

REPORT

Project Title/Name: Universal LLIN Distribution Campaign in Greater Accra, Northern and Upper West Regions, Ghana

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Pre-distribution Report

Region: Northern	Total Number of Districts in Region: Twenty (20) districts for AMF work
Estimated Regional Population: 1,966,710	Implementation period: January to April, 2016
Report Date: June 30 th , 2016	

Introduction

Episcopal Relief & Development and its partner, the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization (ADDRO) with support from Against Malaria Foundation (AMF) is supporting the implementation and carrying out long-term monitoring for a universal LLIN distribution campaign in three regions in Ghana, namely, Northern, Greater Accra and Upper West Regions. The pre-distribution and distribution phases of the campaign are led by the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) with support from Episcopal Relief & Development, ADDRO and other partners' while the post-distribution phase are mostly led by Episcopal Relief & Development and ADDRO, per the agreement with AMF. This report captures all activities undertaken under the pre-distribution phase in the Northern Region of Ghana, which took place between January and April 2016.

Activities Undertaken

The following activities were undertaken under the pre-distribution phase in collaboration with the National Malaria Control Programme:

1. Informative meeting with the Regional Health Directorate (RHD), Northern Region
2. Regional planning workshop

3. Orientation of National and Regional Supervisors
4. Orientation of District Supervisors and Volunteers
5. Household registration exercise
6. Compilation of household registration data
7. Pre-distribution data validation (validation of household registration data)

Purpose/Objective of Activities undertaken

The pre-distribution phase as the name implies is the phase before the actual Long Lasting Insecticidal nets (LLIN) point distribution. Hence, the main purpose is to get actual numbers of population and net needs for the distribution through pre-planning and conducting a household registration exercise.

The purpose for the training of National and Regional Supervisors is a training of trainers activity to equip them with the requisite knowledge to support and supervise the subsequent cascade trainings for the household registration and LLIN point distribution exercise for supervisors and volunteers at the districts and sub-districts levels, and to provide support for the registration and distribution process so as to achieve the needed coverage.

The training of the supervisors and volunteers at the district and sub-district levels is to equip them with the needed knowledge to carry out the household registration exercise successfully and support the LLIN point distribution activity, while the purpose of the actual registration exercise is to get accurate numbers of population and net needs per each catchment area. After the appropriate number of LLINs is confirmed, sub-districts and districts help with the correct pre-positioning of LLINs for the distribution exercise.

Key Stakeholders involved

Key stakeholders involved in the pre-distribution phase in the Northern Region were the NMCP, Episcopal Relief & Development/ADDRO, Vector Works, USAID Deliver and Ghana Health Service – Northern Regional Health Directorate.

Details on Activities undertaken/Summary of Issues discussed/Key highlights

1. Informative meeting with the Regional Health Directorate (RHD)

The informative meeting with the Northern Region Health Directorate was held in Tamale on January 13th, 2016. Participants at the meeting included Ghana Health Service, NMCP and ADDRO, with ADDRO represented by its Head of Programmes. The meeting was facilitated by Dr. Aba Baffoe Wilmot and Otubea Owusu Akrofi of the National Malaria Control Programme. The primary purpose of the meeting was to inform the region about the impending campaign and also brief stakeholders on the campaign model and activities involved.

The facilitators briefed the stakeholders about the campaign, discussed the implementation schedule/timeline, discussed the budget and made modifications where necessary and agreed on a date for the regional planning workshop. Lessons learnt from previous campaigns were also shared to help improve on the planned campaign. Plans to improve upon the campaign based on the lessons learnt were also discussed.

ADDRO observed that Ghana Health Service team was very enthusiastic about the campaign and was ready to cooperate with all stakeholders in the process. They cautioned their team members to always do the right thing as ADDRO would keep an eye on all activities throughout the campaign.

