

Free Bed Net Distribution

Pessidé, Togo May - July 2011



Pessidé, Togo: Post Distribution Report

Overview

Project PeacePal, together with NGO PJA (Petit Jardin en Afrique - Little Garden in Africa) / ASEDA (Accion Sociale pour l'Environment et Development en Afrique - Social Action for Environmental Development in Africa) based in Kante, Togo, launched a mosquito net distribution in the region of Kara, Prefecture of Keran, District of Pessidé. The goal of this project was to help protect vulnerable communities and individuals against malaria. Pessidé is comprised of ten villages including Nandjita, Kanté-taar, Houllo, Nambou, Woutota, Nabina, Narita, Pessidé Ancien, Antenne, and Nambou-Barrière. Three schools were also included in the distribution of the mosquito nets: EPP-Kokote, CEG Kande I, CEG Kande II, CEG Kara, and Lycee Kara. These schools were selected because many students are PeacePals.

The distribution took place in multiple phases. First, NGO PJA / ASEDA recruited supervisors who worked with Agentes Sante Communitaire (Community Health Agents) to complete house to house assessment surveys from May 30 - June 1, 2011. Second, the actual distribution took place June 1-6, 2011 in each village and school. Education sessions occurred concurrently with distribution to inform communities about the causes, prevention, and symptoms of malaria. Communities were very surprised to see the house to house survey combined with education and distribution efforts, one of the first times possibly seen in Togo. Both the organizers and the community felt that the project was effective and hope that it will take place again in the future. For future sessions, opportunities for improvement are included in this report.

Organization of Volunteers

Community Health Agents were recruited from the local villages to assist with the distribution. One Agent was selected from each of the ten Pessidé villages since they live in the respective communities and are knowledgeable of the community's needs. The Agents gathered at the Pessidé Health Center on May 30th, 2011 for training and an explanation of distribution goals, process, and objectives.

NGO PJA / ASEDA also recruited ten independent supervisors from Kante's local high school to assist with the mosquito net distribution. These supervisors were selected based on several criteria: organization skills, communication skills, and health education skills. Additionally, the supervisors were unbiased toward mosquito net distribution since they were not from the villages that were receiving the nets.



Training of volunteers



Training of community health agents

Distribution Process: Picking Up Nets

On May 26, 2011, Mr. Akanto Jean Bosco and two volunteers rented a van and traveled 390km from Kante, Togo to Tamale, Ghana to pick up the mosquito nets. The nets for Pessidé were delivered with nets for another PeacePal distribution taking place near Tamale, Ghana. Even in a rented van, the one-way journey to Tamale took almost 13 hours due to poor road conditions during the rainy season. Upon arriving in Tamale, Akanto, along with the driver and local volunteers, loaded 3,500 nets from a secured room into the rented van within an hour. Nets filled all of the interior van space and required additional storage on the roof of the van. After the van was loaded, Akanto and his volunteers made the drive back to Kante the same day, due to time constraints.



Loading nets in van



Loading nets on top of van

Distribution Process: Storage of Nets

Akanto had previously met with Sonte Stephan, Director of Malaria Prevention in Kante, and Akondo Djato, Chief Doctor of Kante's hospital, who were happy to be present for the arrival of the nets. The nets were stored in a secure room at ASEDA's center in Kante. Nets were unloaded from the van, recounted, and checked for quality by the health officials.



Arrival of nets at ASEDA center



Inspection of nets by medical team

Distribution Process: House to House Surveys

From May 30 – June 1, 2011, teams comprised of one supervisor and one Community Health Agent completed house to house assessments. Information collected from each household included: head of household, number of individuals per household, age and gender of each individual, and number of mosquito nets needed. Distribution teams entered households to evaluate the number of sleeping spaces and the number of nets needed. If existing nets in poor condition were still being used, teams asked household members to remove the old nets as they were to be replaced with new ones. Upon completing the assessment, distribution teams gave each household an official ticket with the household name and number of nets required. Households were required to bring their tickets to the distribution sessions, where they would be verified, in order to pick up their nets.



