, it is useful to create a national “umbrella” narrative about the malaria reduction/elimination effort, giving simple facts about the disease and also putting an emphasis on what achieving malaria reduction and elimination goals would mean for the country in terms of reducing the burden on society and the economy, as well as improving overall development. Furthermore, the narrative should focus on the positive outcomes for individuals, families, communities, farmers, businesses, etc. This can motivate public officials to own initiatives and to ensure adequate funding in order to achieve the national and international goals for malaria reduction/elimination.

Presenting testimonials and personal interest stories telling how people's lives have changed for the better by taking the desired actions helps to reinforce the effectiveness of the umbrella narrative. Success stories celebrate achievement and can motivate the target audience to emulate the action.

The brand should be integrated into all communication efforts, including advocacy, social marketing, interpersonal communication, community mobilization, mass media outreach and school curricula, all of which are vital to reducing or eliminating malaria and sustaining gains achieved through national programme efforts. It is essential that the malaria programme coordinates with all its partners to adopt the national branding strategy, so that in addition to ensuring harmonization of key technical messages, the partners consistently disseminate the branded core messages that promote the desired behaviours.

It is valuable to prepare a factsheet detailing the brand narrative with information about the impact of malaria and the benefits that may be achieved by unifying and sustaining efforts. Such

a factsheet can be used for advocacy with government officials, for engaging the private sector, for marshalling journalists/broadcasters, and during trainings for community health workers and local leaders. Influential people,

such as politicians, well-known media personalities, sportspersons, musicians and actors can operate as brand ambassadors, promoting the main message.

COUNTRY CASE STUDY

In Tanzania, the slogan “*Malaria Haikubaliki*” (Swahili for “Malaria is unacceptable”) over a logo of the map of the country under a net, has been used to great effect. Good coordination ensured that every material produced, whether by the central malaria programme or by any partner, carried the logo and the slogan, and the mass distribution of ITNs over two campaigns increased recognition of the overall message.

The brand was integrated into all communication activities. Through advocacy efforts, the president of the country, using the *Malaria Haikubaliki* slogan, spoke on a regular basis about the importance of fighting malaria. A well-known singer filmed an interview where she spoke about a friend who died from cerebral malaria, because she put off going to the hospital. Alongside these testimonials and numerous radio spots, an army of trained speakers attended women’s groups, community groups and schools and made house-to-house visits to talk about malaria.



The main goal of the “Malaria is unacceptable” campaign has been to contest the social norm that nothing can be done about malaria and that it is inevitable. The campaign has contributed to greater ownership and use of ITNs, increased treatment-seeking behaviour and a reduction in malaria prevalence in Tanzania.

2. Role of branding in promoting social norms

Branding may also be used to promote healthy social norms, especially when these efforts are part of a comprehensive social and behaviour change communication programme. A social norm is a widely accepted belief about what is considered acceptable or expected behaviour. Branding may be used to promote healthy social norms by modelling in an attractive fashion the desired behaviour, for instance, sleeping under a net, preferably an ITN, every night.

Country-specific research into knowledge and attitudes of those practising the recommended behaviours should provide ideas for positive social norm promotion.

In Mozambique, for instance, research into what motivates people to use, care for and repair nets

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indicates a growing social norm that ITNs are something of considerable value and as such need to be properly cared for. There is an increasing belief that “progressive, forward-looking” people, such as those who keep their homes clean and hygienic, always sleep under an ITN. Community members have also begun to characterize people who use nets for purposes other than for sleeping in a negative way¹.

ITN universal coverage campaigns and continuous distribution, with their goal of

1. Malaria Consortium, *Ausculção sobre Conhecimentos, Atitudes, Comportamento e Práticas (CAPC) em relação ao uso das RMTILD: Relatório Final*, August 2015.

achieving and maintaining universal access to ITNs and at least 80 per cent ITN use as a means to interrupt malaria transmission, provide the opportunity to promote new social norms around ITN use. The benefits of having high ITN coverage goes beyond just protecting that individual or household. Achieving high use rates can extend protective benefits for the entire community. Programme messaging that defines a good neighbour and community member as one who uses and cares for their ITNs can introduce this concept as a new social norm, reinforcing sustained net use.

3. Branding research and development

Effective branding relies on a strong understanding of the concepts, framing, images and appeals to cultural and societal values that will be best positioned to motivate the intended population to adopt and sustain the desired change. Research findings on beliefs, attitudes and behaviours for specific communities, regions or countries may exist, enabling informed decisions on branding development. These findings can provide insight on how best to frame a unifying concept and umbrella narrative, make appeals for action, whom to target, and the languages that should be used. It is also important to pre-test all branded communication with the intended audience, before final validation and beginning production of all branding-related materials in order to ensure effective communication with target audiences.

