

Standard operating procedures for town criers during a mass insecticide-treated net distribution campaign in the COVID-19 context

V1 February 2022

Remember the COVID-19 infection prevention measures¹

- Get vaccinated as soon as it's your turn and follow local guidance on vaccination.
- Keep physical distance of at least one metre from others, even if they don't appear to be sick. Avoid crowds and close contact.
- Wear a properly fitted mask when physical distancing is not possible and in poorly ventilated settings.
- Clean your hands frequently with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of used tissues immediately and clean hands regularly.
- If you develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, self-isolate until you recover.

In addition:

- Disinfect tools (megaphone and communication guide, if laminated) before and after you use them (or if they have been handled by someone else) with an alcohol-based cleaner

NOTE: As the pandemic evolves, WHO updates the infection prevention measures based on new scientific findings. Check for any updates on <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>.

Core AMP documents: *Key guidance for distribution of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) during COVID-19 transmission*

Planning for safe ITN distribution in the context of COVID-19 transmission

<https://allianceformalariaprevention.com/about/amp-guidelines-and-statements/>

See also AMP core SBC guidance: *Planning social and behaviour change for ITN distribution in the context of COVID-19 transmission*

<https://allianceformalariaprevention.com/about/amp-guidelines-and-statements/>

NOTE: These standard operating procedures (SOPs) are provided as an example and should be adapted to the specific context of each country's campaign in terms of the activities, roles and responsibilities and COVID-19 infection prevention measures put in place for the campaign activities.

Definition

Town crier (also known as town announcer): an individual on foot or bicycle (non-motorized) employed to make public announcements (usually in town/village centres, markets, along streets, in public spaces, etc.) often using a megaphone.

¹ <https://www.WHO.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Social mobilization role

The primary role of the town crier is to:

- Mobilize communities to participate actively in the household registration and distribution of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs)
- Disseminate key messages about malaria and ITNs to communities to support social and behaviour change (SBC)

In addition, in the COVID-19 context:

- Disseminate key messages about COVID-19 and infection prevention and control measures that must be followed, especially during the household registration and ITN distribution (whether the strategy is fixed site or door-to-door distribution)
- Ensure that COVID-19 infection prevention measures, in particular physical distancing, can be maintained while also ensuring that information about the campaign is disseminated as widely as possible

Standard operating procedures

1. Work with the supervisor to develop a daily workplan

Town criers will be informed at the orientation session to whom they should report, usually the community-level supervisor. Community supervisors will work with town criers to map out the routes to reach villages, settlements or neighbourhoods within towns that need to be covered by the town crier on any given day, avoiding any duplication with other planned social mobilization activities such as motorized street announcers. Below is an example of a workplan that community

Workplan for town criers SBC messages pre-distribution			
Name of town crier: _____			
Name of supervisor: _____			
Name of Health Facility: _____			
Date	Name of community	Streets to cover	Tick when activity completed
10 October	Ali Masjid	Khan Muahla	
11 October	Ghatti Door	Baloch colony	
12 October	Haji Dodo Gishkori	Dumbalo road	
Signed by town crier: _____		Date: _____	
Approved by supervisor: _____		Date: _____	

supervisors and town criers can use to plan daily routes.

2. Before starting work

Before starting daily activities, town criers must ensure the following:

- Their equipment is functioning (megaphone and batteries) and they have spare batteries in case there is a need to change them during the day
- They are wearing visibility materials (such as t-shirt, cap, apron) that clearly identify them as belonging to the mass ITN campaign (as applicable)
- They have a copy of their communication guide
- They have met with their supervisor, been provided instructions and have a copy of their workplan for the day

In addition, in the COVID-19 context:

- They have all the materials needed to ensure COVID-19 infection prevention measures are maintained (medical or fabric face masks [as per national guidelines], soap and water/hand sanitizer, cleaning products to clean/disinfect their equipment [e.g. megaphone] as well as their communication guide [if laminated])

3. Example messages to broadcast

The following messages are examples of those that can be broadcast by the town criers at different stages of the campaign.

Messages to be communicated must be campaign-specific, based on the ITN distribution strategy adopted. Adapt accordingly.

The key messages to disseminate at every stage of the campaign are:

- Malaria is a dangerous disease that affects us all
- Sleeping under an ITN² every night of the year is the best way to protect yourself from malaria
- Everyone in the family should sleep under an ITN
- The government is providing ITNs to every household free of cost

Before household registration and ITN distribution

- On (day/date), campaign workers from the national malaria programme are coming to this village/area/community to register you to receive free ITNs
- To protect everyone from COVID-19, the campaign workers will be wearing masks and keeping a distance of at least one metre³ from you. Make sure you and your family stay at least one metre away from them and wear masks if you have them available. Do not invite the campaign workers inside your household
- Help the campaign workers complete their work quickly and efficiently by giving them the information they ask for. This allows them to allocate ITNs to protect your household members
- The campaign workers will give you a voucher that you can later exchange for ITNs. Keep it safe
 - **OR** The campaign workers will return in X days with the ITNs that you are allocated. They will place the net(s) at your door
 - **OR** The campaign workers will give you your ITNs once they have registered the number of people in your household

² National malaria programmes may prefer to use the term “mosquito nets”, depending on the most common term used in their communities.

³ Distance will vary by country. Check the government guidelines.

If the strategy is fixed site distribution

- On (day/date) go to the distribution point at (e.g. the school/marketplace) to collect your ITNs. Do not forget to take the voucher with you
- Only one member of the household should go to the distribution point. Do not take any children
- Follow the COVID-19 infection prevention measures at distribution sites: wear a face mask at all times, clean your hands before entering the distribution site and maintain a distance of at least one metre from others
- If you are not feeling well and no one in your house can go to the distribution point, ensure that you tell your neighbours so that a community health worker can provide you with your ITNs

For all strategies

- After receiving the ITNs from the campaign worker, wash your hands with soap and water
- Air your new ITNs in the shade for a day before use

4. After completing each “street to cover”

As soon as town criers have completed the street or area mentioned in their workplan, they should “tick” the activity as having been completed. They should not wait until the end of the day or week to tick the areas that have been completed as there is a greater risk of making a recording error.

5. At the end of each day

At the end of each, town criers must:

- Meet with their supervisor to report on progress against the workplan, including areas that were not covered and the reasons why
- Discuss with their supervisor any incidents or problems and any questions that have come from the households in the areas being mobilized, particularly any resistance to the campaign itself or the ITNs.
- Identify any problems they have had with their equipment (megaphone, batteries), visibility materials (such as t-shirt, cap, apron) and communication guide

In addition, in the COVID-19 context:

- Disinfect their tools – megaphone, communication guide (if laminated)
- Properly dispose of their mask(s) as per national guidelines