

Final report of the Net Gain for Africa Task Force

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1. Introduction

The Net Gain for Africa Task Force has completed its second year of activities, a year which has seen the development of existing initiatives, refocusing of others, and the innovation of new projects. The main donor has been IDRC, with additional support from CIDA and from the private sector. Considerable in-kind contribution has also been generated through working with NGO partners such as Population Services International (PSI) and Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival (BASICS).

The overall objective of Net Gain is to reduce mortality and morbidity due to malaria, particularly in women and children, by increasing the proportion of households in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) that own, use, and regularly retreat a mosquito net. Net Gain continues to be a recognisable resource in working with partners promoting, monitoring and evaluating the use of treated nets in SSA. In the past two years Net Gain has gained recognition for its dedication and timeliness in responding to individuals and organisations seeking information on Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs).

The present report follows the same outline as its year one report and describes activities undertaken during the second year of operation. Activities are divided into the following six components:

- development of Task Force information and communication capabilities,
- facilitation of public and private sector alliances,
- market analyses,
- strategic technical inputs,
- advocacy and fundraising, and
- governance

2. Information and Communications

Two specific objectives were encompassed in this area of work:

- To collate and review existing information on ITNs and ITN interventions from SSA countries and other parts of the world, for eventual dissemination;
- To make ITN information available through the Internet, including websites, and a newsletter.

2.1 Communications Centre

Over the first two years of Net Gain, communications capability was established and expanded as the need for information dissemination on ITNs has grown. Net Gain is now recognized as a central resource for information and expertise on ITNs, and is respected and recognized as an authority in ITN project implementation, demonstrated by the numerous committees, consortiums and public speaking engagements that Net Gain is involved in. The Net Gain Task Force has received interest from and established contact with individuals and projects working in regions other than Africa, often from established and successful ITN programmes. The main constraint in this area has been human resources to maintain the database and respond to inquiries. An expansion of Net Gain to create a communications centre with designated personnel represents a logical next step to meet the growing needs of the public and to effectively disseminate information to those who need it.

The synthesis and dissemination of practical and accessible information continues to be a priority for Net Gain. Net Gain is committed to making information available to all groups (especially in SSA) working with treated mosquito nets.

In its first year of operation, the Net Gain Task Force established a reference center for information exchange and dissemination, and created an international network of organizations and institutions involved in research and implementation of ITN interventions. The majority of inquiries and requests for assistance that the Task Force received came from individuals within Ministries of Health and implementing NGOs. These groups, many of which work in isolation, represent a priority for access to up-to-date information on ITN interventions, and will therefore be specifically targeted by Net Gain.

During the first year of activities, the idea for an ITN website was put forward as a way to reach a broader population, and to have current information readily available for those in the field. Unfortunately, in this past year the establishment of a dedicated web site was not feasible as maintenance and up-dating would be too labor intensive given the limited human resources of the Task Force. Therefore, Net Gain was included as part of the PATH Canada web site. The creation of a dedicated ITN web site is seen as a priority for the future.

A number of factors support the continued need for a Communication Centre. There is a paucity of current and easily accessible information on the successful implementation of ITN interventions. Although valuable experience has been gained from research and small-scale pilot trials, the information is not regularly documented and disseminated, and is therefore not available to those in the field planning ITN interventions. With the advent of large scale programmes, important lessons are being learned that need to be documented to ensure that these experiences are made available to other programmes in a timely and accessible manner. Moreover, an important challenge will be to scale up from pilot trials to large scale programmes; thus Net Gain will continue to maintain

contact with ongoing programmes and will facilitate the documentation and dissemination of key lessons learned and best practices in ITN interventions. This is also one of the aims of the new Roll Back Malaria (WHO) resource group, to be housed at UNICEF Headquarters in New York. Discussions are currently underway to promote close collaboration between RBM and UNICEF.

2.1.1 Malaria Matters Newsletter

The production and dissemination of the newsletter "*Malaria Matters - Featuring Netting News*", continues to be well received around the world. Currently, Malaria Matters is the only newsletter worldwide that is devoted to the specific topic of ITNs and malaria. The information is practical, readable, and useful for people who are new to the issue of malaria as well for experts in the field.

Malaria Matters is published in English and French, thereby allowing for a greater readership, reaching over 500 people in 69 countries. Groups receiving the newsletter include Ministries of Health, WHO and UNICEF Headquarters and country offices, NGOs such as Churches Medical Association of Zambia, World Vision, AMREF, BASICS, CARE Canada, researchers at numerous universities around the world, and the commercial sector.

Malaria Matters is currently available on the PATH Website and as a printed publication, and may be received electronically upon request. A needs-assessment survey has confirmed that the majority of readers, especially those in developing regions, prefer a paper copy because of inadequate access to electronic communications. Enthusiastic support from its general audience and from the Net Gain Advisory Group has highlighted the usefulness of this periodical.

