Health Portfolio

A to Z Textile Mills

Long-Lasting Anti-Malaria Bednets

A to Z Textile Mills' long-lasting insecticide-treated bednets are protecting millions from malaria.

SNAPSHOT
A to Z Textile Mills is protecting millions of people from malaria. Each year, the Tanzania-based company produces 29 million low-cost, long-lasting anti-malaria bednets. A to Z has also become one of the largest employers in Africa, providing jobs for 7,000 people, primarily women. Acumen Fund’s grant and loans, which have been fully repaid, helped to catalyze the public-private partnership that made the distribution of A to Z’s life-saving bednets possible.

The Challenge
Nearly one million people in Africa die every year from malaria. At greatest risk are pregnant women and children under five. Those who cannot afford treatment or have limited access to health care are disproportionately affected.

Bednets are one of the most effective ways to prevent the transmission of malaria. Treated nets kill the mosquitoes on contact – but the cost of re-treating a conventional bednet with insecticide every few months is too heavy a burden for many people.

The Innovation
A to Z’s low-cost bednets treated with long-lasting insecticide (LLINs) are effective for up to five years, instead of the usual six months, and do not need to be re-treated.

Acumen’s initial investment in A to Z in 2003 catalyzed a public-private partnership between A to Z, Sumitomo Chemical, ExxonMobil, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The Impact
A to Z is now the largest manufacturer of LLINs in Africa, producing 29 million bednets each year and protecting millions of people from malaria. A to Z has found a way to reduce the production cost of a bednet from $7 to $5 and provide even greater access to the life-saving bednets. A to Z has also become one of Africa’s largest employers. The company has provided jobs for more than 7,000 people, primarily women.