

Malaria

The Integrated Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC-IHP)

has been working since 2010 to improve the health of the Congolese people in 78 health zones in four provinces. Funded by USAID and led by Management Sciences for Health, with partners International Rescue Committee and Overseas Strategic Consulting, Ltd. (OSC), the project focuses on maternal, newborn, and child health; family planning; nutrition, malaria, and tuberculosis; HIV and AIDS; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)—applying many proven, low-cost, high-impact innovations on a large scale.

DRC-IHP stresses low-cost, high-impact innovations that can be used by providers at all levels of the health system. This project has improved health services for more than 12 million people—17 percent of the Congolese population. Data modeling shows that DRC-IHP interventions saved the lives of more than 150,000 children over just three years.

Now replaced by DRC-IHPplus, the project has recently been expanded to 83 health zones through June 2016, with partners OSC and Pathfinder/Evidence to Action (E2A).

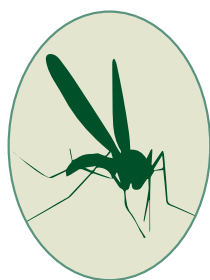
Integrated Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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STRATEGY

The DRC has one of the highest rates of malaria-related deaths in the world, particularly for children under five. Using a combination of approaches, DRC-IHP worked with the DRC's Ministry of Health to train health care professionals and community health workers in diagnosis and treatment, as well as to more effectively distribute **bed nets, medications, and rapid diagnosis tools.**

RESULTS

5000+

health workers (doctors, nurses, clinical officers, community health workers) were trained and —

2 million
BED NETS DISTRIBUTED

Insecticide-treated bed nets were distributed free to pregnant women and parents with children under five.

1.5 million
PREGNANT WOMEN

received at least two doses of sulfadoxine pyrimethamine to prevent malaria.

9.2 million
ACT TREATMENTS ADMINISTERED

Artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) treatments were procured and distributed.

3.9 million
RAPID DIAGNOSTIC TESTS PERFORMED

Rapid diagnostic tests were distributed to facilities.

DRC-IHP

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Malaria

Challenge: The Democratic Republic of Congo has one of the highest rates of malaria-related deaths in the world, particularly for children under five. As late as 2007, fewer than 8 percent of pregnant women and children under five slept under insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

DRC-IHP response: Working closely with the DRC's Ministry of Health, DRC-IHP organized a comprehensive malaria package in 68 health zones, providing:

- Mass distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, particularly for pregnant women and children under five;
- Training for health care professionals and community health workers in diagnosis and treatment;
- Effective medications, including drugs that prevent malaria among pregnant women and rectal artesunate for severe cases in children;
- Behavior change communication;
- Rapid diagnosis and treatment options within communities as well as facilities.

A Life-Saving Innovation: Rectal Artesunate



Although most malaria cases are easily treated, approximately six percent are severe and require hospitalization. Most of these occur in children under five, who might not survive the long trip from a rural home to the hospital.

Today, those with severe malaria can be given a strong treatment with a suppository—rectal artesunate—so they can make it to the hospital.

In 2012, DRC's national malaria program adopted pre-referral rectal artesunate treatment for severe malaria as part of its malaria strategy, for use in both health centers and integrated community-based care sites.

DRC-IHP organized research to see how well the new treatment might be accepted by health workers and parents. Implemented in 51 community care sites in 2014, the study showed encouraging preliminary results. DRC-IHP became the first project to introduce rectal artesunate in both health centers and community-based health sites in DRC.

IHP has trained more than 50 nurses and 70 community health workers in the new treatment. In December 2015, the project will measure its results.

Photo by Todd Shapera