Branding development requires a certain level of experience and know-how. If the malaria communication partners lack experience in this area, the malaria programme or one of its partners would be well advised to hire the services of a commercial publicity agency to develop their brand. If they do so, it is necessary to produce a creative brief for the agency. The creative brief gives the fundamental requirements for creating the branding strategy and materials; it outlines the target audiences and behaviours that need to be adopted and sustained. See also “[How to Write a Creative Brief](#)”.

The bidding and selection process of the publicity agency should begin early so that the ITN distribution campaign communication budget accurately reflects costs.

Publicity agencies will normally make a bid as if the campaign were one of its for-profit clients, but they may reduce their quotes if they are reminded that an ITN campaign is a humanitarian intervention and a not-for-profit public service. Once an agency is selected, through a competitive process, the contract should clearly lay out responsibilities and the expected deliverables, timeline and ownership rights to the materials that are produced. It should also specify that the agency’s work is finished only when final approval has been given, as part of the payment plan, so that the agency cannot continue to charge for each change made after pre-testing, for example.

CASE STUDIES

Mobile telecommunication advertising exemplifies how brand developers in the commercial sector create a set of associations they wish to elicit in the consumer. The images and feelings that an advertisement projects are designed to enhance the value of services and products in the mind of the consumer. This branding strategy can be seen in an MTN Nigeria video advertisement: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnQJOdlmbqg&list=PL9995EB3A35E3251C&index=5

The “*Palu Zero*” (*Zero Malaria! Count Me In*) music video from Senegal shows how projected images and feelings can be used in a campaign to motivate ITN use as part of the branding strategy. Note at the beginning of this music video how the producers draw a subtle association between the positive image of a mobile phone and ITN as a way of projecting an image of the nets as something desirable and of value. The slogan *Palu Zero* is simple, but catchy. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISQHTM4QULk (English subtitles) www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkHEFy6uNpY&feature=youtu.be (French subtitles)

4. Branded communication products

The malaria programme brand should be unique, yet easily adapted and incorporated into many diverse communication activities.

The branded logo and slogan should be displayed on all malaria printed materials and signs produced by all malaria partners. Branding guidelines should accompany the brand to provide guidance to partners on how to use the malaria programme brand consistently. Ideally, the malaria brand should have its own distinct logo and slogan and not replicate existing Ministry of Health logos and slogans.

The brand's approach and core messages should also be incorporated into audio-visual productions that will be broadcast through the mass media or made accessible on the Internet. For example, unique musical themes or jingles can be used to introduce radio and television spots and programmes. A national malaria song or anthem can be sung at schools or during community and religious-based gatherings, or distributed as music videos through television and online outlets, such as social media.

Some examples of malaria music videos can be found on YouTube:

- Malaria No More, Cameroon. www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLSIE93xBYI (mixture of English and French)
- K.O. Palu, Cameroon. www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ro2fNvDnlg&index=1&list=RD1ro2fNvDnlg (mixture of English and French)
- Malaria Free Nigeria. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5LcBLClyfw>

The malaria programme brand can also be incorporated into interpersonal communication activities and trainings. A list of brand core messages should be established, and these core messages should be taught in trainings for community mobilization, for community health volunteers, health workers, public health officials and all others who interact with the public. These core messages should also be included in talking points for malaria ambassadors and other malaria advocates.

COUNTRY CASE STUDY

The continent of Africa

The campaign entitled “Palu Zero” has been a model of success since its launch in Senegal in 2014. Between 2015 and 2016, the country reduced malaria cases by more than 20 per cent. At the start of July 2018, the campaign was ready to go continent wide, led by the African Union Commission and Roll Back Malaria and supported strongly by African leaders.

The campaign, entitled “Zero Malaria Starts with Me”, aims to develop social norms and empower communities to take greater ownership of malaria prevention and care, and to mobilize additional resources to do so. Citizens from all walks of life – political, business, religious and community leaders, private sector, communities, families and individuals are all encouraged to make a personal commitment to end malaria for good.

Kesete Admasu, CEO of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria said: *“The greatest threat to the fight against malaria is inaction and complacency. We can be the generation to end this debilitating disease. Zero Malaria Starts with Me campaign seeks to build a winning coalition to end malaria in every country, bringing together partners from every sector. Zero Malaria starts with me, with you and with all of us.”*

This new continent-wide campaign demonstrates how branding can link together the global campaign with each country's own efforts.