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VECTOR)WORKS
Scaling Up Vector Control for Malaria Prevention

VectorWorks Zimbabwe Annual Report – Year 1

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Background

VectorWorks is a five-year global malaria prevention project funded by the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). The purpose of the VectorWorks project is to support countries to achieve and maintain high levels of coverage and use of long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), as well as to facilitate the adoption of proven alternative vector management interventions, including those targeting specific sites or populations. VectorWorks activities focus on three main areas: policy, monitoring and evaluation, and implementation support.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: Policy—Develop and promote policies at both the international and national levels to encourage sustained, high levels of coverage and use of ITNs and/or alternative vector management interventions.

Objective 2: Monitoring and Evaluation—Design, conduct, and analyze results from monitoring, evaluation, and operational research activities in order to improve current best practices of ITNs and/or alternative vector management interventions.

Objective 3: Implementation—Promote and support country-level implementation of malaria prevention activities to ensure sustained, high-level coverage and use of ITNs and, as needed, targeted coverage and appropriate use of alternative vector management interventions.

Summary of Activities

In Zimbabwe, about 4,355,000 ITNs were distributed in 48 districts from 2012 to 2014 through mass distribution campaigns to ensure that all people at risk of malaria (60% of total population) had access to an ITN. Further plans are under way for another mass ITN distribution in 2016 to replace the ITNs distributed in the previous mass distribution campaigns. Beyond the 2016 mass distributions, Zimbabwe plans to channel ITNs to households on a continuous basis to help sustain coverage levels. These channels include antenatal care clinics, Expanded Programme on Immunization, schools, and community (using village health workers). The objective of the continuous ITN distribution in Zimbabwe is to help sustain the agreed national target of 90% ITN coverage.

VectorWorks developed a guideline document for implementing ITN continuous distribution through the proposed channels and is currently using it for the pilot implementation of ITN continuous distribution in four selected districts (Mount Darwin and Mazowe districts in Mashonaland Central Province, and Hurungwe and Makonde districts in Mashonaland West Province). Zimbabwe will use lessons from the ITN continuous distribution pilot to scale up implementation in all districts at risk of malaria beyond 2016.

Technical assistance for ITN continuous distribution

In Year 1, the VectorWorks project provided technical support to the Zimbabwe National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) and its partners in the implementation of the ITN continuous distribution pilot. The project supported the NMCP and Population Services International (PSI) both remotely and in country to plan, implement, and monitor health facility-based, community-based, and school-based ITN distributions in participating districts.

Support for microplanning and monitoring of school-based ITN distribution

During the year, the NMCP and implementing partners agreed to conduct school-based ITN distribution in all districts of the Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West provinces instead of only four pilot districts as earlier planned. The VectorWorks project provided support to the in-country partners for the microplanning and monitoring of activities for the successful implementation of the school-based ITN distribution in the two provinces in September 2015.

Process evaluation of ITN continuous distribution pilot

In order to assess the effectiveness of implementation of activities and also document challenges and lessons for future scale-up, the VectorWorks project conducted a process evaluation of the ITN continuous distribution pilot in July 2015. The project has shared an evaluation report with PMI, NMCP, and PSI.

Challenges

There was a delay in the start of ITN continuous distribution activities in one district (Mazowe District) in Mashonaland Central Province due to delays in planned related studies in this district. Also during the year, a number of planned activities could not be implemented according to the anticipated timelines in the remaining three pilot districts. This was due to the schedules and availability of key personnel at all levels. The project surmounted this challenge by working closely with these key personnel to plan and reschedule activities for effective implementation. Future timelines for activity implementation should closely consider schedules of key government personnel and competing activities.

Opportunities

During the implementation process of the ITN continuous distribution pilot, the project used lessons learned in its review of activities and tools and to inform better implementation. VectorWorks will apply these lessons in other countries where the project supports implementation of ITN continuous distribution.

The progress report below includes detailed updates on activities conducted in Year 1 as approved by the USAID/Zimbabwe mission.

Progress Report

ZM.1 Technical Assistance for ITN Continuous Distribution Pilot

Progress report: In January 2015, the field operations director of the VectorWorks project had a conference call with the PMI/Zimbabwe and in-country implementing partners to discuss and plan activities for the ITN continuous distribution pilot. This meeting informed the finalization of a work plan that VectorWorks submitted to the USAID/Zimbabwe mission for approval. Throughout Year 1, the field operations director had regular conference calls and also face-to-face in-country meetings with PSI, the key in-country implementing partner, and NMCP to discuss updates, challenges, and recommendations for the implementation of the ITN continuous distribution pilot in the four selected districts. Agreed-upon recommendations were effected at all levels to improve ITN distribution activities.

In April 2015, the field operations director provided orientation for the national, provincial, and district monitoring teams on intensive supervision for health facility-based ITN distribution. As part of the orientation process, the field operations director also led the teams to conduct intensive supervision visits to a few health facilities implementing ITN distribution in Makonde District. The national, provincial, and district monitoring teams used the experience from these initial visits for the supervision of ITN distribution in the remaining health facilities in the pilot districts.

Deliverable	Audience	Timing	Dissemination Plan	Status
Meeting notes and recommendations on challenges being faced during implementation	PMI, MOH, NMCP, PSI	Q2–Q4	Soft copies of meeting notes will be shared with audience via e-mail	Complete. Shared meeting notes and updates with PMI, PSI, and NMCP.
Trip report on orientation for national-level monitoring team, and the initial stage of intensive monitoring	PMI, MOH, NMCP, PSI	Q2	Trip report and meeting with PMI/Zimbabwe	Conducted debriefing meeting with PMI/Zimbabwe in April 2015. Shared trip report with all stakeholders in May 2015.

