

Recommendations toward Achieving a Comprehensive and Effective Communication Plan in Support of the Goals of Universal LLIN Distribution

In support of the LLIN universal distribution scheduled for 2016- 2017, the Alliance for Malaria Prevention (AMP) has drafted the following recommendations designed to optimize the effectiveness of the communication initiatives -- including advocacy, social mobilization and behavior change communication. Investigation into current communication practices and activities as well as communication planning for the universal coverage campaign consisted of:

- observation of activities at distribution points in Jangamo District, Inhambane Province and conversation with individuals actively implementing the LLIN distribution;
- conversation with Jangamo District and Inhambane Province health authorities supervising and monitoring distribution activities as well as with provincial SR, Food for the Hungry;
- meetings with NMCP officials including the communication focal person;
- meetings in Maputo with representatives of World Vision, the Community Development Foundation (FDC) and Malaria Consortium, as well as with other malaria communication partners -- JHU CCP and the Interreligious Program to Combat Malaria (PIRCOM).

Recommendations:

1. National Communication Implementation Plan for the Universal Coverage Campaign

The drafting and adoption of a communication implementation plan will establish a framework for setting communication interventions priorities and coordinating BCC partner efforts. It will also provide a basis for seeking further donor and private sector support for specific tasks.

This can be accomplished under the NMCP chairmanship with contribution from all the malaria communication partners. A budget should be established for the implementation plan, and once an implementation budget is established, this can serve as a basis for further advocacy with donors and the private sector.

Part of the communication plan should focus on how all malaria partners including those engaged in routine malaria communication, such as PIRCOM but by no means limited to PIRCOM, will mobilize in support of the universal distribution during the distinct provincial campaigns.

2. Renewed National and Provincial High-level Engagement

There is a clear consensus among malaria partners consulted that the universal coverage campaign (and malaria prevention and treatment more generally) would benefit greatly from increased visibility at a national level. Partners frequently cited the commitment of national leaders in the HIV-AIDS campaign as an example of the type of prominent backing that would bolster communication effort of the malaria campaign and would contribute to motivating the targeted public to embrace the behaviors communicated through core messaging.

The national level campaign should seek to engage:

- national leaders from all parties -- political, elected and administrative including provincial governors -- as strong advocates of LLIN distribution and use;
- recognized national influencers as malaria "champions";
- mass media professionals to reinforce the national agenda around LLIN use;
- religious leaders to use their influence to achieve LLIN compliance;
- private sector to provide support to the national and international effort;
- different Ministries including Education and Fisheries.

To achieve this, the NMCP and its partners can take a number of steps:

- Produce a factsheet that will clearly and concisely explain the negative impact of malaria on family, community, businesses, economy and the expected positive outcomes that would arise through compliance with universal LLIN use; it will also be important to incorporate into the factsheet:
 - the importance of Global Fund investment in Mozambique, and
 - an illustration of how universal distribution builds on and reinforces existing health infrastructure and other health initiatives.
- Orientations for diverse political figures and other champions seeking their commitments to undertake specific actions in support of LLIN distribution, use and care. These may include:
 - governors,
 - public officials
 - parliamentarians of all parties
 - selected ministers
 - designated malaria champions
- Creation of a calendar for the universal coverage roll out that highlights opportunities both for public figures to promote the campaign and for media coverage.

