



The Alliance for
Malaria Prevention

Considerations for adapted ITN operational strategies

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We come into the next three years of ITN distribution with new challenges, but also new innovations and opportunities.

We also come into these next three years with a level of inertia that discourages changes that may improve ITN access and use and support increased malaria case reductions.

**“If you always do what you’ve always done, you always
get what you’ve always gotten.”**

Jessie Potter

We need to think about moving paper plans to implementation

Necessary sacrifices have been made to ensure we can do the most with what we have on paper, but operationalizing these decisions will need solid operational planning

- Not all contexts are the same
- “Deprioritized areas” are heterogeneous with varying risk levels (there’s always low-brow to go with high-brow)
- “Prioritized areas” are not always effectively reached
- Socio-economics, politics and the acceptance of exclusion
- Are we as efficient as we could be?

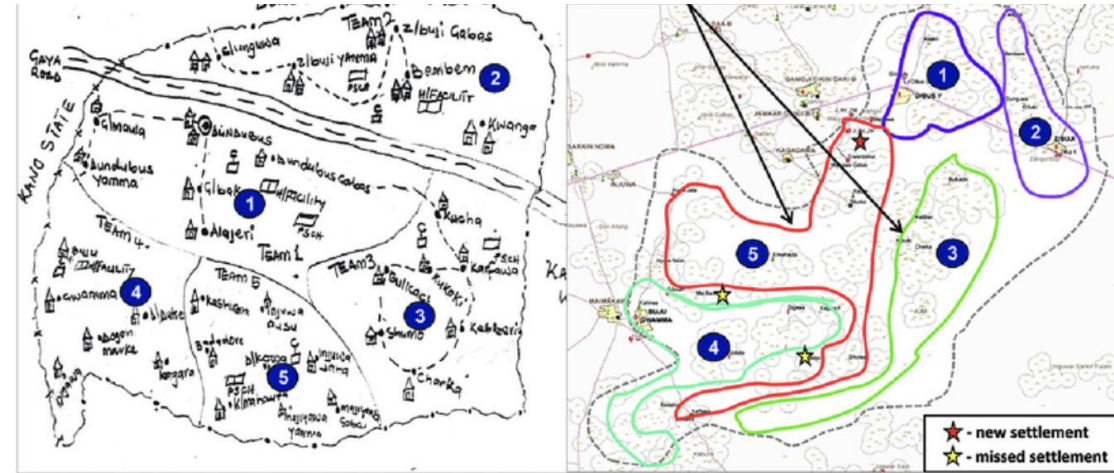


JOHNNY MILLER / MEDIADRUIMIMAGES.COM

Kya Sands, Bloubastrand.

Let's think about setting boundaries

- Artificial line that means little to the people living there
 - Who believes in it when it means they are excluded from a service?
- Microplanning becomes more critical for ensuring that the operational context is truly taken into account
 - Prioritized areas are prioritized for a reason – need to ensure high access and use are the outcome of the campaign
- GIS mapping may give more accuracy, but:
 - It is not always trusted in terms of population numbers and boundaries (triangulation methods need to be defined and agreed)
 - It doesn't help to convince people in non-receiving communities why they aren't receiving



While we chip away at operational costs, we need to think about SBC (which is typically cut first)

- The process of determining exclusion and inclusion is not easy and results will be perceived differently by different stakeholders
 - Needs to be clearly and consistently explained in a language people understand at different levels
- Advocacy will be needed not only where nets are being distributed, but also where they aren't
 - High level leadership and engagement to support implementation of decisions on targeting and prioritization will be needed
- In areas where ITNs are distributed, we need to ensure they are used
- SBC has always been critical, but may be even more so now
 - Do we know what SBC/C is most effective? We seem to recycle both activities and messages → data?



Tailoring operational strategies: One size fits all is out

Hybrid and contextually-adapted approaches are needed to ensure that strategies and channels adopted are effective for reaching everyone we want to reach





Reaching the people we are prioritizing: Setting appropriate and context-specific parameters

- Household registration parameters:
 - Can a team really register the same number of households per day in a densely populated peri urban area and a sparsely populated rural area? Do they need to work the same number of days?
- Fixed distribution point parameters:
 - Parameters came from EPI in the early 2000s → the context was considerably different in terms of infrastructure, urbanization, security and many other factors
 - Do people really still walk 5km to access a DP? Is this a realistic parameter for complex and insecure environments? Will people pay for transport to collect nets at a DP? Is this happening now?
- Change is difficult, particularly when it involves increased funding needs
 - Level of inertia to adjusting parameters, partly linked to ignoring what may work best for the context because it increases operational costs
- Planning for mop up as a blanket activity phase means your parameters are wrong
 - If you aren't paying for mop up, who is penalized?

