



Newsletter #18 August 2020

This issue reflects on the C virus pandemic which has dominated human activity since the start of 2020 and how this is likely to impact the roll back malaria campaign, the global partnership to reduce the incidence of malaria.

C virus pandemic

Since the Corona virus was first identified in Wuhan, China early in January, the virus has spread rapidly throughout the world because of global travel by people. Like any respiratory illness such as influenza, the virus was able to be transmitted between people who were in close contact in both open and

closed spaces. Lockdown in most countries was too late to prevent its spread.

Though the first peak has passed in many countries, a second peak is likely in the coming months as more activities take place indoors during the winter months.

Impact on malaria prevention and treatment

The World Health Organisation's Director for Africa observed that "the C virus pandemic could smoulder in Africa for several years and could overwhelm the available medical capacity in much of Africa. To minimise the spread, a proactive approach was needed which included to test, trace, isolate and treat."

Howie Maujo, Executive Commissioner, Malawi Scout Association recently wrote –
"In the circumstances of COVID-19, Scouts are still advocating and sensitising people in the communities on the dangers of Malaria and the Pandemic COVID-19.

A notable number of Scout groups have initiated small projects of helping out in sewing face masks to distribute to underserved communities in health centres where they can identify patients who are at risk and cannot afford a mask - this is done more especially in the rural areas.

The Government has shifted much of their efforts to COVID-19 as the number of new infections is still escalating at an alarming rate and this is very worrisome and is posing a great danger to the lives of the people whose immune system is compromised. We are very appreciative that the Scouts are carrying this message and disseminating where necessary. Malaria cases are being treated in hospitals, but the priority is COVID 19 before any other diseases are identified for those that are able to visit the hospital. This has resulted in treatment for infection being delayed and so children, pregnant women and the elderly have died from malaria.

All in all we are increasing our efforts to help out as Scouts

Scouts against Malaria and SDGs

In spite of global efforts for many years, there is still no vaccine available to immunise persons against the malaria parasite spread by the anopheles mosquito. Though the number of people dying from the C virus this year is much greater than the *annual* death toll from malaria, the number of people infected by the C virus is still one tenth of those infected with the malaria parasite *each and every* year.

As the Anopheles mosquito, the vector responsible for spread of the disease, is only active at night, the primary means of avoiding being bitten is to sleep under a long life insecticide treated bed net (LLIN). Unfortunately only half the population of Africa are protected by sleeping under LLIN nets and this percentage has *not* increased significantly since 2015.

In 2015 the United Nations agreed a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals with the global aim of *helping others and leaving no one behind*. The initiative, Scouts against Malaria, (SAM) was initiated in the same year and forms one of these Goals which is *Leading a healthy life and promoting well being for all ages*.

Some 3 years later, the World Organisation of Scouting Movements accepted the challenge of helping to meet these Goals and pledged some 3 billion hours of voluntary labour to help meet these goals by 2030.



As part of the SAM initiative, UK Scouts have learnt about the incidence of this disease and how it can be prevented and have been challenged to raise on average £5 which will cover the cost of purchasing and distributing one long life net to a vulnerable family.

Scouts showing how a long life impregnated bed net (LLIN) can be erected to safeguard an entire family, Tontro Community, Eastern Region, Ghana

Previous campaigns

With funds raised by UK Scouts, 20 campaigns over the past 4 years have been organised by African Scout Associations in Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and the Gambia.



Working with local health officers, Scouts have identified vulnerable families in local villages and supplied them with LLIN treated nets. They have helped with erecting the nets and explained why treatment is needed if bitten and where help can be sought.

In this way each Scout can earn the SAM badge illustrated on the front page.

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

The sad fact is that in every campaign to date, Scouts have had to decide who should receive the nets and who should go without, something that no Scout should ever have to consider as there have been insufficient funds to provide nets to all vulnerable families

With funds raised primarily by 1st Baldock Cub Pack, two recent distribution campaigns have been organised which are described below.

Saforo Community, Eastern Region, Ghana

Prince Akese reports ...

“After being welcomed by the Village Chief, Nana Offei, the Scout team were assigned a midwife nurse by name Jane Frimpong to assist in the distribution of the LLIN bed nets. The Midwife nurse supported the team by educating the people of Saforo on the importance of using the mosquito net prior to the distribution. As part of the measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus COVID-19, which has now become a global pandemic, the team did a house to house distribution instead of a mass gathering of the people at one place. We moved from one household to another distributing the treated mosquito nets and educating them on how to use the treated mosquito nets.

In each and every household, the midwife nurse took her time to educate each family how to fix the net and how to maintain it so it had a long life. She stated the reason for this distribution was to help prevent the rate at which lives are been lost to the deadly disease called malaria.



Midwife educating people on the importance of using mosquito nets

Some 200 nets were distributed to families with pregnant women, lactating mothers, children and the aged, persons who would be the most affected if bitten by a mosquito.

Hilary Awusie, the deputy Chief Commissioner, advised each and every household to use the mosquito nets to protect themselves and their household from malaria which could kill them. He further explained that the community can limit breeding of mosquitos by keeping their communities and surroundings clean..

He also used the opportunity to educate every household on how to prevent themselves from catching the Coronavirus by wearing masks, washing hands regularly with soap under running water, using hand sanitizers, and practicing social distancing. He further explained how the virus spreads and what to do in case one gets infected with the virus.

After the distribution was completed, the Village Chief said that he never imagined that such a kind gesture would come to his community but he is very grateful to the Ghana Scout Association and UK Scouts for making such a difference in the lives of his people.”

Mangochi Community, Malawi Howie Maujo reports

“This distribution was done to commemorate the Malaria International day (April 23). The SAM intervention targeted 200 households, primarily our target, in the wake of ConV 19, was to have a door to door distribution taking into consideration the elderly, children and pregnant women.

As a matter of fact we were also mindful of social distancing as one of the preventive measure of ConV 19 so we invited some of the beneficiaries to a school ground for more spacing and distancing as they were receiving the LLIN bed nets .

We have also taken placards with messages on it regarding the ConV 19, creating and awareness in the community thus taking advantage of the distribution to also mainstream the issues of ConV 19.”



LLIN bed net distribution, Mangochi Community, Malawi

Leading healthy lives by reducing the incidence of malaria

This is a set of activities in which individual persons of any age can learn about this disease, why it is so deadly and how each of us could save a life by raising £5 to purchase and distribute a net via the African Scout Associations with which we collaborate. These activities can be undertaken at home and some can involve other members of the family such as a brother or sister. Like other resources these can be downloaded from the SAM website

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

A resource box is also available which provides the educational resources to undertake a range of activities relating to this disease and the order form can be downloaded from our website.