

FULLY FUND THE GLOBAL FUND: ENDING MALARIA IN A COVID WORLD BRIEF



Securing a world where no one dies from a mosquito bite is a reality that is entirely within our reach. Malaria is an age-old mosquito-borne disease, and one of the world's most fatal infectious diseases. Malaria killed 627,000 people in 2020, according to WHO¹. It is also both a cause and a consequence of poverty². Massive strides have been made in malaria elimination efforts over the past decade; from 2010-2020, mortality decreased 36% and more than 1.7 billion cases were prevented³. **In countries where the Global Fund invests, malaria deaths have reduced by 45% between 2019 and 2022⁴.**

Increased funding and political commitment focused on accelerating innovation, taking proven tools to scale, increasing surveillance and use of real-time data to optimize those tools in a locally-tailored approach are what is needed to meet the goal to end malaria by 2030⁵. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, we need to ramp up our collective efforts to maintain and accelerate our progress towards a malaria-free world. Without continuous innovations to address growing threats of insecticide and antimalarial drug resistance, and strong commitment to implement evidence-based malaria programmes, progress towards elimination threaten to reverse.

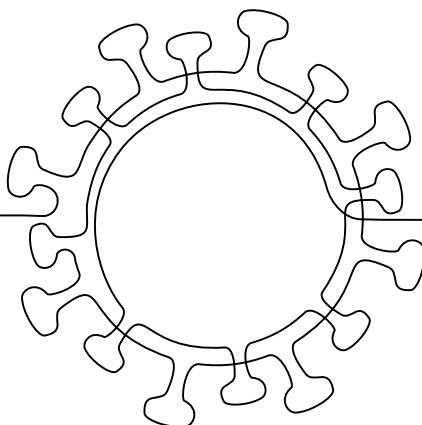
Despite the incredible challenges posed by COVID-19 for many countries on health systems, communities and households, the pandemic has also ushered in a wave of innovations, program adaptations and success stories in fighting malaria. China and El Salvador's malaria-free certifications in February 2021 show the global community that malaria elimination is still within our reach⁸.

Ambitious investment now will speed the pace of progress by harnessing and targeting the use of innovations that will make accessible new diagnostic tools, vector control approaches, and antimalarial medicines. It will also allow for the roll out of RTS,S – the world's first WHO-recommended malaria vaccine. Bold investments now will reduce exponential costs in the future by averting malaria resurgence and tackling threats brought by increasing drug and insecticide resistance⁹.

In fact, in 2020, estimated malaria deaths rose by 69,000 as a result of disruptions in malaria diagnosis and treatment due to COVID-19⁶. Though the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic has intensified challenges and disrupted essential malaria services, in countries where the Global Fund invest, malaria programmes have proven remarkably resilient. From 2019 to 2020, mosquito net distribution increased by 17%, residual spraying by 3% and pregnant women receiving preventative treatment by 1%. Where there were setbacks, they were limited: the number of cases tested dropped “only” by 4%, and the number of cases treated by only 0.5%. However, this welcome resilience should not hide the fact that we are not on track to meet the 2030 target of eliminating malaria as a global health threat. Low burden countries are making progress towards elimination, with eight countries achieved elimination in just the last 5 years. However, since 2016 the momentum of progress has slowed considerably in the highest burden countries.

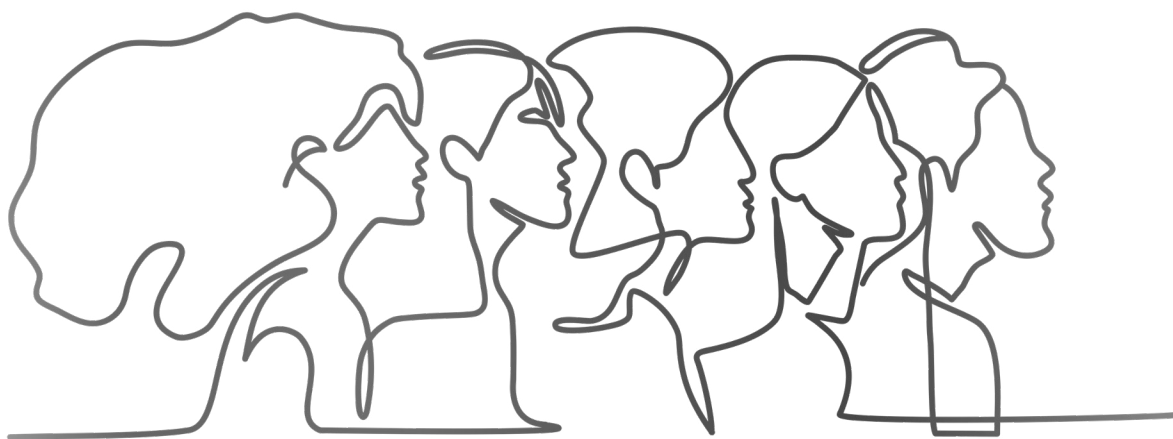
Ambitious investment and action today in malaria elimination means accelerated transformative change. This change will save millions of lives⁷, protect households and communities from poverty and illness and build strong economies. It will also bring more resilient health system and fortify the community-led responses that will stamp out the pandemics of today and tomorrow.

This Issue Brief outlines why **bold investment in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria during its 7th Replenishment offers the decisive and strategic opportunity that is within our grasp today to end malaria in our COVID world.**



THE DISPROPORTIONATE EFFECT OF MALARIA ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

As patients, caregivers and healthcare providers, women and girls bear the brunt of the health, social and economic impacts of malaria. In malaria endemic countries, women and girls resource households and communities with unpaid labour as volunteer Community Health Workers and as caregivers to family members with malaria. Malaria can recur multiple times a year throughout and over a lifetime. This reduces the chance of girls staying in school, takes them out of the formal workforce, and removes their opportunities for full participation and leadership in society - ultimately perpetuating **malaria as a leading driver of poverty and gender inequality¹⁰**.



#GetBackonTrack
means

7.8 billion

for Malaria

Seeing the impact the **Global Fund** has had on fighting **malaria** inspired GFAN Speaker **Krystal Birungi** to become an entomologist with the hope of one day eliminating **malaria** once and for all.

More money for **malaria**, means saving more lives like **Krystal's**.



The Global Fund has an impressive 20-year proven track record of superior impact and results across more than 120 countries and regions where it invests in HIV, TB and malaria programming. With impeccable international credibility in its partnership model and country-owned approaches, the Global Fund offers the greatest value for money to reach people and communities with the services that they need the most.

In the last 20 years, the **Global Fund's investments and innovative partnerships** with malaria-affected countries, donor governments, the private sector and NGOs contributed to saving 10.6 million lives from malaria and preventing more than 1.7 billion malaria cases – **one of the greatest global health successes this century**.

Thanks to massive scale-up in the use of WHO-recommended tools that prevent, detect and treat the disease, we have achieved historic progress against malaria¹¹. In Southeast Asia for example, the Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative (RAI) launched by the Global Fund in the Greater Mekong Subregion has brought 5 countries to the brink of elimination and managed to contained Artemisinin Resistance¹².

However, today, ever-widening gaps between the amount invested and the amount needed are sounding alarm bells. Funding gaps have escalated from US\$ 2.3 billion in 2018 to US\$ 3.5 billion in 2020¹³. For us to reach more than 80% coverage in currently available interventions, investments in malaria must see significant increases beyond current annual levels of about US\$ 3 billion (international and domestic resources). We know that gaps in financing directly translate into gaps in coverage with life-saving interventions, creating dangerous opportunity for malaria resurgence. Getting back on track to defeating malaria, achieving our global SDG targets for 2025 and 2030 demands bold investment and action now.

Malaria investments are one of “the best buys” in global health reaping a 40-fold return on investment. At just USD \$5-8 per case averted, malaria interventions, including immunizations, are extremely cost effective, saving households and health systems billions while boosting stronger workforces and generating over USD \$4

trillion of additional economic output across the 2016-2030 time-frame (see Diagram 1).

Bold investment in the Global Fund will get us back on track to meet the SDG targets for malaria and achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The newly released Global Fund Strategy (2023-2027) defines the road ahead¹⁴. Investing in the Global Fund means an even greater focus on issues of equity, sustainability, program quality and innovation. **These investments are strengthening health systems and countries' capacities to eliminate malaria but also to identify and prevent other diseases.** It means firmly rooting communities that are most affected by malaria at the centre of our global and country-level responses with determined action to tackle human rights and gender-related social and structural barriers. It means building more inclusive, resilient and sustainable health system capabilities and robust community-led responses to be better able to deliver health and well-being, and to prevent, identify and respond to pandemics of today, and tomorrow¹⁵.

