NETLIFE LONG LASTING INSECTICIDE IMPREGNATED NET DISTRIBUTION

June & July 2007



Selected villages in the region of Kedougou

INTRODUCTION

After flying into Senegal, we contacted our mosquito net liaison in Dakar. Thanks to the wonderful help of Vestergaard Frandsen, the nets were shipped safely to Dakar for pick up. With the help of Against Malaria and Rob Mather, we were able to secure 1,000 LLINs. Prior to leaving the United States, we were also approached by former Peace Corps Volunteers who graciously donated additional funds for the purchase and distribution of mosquito nets to their old villages and any other villages that needed help. These funds bought an additional 100 nets, giving us a total of 1,100 nets.

We found an old friend in Dakar's main public transport garage who embraced our project and found us a mini-bus at an excellent bargain. We loaded the nets on the mini-bus the next morning and spent the next 14 painful hours crossing the country to the most rural area around the city of Kedougou. We brought the nets to a set of rooms we would rent for the next two months and quickly put them under lock and key.



The next morning, we took out our bicycles we had brought from the U.S. We rode out to Bandafassi, an hour's drive west of Kedougou.



In Bandafassi, we met with our main counterpart, Mactar Mansaly. Mansaly is the long-time health post nurse in Bandafassi. His post covers 45 outlying rural villages. Together, we looked at his records, took stock of his available medication, and worked with him as he tested patients with a new Plasmodium Falciparum malaria blood test. Because of this new test, we can finally get accurate data for who really has malaria in these rural areas.





After talking to Mansaly, we validated the ideas we had about which villages had the worst problems. Over the next week and a half, we scouted out villages to determine how many nets villages already had. This was tricky, because generally when we asked people about village needs, everyone would always say that nobody had a net. This was not always the whole truth. In some villages, we would find out one way or another that many people already had nets. Sometimes, we would find out from people who actually lived in the village and sometimes Mansaly would let us know that one particular village was doing pretty well with nets.

Some of this information was found our young friend Saliou.



Saliou is an 12 year old boy who I've known since I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in his village. Saliou tagged along with us on our scouting trips. While we asked village leaders about everything from crops to the local health care situation, Saliou would hang out at the local well or pump and ask other kids and women about their mosquito net situation. Often times, Saliou would get a more accurate picture of who really had nets than we did. For this, he was invaluable.

PROCESS

Once we chose the villages with the greatest need, we found people within these villages that were Agent de Sante Communitaires (ASC, or community health agents). These people were often go-getter organizers that knew every person in every household in the village and how to bring them together. We asked these liaisons to help us make lists. We prioritized and started with creating a list of only the married women. After this list was completed and people understood that the married women with children were our focus, we asked for a second list of other people with their own huts and beds. This population usually consisted of adolescents, single women and older folks.



Jesse Matthews (left) and Andrew Sherman (right) with Fula, the Agent de Sante Communitaire of Assoni. Fula was very helpful in gathering and organizing people in Assoni, Afia Pont, Afia Magasin, Wandinto and Dar Salaam.

The only people left out after these two lists were completed were the young to middle aged married men. In this case, these men could use one of their wives nets.

Depending on the village dynamic, this made out to be about 1 net per 2-3 people.

All of this was done for two reasons.

- 1. We wanted total coverage for the villages we would help.
- 2. If we didn't give nets to the village elders, not only would they dislike us, but they had the power to take a woman's net as their own after Netlife had left town. If there was any question as to if something like that might happen, we erred on the side of giving out too many nets than not enough.

Outline of the Netlife Program

Once we arrived in the village, we had an opportunity to have a very receptive audience. We took advantage of this by teaching some important lessons about malaria and hand washing. This was all done in pulaar and much of it was in a question/answer format (ex: Ko honno jonte noje falorte hara nangani neddo? = What is the best way to protect people from malaria?)

I. Greetings - If we don't greet properly people are instantly turned off. They start thinking we aren't very respectful and start tuning out, so we greet quite thoroughly.

II. Who We Are - We introduced ourselves by our names (Ablaye Diallo = Andy and Youssouf Diallo = Jesse) and by our organization. We said Netlife in english and explained Net equals moustiquaire (french) and sanke (pulaar). Life equals la vie (french) or nduurgam (pulaar). We emphasized the fact that Netlife is a new organization and that it is not the Peace Corps. We did this so people in these villages didn't start expecting Peace Corps volunteers to start doing mosquito net distributions, because right now, they don't. We really don't want people in the villages driving the Peace Corps volunteers crazy with requests for nets.





- III. Trouble In The Villages
 - A. We explained why we chose this particular village (distance from health care, large amounts of stagnant water, high number of positive malaria testing in the last few years)
 - B. Two main problems.

1. Diarrheal diseases - We talked about hand washing as the best preventative method. We emphasized the importance of hand washing before eating, cooking, after using the bathroom and after cleaning up poopy babies. We also emphasized the importance of using water AND SOAP.



Andy Sherman pretends to eat at a family meal around a single bowl while discussing how easily diarrheal germs can be spread. The importance of hand washing was very much emphasized.

2. Malaria - questions: What causes malaria? When is malaria dangerous? What happens when you get malaria/symptoms? What do you do if have malaria? What should you do if you are pregnant and want to avoid malaria? What is the best way to prevent malaria? When do you start using mosquito nets? When do you take down the mosquito nets? How can you ruin nets?

