Tanzania

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, a member of The Lutheran World Federation, is made up of over 6.1 million members in 20 dioceses — approximately 13 percent of the population of Tanzania. The Lutheran Church provides medical and surgical services and is in the forefront of HIV and AIDS education, prevention, hospice and palliative care.

Tanzania statistics (according to World Health Organization)

- Population 47.8 million; 73 percent are at high risk and 27 percent are at lower risk of contracting malaria
- 100 percent of malaria cases in Tanzania are due to plasmodium falciparum (the most deadly strain of malaria)
- Number of cases of malaria:
  - 2009: 12,755,332
  - 2010: 10,524,480
  - 2011: 5,481,958
  - 2012: 2,441,750
- Reported deaths from malaria:
  - 2009: 16,776
  - 2010: 15,867
  - 2011: 11,806
  - 2012: 7,820

Challenges Tanzania faces:

- Though major strides have been made, Tanzania is still a developing country with high levels of poverty. Many families, especially in rural areas, cannot afford health care and preventative resources.
- While nearly 80 percent of households in Tanzania have access to at least one insecticide-treated net, coverage is not fully realized yet. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness and lack of access to other resources such as longer-lasting nets, rapid diagnostic testing and first-line malaria medications.
- Health facilities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania do not yet have the knowledge and tools they need to consistently stock and correctly administer malaria treatment.
Malaria work in Tanzania is a collaborative effort!

- Programming is being implemented by Lutheran World Relief and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.
- Joint workshops, program monitoring and evaluation have taken place in conjunction with national and local government.
- The Lutheran malaria program is reaching out to people in Pare, Morogoro and Iringa Dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Four areas of focus for the ELCA Malaria Campaign in Tanzania:

Equipping the church for malaria programming
- Since October 2010, over 1,600 parish malaria volunteers have been trained to educate others about malaria prevention and treatment.
- 15 finance, health care, and malaria project church staff were oriented on financial management practices, including allowance coordination and back-up documentation.

Malaria prevention and control
- Three Lutheran health facilities have reported a more than 50% decline in malaria cases since 2010.
- At the end of 2012, 84% of people in program areas reported sleeping under an insecticide-treated net; this number was 75% in 2010.

Treatment
- More than 75 healthcare providers from the Lutheran church have been trained in early diagnosis and treatment; supply chain management; financial management; and data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Lutheran health facilities are treating 87% of confirmed malaria cases with the first-line drug (ACTs); national average is 21%.

Sustainable livelihoods
- The malaria program is planning to start a livelihood pilot project in Pare Diocese, which will be coupled with an existing water project. The aim is to link health with livelihood and water/sanitation so as to tackle malaria holistically.

Impact:
- In Kashenye, on the western coast of Lake Victoria, one community is using soccer to spread the word. During the annual Copa Malaria (“Malaria Cup”) halftime show in Kashenye, malaria educators teach the crowds and give out prizes. The winning team receives a goat!
- Evelina Lulangasi is a nurse-midwife at a Lutheran medical center in Tanzania. Since the Lutheran malaria program began, she has seen an increase in the number of people seeking treatment for malaria. She says, “It’s a positive change. Now people are coming in before it gets severe. I truly expect that, thanks to the church mobilization and training, the malaria burden in our community will be lowered. It’s a relief to me that the church is doing this. Before, I would go around house by house and try to educate people about the importance of using insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria, and eliminating standing water and tall grasses around their homes to keep mosquitoes at bay. Now people are learning these things in the churches.”