In the July 1998, Malaria Matters issue # 3(Appendix), the need for partnerships between the public and private sector was introduced. Articles from experts in the field were included, as they recognized the usefulness of the newsletter and the far reaching target audience. The fourth edition of Malaria Matters (Appendix), published in November 1998, focussed on net re-treatment and included tips on improving re-treatment rates of ITNs. Malaria Matters 5, June 1999, was concerned with three different models for promoting ITNs in the future: private sector only, public-private partnerships, and large scale social marketing. The issue also contained a summary of the recent Cochrane report on the effectiveness of ITNs, reproduced under the encouragement of its author, Christian Lengeler. In keeping with the objective to have the newsletter available in both French and English, the first two editions were translated into French. A *Propos Du Paludisme: Bulletin d'information sur les moustiquaires 1* was disseminated in December 1998, and A *Propos Du Paludisme: Bulletin d'information sur les moustiquaires 2* in April 1999 (see Appendix for both issues). The dissemination of the first French edition was carried out by AHRTAG and BASICS however PATH Canada is now developing its own

francophone mailing list. The translation and editing of Malaria Matters and the Directory (see below) has been made possible by the close links that PATH has with the Centre Muraz.

2.2 Net Gain Database

A Net Gain database was created to collate relevant information on ITNs and other malaria-related information collected from published articles, reports, newsletters and other literature. The database was created to enable a quick response to public inquiries on ITNs and malaria related issues. An inventory of scientific experts and research institutions has been created, as well as an annotated bibliography of published and unpublished literature relating to ITN projects and programs. Each article is cross-referenced to ensure easy access to the original document. The Net Gain database is a valuable tool as it is one of the only resources that focuses on ITNs. The Net Gain database has also been used to create a mailing list for Malaria Matters and the Directory, as well as to identify user needs for research, technology and information.

3. Public Private Sector Alliances

There are two objectives that refer specifically to the activities of this component:

- To encourage discussions and alliances between public and private sector officials via local workshops.
- To promote the development of private sector participation in the development of innovative ITN initiatives.

3.1 Private-Public Sector Workshop - Tanzania May 6, 1998

A workshop focussing on ITNs was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on May 6 - 7th 1998, which brought together individuals from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, Textile Manufacturers, insecticide suppliers, NGOs, researchers and donors (see Appendix B for full report). The overall goal of the workshop was to examine and suggest solutions to barriers to increasing the demand and supply of mosquito nets and insecticide in Tanzania. This was the first meeting of its kind in Africa. Net Gain was approached by the Tanzanian MOH to support and participate in this meeting, a credit to Net Gain's ability to respond swiftly to needs at the country level. The workshop provided a valuable model for other countries facing similar issues.

The aim of the meeting was to improve the supply of nets, netting and insecticides within Tanzania and to petition about the pending threat of VAT on nets, by providing a forum for discussion among major stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Customs and Excise. Malaria

remains the number one cause of disease in Tanzania and causes a quarter of all hospital deaths.

The specific objectives of the meeting were:

- To provide a forum for key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to discuss important issues and co-ordinate activities;
- To ensure all partners are aware of the full impact of malaria, the benefits of ITN use, and the importance of their role in promoting them;
- To identify barriers and solutions to the supply and demand of ITNs;
- To develop a plan of action to increase the supply and demand of nets and insecticide.

One of the outcomes of the meeting was agreement amongst all the players involved that there is a need for cooperation, continual commitment, and action to achieve the goal of increasing and sustaining supply and demand of ITNs in Tanzania. Three issues were identified wherein significant barriers exist that require immediate action (regulatory constraints, lack of awareness of malaria and the role of ITNs, and taxation) and plans of action were outlined for follow-up by the appropriate parties.

Actions for increasing supply and demand were recommended by the public sector, the research community and the private sector. Immediate strategies were suggested that addressed regulatory constraints, lack of awareness of the full impact of malaria and the potential benefits of ITNs, and reducing taxation on nets and insecticides.

PATH Canada worked closely with PSI Tanzania, who contributed towards the cost of the meeting and co-hosted the meeting. The actual event included a trade show for local, regional and international traders. The meeting report was written and designed specifically in a way which would provide policy makers in Tanzania and other East African countries with a succinct guide to the role that ITNs play in malaria control. The process is being replicated in 1999 in Kenya by the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF), who participated in the Tanzania meeting.

3.2 Partnership in Action: Roundtable Meeting, Accra, Ghana, January 1999

PATH Canada and BASICS, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (MOH) of Ghana, researched and developed a provisional plan for a Public Commercial Partnership for the sustainable marketing of insecticide treated materials (ITMs) in Ghana. PATH Canada has a three-year history of working in Ghana with the Navrongo Health Research Centre and the Ministry of Health (MOH), which has facilitated a good working relationship among all partners. A roundtable discussion was held in January 1999, in Accra, with representatives from the

MOH, the commercial sector, donors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both within Ghana and internationally, to discuss the feasibility of partnerships in Ghana (see Appendix C for full report).

The roundtable meeting built upon a preliminary study conducted in November 1998 by BASICS and PATH Canada (the November study is discussed further in section 4.2). Briefly, the preliminary study highlighted the commitment of the Ghanaian MOH to malaria control. ITMs are one of their main strategies and they have stated their intent to promote them through the development of partnerships between the public and commercial sectors (this policy is in line with current strategic planning from WHO/AFRO). The findings presented examples of ways in which the commercial sector has been engaged in partnerships in other areas, as well as the steps involved in developing and facilitating such relationships. The abundant capacity and willingness of private and public partners in Ghana to consider such a plan was a clear result of this study.

During the roundtable meeting the November study was presented to both public and commercial sector representatives, stimulating discussion on topics including the availability of products (nets and insecticide), promotional strategies, demand generation, distribution, equity, trade barriers and local capacity. The outcome of these discussions was the development of a proposal for a two-year action plan. Further presentations were made on strategies for engaging and negotiating with the commercial sector, elements of a marketing strategy, and the public health impact of the proposed program.

The mechanism for moving the process forward was discussed in detail with valuable inputs from the Director of Preventative Services, and representatives from the donor community. The establishment of a Task Force was seen as the first priority, which would then be mandated with a responsibility to commission and approve a detailed action plan and budget. This body would include representatives from the MOH, the commercial partners, local NGOs and other groups as well as representation from BASICS, PATH-Canada and the Malaria Consortium. The Task Force would then be responsible for fund raising and establishing a management structure for the plan. There were strong expressions of interest by several donors to support such a plan.

This programme is ongoing and PATH Canada will remain involved as a source of technical support and funding in the preliminary phase. The bulk of the funding (approximately one million \$US) will probably come from the local USAID and DFID missions.

3.3 Private Sector Participation

Net Gain continues to be seen as a valuable resource to net and insecticide manufacturers interested in malaria control, particularly in the research and

development of new technologies. The following activities describe the role of Net Gain in private sector development:

- There is a continued relationship with INSECTA, a Montreal based company that developed a technology which binds a polymer to an insecticide (or insecticide mixture) to increase the life of insecticide on a net and to resist washing. This technology is currently being tested by the CDC in Atlanta. INSECTA still relies heavily on the expertise of PATH Canada/Net Gain for advice on the relevance and placement of product technology in the market.
- Catherine Reed was invited to spend three days with three different net and netting manufacturers in Tanzania in February 1999 to discuss market issues. It became clear that the manufacturers had only a rudimentary understanding of the existing market for nets. Valuable technical advice was provided. Catherine is also in regular contact with net manufacturers from India and Thailand. One example of advice that has benefited net manufacturers suggested that net manufacturers state on each net the amount of water needed to treat the net. One of the world's largest manufacturer of nets, SiamDutch, has taken up this idea for customers requesting this information.
- Every issue of Malaria Matters features a new idea or product. Past issues have included the deltamethrin tablet, the easy to use 'squeeze and pour' bottle, and the use of carrier bags for net treatment. All of these ideas have been commercially developed. Results from the initial needs assessment suggested that readers wanted to be better informed on product innovations.

3.4 MEDA

The Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), supported by IDRC in collaboration with Net Gain, designed an initiative to promote investment in domestic African production facilities for ITNs and net re-treatment kits. Increased production and distribution of ITNs and insecticide re-treatment kits are the expected results of these efforts. Net Gain's role is to assist in research, to provide technical expertise and key contacts, and assist in program management.

MEDA will work to achieve four specific objectives as follows:

- 1) Encourage ITN production and ITN re-treatment kit production in at least two and up to four African countries to be determined.
- 2) To develop two "Investment Opportunity Packages", one for ITN production and one for ITN home re-treatment kits. These packages will include a cost benefit analysis showing capital investment and operating costs of sample production (or repackaging) facilities and the revenue generated at various levels of sales and profitability. It will include forecasts of local public health ITN purchases and options for raising capital for investment in such production.

- 3) Employ strategies designed to encourage investment by local business people in both ITN and ITN re-treatment kit enterprises.
- 4) Preparation and distribution of final “case study” reports regarding new investments made in ITN manufacture and supply as well as case study reports on the ITN re-treatment enterprises emerging as a result of MEDA’s intervention.

3.5 NetMark

USAID has developed a five year funding initiative called NetMark, which aims to support a comprehensive approach to the delivery of ITM services in Africa, with particular emphasis on developing the role of the commercial sector in promotion and distribution. Net Gain was asked to be a partner in a consortium bidding for the NetMark grant. Net Gain’s expertise in project development and information dissemination was recognized as a positive contribution to the consortium.