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF MALARIA 2020 AND 2025 MILESTONES AND 2030 TARGETS

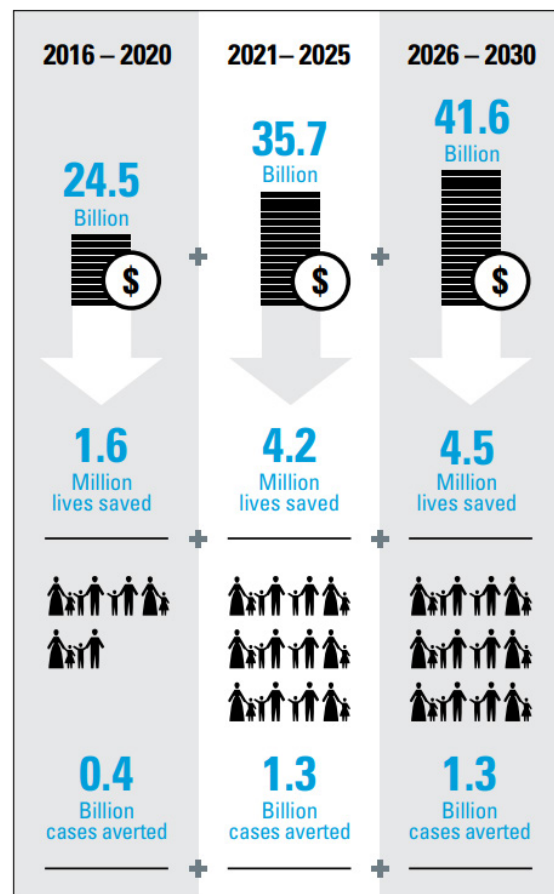


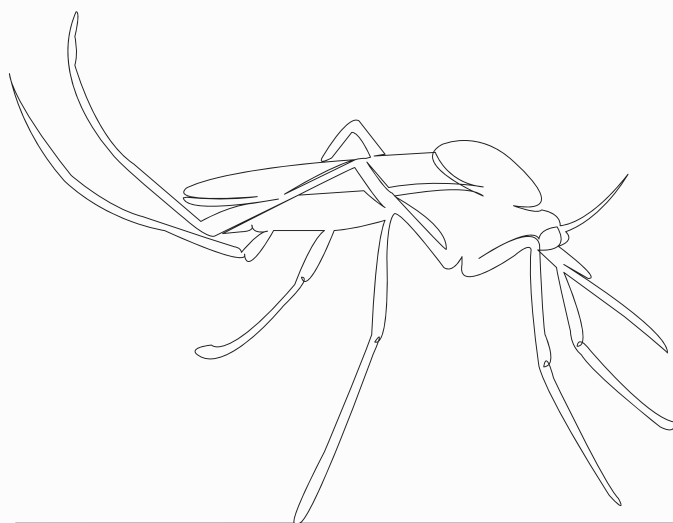
Diagram 1: Source: RBM

The Global Fund is a partnership between donor and implementing governments, affected communities and civil society, the private sector and technical partners. This Global Fund Partnership model is often referred to as the 'gold standard' for international health financing. Fast facts on the latest Global Fund results show how it has adapted its work to protect the hard-won gains made in malaria since the Global Fund was created. This is despite having witnessed, for the first time in its history, significant declines in key malaria programmatic results as a result of COVID-19 disruptions.

- **44 million lives saved** since the Global Fund's creation;
- **45% decrease in malaria mortality since 2002** in countries shouldering the highest malaria burden where the Global Fund invests;
- **188 million mosquito nets distributed** to protect families from malaria in 2020 – this amounts to a 17% increase compared to 2019 despite COVID-19;
- **259 million people were tested for malaria in 2020** – a 4.3% decrease compared to 2019 because of COVID-19 disruptions;
- **11.5 million pregnant women received preventative therapy in 2020**, stable since 2019 despite COVID-19 disruptions;
- **9.4 million structures were covered by indoor residual spraying** in 2020 – representing almost a 3% increase over 2019 despite challenges posed by COVID-19;
- **Since 2020, the Global Fund has provided additional funding through its COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM)** to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the malaria response. This has contributed to training 2 million Community Health Workers to ensure access to malaria services, particularly in hard to reach areas. This has also allowed the distribution of seasonal malaria chemoprevention treatment for children, protecting nearly 30 million, an increase of 8 million children covered from 2019 despite COVID-19 disruptions.

More than ever, malaria is an urgent public health crisis that the world cannot afford to ignore. For the first time in decades the number of cases and deaths have increased, not only because of COVID-19 related disruptions, but also because of the growing threats from an ever-evolving disease and vector. Insecticide resistance and new mosquito behaviours are reducing the effectiveness of vector control, gene-deletions in malaria parasites and jeopardizing effective diagnosis, and drug resistance is decreasing the ability to treat cases. **Eradicating malaria is possible, but only if the rate of progress is accelerated. We cannot afford to fail.** Achieving this requires significantly more resources to expand life-saving interventions to all those in need, optimize impact with more efficient and equitable interventions and development and scaling up of transformative tools.

