

PROGRAMME BRIEF

AMREF Malaria Programme



Transforming communities from within

Introduction

Despite the progress made by some malaria-endemic countries in Africa, the disease is still a public health problem in almost all countries where AMREF works. Indeed, morbidity and mortality rates are high while coverage of interventions such as Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) and Intermittent Preventive Treatment for pregnant women (IPTp) is very low. Furthermore, because clinical diagnosis is widely used, the confirmation rate is low, despite the fact that use of artemisinin-combination therapies (ACT) has been scaled up widely.

In this regard, AMREF has prioritised malaria prevention and control, and within the framework of AMREF's Business Plan 2012-2014, a Malaria Strategy has been developed as a contribution to the control of malaria in Africa, particularly at community level.



The objectives of the strategy are to

- Support countries to increase and sustain coverage of malaria prevention and control interventions
- Support countries to improve early diagnosis and case management of malaria
- Develop and promote innovative approaches to support malaria interventions
- Promote advocacy, communication and social mobilisation for malaria prevention and control interventions
- Strengthen capacities of AMREF's malaria programme

Main achievements in the past

In 1983, AMREF established a Malaria Unit and soon afterwards was credited for being one of the first agencies to help evaluate the impact of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) at community level. The unit has published 31 peer-reviewed articles to document work undertaken in prevention and treatment of malaria. AMREF has also played an important role in training health professionals and community health workers in malaria treatment and prevention practices. In collaboration with the clinical and diagnostics programme, AMREF's malaria unit has been at the forefront

of monitoring drug efficacy and has been influential in strengthening effective and appropriate diagnostic services throughout eastern Africa.

Current malaria activities across AMREF

AMREF is a key partner of Ministries of Health, providing support through specific interventions in selected areas. These interventions include diagnosis, case management, promotion of preventive measures, capacity building, community-based interventions and communication. AMREF is also a leading NGO in the East African Network on Malaria which consists of malaria experts providing technical support to countries to scale up malaria interventions.

AMREF plays an important role in training health professionals in malaria prevention and treatment practices. The organisation offers various levels of training on malaria, for which it has developed appropriate curriculums, including:

- a 12-unit Distance Education course which addresses the management, prevention and control of malaria
- a 16-unit Distance Education course that deals with the diagnosis, management, prevention and control of common communicable tropical diseases, including malaria
- a two-week course on malaria prevention and control management
- Training and refresher courses on malaria diagnosis for laboratory technicians

Monitoring and Evaluation

AMREF's results-based M&E framework is used to monitor interventions and evaluate progress across the organisation.

Programme constraints and proposed solutions

- Expanding the malaria programme

- Mobilising resources

- Develop and implement regional programmes/approaches
- Develop strong partnerships at all levels
- Build capacity of staff at country level

- Promoting innovation and research on malaria

- Develop research activities through current projects
- Document and publish results and best practices



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Futures plans and priorities

Prevention: improving access to main malaria vector control measures such as LLINs, and promoting use of IPTp and other prevention measures among vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV. In addition, community approaches for prevention will be developed, as well as community-based surveillance.

Case management: enhancing universal access to early diagnosis and prompt, effective and safe treatment at all levels. This includes effective management of malaria cases at community level.

Research: testing innovative methods of malaria control, then documenting and disseminating best practices and results.

Advocacy and communication: developing advocacy for resource mobilisation, reinforcing partnership and collaboration and promoting communication and social mobilisation.

Managerial and operational capacities of the programme: Strengthening these capacities at all levels is essential for successful implementation of interventions.



AMREF Headquarters
P O Box 27691-00506 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 020 6993000 Fax: +254 020 6009518
Email: info@amref.org
Website: www.amref.org

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