

Newsletter #34 December 2025



Our campaign received UK wide publicity recently when the collaboration between 3rd St Albans Cub Scout Group and Tamale Scouts in Northern Ghana was broadcast.

On December 4, the World Health Organisation issued its annual report World Malaria Report in which progress is reported in averting illness and death but that the disease remains a serious global health threat, particularly in sub Saharan Africa.

We also report on the most recent education and net distribution campaign and initial trial of our Malaria Prevention Handbook by Scouts in Malawi with funds raised by UK Scouts.

Scouts against Malaria 3rd St Albans collaboration with Ghana Scouts

The BBC broadcast on CBBC Newsround on 14/10/2025 at 0745, a 3 minute film of 3rd St Albans Cub Scouts, Hertfordshire, UK collaboration with Scouts in the Tamale District of northern Ghana to reduce the incidence of malaria.

This involved St Albans Cub Scouts learning about malaria and then fund raising over a period of 5 years and in total raising more than £7000 which funds were sent to Scouts in Tamale. Tamale Scouts used these funds to purchase more than 2000 insecticide treated bed nets which were then distributed in various educational campaigns to vulnerable families in local communities. These bed nets are very effective in preventing being bitten while sleeping as the anopheles mosquito which carries the malaria parasite is primarily active at night.

The link to the film is - [The scouts working together to fight malaria - BBC Newsround](#)

Overview WHO report

Malaria is a life-threatening disease primarily found in tropical countries. It is both preventable and curable. However, without prompt diagnosis and effective treatment, a case of uncomplicated malaria can progress to a severe form of the disease, which is often fatal without treatment.

Malaria is primarily caused by the bite of a female mosquito of the *anopheles gambiae* species. In sucking blood to feed her young, the female species injects a parasite called a *plasmodium* which infects the liver and attacks the red blood cells.

Since 2000, 2.3 billion malaria cases and 14 million deaths have been averted worldwide – including 1 million lives saved in 2024 alone – and there has been continued movement towards global elimination goals, with 47 countries and one territory now officially certified as malaria-free by WHO. However nearly half the world's population is at risk of malaria. In areas with high malaria transmission, young children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to malaria infection and even death.

Serious global health challenge

Despite these gains, however, malaria remains a serious global health challenge, with an estimated 282 million cases and 610 000 deaths in 2024 – roughly 9 million more cases than the previous year. The WHO African Region continues to bear the greatest burden, with 11 countries accounting for about two thirds of global cases and deaths. Progress in reducing the malaria mortality rate nevertheless remains far off track.

This year's report underscores a growing array of risks to malaria elimination efforts in addition to the threat of antimalarial drug resistance. Malaria parasites with specific gene deletions remain prevalent, undermining the reliability of rapid diagnostic tests, while confirmed pyrethroid resistance in 48 countries is reducing the effectiveness of insecticide-treated nets.

"No one should die of malaria; yet the disease continues to disproportionately harm people living in the African region, especially young children and pregnant women," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "An expanded package of lifesaving tools now offers better protection against the disease, but stepped-up investments and action in high-burden African countries are needed to curb the threat".

Beyond biological threats, extreme weather events are also contributing to increased outbreaks of malaria. Changes in temperature and rainfall are altering habitats for mosquitoes and thus transmission patterns. This has resulted in *Anopheles stephensi* mosquitoes – resistant to many commonly used insecticides –invading 9 African countries, posing a serious challenge to urban malaria control efforts.

Conflict and instability in affected regions are also leading to widespread disruptions of health services, limiting access to care and delaying timely diagnosis and treatment

New generation of insecticide treated bed nets (ITNs), which provide better protection against malaria than pyrethroid-only nets, are becoming more widely available, supporting efforts to combat mosquito resistance to pyrethroids. In 2023, these new types of nets accounted for 78% of the 195 million nets delivered to sub-Saharan Africa, an increase from 59% in 2022.

Blantyre rural campaign, Malawi Howie Maujo reports

This activity brought together Scout leaders, youth scouts, community leaders, and health personnel to strengthen malaria knowledge, enhance early detection, and promote household-level prevention.

The initiative also utilized the newly developed Scouts Malaria Handbook, which provides child-friendly, practical, and action-oriented information on malaria transmission, prevention, signs and symptoms, and community engagement methods.

Scout leaders facilitated sessions using the Malaria Handbook as a core training tool.

Lessons covered transmission cycle, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment seeking behaviour, and preventive practices. Interactive methods included group discussions, demonstrations, quizzes, and role-plays.

Practical demonstrations involved proper hanging and use of LLINs (Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets). and methods of environmental management methods such as clearing stagnant water, slashing tall grass, and waste disposal to prevent mosquitos breeding.

Community outreach and findings

Scouts visited door-to-door delivering malaria messages and distributed simplified malaria leaflets based on the handbook. Approximately 350 households were reached with malaria education messages. There were misconceptions among some community members about malaria including attributing malaria to cold weather or witchcraft.

Many households reported better awareness of the need to use mosquito nets daily, especially for children under five and pregnant women. In several households, Scouts demonstrated correct methods of hanging mosquito nets. Households reported that having youths demonstrate these methods was engaging and practical

Village clean-up campaigns focused on eliminating mosquito breeding sites. And engagement of parents and chiefs in malaria control measures.

.The handbook proved to be a valuable teaching tool due to its clear illustrations, child-friendly language, and practical tips. Leaders recommended continuous updates and wider distribution to all Scout districts:



Figures Learning about malaria using Malaria Prevention Handbook, demonstrating how to hang the mosquito nets and distributing nets to vulnerable families particularly those with children under the age of 5 or expectant mothers

Success Stories and recommendations

In one community, Scouts helped persuade over 40 households to start using mosquito nets consistently. A group of leaders organized a school anti-malaria club, which now meets weekly. Parents reported that Scouts became “health teachers at home,” reminding siblings to sleep under nets.

Recommendations include -

- Printing additional copies of the Malaria Handbook for all Scout troops.
- Strengthening collaboration with the Ministry of Health for net distribution during community outreach.
- Continuous training of Scout leaders on malaria updates and first aid basics.
- Integrating malaria education into Scout badges, such as Health and Community Service Badge.
- Scaling the project to other districts for broader national impact

Malaria Prevention handbook

This 30 page booklet has been compiled to inform Scouts and their Leaders, both in the UK and in Africa, about the role of the anopheles mosquito in injecting the malaria parasite when drawing blood, and how families can sleep at night without being bitten by sleeping under insecticide treated bed nets (ITNs). If bitten, what are the symptoms of malaria and why it is important to seek treatment as soon as possible.

Jackie Heath delivered 200 copies of the handbook to Howie Maujo, Executive Scout Leader, Malawi Scouts when, together with 35 Explorer Scouts, they visited the Northern District of Malawi in August.

Copies are available at £3 each (if posted) or £2 if collected..

Helping others in need

Scouts against Malaria is an activity which supports the World Organisation of Scouting Movements' (WOSM) global program, *Scouts for SDGs* (Sustainable Development Goals). SAM activities contribute towards SDG #3 *leading a healthy life*. If you or your Section/Group is willing to join the global partnership to fight malaria, visit our website www.scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk or email us at info@scoutsagainstmalaria.org.uk.



We have developed a wide range of activities suitable for all sections which together with a slide set and videos of current campaigns can be downloaded from the SAM website. These are suitable for on-line learning for individual Scouts as well as sectional meetings.

Alternatively we are willing to visit your Group and organise an evening's activities if you are willing then to raise funds to purchase ITN treated nets and live within a reasonable distance of NE Hampshire.

Editor Rayner Mayer.