

**Free Bed Net Distribution**  
**Choggu Hill Top Community, Ghana**  
**July 2011**



## *Stamp Out Malaria: Choggu Hill Top Community Bed Net Distribution*

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The distribution of 1,200 LLINs in the Choggu Hill Top Community (CHTC) near Tamale, Ghana was the perfect opportunity for the community to come together to do something remarkable. From preschool to the elderly, the community helped with every aspect of the distribution. Due to the tireless efforts of volunteers, the distribution was a success.

**Nets Arrive in Tamale:** On May 26, 2011 at 10:00am Project PeacePal Program Director M.A. Saaka-Dua received a phone call from the shipment truck driver, Thomas, informing him that the shipment had arrived. The U.S. team, comprised of Project PeacePal Board of Directors member Kasondra and her husband, Chris McCracken, were in the town at that time with Saaka-Dua, and were able to meet the driver at the Tamale Teaching Hospital within 20 minutes. Saaka-Dua made a note that the vehicle's license number was **BA336P** and verified that the driver had the correct paperwork for the shipment. Once the paperwork was verified, Saaka-Dua, Kasondra, and Chris joined the driver in his truck and drove to CHTC.



Before entering the CHTC, Saaka-Dua instructed the driver to stop near the chief's palace, in order to receive the chief's blessing for the bed net shipment. In this region, acquiring the chief's blessing is a crucial component to a successful distribution. The team was met by Mr. Yussif Yahaya, the assembly representative, and by Chief Adam Saabi Naa. Both the assembly representative and the chief reviewed the shipment paperwork, and examined the nets. Once they approved, Saaka-Dua called upon

PeacePal students and volunteers in the community to assist in offloading the nets into a secure storeroom. In all, a total of **47 bales** of nets were offloaded in the presence of the following people: The visiting U.S. team, Chief Adam Saabi Naa, the assembly representative of the electoral area, the truck driver and his assistant, and Saaka-Dua. Once the nets were off the truck, the team held a small ceremony where Chief Adam Saabi Naa and the assembly representative were presented with the first two nets. They thanked PeacePal and the Against Malaria Foundation, and asked Saaka-Dua to keep them apprised of the distribution efforts. The assembly representative indicated that he would be interested in assisting with the distribution.

**Storage of Nets:** Children and adults from the community helped to push the bales of mosquito nets into the secure storage area, which was next to Saaka-Dua's home. The bales were stacked and the room was locked. The room remained locked until Jean-Bosco Akanto (PeacePal Program director for northern Togo) arrived later that day from Kante, Togo. Community members assisted Akanto and his two volunteers, as they counted and removed their allotment of nets which amounted to 3,500 (35 bales). The Togo nets were placed inside and on top of Akanto's van within an hour. These nets destined for distributions in the Pesside area of Togo, left CHTC





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about 4:30pm on May 26th. The remaining nets, allocated for CHTC, were again locked in storage until distribution could begin.

**Volunteers Assemble:** The volunteers on the ground intensified their work to complete the house-to-house surveys. Within three weeks of the shipment arrival, these volunteers completed the house-to-house surveys, and Saaka collected all the papers from the volunteers to oversee and track the distribution process. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, Saaka-Dua started the activity of checking and counting nets in the storeroom. The picture to the right shows the storeroom during the counting process. It was a very tiring job to count all 1,206 nets (they discovered 6 extra), but the PeacePal student volunteers were excited to complete their work. Senior students Rufaida, Hamdia, and Rasheeda, as well as five other young volunteers were able to rearrange all the bales of nets. These students, along with Saaka-Dua, checked and counted all the bed nets.



**Teams:** Distribution volunteers, with an estimated age range of 17 - 21, had experience working with other NGOs in previous bed net distributions. Their insight and advice was an important part of the planning process. Additionally, the U.S. team held a separate malaria education, net use and maintenance, and distribution planning session for all senior officers. These officers then instructed their junior officer support teams on proper education for community members, prior to final distribution execution. On May 29<sup>th</sup> the volunteers were assembled as they prepared to send the nets to the various areas in CHTC. There were 30 volunteers on the distribution team, consisting of both males and females. They decided to group themselves in four zones (A, B, C, and D) to facilitate easy movement of the nets to the various sectors of the community. Each team had at least five volunteers, which included an officer who handles the register of each house entered into.



**Methodology:** Saaka-Dua and his team of volunteers adopted the method of distribution known as *house-to-house* distribution. This would help to achieve the ultimate goal in the distribution process (making sure every household received a net), allowed the team to check the accuracy of the data on the house-to-house surveys, and provided individual education sessions with net recipients. The decision to do a house-to-house distribution was also partly due to the negative experience of having an unruly crowd at a previous centralized distribution in the area. The team of volunteers decided to present the nets by removing the cover packets to make way for easy hanging, and to ensure that the recipient will not keep the net inside the packaging. They voiced concern that community members

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might leave the package unopened, and they thought that removing the cover packets would increase the likelihood of the net being used. The volunteers made sure to go over the information on the back of the packet (expressing why people should use a bed net, washing instructions, etc.) with each recipient before removing the packaging.

