

## **Radio Activation**

### **WSM free nets for Winning Villages in low ITN Coverage Regions**

In 2006, Generic malaria communication developed a radio activation program that was implemented or conducted in 4 selected regional radio stations of the Royal Media Group. These four stations were selected because they were in a position of reaching the mass audiences in some identified 16 low ITN coverage regions in Kenya. These 16 districts are to be found in the Central, Eastern, Mountain and Rift Valley regions of Kenya.

The stations selected were:

Citizen FM – has national reach / all regions in the country – targeted to reach Rift Valley

Muuga FM – reaches Eastern / Mountain region

Musyi FM – reaches Eastern region

Inooro FM – reaches Central, Mountain

#### **The Radio Activation**

This is a presenter driven educational campaign that has the key radio presenters in each station talking-up key malaria messages and why people should prevent malaria by using treated nets. The presenters inform listeners who the risk groups are and what they need to do in order to prevent themselves from getting malaria. They inform the communities in these regions that they can access nets at subsidized prices at public health facilities, especially for the pregnant women and the children under five years of age.

The presenters were driving the campaign using the 2005/6 theme of ‘Malaria Ishindwe’ which is a positive and up-beat campaign that delivers the key messages of malaria in an easy to recall manner. Key and popular radio presenters are used because they have a close following or almost celebrity status in Kenya. The radio activation along with carrying key malaria educational messages also involves and encourages the mass audiences to participate by calling or writing in to the stations.

#### **What the Communities had to do**

In 2006, the ‘Malaria Ishindwe!’ (Beat Malaria! or Do Away! with malaria!) campaign activation sought to drive further growth of net ownership amongst these 16 districts. The idea for the radio activation was to get community leaders such as those from Women’s Groups, Youth Groups, Church or Community elders such as Chief’s as well as Public Health Officers to call or write in to the stations and explain how they were involved and had grown net ownership and use within their communities. The presenters were then to read out the most impressive efforts and announce at large which community, group or village was putting in the maximum effort towards this end. This was to serve the purpose of encouraging other communities to do likewise.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Radio Activation then involved the reward which was for the community leader who had impressed the radio station most with his efforts in creating malaria free zones for his community/village. The presenters, representatives from the radio station and PSI personnel went on the ground and confirmed by visiting a few homes from the community leader’s group that he/she had indeed encouraged group members to own and use treated nets. The entire group as well as the community leader was then rewarded with practical gifts (lanterns, blankets, radios, bicycles, cutlery etc) that were of use to the group as well as some ‘Malaria Ishindwe branded items (caps, T-

shirts, lesos, key chains). The big reward for the entire group was also the visit by the radio presenter whom they had heard preaching the malaria message and who was then now on-ground practicing the malaria prevention messages by actually demonstrating how to hang a net and how to treat the nets using the treatment kit.

### **How Winning Villages were chosen for World Swim Free nets and How Distribution was Conducted.**

The radio activation had already assisted in earmarking the communities in the already low coverage regions who were trying their best to convert to malaria free zones or MFZs. PSI then decided that the best gift for these hardworking community leaders would be to actually ensure that their entire villages where they came from were converted to Malaria Free Zones, by rewarding each and every household with a net. Half the community leaders came from very needy villages but had still put in some effort towards encouraging their members to purchase and use treated nets. This was hence a much needed Christmas gift. To ensure that each and every household would be rewarded and benefit from the net, PSI and the Royal Media Group representatives worked with the local administration, mainly the village Chiefs from which the community leaders came from. In Kenya, a village Chief knows all his villagers and most villages are anything from 300 – 1000 households. The winning village chiefs were asked to confirm their household numbers and inform the household heads to come to their camps on the selected dates to collect their free ITN. These confirmations took about a week and the Radio Activation teams were ready to roll-out the distributions by December. However, December is a very crowded month on radio and the exercise was put on hold until January to ensure the exercise was well conducted and served the villagers well.

