

RESULTS IN ACTION

CREATING A FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE CONTEXT ENHANCES MALARIA E-TRACKER IN GHANA

BACKGROUND

CHISU in Ghana is collaborating with the National Malaria Elimination Program (NMEP) to strengthen the health management information system to improve malaria data quality and use by increasing data availability, attaining interoperability of quality health data and information systems, and improving data analysis and use in the country. Malaria parasitemia has declined significantly in Ghana from 50–75 percent in 2002 to 14 percent in 2019, bringing the country closer to its goal of malaria elimination. CHISU is supporting the implementation of the Ghana Malaria Strategic Plan (2021-2025), where one of the objectives is to strengthen malaria surveillance, monitoring, and evaluation systems towards the target of “achieving malaria pre-elimination in at least six districts in Ghana by 2025.”



Photo: Facilitator presenting at DAIVT workshop.

The NMEP has earmarked six districts in Ghana for malaria pre-elimination and has introduced a malaria DHIMS2 (District Health Information Management System) e-tracker into these districts to capture transactional data and improve the quality of data. Staff in the six selected districts were trained on its use to capture relevant data.

CHALLENGE

A three-day workshop, designed to improve malaria data analysis, interpretation, visualization, and use (DAIVT) was organized for malaria data focal persons and data managers from public and selected private health facilities in the six districts targeted for malaria pre-elimination. CHISU supported a two-day technical meeting in Aburi with personnel from the NMEP and the Center for Health Information Management (CHIM) to finalize the content and prepare facilitators for the workshop. Part of the objectives of the technical meeting was to include key indicators for monitoring performance as well as address any technical issues that may affect analysis of data in the e-tracker.

A few key issues emerged over the course of content preparation:

- There were challenges with downloading previously uploaded data from the application
- The analytical dashboard for the e-tracker was not functional
- E-tracker training materials were out of date
- Some key indicators for monitoring performance were yet to be added to the e-tracker

SOLUTION + PROCESS

After identifying these issues, the CHISU team, in collaboration with CHIM and the NMEP, took steps to address the challenges.

Missing pre-elimination indicators: In the technical meeting, the NMEP provided key malaria pre-elimination indicators, which were added to the malaria e-tracker by the CHIM team: proportion of suspected malaria cases that receive a parasitological test in health facilities; malaria test positivity rate; slide positivity rate; and confirmed malaria cases per 1000 persons per year. These changes were made in time for the Koforidua training workshop.

Data download issues: The training team discovered that every data download request from the e-tracker resulted in the download of the first 100 records, no matter the quantity selected for download. The CHIM team diagnosed the issue, which was resolved within three days.

Deactivated malaria e-tracker dashboard: Though the analytical dashboard that facilitates and simplifies data analysis and interpretation for the malaria e-tracker had been developed, CHISU and the training team discovered during the facilitator training that it was not activated for users. CHISU and the training team flagged the issue to CHIM, who activated the dashboard in advance of the Koforidua workshop.

Outdated and misaligned training materials: The training team discovered that the e-tracker training guide and video tutorials were not updated to the current interfaces, uses, and operations. To address this, a member of the training team from CHIM was tasked with producing updated videos for the participants, and other CHIM team members were assigned to update the training guide. This led to the quick production of training material corresponding to the malaria e-tracker interfaces and operations, which were ready to be used during the Koforidua training workshop.

The Country Health Information Systems and Data Use (CHISU) program is USAID's flagship data and information system project to strengthen host country capacity and leadership to manage and use high quality health information systems to improve evidence-based decision-making.

RESULTS IN ACTION



Figure 1: Example of Dynamic e-Tracker Dashboard Developed by a Participant.

IMPACT

Following the technical meeting, all identified issues were resolved in time for the Koforidua workshop, ensuring that participants could interact with a functional system that had appropriate training materials. This quick response demonstrates how CHISU's approach to government stakeholder involvement facilitates not only high-quality capacity building, but also flexible and responsive technical support.

By providing a platform for stakeholders to develop and review training content, CHISU ensured training materials were suitable and facilitators were well prepared; it also provided an opportunity to pivot and address emerging needs with the system itself. CHISU has also demonstrated that the program is adaptive, responsive to challenges, and well positioned to support all aspects of Malaria HIS strengthening initiatives in Ghana.