Assisting the Rural Poor to Prevent Malaria

As part of continuous efforts to improve the well-being and increase the income of female shea butter producers in Northern Ghana —through its Sundial Brands Shea Butter Community Commerce Projects—SNV distributed insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) to female shea butter producers, identified as one of the rural poor groups of Northern Ghana.

The data from the District Health Information Management Systems (DHIMS) revealed that from December 2016 to August 2017, 4,326 outpatient cases tested positive for malaria in the Kumbungu district. Despite increased efforts by the Ghana Health Service over many years to control malaria, this level of disease prevalence in the Kumbungu district is high. To support the ongoing malaria prevention efforts in the district, SNV/Sundial Brands partnered with the Private Sector Malaria Prevention (PSMP) project, funded by the UK Department for International Development and implemented by Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, to procure 1,000 ITNs for women shea butter producers in the Bognayili and Gupanarigu communities in the Kumbugu district of the Northern Region of Ghana. This action also fulfilled the company’s obligation of giving back 10% of Shea Moisture Community Commerce sales to support communities that supply raw materials to Sundial Brands.

Education on ITN Use

While Sundial Brands Ltd. distributed the ITNs, program officers of PSMP educated the women shea butter producers on the proper ways to hang and care for the ITNs. The women were encouraged to always sleep under their ITN because it is a physical barrier between people and mosquitoes; it kills and reduces the mosquito population in a community; and it repels harmful
mosquitoes and other insects.

**Company Leadership Advice on ITN Use**

During the ITN distribution program, Sundial Brands Project Manager, Mr. Eric Banye, encouraged the women to ensure their entire households sleep under the treated ITNs. “Your health is very important for the success of our project, because if you or any member of your family is infected by malaria, you are likely to be absent from work and that would affect our productivity,” he said. Chief Community Mobilization Officer at Sundial Brands, Mr. Emmet Dennis, also expressed his appreciation to the women for their commitment and effort in producing quality shea butter. According to Dennis, Sundial Brands is concerned about the health of the women, recognizing that poor health leads to low productivity, which affects business revenues. The community chiefs, assembly member, and the women shea butter processors expressed gratitude to Sundial Brands for providing the free ITNs. Leaders of allied companies that witnessed the ITN distribution program were Mr. Chinedu Okoye, the CEO of Perfect Trust Cosmetics and the official partner for Shea Moisture in Nigeria; Umeadi Blessing Odega, the winner of the Young So/ti Tucker Competition, which supports and empowers young women to realize their entrepreneurial dreams; and the Shea Moisture Team from Nigeria.

**Lessons Learned**

When companies recognize the relationship between the good health of workers and community members on one hand, and increased productivity on the other—as shown by SNV/Sundial Brands—they are more inclined to invest in malaria prevention activities, such as ITN distributions.

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**PSMP is a three-year project funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and operated by the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP). The purpose of the PSMP is to catalyze private sector engagement in malaria control, in particular in the supply and distribution of Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLIN).**