Time, trust and... tango?
Key factors for the uptake of malaria rapid diagnostic tests
A case study of Uganda

Daudi Ochieng
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Background

**Project**  UNITAID private sector rapid diagnostic test (RDT)

**Period**  April 2013 to April 2016

**Countries**  Uganda and Nigeria

**Focus**  Nine districts in Uganda

**People**  11 million

**What**  Create local market for quality-assured malaria rapid diagnostic tests (mRDTs)

**Where**  Private sector outlets
Behavioural change objectives

- Increase from 34 percent to 50 percent in the number of clients who test before they treat within 24 hours.
- Increase from 9 percent to 25 percent in the number of clients demanding an mRDT test upon visiting a health facility.
- Increase from 37 percent to 50 percent in the number of health providers that use mRDTs.
- Tenfold increase in the number of mRDT kits purchased by participating outlets from an average of 4,500 kits per month to 45,000 kits per month.
Target audience

**Primary Audience:** Men and women between ages 20 and 35 years in urban, peri-urban and rural areas

**Secondary Audience:** Health providers/outlets, which include private health facilities, hospitals, private clinics and drug shops

**Tertiary Audience:** The Ministry of Health (MoH) and district technical health teams (DHT)
Situation analysis

- Little knowledge and awareness about testing for malaria before treatment, therefore leading to self-medication
- Little knowledge and awareness about the benefits of mRDTs and, therefore, a preference for microscopy
- Lack of mRDTs in the market
- A common misconception that mRDTs were HIV tests
- Use of traditional medicine
- Lack of information on safety and costs of mRDTs
- Lack of mRDTs at drug stores and informal outlets
Engagement and exchange

The project trained health providers on:
• How to engage with clients to have shared decision making
• How to communicate with their clients to create trust
• How to improve the quality of the services

The project engaged clients by:
• Celebrity endorsement to create trust in the product
• SBCC to change behaviours

The project engaged health providers as:
• mRDTs don’t use electricity
• Time saved resulted in increase in profits
Integrate intervention mix: The eight Ps

1. **Product:** Positioned as a fast, safe, affordable and easy, and approved by MoH & WHO

2. **Price:** Set at US$0.74 mid-rate; less than the cost of a full dose of artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs)

3. **Placement:** mRDTs were strategically placed in 201 outlets

4. **Preparation:** Outlets were trained by MOH and given DHT support

5. **Promotion:** IMC approach

6. **Participation:** MoH HP and outlet owners held monthly meetings

7. **People:** Trained retail outlet owners on customer care

8. **Partners:** DHTs, MoH and private sector
The campaign

Appeal technique: Use of catchy and current vocabulary

Creative approach: Use of everyday language relevant to the target audience

Tone and style: Simple and easy to understand

Monitoring and evaluation plan:

- Client slips
- Monthly review meetings with MoH, DHTs and outlets
- Technology
- Mystery clients reports
- Entry and exit interviews
- Value Chain Analysis
- Dipstick surveys
**Results**

**Message recall rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test before you treat malaria</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep under a mosquito net</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaria kills</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever is a major symptom of malaria</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat malaria using ACTs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Message recall:** 68 percent of clients at the project end line could recall messages regarding testing.

*Source - UNITAID private sector RDT project, end line survey.*
Results

Reported action among those exposed to malaria messages

- Sleep under a mosquito net: 47.1%
- Test for malaria using an RDT: 34.7%
- Malaria kills: 21.5%
- Test before you treat malaria: 19.4%
- Fever is a major symptom of malaria: 9.1%
- Treat malaria using ACTs: 5.3%
- Other: 0.4%

Source - UNITAID private sector RDT project, end line survey.
Results

Preferred malaria testing method

Treatment seeking within 24 hours: increased from 34 to 37 percent among

Demand: increased from 9 to 48 percent, exceeding the project’s target of 25 percent

Source - UNITAID private sector RDT project, end line survey.
Sales: Increase by over 100 percent sales during the period of the mass media campaign (August to November 2015).

The average total monthly sales increased from 4,500 to over 70,000

Source - Project monthly sales reports
Lessons learnt

• Integration of behaviour change with marketing principles is crucial

• Improvement in client-providers communication was key.

• Private sector involvement increases success rate

• Tailoring to Local context resonates with the target audience
Time is a cost for the patient and the health provider.
Trust in the mRDT and the health provider.
Shared decision-making is key
Acknowledgements

- UNITAID
- Uganda Ministry of Health
- Manufacturers (SD Bioline and Premier)
- First line importer (UHMG Medlink Karuri)
- District Local Governments (Wakiso, Kampala, Mukono, Hoima, Masindi, Kiboga, Buliisa, Kyankwanzi, Kibaale)
- Participating private outlets
Thank you