- Production of sets of talking points for political figures and other champions that enable consistent communication of key messages supporting use, care and social norm creation; these champions should be encouraged to give first person accounts of how malaria impacted their lives and how it is important to overcome malaria's burden on Mozambique.
- Expand the malaria branding accomplishments, beyond logo and slogan, to include:
 - musical theme and song
 - list of branded messages
- Produce mass media toolkit that contains facts sheets, a coverage opportunities calendar, programming and article ideas and best practices, some TV and radio spots as well as audio and video recordings of branded song and musical theme. The musical theme can be used in jingles and as musical bridges in broadcast segments dealing with malaria.
- Workshop with journalists, broadcasters and representatives of the national media to promote the new national narrative (see 3 below), SBCC objectives and social norm promotion.
- Production of a video with influential figures from all prominent political parties promoting the universal coverage campaign and its objectives, as a way to undermine any local tendency to thwart the campaign for narrow political objectives.
- Demarche to the Ministry of Education: According to informants in Jangamo District, three teachers at each local school have been trained to promote malaria prevention and treatment among students. The Ministry of Education should be commended for this important initiative. The Ministry should be asked to invigorate this school-based initiative to have malaria-focussed activities coincide with provincial rollouts. It may be possible to ask students to write short essays on LLIN use or do drawings, as well as to sing the national malaria song in classrooms or school assemblies.
- Demarche to the Ministry of Fisheries and the Instituto de Apoio de Pescadores: These two institutions should be contacted to have them reiterate to fishermen associations the prohibition of the use of old and new nets for fishing purposes and to establish penalties for bednet misuse. These two institutions should also be asked to promote, during the universal distribution roll out, development initiatives that may provide to fishing communities inexpensive or free fishing nets to help booster fishing livelihoods and reduce the temptation to use LLINs for fishing.

- Outreach to the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy to define a policy and develop a communication approach to workers in the mining sector, including prospectors (*garimpeiros*) and those living in congregate settings.
- Outreach to PIRCOM at the national level to establish an agenda and calendar of activities and objectives to be carried out in conjunction with the roll out of the universal distribution
- Outreach to phone companies to elicit their support in using SMS methods in support of different communication phases of the distribution campaign -- pre-registration, registration, distribution and post-campaign.
- Outreach to employer and business associations to garner their support for the campaign, for in-kind contribution, financial support and workplace policies supportive of LLIN use.
- Outreach to employers whose seasonal and migrant workers may live in congregated settings to develop a national policy to assure that these workers sleep under LLINs while away from their primary residences.

3. Fostering a National Narrative about Malaria and New Social Norms

National Narrative: A number of steps can be taken to produce a stronger national "umbrella" narrative about the impact of malaria on Mozambican society, economy and development, as well as the considerable positive outcomes that compliance with the LLIN universal campaign objectives and other malaria prevention and treatment efforts will have on Mozambique. In essence, such a narrative should illustrate how Mozambicans are overcoming the malaria burden and what malaria elimination in Mozambique will mean for everyone.

The narrative story line can be reproduced in all the activities mentioned above in recommendation no. 2, *Renewed National Level Engagement*, as well as in the recommendations that follow below. In general, an enhanced national narrative would help to reinforce the creation of alternative social norms supportive of social and behavior change efforts undertaken at local levels.

Social Norms: It appears that the ongoing malaria communication campaigns may already have had some success in undermining the once widespread negative social norm that malaria is part of everyday life and that nothing can be done about it. As part of the process of drafting the National Communication Implementation Plan, the Malaria Communication Group chaired by

NMCP should articulate a plan for social norm creation including a standard set of messages that not only promote LLIN-use and care messages, but foster social norms that will spontaneously lead people to take appropriate prevention and treatment. This should be seen as part of a normal process wherein specific messages need to change as the program and the malaria control situation evolve, to keep from becoming outdated and ignored and to respond to new policies, situations and changes in behaviors.

In this regard, the goal of universal LLIN use represents an opportunity to expand messaging beyond protection of self and family to one's responsibility to use LLINs to protect other community members that is consistent with the goal of stopping transmission. It will likely be important to convey the importance of high community coverage for everyone's protection and health.

The qualitative study (Auscultação sobre Conhecimentos, Atitudes, Comportamento e Práticas (CAPC) em relação ao uso das RMTILD) about attitudes toward LLIN use, which was undertaken in Nampula and Niassa provinces by Malaria Consortium, provides some indications of positive deviance attitudes that may be translatable into social norm promotion. Examples include:

- the negative characterization of people who use nets for purposes other than for sleeping;
- LLINs are something of considerable value and as such need to be properly cared for;
- progressive, forward-looking people sleep under an LLIN, like those who keep their homes clean and hygienic.

