Malaria is a disease that claims the lives of more than 400,000 people each year. Health systems, which include human resources for health (HRH), play a critical role in the fight against malaria.

Strengthening National Malaria Control Programs

Among its strategic approaches for 2015 to 2020, the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) focuses on building health system capacity. It provides technical assistance to National Malaria Control Programs (NMCPs) to help countries make the best use of their Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) grants. But health workforce challenges limit capacity to implement national program activities, negatively affecting grant performance. To address these challenges and build health system capacity to improve malaria control, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and PMI have placed long-term technical advisors to support NMCPs in countries that struggle the most to meet their malaria goals.

HRH2030 and Malaria

To streamline support to selected NMCP long-term technical advisors, PMI has turned to HRH2030, USAID’s flagship program for human resources for health. HRH2030’s Capacity Building for Malaria activity provides a framework to help advisors identify obstacles that prevent countries from achieving their malaria control goals.

Activity Objectives

1. Strengthen NMCPs’ institutional capacity to ensure effective implementation of high-quality malaria control services at all levels of the health system.

2. Support NMCPs’ leadership, health workforce, and procurement and supply management for successful implementation of GFATM’s funding model.

3. Improve long-term technical advisors’ and NMCPs’ technical knowledge and experience, and monitoring and evaluation management in malaria control.
With support from HRH2030, the advisors guide NMCP leadership in overcoming these obstacles using evidence-based approaches to improve management and overall effectiveness of their national malaria control programs. To ensure sustainability of this work, HRH2030 has laid the groundwork for learning exchange and sharing of best practices through the creation of an online platform and engagement of NMCP leaders in a community of practice.

**Approach**

HRH2030 works with long-term technical advisors in Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo. To ensure local ownership and long-term success, HRH2030’s Capacity Building for Malaria activity is based on the three core elements described below.

**Supporting Long-Term Technical Advisors to Address Capacity Needs**

HRH2030 uses a systematic and evidence-based approach to support long-term technical advisors and NMCPs to identify and resolve capacity gaps across several dimensions. These dimensions include supply chain management, leadership and governance, and strategic planning.

This approach is captured by the Capacity Maturity Model, Figure 1. Guided by this framework, the HRH2030 team engages with the technical advisors and supports NMCPs in a country-specific and contextually-appropriate way to address capacity needs, defining specific processes that can fulfill the NMCPs’ immediate strategic objectives. With each iterative improvement (based on a country’s and program’s available resources), an NMCP will move through the different levels of maturity across various dimensions linked to the activity’s objectives. The use of this framework ensures both ownership and sustained use by the NMCPs for continued assessment of their capacity maturity.

**Engaging NMCP Leadership**

By establishing a community of practice and platform for learning, HRH2030 builds the capacity of technical advisors and NMCP staff by facilitating information sharing across a large network. By providing a space for others to share their experiences, HRH2030 engages NMCP leadership and staff in continuous learning and collaborative problem-solving to build skills in universally important areas key to the sustainability of malaria control programs.

**Encouraging Use of Context-Appropriate Interventions and Tools**

HRH2030’s technical team provides supervision and implements a user-led learning structure to support technical advisors and their NMCP counterparts. The team works together to modify its approach to suit the individual country context and local infrastructure, encouraging capacity building through engagement with peers and mentors. Emerging technologies using smartphone capabilities for webinars, chat rooms, discussion threads, and a tool/resource library enhance the learning and doing process.

![Image](image_url)
In 2017, HRH2030’s technical advisor contributed to a review of progress made on Cameroon’s 2014-2018 Malaria Strategic Plan. The culmination of this review will result in a renewed strategy developed with the country’s NMCP for a National Malaria Strategic Plan to cover the period 2019-2023.

In 2017, HRH2030 advanced the malaria commodities supply chain in Niger by improving reliability of logistics data and enhancing staff capacity to use available data for decision-making. The HRH2030 technical advisor worked with NMCP colleagues to develop new tools and upgrade existing tools for commodities management at the central level; provided data analysis support, including how to flag discrepancies; and developed supply chain indicators for malaria commodities for improved monitoring and evaluation.

In 2017, HRH2030 reviewed Côte d’Ivoire’s LLIN campaign distribution data and worked with the NMCP coordination team to evaluate the data on distributed LLINs to find residual households. HRH2030’s technical advisor supported the NMCP coordination team to organize a distribution campaign of more than 9.3 million LLINs in 52 of the country’s 83 health districts.

In 2018, HRH2030’s technical advisor contributed to a review of progress made on Guinea’s 2019 mass distribution campaign of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs). Forecasts showed the need for the NMCP to find nearly 3.5 million additional nets for effective prevention of malaria in the coming year. HRH2030 helped organize a stakeholder outreach meeting on the resource gap, resulting in a partnership with the Against Malaria Foundation for the free supply of three million LLINs to Guinea.

In 2018, HRH2030 supported the NMCP to design a study protocol on the level of adherence to malaria treatment by health workers and patients in four health facilities across the western region of Sierra Leone, including Freetown. In addition, HRH2030’s technical advisor mentored NMCP staff and local partners to develop a training plan for both public and private health workers in all 14 districts of the country. HRH2030 also developed coaching plans to improve the capacity of the NMCP to pilot malaria testing in private pharmacies in five major cities nationwide.

9.3 million long-lasting insecticide-treated nets distributed in Côte d’Ivoire in 52 of the country’s 83 health districts
About HRH2030

HRH2030 strives to build the accessible, available, acceptable, and high-quality health workforce needed to improve health outcomes.

Global Program Objectives

1. Improve performance and productivity of the health workforce. Improve service delivery models, strengthen in-service training capacity and continuing professional development programs, and increase the capacity of managers to manage HRH resources more efficiently.

2. Increase the number, skill mix, and competency of the health workforce. Ensure that educational institutions meet students’ needs and use curriculum relevant to students’ future patients. This objective also addresses management capability of pre-service institutions.

3. Strengthen HRH/HSS leadership and governance capacity. Promote transparency in HRH decisions, strengthen the regulatory environment, improve management capacity, reduce gender disparities, and improve multi-sectoral collaboration for advancing the HRH agenda.

4. Increase sustainability of investment in HRH. Increase the utilization of HRH data for accurate decision-making with the aim of increasing investment in educating, training, and managing a fit-for-purpose and fit-for-practice health workforce.

Program Partners

— Chemonics International
— American International Health Alliance (AIHA)
— Amref Health Africa
— Open Development
— Palladium
— ThinkWell
— University Research Company (URC)

www.hrh2030program.org

This material is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of cooperative agreement no. AID-OAA-A-15-00046 (2015-2020). The contents are the responsibility of Chemonics International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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