ZM.2 Support for Microplanning and Monitoring of School-Based ITN Distribution

Progress report: During the monthly update calls, the VectorWorks project discussed implementation of school-based ITN distribution. In these calls the project confirmed that country partners had agreed to implement school-based ITN distribution to all districts in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West provinces, and not limit it to the [four](#) pilot districts only.

Distribution in schools was planned for September 2015. Based on the new plan and proposed preparatory activities, the project developed a revised draft school ITN distribution implementation schedule and shared it with PSI for further review and finalization with in-country stakeholders. This implementation schedule outlined the preparatory activities and the proposed timing for implementation, phasing activities out in both provinces in order to conduct them effectively. In April 2015, the VectorWorks project received and reviewed the data from schools for ITN quantification and discussed the process for verifying enrollment data. PSI used the final implementation schedule and the school enrollment data in the planning and implementation of school-based ITN distribution in the two provinces.

The VectorWorks project's field operations director was also in country in September 2015 to support partners in the detailed microplanning for the successful implementation of school-based ITN distribution. The field operations director also joined the national monitoring team to monitor distribution activities that had started at some levels in both provinces by September 2015. The monitoring visits also served as an opportunity for the collection of further information on challenges, best practices, and recommendations for future scale-up of the school-based ITN distribution process. VectorWorks shared a trip report with recommendations for further improvement in the school-based ITN distribution process with PSI and PMI.

Deliverable	Audience	Timing	Dissemination Plan	Status
Finalized implementation schedule for school-based ITN distribution activities in the pilot districts	PMI, MOH, MOE, NMCP, DEOs, PSI	Q2	Soft copies of final implementation schedule to be shared via email	Complete. Shared final implementation schedule with all stakeholders and used it for planning and implementation of school-based ITN distribution.
Finalized district- and school-level ITN quantification for the two provinces	PMI, MOH, MOE, NMCP, DEOs, PSI	Q3	Share final quantifications with audience via email	Complete. Shared final ITN quantifications with all stakeholders at all levels and used them to guide ITN supplies to schools in September 2015.
Trip report on monitoring of school-based ITN distribution in the two provinces	PMI, MOH, MOE, NMCP, PSI	Q4	Share trip report and meet with PMI/Zimbabwe	Conducted debriefing meeting with PMI/Zimbabwe in September 2015. Shared trip report with all stakeholders in October 2015.

ZM.3 Process Evaluation of ITN Continuous Distribution Pilot

To inform scale-up of ITN continuous distribution in Zimbabwe, the VectorWorks project conducted a process evaluation of the ongoing pilot in the two provinces. The objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Document the processes involved in the continuous distribution of ITNs through antenatal care clinics, Expanded Programme on Immunization, community, and schools.
- Identify issues and challenges that emerged during the implementation of the pilot.
- Identify best practices and provide recommendations to inform the scale-up of ITN continuous distribution.

Progress report: The VectorWorks project developed a research protocol for the process evaluation of the ITN continuous distribution pilot with input from in-country stakeholders. The Johns Hopkins University institutional review board (IRB) and the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe reviewed and approved this research protocol.

The VectorWorks project conducted fieldwork for the process evaluation in July 2015 in selected districts in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West provinces. Project staff conducted field activities with PMI, NMCP, and PSI. VectorWorks submitted a trip report and final process evaluation report to PMI and implementing partners. The process evaluation report outlined detailed recommendations for all aspects and activities for ITN continuous distribution.

Given that the ITN continuous distribution scale-up is planned to commence beyond the 2016 mass distributions (over a year from the writing of this report), Zimbabwe is well positioned to plan a successful and large-scale ITN continuous distribution program as it has adequate time to use the recommendations from this pilot.

Deliverable	Audience	Timing	Dissemination Plan	Status
Finalized protocol for IRB (local and JHU) approval, as needed	PMI, MOH, MOE, NMCP, PSI	Q2	Submit copies of protocol to local and JHU IRB	Finalized and submitted the protocol and received approval from local and JHU IRB in April 2015.
Trip report on process evaluation	PMI, MOH, MOE, NMCP, PSI	Q3	Share trip report and meet with PMI/Zimbabwe	Conducted debriefing meeting with PMI/ Zimbabwe in July 2015. Shared trip report with stakeholders in September 2015.
Final report on process evaluation of ITN continuous distribution pilot	PMI, MOH, MOE, NMCP, PSI	Q4	Share copies of final report with audience via email	Complete. Shared final report with all stakeholders in September 2015.

ZM.PM.1 Work Plan and Reporting

Progress report: The VectorWorks project developed and submitted a work plan to the USAID/Zimbabwe mission in January 2015 for approval. VectorWorks submitted a semiannual report on the project's planned activities and progress to PMI in May 2015. This report is in fulfillment of agreed plans to submit an annual report on the project's progress throughout the year of implementation.

Deliverable	Audience	Timing	Dissemination Plan	Status
Annual work plan approved by PMI/Zimbabwe	PMI	Q2	Share copies of work plan with audience via email	Submitted annual work plan to PMI in January 2015.
Semiannual and annual progress reports	PMI	Q2, Q4	Share copies of reports with audience via email	Submitted semiannual report in May 2015. Submitted annual report in November 2015.