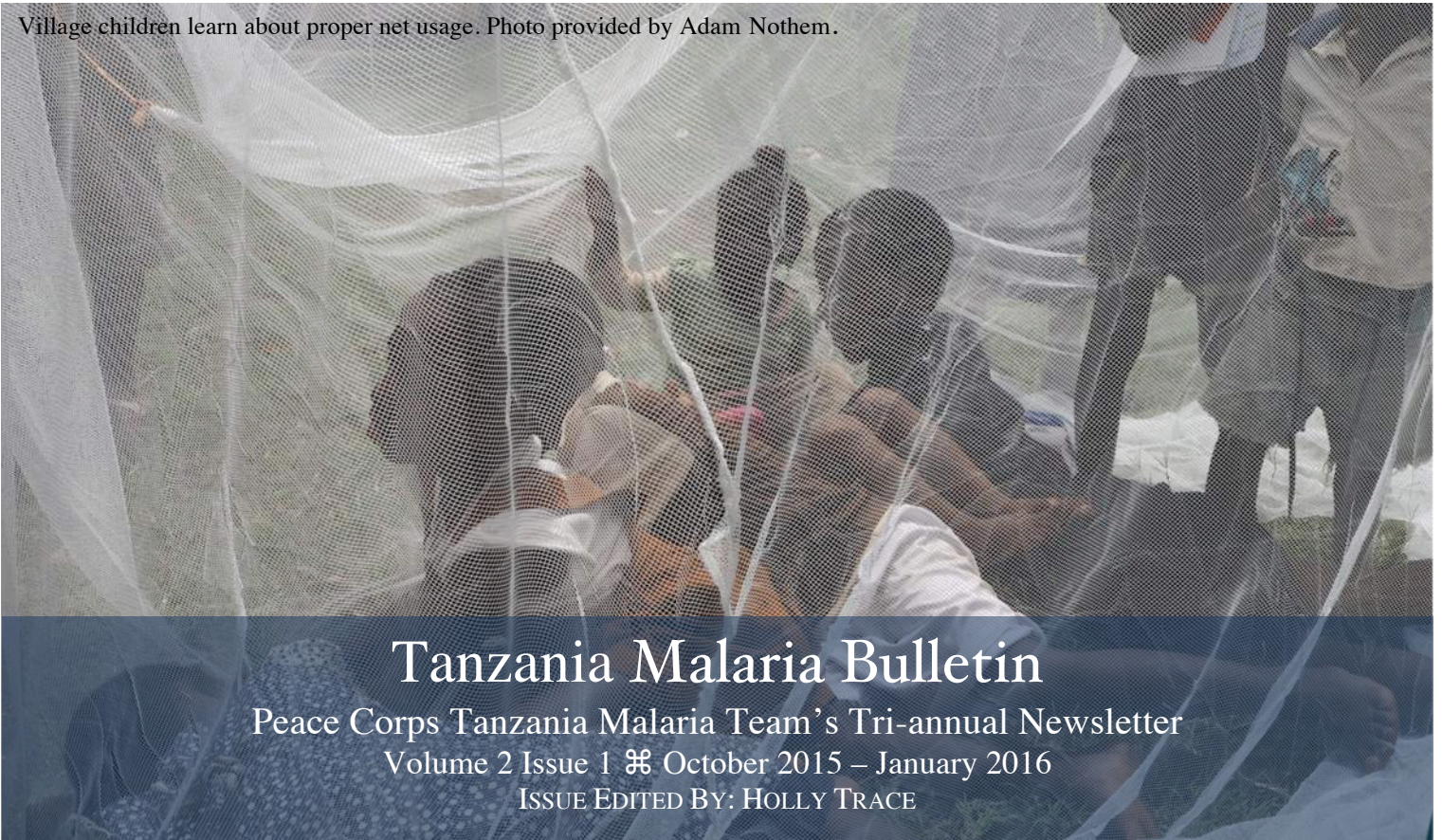


Village children learn about proper net usage. Photo provided by Adam Nothem.