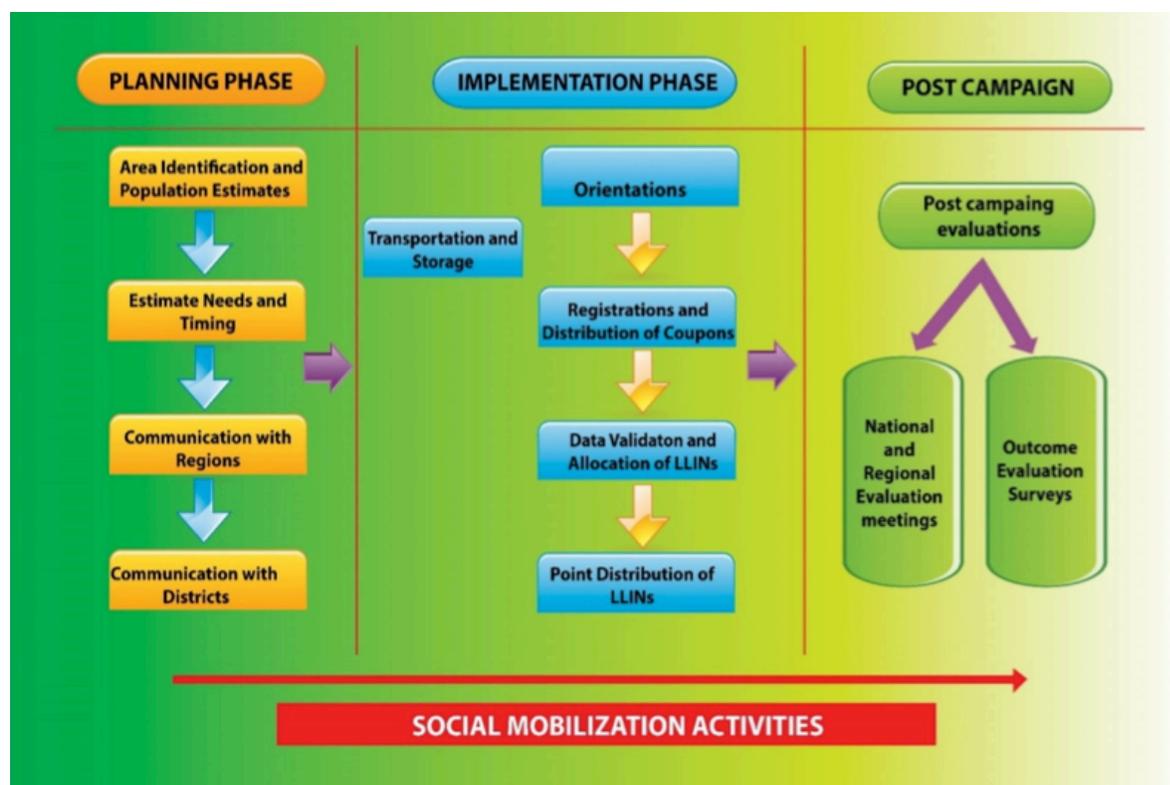
2. Regional planning workshop

The regional planning workshop was the second in the series of meetings organized by the NMCP with support from AMF in preparation for the LLIN point distribution campaign. The workshop was held at the Northern Region Health Directorate in Tamale on January 22nd, 2016. The purpose of the planning workshop was to deepen the understanding of stakeholders on the campaign model and related activities, to discuss implementation schedules and agree on timelines for all activities, discuss budget details and allow stakeholders to make inputs ahead of finalizing it, and to discuss and agree on roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders for the campaign.

Stakeholders present at the meeting were NMCP, Northern Region Health Directorate, District Directors/District Health Management Team (DHMT) representatives of the Ghana Health Service, the Northern Region Coordinating Council and ADDRO.

The facilitators from the NMCP presented the campaign model to participants, led a discussion on the implementation schedules/timelines and budget and made modifications where needed.

Below is the diagram of the campaign model shared by the NMCP which highlights the three main phases of the campaign – planning phase, implementation phase and the post campaign phase.



The main campaign activities including the training of trainers, district/sub-district orientations, household registration exercise, compilation of registration data, validation of data and movement of nets, LLIN distribution and post-distribution activities were highlighted. It is worth noting that NMCP stressed that the campaign nets are free and strictly not for sale and whoever diverts some of the nets for sale or otherwise than the intended purpose, irrespective of his or her position, would be dealt with severely by the law.

