



© IVCC / Jed Stone

Unitaid and Malaria

Unitaid is funding better ways to control mosquitoes that spread malaria, protect children and pregnant women most endangered by the disease, and speed up access to the best tests, prevention tools and medicines.

What is malaria?

The *Plasmodium* parasite causes malaria. It is spread by infected mosquitoes. An estimated 445,000 people died of malaria in 2016. The victims are often small children and pregnant women.

Our latest initiatives

- **The New Nets Project (2018-2022):** Unitaid and the Global Fund have contributed US\$ 66 million in total to evaluate and pilot bed nets treated with new insecticide combinations in sub-Saharan Africa. The nets are expected to kill mosquitoes that have become resistant to previous generations of nets. Innovative Vector Control Consortium (IVCC) leads the project, with partners London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Population Services International (PSI) and PATH.
- **Vector Control Platform for Asia Pacific (VCAP):** Unitaid and the Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA) launched the VCAP web platform in July to boost development and use of vector control tools. It links regulators, policy-makers, industry, academia and the global health community. Better communication between partners will further the drive to eliminate malaria in Asia Pacific by 2030.

Prevention

- **At home:** Spraying houses with long-lasting insecticides has declined because mosquitoes have become resistant to familiar insecticides, and newer versions are too expensive. IVCC's NgenIRS (2016-2019) project to usher in affordable new insecticides is funded by a US\$ 65 million Unitaid grant.
- **In pregnancy:** In malaria-endemic areas, as much as 10 percent of maternal deaths are caused by malaria in pregnancy. Jhpiego's TIPTOP project (2017-2022) enlists community health workers to offer expectant mothers intermittent doses of sulfadoxine-pyramethamine, a medicine that prevents malaria. Unitaid contributes US\$ 50 million to the effort.

- **Scale-up success:** Unitaid funded the world's first large-scale pilot to find out if small children and babies in Africa's Sahel region could be protected from rainy-season malaria by a type of oral medication. The ACCESS-SMC project (2014-2018) averted an estimated 60,000 deaths and proved the method is effective and affordable. After Unitaid's project, the intervention was adopted by other funders such as the Global Fund and the World Bank.
- **Piloting a vaccine:** Unitaid is contributing about \$US 9.6 million to WHO's Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme to support a pilot of the world's first malaria vaccine.

Treatment

- **Better medicines:** Unitaid invested more than US\$ 3 million in Medicines for Malaria Venture to increase market availability of new, effective, affordable, user-friendly and quality-assured products for malaria.
- **Emergency measures:** Without immediate treatment, small children often die of severe malaria. A single rectal artesunate suppository can buy time for a child with severe malaria to make it to a healthcare facility for comprehensive treatment. Unitaid is providing US\$ 19 million to the CHAI RAS project (2017-2020) to make the suppositories more widely available to severely ill children.
- **Forecasting demand:** Unitaid supported two projects to provide market intelligence on ACTs, the artemisinin-based combination therapies that the WHO recommends for treating malaria.

Testing

- **Creating markets:** A US\$ 34 million Unitaid investment helped create a private sector market for quality-assured rapid diagnostic tests in five malaria-endemic countries. Unitaid invested another US\$ 9 million to help establish quality standards for such tests.

Among our malaria-fighting partners

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Clinton Health Access Initiative, Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, The Global Fund, Innovative Vector Control Consortium, Jhpiego, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Malaria Consortium, PATH, Medicines for Malaria Venture, Population Services International, President's Malaria Initiative, UNICEF, WHO's Global Malaria Programme.