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BURUNDI

SNAPSHOT

“They keep us healthy”—Bed-nets a bonus at the ante-natal and vaccination clinics



Photo: Carole Douglis

Over the last four years, the Agency has helped Burundian families avoid malaria by distributing insecticide-treated nets.



Photo: Carole Douglis

Clad in a rainbow of colors and frills, the moms spill from the waiting rooms into the corridor, holding babies who are bouncing, sleeping, and crying.

It's a busy day at a clinic outside Bujumbura, Burundi. It's the day that women can come for antenatal checkups, bring their babies and small children for vaccinations—and also receive insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

When asked whether bed nets really do prevent malaria, the mothers shout a chorus of responses: “Yes, they are important!” “That’s one of the why we came.” “They keep us healthy.” One in particular stands out: “We’ve slept under a net for six years now. In my family, before that, each person would get malaria three or four times a year. Now we go from one year to the next with no one getting sick.”

Net distribution at ante-natal clinics and on immunization days nationwide is a key part of the Government of Burundi’s Malaria Control Program since pregnant women and children under five are the most vulnerable to malaria. Eighty-five percent of the nets distributed nationwide are donated by USAID. Over the last four years the Agency has donated 2,375,000 bed nets.

In addition, in a ground-breaking pilot program, USAID has trained over 402 community-level health workers to quickly diagnose malaria in children using rapid tests and immediately treat those who test positive, saving many lives.

Since 2000, malaria-related mortality rates have fallen by more than 20 percent at the hospital level and morbidity dropped by 30 percent.

“We are proud to have helped Burundi accomplish a dramatic reduction in malaria deaths,” said Dawn Liberi, U.S. Ambassador to Burundi. “Though there’s more to do, this is a striking success of the partnership between the American and Burundi people.”

For more stories of our work in Burundi and around the world, please see <http://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories>