



PHOTO & CAPTION

Expanding the Mosquito Net's Reach



Photo: USAID/Senegal Richard Nyberg

The people of Khombole know that mosquito nets are good for them, not only to protect them against malaria, but also to fend off the mosquitoes' buzzing, biting belligerence that thwarts a peaceful night's rest.

Some families can afford a treated mosquito net at local market price (about \$7 for the least expensive net), but many more cannot. The Government of Senegal sells them for \$2 each at local government health clinics, but the supply is unreliable and inconsistent, and clients rarely have a choice about the type of net they receive.

Senegalese mother Ami Dioume (left) meets with Dr. Toumani Toure, Khombole District's chief doctor (center) and Admiral R. Timothy Ziemer, the U.S. Malaria Coordinator, as she redeems a USAID-sponsored voucher for a mosquito net to protect her children.

In Khombole and five other districts, a different system is covering greater ground. A USAID project there brings together the companies which manufacture and distribute insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) and the local health committee at each facility. The health committees then decide which brands, types, and sizes of nets they would like to offer at their facilities, and negotiate with the companies for suitable prices.

The project also provides staff training and vouchers, so when pregnant women or young children (the groups most vulnerable to malaria) come in, the health workers can ensure that they already use a net, and, if not, that they receive a voucher. The voucher is a personalized \$5 coupon the family can redeem toward the purchase of an ITN at the health facility's pharmacy.

That's what Ami Dioume did. "This is the first net in our family," said the pregnant mother of four who just redeemed her voucher and paid a \$2 contribution for her net at the Khombole health center. "I just had my two-year-old daughter treated for malaria here, and I learned about the net. I want it now to protect my family," she said.

In one year, at the 20 participating clinics, almost 90% of women issued vouchers redeemed them. These 22,302 mosquito nets went to families whom, thanks to voucher records, local health committee outreach efforts can follow up with to make sure the nets are used correctly.