

World Malaria Day in the UK: Mobilising to Save Lives 25th April 2008

Background to World Malaria Day



World Malaria Day was established and approved at the 60th World Health Assembly (WHA) in March 2007. It replaces "Africa Malaria Day" which has been commemorated every year since 2001 on 25 April and will be celebrated from henceforth annually on the same day. Its purpose is to provide education and understanding of malaria as a global scourge that is entirely preventable and treatable.

Greater awareness of the impact of malaria is needed and it is hoped that the establishment of World Malaria Day will mobilise and connect communities across the world to get involved in the fight

against the disease.

Mobilising to Save Lives

Although malaria is not a disease of developed countries, with only a few travelers affected by it, it **continues to kill up to 3 million people each year** globally, most of them pregnant women and children under 5. Despite a significant increase of resources allocated to malaria control over the past 6 years, the financial needs necessary to cover basic interventions remain high (around \$US 3.2 billion). Therefore **strong and cohesive advocacy and engagement** across all sectors of society is vital.



Malaria advocacy is still in its early stages of development and further mobilisation of advocates at global, regional, national and local level is crucial. World Malaria Day represents a unique opportunity **to connect and engage** on this issue in order to better coordinate and mobilise to take action.

Such mobilisation needs to occur not only in the North, where it has mushroomed, but also in the South, enabling advocates to develop their own messages which fit the context and needs of the country, and to boost advocacy efforts to improve accountability for response to malaria suffering.

World Malaria Day is about **inspiring the malaria community to continue** in its efforts but also to **create a common framework for mobilisation and coordination** that will strengthen the impact of malaria advocacy at all levels. Media coverage, policy debate and NGO actions should **complement and magnify each other** and the role of each of these elements is crucial in securing an effective and comprehensive advocacy response to malaria.

In the UK **everyone** can play a role in the fight against malaria. Ultimately what makes an organisation a malaria stakeholder is that they are **Working to Save Lives**. Civil society as a whole must show leadership and be a catalyst for action.



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Businesses, recognising the economic impact of malaria, can contribute through their core business operations, social investment and philanthropic programmes as well as through engagement activities in policy dialogue and advocacy. The contribution that a company can make depends on the industry sector involved and the type of intervention. The NGO community works extensively both in the field and in areas like advocacy to fight malaria in all its aspects including raising awareness and additional support. NGOs can also reach out to select groups that often do not have a voice in advocacy, such as women or Diaspora. Trade unions can educate members, undertake joint actions with governments and employers and mobilise support to improve health care systems.

All stakeholders need to consider how they can **mobilise to save lives** in the future and further engage their “targets” or “audiences”. One key aspect of future malaria advocacy is that stakeholders need to **connect to save lives** - by working together, fostering dialogue but also sharing experiences.

Useful links

www.worldmaliaday.org
www.malariaconsortium.org
www.mobilising4malaria.org
www.europeanallianceagainstmalaria.org
www.iblf.org
www.africanwomen.co.uk
www.tuc.org.uk