**Process:** Before giving out any nets, the volunteer team asked the recipient to present identifying information, such as a health card. Once presented with identification, the team checked to see if that the person had ever received a free net from the Ministry of Health or another organization. Those who received nets in the past four years did not qualify to receive a net in this current distribution. Qualified persons signed or provided a thumbprint to verify that they received a free bed net. The following groups were the initial groups to receive nets during the distribution.

- The Disabled
- Malaria Cases
- Pregnant Women



**Gift of Education:** The first education session took place three days before the shipment of nets arrived. The example net was hung outside from a tree limb and a cot was brought out. Kasondra explained the importance of covering the entire cot with the net and the significance of tucking the net in to prevent holes. Children were invited to take turns getting in and out of the net. It is estimated that 30 people attended this event. In addition, at every home and zone the team provided malaria education followed by distribution of the nets. The education sessions included the following:

- What is malaria?
- The signs & symptoms of the disease
- Prevention and treatment of malaria, including where to access treatment
- Discussion of target groups, and why they are affected by malaria
- Proper hanging of nets and their use in the home

It was made clear to all recipients that this was a one-time donation and the nets should be put to good use with proper





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care for a long time period. They also informed people that they could purchase additional bed nets in the drug stores and pharmacy houses in town.

Volunteers gave malaria education sessions to every household who received a net. The volunteers started by giving the net to the recipient and hanging the net. Then the volunteers asked the recipient: *What is malaria?* The education continued as the volunteers spoke of the seriousness of malaria as a killer disease. They also informed the recipient about treatment and where one can access it. The volunteers “made the people to understand that malaria has no respect for any person, color, or race.”



**Breakdown of Net Distribution:** The actual distribution began on July 1<sup>st</sup>, though it had been scheduled to begin on the evening of May 26<sup>th</sup>. It was postponed due to a number of reasons. There were significant rainstorms that flooded roads and disrupted electricity. During the month of June, the team completed the house-to-house surveys, as well as participated in a community clean-up event. This clean-up event, organized by the Assembly, required that all community members clean up trash

from around their homes and in the town. This clean-up event happens once a year, and is the only form of garbage disposal in CHTC. On July 1st, the distribution team went into the community to begin distribution. The teams were split into four groups: Team A, B, C, and D. Each Team consisted of one (1) senior officer and four (4) supporting junior officers. The volunteers physically hung the nets for each household that allowed them access inside.



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TABLE OF DISTRIBUTION AND HANGING OF NETS				
DATE	TEAM	NETS HUNG UP	NETS DISTRIBUTED	TOTALS
1/7/2011	A	55	5	60
	B	55	25	80
	C	45	5	50
	D	50	12	62
SUB TOTAL		205	47	252
2/7/2011	A	60	15	75
	B	75	20	95
	C	55	5	60
	D	32	6	38
SUB TOTAL		222	46	268
3/7/2011	A	50	4	54
	B	79	8	87
	C	46	12	58
	D	62	9	71
SUB TOTAL		237	33	270
9/7/2011	A	50	4	54
	B	54	8	62
	C	42	12	54
	D	40	8	48
SUB TOTAL		186	32	218
10/7/2011	A	37	8	45
	B	34	15	49
	C	25	9	34
SUB TOTAL		96	32	128
TOTALS		946	190	1136

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At the writing of this report, **1,136** nets have been distributed in the CHTC. Although some community members were absent during the distribution, the program director anticipates the absent members will receive their nets within the next two weeks. The volunteers recorded 64 absent community members, and currently the corresponding 64 nets are in the storage facility near the Program Director's house. With the additional 6 nets discovered during counting, there are 70 nets available for distribution.

**Conclusions:** After the distribution was complete, the team came together to share their thoughts about what Project PeacePal and the Against Malaria Foundation did to *Stamp out Malaria*. They discussed and reflected on the importance of distributing the nets at the right time to the people who need it. At this time, Saaka-Dua feels that the bed net distribution has “already yielded a good beginning” and hopes for an even “brighter ending in the distribution of the nets.” He went on to say that “all the volunteers in the program are all happy and standing firm in the distribution.”

**Disposal of packaging:** The volunteers decided that the waste from the plastic packaging of the nets should be burned, in order to try to eliminate the buildup of trash around the community (there is only one organized trash pick up per year). After checking to see that all nets were emptied, the packages were burned. This was done by the program director.



### **Successes:**

- The support and blessings from the village chief and the assembly representatives were critical components of the success of this mission.
- Support from community members was outstanding—everyone wanted to assist in the distribution process. There was never a lack of helping hands!

