

Commune of Méguet, Burkina Faso, West Africa
Mosquito Bed Net Distribution
October 7-12, 2009



Mothers and children waiting to receive bed nets in Kietenga.

Introduction:

In Burkina Faso, malaria is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality. The poverty level and the insufficiency of information pertaining to malaria, adversely affect the number of people that seek medical treatment when infected with the parasite.

The distribution effort was conducted in the Commune of Méguet, which is a rural commune, consisting of 21 villages, ranging in size from 204 habitants to 7,273 habitants. The total commune population is 36,490. The majority of these persons are subsistent farmers which do not have the financial means necessary to purchase chemically treated bed nets. In 2007, malaria affected 36% of the communal population.

Nine villages were selected in the Commune of Méguet where Blanket Coverage could be achieved. They were as follows:

	Commune of Méguet	
	Recipient Villages	
Village	Population	Nets
Kakim	263	108
Yama	218	91
Koudoughin	363	150
Vagma	240	99
Pilmalga	378	152
Songuikéim	352	144
Boulwando	1,408	566
Fatimatenga	989	403
Kietenga	702	287
Total Population Served	4,913	2,000

Distribution:

Working with the village health committee at the health clinic in Méguet, the recipient villages were determined, and a recipient list for each village was created. The members of the village health committee notified the residents of each village of the distribution date, time and location.

The bed net distribution team consisted of three staff members from L'Association Solidarité pour un Développement Communautaire, my host organization. Also, the designated village health representative from each village helped ensure that the distribution effort ran as efficiently as possible.

During the meetings that were held with the village health committee, a decision was made to distribute the bed nets in the satellite villages around the principal village of Méguet, where the health clinic is located. The reason being that persons living five to

fifteen kilometers away from the health clinic are less likely to seek medical attention when infected with the malaria parasite, than those living within walking distance of the health clinic. Moreover, in 2009, the health clinic in Méguet received mosquito nets from the Burkinabè Federal Government to provide for the needs of pregnant women and children under the age of one. Due to the distance between the health clinic and the satellite villages, the primary recipients of these mosquito nets are expecting mothers in the village of Méguet.

As part of the distribution effort, recipients were educated, in the local language, about preventative measures that they can take to avoid becoming infected with the malaria parasite. The importance of sleeping under the bed net, proper refuse and waste management, as a means to eliminate standing water, and the importance of wearing protective clothing in the evening to avoid mosquito bites which transmit the parasite were all stressed.

Furthermore, the recipients were also educated about proper bed net hanging techniques and maintenance.

Achievements:

The original target goal was set at acquiring 500 bed nets, which would have been sufficient for achieving blanket coverage in no more than three villages in the commune of Méguet. Due to the generous support of family and friends alike, blanket coverage was achieved in 9 villages in the commune of Méguet.

The bed net distribution campaign was successful in furnishing impregnated bed nets for 13.5% of the population of the Commune of Méguet. Moreover, the persons receiving the bed nets were determined to be “at risk,” due to their respective villages’ distance from the health clinic in the village of Méguet. As noted above, these persons are less likely to seek proper medical attention when infected with the malaria parasite.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of this distribution campaign was being approached by community members thanking me for the treated bed nets that their family had received. Most of the beneficiaries do not have access to impregnated bed nets due to financial limitations. Therefore, the distribution campaign was seen as a major milestone in the fight against malaria in the commune of Méguet.

Constraints:

Due to budgetary limitations, fuel and transportation costs, from Ouagadougou to the ultimate recipient villages, were inevitably a constraint.

While acquiring 2,000 bed nets more than surpassed the original goal of receiving 500 bed nets and met the needs for 13.5% of the communal population, similar efforts must be conducted in the years to follow, in order to better meet the commune’s needs for chemically treated bed nets.

Conclusion:

The distribution campaign was appreciated by the recipient villages and will without any doubt lead to a decrease in reported malaria cases in these respective locales. However, the distribution campaign needs to be replicated in the locales that did not receive bed nets. Achieving 100% blanket coverage in each specific village will result in a dramatic decrease in the mosquitoes which serve as vector agents in the propagation of malaria. This in turn will result in a sharp decrease in the number of reported malaria cases.



Children awaiting the distribution of mosquito nets in Boulwando.