The new 2023-2028 Global Fund strategy is the blueprint that will help get the world to 2030. **GFAN calls on donor countries to give the Global Fund the means to implement its new, ambitious strategy. We call governments to raise USD \$28.5 billion during the 7th Replenishment, including USD \$7.8 billion for the fight against malaria¹⁷.**



END NOTES

- 1 World Health Organizations (December 6, 2021). World Malaria Report 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-malaria-programme/reports/world-malaria-report-2021>; and Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria: <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/malaria/>
- 2 World Health Organization (WHO). Why research infectious diseases of poverty? Accessed at: https://www.who.int/tdr/stewardship/global_report/2012/chapitre1_web.pdf ; and The Conversation. (October 14, 2021). Ending malaria in Africa needs to focus on poverty: quick fixes won't cut it. Accessed at: <https://theconversation.com/ending-malaria-in-africa-needs-to-focus-on-poverty-quick-fixes-wont-cut-it-169205>
- 3 Global progress towards malaria elimination is increasing in several countries. The number of malaria endemic countries report ing fewer than 10,000 cases increased from 26 to 47 between the years of 2000-2020. (WHO, World Malaria Report 2021); and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. (December 16, 2021). Malaria's Impact Worldwide. Accessed at: https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/malaria_worldwide/impact.html
- 4 Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/results/>
- 5 Malaria No More (June 28, 2021). New Report Spells Out Double Dividend for Accelerating Ending Malaria and Advancing Gender Equality. Accessed at: <https://www.malariamore.org/news/new-report-spells-out-double-dividend-for-accelerating-ending-malaria-and-advancing-gender-equality/>
- 6 World Health Organizations (December 6, 2021). World Malaria Report 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-malaria-programme/reports/world-malaria-report-2021>
- 7 RBM Partnership, Action and Investment to Defeat Malaria - 2016-2030 accessed at https://endmalaria.org/sites/default/files/RBM_AIM_Report_0.pdf
- 8 Global Fund 2021 Results Report. Accessed at: <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/results/>
- 9 World Health Organizations (December 6, 2021). World Malaria Report 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-malaria-programme/reports/world-malaria-report-2021>
- 10 Malaria No More (June 28, 2021). New Report Spells Out Double Dividend for Accelerating Ending Malaria and Advancing Gender Equality. Accessed at: <https://www.malariamore.org/news/new-report-spells-out-double-dividend-for-accelerating-ending-malaria-and-advancing-gender-equality/>
- 11 World Health Organizations (December 6, 2021). World Malaria Report 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-malaria-programme/reports/world-malaria-report-2021>
- 12 Focus on RAI, Global Fund (2019). https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/6509/publication_regionalartemisininresistanceinitiative_focuson_en.pdf
- 13 World Health Organizations (December 6, 2021). World Malaria Report 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-malaria-programme/reports/world-malaria-report-2021>
- 14 The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World; Global Fund Strategy (2023-2028). Accessed at: https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/11612/strategy_globalfund2023-2028_narrative_en.pdf
- 15 The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World; Global Fund Strategy (2023-2028). Accessed at: https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/11612/strategy_globalfund2023-2028_narrative_en.pdf
- 16 Global Fund 2021 Results Report: https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/11304/corporate_2021resultsreport_report_en.pdf
- 17 GFAN Civil Society Ask: <https://www.globalfundadvocatesnetwork.org/fully-fund-the-global-fund-get-back-on-track-to-end-aids-tb-and-malaria-in-a-covid-world/>

CREDITS

PROJECT LEAD:

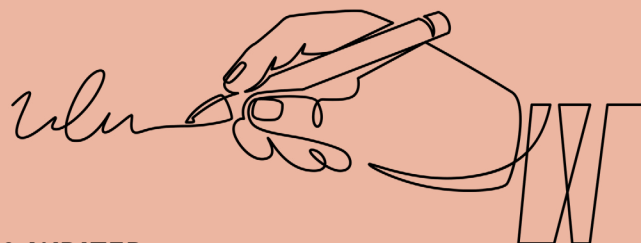
Katy Kydd Wright

EDITING & LAYOUT:

Quentin Batréau and Tara Hogeterp

CONSULTANT & WRITER:

Robin Montgomery



WITH THANKS:

To prepare this report, a small reference group from GFAN's membership provided guidance and feedback and we thank them for their collaboration.

