

Tanzania Long-Lasting Insecticide-treated Hospital Bed Nets –Pilot project: Report – July, 2010

Background

1. Malaria is a leading killer in Tanzania, infecting about 18 million people annually. The disease is responsible for between 60,000 and 80,000 deaths each year – at least nine deaths every hour - mainly pregnant women and children under five. Official records also show that 30-40 percent of attendance at health centres and hospitals are related to malaria cases, burdening overstretched health facilities (*National Malaria Control Program-NMCP*). Malaria, according to the National Planning Commission (NPC) costs the country an estimated loss that is equivalent to 3.4 percent of gross domestic product.

Initiatives being implemented by the NMCP, under the Roll Back Malaria program, such as insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor residual spraying (IRS), had helped reduce malaria cases, along with deaths of children under five and infants (younger than one). The intervention initiatives have proven to work, Tanzania is now scaling up distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets and behaviour change communication.

Partnership

2. The Against Malaria Foundation (AMF) with Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS) TZ are committed to improving the health of vulnerable groups especially those who are sick and attend to health facilities in Tanzania by promoting healthier behaviour and delivering quality hospital treated bed-nets and other services. The partnership operates under the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Through effective collaboration and targeting, AMF and TRCS expect to demonstrate significant increases in health impact in the Government priority areas focusing on Malaria.

TRCS has committed itself to play a key role in the distribution of over 450 long-lasting insecticidal (mosquito) nets (LLINs), as a pilot exercise to five hospitals in five different regions in Tanzania. Formalized commitment was done in February, 2010 but the Memorandum of Understanding between AMF, TRCS and IFRC was signed in May 2010. TRCS explicit commitment is to secure involvement from Regional, district and other volunteers across the country in the subsequent LLIN distributions to hospitals and other health facilities.

3. Implementation:

The exercise was done as follows: -

Misungwi Designated District hospital and Musoma regional hospital was done on 8th May 2010. In Musoma regional hospital, 43 nets remained which are in the TRCS regional store. Photos were taken from Misungwi hospital but they did not fulfill the requirement in terms of quantity and quality. TRCS will take new photos and video pictures while also checking for the use of hanged nets. Video pictures for Musoma have been sent in a separate mail. (Pls can you send us your postal address for the delivery of this video).

Kilindi District hospital in Tanga region in a very remote location, the exercise was done on 10th June 2010. Photos were taken and have been sent already. Attached is a video which I hope you will be able to see them using the right compatible converter, although we had had problems with the video taken with a Blackberry handset.

Newala and Nachingwea District hospitals, the hanging up of hospital bed nets was done on 10th and 11th July 2010 respectively, and successfully. Many photos were taken but no videos. Photos are sent with this report for the two districts. Due to its remoteness, TRCS will take videos when we go back for follow-up of bed nets and feedback of the effectiveness and suitability of the whole exercise.

4. **Lessons learnt:** (a) due to unavailability of proper facilities to take photos and videos, the process of taking them during distribution of bed nets was not adhered to and this has delayed the exercise significantly. (b) The pilot hospitals were far away from each other and this necessitated excessive cost in travelling for a single hospital which is far away from a regional headquarters. (c) Preparation of facilities especially cameras and video cameras were not done thus incapacitated the whole exercise of taking pictures and videos despite instructions provided to our regional coordinators. (d) The manufacturer of bed-nets should have better communication with our regional and national headquarters offices before delivery of the nets to ensure early planning with hospital leaders and delivery. (e) Wherever we delivered the nets to hospitals Hospital Authorities were very grateful for the received nets and words of thanks were extended to AMF and IFRC for their humanitarian gesture and gift to reduce morbidity and mortality of malaria to our ailing communities.

5. **Future plan:** TRCS is very much committed for the work to educate, distribute and hang hospital nets for the use of hospital patients. The next batch of 10,000 nets will be better handled, timely distributed to the respective hospitals, taking into account all the necessary information is included with photographs and video pictures to ensure better performance of the TRCS responsibility with the support of IFRC.