Pre-testing: The social norm promotion messages that are devised and agreed to by NMCP should be pre-tested prior to production and dissemination.

4. Communicating a Policy on Disposal and Repurposing of Old Nets

In Jangamo District, the AMP team observed considerable confusion with regard to the disposal of old nets, posing a possible negative environmental impact and an information vacuum that the public may be filling with counterproductive ideas regarding both new and old nets. The confusion derives from an absence of a clear national policy on the issue of old nets. The elaboration of a definitive policy and a communication strategy -- with messages to be used for all levels of engagement -- to support it will be an important step in the universal distribution communication strategy.

Messaging in support of the old net policy could be used to underscore the new LLINs as valuable and beneficial commodities that need to be properly used and cared for, and not to do so, is a sign of an irresponsible citizen. Messages will require pre-testing. The development of this strategy should also be done in conjunction with the Ministry of Fisheries including the

Instituto de Apoio de Pescadores, as mentioned above, as a constructive developmental approach to fishing communities may go far in preventing misuse.

5. Messaging on LLIN Care and Irritability

The qualitative study mentioned above, which was undertaken in Nampula and Niassa provinces, indicates that, although there is a general awareness that bed nets must be cared for, there is limited knowledge of what to actually do for maintenance especially with regard to washing and hanging for the first time. There also appears to be confusion among the public around issues of possible body irritation that handling and using a new LLIN may cause.

It will be important to review and change, if necessary, the core messaging around handling and use, and to refresh all those engaged in malaria communication, including routine communication. It will be especially important to insure that community health volunteers and workers, who are largely trusted by their communities, convey the correct messages.

6. Provincial and District Campaign Communication Strengthening

Provincial-level microplanning: Communication should become an integral component of the provincial-level microplanning workshop, which has been recommended by the AMP team. As an outcome of the provincial-level microplanning workshop, district health officials should be expected to have elaborated a detailed communication plan including a communication budget. To do so will require that the following steps be taken.

- a. The design of a detailed communication agenda for the microplanning workshop (among the many aspects that should be discussed is how to deal with resistance to the campaign by segments of the population especially on political and religious grounds as well as in areas of armed conflict);
- b. The development of communication planning tool to be sent to district health officials to aid them in the preparation of the district-focused communication data and information that will be used at the microplanning event; this data will be used in producing the district's communication strategy, communication implementation plan and budget;
- c. The inclusion of a central-level malaria communication expert in the microplanning facilitation team;
- d. The inclusion of a district-level health promotion/education officer in the district team attending the provincial microplanning workshop;

Provincial-level Health Official-Media Workshop: It will be important to design a provincial-level workshop that will bring together broadcasters/journalists and district health officials with the goal of developing mass media strategies in support of all phases of universal coverage distribution. Radio stations -- community radio stations, private commercial and religious

stations and provincial branches of Radio Mozambique --are particularly important for reaching the general public with pertinent campaign information and behavioral messages.

During the workshop, broadcasters should be oriented toward effective programming formats that enhance the prospect for behavior change, promote constructive social norms and mobilize the community through the use of effective programming formats. The most effective types of radio formats include call-in shows where audience can ask questions of local health officials, roundtables with local health and other influential personalities, and first-person accounts of the benefits achieved by ordinary community members the sustained use of LLINs (for a discussion of the types of radio programming that have proven effective in Mozambique in support of the HIV/AIDS campaign, see: Gregory Alonso Pirio: "HIV and Journalism: Lessons from the Frontline of Behavior Change Communication in Mozambique." In Slivio Waisbord and Rafael Obregon (eds), *The Global Handbook of Health Communication*, John Wiley and Sons, 2012, pp. 426-443.)

