

***NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund**

Frequently Asked Questions - *NetsforLife*[®]

September 2010

Where does *NetsforLife*[®] work and how has it impacted communities?

NetsforLife[®] serves 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The success of the program is a result of the *NetsforLife*[®] partnerships with a network of faith-based organizations working on the ground in Africa. As active and trusted members of local communities, they have helped the program reach 5 million people through malaria messaging, the distribution of nearly 2 million nets and the training of over 14,000 malaria control agents. The next goal is to mobilize 30,000 volunteers and distribute 7 million nets by 2013.

What is unique about *NetsforLife*[®]?

The program's methodology is to collaborate with existing national malaria programs to mobilize, train and educate volunteers in working together to eliminate the disease by instilling a 'net culture'—defined as the community-wide understanding of the protective value of nets and the right way to use and maintain them.

In addition to the distribution of nets, a main component of the initiative is education about malaria transmission and prevention. Communities learn about the importance of using mosquito nets and receive detailed knowledge about proper net use and maintenance. When the program began in 2006, only four out of ten people understood how malaria was transmitted in the communities *NetsforLife*[®] was present. Now, nine out of every ten people understand how the disease spreads.

For every ten nets distributed by *NetsforLife*[®], at least one community member will acquire a net on their own because they have heard “the message” in their community. Between 2006 and 2009, nearly 200,000 community members who did not receive nets through *NetsforLife*[®] took the initiative to acquire their own net.

What is *NetsforLife*[®] doing to empower the communities to help themselves?

Without the buy-in of communities in volunteering, implementation, and follow-up, *NetsforLife*[®] could not have celebrated its many successes. The first step to malaria prevention is raising awareness and mobilizing communities to act. The program works to instill the “net culture”. In this way, *NetsforLife*[®] is helping to ensure sustainability of malaria prevention and net-seeking behavior. By building the capacity of the local partners through training and education to implement development strategy and activities based on community input, and measurable global standards, we have added to the local pool of knowledge on malaria and other health messaging(such as water/sanitation, maternal health, and HIV/Aids).

Does *NetsforLife*[®] go beyond providing nets and training communities on net usage?

NetsforLife[®] goes door to door to help hang up nets within the home. This is a community based project and cannot be done without the community buying in (ownership and involvement)

- A unique way of delivering nets to households
- It increases net usage and reduces losses from stealing and selling
- It is combined with intensive community mobilization and education
- Strategy has to be adapted to fit each local context

What does my \$12 go towards?

When you contribute \$12, it goes to more than just a long lasting insecticide treated net. It supports a full programmatic approach to building stronger, more sustainable communities. *NetsforLife*[®] uses an integrated approach to malaria prevention including:

- raising awareness about malaria prevention and teaching communities about how to prevent infection, recognize symptoms and know when to seek treatment;
- using local church structures and faith-based groups to distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated nets to remote areas, where government institutions often do not reach;
- training malaria control agents to educate their communities on malaria and distribute nets - they also assist with monitoring and evaluation;
- following up to ensure that awareness training programs are working effectively and the message about the importance of using nets is spreading; and
- providing communities with information about how to get access to testing and treatment.

How does *NetsforLife*[®] implement its program of providing nets and training communities to use them affectively?

Community entry is usually done at least 3 months prior to distribution exercises. Local traditional, religious and political leaders are brought into the process early on and are continually tapped as resources. Students are used as agents of change; often youth groups and clubs use drama/skits etc. to take the message back to their communities and homes. Malaria control agents are people selected by the communities to be trained and in-turn educate communities on malaria, distribute nets and assist with program monitoring and evaluation. They live in the communities where they work and are a sustainable resource.

Once training has been completed, and local community leaders are identified, nets are stored in the homes of traditional, political and religious leaders or in local schools and ministry of health - district health centers. The nets are left in the care of the chiefs or other leaders, who take charge of the distribution from this point. The chiefs are given the responsibility to ensure that volunteers receive enough nets for distribution and are able to account appropriately.

How does *NetsforLife*[®] monitor and evaluate its work?

A baseline study is conducted in each community to assess the number of malaria cases, use of nets, the populations most at risk and the barriers to treatment (such as lack of proximity to clinics, inadequate health-care facilities, cost of treatment, no access to drugs). Formal monitoring begins at three months (or after the next rainy season, whichever comes first) and is repeated at 12 months and 24 months after net distribution.

Evaluation of program impact in communities includes reviewing data on malaria incidences from health-care facilities, where available; developing community surveillance methods; and involving the community in the assessment process. Monitoring and evaluation is a critical piece in the fight against malaria, and includes training people to collect data and assess the impact of the programs on the communities. The program has built in monitoring and evaluation at all levels and during each phase of the program.

The *NetsforLife*[®] monitoring and evaluation has been initiated in all countries and is independently verified.

Who are the *NetsforLife*[®] partners?

NetsforLife[®] is a partnership of corporations, foundations, non-government organizations and faith-based organizations working together to fight malaria. Sponsors include ExxonMobil Foundation, Standard Chartered Bank, Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, The Starr International Foundation, J.C. Flowers Foundation and Episcopal Relief & Development.

Learn more at www.inspirationfund.org