



Newsletter #20 April 2021 World Malaria Day

This issue is being published to highlight World Malaria Day on April 25. This year is of particular importance as health services world wide have been over whelmed by the Covid 19 pandemic. So resources that would otherwise have been available for treating malaria will have been diverted to fighting the pandemic.

Malaria cases, which totalled some 229 million in 2019, will likely have increased and so will the number of deaths, primarily of children under the age of 5 years old as they are not strong enough to fight the disease.

What Scouts are doing to help others

Scouting against Malaria (SAM) initiative forms part of the World Organisation of Scouting Movements (WOSM)'s global initiative *Scouts for SDGs* and contributes directly to two of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals that is –

- Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well being for all ages
- Promoting global partnerships

and strengthens two others -

- Providing inclusive education and life long learning
- Making human settlements resilient and sustainable

UK Scouts have formed a global partnership with 4 African Scout Associations and their local communities. Whereas UK Scouts have learnt about this disease, how it can be prevented and raised funds to purchase long life insecticide treated bed nets (ITNs), African Scouts have been able to go into a community, educate families how malaria can be prevented, how to recognise malaria symptoms and advise where help is available, distribute ITN nets and help erect them where necessary.



A Scout erecting a bed net for a family with young children, Nyame Bekyere Village, Ashanti District, Ghana

If only more Scout Groups undertook the SAM activities as part of our global programme zone and raised on average £5 per Scout for purchasing and distributing ITN nets, Scouts could make a greater difference and save lives

Recent campaigns

With funds raised by Hertfordshire Scouts, one new campaign has been undertaken in a local community in each of Uganda, Malawi and Ghana with on average 200 ITN nets being distributed to 200 out of typically 1000 households. Videos are available of each distribution and can be downloaded from the SAM website.

Malawi



Health Assistant at Chin'amba area under Mvera mission hospital greeting the elderly gathered

Howie Maujo reports that during the recent campaign ITN net distribution included -

- persons unable to do farming and to provide for themselves due to different disabilities as farming is the only means of survival.
- people with albinism, unable to socialize due to some insecurities about their lives as it is believed that their bones bring fortune to people. They are confined to their homes in fear of being killed which will affect their education as well.
- most of the elderly and people with physical challenges who rely on seasonal fruits to sustain them all year around due to limited sources to acquire finances.

Ghana



Louis Okyere reports -

Due to the increasing number of active COVID-19 cases and measures put in place by the government to prevent the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), health facilities have had to divert attention from limiting the incidence of malaria.

In the Yensiso village community in the Eastern Region, a team of 6 Scouts moved from household to household, distributing the mosquito nets and demonstrating to the people on how to fix and use the treated mosquito nets as well as how to preserve them.

The mosquito nets were distributed to pregnant women, lactating mothers, children and the aged in the community since these are the most people affected by malaria caused by mosquitos. The team also explained to every household that the community can prevent malaria not only by using mosquito nets but also by adopting to vigorous clean-up exercise in their community, cleaning of gutters and surroundings where they live. As these are the causes of malaria because mosquitos prefer to breed in a dirty environment.

Uganda



Net distribution in Kasakoso village

Cleopatra John reports - on March 4th, a team of Scouts moved into Kasakoso village to carry out a SAM campaign and distributed 300 ITN bed nets.

Challenges they faced included -

- many people had given up on the fight against malaria and had concentrated on Covid 19
- there were many teenage mothers in the community who have no idea that Malaria still claims lives especially expectant mothers.
- they did not know that they can lose their babies in case they get malaria.
- we therefore gave them each a bed net and advised them to sleep under the net every night but also attend antenatal care every month in order to be examined by a medical doctor.
- it was important to note that the need for community sensitisation has risen because of the expectant child mothers.
- since Kasokoso is a slum, in addition they recommended that more community effort should be put into draining all stagnant water and keeping the grass around the homes slashed to reduce the sites where mosquitos can breed.



Hoping to expand net distribution

In order to expand the SAM initiative, we have established a dialogue with WOSM's African Bureau in Nairobi. At a recent meeting, we have agreed that African Scout Associations will be able to expand the distribution of ITN bed nets if these can be made available as free issue

In their 2020 World Annual Malaria Report (described in to our December 2020 newsletter), the World Health Organisation, called on countries and global health partners to step up the fight against malaria, a preventable and treatable disease that continues to claim hundreds of thousands of lives each year. A better targeting of interventions, new tools and increased funding are needed to change the global trajectory of the disease and reach internationally-agreed targets

As in past years, the sub Saharan Region has shouldered more than 90% of the overall disease burden even though the Region has reduced its malaria death toll by 44% since 2000. The manufacture of ITN treated nets, up to 100 million per year, is financed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and individual Member states. However the distribution has not been as effective as one might assume, as the proportion of people sleeping under bed nets in sub Saharan Africa is only 50% and this percentage has *not* increased significantly in the past 5 years.

It was agreed that in parallel with the African Scout Federations updating their project plans and submitting their plans to their National Ministries of Health, WOSM Africa would consider discussing with WHO's Regional Office to offer Scouting's assistance in distributing and erecting these nets and helping with education on how the nets should be correctly used. Scouting could then use any funds raised to pay for the net distribution and many more deaths could be prevented..

Joining the global partnership

If you or your Section/Group is willing to join the global partnership to fight malaria, visit our website www.scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk or email us at info@scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk.

On line resources are available on the SAM website, which can be down loaded and are suitable for on-line learning for both individual Scouts and for sectional meetings. So do publicise our activities wherever possible and help save a life.

Editor Rayner Mayer