At the end of the workshop, broadcasters/journalists and health officials at the provincial and district levels should have an agreed upon plan for deploying the media throughout the campaign, including a budget as required. In addition, the district and provincial media plans should include a clear understanding between health officials and broadcasters on the types and frequency of announcements that may be read on air throughout the registration and distribution phases.

The media plans should also contain a provision for provincial and district health officials to report back to radio stations on the accomplishments of the campaign and more generally to give feedback to communities of progress towards elimination. Acknowledging compliance and praising communities for it is an important way to sustain desired behaviors.

7. Community-Level Social Mobilization-- Deploying Community Health Workers and Volunteers

If the recent LLIN distribution campaign in Jangamo District is representative of the rest of the country, it would appear that the country has ample experience in, and a strong capacity for, mobilizing communities. Nonetheless, it is recommended that in the upcoming universal coverage roll out that priority be given to community health volunteers (*mobilistas/activistas*) and community health workers (*agentes polivalentes elementares*) when selecting registrars and members of monitoring teams.

There are a few reasons for this:

- community health volunteers and workers are trusted sources of health information in the community, according to qualitative research, and as a result would likely have a greater impact in fostering behavior change than would individuals with no such experience
- community health volunteers and workers have been trained in key malaria messages and would be more likely to accurately communicate messages to the members of their community;
- in giving priority to such individuals the LLIN universal distribution campaign would be reinforcing existing community-based health structures to the benefit of other programs;
- the selection of health community volunteers and workers would also reduce the possibility of political bias in the selection of individuals, which could have a negative impact on the perception of the campaign among beneficiaries of a different political orientation.

8: Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication Activities and Outcomes

It is recommended that NMCP and its partners devise a plan and an effective system for monitoring communication activities undertaken in each phase of activities as the campaign rolls out. It will be critical to separate supervisory activities from monitoring activities, and to see monitoring teams as providing critical information to campaign supervisors to aid them in taking corrective actions if merited.

Each district should have a team of trained monitors with tools to assess whether the key messages are being communicated and correctly consumed. Among other issues, monitors may also be able to detect obstacles or barriers among beneficiaries, for instance, for partisan or religious reasons, so that special efforts can be made to address resistant populations.

Monitoring should be made of broadcasts and community meetings. Monitors should also engage in random accompaniment of registrars during their door-to-door meetings (while supervisors should be doing this regularly). Monitors may also separately interview targeted community members to insure that they are receiving and understanding the key messages.

In the post-campaign phase the monitoring team should engage in a door-to-door rapid qualitative assessment using segmented cluster sampling to determine levels of use and knowledge of care. This will help inform decision-making in launching post-campaign communication activity to promote hanging, use and care as well as to identify shortfalls in LLIN access.

The program should consider deploying a smart phone data filing application for quickly gathering and submitting its monitoring data, such as the Rapid Mobile Phone-based (RAMP)

survey. The quick turnaround in data collected through RAMP's use has reportedly proven of enormous benefit in other countries to program managers and other decision-makers.

It would be worthwhile to approach the country's telephone operators to solicit finance an in-kind support for implementing a RAMP or RAMP-like data collection system.

9. Place Hang-up Flyers in Bales

It is recommended that the flyers illustrating how to hang up and care for the nets be printed by the net manufacturers, according to NMCP specifications, and included in the bales at the factory (perhaps on a one flyer per two nets basis). It was noted at distribution points visited in Jangamo District, and also, as we subsequently learned from other informants, that many beneficiaries did and do not receive copies of the flyer when receiving their nets. This reportedly is because of a shortage of funds for communication activities, as well as limited capacity of suppliers in the country to deliver the necessary quantities on time.

10. Lessons Learned by Province

At the end of each provincial campaign, there should be a meeting of key figures involved in communication to draw a list of lessons learned and best practices from their undertakings. Central-level communication personnel can then share the lessons learned and best practices with other provinces during their own microplanning workshops to contribute to the accumulation of communication know how in achieving universal coverage -- overall to help optimize communication in the achievement of the objective of universal coverage.