

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM MALARIA WITH TREATED MOSQUITO NETS

*By Immaculate Namyalo, PACE liaison, Villa Maria Hospital*

Almost any villager can tell you the benefits of using a mosquito net, but not all understand the value of treated nets. **Insecticide-treated nets** protect individuals and have a community-wide effect because the insecticide kills mosquitoes as well. For people sleeping in the vicinity of treated nets, even if they do not have their own nets, risk from bites decreases by 75 percent. Personal nets reduce bites for each individual sleeping under the net by a further 69 percent as indicated by Medical Research Council, 2013.

“Although treated nets cost a bit more than untreated nets, they are cheaper and more effective than spraying insecticide. Treating a family’s bed nets requires only about one sixth as much insecticide as the amount typically sprayed indoors,” says C.F.Curtis, Scientist at Medical Research Council.

The prevalence of malaria is decreasing as mosquito nets are now regarded as a basic household. In 2009/2010 Villa Maria Hospital recorded 2,015 malaria cases. Recent data from 2012/2013 shows that the number of cases has greatly reduced to 879. Ongoing support from PACE and the powerful community arm of Villa Maria Hospital continues to help reduce the number of malaria cases within the hospital’s catchment area, which covers the six sub-counties of Kalungu, Lwabenge, Butenga, Bigasa, Kitanda and Kibinge.

While distributing insecticide-treated nets provided by PACE, the hospital carries out a number of other community malaria prevention initiatives. These include health education sessions, net usage demonstrations, promotion referral to facilities, as well as carrying out follow ups and home visits through collaboration with Village Health Officer. The hospital also educates community members by pinning up posters in community health centres and homes.



Kisaka Tony is client at the antiretroviral clinic who received an insecticide-treated net from PACE. “Before using the mosquito net, always had on and off fevers that made me have to go to the hospital frequently. This affected my ability to support my family,” Kisaka .Sometimes, Kisaka could not even afford the user fee of one thousand shillings at the clinic. However, after getting the mosquito net and using it on a daily basis he has managed to do his day-to-day activities as he no longer gets the fevers.

Having seen the importance of sleeping under a mosquito net, Kisaka has acquired nets for other family members as well. He is now able to do more work and earn more money, which has enabled him to acquire many assets

than before. He is also one of the Village Health Officers of Villa Maria Hospital.



Kisaka acquired these mosquito nets from PACE for the children’s bedroom.