

“What differentiates APCO is that they really care about and understand the issues that we care about, and they are one of the few international agencies with **a presence and real expertise** in developing countries.”

Anna Wang
former vice president
Medicines for Malaria Venture

Medicines for Malaria Venture

THE CHALLENGE

Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) was created to address critical gaps in the fight against malaria, a scourge claiming the lives of one million people annually. As drug resistance rendered most widely-used medicines useless, the need for research and development (R&D) to discover, develop and deliver effective and affordable anti-malarial drugs was urgent.

Through innovative public-private partnerships, MMV rapidly developed the largest-ever pipeline of potential anti-malarials. Its first drug, a pediatric formulation of a leading anti-malarial, was launched in February 2009. Despite its advancements, MMV was hampered in its effort to raise the necessary funds to support its activities:

- MMV was an unknown entity to decision makers in the public development aid (PDA) agencies of many large donor countries.
- R&D for malaria was not addressed or covered by existing financing schemes and institutions, and most actors in the PDA field had a lack of understanding of R&D for malaria.

If MMV's R&D pipeline could not find the funding, projects would slow down or, worse, terminate. A looming disaster of existing drugs failing with no alternatives could become reality in just a few years.

THE SOLUTION

MMV worked with APCO Worldwide's Berlin, Brussels and Paris offices to develop and carry-out a multinational public affairs positioning and outreach programme. The aim was to raise the political profile of MMV and the fight against malaria on the EU, French and German agendas. MMV also asked APCO to look at possible funding opportunities and support from these countries and institutions.

MMV and APCO devised and implemented a programme to promote MMV to development aid officials, government members, parliamentarians and third-party endorsers. APCO also garnered support from official representatives of the affected countries, to develop them as champions in support of funding for R&D in the fight against malaria.

THE RESULT

Though this endeavour spans many years, a year into its course MMV already achieved an unprecedented level of recognition and acknowledgement with targeted stakeholders. It also positioned itself as an organisation making a difference while clearly setting out the case for direct R&D funding and support in the fight against malaria. Potential funding opportunities were identified and are being rigorously pursued.

Since 2004, APCO has assisted MMV on a range of issues, from raising its profile among key decision makers across the European Union to generating awareness and launching its first anti-malarial drug in Africa.

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