



*Nets on the water; Agnes Suubi from Malaria Consortium delivering nets to the villages by boat*

**Buhuka** parish lies at the foot of the Rift Valley on Lake Albert in Hoima district, Western Uganda. The lush green hills and the blue waters are simply breathtaking but the beauty of the parish is the last thing on the minds of the residents, many of whom are fending for survival. The hilly terrain and the waters make the area virtually inaccessible and the delivery of public health services extremely difficult.

Home to over 10,000 people, the majority of whom make their living through fishing, Buhuka parish is made up of ten villages, six of which are only accessible by water. The main peninsula of the parish sits at the bottom of a steep escarpment, has no road access and is only reached by foot, air or boat. Residents have to climb the steep hills and walk several kilometers in order to reach any sort of health services.

## **Delivery of malaria prevention services in hard to reach areas**

## Giving back to the community

The discovery of oil in Lake Albert has attracted oil companies to the region, bringing the added advantage of employment to the surrounding areas. Heritage Oil and Gas has been operational in Buhuka parish since 2006. In early 2009, along with several other major companies, they sponsored the UAE Charity Challenge to raise funds for a variety of worthy causes, including supporting malaria control interventions near Lake Albert.

Malaria is the leading cause of illness and death in Uganda. It accounts for 50% of outpatient visits, up to 20% of hospital admissions and 14% of hospital deaths. Though mosquito nets have proven to be the most efficient way of preventing malaria only 10% of the households in this region of Uganda own a mosquito net, leaving the majority vulnerable to malaria. Therefore it is not surprising that the residents of Buhuka parish identified malaria as one of their biggest challenges.

With this in mind, UAE Charity Challenge donated mosquito nets for all of the households in the parish to protect the residents from malaria. As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) campaign, Heritage Oil and Gas supported this intervention by providing the logistical assistance needed to make the distribution a reality for these hard to reach communities.

Malaria Consortium, the world's leading not-for-profit dedicated to the comprehensive control of malaria, was contacted to oversee the distribution because of their extensive experience in conducting mass net distributions in hard to reach areas. Malaria Consortium has developed a model for high profile delivery of malaria interventions, in particular Long Lasting Insecticide treated Nets (LLINs) to households countrywide. With this model, rapid results can be achieved at community level with hundreds of families receiving free LLINs in the quickest time possible.

## 6,000 nets in three days

A total of 6,000 nets were delivered to 10,203 people in just three days. The implementation was carried out by a team of three; one trainer from the Ministry of Health's National Malaria Control Programme and two members of staff from Malaria Consortium Uganda. In order to promote local ownership and support for the initiative, twenty local Community Medicine Distributors (CMDs), trusted community volunteers who help carry out malaria control activities in their village, and 10 Local Council (LC) Chairpersons from the parish assisted with the distribution. On the first day distribution was carried out in Bisiki, Kyeyanja and Usasa villages. On the second day the villages of Kyakampere, Nsunzu, Nsonga and Kyakasambu received nets. Finally on the third day distribution was done in Kiina, Senjojo and Kucunde villages.

## “Sleep under a net to prevent malaria”

A few days before the distribution took place the CMDs from the villages and LC I chairpersons were brought together for sensitization and training on how to conduct mass net distributions. Once the training was completed they went out to the villages, traveling from house to house, registering all of the residents and giving them coupons with which to claim their nets. A total of 2,580 households were visited over two days. The data collected from the registration was then used to allocate nets to the villages depending on their population. On the actual distribution days residents gathered at a central point in their villages to receive their nets. In addition to giving nets, the beneficiaries were given health talks on malaria and the team demonstrated to them how to use a mosquito net correctly. Leaflets were also provided in the local language on the use and care of the nets.



*Mitra Feldman; Malaria Consortium with Buhuka parish residents*



*A net beneficiary*



*Eugene Mugisha, Malaria Consortium, gives a beneficiary a net coupon*



Residents queue to receive their nets



The donors, UAE Charity Challenge



Handing out leaflets on how to use and care for the nets



“How to hang a net”

## Malaria Consortium

Malaria Consortium is an international organization working primarily in Africa and Asia on communicable disease control. Malaria Consortium works closely with Ministries of Health, academic institutions and a range of partners, and is involved in all aspects of malaria control from policy and strategy development to implementation, monitoring and evaluation and operational research. Malaria Consortium also works on the control of other communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, diarrhoea and neglected tropical diseases.

**Malaria Consortium Africa.**  
**Plot 2 Sturrock Road, Kololo.**  
**P O Box 8045 Kampala**  
**Tel: +256 312 300420**  
**Fax: +256 312 300425**



**malaria consortium**  
*disease control, better health*