3.6 The Directory of Suppliers and Manufacturers

The second edition of a Directory of suppliers of nets, netting and insecticides in SSA was distributed in July 1998 accompanying *Malaria Matters 2*. The directory was designed as a tool to help managers of primary health care and malaria control programmes obtain essential materials including mosquito nets, bulk netting, and insecticides required for effective ITN interventions. The directory provides a comprehensive listing of suppliers by country. The first directory was produced in conjunction with AHRTAG, UK, whereas the second edition was produced entirely in-house. The second edition provided a vehicle for the inclusion of two important articles: 1) a review of the efficacy of ITNs, and 2) information concerning the development and testing of instructions for home treatment kits.

The first edition of the directory was translated into French and in 1998 mailed along with *A Propos Du Paludisme: Bulletin d'information sur les moustiquaires 1*. The second directory was translated and disseminated in June 1999 to French speaking countries in Africa.

There are continual requests for the directory by professionals from around the world, including India, Thailand, United States and Canada. The manufacturing industry for both nets and insecticides entirely supported the printing and dissemination of the second edition of the directory and has provided very favourable feedback.

4. Market Issues

The activities in this section are related to the following objective:

- To review key issues and constraints to market based strategies.

4.1 An Examination of Public-Private Partnerships and ITNs: What Each Partner Has To Offer

Over the past decade, the role of ITNs in preventing malaria has become well known as a cost-effective intervention, especially in SSA. ITN research has suggested that although effective, new and innovative ways to promote and distribute ITN use and re-treatment are needed. The public sector cannot do it alone. A recent study conducted by PATH Canada examined the respective roles of the private and public sectors to increase the use of ITNs. Three-way partnerships between NGOs, the commercial sector, and government, were studied to identify what each partner can offer. The study was carried out by a University of Ottawa MBA student, as part of her course work (full report in Appendix E).

Increasingly ITN researchers are engaging other disciplines in their research and strategic planning. Much of the challenge of introducing ITNs in SSA arises from the necessity to implement lasting and sustainable collaborative programs. Working independently, each group faces barriers that impede widespread ITN distribution. For example, governments do not have the financial capacity to supply ITNs to all people who are at risk; the public sector does not have the capacity to manufacture and sell goods; and the commercial sector does not have the expertise in social marketing. However, by pooling resources, expertise and creativity, the strengths of each partner can be maximized. Governments can affect policy, the commercial sector can ensure that the product is available to the public, and NGOs can contribute by playing a role in health promotion and demand generation.

A number of key findings comparing strengths and limitations that each partner brings to the table are summarized below.

Partner (sector)	What they have to offer	What are their limitations	Potential risks
NGO (public)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools to promote ITNs • Public education/ dissemination • Demand generation • Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No experience in sales • Modest financial resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not finding appropriate partners • Credibility and influence with partners
Commercial (private)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Distribution • Marketing • Advertising • New technology • Creativity/ ingenuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not often partners with government agencies • May not be willing to disclose innovative ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic practices imposed on the commercial sector • Moderate financial gain in the short term
Government (public)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slowed down by bureaucratic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relinquish some responsibility and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political processes • Legislative and administrative support 	<p>process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not as willing to take risks 	<p>power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust to different working methods
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The findings of this study were presented at the CHIH conference and formed the basis of an article for Malaria Matters 5.

4.2 Ghana, Market Study, November 1998

In November 1998, BASICS and PATH Canada conducted a preliminary study on ITMs in Ghana (see Appendix D for full report). This study addressed the role of ITMs as an important component of the Ghana National Malaria Control Strategy, and generated a commitment by the WHO and donor agencies to promote their use in SSA through the development of partnerships between the public and commercial sectors. The findings presented examples of ways in which the commercial sector has been engaged in partnerships in other areas, as well as the steps involved in developing and facilitating such relationships. This study illustrated the abundant capacity and willingness of private and public partners in Ghana to consider such a plan.

Included in the study was a feasibility assessment of Fully supported by the Ministry of Health, the assessment comprised of meetings and interviews with individuals and organizations from the Ministry of Health, non-government organizations (NGOs) and donors as well as, from the commercial side, manufacturers and suppliers of insecticide and netting, distribution companies, and advertising, promotion and consumer research firms. The aim was to assess the interest, skills and resources for partnerships and to set out a framework for a strategic plan for discussion at the roundtable meeting to be held in January 1999.

The findings of the study suggest that commercially, Ghana has a very vibrant economy. Fifty percent of Ghanaian households spend money on insect control, and the large insecticide manufacturing and supply companies are already looking to see how they can expand their product lines to include treatment for mosquito nets. Existing distribution networks reach 170,000 retail outlets, including 130,000 ‘table top’ vendors and 6,000 chemical supply shops. There are a number of world class advertising, promotion and consumer research firms, working with a well-developed mass media system - print, television and 26 FM radio stations, as well as direct and interpersonal promotion networks.

At present there is only limited use of mosquito nets in Ghana. Most new nets are purchased for use in secondary boarding schools or in Government or NGO supported pilot projects. Single-use ‘consumer friendly’ insecticide preparations are new, and have not yet penetrated the wider market. But the opportunities are

great. There is a very large latent demand with already more than 1.5 million households spending money on mosquito coils and sprays and an as yet undetermined but large portion of their resources on malaria treatment in both the public sector, where 40% of admissions in government hospitals are related to malaria, and in private pharmacies and drug sellers. The Ministry of Health may soon be successful in reducing taxes on nets and insecticides and numerous net and insecticide companies want to see a market develop.

