

Social and Behavioral Change Communications Campaign: Increasing the use of insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria in Nigeria




Summary

- In 2022, Catholic Relief Services Nigeria created a communications campaign with seven social media advertisements promoting the use of insecticide-treated bed nets (ITN) to prevent malaria, on both Facebook and Instagram, that were viewed a total of 41 million times by 3 million people, over the course of 4 months.
- The CRS Nigeria team leveraged the Meta brand lift test to measure two SBCC digital campaigns. Based on the 1.9 million people reached on the first campaign, it is statistically likely that an additional 78,500 people expressed the importance of using mosquito nets to protect against malaria.
- For the second campaign with 2.05 million people reached, it is statistically likely that an additional 77,400 people reported sleeping under a mosquito net in the last two days. Both results translate into a positive impact on spreading awareness of the use of insecticide-treated bed nets to protect against malaria.
- While there are many lessons still to learn, this blog post shares what we learned about what worked and what didn't work when it comes to social behavior change communications for malaria prevention in Nigeria.

CRS Nigeria
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Malaria can lead to death, protect your family, and sleep under a net every day. Click on the link to join our community.




You are not seeing blurry...

linktr.ee/crsnigeria
Protect your family, sleep under a net. [Learn more](#)

CRS Nigeria
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Wondering how to sleep under a mosquito net? Click on the link below, to join our community and learn how to use a ...See more



Steps on how to hang an Insecticide-treated bed nets

Join our Community 🖱️ [Learn more](#)

Malaria mortality in Nigeria

Nigeria has the highest number of global malaria cases (27 % of global malaria cases as of 2019) and accounts for the highest number of deaths (23 % of global malaria deaths). CRS Nigeria conducted research and identified key barriers that prevented people from using bed nets, such as:

- 20% has the perception that the net was not needed
- 15% had the perception that there are no mosquitos
- 14% think is due to hot weather there is an increase of malaria mosquitoes
- 7% has safety concerns about the chemicals on the ITN
- 39% of the households don't own a bed net, and another 31% have quantities insufficient for their household size.
- 52% and 58% of the children under-five and pregnant women respectively didn't sleep under a bed net the night before the survey

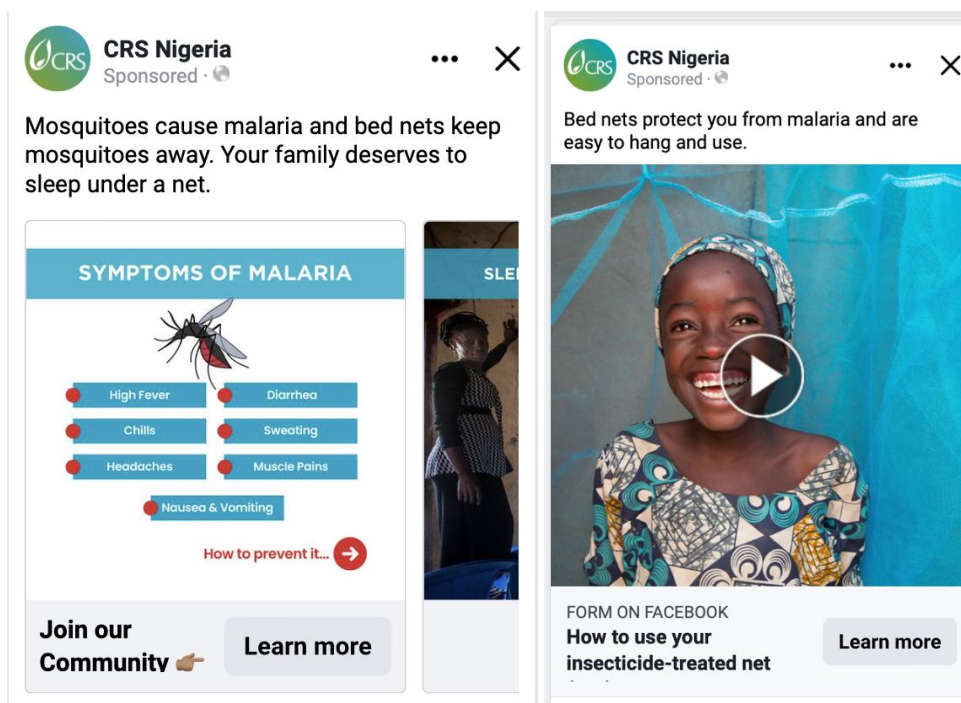
To help increase the use of ITNs, CRS Nigeria identified key drivers that encouraged their target group to adopt the desired health behaviors such as:

