Towards Sustainable Malaria Control in Africa

A pilot project towards effective and lower-risk malaria control in Niayes, Senegal

Every year, an estimated 781,000 people die from malaria. And most of these deaths are in Africa. To date, control programs to fight malaria have been based on three different interventions: a) the use of bed nets, b) spraying insecticides - including DDT – indoors and c) medical treatment of malaria victims and pregnant women.

The use of insecticides to control malaria is highly dependent on a single class, pyrethroids. They are the most commonly used pesticides for indoor residual spraying and the only insecticide class used to treat bed nets. These methods create risks to health and the environment and increase the risk that mosquitoes will develop resistance to the chemicals being used. To reduce these risks, non-chemical approaches should be adopted and implemented whenever possible.

The goal of this PAN project is to implement a holistic DDT-free, ecologically-grounded and community-based system for malaria control in Niayes, Senegal.

Holistic approaches which use ecology and community-based methods are still scarce. They take into account the kind and number of vectors and parasites, identify existing resistance as well as the kind, number and spread of health impacts, analyze the local epidemiology and ecosystem, and take into account the economic and social situation. This project builds upon previous experiences with holistic approaches (e.g. in Mexico and Kenya).

An important part of this integrated project is a continued cooperation of:
- people who live in Niayes, Senegal
- the staff of the health centre in the village Mbeer,
- civil society organizations
- governmental representatives in Senegal and
- scientists

This pilot project can serve as an example for malaria control without DDT. It contributes to the aim of the Stockholm Convention to globally eliminate DDT and can contribute to an improved global environment protection while reducing the number of malaria incidences.

The core of this project is the integration of environmental management, technical and social approaches. A holistic, integrated approach to malaria control is not limited to the reduction of malaria incidences but can also increase environment protection and can improve the physical condition of those people living in malaria infected regions and it can improve the economic situation in rural areas by avoiding income lost caused by ill-health.

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