This study was carried out in conjunction with BASICS and Johns Hopkins University, who also co-funded the research, under a collaboration that has been developing since August 1997. The first joint mission was undertaken following high level discussion with Dr. Fred Binka, previously head of the Navrongo Health Research Centre (Ghana) and now a senior officer in RBM Geneva.

4.3 Local Ghana Task Force for Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Marketing of (ITMs)

Following the market study in Ghana carried out in November 1998 and the related roundtable meetings in January 1999, a local Task Force was established as the body responsible to commission and approve a detailed plan of action for developing and implementing the Public Commercial Partnership Project in Ghana.

The Task Force is a vital part of this ITM initiative. It will provide a pool of expertise and experience, which will guide and monitor the development of the programme. As the programme is multi-faceted in dealing with the public health concern of malaria by promoting the availability of nets and insecticides through the commercial sector, the Task Force membership consequently reflects a broad-based approach. This is important as the Task Force as a whole must understand the needs and aims of the public sector, the commercial sector, and the donor community, as well as the needs of a civil society.

The Task Force will be responsible for:

- setting of the aims and objectives of the programme;
- setting of guidelines and specifications, and monitoring quality assurance;
- working with the Ghana National Malaria Control programme and other Government Ministries, and serving as a liaison between them;
- advocating, funding or fundraising for all aspects of the programme;
- monitoring and participating in design of research and demand creation campaigns;
 - a) • providing the strategic direction of the programme,
- establishing a management structure; and
- being responsive to the needs of programme management.

4.4 Ghana Public-Private Partnership for Sustainable Marketing of (ITMs)

This unique project brings together the complementary skills and resources of the public and commercial sectors to achieve the sustainable marketing of Insecticide Treated Materials (ITMs) in Ghana. The goal of the project is to reduce the health and economic burden of malaria, especially in young children and pregnant women, by increasing demand for ITMs and ensuring their availability through sustainable marketing. From its inception this project has been developed by a partnership, which includes representatives of the commercial sector and the Ministry of Health (MOH), local and international non-governmental organizations, including GSMF (Ghana Social Marketing Foundation), BASICS, PATH Canada, UNICEF and WHO as well as local funding partners. This partnership has been formalized into a Task Force, which fully supports GSMF as the chosen administrative and management agency. The Task Force will remain very active in this project to provide strategic guidance and technical expertise and monitor the development of the programme. Task Force members have skills and experiences, which will enhance the quality of the project, facilitate further fund raising and ensure seamless linkages with the project and the MOH and other key players in Ghana.

This project aims to create demand for both nets and, more importantly, insecticide re-treatment and to meet this demand through commercial distribution and marketing. This can only be done through partnerships between key public and commercial entities. Although the two groups may have different motivations - public health impact versus commercial viability - both have the common goal of increased availability and use of ITMs. This partnership strategy has been successful for increasing the availability and use of contraceptives, salt iodization, ORS, hand soap and other “public health products”. This partnership strategy, endorsed by the WHO Roll Back Malaria initiative, and chosen by the Ghana MOH in their five year plan, is the first for a nation-wide ITM project.

5. Strategic Technical Inputs

The following activities were to address the objective of:

- undertaking and supporting research initiatives and making available technical support on aspects of ITN technology.

The Pan Africa Branch of CIDA has directly funded this component of the Net Gain project (\$100,000 CDN). Two projects were funded, both contributing towards the body of knowledge concerning monitoring and evaluating ITN projects, while also answering very specific needs for the collaborating local partners. Summaries of the projects follow:

5.1 Assessment of Bednet Use in Kassena-Nakana District, Navrongo Research Centre, Ghana

The Navrongo Health Research Centre (NHRC) implements projects involving the efficacy of ITNs as well as their acceptance. Through August to October 1998, the team field-tested and validated a rapid appraisal methodology for assessing ITN use, maintenance and replacement behaviours. The primary expected results of the project were (i) an effective and accurate rapid appraisal methodology available to Ghanaian malaria control programmes through the NHRC and (ii) to make it available to other organisations involved in ITN programming, through the Net Gain for Africa Task Force.

A variety of well established tools, including receipt records and focus group discussions, were used by this project to assess net maintenance and replacement behaviours. However a key component of the project was the validating of a rapid appraisal methodology, cluster sampling, to assess net usage and coverage. The WHO EPI cluster coverage survey was used as a guide for the rapid survey. The results of this were then compared and contrasted with the results of a survey performed with a sample selected from a pre-existing **database**.