- Knowledge (information on the benefits and safety of using ITNs)
- Availability / accessibility (target group has access to ITNs / ITN's are FREE and available, geographically close and affordable)
- Influence from community messengers (the people they look up to and trust, who explain how they protect themselves as well as their family members from malaria and practice the use of ITNs).

As part of CRS' malaria programming in Nigeria, CRS partnered with Meta to help increase the importance of utilizing ITNs and increase knowledge of where to get free bed nets through Facebook and Instagram advertisements, as state-wide ITNs distributions were happening in real time in Nigeria.

The target audience was women of reproductive age 18-35 years old, due to women in Nigeria being the family's caretakers.

The goal of the campaign was to reach 2.5 million users on Facebook and Instagram in Nigeria with 7 messages aimed to increase people's belief that ITN's are effective at preventing malaria. This SBCC campaign was meant to reinforce the availability of bed nets distributed by CRS Nigeria in diverse communities, as well as reinforcing positive behaviors such as teaching how to care and hang their ITN's correctly within their communities.



One step closer to increasing the use of ITNs to prevent malaria

CRS Nigeria successfully reached over 4 million users on Facebook, almost double the estimated target audience. We believe this could be due to malaria being a global health concerning subject that is not commonly talked about in social media, specifically in Nigeria.

Additionally, our target audience viewed the ads 38 million times and generated over 1 million link clicks, which lead to CRS Nigeria Facebook Group, on [How to use Insecticide-Treated Bed Nets \(ITNs\)](#). Over 500 people joined the group and discussed topics such as how to get more information about where to get their free ITNs, ask personal questions, such as what the symptoms of malaria are, or what is the best treatment if contracted. We think only 500 people joined the group because there was already a lot of offline messaging about this program.

All creatives in the campaign were optimized for mobile phones, for example:

- Vertical video, including subtitles, with the most important messages within the first three seconds and a great thumbnail image that will show in-feed performed well.
- Trusted messenger testimonial videos, authentic and showcased personal stories and images over heavy text, particularly for areas with low literacy.
- Appealing images have been proven to result in ad recall and high engagement, such as the “You are not seeing blurry” and the image of happy children under their ITNs, captivated the attention with not too many messages, and generated stronger Brand Lift Study results.

Results

Brand Lift is a kind of lift test where you can use brand polling and other brand awareness measurements to help understand the true value of your Meta advertising and how well it performs independent of your other marketing efforts. Brand Lift works by selecting a representative sample of people eligible to see your advertising. That sample group is then randomly divided into test and holdout groups, and causal inference techniques are then used to measure the impact of your advertising.

The results of the Brand Lift study showed a statistically significant ad recall lift with an astonishing +20pts from the test group, which shows how people who did see the ad from the campaign responded to the BLS question. Which means of the 1.95 million people who saw our ad, and additional 396,000 people were statistically likely to remember seeing our ad.

In addition, based on the 3 million people our campaign reached, we saw an impact of +4pts lift on knowledge, when we asked people if they thought that ITNs protect against malaria, and +3.8pts lift when we asked if they slept under a mosquito net.

Meaning the ads had a positive impact spreading awareness of the use of insecticide-treated bed nets to protect against malaria.

What's next

CRS Nigeria's call to action was to join Nigeria's Facebook Group, a practice that was more successful than previous campaigns where the target audience was directed to a Ministry of Health landing page. A clear, short and singular messaging, as well as a clear call to action are more effective practices.

Creating a safe space on Facebook where the target audience can discuss personal questions relevant to malaria and ITNs, was very effective. The Facebook Group is still active with a combination of content from informative / engaging posts, voting polls, etc. The group content is based on relevant topics on how to protect yourself and your family from malaria in addition to using a bed net every night, which keeps the group relatively active. Sustaining the Facebook Group community, as we continue mass distributions of ITNs is essential to continue this SBC Campaign in Nigeria.