

Conversations with Rob Mather and Peter Sherratt, October 15 and October 22, 2015

Participants

- Rob Mather – Founder and CEO, Against Malaria Foundation
- Peter Sherratt – Executive Chairman, Against Malaria Foundation
- Elie Hassenfeld – Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, GiveWell
- Rebecca Raible – Research Analyst, GiveWell
- Natalie Crispin – Senior Research Analyst, GiveWell

Note: These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Rob Mather and Peter Sherratt.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Rob Mather and Peter Sherratt of the Against Malaria Foundation (AMF) to get an update on AMF's long-lasting insecticide-treated net (LLIN) distribution negotiations and time-sensitive funding needs. Conversation topics included the current pipeline for future distributions, room for more funding, and relationships with other actors.

Note that AMF prefers to keep the names of countries it is in negotiations with confidential until agreements are signed; we've used the pseudonyms that AMF assigns the countries on its future distributions page:

<https://www.againstmalaria.com/FutureDistributions.aspx>.

Pipeline for future net distributions

Country I

Net distribution negotiations in Country I have progressed significantly, and are now in the final stages. Though there is no specific deadline for concluding these agreements, AMF expects that they will be signed in the coming weeks or, at the latest, by the end of 2015.

Country C

Net distribution negotiations in Country C have been progressing well, and are reaching the final stages. The country has requested a 4 million net distribution in the first half of 2016. At present, AMF is capable of funding 2 million of these. As funding details are not yet finalized, the distribution is unlikely to proceed within the proposed timeline.

AMF expects that its Country C agreements will be signed within the next two months. Once AMF becomes aware of a clear deadline, AMF will have to immediately inform partners of its specific commitments.

AMF is eager to conclude agreements in both Country C and Country I, as AMF believes this will help progress on other discussions.

Country K

Country K has requested 2 million nets in the first half of 2016. Country K's MoH recently issued its approval for moving discussions between AMF and the NMCP to the next phase.

AMF is interested in expanding its work to Country K for a number of reasons: the country has a low gross domestic product (GDP) and negotiations with country partners will likely progress well. Additionally, the country's relatively sophisticated health system might enable AMF to collaborate directly with the MoH on distribution efforts.

Within the next two weeks, AMF plans to inform Country K's MoH about whether it can commit to funding a distribution in early 2016. If it cannot, the program might not receive the requested funding from other partners. If AMF were to obtain the necessary funding in the coming months, it could potentially fund a distribution program in the latter half of 2016.

Country Z

AMF has been asked to contribute funding to Country Z's 2017 net distribution program. The NMCP is currently involved in its planning cycle, and has not yet detailed its potential contributions. Once these have been announced, negotiations have the potential to progress quickly.

Recent observations from the field indicate that a significant coverage gap remains following net distribution campaigns in Country Z in 2014 and 2015. Mr. Mather estimates that current net coverage levels are approximately 50-60%.

Country J

In Country J, AMF's net distribution negotiations have been put on hold. AMF had proposed carrying out a three-phase distribution of 3.2 million nets to pilot the use of digital electronic devices, such as smart phones and tablets, for data collection. During the pilot phase, nets would be distributed to two geographical areas that are each in need of 100,000 nets (the areas have already been identified).

Approximately 1.5 million nets would be distributed in each of the following two years. The presence of a pilot phase will delay the program's ability to reach a more significant portion of the population, so AMF is eager to begin this work as soon as possible.

AMF's potential in-country distribution partners in Country J are enthusiastic about participating in the distribution.

AMF has chosen to prioritize negotiations in Country C, Country I, and Country Z, as these have progressed, or have the potential to progress, more quickly and easily.

AMF is eager to start working in Country J, and still hopes to secure funds and re-engage with potential partners in the near future.

Room for more funding

AMF's current room for more funding is approximately \$75 million, which would be allocated as follows:

- Country C - 2.1 million additional nets to close the coverage gap (\$6.3 million)
- Country K - 2 million nets (\$8.2 million)
- Country J - 3.2 million nets (\$9.6 million)
- Country Z (2017) - 15 million nets or a portion thereof (\$5-\$37.5 million)
- Country I (2018) - 9.2 million nets in 2018 (\$13.1 million)

With additional funding, AMF would first prioritize programs in Country C and Country K, followed by programs in Country J, then Country Z, then Country I.

In Country J, AMF's initial proposal included an additional 8.4 nets (and related non-net costs) at an additional cost of \$25.2 million. It is not currently prepared to make this additional commitment given that it has not yet worked in the country.

Given the apparent need for urgent, increased action in Country Z, the cost and priority level for this program might increase, and it might begin in 2016 rather than 2017 as initially expected.

AMF is eager to expand its work to new countries, such as Country K and Country J. This will increase AMF's opportunities to participate in future projects, and new partners will gain exposure to AMF's methodologies (e.g. data collection practices).

A note on non-net costs

For AMF's Malawi distribution, non-net costs are approximately \$1 per net (between \$0.90 and \$1.20). For AMF's DRC distributions, non-net costs are approximately \$3 per net.

On average, Funding Partner A's non-net costs are approximately \$2.50 per net. The African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) also uses this figure. AMF is not sure what expenses are included in this figure.

All GiveWell conversations are available at <http://www.givewell.org/conversations>