House to house survey with distribution team



Example of old mosquito net being discarded

Distribution Process: Education and Distribution Sessions

A detailed schedule was outlined to reach each village/school effectively and efficiently from June 1-6, 2011. The team rented the local hospital's car, a taxi, or a motorcycle to transport mosquito nets from the ASEDA center to each local village's distribution location (see 'Mosquito Net Distribution Data' for full details). When feasible, Akanto voluntarily used his personal car for transport as well. Households were informed of the distribution location and time and instructed to meet there. The distribution commenced with an education session including information ranging from basic symptoms of malaria, methods of preventing malaria, and the importance of utilizing mosquito nets, including a demonstration on the proper way to hang a mosquito net. Sessions ranged from 45 minutes to one hour and were conducted for audiences ranging from 100 to 500 people. After the education sessions, households stood in line and presented their tickets to receive the specified number of nets for the household. This process continued on a daily basis starting from 7am and ending sometimes at 10pm. After the day's work, the distribution team met separately to discuss the lessons learned from the day's activities and to prepare for the following session.

On June 1st, 2011, the opening day of the distribution campaign, a ceremony was held in the village of Nandjita. The Prefet (Governor of Keran Prefecture), General Secretary of Kante, and other government and health representatives facilitated the ceremony and assisted with the distribution. A representative from Association Togolaise Presse (ATOP – National Togo Press) was present to observe the day's events. On June 20th, 2011, an article in Togo Presse, the most widely circulated national newspaper, highlighted the events of the opening ceremony and the progress of the distribution campaign to date.

Many households in the village of Woutota were absent during the initial distribution campaign. For this reason, the team revisited Woutota on July 14th, 2011 to conduct another education and distribution session of absent households.



Local officials present for Opening Ceremonies



Education session in Woutota

Distribution Process: Follow-up

On June 5th, 2011, the distribution teams visited each of the 8 villages that had already received mosquito nets to complete a brief follow-up review. Teams visited about 10-15 households per village to verify that old mosquito nets were removed and that the new mosquito nets were hung properly and being utilized.

On July 20th, 2011, Ismail Kassam, PeacePal Board Member, and Akanto Jean-Bosco visited the village of Houlío to meet with the Community Health Agents at the health center to discuss the distribution program. Health agents shared their views on how the project went, the challenges they faced, and their hopes for future distribution campaigns. During the session, the local Chief arrived and greeted the team. The Chief thanked the group for all their efforts and commended them on the success of the campaign. As a symbolic gesture for the program, the team planted a mango tree outside the community health center to represent the connection between PeacePal, ASEDA, and the District of Pessidé and hopes for future growth. Afterwards, Ismail and Akanto visited 5 households to ensure that mosquito nets were properly placed above sleeping spaces and utilized. Before leaving Houlío, Ismail and Akanto were invited to the Chief at his house where he once again thanked the team for all the time, effort, and dedication demonstrated during the program. Before ending the day, Ismail and Akanto met with the supervisors of the distribution team to gather their feedback on the program and their recommendations for future distributions.



Feedback session with community health agents



Planting mango tree in Houlío

Successes

- **Effective house to house distribution:** Local officials, Regional Health Agents, community volunteers, and local communities felt that the house to house distribution was effective for several reasons. First, an accurate assessment of households was conducted. Additionally, sleeping spaces were evaluated and households were asked to remove old nets. Second, education sessions were tailored to audiences based on the local village demographic. Third, follow-up house to house visits ensured that nets were properly hung in the household rather than simply being stored away and kept new, or used for alternative purposes (as often can be the case). Those involved in distributing the nets and the recipients of the nets claim that this is one of the first programs of its kind.
- **Effective timing:** The month of May was the ideal month for this distribution since: 1) students (free from classes) were available to assist in distribution efforts; 2) May is the start of the rainy season; therefore, nets

were distributed before the number of mosquitoes in the area reached its peak. Even though the rainy season made the road difficult to navigate when picking up the nets from Tamale, Ghana, overall this proved to be a good time period.

- **Independent Supervisors:** Selecting high school students to assist with the net distribution proved to be an effective approach as they were not from the targeted villages, and were therefore unbiased.
- **Opening nets prior to distribution:** Prior to handing the new nets to households, distribution teams opened the net's packaging. Although it may seem intrusive to open a new net before giving it to someone, this ensures that the nets were actually used at the time of distribution instead of being stored for a later time, or even given to someone else as a gift.

