

Newsletter #27 September 2023



We consider the possible impact of the warmest month ever recorded on the incidence of malaria and report on a visit to Zanzibar by Kent Scouts and the most recent campaigns by African Scouts to distribute insecticide treated bed nets in Ghana and Malawi using funds raised by UK Scouts..

July 2023 has been the warmest month ever recorded and has resulted in extreme weather events throughout the world. This has also resulted in the growth of cyclones and hurricanes with very strong winds accompanied by torrential rain. Earlier in the year cyclone Freddy devastated parts of Mozambique and Malawi and more recently have had severe impacts on parts of Japan, South Korea and the USA.

This combination of extreme heat and rainfall results in ideal breeding places for mosquitos, of which one species, the anopheles mosquito, is primarily responsible for the spread of the malaria parasite when it bites someone to extract blood to grow its young. So the incidence of malaria is likely to increase and in many sub-tropical countries, the only safe solution is to sleep under an insecticide treated (ITN) bed net.

SAM's mission is not only to raise awareness of the severity of this tropical disease, but also to raise funds which can be sent to Scout Associations in sub-tropical Africa where malaria is endemic. The African Scouts learn about the incidence of malaria, purchase the ITN treated bed nets and help inform communities about the incidence of malaria and subsequently distribute these nets and help erect where necessary.

Ghana Michael Bowden reports –

The main goal of this project in the northern region of Ghana is to assist the vulnerable and the marginalised rural people with relevant information and education needed to stay protected against the deadly malaria disease .

3rd St Albans Griffin Cubs have been fund raising for each of the last 3 years and have so far distributed over 1500 nets to local communities in Tamale district.. This summer we were able to provide funding for a further 350 nets, which were distributed to the rural communities of Dalun and Saakuba, in addition to the information and education needed to stay protected from Malaria.



60 Cub Scouts, Scouts and Scout leaders from Anbariya Cubs based in Tamale participated in the distribution exercise. They also visited communities from the previous distributions, all of whom reported a significant *reduction* in cases of Malaria compared to the previous year, which is fantastic news. A video of their present campaign can be downloaded from our SAM website.

Zanzibar Kent Scouts visited this country this summer and Andrea Noake reports –

“Armed with gifts we were invited into a local home, close to Kinuni Primary School. We split the whole contingent into 4 smaller groups and headed into the residential area. The home we visited was inhabited by a single Mum and twelve children, aged 4 to 20 yrs. The rented house comprised of a number of small rooms, built from breeze block-type bricks, wooden struts and corrugated iron roof, patched with ripped tarpaulins. Although there were 6 small rooms the family lived in 3, having recently being allowed to use a third as a bedroom. This room had one double mattress on the floor, covered by a mosquito net, with a smaller net to one side over bare floor.

There were no toilet facilities and the mother expressed that it was embarrassing to have to ask neighbours to use their facilities. The family had access to free water from a neighbour’s tap. She was able to provide the family with one meal a day. They ate mainly fish and other staple food brought from the local shops. Meat is very expensive and is rarely on the menu and food is cooked using a charcoal fired stove.

As the houses are so tightly packed together, there is no room to grow any crops/food. Any space that is available is used for banana trees. They are unable to go fishing as it is too far to get to the coast. The older children (and the Mother, when she isn’t looking after all the younger children) try to find paid jobs whenever they can, to support the family and therefore have missed out on education. Having divorced, her husband does not help support the family in any way.

The number of children in Zanzibar is causing a massive problem. This is contributing to the overstretched education system. Kinuni Primary School has over 7000 pupils and doesn’t have the adequate accommodation. The solution is to have a 2-shift system, half attend in the morning and half in the afternoon. Each class has over 150+ pupils, with one teacher. Lessons are conducted with the teacher following their National Curriculum from a text book, writing on a blackboard at the front of the class, with lots of repetition and the chanting of key facts.

The family does not receive any help from the local community. In Zanzibar there are very few charities to offer support. The church will try to help, but usually at certain times of the year- i.e. Christmas.



Malaria is a huge problem and, in some areas, 50% of the population may be sufferers, of varying degrees. Malaria continues to be the greatest threat to lives in Africa. Any medication or treatment must be paid for. Pregnant women need more care as they are more susceptible to disease at this time.

