

WINNER FOR COMMUNICATIONS

RAISING AWARENESS OF MALARIA

How an Effective Communications Campaign can Reduce Malaria

Sinoma International Engineering, winner of the 2023 Duty of Care Award for Communications, developed an awareness program to safeguard employees against malaria.

Sinoma is the world's No. 1 cement engineering enterprise, with over 14,000 global employees in 82 countries.

Liu Yao, Deputy Manager of the Security & Environmental Protection Department, describes the challenge of dealing with malaria:

'People are the most important assets in our operations. But with so many employees globally, safeguarding their health, safety, security, and wellbeing can be challenging. In locations where malaria is prevalent, this potentially deadly infectious disease poses a serious threat to the life and wellbeing of our employees.'

'In addressing this threat, we put employee communication as the key driver to the success of our health and security programme.'

A Control and Prevention Programme

Sinoma deployed a team of health experts from leading medical institutions to formulate a comprehensive malaria control and prevention programme.

As a starting point, the team surveyed the employees working and living in endemic EDO Nigeria to assess the scale of the impacted population and understand the gap in awareness. In some malaria endemic projects, the workforce malaria incidence rate could reach as high as 10%-20%. Some employees had even experienced repeated infections. The survey also identified a gap in employees' awareness of malaria.

The control and prevention programme was then

developed. It consists of prompt diagnosis, effective testing and treatment measures, onsite controls and an employee education and engagement programme.

This included establishing a malaria case monitoring and internal escalation mechanism to ensure malaria infection could be detected at an early stage. The target was to detect 100% of malaria cases. To achieve this, sites were equipped with diagnostic equipment, and professional doctors and technicians were deployed to provide rapid malaria testing onsite.

Frequent and regular control onsite was also put in place, including regular mosquito spraying around the entire worksite and living areas; regular site cleansing, including removal of stagnant water and weeds to reduce mosquito breeding; and the installation of mosquito screens on all doors and windows where people are present.

Education and Training as a Priority

As part of this programme Sinoma prioritised malaria education and training. It set a target to roll out training to cover its entire workforce. This resulted in 326



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sessions, with 12,423 attendees.

Malaria awareness sessions were delivered via multiple channels, including onsite training, remote video lectures, and other means to ensure the scientific information was accessible to all employees, including the frontline workforce. Mandatory assessments were deployed and all staff were required to pass the tests.

The onsite control measures involved employees too. For example, employees were taught the proper and most effective use of mosquito nets.

The training significantly improved malaria prevention awareness. This awareness was also extended beyond the immediate workforce. For example, in Nigeria, through systematic education of 100,000 local employees, knowledge about effective prevention was passed on to their families and communities.

The medical project team also provided malaria consultation services onsite and addressed any questions and concerns from its employees.

It also incorporated mental health support into its communications with the employees.

Sharing Best Practice

The malaria programme brought remarkable results. In the EDO project in Nigeria alone, the malaria infection rate dropped from 10% (2020) to 2% (2021).

Sinoma has communicated its best practices on malaria prevention and control to all levels of the company. Medical experts from China also exchanged best practices with local doctors to support malaria control in local communities. In addition, Sinoma is duplicating the model to other infectious disease endemic projects.

Liu Yao Concludes

'We have successfully implemented highly complex infectious disease control and management programmes to fight the spread of malaria and other infectious diseases. Raising awareness, including the education and training of employees has been a priority. This has brought positive results for both our people and the communities in which we operate. We will now strive to further optimise the programme to protect our global workforce.'

Key Elements

Employee education and training should be a key part of any malaria prevention and control programme. It should:

- Be aimed at the whole workforce
- Consist of different channels, both onsite and remote
- Offer access to further information
- Address mental health issues
- Be extended to the local community