We answered all of these questions about malaria thoroughly with audience participation. This was a lot of fun. I should say that almost everyone knew the answer to these questions, which is reassuring. I once read an argument against nets claiming that people would use them as fishing nets or other odd uses. When I spoke about how can people ruin nets and brought this up, they looked at me as if I was crazy. The people we to which we spoke understood the value of these nets and talking about fishing with them was the same as asking an American or European to use their wedding ring as a lure to catch a fish.

We also review the new malaria testing that is being offered for free at area health posts. We highlight that the test can accurately tell (really really) if you have malaria or not. The plus side for the villagers is that if they don't actually have malaria, they won't have to spend too much money on drugs. Also, the more testing that occurs in these areas, the more accurate the data will be reflecting the actual incidence of malaria.

IV. Details Of The Nets - We start with the truth - the nets awesome. They are big. They have insecticide inside the fibers that can last up to four years. They can be washed up to 20 times before the insecticide is ineffective. After 20 washes, if the net is still intact, they could be retreated with insecticide at the local health post.

V. This Is The End - We told these villages that we're basically done, that we're never coming back. This wasn't necessarily the truth, but we wanted to make sure that the people didn't put off buying a net while thinking we would come back soon. We emphasized that if their net goes bad, to buy another one as soon as possible. "Do not wait for another project like this to come by here. Buy another net if you can."

VI: Take Home Points - From the returns on the new malaria test so far, we can see a high rate of positive malaria tests during the months of September and October - after rainy season is done. If they wanted to avoid malaria during bad times, they should keep the net up until the end of November. Ideally, we wanted them to have the nets up year round, but at least through November.

We also knew that some people may have two nets or will someday would have two nets. We explained that we are doing this project to help people in the rural areas, and we just wanted to make sure people in rural areas had more access to nets. We encouraged anyone that had two nets to give one to someone (a relative or whoever, ideally a pregnant woman or a woman with children) in another rural village. We encouraged not giving them to people in cities like Kedougou or Tambacounda, because our emphasis was on the rural population, and people in cities were already lucky enough to have access to better health care. Then finally, we distributed the nets. We did this by reading off of our preprepared lists. These lists also included Identity Card numbers. When people would come up for their net, they would bring their ID up and we would write down their number. Occasionally, someone would not have an ID Card. With the whole village their, as long as everyone validated the fact that the person actually lived in that village, we still gave them a net. The ID card set up wasn't to exclude rural people that had no ID, but to instill the idea to the local people that this was an organized and official distribution.

We also charged 100 cfa per net, about \$0.20 American. This amount was still very minimal, but allowed some sense of ownership of the nets to be conveyed. There were no people who could not afford this cost. All of this money was donated to an organization called Senegad, which provides rural adolescent girls arrangements and scholarships to go to higher education facilities.



In this village, everyone brought up their ID cards before we started the distribution. Here, Andrew Sherman is checking the ID's with a list made of all the married women. For one set of five villages, we were even able to provide educational theater. From my past Peace Corps experience, I had trained a group of five villagers to perform a skit of a pregnant woman, her husband and the health, social and financial struggles they encounter with malaria.



When these distributions were completed, there was often a celebration of dancing and singing.



Over the next month and a half, we biked out the mosquito nets on footpaths to villages inaccessible to automobiles. We rode ridiculous distances, and the both of us lost substantial amounts of weight as we performed these exhaustive distributions in 17 villages.



RESULTS

The 17 covered villages were reported to our counterpart, so that the Ministry of Health could be aware of the coverage. This way when more nets arrive, Mansaly would know that these villages were covered. He could then make sure new nets go to villages we couldn't help on this trip. Mansaly also wrote us this letter of thanks.

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Mactar MANSALY Infirmier d'Etat à Bandafassi Département de Kédougou

Je suis très content de l'acte de Andrew SHERMAN et Jesse MATTHEWS de l'organisation NETUFE de la distribution des moustiquaires imprégnées à des populations qui en ont vraiment besoin.

Cette distribution est accompagnée des séances d'éducation sanitaire sur le paludisme et les maladies diarrhéique.

Ils ont sauvé la vie à beaucoup de personnes, si nous savons que le paludisme tue beaucoup de personnes en Afrique.

Je vous remercie de tout mon cœur et que le bon DIEU vous donne longue vie et une bonne santé The rest of Mactar Mansaly's letter is a good illustration of our final results.

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Listes des villages qui ont bénéficié des moustiquaires imprégnées

	Villages	Moustiquaires	Populations
1	Assoni	232	396
2	Afia Magasin	88	299
3	Afia Pont	73	209
4	Wandinto	12	30
5	Darsalam (1)	10	30
6	Sylling	20	124
7	Boundoucondi	63	221
8	Nathia	70	130
9	Thiamalel	126	297
10	Mamacono Tanda	56	107
11	Alinguel (Temessou)	49	118
12	Dindéfélo Tanda	61	125
13	Dapan dapasse	33	100
14	Boussaura	88	240
15	Togue	66	212
16	Dar salam (2)	12	28
17	Bambaya Labourou	41	115
		1100	2781

Toute la population et moi nous vous remercions très chaleureusement

Mouctar MASSALY Infirmier Diplomé d'Etat Mactar MANSALY Infirmier d'Etat à Bandafassi