**CHALLENGE**

The Government of Benin’s malaria strategy sets ambitious targets for the reduction of malaria as a public health threat. These include objectives for community, household, and individual malaria-prevention efforts such as universal use of appropriate bed nets and intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp2) for pregnant women.

**RESPONSE**

The project developed intensive health education and social mobilization efforts to encourage citizens to practice malaria prevention and seek early testing and treatment in the case of malaria symptoms.

**RESULTS**

BCC efforts were evaluated by comparing an area (Ouémé Plateau) that received BCC, with a control area without BCC (Mono Couffo). The results below are based on survey responses of women at health facilities in both areas.

- Proportion of pregnant women taking at least two doses of IPTp:
  - **IN CONTROL AREA:** 42%
  - **IN THE INTERVENTION AREA:** 66%

- Proportion of women with a child under 5 who reported sleeping under a net the night before:
  - **IN CONTROL AREA:** 82%
  - **IN THE INTERVENTION AREA:** 94%

**OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS**

The community-based case management system contributed significantly to overall results of ARM3:

- **PREGNANT WOMEN WHO RECEIVED IPTp2, 2011:** 23%
  - **2017:** 67%

- **MALARIA-RELATED MORTALITY RATE, 2011:** 12%
  - **2017:** 1%
STRATEGY AND METHODS

ARM3 supported ambitious NMCP behavior-change campaigns for malaria prevention and timely treatment.

- **BCC support for national bed net distribution campaigns** in 2014 and 2017. The latter campaign distributed 6.6 million long-lasting insecticidal nets.

- **Message development**: ARM3 assisted the NMCP to revise and validate messages stressing prevention, including using the bed nets, particularly for pregnant women and families with children under five.

- **Mass media**: Radio broadcasts with BCC programming reached close to half the population—approximately 4.5 million. ARM3 supported the NMCP to develop contracts with 15 radio stations for this purpose.

- **Training** of health workers in malaria education:
  - 2,384 doctors, nurses and other staff at health facilities
  - 1,214 community health workers

- **Social mobilization**, including health-education festivals, infotainment, theater performances, public discussions

- **The National Integrated Communication Plan, 2017–2021**: The project helped develop the new plan, which includes calls for participatory planning and messaging, and a national baseline survey of knowledge, attitudes, and practices on malaria.

BCC MESSAGING WITH BED NETS FILLS THE VOID OF INDOOR RESIDUAL SPRAYING

In the northwest Department of Ataora, years of residential spraying ended suddenly in 2017. Predictably, local malaria cases began to rise. The NMCP with ARM3 prepared not only a bed-net distribution campaign, but also an emergency program of BCC — using radio, town criers, theater and other community engagement, as well trainings for health workers, government, community, and religious leaders in malaria education.

Within weeks, case numbers had dropped to levels seen in previous years when spraying was practiced.

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