

# Malaria Advocacy Innovation Grants

## Mobilising civil society for better health

Malaria is one of the biggest killers of African children under the age of five and pregnant women. Despite some Ministries of Health spending nearly half their budgets on tackling the disease the human cost and effect on families remains incalculably devastating.

Many stakeholders are working in different ways to address the disease but it is civil society in endemic countries that often has the most powerful impact in the fight to eliminate malaria.

Despite successes in the drive against the disease, obstacles to progress remain. Some of the solutions are simple and low cost, such as long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) and artemisinin combination therapy (ACT). Accurate diagnosis and better health systems would also improve the shocking mortality figures experienced in endemic countries.

By supporting grassroots advocacy and awareness raising efforts in the South, real progress can be achieved in defeating this disease. Supporting small scale, community-led advocacy efforts is an extremely cost effective way of raising local political awareness of the need for government commitment.

Mobilising for Malaria (M4M) was a three year (2006-09) Malaria Consortium advocacy programme supported by GlaxoSmithKline's African Malaria Partnership. The aim of the programme was to raise awareness of the disease in Europe and Africa through supporting civil society and the media. It did this primarily through establishing National Coalitions against Malaria in three African countries. In May 2007 the programme expanded its geographic remit



Photo by Pedro Sa Da Bandeira

and began allocating Malaria Innovation Grants, over three rounds, to other external partners for approximately one year each.

The Innovation Grants supported ideas and partnerships that reached new audiences in creative ways and tackled difficult issues such as equity, transparency and accountability. Audiences included decision makers at national or regional levels, politicians, media, government ministries, international organisations and local leaders. Seven projects were supported by the grants in the following countries/regions: Nigeria, Western and Central Africa (a ten-country project in Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Chad, Central African Republic, Mali, Togo, Djibouti,

Cameroon and Benin) Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso.

The Innovation Grant projects have all been extremely successful, linking with other malaria advocacy initiatives in their respective countries. For example the grant to Mozambique enabled the recipient to engage with and become a member of the Mozambique Coalition, a broad network of stakeholders working on malaria.

Some have also taken the initiative to begin the establishment of coalitions themselves (Congo Brazzaville, Niger, Togo, CAR, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo). Malaria Consortium is committed to supporting these movements in seeking financial support to continue and build upon these projects.

## Nigeria

Action Family Foundation (AFF) secured a grant in September 2007 to expand the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Roll Back Malaria project (RBM) to work towards the Millennium Development Goals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Its main aim was to build the capacity of such organisations in malaria control, advocacy and service delivery, primarily through the organisation of a five-day malaria advocacy training session in May 2008, where 35 people representing 28 CSOs were trained.

These links led to joint activities around World Malaria Day 2009 as well as AFF participation at the Lagos RBM Partners Forum. AFF also hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Malaria Summit in November 2008.

## Lessons learned

- Small, targeted grants are a successful way to begin malaria advocacy in countries where existing malaria networks or coalitions do not exist.
- The grants encourage high impact activities over a short period of time, reaching audiences that previously did not receive malaria messages (e.g. parliamentarians, HIV organisations, the media, or businesses).
- The grants encourage creativity and innovation, helping to generate ideas that can be disseminated to others in the malaria community.
- The grants provide a gateway for smaller organisations to engage with the wider malaria community, so they can benefit from its expertise and link up for future work.
- The grants can identify areas where malaria advocacy is lacking or under resourced.

## Western and Central Africa

Azur Development and the African AIDS Network received a grant in November 2007 to implement media campaigns and malaria alert systems in 10 Francophone countries: Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Togo, Ivory Coast, Niger, Djibouti, Cameroon, Mali and Benin.

By the end of the project the two organisations had undertaken capacity building with over 65 HIV/AIDS groups on malaria issues, empowering some of these organisations to develop country-specific malaria projects of their own (in three countries coalitions or networks against malaria were founded).

There was also an increase in malaria-specific content in all sectors of the media, with active anti-malaria journalist clubs formed.

## Tanzania

Orphans Relief Services (ORES), Tanzania, received a grant in order to mobilise and engage parliamentarians and the media on malaria in Tanzania's Dodoma District. This was achieved through the creation of an alliance of parliamentarians. The project trained 37 MPs in a workshop, who were then instrumental in forming a first-of-its-kind coalition of Tanzania Parliamentarians Against Malaria (TAPAMA). TAPAMA is now formally registered with over 160 members and has been heavily involved in the distribution of nets and educational material.

MPs continued to be involved in advocacy and campaigns over 2009 World Malaria Day, and helped with the formation of four cultural groups which became effective tools for the community distribution of advocacy materials. The project also mobilised and trained four major Tanzanian media outlets as partners in the fight against malaria. The ORES project outcome of the creation of TAPAMA was seen by an external evaluator as an exceptional success.

Photo by Pedro Sa Da Bandeira



## Ghana

The Africa Media and Malaria Research Network (AMMREN), a network based in Ghana with activities in Gabon, Senegal, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and The Gambia, was awarded a grant to create a magazine called Eyes on Malaria.

This 32-page magazine is now published bi-annually and is available in hard and online copies. The grant covered the production and publication of the first two issues. The magazine aims to connect malaria research findings and policy with day to day issues, using simple language to communicate key messages to a broad audience. It also reports on malaria events and initiatives in the international arena. Its articles are mostly written by AMMREN members across the nine countries.

## Mozambique

União Geral das Cooperativas was awarded a grant to implement a project focused on mobilising and engaging government representatives and businesses in Mozambique.

They advocated successfully to a wide range of ministries, encouraging them to include malaria in their national plans. They also led malaria discussions in the influential Economic Associations Confederations (CTA) and held a malaria exhibition in the CTA national meeting.

As a result, several major enterprises started to plan malaria control interventions as part of their social responsibility programmes. These companies are seeking an increase in malaria awareness in their workplace programmes. Finally a "malaria business group" was created by the Business against Aids Forum (ECOSIDA), which is striving for an increase in malaria awareness in the workplace.

## Burkina Faso

Jeunesse et Defis and La Convention pour la Culture de la Paix (CCP) was awarded a grant to found a Coalition in Burkina Faso in order to accelerate the implementation of key anti-malaria commitments.

The goal of the coalition was to coordinate various partners (including opinion leaders, parliamentarians and civil society), enabling them to identify and launch major activities. The project mapped the malaria situation in Burkina Faso prior to setting up its secretariat and then ran capacity building sessions with its new members. It was at the forefront of World Malaria Day 2009 activities and led the drawing up of a national civil society charter on the fight against malaria.

Its activities established meaningful interface between civil society and decision makers whilst bringing international commitments on malaria to the government's attention.

## Democratic Republic of Congo

Initiative Locale pour le Développement Intégré (ILDI) was awarded a grant to mobilise parliamentarians against malaria in three provinces of the DRC. Beginning in Sept 2008, the project was the first of its kind in the DRC and has now trained 45 national and provincial parliamentarians plus parliamentary staff and civil servants.

The parliamentarians issued a declaration of engagement in parliament and invited other parliamentarians to join with them in calling for malaria specific budget lines. The project's civil society component trained over 120 civil society groups in advocacy techniques.



**To learn more about the project visit  
the Innovations Grants page on  
<http://www.mobilising4malaria.org>**

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