# Tanzania Malaria Bulletin

Peace Corps Tanzania Malaria Team's Tri-annual Newsletter

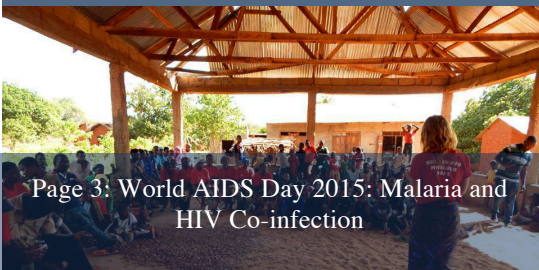
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## A YEAR IN REVIEW: A LOOK BACK AT 2015

As Peace Corps Tanzania reflects on the efforts of Volunteers throughout the country during 2015, one of the remarkable highlights is the expansion of the Tanzania Malaria Team (TZMT) and the significant impacts of Volunteers in their communities. 2015 saw the growth of the committee from three Volunteers to nine, all placed in different regions in Tanzania. This geographic diversity allowed all Volunteers the chance to engage with their regional coordinators in implementing region-specific malaria programming. Increasing the number of coordinators three-fold has allowed the TZMT to become a highly effective tool for Volunteer and community mobilization.

Coordinators were especially vital during April when the TZMT hosted a countrywide malaria education challenge for Volunteers. This challenge led to a 250% increase in the number of people reached with malaria information from about 7,000 people in 2014 to 17,000 in 2015. Regional Coordinators travelled around their regions to support Volunteer activities and helped them access resources and supplies to implement their projects. The challenge motivated several Volunteers to engage in activities Volunteers haven't traditionally done and reach community members often overlooked. From distributing bed nets at boarding schools to travelling to outlying clinics and teach women attending a monthly weighing days about malaria prevention, this challenge encouraged Volunteers to think outside of the box on ways to best engage their communities with malaria messaging.





Health Volunteer, Emily Beggins, and her counterpart Salum Kabugo teach village children how to properly use a bed net. Photo provided by Adam Nothem.

Lessons learned in the field concerning the best ways to reach villagers are not forgotten; as Regional Coordinators collect information on the various activities implemented they note what worked well. These best practices are then taught at the Malaria Training of Trainers (TOT) held twice annually for Volunteers and their counterparts. In 2015, the training was adapted to incorporate the most effective activities implemented during the April challenge and included new sessions to fill knowledge gaps the challenge helped identify. The continually evolving TOT insures that Volunteers have all the knowledge, resources and the skills they need while providing concrete examples of what works and how to implement these best practices.

While the challenge and TOTs played major roles in the TZMT's success in 2015, they were just two ways people incorporated malaria into their services. Volunteers carried out malaria projects throughout the year, from implementing Malaria No More's *NightWatch: A Malaria Education Program* at local primary schools to utilizing *PataPata*, a malaria education radio skit created by JHU and the Tanzania Communication and Development Corporation (TCDC) to assist with the School Net Program in the southern regions of Tanzania. Volunteers engaged their communities in malaria sensitization projects throughout the year. This dedication to the fight against malaria is what made 2015 a success and will carry through to help guarantee an even more successful 2016.