### **Challenges:**

- Many community members explained that they did not have twine, nails, or a hammer to hang their nets. Project PeacePal purchased these items while in town.
- The weather created several problems, from dangerous roads to delays in distribution.
- Lack of a sewage draining systems continues to create an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes in the Choggu-Hill Top area.
- Several people from outside Choggu-Hill Top asked for mosquito nets, which we were unable to provide.



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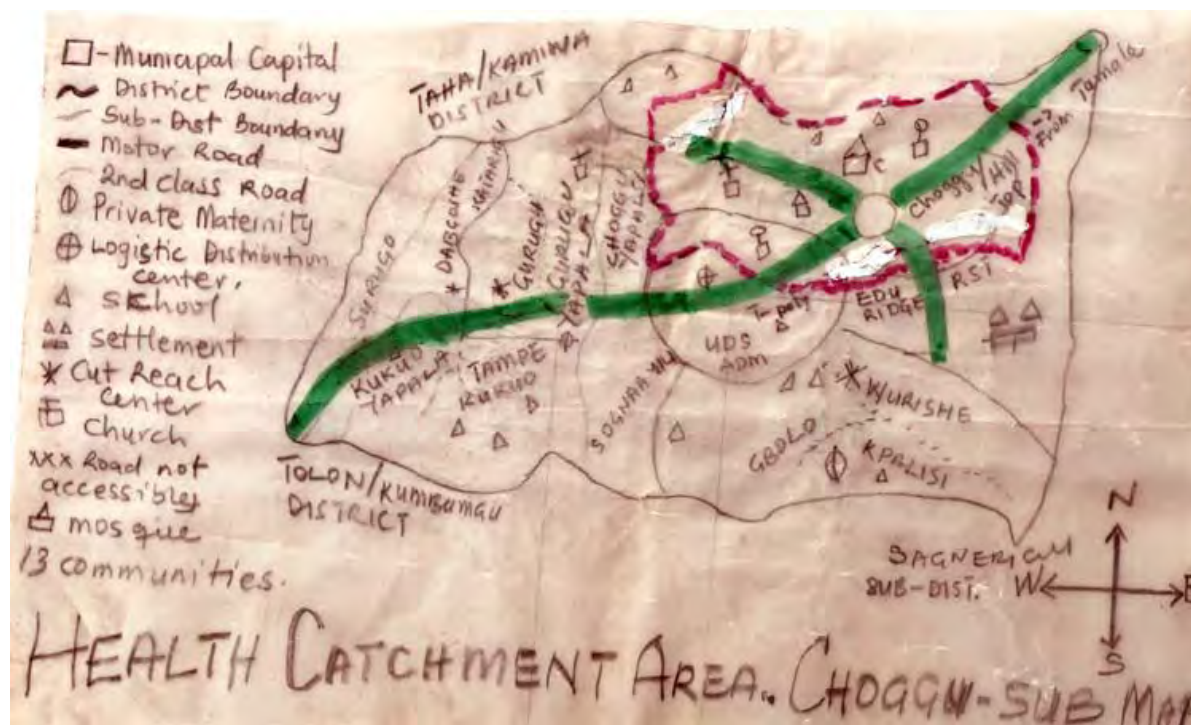
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**Dedications:** Alidu Alhassan, Iddris Abdulai, and Madam Ayishetu who all live in the community, and helped with the bed net distribution. Madam Andaratu for assisting in counting nets with the volunteers at the storage location. Mr. Fuseini Shayawu was also helpful in the process of the distribution. He spent many days assisting with the distribution and hanging nets in houses around the community. We would also like to thank the area Assembly Representative Mr. Yussif Yahaya, and Chief Adam Saabi Naa for their support throughout this process. In all we had a very impressive team in the community, who all participated in the cause of fighting malaria. The Choggu Sub-District Health Center staff were also valuable partners. Health volunteer Mr. Fuseini Dokurugu travelled with the volunteers, and gave talks on malaria and its related health hazards.

Saaka-Dua wishes to thank all those who have given their time in working “with us for the success of the distribution and hanging exercises.” Thank you to our International Partners for all your great gifts and support in making this program a success. We shall be proud and always say *yes we can Stamp Out Malaria* in the Choggu Hill Top Community.







## Additional Resources

**More photos of the distribution are available at:**

<http://www.peacepal.org/news-a-events/photo-gallery/stamp-out-malaria-net-distribution-tamale-ghana.html>

**See videos of the distribution:**

<http://www.peacepal.org/news-a-events/video-gallery.html>

[Shipment Truck arriving in Choggu Hill Top Community](#)

[Traditional Tribal Chief Receives First Net](#)

[Organizing of Net Bales and Loading Truck to Togo](#)

[Hanging a bed net in Choggu Hill Top Community](#)