The triangulation of the coverage data with information from the other assessment methods has provided a very detailed picture of net use and factors that affect it, including maintenance and replacement behaviours. The findings of the validation work concerning the rapid assessment tool were presented to the MOH and other national level players (UNICEF and WHO) in Ghana. The tool will be piloted in other districts over the coming year. An additional benefit to this approach will be the accurate monitoring of EPI coverage at the same time as net coverage.

The findings were presented at the MIM African Malaria Conference in Durban on March 1999 by Philip Adongo of the NHRC. The concept of using cluster sampling was further discussed in other sessions. David Nabarro, Director of RBM stated that the methodology should be a key component of future monitoring. The results are also being prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. They will also be included in Malaria Matters, and will be presented and discussed at greater length in the International ITN conference in Tanzania in October 1999.

5.2 Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for an ITN project run by the Churches Medical Association of Zambia (CMAZ)

The purpose of this work was to collaborate with CMAZ in the development of an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy and methodology for the ITN programme, which CMAZ was currently carrying out as an integrated component within its primary health care program.

The anticipated result of this project was the development of an effective and accurate monitoring and evaluation (M & E) framework for use by CMAZ in its

ITN program. The framework was expected to include indicators, which accurately reflect activities within the programme.

The M & E framework, for centralised CMAZ activities and those of the three participating hospitals, was developed in strategic planning workshops with assistance from Dr Pierre Plourde, a technical advisor from PATH Canada. At this time CMAZ and its partners had the opportunity to assess existing activities as well as plan new activities, thus the M & E frameworks developed were tailored to the needs of each situation. It is thus recommended that in the future technical advice of this sort should also include 'strategic planning', or a "review thereof".

Full assessment of the CMAZ programme needs to be carried out at three different levels: CMAZ headquarters, the partner hospitals and use of ITNs within a home. There is a challenge to ensure the relationship between each level is accurately monitored. During the first year of monitoring it was difficult to reconcile the records of nets and insecticides procured by CMAZ and distributed to partner hospitals for resale, even with the great deal of effort and goodwill given to this activity. The basis for this problem was the slightly different accounting and stock keeping systems that CMAZ and the partner hospitals use. However, as the passage of other supplies and funds can be tracked and monitored quite easily, an integration of the ITN activities into the well-established existing systems should decrease or eliminate this problem. For other organisations without existing mechanisms for procurement and distribution, much attention needs to be given to the adoption and maintenance of store keeping, record keeping and accounting.

The indicators adopted by the different partner hospitals were quite standard and worked well. The indicator to assess coverage - for children under 5 years of age sleeping under a net or a reportedly treated net - has worked quite well but still requires some refinement. First, the stem of whether a child slept under a net 'last night', 'regularly sleeps under a net', or 'always sleeps under a net', needs to be consistent among partners and all field workers. A more important problem is the sampling used to assess this indicator. Examination of data and discussions with partner hospitals discovered that two out of three hospitals thought that they had sampled correctly, according to their training, but in fact had not. It is therefore important for CMAZ to have a small number of sentinel sites, which accurately monitor changes in ITN coverage.

The aims of this project were twice presented and discussed in a national Zambians forum, the findings will be disseminated at the 1998 CMAZ Annual meeting. The full report will be circulated to CMAZ and the three partner hospitals (and on request to other local and international organizations). A synopsis of the findings and recommendations will be circulated to all CMAZ partner institutions (98 in total) through a specially written article for the Association's newsletter 'Balm'. The monitoring, evaluation and planning strategy was presented and

discussed during the International ITN conference in Tanzania in October. An article for a peer reviewed journal is being prepared as well as an article for Malaria Matters (6 or 7).

5.3 Support to Programme and Strategic Development

Over the last two years, during the life of the Net Gain Task Force, requests for support to programmes has often come directly from the National Malaria Control Programmes in the Ministries of Health, and from implementing NGOs. Focused studies and operational research, involving all of these groups, are required to identify potential barriers and define solutions to the long-term and correct use of ITNs.

Net Gain has established itself in the world of malaria and is recognized as a leader in project development. Moreover, Net Gain has built a reputation as being a responsive and useful resource for health professionals and academics throughout the world. Part of the future plans of Net Gain is to increase accessibility of ITNs and to promote their correct usage through strategic development and technical support, operational research, demonstration projects, pilot trials and focused studies.

Net Gain is an independent institution and maintains close contact with field activities allowing for flexibility with governments and the private sector and the ability to respond to identified needs in a timely and cost-effective manner. Net Gain's experience as an independent body with successful working relationships with partners and experts in the area of ITNs gives credibility to the Secretariat among all sectors.

PATH Canada and Net Gain's past and current work on ITN interventions in SSA countries has already made a significant contribution toward identifying and overcoming operational barriers to successful ITN programmes. Some of the key barriers identified include lack of awareness of the benefits of ITNs, personal preferences for alternate methods of mosquito control, and perceived or real affordability.

6. Advocacy and Fundraising

The activities in this section aimed to raise people's awareness, through printed materials, presentations or personal contact, of the:

- potential impact of treated net interventions (on malaria);
- goals and objectives of the approach of the Net Gain for Africa Task Force;
- services available through Net Gain and how to access them.