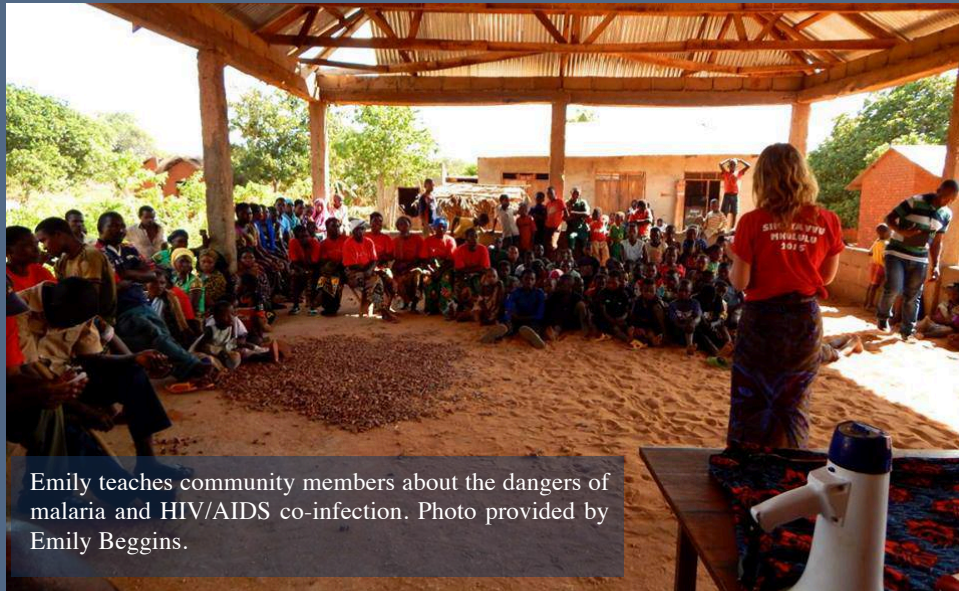


Primary school students in Mbeya show off dream banners that they hung on their bed nets to remind them of their dreams that malaria could put an end to. Photo provided by Allison Krenzien.



Primary school students in Mtwara gather around a radio to listen to *PataPata*. Photo provided by Emily Begins.





Emily teaches community members about the dangers of malaria and HIV/AIDS co-infection. Photo provided by Emily Beggins.

## WORLD AIDS DAY 2015: MALARIA AND HIV/AIDS CO-INFECTION

BY: EMILY BEGGINS

*Tanzania is one of several countries where malaria and HIV/AIDS are two of the major health concerns, and thus the risk of co-infection is very real. With the stigma that surrounds HIV/AIDS and the acceptance of malaria as inevitable, the probability of co-infection increases. Volunteers work with communities to educate and empower people to take ownership of their own health through prevention, testing and care.*

In Mtwara region, malaria is a problem that every community faces every day. In my village, it is the number one health problem at the clinic. Because malaria is so common, it is often viewed as an inevitable part of village life, not something that can be prevented. While primary students obtained bed nets through the Student Net Program, most of their families do not sleep under a bed net due to a lack of access and a perception that nets are too expensive at 10,000tsh per net.

Simultaneously, HIV/AIDS still has a strong taboo in the village. While Mtwara region has a 5% HIV infection rate, the disease is not understood and many HIV patients are stigmatized. Young people do not take precautions to prevent HIV/AIDS and are often afraid to get tested or to speak about their status.

While December 1<sup>st</sup> is World AIDS Day, it also marks the start of the rainy season in Mtwara, which brings with it an influx of malaria. My counterpart Salum Kabugo and I have been teaching malaria at our village primary school using the *PataPata* radio program as a medium to make malaria education fun and relatable. Myself, Kabugo and our Community Change Agent, Msosa, have been traveling throughout the primary schools in the ward to monitor bed net usage amongst students and to provide education on malaria prevention. Meanwhile, we have also been working with the ward's HIV group to celebrate World AIDS Day, which we celebrated on December 4 with dancing,

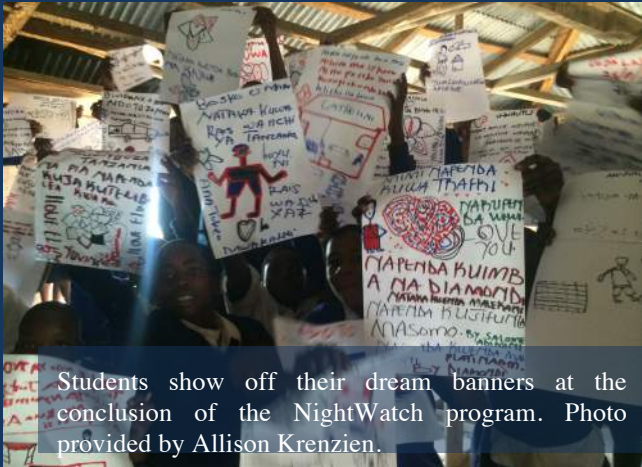
skits, speeches, and a football match between two ward teams..

