



Newsletter # 7

February 2017

In this issue we discuss the launch of the World Malaria Report and its conclusion that it is now a race against time to reduce the incidence of the disease before existing treatments become ineffective. We also note that Scouts in Ghana will now participate in our Scouts Against Malaria initiative and will start distributing bed nets and information about the disease to vulnerable families

World Malaria Report

The World Health Organisation has established that global malaria deaths have dropped by two thirds since the year 2000 averting 6.2 million deaths. However in 2015 WHO estimate that there were 212 million cases of malaria resulting in 430,000 deaths, primarily of children under the age of 5. 'Not only does malaria devastate lives but also holds back developing economies from reaching their potential' said Priti Patel, UK's International Development Secretary. Moreover there is increasing evidence that insects and parasites are becoming resistant to existing treatments.

Mrs Patel pointed out that the UK had already funded the manufacture of 10 million long lasting, insecticide- treated bed nets and will now fund the manufacture of another 40 million.

'We are definitely seeing progress' notes Dr Pedro Alonso, Director of WHO's Global Malaria Programme, 'but the World is still struggling to achieve the high levels of programme coverage that is needed to beat this disease'.

How Scouts can help

Insecticide- treated bed nets are the cornerstone of malaria prevention efforts in sub tropical Africa but only **half** the population at risk have access to a bed net. What Scouts can do in these countries is to help with the distribution of the nets by identifying vulnerable families and informing and helping them to erect and use the nets safely. Also to inform them what are the symptoms and where treatment is available if a child is bitten.

What UK Scouts can do is to understand the nature of the illness, how to prevent it and to raise funds so that Scouts in the sub tropical African countries can join the Global fight against malaria.

Pilot trial in Masindi district, Uganda

Following successful trials in two Uganda districts, a third trial was carried out in the Masindi district where Hampshire Scouts have been active for the past 16 years in another Community project which has involved in building clean water wells in some 30 villages to date. This 3rd trial was also successful and Ugandan scouts have now developed a method of working with local NGOs for targeting distribution of the nets, help with erecting nets and explaining why treatment is so important and has to be started as soon as the symptoms of malaria become apparent.

Funds have been sent out for a further trial in Uganda and the first trial in Ghana. In addition we would have started another trial in Soma, Gambia if the Foreign office had not decided to evacuate UK citizens.

New mosquito borne viral diseases

Malaria is induced by the bite of the female anopheles mosquito who need blood to feed their young. Other illnesses induced by other types of mosquitos include yellow fever, denque fever, West Nile virus(1999), chikungunya (2005) and most recently the Zika virus (2015).

In 2017, it is expected that to this growing list will be added three more mosquito borne diseases that is Rift Valley fever, Oropouche and Mayaro. Of all these illnesses, the only one for which a vaccine is available is yellow fever.

Programmes and resources

New programme ideas and resources are being continually developed and trialled. Some of the activities developed by Sophie Rance and Sana Siddique at the Institute of Education, University of Reading are illustrated below. The one is a six/patrol activity to illustrate the sequence of how malaria can be contracted and how it can be cured. Groups can then compare their results with those of the others and agree how this illness can develop.

The other activity is for individuals to assemble a mosquito from its constituent parts which requires using a set of pipe cleaners and bending these to shape.



An activity which Groups find challenging is to erect a bed net over a framework of bamboo poles and then for each group to assemble safely inside the net.

Such activities are not only very educational, but are also great fun and make for interesting programmes.

The programme should always end with a discussion about how UK Scouts can raise funds to help Scouts in African countries distribute nets to reduce the incidence of the disease. It is suggested that a Group should collectively raise £5 per Scout which will pay for purchase and distribution of a treated bed net

Joining the fight against malaria

If your Section/Group is willing to join the global partnership to fight malaria and earn the SAM badge, please visit our website www.scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk or email us at info@scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk. You can also see what is being done by visiting our Facebook page. Combatting malaria is an activity within the Global Programme Zone of the Scout Association and links UK Scouts with Scouts in other countries.