The woman seemed very pleased to receive the gifts of rice, sugar, tea, oil and washing detergent, expressing 'God bless you - you have touched my life'. We retorted 'God bless you too' and thanked her for allowing us into her home and answering the many questions we posed. We walked away quietly, processing what we had just witnessed and experienced. Reminding ourselves how lucky we are to have been born where we have and feeling the need to be grateful for and make the most of all our opportunities."

Malawi Howie Maujo reports

Cyclone Freddy, one of the most powerful and longest-lasting storms ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, made landfall in southern Malawi on 12 March 2023, causing heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides. It affected 14 of 28 districts, displacing more than 500,000 people and killing over 500 as at 21 March. On 14 March, the Government of Malawi declared a state of emergency in the ten hardest-hit districts. The cyclone caused severe damage on infrastructure, including power lines and telecommunication structures; flooded houses and roads; and destroyed bridges, schools, and health facilities. The cyclone also led to crop and livestock losses, affecting livelihoods.

At the time of the cyclone Freddy disaster, Malawi had also been grappling with a cholera outbreak since March 2022. The floods and heavy rains from the cyclone increased the spread of the outbreak. As at 29th March 2023, there were an estimated 56,090 suspected cases and 1,712 reported fatalities. At the same time in such peril times, malaria possesses a great danger due to swamps that are filled up with water due to heavy flooding, these areas can turn into mosquito breeding grounds, resulting in increase of malaria cases that can also result into death of infants and pregnant women.

Scouts in the southern part of Malawi were not spared from this monster, they were greatly affected by the floods. They lost their loved ones, houses washed away which led them to displacement and some got injured. Some Scouts got a refuge from their neighbours whose houses survived and some group of Scouts got a refuge from the evacuation camps.

It was very traumatizing to the young ones as they have been operating from these camps to school this has created unfavourable environment which has led to less concentration in class and that had a long term psychological effect in their mental wellbeing. The districts that were hardly hit are; Blantyre, Zomba, Mulanje, Phalombe, Chiradzulu, Nsanje, Neno, Mwanza, Chikwawa, Mangochi and Thyolo respectively. Scout Association of Malawi only targeted the District of Blantyre because it was the worst of all the districts.



Scout Association of Malawi in partnership with UK Scouts, embarked on a joint venture to reach out to vulnerable group of people in Malawi that were affected by the Cyclone Freddy and were living in the evacuation centre.

Two interventions were carried out to scale up the need and demand that resulted in the increase number of beneficiaries. Those that needed the ITN's were more than a 1000 and our interventions only managed to reach out to 900 beneficiaries that includes the infants, pregnant women, the elderly and other disadvantaged group of people.

Intervention goal was to reduce incidence of Malaria cases among vulnerable that were affected by Cyclone Freddy. Specific objectives included

- 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 emergence of mosquitoes that spread malaria.
- Scaling up the intervention to meet the existing demand in the evacuation centres.

Strategy These included identification and distribution of impregnated mosquito nets to vulnerable groups that were hit by Cyclone Freddy and civic education on proper use of ITNs to prevent Mosquito bite

Issues that were addressed The interventions were conducted without difficulties, though demand looks to be increasing each time of distribution, especially among the vulnerable such as pregnant women, the children and the elderly people as the victims number increase each day. We need another 1,000 ITN s for another intervention as the months we are getting into are very crucial for mosquitoes breeding. We acceded to this request by sending a further sum of £500 to Malawi in June.

Conclusion There is a need for distributing more ITNs to the victims as the numbers increase and we did reach to most of those that are more vulnerable, but still the number is escalating. Above all, the project strengthens Scout structures to effectively engage communities in preventing malaria and Scouts are becoming proactive in terms of knowledge dissemination.

Laptops 2 laptops were transported by Colin Andrews to Lilongwe in August for use by Malawi Scouts in developing a Malaria handbook for Scout Leaders in sub-tropical Africa. We acknowledge with thanks this generous donation by 3rd Yateley Green Scout Group.

Autumn activities

Scouts against Malaria is an activity which supports the World Organisation of Scouting Movements' (WOSM) global program, *Scouts for SDGs* (Sustainable Development Goals). 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.



We have developed a wide range of activities suitable for all sections which together with a slide set and videos of current campaigns can be downloaded from the SAM website. These are suitable for on-line learning for individual Scouts as well as sectional meetings.

Alternatively we are willing to visit your Group and organise an evening's activities if you are willing then to raise funds to purchase ITN treated nets and live within a reasonable distance of NE Hampshire..

Editor Rayner Mayer

SAM activities contribute towards Sustainable Development Goal #3 as described in this newsletter.