Challenges

- **Distribution budget:** Speaking with the trained supervisors and the Community Health Agents, each group mentioned that the lack of a distribution budget made the program very difficult. Team members often had to travel several miles on foot to reach the distribution site, and were responsible for their own transportation and any additional expenses (i.e. meals, water, etc.) Additionally, because the culture of volunteerism does not exist in the area, individuals expect to receive some pay or at least have expenses covered. Finally, volunteering to assist with the net distribution meant lost income from a day's work; since volunteering for no pay provides little incentive, this proved to be a significant challenge.
- **Geography:** Although the villages in the Pessidé area were highlighted by the Kante hospital as high-risk malaria areas, the distance between households and the geographical isolation of each village was difficult to navigate on foot. For example, net distribution teams often walked $\frac{1}{2}$ mile between houses in order to complete the house to house assessment surveys and distribute mosquito nets. Oftentimes when distribution teams arrived at a house and the household was not home because they were working in their field (which could span up to a quarter mile), the teams would have to retrace their steps and go back to those homes. This added up to a significant distance and a lot of time. Additionally, unpaved, rocky, and dusty terrain proved to be very challenging to walk by foot with flip-flop shoes or torn sandals, as worn by many of our team members.
- **Apprehensive about sharing household information:** Our teams encountered many instances where households did not feel comfortable or even apprehensive about sharing household information. The reasons are two-fold: 1) other organizations had previously requested information about their household and promised to return with goods, or to help their home. These organizations did not make good on their promise and the households' expectations went unmet. 2) some households were weary of or feared providing information to our teams because they thought we were from the government, investigating their home, or trying to get them into trouble. With households not wanting to provide information to us for these reasons, this proved to be a challenge to get accurate house to house survey information.

Suggested Improvements for Future Campaigns

- **Local villages provide distribution budget:** While many local villages can find volunteers, there are certain expenses which cannot be avoided: securing means of transportation, providing food and water for volunteers, etc. Our suggestion is that when a village is selected for the distribution campaign, that village commit to raising a pre-determined amount of funds to assist with the distribution.
- **Uniforms for distribution teams:** Often when distribution teams arrived at households, their validity was sometimes questioned due to the lack of a uniform or identification card. Providing distribution teams with a vest, a hat, or an ID card could help avoid this challenge as well as aid in addressing the apprehension of giving household information described above.
- **More thorough training sessions:** Some supervisors and Community Health Agents indicated that they would have preferred further training regarding the distribution process, what to expect, and how to address questions or concerns from households. One suggestion is to include past supervisors in future training sessions if the distribution is held in the same country, region, or area. Additionally, as part of the formal training sessions, it would have been helpful to have sample houses for the teams to visit first before going out into each household. This would give the teams and the trainers an opportunity to discuss results and identify potential questions the teams may have.