The latter two aims included in their target group major donors and policy makers such as CIDA, USAID, The World Bank and UNICEF.

Catherine Reed (Technical Advisor for Net Gain) and Sian FitzGerald (Executive Director of PATH Canada) attended the following meetings or conferences, starting in April 1998

Title and date	Theme	Net Gain input/involvement
<p>Stakeholders workshop. Tanzania, May 1998</p> <p>Private Public partnerships: a coalition. New York, Late May 1998</p>	<p>ITNs</p> <p>Developing Public and Commercial partnerships to promote ITNs in SSA. Development of an International Task Force of people and organizations (Inc WHO/TDR, BASICS, BAYER and CORE US) involved with promoting the demand and supply of ITNs in SSA through private public partnerships.</p>	<p>A stake holders workshop was organized by PATH Canada and PSI Tanzania, for all parties concerned with promoting the use of ITNs in Tanzania.</p> <p>PATH Canada shared the recent Tanzania experience, as well as general experience concerning ITNs</p>
<p>Health Link (formerly AHRTAG), London England, July 1998</p>	<p>Advisory group for Child Health Dialogue</p>	<p>Catherine Reed has been on the AHRTAG advisory group for Child Health Dialogue since 1995.</p>
<p>Rotary International, Annual Convention, Indianapolis, June 1998</p> <p>Inaugural meeting of Roll Back Malaria, ITN Resource Network,</p>	<p>International development.</p> <p>Presentation of Net Gain and other PATH Canada malaria control activities to</p>	<p>Rotary and Rotarians against Malaria campaign brought together interested groups from around the world to discuss malaria related issues. This is the second time that Catherine has attended. Rotarians have very large ITN and malaria projects especially in the Pacific, but increasingly so in SSA.</p> <p>Verbal presentation with distribution of latest newsletter.</p>

Geneva, October 1998	the new resource Network	
A study of models for successful private-public partnerships. Canadian Society for International Health. November 15-19, 1998	Private public partnerships.	Results of the private public partnership study presented - Jonathan Stein
A monitoring framework for malaria prevention in Zambia. Canadian Society for International Health. November 15-19, 1998	Monitoring and evaluation of ITNs.	Poster presentation – Pierre Plourde
Multilateral Initiative on Malaria – Durban South Africa, March 14-19, 1999 Public and Private Partnerships for Sustainable Marketing of ITMs in Ghana	A review to date of the joint PATH Canada, BASICS and MOH activities in Ghana	Oral presentation by Catherine Reed, for David McGuire, Michael Macdonald (BASICS) and George Amofah (MOH)
Multilateral Initiative on Malaria – Durban, South Africa, March 14-19, 1999 Rapid assessment of the coverage of mosquito nets using cluster sampling technique in the Kasena-Nankana district of Northern Ghana	Presentation of the EPI based cluster sampling methodology part of the CIDA funded project based in NHRC	Oral presentation by Philip Adongo.
Multilateral Initiative on Malaria – Durban, South Africa, March 14-19, 1999 Existing mosquito nets in Africa – a hidden resource	There are traditions of net manufacture, sale and use in many SSA countries, which are largely being ignored. These networks could provide guidance to new initiatives but also demonstrate that there are tens of millions of nets waiting to be treated	Oral presentation Catherine Reed
Book Launch, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK, 19 May 1999	While working with Net Gain and PATH Canada, Catherine Reed completed a book started as a project with the LSHTM ' <i>ITN projects: A Handbook for Mangers</i> '	Presentation by Catherine Reed about NGO involvement in ITN projects, including the current work in Ghana.

Exhibit for the Canadian Capital Commission Millenium Pavillion – Opening 2000 for 5 years	PATH Canada has been working with the organisers to prepare an exhibit which will feature the story of nets in Tanzania, and thus bring in the work of TEHIP and IDRC’s other projects	Exhibit of a traditional Tanzanian bedroom with net. Illustrated by maps and presentations concerning net manufacture, sale and use in the country.
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These meetings provided the opportunity to meet regularly with other individuals concerned with the promotion of malaria control through treated nets, including researchers, implementers, donors and manufacturers/suppliers.

The visibility of Net Gain at these meetings has contributed to its credibility as an important and viable resource for increasing the accessibility to information on ITNs. Regular personal contact with key stakeholders is essential for mobilizing others towards greater commitment for malaria control.

