

Report Panel III

Get back on track: Ending Malaria

By Olivia Ngou, Cameroon



Get back on track!

The contribution of the
Global Fund to achieve the
Sustainable Development Goals

International Conference
September 08, 2022 – Berlin

#GetBackOnTrack

ACTION AGAINST AIDS GERMANY
ONE
World Vision
Friends of the Global Fund Europe
GLOBAL CITIZEN
DSW youth car

*This article was written on the occasion of our conference held with partner organisations on 08 September 2022: "Get back on track! The Global Fund's contribution to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals". We asked **Olivia Ngou**, Executive Director of Impact Sante Afrique and Global Coordinator CS4ME (Civil Society for Malaria), Cameroon to write about her impressions of the third panel discussion on "#GetBackOnTrack! Ending malaria", taking into account the perspective of communities living with HIV, TB and malaria. We deliberately did not ask for an objective account of the discussions and the proceedings of the session. The text was translated by us from English into German. We would like to thank Olivia for her contribution!*

Panelists: **Dr Corine Karema**, CEO Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership to End Malaria, **Elise Mballa Meka**, Mayor of the Commune Akom II and Malaria Activist in Cameroon, **Harriet Ludwig**, Senior Policy Officer, Ministry of Cooperation and Development Aid, Division of global health, **Mirjam Grosse Rueschkamp**, Unitaid Senior Advisor to Executive Director. The panel was moderated by **Jan-Thilo Klimisch**, cbm and **Daniel Townsend**, Focal Point Global Fund NGO Delegation, Germany.

Should we be still be optimistic about defeating malaria!?

A group of talented women engaged in different ways presenting their views experiences and thoughts on how we must as a global community get back on track to defeat malaria. The diverse panel represents what is needed to defeat malaria; a multi-lateral collaboration across different sectors: local political leaders mobilizing domestic resources, international donors contributing to this global mission, technical partners driving research and innovations, country malaria program manager (former) with the operational knowledge, global partnership to coordinate efforts and increase advocacy, raising the alarm about the urgency to finish the job.



Well the good news from **Dr Corine Karema**, is that the Global fund supports 50% of the malaria funding needed. With other partners such as Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the US President Malaria Initiative and countries efforts— malaria deaths decreased by 60% and 2/3 of malaria cases and millions of lives were saved in just 15 years since 2000.

This means if we kept the same efforts with consistency, we could in 2030 get to zero mortality of malaria!? Well **Unfortunately progress have slowed down:** for the last 3 years we are going



backward, we are not track to end malaria. We still have 627 000 people dying of malaria each year, one child is still dying every minute due to malaria. We are seeing since last year an increase of cases of malaria. We notice the slow mobilization of malaria funding, and COVID 19 Pandemic had a major impact on the malaria programs. We know that malaria is a disease of poverty and we are not yet

targeting all people who don't have access to malaria services. If cases continue to increase, we will lose the gains we have made before. **Dr Corine Karema** alarmed us about the current malaria situation and the risks of going backward.

We are no longer on track and that's not good news.



But what about countries, what they are doing to fight malaria? what are local leaders doing at their levels to reverse this situation so we can get back on track. **Mrs Elisabeth Mballa** a local mayor of AKOM II bringing together 50 villages with a total 30,000 people presented the work she is doing at the country level (Cameroon). As a woman, a mother a caregiver and now a leader. A leader who noticed many cases of malaria among children and women in the villages and who decided to do something about it. As a mayor she invested local resources of the council to support Community Health Workers (CHWs) to bring malaria services (prevention rapid diagnosis and treatment) in the communities who live far from health centers. What she didn't say and I know is that these Community Health Workers have tested and treated (thus saved) hundreds of children, more than the district hospitals in that area. It shows that malaria is disease happening the community level and should be addressed there as well. Her program has a direct impact on 30,000 people. I can only imagine what if each mayor in each city or council in each endemic country did the same? Investing in Community Health Workers to close the gap between the most vulnerable groups and access to lifesaving tools and services for malaria. Mayor Elise Meka, on this is now engaging 20 other women mayors in Cameroon to invest in Community Health Workers. bravo! this is good news. We need more local leaders like this, we need more cases like AKOM II where domestic resources contributed to the fight and fill the gaps. **if we can do this largely in many countries, we all surely get back on track.**

But what else is needed to finish the job and defeat malaria?



