



# Voices and UAM: An Innovative Partnership to Promote Net Use

## Innovative Net Use Messaging: Case Study #2

Beginning during the 2012 World Cup, the United Against Malaria partnership leveraged the excitement and reach of global football to deliver passionate, evidence-based malaria prevention and treatment messages. Through football, UAM was able to catalyze participation from national leaders and call for action by individuals, strengthening the culture of net use around the continent.

The Voices/UAM partnership uses an evidence-based approach to malaria communication, employing a campaign strategy centered around the idea that a multitude of channels are necessary to reach large and diverse audiences across the spectrum of society.

The UAM campaign has capitalized on the multitude of opportunities to disseminate net use messages during football tournaments via pitch-side branding, public service announcements (PSAs) playing in stadiums, players reading malaria and net use messages before matches and print and program materials distributed to fans in stadiums.

***“By linking our messages with football, we knew the messages would be more appealing to men – a key population often left out of health programs. We were aware that we might not reach some segments of the population – those who might not be as receptive to the football messages. We were surprised in our studies to find that women were exposed and recalled messages in very high numbers, almost as high as men. In addition, through the use of football as an entry point, we reached very high level thought leaders, who could influence behavior as well.”***

- Claudia Vondrasek,  
Director, Voices Project



## BACKGROUND:

The United Against Malaria (UAM) Partnership was launched in advance of the World Cup in 2009. Using sports as a platform to build multi-sectoral, strategic health partnerships, while not an entirely new concept, is unparalleled in its scope and breadth under UAM. Since football is played or watched by millions in Africa<sup>1</sup>, it offers a unique opportunity to reach individuals of a variety of ages, socio-economic, and geographic backgrounds with important, life-saving information about malaria prevention. It also offers the opportunity to promote unique channels for message delivery, such as during football events, PSAs created and endorsed by football players, and endorsements by influential thought leaders to reinforce malaria prevention messages under the well-recognized UAM banner and logo.

UAM has partners in both the public and private sectors—from government leaders, heads of state, parliamentarians, and ministers, to business leaders, football federations and their sponsors, and other private sector leaders—highlighting the importance of the breadth and scope of partnerships required in this strategic effort.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Confederation of African Football (CAF), an estimated 700 million viewers saw messages during the 2013 AFCON closing ceremony via South Africa- based media networks.

One key strategic partner in UAM has been the Voices project of the Johns Hopkins University, Center for Communication Programs (JHU-CCP).<sup>2</sup> Voices has worked closely with the UAM campaign in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and multiple other African countries to develop messages on net use and malaria treatment-seeking behaviors, based on theory and evidence.

Through such events as the FIFA 2010 World Cup, CECAFA Tuskier Challenge Cup in 2010, 2011, 2012, the Africa Cup of Nations in 2012, 2013, and other popular football events, Voices has continued to offer technical leadership to UAM and its partners. These partners include over 20 African Football Federations, the Confederation of Africa Football, the Unions of Professional Football Players, a large range of media contributors, pan-African broadcasters, and more than 100 private sector companies. To date, the campaign has produced more than 150 public service announcements in over 16 languages.

Results from a number of omnibus media surveys suggest UAM's messages have been well-received and have contributed to key changes in behavior. The most notable changes were around reported preventive actions, impact and reach of the campaign, and building the proof-of-concept for the approach to utilize football as an effective way to convey important health information.

## INNOVATIVE MESSAGING EXAMPLES

### Football star endorsements of UAM

Malaria prevention messages are delivered through a variety of multimedia approaches such as daily newspapers, public service announcements (PSAs) on TV and radio, football commentator announcements, football magazines, news broadcasts, and music videos. UAM branding always accompanies the messages on a variety of products from clothing to food and beverage products, in order to promote brand recognition and build brand loyalty.

In Nigeria, star players reminded the audience that *"real men protect their families from malaria"* by

ensuring their families use nets and seek treatment for malaria. This speaks directly to one of football's largest viewer demographics: men.

Voices in collaboration with UAM has produced more than 300,000 copies and nine versions of GOAL! magazine in four languages. GOAL! is a malaria educational tool designed for football fans, and is distributed in key locations such as stadiums, fan parks, and clinics. The magazine provides interactive malaria education tools such as quizzes and puzzles, alongside key messages on net use, stories and statistics about football stars, and tournament schedules. The interactive activities in the magazine are designed to reach younger audiences and build a social norm for net use.

