

# Implementing Social and Behavior Change for ITN use in Nigeria – Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria Experience

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**PMI**

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# OUTLINE

1. Background
2. SBC interventions for ITN campaigns in Nigeria
3. Lessons Learnt
4. Recommendations



# BACKGROUND

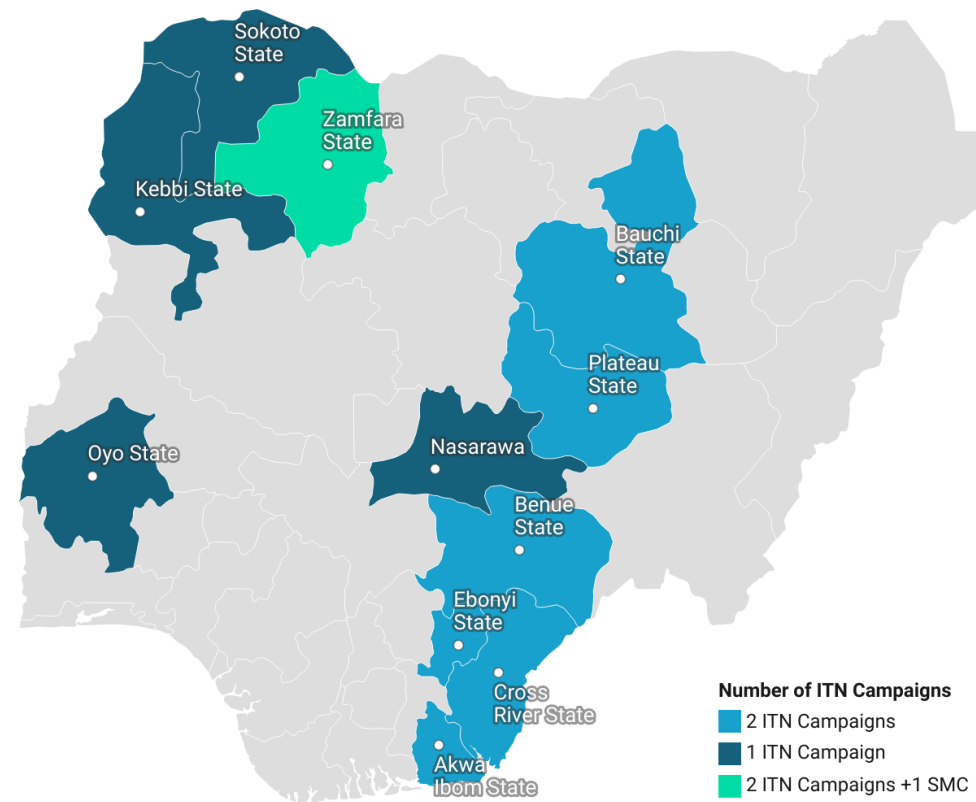
- In line with global practice, Nigeria has implemented ITN as a core strategy in malaria prevention
- The target is to improve access and utilization of vector control interventions to at least 80% of the targeted population by 2025.
- Nigeria has distributed over 250 millions ITNs since ITN campaigns started in 2007.
- SBC interventions start before, during, and after ITN distribution to align with these objectives.
- Campaign budgets range from \$1 - \$2 million USD depending on the population of the state
- SBC intervention budget of these ranged from 9-13% as at this year 2024
- However, the mass distribution aims for universal access and to tap from the herd effect of the use of insecticide treated nets – so acceptability and use must be high to have desired effect.



# Implementing SBC In Nigeria: BA-Nigeria Experience

Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria (BA-N), USAID's flagship program for social and behavior change (SBC) played a crucial role in the implementation of SBC strategies for the mass distribution of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) from 2018 – 2024 with support from US PMI.

- From 2018-2024, Breakthrough - ACTION served as USAID's flagship program for social and behavior change (SBC) in Nigeria.
- Breakthrough -ACTION Nigeria supported 11 States to conduct 18 mass ITN distributions, including Nigeria's first integrated ITN/SMC campaign in Zamfara in 2020
- Over 53 million ITNs were distributed within the period



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# SBC for ITN Campaign

## **Communication Objectives:**

- Every household should be aware that the ITN campaign is taking place and understand what they are expected to do to be part of it at every point in time.
- Everyone should understand the importance of the ITN in prevention of malaria and its appropriate use and care.

## **Behavioral Objectives:**

- Every household should take the ITN vouchers and redeem the same at a designated point and date.
- All community members are to air the ITNs and hang appropriately.
- Every community member should sleep inside the ITN every night, all year round.





## SBC for ITN Campaign (II)

Advocacy is planned and implemented to engage and influence relevant government official, policymakers, key stakeholders and their networks for buy-in, commitment and support in kind/cash for the ITN process.