Again, ADDRO's Head of Programmes participated in the regional planning workshop. It was observed that the Regional Health Directorate (RHD) was happy with its involvement in the planning and budgeting process as their (RHD) inputs and concerns were taken into consideration. The RHD's involvement in these processes would also ensure its (RHD) ownership of the campaign (as they are the custodian of health in the region) and would encourage them to work hard to ensure it is successful.

3. Orientation of National and Regional Supervisors

ADDRO's Health Coordinator and Northern Region Coordinator participated in the orientation for the national and regional supervisors of the LLIN campaign. The national supervisors consisted of staff from the NMCP office in Accra and other partners involved in the campaign including Vector Works and USAID Deliver, while the regional supervisors consisted of Ghana Health Service staff at the regional level.

The orientation took place on the 7th of March, 2016 at the Regional Health Directorate Training Unit (RHDTU) in Tamale. The aim of this training was to equip the national and regional supervisors with the requisite knowledge and skills to support and supervise the cascade training of supervisors and volunteers at the districts and sub-districts levels respectively to ensure a successful LLIN campaign exercise.

The facilitators for the orientation of the national and regional supervisors were Otubea Owusu Akrofi, Francis Ocloo and Dr. Aba Baffoe Wilmot from the National Malaria Control Programme. The topics covered in the one-day orientation included:

- How to register households and distribute coupons
- Correct filling of coupons
- Allocation of nets to households using universal coverage formula, defined as one LLIN for two people in a household
- Social mobilization activities and the messages to give out. The messages covered malaria prevention, awareness about the campaign, correct and consistent use of LLINs and maintenance of the LLINs.
- Point distribution process

After the NMCP's presentations, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions to deepen their understanding about the whole process, to help them correctly facilitate the orientation for the supervisors and volunteers and also enable them offer the required support to them (supervisors and volunteers) to effectively undertake the household registration activity and the subsequent LLIN point distribution activity. Participants also shared experiences on previous campaigns in the Northern region.

4. Orientation of District Supervisors and Volunteers

ADDRO's Northern Region Coordinator joined national supervisors to support the training of district supervisors for the LLIN campaign and supervision of subsequent training of volunteers by the district supervisors. The training was aimed at equipping district level supervisors with the requisite knowledge to support the training of volunteers and to supervise the activities of volunteers thereafter.

National supervisors present during this activity included staff from NMCP Head office, Accra and other partners involved in the campaign whilst regional supervisors were Ghana Health Service staff at the regional level taking part in the campaign.

- **Supervisors Orientation**

During the orientation of the district-level supervisors, ADDRO visited two districts namely Mamprugu Mouduri and West Mamprusi. These two districts have seven (7) sub districts. The orientation started on March 9th, 2016 and ended on March 11th, 2016. A total of 32 district-level supervisors were trained in the two districts.

Protocol of visiting district-level officials was observed in the two districts visited, as it was a requirement for all supervisors to do so. Both national and regional teams therefore paid a courtesy call on staff of the District Health Administration (DHA) before proceeding to the training grounds for monitoring and supervision of the orientations.

ADDRO observed that the venues for the orientation were suitable. The facilitators for the orientation were Ghana Health service staff who had participated in the regional orientation and were supported by the national and regional monitoring team – including ADDRO's representative. The approach employed for the orientation was an interactive one, where participants were encouraged to effectively participate in discussions and to ask questions where

they did not understand. The facilitators took participants through the household registration process and issuing of coupons, correct filling of coupons, allocation of nets to households using the universal coverage calculation of one LLIN for every two people in a household, social mobilization activities and the messages (about malaria prevention, awareness of the campaign, correct and consistent use of LLINs and maintenance of the LLINs) to be given out to communities and the point distribution process.

A challenge encountered was that the orientations of the district supervisors in the two districts were done on the same day. Hence, the monitoring team could not fully monitor both orientations and recommends that future orientations at the district level should not be scheduled on the same day to allow national and regional supervisors to fully monitor and supervise the orientations in all districts. Alternatively, a monitoring team should be assigned to each of the districts to allow for full monitoring and supervision if all or a number of districts are scheduled to have their orientation on the same day.