Meaning of mopping-up in English

the activity of dealing with a small number of people, problems, etc. that remain after most of them have been defeated or solved: The war was effectively over, although skirmishing and mopping-up went on for some time.

 Cambridge Dictionary
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/moppi...> ▼

MOPPING-UP | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary

Considerations for fixed site vs door-to-door: Costs aren't equal across countries or contexts

Door-to-door registration and fixed site distribution (two-phase)

- HHR is needed to better establish ITN needs (microplanning is poor/difficult)
- Limited issues (e.g. insecurity) that affect ITN access or movement of teams/establishment of fixed distribution points (DPs)
- Population is unlikely to move between HHR and distribution

Door-to-door distribution (one-phase)

- Hard-to-reach populations, areas of insecurity with potential population movement, specific populations (nomadic, transient workers and economic migrants, etc.)
- Last mile logistics can be effectively put in place
- Existing CHW networks collecting regular population data to quantify nets
- Microplanning is of high-quality for estimating ITN needs

Door-to-door registration and door-to-door distribution (two-phase)

- Due to cost and time, this is **likely to be one of the most inefficient approaches** and is not a recommended strategy unless it is justified by a specific context

Personnel and commodity security are considerations as we start to target interventions differently

- Develop, update and monitor risk assessment and mitigation plans
- Ensure safety of personnel and mitigate issues by ensuring effective planning, coordination and communication
- Ensure security and safety of commodities through a well-defined supply chain and processes for accountability
- Train campaign staff on security as a core element for successful implementation of activities where operating in COE
- Respect duty of care



Track what happens to ITNs as part of post-distribution monitoring

With GS1 and the scale up of scanning barcodes on bales and nets in the coming years, it will be possible to know where nets were distributed and where they end up, which could provide another piece of data for defining where there is need/demand for ITNs within deprioritized areas



Credit: NMCP Liberia



Sub-national targeting of different ITN types means sub-national planning for plastic waste



Waste generated in Namacurra district, Zambézia Province. Photo: Programa Nacional de Controlo da Malária/ Direcção Provincial de Saúde, Tete

Most campaign ITNs are procured in bulk, but plans are still needed for management of waste generated

Public-private sector partnerships should be explored where individual packages are distributed during campaigns for effective waste management

With the increased scale up of CFP nets, waste management becomes a priority issue for many countries to consider for upcoming campaigns

Programmes and partners need to think about waste management for continuous distribution ITNs



Most CD nets (school, routine, community, subsidized sales, private sector) are procured with individual packages

A recent survey shows that few national malaria programs have policies and/or provide guidance for management of individual plastic packages distributed through CD channels, whether targeted to the distributor (if packages are retained at point of distribution) or to the household (if nets go home in individual packages with recipients)

Conflict affects access – adapted strategies are needed as these are the people we need to reach

- Overlap between humanitarian needs and conflicts with malaria disease burden
 - 44% (24) core GF portfolios are classified as COE and are home to 76% of malaria cases
 - Humanitarian crises in 37 malaria-endemic countries, with instability increasing, particularly in the high-burden Sahel
- Reaching last mile populations likely requires an adapted strategy from what is used for “easy access” populations



A camp for internally displaced people in Somalia. Photo by: [Faisal Abdi via Kalu Institute](#) / [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



UNAMID/Hamid Abdulsalam

ITN scale up and the efforts to increase ITN distribution channels

We have two main distribution channels that can be implemented where feasible (not a black and white decision):

- Provide nets to households every three years
- Provide nets on a continuous basis to households through different and appropriate channels for the context (routine +)

We have limited resources, many malaria needs:

- We have comparable operational costs and less system disruption for CD vs campaign channels
- If we're looking for the most health impact in terms of reduction in malaria cases, which of these offers more consistent and sustained protection?

Tailoring channels – Our inertia

- While campaigns (+ routine +) are now our comfort zone, countries are not one size fits all
 - Diversity and heterogeneity
- Many of the factors that enabled ITN scaleup are needed for adoption of a mosaic of channels for sustained ITN access and many of them are in place
 - What is causing the inertia to change?

What enabled ITN scaleup to occur?



How do we get the most mileage out of nets?

- We need more focus on net care and repair to extend net longevity where possible
 - Do we know what works/doesn't for different countries and contexts?
- Programs need to develop policies and guidance for nets through their lifecycle, including for care and repair
- It may be true that nets don't last as long as three years, but it is equally true that post-distribution SBCC is weak to non-existent



A musical troupe performs a song about net care and repair while demonstrating net washing at a song contest in Nigeria.

