



Newsletter #21 September 2021

This issue is being published to coincide with the annual Gilwell Reunion of Scout Leaders in the UK and abroad on 4 September. With the Covid 19 pandemic still creating problems for health services in almost every country, our Scouts against Malaria (SAM) initiative is more important than ever in limiting the incidence of malaria in countries where it is endemic.

We will be describing our SAM initiative in a webinar at 1100 (GMT +1) on 4 September but will also be available at other times during the day. The webinar will also involve African Scout leaders involved in organising these campaigns. For more information and to see the complete Gilwell programme go to www.scouts.org.uk/reunion

Consequently malaria cases, which totalled some 229 million in 2019, will likely have increased in 2020 and 2021 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

Scouts 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

Role of mosquito and main form of prevention

The mosquito, of which there are 14,000 for every living person, is a pollinating insect of which only a few species can spread a disease. One of these species is the anopheles mosquito whose female draws blood in order to feed her young. In drawing blood, a parasite called a plasmodium can pass into the blood stream and attack the red blood cells within the liver. This can result in severe fever, high temperature, diarrhoea and vomiting and even in death if treatment cannot be started quickly.

As the Anopheles mosquito is only active from dusk to dawn, the safest form of prevention is to sleep under an insecticide treated bed net (ITN). Funds raised by UK Scouts have enabled 10,000 nets to be purchased and distributed by Scouts in Malawi, Uganda, Ghana and Gambia.

Anopheles mosquito



www.vectorbase.org



James D. Gathany/CDC

Konde village, Mvera District, Malawi

This campaign was undertaken in July and had 3 specific objectives –

- Encourage vulnerable groups to use impregnated mosquito nets more frequently
- Have a healthy and energetic community that work together on hygiene and sanitation to prevent mosquitoes breeding so spreading malaria
- Mainstream Scout values to mitigate spread of malaria.

The strategy was to identify and distribute impregnated ITN bed nets mosquito nets to vulnerable groups and to educate villagers on the proper use of such nets. The project has been implemented without difficulties, though demand looks to be increasing each time of distribution, especially among the vulnerable like elderly people. The identification exercise unveiled another vulnerable group of people with albinism who expressed desire for more mosquito nets since malaria poses as a great threat to their health and wellbeing.

The project had no major modification though in the last report it was suggested to disinfect swampy areas. But the budget line could only cater for one issue, either distribute nets or disinfect some areas. In the next phase of funds disbursement, a one week long educational campaign will be carried out, along with activities to improve household sanitation.



Erecting an ITN net in the house of an elderly person



Beneficiaries including a boy with albinism

What Scouts can do

There is a set of activities on the SAM website which will enable Scouts to learn about the illness and how it can be prevented. Then for each Scout to raise on average £5 which will enable one ITN bed net to be purchased and distributed in an African country which could protect a family against being bitten. In this way Scouts can earn the SAM badge.

Resources on SAM website

There is an activity handbook with a set of activities suitable for all sections and a resource box which can be purchased which provides the materials for such activities. Most recently a Malaria Prevention handbook has been drafted which can also be downloaded. There are also the previous editions of our newsletter

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.

Editor Rayner Mayer