Malaria Consortium is a non-profit organisation established in 2003 specialising in the prevention, control and treatment of malaria and other communicable diseases among vulnerable populations. Its mission is to improve lives in Africa and Asia through sustainable, evidence-based programmes that combat targeted diseases and promote Universal Health Coverage. The organization is a world leader in iCCM strategy, policy, implementation and research. It has spearheaded successful iCCM programs in multiple African and Asian countries and has done so in Uganda since 2003. mHealth is a core component of Malaria Consortium’s work.
Malaria Consortium and mHealth

The organisation uses technology to improve service quality, access and equity within its projects, as well as provides evidence based technical assistance to governments to adopt such technologies for strengthening health system efficiencies and effectiveness. The organisation has developed its digital health expertise since 2009, the development of which is supported by strong evidence and grounded in implementation lessons. With a focus on malaria surveillance and community-based primary healthcare; the organisations’ portfolio includes:

- successfully supporting governments to develop malaria and community health information systems
- strengthening essential commodity stock management and monitoring functions
- improving supportive supervision of community health cadres
- exploring the impact of digitising community health systems on quality of care
- utilising social media to support public health communication
- building adaptable and responsive digital health systems to address COVID-19.

Malaria Consortium believes digital health is key to improving equitable access to quality case management — through stronger enumeration, planning and monitoring — and advancing health system effectiveness and efficiency. It is not only able to bring affordable, quality health services to those living in hard-to-reach areas, but can also facilitate communities’, health workers’ and governments’ (real-time) access to health information and data — improving knowledge, uptake of services, productivity and informed decision making.

Buikwe project

We are supporting Uganda’s Ministry of Health (MoH) to develop and optimise its digitised Community Health Toolkit (CHT) within its community health information system. Malaria Consortium has funded and provided technical assistance into the development of the iCCM+ module of the MoH’s mhealth platform. In partnership with Medic Mobile — a technological development who are the CHT’s technical steward — Uganda’s CHT iCCM module has been adapted to:

- align with newly updated 2021 iCCM+ guidelines
- include supervision and stock management components
- better enable village health teams’ (VHTs) adherence to guidelines/protocols
- improve data quality, flows and use
- support targeted supervision and mentorship.
Implementation

The project is based in Buikwe and supports all iCCM VHTs that serve populations at, or beyond, 5kms from a health facility. Thus far the project, in collaboration with the MoH and Buikwe district, has:

- completed app development
- provided the district with (365) technological devices
- Trained 18 MoH and District iCCM and mhealth technology trainers
- trained approx. 390 VHTs and their supervisors
- conducted competency assessment of all VHTs
- supported the district health management team to quantify required commodities and conduct health facility (HF)-VHT redistribution

The project has been in set-up stage since December 2020, and will support six months of active application use, from November 2021 to April 2022. During this period, airtime, software support, as well as MoH and district support for monitoring and adaptation will be provided.

Up-coming activities

- **Integration of Smart Discharges**
  In support of the MoH, Malaria Consortium is partnering with World Alliance for Lung and Intensive Care Medicine in Uganda (WALIMU) — a Ugandan and American non-governmental organisation that works to improve clinical care for severely ill patients in hospitals across Uganda — to enable a complete cycle of care for at risk children. Smart Discharges supports healthcare workers to identify children who are at risk of complications once discharged and, therefore, need home-based follow-up. The iCCM+ module of the MoH’s CHT as developed by Malaria Consortium, will be used for this community level alert and home-based support and follow-up. This novel HF-community linkage will be implemented in Buikwe. This is expected to be live in December 2021.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**
  Two observation points and an endline assessment will be used to determine/assess:
  - if VHTs, using this decision support tool, adhere to iCCM algorithms and correctly assess and classify children under five
  - the data quality of VHT monthly digital reports in comparison to paper reports
  - use of digital dashboards for decision-making at HF and district level
  - the reach/coverage,
  - the adoption (including usability and acceptability), implementation and maintenance requirements of the decision support tool among the VHTs trained to use it over the intervention period
  - the effectiveness of a facility-based linkage to a community-based follow up system to improve post discharge care for children recovering from severe infections.
VHT using iCCM to assess a sick child in Nyenga sub-county