6.1 Publications

- a) Based on an examination of private-public partnerships conducted by PATH Canada, Catherine Reed and Sonia Desroisiers were interviewed by Neale MacMillan for an article published in IDRC. The article discussed the importance of public-private partnership for ITN promotion, production and distribution. This provided additional exposure for PATH Canada, and the importance of partnerships.
- b) Catherine Reed co-authored Insecticide Treated Net Projects; A Handbook for Mangers. Development and production of the manual was funded by DFID and is being distributed through the LSHTM.
- c) Catherine Reed was asked to write a chapter in the second edition of Net Gain, based on Net Gain’s work with trade barriers and taxes. This edition of the book is expected to be ready for publication in 2000.
- d) A review of existing use of mosquito nets in SSA, by Catherine Reed, is currently being prepared for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

6.2 Roll Back Malaria

Net Gain was specifically named in the Roll Back Malaria resource network on bed net programmes. The bed net resource network should serve to ensure that there will be no duplication of ITN efforts around the world, and that collaborative efforts are maximised. PATH Canada has been an important member of the steering group. The work in Ghana, work on trade barriers, development of a rapid

assessment of ITN coverage, and Malaria Matters are all items of particular importance. PATH Canada has continued a high level of discussion with RBM.

RBM itself is still developing its own strategy and has yet to be fully funded, which has hampered attempts to put into operation its expected full range of activities, and thus PATH Canada's role within it.

6.3 Second International ITN Conference, Tanzania, October 1999

PATH Canada was a part of the organising committee for this conference from its inception, as it was in the previous meeting in Washington. Its involvement included development of two particular sessions on monitoring and evaluation and development of Public-Private Partnerships, and overall management of the agenda. PATH Canada has been seen as one of the key forces in promotion of ITN activities.

6.4 WHO/AFRO Development of Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for Country Managers

PATH Canada was asked to join this working group which met in Nigeria in February 1999. This unfortunately clashed with work in Ghana, however PATH Canada provided written comments, which were incorporated into the final report, and will continue an ongoing dialogue with Dr Lucien Manga.

7. Task Force Operations

7.1 The Task Force Advisory Group

The Net Gain Advisory Group continues to provide strategic advice as well as oversight and guidance for priorities and operations. The annual meeting was held on 2-3 July 1998 in London, England, and attended by representatives from the sectors of health, malaria, business, economics, and donor communities. Most of the members had an existing interest in malaria control through ITNs.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To review the progress of Net Gain's activities during the first year of operation;
- To review the appropriateness of ongoing and planned Net Gain activities, and to make recommendations for future directions in the life of the task force;
- To identify the perceived role of Net Gain in the broader context of malaria control;
- To make recommendations for defining an optimal operational strategy for scaling to a Net Gain Secretariat.

Key outcomes of the meeting included:

- Malaria Consortium will be organizing a conference scheduled for October 1999 in which Net Gain will have a role to organize a session on monitoring and evaluation;
- Technical advice was to be provided for both the Ghana and Zambia monitoring and evaluation projects;
- It was suggested that Net Gain would be an excellent broker for monitoring and evaluation in the proposed Secretariat. Net Gain could collect information from many organizations, classify them, and make them available in a useful format to others;
- Small-scale operational research and monitoring and evaluation projects were seen as appropriate activities for Net Gain;
- Improving public-private partnership activities was seen as a necessary task for Net Gain. Net Gain should focus on identifying the gaps and concentrate on activities that are not being done by other groups. Net Gain could play an important role by focusing on key questions in discrete studies, such as the study being conducted on private-public partnerships and the Trade Barriers study;
- Net Gain could play a role in facilitating registration of different products relating to ITNs. For example, Net Gain could guide manufacturers as to what they would have to do to get a product to meet requirements;
- Malaria Matters was seen as an excellent vehicle of information, and the target audience could be made larger. Suggestions for improvement included: making it “sexier”, having one theme per issue, adding a question and answer section, include descriptions of new projects;
- The proposal to develop a Net Gain Secretariat was supported. This is a natural progression leading from the Task Force, whose main objective was to serve as a building block mechanism leading to a sustained entity in a Secretariat.

7.2 Network of Affiliates

In the interest of institutional credibility and flexibility, Net Gain has developed reciprocal linkages with a number of groups in Africa and elsewhere from which it can draw upon for technical expertise for workshops, short-term consultancies, technical reviews, etc, such as: AHRTAG, CIDA, IDRC/TEHIP, WHO/TDR/RBM/AFRO, Rotary/Rotary Against Malaria, Population Services International, UNICEF, Malaria Consortium, LSHTM, BASICS, KEMRI, AED, Christian Relief Services, Roll Back Malaria Resource Network, Navrongo Research Station Ghana, Churches Medical Association of Zambia, USAID, African Medical Research Foundation, Kenya - Centre Muraz, Burkina Faso, WHO Collaborating Centre Ottawa, Canadian Public Health Association.

7.3 Creation of the Net Gain Secretariat

The overall objective of a proposed Secretariat is in keeping with that of the Task Force - to reduce morbidity and mortality due to malaria by increasing the proportion of households in SSA that own mosquito nets, treat them adequately and use them regularly. There are three core activities that would sustain the Secretariat: a communications centre, support to programmes and networking/advocacy.

The Secretariat would continue to emphasize private sector involvement, in order to increase their role in the design and delivery of cost-effective and sustainable interventions. This would result in making ITN technology more widely available, sustainable and affordable.