### **Distribution Summary Table**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Village or Sub/Location; Location; Division; District</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b># of nets distributed</b>	<b>Contact person</b>
18/01/2007	Riakanau; Nthingini-Riakanau; Karaba; Mwea; Embu	3,000	300	Chief Kimeu Cell +254-722-306909
19/01/2007	Kyeleni; Kyanzimbi; Matungulu; Machakos	9,000	680	-
19/01/2007	Nguruweini; Kagumuini; Gaichiri; Maragua	6,297	880	Mr Kimani Cell + 254-720-421469
20/01/2007	Kathunguri; Karurumo; Kieni; Embu	6,000	800	Ephraim Gathiomi Cell +254-721-718207
20/01/2007	Kiarukungu; Kimbimbi; Mwea; Kirinyaga	6,000	800	Senior Chief Henry Karatu Cell +254-721-116670/ 254-722-878534
25/01/2007	Maweni; Voi Central, Voi Central; Taita Taveta	5,720	1,100	Councillor Bi. Amisi Cell +254-722-674118
25/01/2007	Kaare; Kiera; Mwimbi; Meru South (Tharaka)	5,600	800	Asst Chief Lytton Mbae Ndobi Cell +254-726-226303
02/02/2007	Nubia; Township; Mosochi; Kisii Central	2440	500	Chief Nyakundi ;254-721-784207 Musa Abbas +254-724-997827

## Taking the Nets to the Grassroots



*Above: Some of the beneficiaries of the latest WSM nets distribution by PSI*

World Swim against Malaria (WSM) is a not-for-profit humanitarian initiative borne two years ago out of an urgent need to help fight malaria, one of the world's deadliest diseases, second only to HIV/AIDS.

Its mission is to marshal universal support and all the available human and capital resources from like-minded people in helping to stop the disease through distribution of long-lasting insecticide treated nets to the vulnerable poor especially in the hardest hit areas. Every shilling donated to the course goes to buying a net for some of those at the riskiest end of contracting the killer disease.

“Our aim is to have a million people swimming across the world at the same time,” says a mission statement posted at the WSM website. And just judging by the wave with which the project has swept across the many volunteers' hearts so far, a million people seems pretty much an underestimate.

Population Services International, an international NGO working to address social health issues through social marketing, recently partnered with WSM to help distribute nets to the vulnerable poor including pregnant women and children under five in Kenya.

To date PSI has distributed over 5,700 nets to seven villages countrywide selected on the success of their self-driven mobilization exercise to drive malaria out of their villages in an initiative dubbed creating- *malaria free zones*.

In one of the distribution exercises organized by PSI in January, part of the 5,700 nets were delivered in rural Kyeleni sub-location, in Eastern Kenya's remote Matungulu division in Machakos District.

Kyeleni is among the seven villages in five districts that were selected from an initial 61 villages countrywide by PSI to benefit from the free WSM nets distribution after participating in a community driven education awareness campaign on malaria prevention. Other regions Kaungani and Meru in central province, Kisii in Nyanza province and Voi in Coastal province.

Under a mutual agreement, PSI met the cost of logistical delivery of the nets to the grassroot's beneficiaries besides its normal core of educating the masses on significance of using the nets to protect themselves against malaria.

At Kyeleni, one of the recipients, Kitheu Mutuku, a 28 year old a mother of three could not initially translate her joy into words as she beamingly picked up her share of the delivery.

“I have always heard about the campaign to protect myself and the young children from malaria but the cost of the net has never favored me,” marveled Mutuku clutching on to her seven months old baby, “I am very happy now my baby will no longer live in fear of contracting *Nde tema* (native language for malaria). Mutuku is not alone.

Although ITN distribution program has made inroads in increasing the net coverage in the country, there are still many others who cannot afford the protective nets even at the subsidized cost.

And so for Mutuku and a score of others who have never used a net, the WSM initiative could not have come at a better time. In a country where over 50 per cent of the population live on less than a dollar a day, one cannot fail to deeply understand the plight of Mutuku.

**For further information please contact: Population Services International--Rose Kibe on 254-20-4440125-8 or [rkibe@pskenya.org](mailto:rkibe@pskenya.org), [www.psi.org](http://www.psi.org) Or World Swim Against Malaria-- Rob Mather on - [rmather@btinternet.com](mailto:rmather@btinternet.com) WSM-- [www.worldswimformalaria.com](http://www.worldswimformalaria.com)**