



SMARTNET

A Tanzanian Public/Private Partnership to Prevent Malaria

SMARTNET is preventing malaria in Tanzania by building a sustainable market for Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) whilst ensuring equitable access for the most vulnerable. SMARTNET is managed by PSI/Tanzania and funded by DFID and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

Over 90% of Africa's net manufacturing capacity is based in Tanzania which means that the country has an unprecedented opportunity to reach even the most vulnerable with ITNs delivered through the commercial sector. This is the story of the realization of this opportunity.

The Partnership

SMARTNET is a public/private partnership between the Ministry of Health (MOH), PSI/Tanzania, net manufacturers, insecticide suppliers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, NGOs, research organisations, advertising and promotion companies, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

A Deadly Disease

In a population of about 34 million, there are over 16 million cases of malaria a year in Tanzania, killing one person every five minutes and causing the death of 80,000 children under five annually. Tanzania's malaria burden swallows up about US\$ 119 million of national resources (3.4% of its GDP) every year. Controlling malaria is a key national strategy to reducing poverty and improving the economic performance of the country.

Effective Targeting

SMARTNET has been a trailblazer for the global Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership by demonstrating the extent to which commercial ITN production and distribution can be stimulated whilst ensuring equitable coverage through effective targeting of subsidy. The SMARTNET partnership has catalysed groundbreaking changes in net taxation and insecticide regulation which have helped provide an enabling environment and a kick-start to the commercial sector. This has been achieved through an innovative mix of interventions based on a range of supply and demand-side incentives. SMARTNET has provided support to manufacturers, distribution agents and retailers through transport subsidies, guaranteed payments for shipments, as well as marketing support

including the development and airing of branded and generic advertising campaigns. Another groundbreaking achievement of SMARTNET was negotiating the inclusion of an insecticide treatment kit into all locally made nets nationwide. As a result of intense promotion, the *Ngao* insecticide retreatment brand is a household name throughout the country.

Effective Distribution

In recognition that the malaria toll is highest in rural areas, where accessing ITNs is more difficult and ability to pay is reduced, SMARTNET and other partners have implemented a series of strategies to increase affordability and improve access. PSI/Tanzania is now working hand-in-hand with hundreds of traders associated with shifting markets. These weekly markets, to which many thousands of people come to buy and sell



Shifting markets are now selling affordable ITNs along with other goods in rural areas.

household goods, cattle, fruit and vegetables are found in remote rural areas and many of them are now selling ITNs along with their other goods.

Ensuring commercial availability of ITNs in remote rural areas is a pre-requisite for the success of the Tanzania ITN voucher programme which targets subsidy to those who need it most.

Working in Partnership to Achieve the Abuja Targets
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Rural households are able to access affordable ITNs through a range of commercial outlets

Pregnant women (who are at risk of severe malaria) receive a voucher during antenatal visits and are then able to use the voucher as part payment for an ITN at a nearby retail or shifting market outlet. In this way, the commercial sector plays a central role in reaching vulnerable groups with ITNs. As a result of SMARTNET's market support and subsidy targeting activities, commercial sales of nets bundled with Ngao were 3.3 million in 2003 & 2004 and sales of Ngao net retreatment were 3.6 million.

Achieving the Abuja targets

Although ITN and retreatment sales have been impressive in the past two years, the real testament to the success of the SMARTNET strategies is reflected in the change in ITN coverage of Tanzania's malaria risk groups. Household coverage has changed from 37% in 2001 to over 50% in 2004 and household surveys have shown that children under five are given priority to sleep under these nets. As a result of SMARTNET and other ITN promotional activities, Tanzania is now poised to achieve the Abuja target of covering 60% of children under five and pregnant women with an insecticide treated net by the end of 2005.

Local Manufacture of LLINs

SMARTNET has also played an integral role regarding technology transfer to African net manufacturers. There are only two brands of long lasting insecticidal net (LLIN) which have received approval by WHO. In the case of the Olyset net, the insecticide is incorporated into the polyethylene resin prior to the extrusion of fibres. As a result, the net treatment remains effective for at least five years.

This technology was developed by the Japanese chemical giant Sumitomo, and SMARTNET, together with other partners, including WHO, Acumen Fund, Exxon Mobil, and UNICEF played an important role in the transfer of this technology to the Tanzanian manufacturer A-Z Textile Mills. SMARTNET helped

A-Z to develop the local brand ("Magic Power") and is currently providing brand marketing support. The Magic Power net launch on the 16th of November 2004 was attended by the President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, the US Secretary for Health, Tommy Thompson, the Executive Director of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, malaria, Richard Feachem and the Executive Secretary of Roll Back Malaria, Dr. Awa Coll Seck. During the ceremony, the central role that the Tanzania commercial sector has played in their country's fight against malaria was highlighted and applauded.

Zero Tolerance for Malaria

SMARTNET's latest initiative is a nationwide malaria prevention communication campaign which has been built around the slogan "Malaria Haikubaliki" (Malaria is Not Acceptable). This campaign directly challenges one of the key constraints to mobilising Africa's community against malaria, which is the resigned belief that malaria is simply a part of life. With easy access to ITNs and effective malaria treatment, malaria must be tolerated no longer. This MOH campaign designed by SMARTNET has the support of the President of Tanzania, who can be seen wearing the "Malaria Haikubaliki" badge at public functions.



Messages being delivered at a shifting market as part of the 'Malaria Kaikubaliki' campaign

Programme Evaluation

During a recent programme evaluation carried out by DFID consultants, the SMARTNET programme was described as the 'Best ITN programme in Africa' . (DFID Output to Purpose Review; 2004).

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