To follow up this work, Kabugo and I headed to the local clinic on a family planning day when we knew it would be busy. We did a lesson on malaria/HIV co-infection with the help of our clinic's Dr. Millanzi. By emphasizing the dangers of co-infection, especially for pregnant women through increasing risk of anemia, low birth weight and decreasing the efficacy of SP (malaria prophylaxis used during pregnancy) and potentially ARVs. We promoted the use of condoms and bed nets alike. Our audience, a mix of grandmothers, pregnant women and young men, had many questions and stories to tell; worries about daughters having unprotected sex and concerns over the lack of bed nets available in the community. Kabugo did a condom demonstration and Dr. Millanzi encouraged community members to come to the clinic to get tested for malaria and HIV if you are a risk or showing symptoms. We made the audience aware of what services were available and the support offered at the clinic.

These projects will be followed up by continuous education during my service and beyond through Kabugo. Engaging the community with such education opens dialogue with the aim of community members valuing malaria prevention, decreasing the stigma and fear surrounding HIV/AIDS, and ultimately empowering the community to protect themselves.

## THE RAINS ARE COMING: *NIGHTWATCH* IN THE CLASSROOM

BY: ALLISON KRENZIEN



Students show off their dream banners at the conclusion of the *NightWatch* program. Photo provided by Allison Krenzien.



Mr. Emmanuel Bazuka plays a game of malaria-themed "Simon Says" to teach students about malaria symptoms. Photos provided by Allison Krenzien.

In a rural village in Mbeya, a region with relatively low malaria transmission, it is sometimes difficult to express to locals why malaria is important to learn about as it generally does not affect them as much as other areas in Tanzania. However, people are mobile and the risk of contracting malaria increases as people travel to areas with a greater prevalence. On top of this risk, people from low transmission areas are more likely to develop complicated malaria and thus get sicker than individual living in areas with more malaria. As Tanzania works towards eliminating malaria within its borders, it becomes increasingly important for everyone to understand how to prevent malaria to protect themselves and do their part to help reduce malaria infections and malaria related deaths to zero.

Over a 5-week course at an Mbeya primary school, Allison Krenzien and her counterpart taught malaria lessons, played games, and read stories to over 130 students. The lessons were informative and gave important facts about the dangers of malaria, usefulness of sleeping with a bed net every night, and the signs and symptoms of malaria; however, it was the fun games, stories, and activities that really drove the points home.

The Malaria No More's malaria education program geared towards primary school students, *NightWatch* provided the information for the course and the students brought their eagerness to learn. They were a fount of questions and wholly engaged with the material with enthusiasm. With so many students under the age of 10, keeping them engaged in learning is critical but sometimes challenging. So, very little of the course was rote memorization and repetition of facts.

For example, during the lesson on prevention methods, a hand drawn picture of a courtyard was shown. There was a pregnant woman lying on a mat, uncovered water pots, no screens on the door or windows to the house, etc.

The students then suggested what was wrong with the picture- what needed to be changed for a healthier home. In this way the students generated the answers themselves and the point was made all the clearer. Another fun activity was a true or false game where the students listened to a "fact" about malaria and had to run to the true or false marker as their answer. It utilized all of that childhood energy and required critical thinking rather than absorbing information. The final day of the course the students drew "dream banners" (drawings of their dreams for the future to be placed in their bed nets as a reminder to use them every night) and listened to a story written and illustrated by other PC Tanzania Volunteers. The story is about two young boys about the students' age and one of them contracting malaria.

When asked during the last day of the class what are some things they had learned during the course, there was an abundance of hands raised to share. Many children gave answers like "it is important to sleep under a bed net every night" or "if you think you might have malaria, go to the clinic to get tested." Even more exciting than these answers from the course were those that came in answer to ideas brought up in our first session where Allison asked what were some things they had heard about malaria growing up. Through *NightWatch* the students were able to learn enough to begin to dispel some rumors that crop up in the village setting and then start circulating truth instead.

Allison's Tanzanian counterpart, Emmanuel Buzuka, remarked about the training, "The students are able to share with their families why it is important to sleep with a bed net or why malaria does not come from eating too many mangoes. The most important part of this training is to empower students, even at this young age, that they can have an impact."



## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: THANK YOU AND FAREWELL

This year I have had the privilege of serving Peace Corps Tanzania as it's first National Malaria Coordinator, and it has been a wonderful experience. As my tenure in this position draws to a close, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who helped make this year such a success. First, thank you to the members of the Tanzania Malaria Team (TZMT) who worked tirelessly to help engage Volunteers and community members in malaria sensitization projects. To all the Volunteers that took the time to engage your communities in a dialogue about malaria—you rock and keep up the good work! For all the implementing partners that reached out to Peace Corps to help further engage communities, thank you for helping us to further educate our communities. Lastly to the Peace Corps staff, with out your help and support, my position wouldn't have existed. You are all amazing people and I'm grateful I had the opportunity to work with you. Good luck to all of you in your continued fight against malaria, I know I'll be doing my part in the US and remember, as we say here in Tanzania, "Malaria Haikubaliki" or "malaria is unacceptable".

Sincerely,  
*Holly C. Trace*

### PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

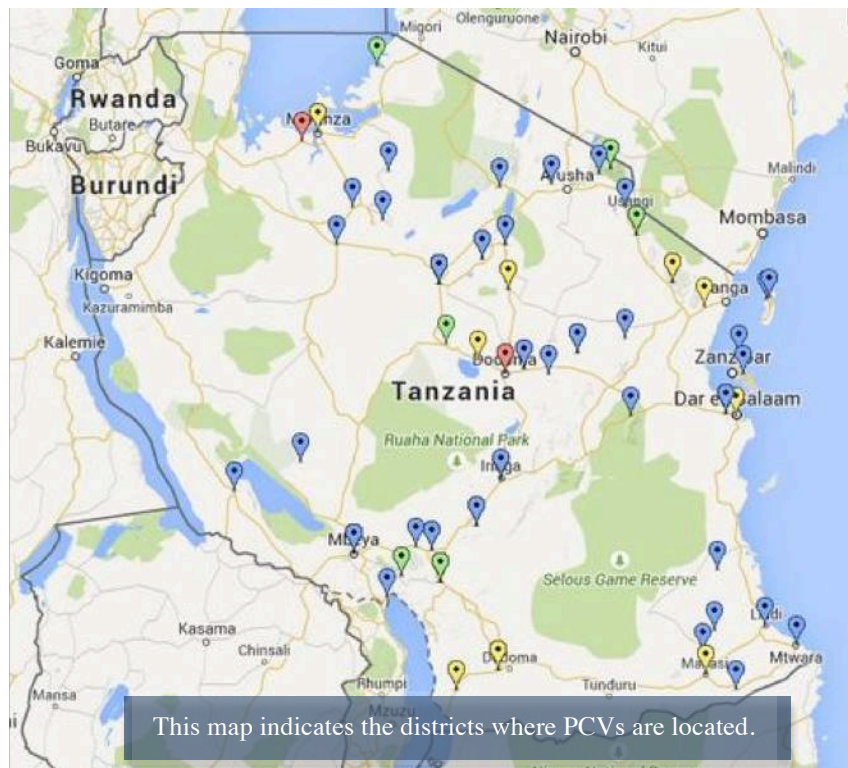
- 220 Volunteers serving in the sectors of Education, Agriculture, Health and Global Health Service Partnership
- 60 districts in 23 regions across Tanzania are currently served by Volunteers
- 100% of Volunteers trained in malaria basics
- 8 Volunteers and one staff member have attended an intensive international malaria training
- 23 Volunteers and their 23 respective community counterparts have attended an extensive domestic malaria training
- 2 Volunteers have extended for a third year to continue their work with malaria



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### WHERE ARE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SERVING?



#### Peace Corps Malaria Work

The Tanzania Malaria Team is the Tanzanian Chapter of Peace Corps's Stomping Out Malaria in Africa initiative. The Stomp initiative is a partnership between the President's Malaria Initiative and the Peace Corps. Also supporting the Stomping efforts: Johns Hopkins University, University of South Florida, the CDC, PATH, Malaria No More, and numerous local organizations in host countries across Africa. This initiative aims to have universal bed net coverage and malaria prevention and treatment education programs in every malaria-impacted Peace Corps community in the target countries and work with partners to achieve two Millennium Challenge goals: a 50% or more reduction in deaths caused by malaria globally by 2015 and a substantial reduction in deaths caused by malaria in all 25 African target countries by 2020.

For more information visit:  
[www.stompingoutmalariainafrica.org](http://www.stompingoutmalariainafrica.org)