- **Volunteers Orientation**

The trained district supervisors conducted the orientation for the volunteers at the sub-district level. All sub-district volunteer trainings were scheduled to immediately follow the supervisors' trainings and took place between March 10th and 13th, 2016. These trainings were conducted using the NMCP's manual for the campaign. The content was very similar to that of the orientation of supervisors. The only topic left out was the allocation of LLINs using the universal coverage formula, as the allocation was to be done by only the district and sub-district supervisors and not to be made known to volunteers. The main reason for this is that if volunteers know the formula, it could tempt some to connive with household heads/representatives to inflate their household population in order to get more LLINs – perhaps, for each household member to get one LLIN or even more.

ADDRO supervised the orientation of volunteers in Mamprugu Moagduri and West Mamprusi districts. A total of 211 volunteers were trained for the household registration exercise. The ADDRO representative made the following observations:

- Orientation for volunteers in the two districts visited were done on March 11th and 12th, 2016

- The venues for the orientation of the volunteers were suitable
- Logistics necessary for the orientation and all materials needed example, coupons, posters, etc. were available
- The orientation was practical and participatory. Participants shared their experiences of previous LLIN campaigns in the Northern region.

The ADDRO representative conducted monitoring and supervision of the orientations in four out of the seven sub-districts in the two districts he visited, as the dates for the orientations in the other three sub-districts were postponed. The reason for the postponement was that the GHS staff were involved in other equally important health exercises during this same period.

A challenge encountered, similar to the orientation for district supervisors, was that the training of volunteers in some sub-districts were scheduled on the same day. The monitoring team requested that some sub-districts reschedule the date for their orientation to enable the team fully monitor and supervise the orientation in all sub-districts. Again, for future campaigns, it is recommended that sub-districts should not schedule orientations on the same day or alternatively, to have more supervisory and monitoring teams if orientations have to be scheduled on the same days for a reason.

5. Household Registration exercise

The NMCP and partners carried out a household registration exercise prior to the point distribution activity. The objective of the household registration exercise was to ensure that all households are registered and have coupons to redeem nets during the actual distribution of LLINs.

The registration of households by volunteers took place from 14th to 18th March, 2016. This involved the household registration of intended LLINs recipients and issuing out of coupons to those households by volunteers. During the exercise, volunteers moved from one household to another to register and issue out coupons to household heads or household representatives to enable them to redeem LLINs during the actual LLINs point mass distribution. The exercise was scheduled to be completed in a period of five days (Monday 14th March to Friday 18th March 2016), however in all the sub-districts, most of the work was completed by the fourth day.

National and regional teams supervised the household registration by the volunteers. Two members from the district (District Health Administration and sub-district) were selected by the District Health Administration and Sub-district in-Charges (sub-district team leaders) to help the national team in the monitoring of the registration exercise in the communities. The district monitoring team co-operated with the national team to carry out its work. The communities were randomly selected for monitoring. The monitoring exercise was conducted using the “supervisor household registration exercise checklist.” This form checks, among other items, the following:

- The availability of enough coupons for the registration
- Whether or not the volunteers correctly filled in the coupon and issued it out to the household members
- Whether or not the volunteers passed on the key and correct information to the household members regarding the use of and care for the nets
- Whether households know about the point distribution exercise and day of the distribution of LLINs
- Challenges encountered in the course of the exercise
- The corrective measures that the monitoring team and or the volunteers had taken in addressing these challenges

ADDRO’s Northern region coordinator conducted light monitoring of this exercise and made the following observations:

- The registration exercise started on Monday, 14th March and ended on Friday, 18th March, 2016
- Almost all the volunteers used for this household registration exercise could read and write
- Coupons observed were properly filled by volunteers
- Publicity for the exercise was good as most household members interviewed were aware of the exercise (including the registration activities as well as the actual distribution of LLINs)
- The sub-districts supervisors commenced the calculation of allocations of LLINs to the communities using the universal coverage formula

- The sub-district representatives coded the coupons by community for easy identification. Each community and its corresponding booklets had a unique code and the pages/coupons in the booklets were given page numbers. This unique identification was done to facilitate easy identification and issuing out of nets during the actual distribution of the nets.
- The elderly (individuals 70 years and above) were registered separately in the households
- The district formed many monitoring teams to effectively supervise the registration exercise

Other good practices observed in the districts were that the few illiterate volunteers in some communities were paired with literate ones. The reason given was that GHS did not want to leave them out of this exercise as they use them for most programs at the community level. Households in these districts were also marked with chalk for identification. Sub-district officials provided means of transport to volunteers who worked in very remote communities and some community members provided lunch for volunteers in appreciation of their work.

