

Matthew

Bioengineer



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My name is Matthew. I'm a bioengineer at the company producing these mosquitoes. I truly believe our company is doing great work for the greater good. The mosquitoes we engineer combat diseases which sicken and kill many people every year. Our product means that people no longer need to rely on dangerous chemicals in insect repellent or insecticides to stay safe from mosquito-borne diseases. With strict guidelines, plenty of rigorous testing, and the best scientists on our team, this is a sound product for reducing a public health issue. I want to get public input because I know that there are social and ethical questions about their release. We also know that our mosquitoes won't be as good at mating as wild ones, which is why we're considering gene drives.



PERSONAL PROFILE

Anna Ecologist



Jo Straube / Wikimedia Commons

I'm Anna, an ecologist who has done academic research in Mombasa for 4 years. Our ecosystems give us many things we need, including food, fresh air, clean water, and medicine. I have seen experiments go wrong when they release a foreign species into a habitat. I believe GE mosquitoes could do irreversible damage to the environment. I think it's irresponsible to conduct field trials in Mombasa until the risks are fully understood. Even when scientists have the best intentions, they cannot predict the outcome of their experiments, and there might be negative impacts on the ecosystem and economy. I get media inquiries about these mosquitoes and fear that people see me as standing in the way of a solution to Mombasa's malaria problem. I care about people's health, but if we release something into the environment, there will be no turning back. I strongly caution against releasing engineered species.



PERSONAL PROFILE

Faraji

Parent



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My name is Faraji, and I have three children. We live about five miles away from the city center. One of my daughters is very sick with malaria after being bitten by a mosquito a year ago at the end of the rainy season. We do not have a way to get to the health clinic easily, and often must wait several hours to be seen. My daughter is getting sicker, and I grow increasingly concerned about the safety of my other children as well. My sister is pregnant, and she has not received the preventative treatment for malaria that she needs to protect herself and the baby. However, I'm concerned that introducing these mosquitoes might not work the way we expect and might put our community in danger.



PERSONAL PROFILE

Ahamed

Mayor



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I'm Ahamed, the mayor of Mombasa. The residents of my city have suffered from malaria for a long time. Genetically engineered mosquitoes have the potential to eliminate malaria from our city. The companies that have produced these mosquitoes are willing to release them in our area, using Mombasa as a future case study. I think this solution could help Mombasa become a healthier city, a more attractive tourist destination, and possibly a center of biotechnology. However, many of my constituents are skeptical of and even frightened by this technology. They have seen communities suffer after accepting help from Westerners. How can we eliminate malaria while considering the legitimate concerns from citizens in Mombasa?



Sharon

Relief worker



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I'm Sharon, a community health worker with the Red Cross in Mombasa, Kenya. The malaria parasite is becoming increasingly resistant to the antimalarial drugs we normally prescribe, and many of the patients cannot afford these drugs anyway. The situation here is made worse by the high prevalence of AIDS, which compromises the immune system of those infected. I've heard rumors of clinical trials of a malaria vaccine, but that may take years to be approved, and it is difficult to get everyone in the community vaccinated. Genetically engineered mosquitos could be a powerful tool in the fight against malaria.



PERSONAL PROFILE