

REPORT ON DISTRIBUTION OF LONG LASTING INSECTICIDE TREATED NETS

Provided by:

The Akado Medical Centre, Project Mosquito Net and Power of Love Foundation in partnership with World Swim Against Malaria.

Background

Akado Women and Medical Centre has successfully distributed the six thousand insecticide treated mosquito nets (ITNs) in twenty seven fishing beaches and thirteen rural villages in Rusinga Island, Gembe Locations and Mbita Township of Kenya on the outskirts of Lake Victoria between the dates of June 4th-15th 2007.

The Distribution

Akado started by conducting a Rapid Needs Assessment prior to receiving the nets, to identify the most vulnerable groups and to assess the magnitude of Malaria in our designated project areas. The survey primarily targeted children under 5 years, pregnant mothers, orphaned children in child headed households and people living with HIV/AIDS living within the impoverished, densely populated fishing slums and who are the most at risk of contracting malaria.

The primary factors for malaria contraction being due to low insecticide treated net coverage, and misconceptions about how malaria is contracted and their lifestyle of migrating from place to place in search of fish, causing them to always be in close proximity to a major water source.

The survey was followed by a well organized, intensive community mobilization campaign targeting the fishing beaches, rural villages and the Mbita Township before the arrival of the nets. We also held consultation meetings with the relevant government authorities including the Ministry of Health, provincial administration, politicians, church leaders, women group leaders, youths, school teachers and other key stakeholders to solicit their views and support to be inclusive of the entire communities.

The distribution project reached out to the most marginalized children under 5 years, pregnant mothers and other vulnerable children at greatest risk of contracting malaria due to poor hygienic and sanitary conditions, child discrimination, abuse and exploitation.

During this historical event a total of 5,971 nets were distributed to 3,767 children under 5 years, 973 pregnant mothers, 779 child headed households and 452 were distributed to elderly care providers living with total orphaned children. Twenty nine went to staff members and their families.

Education Outreach

This was a historical event in our community and we utilized the opportunity to meet and educate the marginalized in the community, especially women and school children, to educate them about malaria and environmental sanitation.

Conclusion

Before the distribution period we discovered that 67% of absenteeism among pupils in 21 local schools is as a result of malaria, while the usage of ITNs in the fishing beaches was below 17%. Through this single distribution of ITNs, we have increased the usage of ITNs in these fishing slums households by at least 35%, from 17% to 52% ITN coverage.

The whole event was an empowering process of uniting, motivating and educating the poorest and vulnerable groups in our community to take the reciprocal responsibility of improving their own lives and ensuring increased child survival opportunities within the fishing area slums where they live and work.

We believe that provision of long lasting insecticide treated nets is one of the most effective ways to increase child survival in the impoverished, densely populated fishing slums and hence, breaking the cycle of poverty, myriad of ill health problems and illiteracy in our project area.

Acknowledgements

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