Money is not endless we need to make the best use of it said **Harriet Ludwig**, Senior Policy Officer, Ministry of Cooperation and Development Aid. From her point of view, we to take integrated approaches with other diseases programs like TB, HIV/AIDS, vaccinations to get back on track. **We need to make smart investment such increasing funding for health system strengthening** which will benefit the three diseases malaria TB and HIV. making smart investments is

key.

From Unitaid, **Mirjam Grosse Rueschkamp**, getting back on track means **bringing innovations to the fight against malaria and ensuring access and low cost of the quality tools for vulnerable groups**. Working with Global Fund and implementing partners is key to achieve those objectives. For example, getting seasonal malaria chemoprevention treatment to countries eligible has helped save 33 million children. In addition to this, getting the first malaria vaccine to children in Africa is a breakthrough moment in malaria history. New tools will definitely get us back on track to end malaria.



In conclusion are we able to get back on track? To achieve the 2030 malaria goals?

Corine Karema outlined the following points

- We need to remind ourselves malaria is not a fatality. it is unacceptable to have malaria! The good news is that more and more countries are eliminating malaria, 21 countries to be exact have done so in the last 10 years.
- Smart investments are key. We are striving to use more efficiently the resources we have especially the data for decision making, knowing where the highest burden is and targeting interventions.
- Innovations are needed. Right now, on the pipeline we have new vaccines, new generation of mosquito nets showing 44% decrease of malaria, seasonal chemo malaria prevention and upcoming new treatments coming.

- Political will & more domestic funding from endemic countries are essential. Gladly today We are seeing more endemic countries committing more resources for malaria such as the recently 2.2 Billion \$ engagement at the commonwealth summit.

Finally, together we should get to work, creating partnerships, synergies, uniting efforts as a global community, making a good use of resources and data we have, raising more funding to accelerate the fight and getting to the vulnerable communities are missing now. If we can do this well, we can get back on track to end malaria.

I am optimistic and you should too.

Olivia Ngou:



Olivia Ngou is the founder and Executive Director of **Impact Santé Afrique an African based NGO a women led organization focusing on malaria advocacy, community engagement** . Prior launching ISA, she led the Cameroon and Africa programs for Malaria No More helping to keep malaria high on the agenda and rally political, celebrities , private sector and communities leaders around the cause. Olivia began her experience on malaria at the Special Envoy for Malaria at the United Nations; during that time she taught a public health course at the City University of New York: Health of the Wellness Project for undergraduate’s students at CITY College. She also worked with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control as a research

assistant and, she was a fellow of the Harvard University Science of Eradication Malaria Leadership Course. She holds a master degree in Public Health.

Olivia has a great passion public health & the fight against malaria and maternal and child health; She is based in Cameroon, central Africa. she is striving to make her humble contribution to help create a world where no dies from a mosquito bite. She is committed to ensuring communities are included in malaria and health programs as equal partners. She recently elaborated a guide on community issues, social rights and gender in malaria programs and tool for malaria civil society to increase participating in Global Fund mechanisms.

She co-founded and established the first Global Network of Civil Society for Malaria Elimination (CS4ME) which she now coordinates with more than 450 members from 43 countries. She also coordinates the GFAN AFRICA francophone platform to increase advocacy for the fight against malaria TB and HIV/AIDS in francophone Africa. She was the recipient of the prestigious REACH THE LAST MILE 2019 CHAMPION award. She is also a member of the Global Fund Communities Delegation to the Board, A member of the

advisory group of the Community Rights & Gender of the Global Fund, a Steering Committee Member of the RBM partnership to end malaria advocacy committee, & A member of the WHO Global Chemoprevention malaria advisory group. Through her NGO **impact santé Afrique**, She is supporting civil society including , community based, youth faith based and women led organizations and as well national malaria programs in to increase local advocacy, malaria gender transformative programs, community engagement and domestic resource mobilization for health. For more information about her work www.impactssante.org

Action against AIDS Germany

Sept 2022

Contact: info@aid-kampagne.de

Photos: Alexej Stoljarov