

# *The Role of Communication in Malaria Control in Africa*

Concept Paper for the First RBM  
Communication Working Group Meeting

September, 2003



## **RBM Strategies**

1. Rapid, effective treatment within 24 hours
2. Widespread use of ITNs
3. IPT during pregnancy in high transmission areas
4. Detection and appropriate response to epidemics



## Communication Challenges: Promoting Proper, Effective treatment

- Poor symptom recognition
- Complacency about malaria
- Improper treatment practices
- Poor quality anti-malarials in private sector
- Outdated malaria treatment policies
- Introducing new drug policies



## Communication Challenges: ITN use

- Knowledge of malaria transmission
- Complacency about malaria
- Poor acceptance of ITNs
- Treating and retreating rare
- Preference for environmental vector control measures
- Usage least likely among most vulnerable
- Ineffective advocacy for policy changes



## Communication Challenges: Malaria prevention in pregnancy

- IPT still not policy in some places
- Integrating malaria control with antenatal care
- Worries about SP safety during pregnancy
- Poor understanding of the rationale for IPT



## Communication Challenges: Epidemic response

- Over-reporting epidemics
- Need for rapid information
- Involving communities



## Communication Challenges: Cross-cutting issues

- Ineffective advocacy and communication skills among Malaria Control Programmes
- Conflicting malaria information from other health sectors
- Low status and poor appreciation for communication
- Inadequate time and resources for strategic communication
- Malaria communication rarely evaluated



## Conceptual Framework: The Role of Communication in Malaria Control

Domains for Malaria  
Communication Interventions

Social Political  
Environment

Advocacy for policy change, coalition building, communicating policy change

Service Delivery  
System

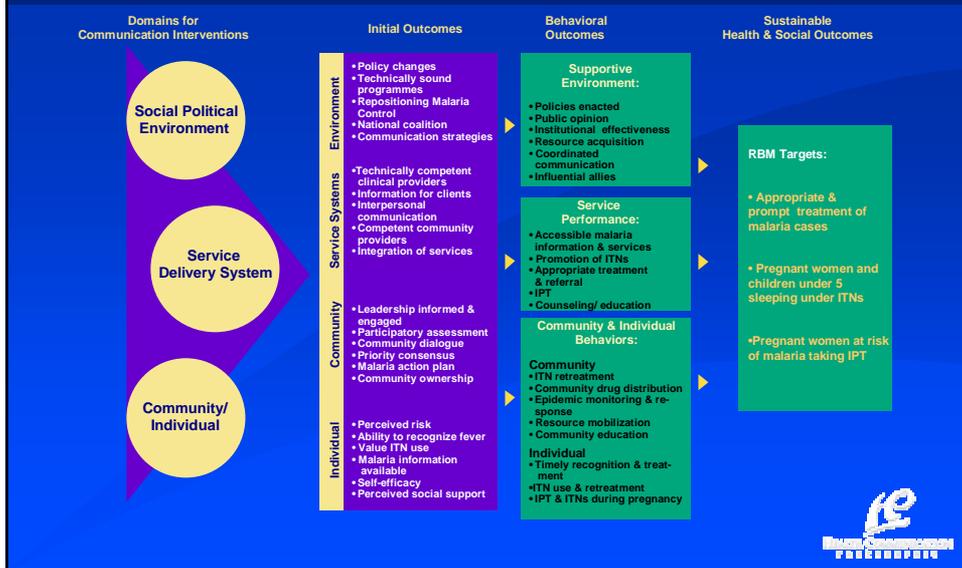
Interpersonal communication skills, job aids, client materials, branding and media promotion

Community/  
Individual

Mass media, community mobilization, interpersonal communication



# Conceptual Framework: The Role of Communication in Malaria Control



## Social and Political Environment

- **Advocacy to:**
  - introduce new programmes/policies
  - address societal and environmental factors
  - garner active support and involvement of influencers
  - reposition Malaria Control Programmes
- **Communicating Policy change:**
  - among health care system, private sector, community

## Service Delivery System

### Making Malaria Services more Accessible

- socially marketing ITNs, prepackaged drugs
- over-branding drugs that meet government standards and promoting them
- raising awareness of community services



## Service Delivery System

### Improving the Quality of Client-Provider Interactions

- job aides
- client materials
- interpersonal communication skills training



## Community and Individual

### Changing household practices

- Multi-channel approaches to increase perceived risk, change attitudes, inform
- Interpersonal channels to give instructions, correct information, build a sense of self-efficacy and social support
- Community channels to inform, educate, reassure about safety and effectiveness



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## Community and Individual

### Mobilizing communities for malaria control

- Participatory assessment and prioritization
- Information sharing
- Community dialogue and planning
- Collective action (Eg. net re-treatment, community drug distributors, shared transportation)



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