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USAID's End Malaria Project

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a post-conflict country facing persistent insecurity, hindering the Ministry of Health's (MoH) and its partners' efforts to improve the population's health. The DRC accounts for 12.3% of malaria cases and 12.6% of malaria-related deaths globally, and pregnant women and children suffer disproportionately from the disease.¹ Since the MoH partnered with the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) in 2010, malaria-related mortality has decreased by 43%, from 186.5 deaths per hundred-thousand to 107.1 deaths per hundred-thousand as of 2020.² Further, an estimated 67.5% of the population now has access to an insecticide-treated bed net (ITN).^{1,3} However, progress has been slow, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

USAID's End Malaria Project (2021 – 2024), implemented by Chemonics International, supports the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) to achieve and sustain its goal of universal coverage of ITNs through mass and school-based distribution campaigns in ten provinces selected by the NMCP and PMI. USAID's End Malaria project objectives are three-fold:

1. Increase population access to ITNs through mass distribution campaigns by covering 90% of households in targeted provinces.
2. Contribute to maintaining household ITN coverage through implementation of school-based distributions by reaching 95% of eligible school children in targeted provinces.
3. Strengthen the capacity of the NMCP to plan and implement ITN distribution activities in line with international best practices.

Thus far, USAID's End Malaria has supported the NMCP to effectively plan and implement mass distribution campaigns down to households and primary schools in ten provinces, with one province, Lualaba, benefitting from a second mass campaign (see map). The project also improves knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to ITN uptake via gender-inclusive communication campaigns to increase ITN uptake by both women and men. Due to COVID-19 at start-up, the project adapted its

STRIDES TOWARD UNIVERSAL ITN COVERAGE IN THE DRC

More than 18 million ITNs distributed to nearly 32 million people through mass and school-based campaigns, including:

- More than 15 million ITNs to over 28 million people through mass distribution campaigns
 - 96% of targeted households received ITNs
 - 87% of households surveyed through 5% verification received an adequate number of ITNs per national guidelines⁴
- More than 2.8 million ITNs to children in grades 1-6 through distributions at more than 10,000 schools
 - 99% of targeted students reached during school campaigns
- Achieved universal access goals in supported provinces by reaching 1.9 persons per ITN

1. World malaria report 2022. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

2. [Malaria Atlas Project Mortality Rate Statistics](#). Democratic Republic of the Congo, September 2023.

3. All ITNs are within the definition of long-last insecticide treated nets (LLINs).

4. In the Kasai, Kasai Oriental, and Nord Ubangi Provinces

mass distribution strategy to protect health workers and households during campaigns, shifting from point-based to door-to-door distributions.

Sustaining efforts to end malaria through local capacity strengthening. The project relies on a core group of staff with technical expertise in ITN campaign planning, distribution, and uptake practices to achieve results. For each campaign, the team works with a decentralized network of health representatives at the national, provincial, health zone, health area, and local levels to troubleshoot challenges ranging from stockouts and the need for expedited distributions to geographic accessibility issues and insecure environments. The project has trained 6,070 local actors as campaign leaders and engaged 54,280 community workers and 8,592 social mobilizers to educate their own communities about malaria prevention during door-to-door distributions.

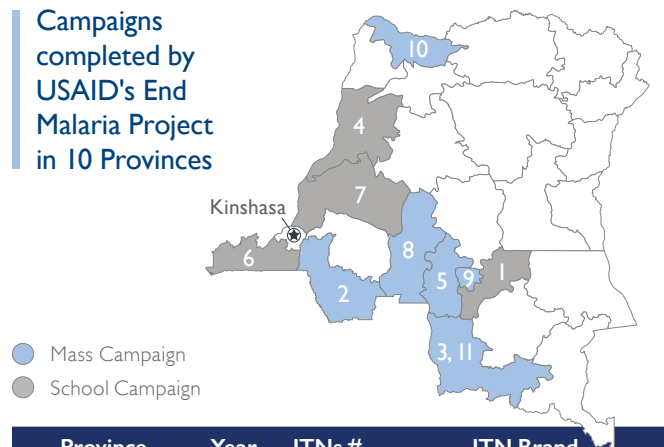
USAID's End Malaria Project collaborates solely with local partners to strengthen their capacity to support ITN distribution campaigns. For warehousing and distribution, the project has engaged ten Regional Distribution Centers (CDRs) and supported them in developing and implementing business plans to improve their sustainability and using TransIT, an electronic transport management and tracking system. These advances improve the capacity of local institutions to support the NMCP in its leading role, ensuring that a critical intervention in the fight against malaria reaches the population.

Improving ITN campaigns with better data management and post-distribution monitoring. Since December 2022, the project has partnered with the University of Kinshasa School of Public Health (UoK) and the *Coordination Nationale de Renforcement de Système de Santé Communautaire* (CNRSC, an umbrella organization of local civil society organizations) to integrate digital data collection and 5% household verification, particularly in the mass distribution campaigns. The project procured 4,813 Android tablets and loaded them with Kobo Toolbox, an open-source platform, to capture data and better integrate data visualization, management, and analysis through DataVisio. Within 72 hours post-distribution, data verification teams trained by the CNRSC assess and verify the campaigns' reach, compliance with national distribution guidelines, and household ITN coverage per NMCP guidelines. The 5% verification results confirmed that the project advanced the supported provinces toward [World Health Organization's recommended universal coverage target of two persons per ITN](#).⁵

5. Malaria Policy Advisory Committee Meeting. [WHO recommendations for achieving universal coverage with long-lasting insecticidal nets in malaria control](#). October 2017.

6. Becker, Julie, Harb, Clara, Ubial Sitek Alphonse. Chemonics International Inc. [Beyond Bed Nets: How Gender Integration Can Improve Malaria Control](#). March 2023.

Campaigns completed by USAID's End Malaria Project in 10 Provinces



Province	Year	ITNs #	ITN Brand
1. Lomami	2021	712,814	Royal Sentry, DuraNet
2. Kwango	2021	1,386,899	Royal Sentry, OlysetNet, Olyset
3. Lualaba	2021	1,874,492	DuraNet, DAWA Plus 2.0, Yorkkool
4. Equateur	2022	771,440	DuraNet, Olyset
5. Kasai Central	2022	3,052,434	DuraNet, Yorkkool, SafeNet
6. Kongo Central	2022	830,754	DuraNet, SafeNet
7. Mai Ndombe	2022	529,521	Royal Sentry, Olyset, SafeNet
8. Kasai	2023	2,946,386	DuraNet Plus
9. Kasai Oriental	2023	2,943,442	DuraNet Plus, PermaNet 3.0
10. Nord Ubangi	2023	1,056,683	IG2 PBO
11. Lualaba	2023	2,132,389	Olyset, Yorkkool, SafeNet, DuraNet

Incorporating a Gender Focus Into Mass Distribution Campaigns to increase ITN uptake.

USAID's End Malaria Project's Gender Analysis and Gender Implementation Strategy (GAGIS) informs a Community Diagnostic Activity, which serves to collect province-specific data on barriers to ITN uptake, including gender-related factors. With the findings, the project designs a locally driven approach using communications strategies and materials, thereby contributing to national gender goals to increase women's participation to 30% of all campaign actors and to ensure equal ITN uptake among men and women at the household level. Since its inception, the project has disseminated campaign messages in 46 local languages over 141 media platforms. [This blog](#) details the process for a 2021 mass distribution campaign in the Lualaba Province.⁶

Across six completed mass distribution campaigns the proportion of women participating averaged 26% (Range = 17% – 33%), which is just under the NMCP's 30% target.