

LEAD: Leadership & Engagement for Improved Accountability & Delivery of Services Framework

Key messages

- Focus for improving malaria program performance is often directed towards addressing technical challenges, while operational issues – such as suboptimal coverage of surveillance and vector control, stock-outs and shortages, or lack of engagement with the community or private sector – are neglected. However, until adequately addressed, operational challenges can significantly inhibit malaria program effectiveness.
- Building strong leadership and management capacity within a malaria program can correct these operational issues. By strengthening communication and coordination, enhancing training, supervision, motivation, and accountability, and engaging the appropriate stakeholders, a malaria program can dramatically improve efficiencies in the delivery of planned services and develop the innovation necessary to overcome unforeseen but inevitable disruptions.
- The Leadership & Engagement for Improved Accountability & Delivery of Services Framework (LEAD) was developed in response to malaria program demand to support NMCPs in approaching problem-solving in a systematic, participatory manner while building capacity for leadership and management at any level and across levels and ensuring sustainability. It also supports malaria programs to improve teamwork and the quality of service delivery, make data-informed decisions to improve operations, and take critical action.



About the Toolkit

The MEI Malaria Elimination Toolkit is a set of proven tools and approaches to help malaria endemic countries accelerate progress toward malaria elimination. Developed by the Malaria Elimination Initiative (MEI) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), the toolkit addresses the unique challenges faced by national malaria programs in heterogeneous transmission settings. These tools have been used successfully at the national and/or subnational levels, leading to important changes in malaria policy and practice.

The MEI recognizes that implementing any new tool or approach can be challenging. Technical assistance is available to support the tailoring and implementation of all MEI tools. Please visit our website shrinkingthemalariamap.org or contact us for more information at mei@ucsf.edu.

- LEAD is comprised of practical activities that take a bottom-up approach to program planning, ensuring it is an iterative process with buy-in by the key stakeholders who are responsible for the execution and evaluation of malaria plans.
- Underscoring the role of the manager, *The Lancet* Commission on malaria states “effective management and implementation of malaria programs are the most important requirements for national and regional elimination and eventual global eradication.”

What does good program leadership and management entail?

According to the WHO, “Leadership is about creating a vision, communicating this to others, developing strategies, motivating people, and negotiating for resources and other support to achieve their goals. [Managers] make decisions on how best to use staff, budgets, drugs and other resources, and are responsible for making things happen. In the resource constrained and difficult environments of many low – to middle-income countries, a manager must also be a leader to achieve optimum results.”

Strengthening leadership and program management at the subnational level creates an important bridge between the national, subnational, and community levels. This bridge contributes to achieving outcomes and overall strengthening of a high-quality health system. Community engagement is increasingly becoming a critical part of this work, making programs more sustainable and aligned with the local context while facilitating local ownership.

What is LEAD and why is it useful?

LEAD supports programs in defining, prioritizing, and solving operational challenges while also leveraging opportunities for process improvement and building management and leadership skills. The framework uses the actual current challenges and opportunities that malaria program managers face and helps them resolve these challenges using already available resources.

LEAD draws upon organization development, leadership learning, participatory action research, quality improvement methods, and principles of community engagement to improve operational delivery at the district, clinic, and village level. LEAD employs a systematic process, involving continual problem diagnosis, action planning, implementation and evaluation to build capacity for change management through a series of workshops, meetings, trainings, coaching, and mentoring over the course of the planning cycle (Figure 1).

Who should use this tool and how?

LEAD is intended for use by subnational malaria program directors, officers, pharmacy managers, and administrators working at the provincial, district, health facility, and community levels, as well as national managers who want to: 1) develop leadership and management capacity, 2) increase productivity, coverage and quality of operations, 3) empower frontline workers to take ownership, solve challenges, and act on decisions, and 4) optimize limited resources, while integrating for efficiency with other programs.

The framework guides the user through distinct modules to identify key stakeholders, prioritize operational challenges and opportunities to improve operations, determine solutions, develop indicators to measure progress in implementing those solutions, and integrate successful solutions into the health system.

Implementation of the LEAD Framework is best followed with steps to develop and implement a process improvement action plan, and can be used alongside other tools in the MEI toolkit including the Malaria Budget Advocacy Framework and the SUSTAIN Tool.

Figure 1. Change management cycle



The Malaria Elimination Initiative (MEI) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) believes a malaria-free world is possible within a generation. As a forward-thinking partner to malaria eliminating countries and regions, the MEI generates evidence, develops new tools and approaches, disseminates experiences, and builds consensus to shrink the malaria map. With support from the MEI’s highly skilled team, countries around the world are actively working to eliminate malaria.

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