



Supporting frontline health workers in Uganda

Strengthening capacity during COVID-19 and beyond

Background

Frontline health workers (FLHWs) in Uganda — including health facility workers and village health team members (VHTs) — play a critical role in the management of infectious diseases, such as malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia, many of which are endemic in the country. With the emergence of the novel coronavirus pandemic, FLHWs now face the challenge of safely and effectively continuing to provide integrated community case management (iCCM) to tackle these diseases, while also managing cases of COVID-19.

As COVID-19 infections continue to grow, health workers are increasingly at risk of exposure — not only because of their close contact with the public,^[1] but also given limited stocks of personal protective equipment (PPE), drugs and other equipment, and a lack of training in infection prevention and control (IPC).^[2] Without these resources, the risk of mortality and morbidity attributable to COVID-19 and other diseases is greatly increased for both FLHWs and the communities they serve. Furthermore, with the majority of resources being diverted to respond to the pandemic — such as for social and behaviour interventions aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 — it has become challenging to implement and track

Country

Uganda

Donor

Mastercard Foundation

Length of project

May 2020 – October 2020

Partners

Implementing districts

Malaria Consortium

Mastercard Foundation

Ministry of Health, Uganda

existing interventions that target endemic diseases. This could have severe repercussions for the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of these illnesses.

It is, therefore, vital to develop FLHWs' capacity to diagnose and treat cases of COVID-19, while at the same time continuing to provide iCCM services safely, accurately and with the right tools and support.

Project outline and objectives

In partnership with Mastercard Foundation, through its COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Program, Malaria Consortium will develop the capacity of 33,000 FLHWs to identify, safely treat and refer cases of COVID-19 while continuing to provide effective iCCM during the outbreak. This project will support FLHWs in 40 districts where the Strengthening Uganda's Response to Malaria (SURMa) and the USAID Malaria Action Program for Districts (MAPD) projects are being implemented.

This project seeks to:

- develop FLHWs' capacity in IPC and early identification of suspected cases of COVID-19, with the aim of encouraging referral to health facilities
- guarantee access to essential PPE — such as masks, eye goggles and gloves — for all FLHWs in the target districts
- improve the accuracy of data reported by VHTs
- expand the reach of appropriate messaging on COVID-19 and health-seeking behaviour to the target population.

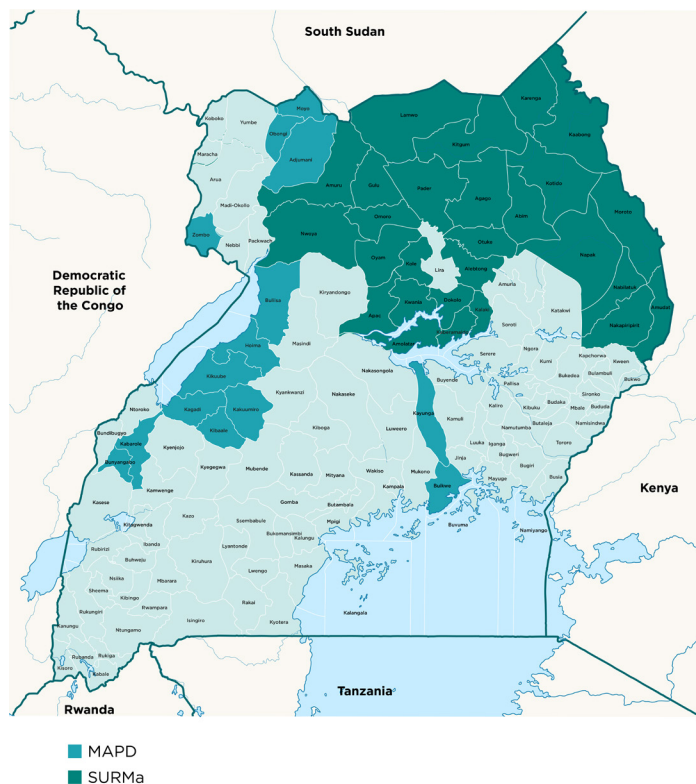
Activities

To achieve these objectives, Malaria Consortium will:

- provide targeted training to FLHWs on the prevention, control and risk factors for the transmission of COVID-19
- procure and distribute PPE to FLHWs
- procure and distribute water, sanitation and hygiene kits to FLHWs — these will include soap and 10-litre jerry cans

- enhance VHT surveillance through the use of digitised reporting channels — such as email and SMS — and phone calls. These methods reduce error in the recording chain by enabling health facilities to follow up with VHTs on reporting errors and omissions
- disseminate information, education and communication materials — such as posters and pamphlets — through house visits, radio broadcasts, social media and SMS to inform and sensitise communities about COVID-19 and appropriate health-seeking behaviours.

Map of Uganda illustrating the districts in which FLHWs are currently implementing iCCM



References

1. World Health Organization. Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19: Interim guidance. Geneva: WHO; 2020. [WHO/2019-nCoV/IPC_Masks/2020.3](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC_Masks/2020.3).
2. WHO. Rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Interim guidance. Geneva: WHO; 2020. [WHO/2019-nCoV/IPC_PPE_use/2020.2](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC_PPE_use/2020.2).

© Malaria Consortium / July 2020

Unless indicated otherwise, this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-profit or educational purposes without permission from the copyright holder. Please clearly acknowledge the source and send a copy or link of the reprinted material to Malaria Consortium. No images from this publication may be used without prior permission from Malaria Consortium.

UK Registered Charity No: 1099776

Contact: info@malariaconsortium.org

Cover image: A female VHT from Igura village, Kwana district, celebrates receiving much-needed PPE from District LCV Chairperson, the Honorable Okello Anthony Bazil Onach.

FightingMalaria
 MalariaConsortium
www.malariaconsortium.org

