

RBM Partnership to End Malaria

February 2025

In the late 1990s, malaria's deadly consequences were largely uncontrolled. An eradication campaign in the 1950s - 1970s had failed. The drugs most commonly used for malaria were becoming less effective, and the countries with the highest rates of disease had limited resources to devote to prevention and treatment.

Battling malaria is also a complex, [multi-sector endeavor](#). Agriculture, construction, and tourism can all heighten transmission and create environments in which the mosquitos that carry the disease can thrive. The recognition that the health sector could not fight malaria alone, as well as promising new research about interventions that could be delivered affordably at scale, led to the founding of the [Roll Back Malaria \(RBM\) Partnership](#) in 1998 by the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization, and the World Bank.

Field Catalyst Role 1

Diagnosing and assessing the core problem and the full landscape of actors devoted to it

With hundreds of partners across government, global development, the private sector, philanthropy, and academia, RBM gathers input and builds buy-in about how to battle malaria. As the organization began its work, insecticide-treated nets were not widely in use, despite their proven efficacy. People infected with the disease were not consistently seeking or receiving treatment, and most treatment was presumptive

FIELD

Malaria eradication

YEARS OF OPERATION

1998 - present

KEY IMPACT

Contributed to cutting malaria deaths by more than half since 2000, [saving 10 million lives](#)

(i.e., all fevers were assumed to be malaria) and used outdated drugs.

RBM became a clearinghouse and problem-solver to scale up effective strategies. It increased availability and affordability of treated nets through subsidies and an expanded commercial market, and promoted other effective prevention techniques, like indoor residual spraying of long-lasting insecticides. It improved access to newly-developed rapid diagnostic tests and Artemisinin-based Combination Therapies (ACTs), which replaced less effective medicines. In 2008, RBM published the [Global Malaria Action Plan](#), which laid out a comprehensive strategy and specific targets for what the field should accomplish by 2010 and 2015.

This case study was developed collaboratively by Student Experience Research Network and The Bridgespan Group, drawing on The Bridgespan Group's [research](#) on RBM Partnership to End Malaria and the roles and assets of field catalysts, RBM's publicly available materials, and the World Health Organization's [World Malaria Report 2020: 20 Years of Global Progress & Challenges](#). It is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial No Derivatives 4.0 International License](#).

Field Catalyst Role 2

Advocating and shining a spotlight

By enhancing measurement, mobilizing funding, and building widespread awareness, RBM has helped to ensure that malaria eradication is a global priority, and that countries have the resources they need to fight the disease. The organization has developed tools including a [malaria indicator survey toolkit](#) and surveillance systems. These data sources help to make the case for investments, identify critical gaps, and direct resources to where they are most needed and useful. Collective advocacy [tripled](#) the amount of funding available to fight malaria between 2005 and 2017.

RBM's role has involved maintaining a focus on malaria in global discourse and aligning its efforts with high-profile initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals, emphasizing not only the health impacts, but also the economic and social impacts of the disease. It amplifies and celebrates new malaria-free certifications as countries achieve them, building a shared sense of global momentum.

Field Catalyst Role 3

Connecting and organizing actors around a shared goal

RBM compiles and disseminates technical information, best practices, and developments in the field (e.g., evidence of drug resistance) across its global network. It respects country leadership, while serving as an advisor and convening body to support national strategy, healthcare training and infrastructure, and grant writing and financing.

Its efforts have involved coordinating among funders, including bringing additional funders and resource flows into the field, and integrating malaria-focused efforts into existing workflows – for example, UNICEF

distributed treated nets during its routine vaccination campaigns.

RBM facilitates regional cooperation and provides venues for countries to work together to develop policies, synchronize the timing of their interventions, and improve cost efficiency. Its high-level view paired with deep relationships allows the organization to maintain a comprehensive index of resources and solutions while recommending adaptations for high-burden areas and specific populations.

Resource mobilization to usher in an era of progress

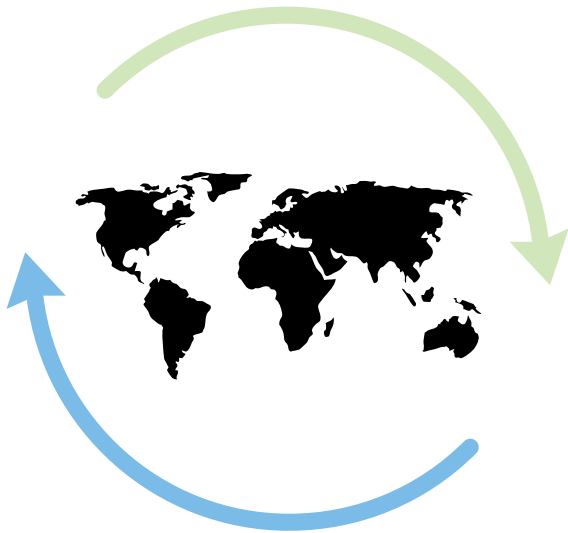
While there were various efforts to raise and provide the financial resources needed to fight malaria, RBM recognized the need for a formal body to coordinate these activities. This was an early focus of the organization's work. It quantified how much funding was needed to achieve the field's goals, equipped the field to be able to clearly and consistently articulate resource needs, and engaged with existing and new donors who wanted to support various aspects of the field's efforts. It supported funders to pool resources and mount a cohesive funding response to a complex problem.

The increase in resources for malaria eradication was one of the earliest signs of progress in the field. It is often the case that resources and infrastructure serve as the enablers of other areas of [field development](#) – including knowledge base, actors, field-level agenda, and engagement with public systems. With greater resources and resource alignment, progress in reducing the prevalence of malaria followed.

In 2017, Roll Back Malaria became the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, to reflect a commitment to completely eradicating the disease. The organization continues to work toward this goal, and reports that since 2000, the field's efforts have [saved more than 10 million lives](#).

Worldwide information and resource flows

RBM organizes a global network so that individual countries do not need to fight malaria alone, or duplicate efforts. The organization established a feedback loop to elevate local insights for global stakeholders, while generating global attention and resources that benefit local efforts.



COORDINATED GLOBAL SUPPORT

- **Advocacy** to galvanize action
- **Pooled funding** targeted to the most pressing needs
- **Dashboards** for tracking progress
- **Technical assistance** based on aggregated knowledge
- **Convenings** to share information and coordinate work

AMPLIFIED LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Input** to inform global priorities and strategies
- **Knowledge** about how to implement interventions
- **Collaboration** with regional partners
- **Data collection and delivery** of solutions