Credit: Center for Communication Programs Nigeria; Courtesy of NetWorks



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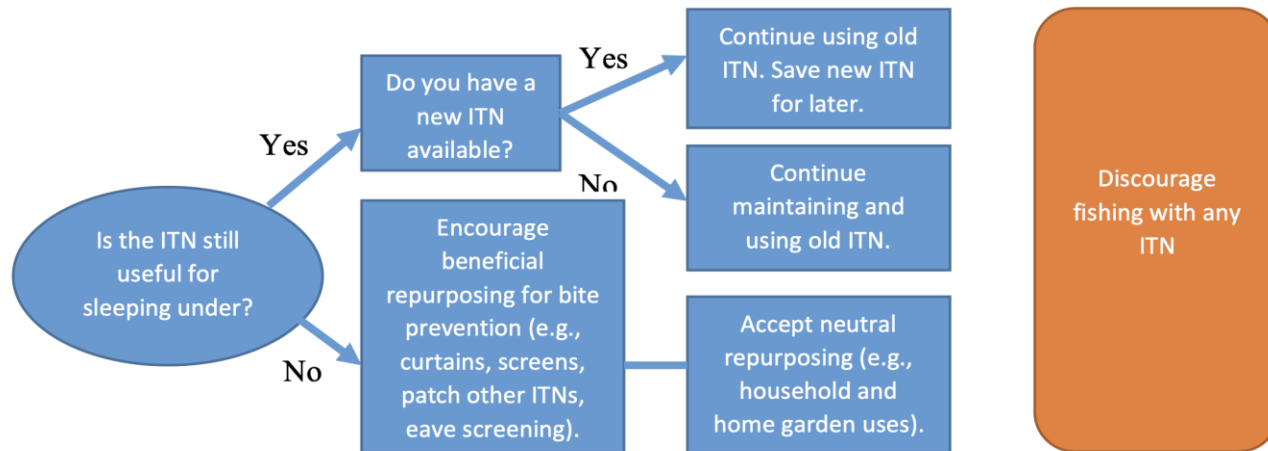
Community mobilizers invite an audience member to demonstrate how to sew a hole in a net during a community theater performance in Nasarawa, Nigeria.

And what about inactive nets?

Serviceable inactive nets

- They are still seen as good for something, but few national policies net repurposing and limited guidance during distribution (all channels)
- Programs need to contextualize existing guidance or develop their own

Figure 1: Flowchart of recommendations for ITN use and repurposing



Unserviceable inactive nets

- They are no good for anything (have already been repurposed or the HH has no intention to repurpose) → final disposal
- Programs should start to look at options for final disposal of end-of-life (EOL) nets, which is likely to require establishment of public-private partnerships given funding limitations
- Proactive collection of EOL nets is likely to be cost-prohibitive, so options needed for EOL net return that are available continuously → needs to be tied to continuous SBC messaging and establishing norms

<https://endmalaria.org/sites/default/files/Consensus%20Statement%20on%20Repurposing%20ITNs.pdf>

We need nuance in delivery strategy now and in the future

It could be a difficult few years...

- Over 3B ITNs delivered to malaria-endemic countries for distribution through campaigns or CD
 - Malaria has plateaued or increased in many countries for the past five years
 - Seems to be some decline in political will/support for ITNs in some places
- Funds are insufficient to meet needs for maintaining vector control services in many countries
 - Everyone wants the most efficiency and value for their money
 - IRS is scaled down and increased reliance and focus on a single VC tool
 - Increased competition for malaria funding as new interventions arrive
- In the face of limited resources:
 - Some populations are deprioritized, not because they aren't at-risk but because we can't stretch further
 - Operational costs are reduced, potentially affecting ITN access where strategies are not adapted to context
 - Adjusting channels is a risk when campaigns have done what they are supposed to do (e.g. get lots of nets out in a short time)
 - Innovative distribution strategies and approaches will be tested, leading to more nuance in our delivery of ITNs
- There is a need to monitor the outcomes of decisions and be prepared to address negative outcomes (operations or epidemiology, as well as coverage, equity, community and political support/perceptions)

The priority for the global malaria community should be on sustained reductions of malaria cases, which might require some changes and a shift from our comfort zone.

While we rely on ITNs as a main tool for preventing malaria, it will be important to ensure that the right nets are available on a continuous basis to populations through whichever channels are contextually feasible and that those nets are used and cared for correctly.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



Thank you

Expanding the ownership and use of mosquito nets