

Beyond our borders

If you're planning a community impact project, there's no reason to limit your plans to your own turf. Instead, let these three international projects inspire you and your section to achieve true greatness in places that need it the most

Scouting has always encouraged young people's natural curiosity and it's this curiosity that leads to the acquisition of knowledge and a thirst for adventure. This curiosity also opens their eyes to the world around them. Looking around, it's plain to see there are problems in our world today, but rather than turning our backs on challenging issues, as Scouts we focus on finding solutions and making the world a better place.

By including community impact in our programme, we develop kinder, more tolerant individuals who are better skilled to make a positive contribution to society. Many Scouts have taken their commitment to community impact beyond the borders of the UK. These inspiring projects involve UK Scouts working with Scouts from other countries to make an impact on our global community while learning about other cultures and global issues.

Scouts Against Malaria

In early 2015, delegates at the 8th Hampshire International workshop were asked to list the top 10 problems that were affecting the planet. Disease was at the top of the list; AIDS, the Zika virus and the hidden killer, malaria, were mentioned most often.

The delegates realised that as Scouts they were in a unique position to help communities in malaria-affected areas. They could utilise links with local Scout Groups usually attached to schools that could help with the distribution of nets and education; why it's important to use the nets and how to use the nets correctly and safely.

Until 2014, Marvin Takel was Assistant Scout Leader at 8th Camberley Scouts in Surrey. Over several years of expeditions to Uganda, he developed extensive knowledge and insight into the country and so, in 2015, he discussed a possible initiative with representatives of the Ugandan Scout Association. The initiative was welcomed by the Ugandan Scouts and they committed to support it logistically. And so, Scouts Against Malaria was launched. Scouts

Against Malaria's mission is to provide programme ideas and resources to teach young people about malaria and its effects. They are then encouraged to raise funds in order to supply African Scouts with mosquito nets that they can distribute to vulnerable families in Sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 43% of people at risk of malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa don't have access to malaria nets or insecticides. By learning about malaria and what can be done to limit its impact, young people can make a difference and save lives while broadening their minds and learning about the world.





Above: Mosquito nets are distributed to families in Bugembe, Uganda, while UK Cubs learn how mosquitos pass malaria onto humans and attempt erecting their very own mosquito nets

'When I was first approached about this project, I raised some questions about whether it was the right thing for us as an organisation to become what was to all intents and purposes, an aid agency. That's not what we do, we do education,' admits George Devine, Manager, International Scout Support Unit. 'However,' he continues, 'I liked the principle of getting UK Scouts involved and becoming more aware of the affects of malaria and what it was doing in other parts of the world. I feel strongly that we need to remember that our role is education and personal development. The important thing is that we're teaching our young people about global issues, as well as teaching them about other cultures, and if the spin-off of that is that we're helping people who are in need, that's brilliant, but it's not the main objective.'

Once Scouts in the UK understand the issue, they complete badge criteria to earn a Scouts Against Malaria Challenge Badge. The Scouts then fundraise £5 per badge, and after sending the money to Scouts Against Malaria they receive their badges. The corresponding number of mosquito nets is then supplied to the Scouts in Africa. Once Scouts Against Malaria have been informed of where the nets have been distributed, the information is uploaded to the website so that interested fundraisers can see exactly where in the world their efforts have helped those in need.

Local African Scouts allocate the mosquito nets to individual homes in their communities. The Scouts meet the family and teach them the importance of using the net and how to set it up correctly. They then keep in contact with the families to ensure that the nets are maintained and used correctly. For taking part in this initiative, the African Scouts also earn the Scouts Against Malaria Challenge Badge.

For more information about Scouts Against Malaria, and how you and your Scouts can get involved, visit scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk.

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