Star football players Didier Drogba of Côte d'Ivoire, Samuel Eto'o of Cameroon, and Steven Pienaar of South Africa have continually supported pan-African malaria control efforts, particularly net use, by endorsing UAM on billboards across several African countries.



### Public Figure Endorsements of UAM

Public figures are often highly respected and considered a trusted source of information in Africa. As such, the UAM campaign strategy has prioritized key strategic partnerships with a number of important public figures.

In Côte d'Ivoire, ads promoting net use featuring President Alassane Ouattara were developed by a joint Voices /UAM partnership, and adapted to the local context. The President's office put up billboards, purchased back pages of the largest daily newspaper during the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament, and broadcast PSAs of the ads on television. The ads, approved by the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP), carried the

<sup>2</sup> The Voices project has been an active partner of United Against Malaria (UAM) in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, South Africa, Liberia, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Madagascar and Uganda since 2009

message “Sleep under a treated net every night to avoid mosquito bites and malaria.” President Ouattara has continued to show his interest in providing leadership to the African Leaders Malaria Alliance.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has continually shown her support by endorsing UAM on a number of billboards to promote consistent net use. These billboards were visible before and during the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations tournament and stated “United We Can Beat Malaria: Remember to use your treated mosquito net every night.” President Sirleaf continues to champion the campaign, appealing to Africa’s leaders in PSAs on the importance of net use throughout the country and the continent.

Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni has also promoted net use on UAM billboard endorsements shown across Uganda over the past several years.



## UAM NET USE MESSAGING: RESULTS

An omnibus survey conducted in April 2012, after the 2012 AFCON games in Côte d’Ivoire, found that 90% of respondents in urban areas watched at least one match and 60% of those respondents recalled the UAM net use message to “sleep under an insecticide treated net every night.” Based upon an extrapolation of the urban population from a sampling of eight urban centers, an estimated 6 million people in the country would have recalled the message to sleep under a net every night.<sup>3</sup>

Results from the 2012 omnibus survey in Ghana showed that roughly 68% of survey respondents recalled net use messages from PSAs featuring the Ghanaian national football team, the Black Stars. Omnibus results following the World Cup in 2013 were also positive.

<sup>3</sup> Omnibus Survey, IPSOS, Cote d’Ivoire; 2012. [http://www.malariafreefuture.org/sites/malariafreefuture.org/files/cotedivoirecasestudy2013lr\\_0.pdf](http://www.malariafreefuture.org/sites/malariafreefuture.org/files/cotedivoirecasestudy2013lr_0.pdf)  
[http://www.malariafreefuture.org/sites/malariafreefuture.org/files/ghanacasestudy2013\\_1.pdf](http://www.malariafreefuture.org/sites/malariafreefuture.org/files/ghanacasestudy2013_1.pdf)

According to the survey, Ghanaians with high exposure to UAM spots (on TV and in newspapers) during the AFCON 2013 games were far more likely to take preventive action than those with little or no exposure to spots. For example:

- They were more than three times as likely to make sure their LLIN had no holes.
- They were nearly four times as likely to discuss with friends the importance of sleeping under a net every night.<sup>4</sup>

Media surveys estimated that 22 million people were exposed to at least one World Cup match in 2010. In Tanzania, omnibus survey results showed that 64% of survey respondents recalled seeing a UAM spot. Of those respondents:

- 48% confirmed they had taken steps to ensure their families sleep under ITNs.
- Based upon an extrapolation of urban centers, an estimated 6.6 million people had taken preventive action to make sure their families slept under ITNs.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The use of football as a platform for communicating malaria messages has allowed UAM to leverage the reach and momentum of football for public health goals. Football engages individuals of all ages, socio-economic, educational, political, and geographic backgrounds, enabling key malaria prevention messages, such as those on net use, to reach a considerable proportion of the population. Using multiple channels helps increase the likelihood of exposure to messages and increases the likelihood that messages will resonate and be motivating to the wide audiences of football fans across Africa. Building the culture of net use by using testimonials and calls to action by influential figures, and other targeted channels, has seamlessly reinforced the importance of net use across the continent.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.malariafreefuture.org/sites/malariafreefuture.org/files/ghanacasestudy2013\\_1.pdf](http://www.malariafreefuture.org/sites/malariafreefuture.org/files/ghanacasestudy2013_1.pdf)