Interventions starts from

- Microplanning
- Implementation of advocacy plan
- Capacity building of various SBC stakeholders
- Community Mobilization
- Media Engagement



*Advocacy visit to the Commissioner of Police, Benue State Command for support of lives and nets during 2023 ITN Campaign.*



*The CDC resident Advisor within PMI, Dr Mark Maire (left) presenting performing the symbolic presentation of the LLINs to the Commissioner of Health(right)*

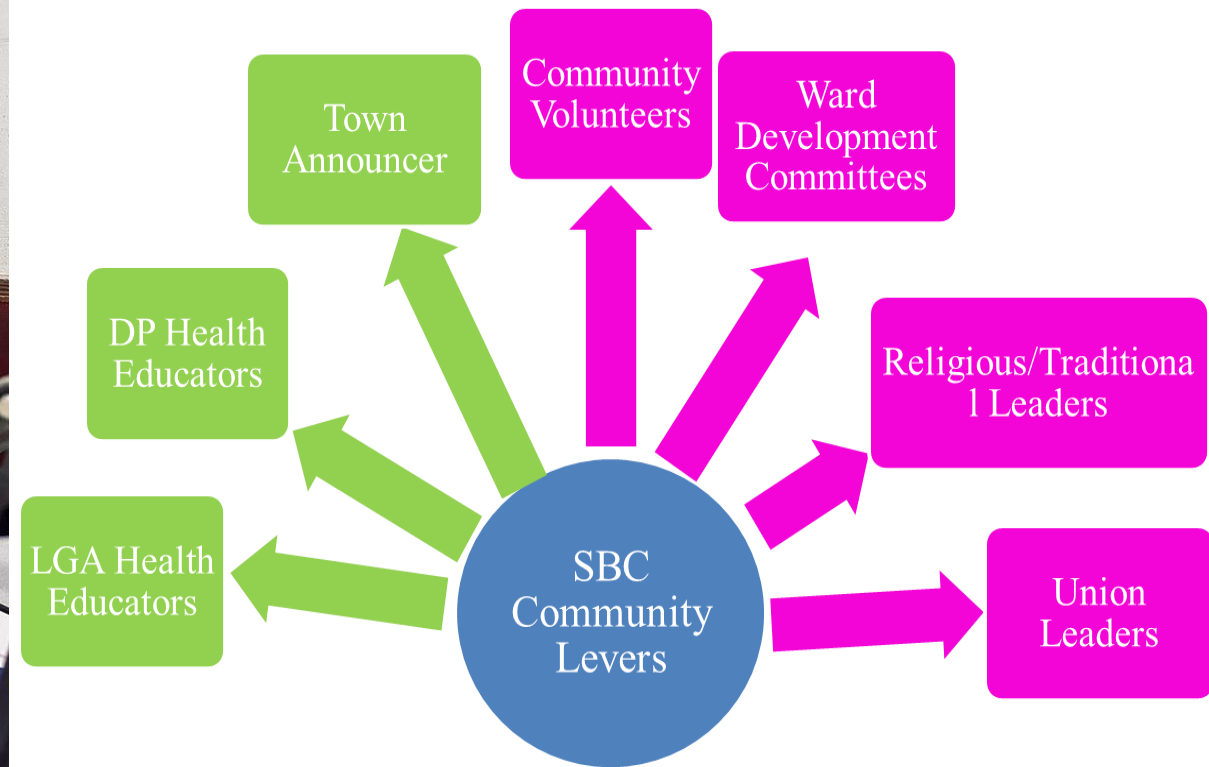


## Working with the media



*Bauchi State Health Educator (right) during a co-produced media program on ITN use at Globe FM during 2023 ITN Campaign*

## Working with community structures



# Post Distribution SBC Interventions

- Critical in achieving ITN campaign objectives
  - Effective Communication takes time which is not usually available during the campaign.
- Data driven using the results of the end-process assessment, - initially focused on LGAs with low net hanging and use rates
- Now instituted across all LGAs in PMI supported states as part of the post distribution campaign since Dec 2023 in Zamfara.
- Coordinated effort spans from 6 to 12 months, aiming to achieve 100% net retention and at least 80% ITN use.
- Various SBC approaches are employed, leveraging platforms like
  - ANC clinics and other health interventions,
  - school-based activities – continuous, change agents
  - community structures (religious and social groups) to make net use a norm beyond individual net use.
- Unfortunately, due to project close-out, BA-Nigeria is not able to measure this intentional post SBC activities





# Lessons Learned

- Investment in SBC interventions is never a waste
  - It ensures the whole investment in the ITNs achieve its aim.
- Funds and time allocated to SBC can be better, longer and more focused.
- Everyone can play a vital role in providing health education on proper ITN use and care if correct, appropriate and consistent information is widely available.
- BA-Nigeria has the advantage of routine malaria SBC and community volunteers to continue engagement on net use compared to some other states.
- The cost of misinformation can be grave and counter-productive.
- ITN campaigns are such huge logistical work. It is so easy to forget the goal and get lost in the process.



## Recommendations

- Survey data are not explorative enough and rapid qualitative assessment may be necessary if there is no routine activities and enough understanding of the ITN culture and perception
- Use of community structures and the media to understand the existing beliefs and perception so that ITN messaging are appropriate and focused
- Invest more in intentional SBC even after the ITN campaigns.
- There is need to plan for post campaign rapid assessment using the same methodology as used during the end process – 3, 6 and 9 month after campaign.



# *Thank you!*

For more information, visit

<https://nmcp.gov.ng/>

<https://breakthroughactionandresearch.org/nigeria/>