

Fighting Malaria with High-Impact Interventions



According to the World Health Organization, malaria accounted for 655,000 deaths in 2010, 91 percent of which were in Africa and 90 percent of which were among children under age five. Abt Associates works in more than 15 African countries to introduce and sustain **“high-impact”** interventions to combat malaria thereby promoting health, education, and economic growth.

Experience in High-Impact Malaria Interventions

Conducting Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS)

Abt Associates is leading IRS projects that protect millions of people from malaria in the short term and build long-term capacity of ministries of health, national malaria control programs (NMCP), health facilities, NGOs, and community and business leaders in activities needed for successful IRS:

- Planning and forecasting for IRS programming
- Managing the supply chain for all insecticides and spray equipment/materials
- Conducting community sensitization on IRS benefits and mobilizing community support for IRS
- Carrying out spray campaigns in targeted areas in collaboration with district health offices and NMCPs
- Ensuring environmental compliance and safety of IRS materials and spray procedures
- Monitoring and evaluating IRS effectiveness
- Conducting entomological monitoring and surveillance to inform decision-making on type of insecticide and geographic area to cover

Abt is leading IRS in 12 countries under the USAID-funded President’s Malaria Initiative Africa Indoor Residual Spraying (PMI AIRS) Project, which has protected more than 36 million people from malaria since 2011. The PMI AIRS Project also conducts integrated vector management work in Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria. In Uganda under a separate USAID contract, Abt turned around a struggling IRS program that is now achieving more than 90 percent coverage rate and protecting 2.6 million people.



Photo Credit: Erin Schiavone

In Zambia, two Abt-led USAID-funded projects expanded IRS operations from 15 to 53 districts and built NMCP capacity in all aspects of IRS.

Improving Case Management

In Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia, and other high malaria burden countries, Abt is helping governments develop health policies, guidelines, manuals, and supervision strategies for case management, including diagnostics, as well as training facility-based and community health workers. By expanding the number of trained providers at community levels, early care-seeking for fever is expected to rise and mortality rates to fall in hard-to-reach populations.

- In Ethiopia, through the Private Health Sector Program, Abt expanded access to malaria services by supporting training of private sector providers.
- In Nigeria, through the USAID-funded Strengthening Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) Project, Abt worked closely with the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria and the Clinton Health Access Initiative to develop and deliver a training of trainers guide and curriculum to train proprietary patent medicine vendors on case management and treatment of malaria and other childhood illnesses. Also in Nigeria, Abt trained health workers in 283 facilities in case management and improved quality of service delivery by reconstituting moribund health facility committees and by working to address gaps in health information systems and supply chain management.
- In Mali, Abt partnered with the NMCP and other stakeholders to conduct health provider training of trainers on new malaria case management guidelines.

- In Zambia, Abt collaborated with the National Malaria Control Centre to update the malaria case management guidelines and trained 1,013 health workers from 77 districts in the diagnosis and treatment of uncomplicated and severe malaria.

Providing Intermittent Preventive Treatment for Pregnant Women (IPTp)

Abt helps countries develop and implement a comprehensive package of services for pregnant women, including IPTp, during their regular antenatal clinic visits. Working closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Zambia, Abt conducted a nationwide survey that found most health workers were not oriented to focused antenatal care (FANC). As a result, Abt supported the Ministry of Health to train health workers in FANC, including the use of IPTp to prevent malaria. In Mali, Abt helped the NMCP refine treatment and prevention policies, a critical step in introducing sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine for IPTp.

Long Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets (LLINs)

Abt is working to increase the use of LLINs. Through support for communications campaigns in Mali, Abt helped ensure that LLINs distributed through campaigns are used nightly.

Building Local Capacity and Sharing Best Practices

To facilitate the transition to full country ownership of national IRS programs, The PMI AIRS Project developed Country Capacity Assessments to help countries identify strengths and improve on weaknesses in their IRS programs. They also developed country-specific Capacity Building Action Plans to guide countries in their path to full country ownership of IRS. In Uganda, Abt worked with Gulu University to renovate an insectary for entomological monitoring and officially handed it over to the university. The insectary supports the university's undergraduate and master's degree programs in biological studies and increases the country's capacity to carry out entomological monitoring. In Mali, Abt built the capacity of health managers to monitor malaria control activities and evaluate if they are being carried out according to international best practices. District health managers were trained to monitor the distribution of LLINs and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine for IPTp.

Contributing to Global Efforts

Abt works in concert with international experts to accelerate progress in malaria control. In 2014, Abt's Dereje Dengela, was selected to be Co-Chair of the IRS Work Stream of the Vector Control Working Group. Abt has previously held board membership with Roll Back Malaria as well as membership in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's (GFATM) Finance and Operational Performance Committee.

Tackling Malaria through Health Systems Strengthening

Capacity building activities include work with ministries of health to improve forecasting, planning, financing, and management of health programs. With support in Mozambique, the MOH unclogged a massive pipeline of GFATM disbursements, allowing the country to meet strict deadlines for the first time.

Through system-wide interventions, such as development of community-based health insurance, Abt has increased access to malaria prevention and treatment. In Ghana, through the SHOPS Project, Abt is improving licensed chemical sellers' (LCS) access to accreditation with the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), thereby increasing availability of NHIA-supported malaria services in rural areas. Additionally, Abt helped make training on the new LCS malaria curricula a requirement for LCS licensure. Abt has worked closely with ministries of health and NMCPs in countries such as Burkina Faso to develop evidence-based national malaria strategies.

While significant evidence exists on the impact of malaria control strategies on prevention and treatment, there is less evidence of their broader impact on the health system, particularly on service utilization, resource use, and costs incurred. Abt assessed the impact of scaled-up malaria control activities on two health facilities in Zambia, finding that as malaria was better controlled in the hospitals' catchment areas, facility-level resources used for malaria treatment also declined, potentially freeing resources for treatment of other conditions.

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Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.

