



## MSF SCIENTIFIC DAYS INTERNATIONAL 2021 Agenda

### Day 1: Tuesday 18th May

**10:30 Introduction**

**10:35 Session 1 - Different approaches to learning from communities**

Community engagement ensures that we understand and address the needs of those affected by research. In session 1, we will discuss what we have learnt from the communities at the heart of our research and practice. From CAR, we will present findings on mortality levels in this conflict-affecting setting, and provide insight into the knowledge, attitudes and practices of healthcare workers in relation to abortion care. Looking at both South Sudan and CAR, we will build on previous research to explore how young men and their communities perceive sexual violence and its prevention. Follow online, and join the conversation, as we discuss how community-based research is advancing global health.

**11:50 Break**

**12:20 Session 2 - Keynote + Panel - Dr & Dr Bang**

Dr Abhay Bang was brought up in Mahatma Gandhi's ashram. He completed his medical education with three gold medals, post-graduation in internal medicine and then MPH from The Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. For the past 35 years he has been the Director of the Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), which he co-founded in 1985 with his wife, Dr Rani Bang, in Gadchiroli, a remote district in Maharashtra state, India. They continue to live, provide medical care and conduct research in 134 villages in Gadchiroli.

Dr Abhay and SEARCH have conducted several ground-breaking studies that have shaped national and global policies. They have developed a new approach, 'Home-based Newborn and Child Care', which has reduced infant mortality rates in Gadchiroli. This research was selected as one of the milestone papers published in the Lancet in the past 180 years to be included in their Vintage Papers. This approach has been replicated in 10 countries, and is being scaled-up nationally by the Government of India.

**13:40 Break**

**14:10 Session 3 - Covid-19: Health, life and death in a pandemic**

Despite the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global health and research, there are still significant gaps in our understanding among certain communities and contexts. In session 3, we'll be discussing how COVID-19 has impacted different communities. From Bangladesh, we'll consider whether the low number of COVID-19 cases among the Rohingya population reflect what has really happened. We'll also zoom into the results from a multi-site study to focus on how communities in Nigeria and Sierra Leone perceive COVID-19's impact on their lives and security. Join the discussion as we share emerging evidence around the impact of COVID-19 among some of the most vulnerable communities.

**15:25 Day 1 Closing Remarks**

## Day 2: Wednesday 19th May



**10:30 Introduction**

**10:35 Session 1 - Malnutrition: new norms, adapted protocols**

Questioning existing practices is what drives improvements. In session 1 of the day, we will challenge the evidence around the monitoring and treatment of malnutrition. We will discuss whether recent findings from a trial in DRC support the use of a simpler treatment strategy for malnutrition, and we will hear about research from India that evaluates the current threshold for treatment and discharge of children with malnutrition. Follow online and join the conversation as we challenge the norms in malnutrition.

**11:50 Break**

**12:20 Session 2 - Hidden patients and challenges in HIV and TB**

The goal of ending HIV and TB is still far from being achieved. In session 2, we will be exploring emerging findings in the field of HIV and TB. From Eswatini and India, we will investigate the relatively understudied area of asymptomatic Leishmania infection in people living with HIV, and hear exciting findings from a new, easy-to-use and affordable test to detect acute HIV. We will also provide unique insights into the perspectives around the treatment journey for children and adolescents with drug-resistant TB. Join the conversation as we discuss the research findings that are contributing to the fight against HIV and TB.

**13:50 Break**

**14:20 Session 3 - Targeting malaria in fragile and conflict settings**

Conflict leads to unprecedented challenges to health and huge surges in diseases like malaria. In the final session of the day, we will hear about the malaria situation across Burundi, CAR and DRC. We will evaluate the benefit of insecticide-treated bed nets, and explore community perspectives around large-scale preventative treatment and its impact. Participate in the conversation as we discuss malaria control strategies in complex emergency settings.

**15:35 Day 2 Closing Remarks**

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## Day 3: Thursday 20th May

**10:30 Introduction**

**10:50 Session 1 - Striving to develop sustainable and adaptable humanitarian structures**

Sustainability at a system level is essential to be able to adapt and transform in the face of changing conditions. In session 1, we will explore how MSF is striving to develop sustainability, both at the operational and environmental levels. From a toolkit allowing MSF to measure and mitigate our environmental footprint, to a portable cool box that uses off-grid sources of energy to distribute vaccines, join us as we discuss the innovations that are driving sustainability and transforming our organisation.

**12:05 Break**

**12:35 Session 2 - Bridging gaps to communities and patients**

To adapt to different contexts and address specific needs, communities must be at the centre of humanitarian responses. In session 2, we will hear about the potential of a photography-based tool to understand and address stigma among people with multidrug-resistant TB. We will also explore the role of digital spaces in reaching reach communities and patients, discussing a new toolkit to equip communities to respond to COVID-19, and the use of digital platforms to promote. Follow online, and join the conversation, as we share insights into the innovations that are bridging the gaps to communities and patients.

**13:50 Break**

**14:20 Session 3 - Digital Health: The opportunities and challenges in humanitarian settings**

Apps and smartphones have exponentially driven the development of medical tools, but can these be used in humanitarian settings? In session 3, we will explore how smartphone-based applications could contribute to the fight against antibiotic resistance, and how applications could support adherence to treatment and monitoring of side effects in drug-resistant TB patients. Join us as we share insights into the opportunities and challenges of digital health within humanitarian contexts.

**15:35 Day 3 & Conference Closing Remarks**

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