



# Malaria Safe

Said Salim Bakhresa & Co.

Said Salim Bakhresa & Co. (SSB), an East African flour mill, launched its malaria control initiative in 2008 when an internal study revealed that one in five employees were suffering monthly from malaria. The company initiated a malaria treatment and prevention program to educate and protect its 6,000 workers. It distributed nets, made rapid diagnostic tests and medicine available in its clinics, and updated its malaria protocols. As a result, SSB has cut its malaria-related treatment costs by two-thirds. Malaria-related absences have dropped by 80%<sup>1</sup>.

“It is simple arithmetic,” explained Said Muhammad Said Abeid, general manager of SSB. “If you count the cost of paying for 34 people per day who are home sick with malaria, plus the costs of hiring people to replace them, the cost is 1,240,000 TZ shillings (about \$770) per day. That’s over 146 million TZ shillings per year (\$90,300), and that doesn’t even include the medical costs, especially if an employee required emergency care.”

The company invested 72 million TZ shillings (\$45,500) to provide nets to its 6,000 workers. “In one year, we got a return on our investment in mosquito nets,” Mr. Said explained. One reason is that with nets in their homes, workers were less likely to miss shifts, because children or other relatives were less likely to fall ill.

Joining United Against Malaria (UAM) in 2009, SSB switched from Fansidar, a monotherapy drug for treating malaria, to artemisinin-based combination therapies, which have been proven to be more effective because there is less resistance. As recommended by the Malaria Safe Playbook, UAM’s private sector guide for malaria control, SSB also switched from clinical diagnosis—looking for symptoms—to rapid diagnostic testing, or analyzing the



SSB’s 6,000 employees have received long-lasting insecticide-treated nets.

## COMPANY PROFILE

**Headquarters:** Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**Employees:** 6,000 in Africa

**Industry:** Food production

## MALARIA INTERVENTION

**Education:** Malaria education sessions run by internal, trained doctors for 6,000 employees; education tools and materials for all staff

**Protection:** nets distributed to employees and their families; diagnostics and treatment center in the company’s headquarters, run by trained medical personnel; artemisinin-based combination therapies available for employees

**Visibility:** sponsorship of UAM activities; UAM logo on product packaging distributed throughout Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda; PSAs

**Advocacy:** malaria presentations to dignitaries, business leaders, and policy makers at international forums and Tanzania Ministry of Health



**Malaria Safe** practices are those that lead to a malaria-free future, such as net distributions and education workshops for employees and customers. More Malaria Safe case studies are available at [www.malariafreefuture.org](http://www.malariafreefuture.org).

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**Malaria-related medical expenses fell by two-thirds. Malaria-absences dropped 80%.**

blood itself to identify the malaria virus.

Human resources manager Mwanafumo Mwinjuma Mohamed says the company's efforts have led to a healthier workforce. "We are seeing increases in productivity at our factories," she says. "We are mobilizing people to stay a step ahead of this disease, and when they do get sick, we have the instruments to detect the malaria virus."

To further raise awareness, SSB has integrated the UAM logo into its product packaging, distributing UAM-branded flour sacks throughout Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda. Its football sponsorships have also brought UAM to the public conscience, thanks to public service announcements by Tanzanian star player John Boko and other footballers.

Football, in fact, is a central component of SSB's corporate social responsibility program. The company has leveraged this platform to raise awareness among football fans, placing UAM banners in stadiums and on its jerseys, promoting malaria control at awards ceremonies and press conferences, and partnering with the Tanzania Football Federation.

With support from Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, SSB has been a strong advocate for private sector involvement in the fight against malaria. Mr. Said has addressed dignitaries, business leaders, and policy makers at the World Economic Forum in Tanzania, sent representatives to meetings at the national Ministry of Health, and championed UAM since before the 2010 FIFA World Cup to raise awareness about malaria through football. In November 2012 he was honored by the Prime Minister of Tanzania, Hon. Mizengo Pinda, during a national launch of Malaria Safe.

Said Salim Bakhresa is one of more than 90 African companies that have adopted the Malaria Safe program and joined UAM.



**Said Muhammad Said Abeid, general manager of SSB, participates in a private sector panel on malaria control in Kampala in December 2012.**



“ It used to be that we paid 4.5 million TZ shillings (\$2,800) each year on treating our employees for malaria. But this year we only paid one-third of that. Now we can focus on pushing our products on the market rather than wasting resources on this disease. That is our business and we understand that good investments give returns. ”

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<sup>1</sup>These figures were provided by Said Salim Bakhresa human resources and from an in-depth interview with Said Muhammad Said Abeid, general manager, in Kampala, Uganda, December 2012.