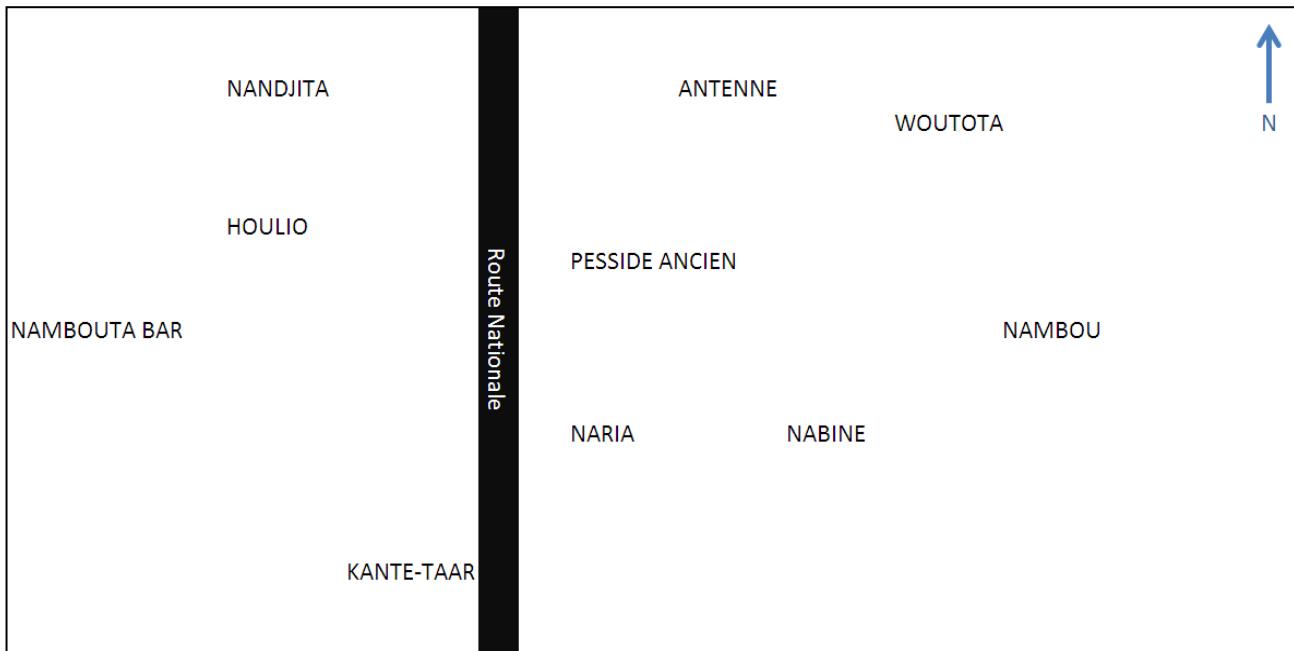


Nandjita resident receiving nets



Houlio residents receiving nets

Relative Locations of Distribution Villages



Record of Distribution Phases

PeacePal and Accion Sociale pour l'Environnement et Development en Afrique
(ASEDA - Social Action for Environmental Development in Africa)

May - July 2011: Kante, Togo

Date	Description of Activity
26-May-11	Collection of mosquito nets from Tamale, Ghana
27-May-11	Arrival of mosquito nets in Togo and reception by Doctor Akondo and Sonte Stephan, Malaria Prevention Director of Kante
28-May-11	Recruitment and training of professors
28-May-11	Recruitment and training of Supervisors
29-May-11	Recruitment and training of Supervisors
30-May-11	Making of official household tickets to be distributed to each household recipient
30-May-11	Survey assessment at CEG I and Lycee by Sekedjah W Oham (Supervisor)
30-May-11	Survey assessment at CEG II by Talakena (Supervisor)
30-May-11	Transportation rental for distribution
30-May-11	Supervisors assigned to local villages
31-May-11	Launching of house to house surveys by village
1-Jun-11	Opening Ceremony and first distribution of mosquito nets
5-Jun-11	Supervisors followed up with eight villages that had already received nets
6-Jun-11	Final education distribution session completed
14-Jul-11	Follow up distribution for absent households in the village of Woutota
20-Jul-11	Meeting with PeacePal representative (Ismail Kassam), local Chief, and Community Health Agents to provide feedback on distribution efforts, discuss lessons learned from the campaign, and plant a tree as a symbolic gesture. Meeting with Supervisors to discuss their perspectives on how the distribution campaign went and how they feel the campaign could be improved for the future.

Mosquito Net Distribution Data

PeacePal and Accion Sociale pour l'Environnement et Development en Afrique

(ASEDA - Social Action for Environmental Development in Africa)

June 2011: Kante, Togo

No.	Village	Distribution Location	Date of Distribution	Hours	# of Nets	# of Volunteers
1	Nandjita	School	1-Jun-2011	7:00am - 12:00pm	223	6
2	Antenne	Catholic Church	2-Jun-2011	12:00pm - 4:00pm	366	8
3	Woutota	Chief's Home	2-Jun-2011	2:05pm - 2:25pm	386	7
4	Nambota	Village market	2-Jun-2011	2:33pm - 5:05pm	280	7
5	Nabine	Cotton market	4-Jun-2011	8:34am - 11:04am	222	5
6	Kante -Taar	School	4-Jun-2011	11:40am - 1:00pm	398	9
7	Narita	Chief's Home	4-Jun-2011	3:00pm - 5:00pm	157	4
8	Pessidé Ancien	School	4-Jun-2011	5:17pm - 6:20pm	546	9
9	Houlio	Health dispensary	6-Jun-2011	7:52am - 2:00pm	367	27
No.	PeacePal Recipients	Distribution Location	Date of Distribution	Hours	# of Nets	# of Volunteers
10	CEG and Lycee of Kara	School	2-Jun-2011	7:00am - 8:55am	210	6
11	CEG I, CEG II, and two Lycees of Kante	School	2-Jun-2011	9:05am - 11:06am	212	6
12	EPP - Kokote	School	2-Jun-2011	3:00pm - 5:00pm	105	6

TOTAL* **3,472**

*Out of 3500 mosquito nets for Togo, 28 nets will be distributed by the end of July 2011. These represent households that were absent during the distribution.

Additional Resources

- More photos of the distribution available at:
 - <http://www.peacepal.org/news-a-events/photo-gallery/net-distribution-kante-togo.html>
- View videos of the distribution:
 - <http://www.peacepal.org/news-a-events/video-gallery.html>