A key observation made by ADDRO was that a lot of the households (more than 50%) did not have access to phones and hence did not have cell phone numbers. Although identified as a challenge, this should not directly impact the follow up of the LLINs at the household level as other information like name of household head, location of household and community name would help to locate the households. In addition, the volunteers who were involved in the household registration exercise are residents in their respective communities and can assist in locating the households.

6. Compilation of household registration data

After the registration exercise, the trained sub-district officers calculated the appropriate number of nets to registered households using the universal coverage formula. Total number of people registered and total number of nets allocated were written on the inside cover page of each registration booklet. The district officials also summed up total population registered and total nets allocated per community. Summaries of the total population registered and total nets allocated per community were made for sub-districts and each of the districts. The district level

officers filled out the pre-distribution data validation forms ready for the pre-distribution validation exercise which followed.

7. Pre-distribution data validation (validation of household registration data)

After the compilation of data, the NMCP and partners undertook the validation of the household registration data. Two staff from ADDRO consisting of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and the Northern Region Coordinator were involved in the exercise: one staff visited the North Gonja District and the other staff visited the Sagnerigu District to validate the coupons issued to households during the registration exercise. All the eight sub-districts were visited (four in North Gonja and four in Sagnerigu) and pre-distribution data duly validated. All coupons were checked to ensure that the entries tallied with the population registered and the allocation of nets to households.

The exercise was aimed at validating the data compiled by the districts after the household registration exercise to ensure that allocated numbers of LLINs needed per district for the point distribution exercise were accurate and correctly reported to NMCP.

The validation was done at the sub-district level in both districts, however, the team first visited the District Health Directorates to interact with the leadership and get the pre-distribution data validation forms, which were to be filled by the District Health Administration (DHA).

The team carried out the following activities:

- Crosschecked figures on template with summary on booklets for each communities
- Re-computed the totals for each community where there were inconsistencies (i.e., in cases where the allocations were not correct and where the totals for one or two coupon booklets were not accurate)
- Numbered all booklets used by each community. E.g. for a community which used 10 booklets, the numbering was done as follows; 1/10, 2/10, 3/10....10/10
- Scanned through registration booklets for average household sizes. Where average household sizes were larger (10 or more), the team probed; and in some cases, requested that the district re-register the households. For instance, there were household numbers of 39, 16, 14, etc. in one booklet. When the volunteer

was contacted, he indicated that the people in the house did not allow him to register each household in the house, and that they would not allow him to bring any separation amongst the family. The volunteer was asked to go back and explain the purpose of the exercise to them and the reason behind registering each household and re-register them. The ADDRO staff followed up to ensure that those households were properly registered and the data validated.

- Validation of nets allocated to each household with respect to the household population
- Validation of population summaries per booklets and communities.
- Validation of nets allocated per booklets and community

The table below shows the summary of the registration data from the districts

District	Total Population Registered (from coupons)	LLINs allocated using projected population	LLINs allocated from coupons (Actual)	Variance
North Gonja	56,432	28,720	31,639	-2,919
Sagnerigu	208,508	97,650	117,987	-20,337

This means that 20,337 pieces of nets were required to top up the LLIN requirement for distribution in the Sagnerigu District and 2,919 for top up in North Gonja district.

