The Against Malaria Foundation (AMF) was founded in 2005 by Rob Mather, an MBA graduate from Harvard Business School and previous strategy consultant. AMF focuses solely on distributing long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets in order to prevent malarial infection in 35 countries across Africa, Asia and South America, primarily DRC, Malawi, and Ghana.

What’s the need?

- According to the most recent World Health Organization estimate, there were about 214 million cases of malaria in 2015, and an estimated 438,000 deaths.
- 90% of the deaths occurred in the WHO African region, two thirds of which were children under the age of 5.
- While these figures show there is still an incredible amount of work to be done, malaria is both preventable and curable and mortality rates have fallen by 60% globally since 2000.

What they do (program details)

- AMF purchases and distributes long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets to partners who implement and oversee distributions in areas with endemic malaria.
- AMF receives and reviews proposals from charities that need bed nets. They look for “areas with a malaria problem where there is also a need for nets, and distribution partners with whom we are comfortable working.” They require from partners:
  - Accurate household-level net need data
  - Independent supervision at the ’moment of net distribution’
  - Post-distribution monitoring of net use and condition
- When a proposal is approved, AMF purchases and ships nets for the charity. It then publishes pre-distribution and post-distribution reports on its website. These are very detailed, including the location of each delivery.
- After distribution, AMF requires household surveys to be conducted every 6 months for 3 years to understand the condition and usage of the nets that have been distributed.
Due to support from private donations, 100% of every dollar donated buys bed nets, which AMF is able to purchase for $3 each. The full cost per bed net, including delivery, is estimated at between $5.30 and $7.50, depending on where they are working.

Evidence of impact of intervention

- Malaria nets are proven to be effective - 5.53 deaths averted per 1000 children protected annually (due to a decrease in mortality since then GiveWell now estimates this number as 3.1 deaths averted).
- General data on net distributions shows usage rates between 60-80%.
  - Small-scale study: roughly 70% for spot visits and 85% when asked.
  - If assume equal amount of over-reporting on national surveys, actual net usage rates would range from 68-84%.
- Concern over use of nets for fishing.
  - Mostly anecdotal evidence, except one study showed 87% used nets to fish (several villages along a lake in eastern Africa).
  - GiveWell: This doesn’t apply to AMF because they require follow-up surveys that show 80-90% have hung up nets within 6 months (enter home rather than ask).
- Mosquitos may develop resistance to insecticide in nets.
  - Serious concern but shortage of evidence (RCTs not possible because resistance isn’t randomly distributed).
  - Nets could still offer some level protection in the presence of resistance.
  - WHO still recommends use of nets.
  - AMF funding study on insecticide resistance.

Evidence of impact of charity

- AMF measures impact through # nets distributed, cost/net, and use / condition of nets following distribution.
  - Have distributed 17.8MM nets (excludes funded, undistributed nets).
  - ~$4.69/net going forward (based on past and planned distributions).
  - % of nets hung / used correctly / in working condition at 6-mo intervals for 3 years following distribution (post-distribution surveys).
  - No longer track malaria case-rate data.
  - $3.2K / life saved (GiveWell estimate).
- AMF’s process for publishing distribution information and metrics is highly transparent when it is followed.
  - For each distribution, report # of nets, geography, distribution status and donor.
  - Publish photos, proposal, and post-distribution report for almost all distributions; video for most; and post-distribution surveys (AMF reports 95% compliance with reporting process).
  - Facilitate decisional transparency through articulation of distribution assessment process and pipeline transparency through stage-level status of proposed.
distributions

- In addition to learning through data tracking, post-distribution reports include any problems / complications encountered, solutions discovered, and lessons learned

Plans for 2017

- Recently announced 3 distributions totaling 14.3MM nets, scheduled in 2017 with an additional 3MM nets scheduled for 2018 in the Malawi region (Givewell)
  - Spring 2017: 10.6MM nets to Uganda
  - Summer/Fall 2017: 2.4MM nets to Togo
  - Spring - Winter 2017: 1.2 MM nets to Papua New Guinea
- Partnering to fund study on insecticide resistance
  - AMF plans to fund study on PBO LLINS which may be more effective in areas where the mosquitoes have developed resistance. The study is estimated to require $2.7MM
- Efforts to create and co-fund Malawi “Malaria Control Unit” to assist in record-keeping with Concern Universal

Remaining uncertainties

- Potential insecticide resistance
  - AMF conducting study to learn more - impact currently uncertain
  - Nets would still have impact against resistant mosquitoes
- Scalability
  - Concern that stringent requirements (data collection, reports, not funding non-net costs) limit pace of growth
    - Mitigated by recent announcement of planned large distributions
    - AMF insists it can maintain process standards while scaling
  - Limited staffing despite large need and funding
    - AMF says it uses experienced consultants, part-time staff, hired 1 Program director in 2016, needs to hire more staff in 2017

Sources and more information

- GiveWell review: www.givewell.org/international/top-charities/AMF
- Giving What We Can review: www.givingwhatwecan.org/top-charities/against-malaria-foundation
- Against Malaria Foundation website: www.againstmalaria.com
- NYT article and AMF response
- Correspondence with AMF founder