**After the validation exercise, North Gonja district sent information to NMCP and ADDRO that some coupons were left out during the summation (those booklet totals were not added to the district summaries). New numbers sent in and accepted by the NMCP are below:

District	Total Population Registered (from coupons)	LLINs allocated using projected population	LLINs allocated from coupons (Actual)	Variance
North Gonja	59,909	28,700	32,303	-3,603

Some observations made by the ADDRO team are below:

- Most of the community populations registered were far greater than the original estimates.
- There were errors in the allocation of LLINs using the universal coverage concept of one LLIN to two people in a household
- There were some cases where multiple families were lumped together as single households
- There were issues with the calculation of the total populations of households as well as with total LLINs allocated (the math was incorrect and as such the totals were not correct).
- Summaries of population registered and nets allocated per booklets were incorrectly done in a few of the coupons, leading to incorrect community and district summaries.
- Some coupons were not properly coded as they were lacking page numbers.
- The North Gonja district coordinator of the LLINs was abreast with everything happening in the district, and had all of the sub-district information and up to date on the happenings in all the communities.
- In the Goggu sub-district, the sub-district head involved all sub area supervisors in the allocations and summary of coupons, which reduced the workload and minimized errors.
- Large communities were split into two or three sections to facilitate registration of households and the subsequent distribution of nets.

Some challenges noted include:

- Late submission of summary of sub-districts data to district for collation
- Large numbers of booklets to validate
- Poor telephone network making it difficult to reach some of the volunteers who had issues with some coupons and needed to get to the sub-district to clarify and

if necessary go back to the households to make corrections to the registration or to re-register.

- Difficulty in reaching Mankarigu, a hard-to-reach sub-district across the White Volta River. The team had to travel across five districts to get to Mankarigu.

Some actions taken to resolve some of the above challenges included:

- With the delay in the submission of sub-districts data, the team continued to move to the sub-district and start the validation of the coupons whilst still waiting for the summary of sub-districts data.
- The validation team (including ADDRO staff) visited the communities to ascertain the veracity of the information captured on the coupons especially household sizes ranging from 15 to 20
- The households with large household sizes were re-registered to reduce the sizes of the households and the earlier coupons issued were retrieved and replaced with new coupons.

It is recommended that for future work:

- All sub-district summary forms should be compiled before validation
- Sub-district supervisors should be encouraged to do diligent work in the allocation of LLINs and additions of totals. This is because approximately 30% of the coupon booklets validated by the ADDRO team had inaccurate additions. In some instances, the total LLINs were less by twenty LLINs
- Sub-district supervisors should be increased from two to five to facilitate the monitoring of the distribution of LLINs
- Mankarigu should be added to the team responsible for Mamprugu Mogduri district for purposes of monitoring the distribution of nets. Although, Mankarigu is a sub-district under North Gonja, it can only be assessed by either using a boat or by passing through the Mamprugu Mogduri district.

Conclusions

The pre-distribution phase of the universal LLIN distribution campaign in the Northern Region of Ghana, which took place between January and April 2016, was successful. The NMCP led this phase in collaboration with development partners, with Episcopal Relief & Development/ADDRO being a key partner.

Episcopal Relief & Development/ADDRO participated in and conducted light monitoring of the pre-distribution activities. The presence of monitors from especially ADDRO and the NMCP ensured checks and balances. As indicated earlier in this report, the Northern Regional Health Directorate cautioned their staff during the informative meetings to always do the right thing as ADDRO would monitor all activities during the campaign. Hence, the potential of being monitored kept GHS staff as well as volunteers on their best behavior (worked well to ensure some level of quality) throughout the processes. ADDRO's participation in the processes also helped to strengthen coordination and communication among the various stakeholders to help improve on the implementation of the project.

Although there was a schedule/timeline for all activities which was shared with all partners at the beginning of the planning process, schedule changes made the work a bit difficult at times, particularly when those changes happened with short notice. However, these early changes in the Northern region ironed out kinks that made it such that it is anticipated that the planning activities in Greater Accra Region will have gone better and the Upper West Region will also go on well. Lessons learnt from the pre-distribution activities in the Northern region have gone a long way to help ADDRO, NMCP, GHS and other partners to improve on the pre-distribution phases in the Greater Accra and the Upper West Regions.

The next line of action following this phase is the reallocation of more accurate LLINs based on validation data, and movement of nets to the distribution points. Throughout the process, SBCC is being intensified to ensure that beneficiaries are able to redeem their nets and correctly use them. It is worth noting that issues that came up during the pre-distribution phase in the Northern region were mostly resolved, so in the end it was successful and set the foundation for a successful distribution phase.