

# A Caregiver's Experience Encourages Others to Protect Their Children Against Malaria

**Malaria is widespread in Zamfara State, Nigeria.**

According to the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, in 2018,

**36%**

**of children under 5 years with fever tested positive for malaria in the past two weeks.**

Photo showing- Suwaiba posing with her son Sayyid

To ensure continued access to life-saving preventive measures, the United States President's Malaria Initiative (PMI)-supported Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria (BA-N) and the Ministry of Health (SMoH) of Zamfara State to conduct an integrated malaria campaign in 2020.

The campaign distributed Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs) and a medicine called Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine with Amodiaquine (SPAQ). SPAQ is the medicine of choice in an intervention called Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC) where preventive malaria medications are given to children under five during the rainy season when malaria cases

are the highest. Through mass media and community mobilization activities, BA-Nigeria ensured universal awareness and participation in SMC and ITN campaigns, the sustained use and care of nets, and the completion of the full course of SMC medications (each monthly dose is administered over 3 days).

Suwaiba Namadi, a 37-year-old widow and mother of three, lives in Marina Community, Gusau Local Government Area, in Zamfara State. She sells "waina," a Hausa treat prepared from soybeans to support her family. Suwaiba did not allow her children to take the SPAQ medicine because she believed it would be harmful to them. While awareness and participation in SMC campaigns are high, SMC is still a fairly recent intervention for many households (having only been introduced in Zamfara in 2015), and some people are not entirely comfortable with taking preventive medication in otherwise healthy children. This changed in early 2019 when Sayyid, her son, was diagnosed with severe malaria.



*"I was at my business – selling waina when I got a call saying Sayyid was dying. I quickly dashed to the room and saw him convulsing. I thought my little Sayyid was going mad or something. I wasn't sure, so I rushed him to the hospital. After a few hours, Sayyid was getting better. The health personnel told me that it was severe malaria, and this made me, for the first time, realize that malaria is a very dangerous sickness and can kill"*

**- Suwaiba Namadi**

This near-death experience changed the way Suwaiba thought about malaria. She now understood how dangerous it can be, especially to young children. Because of this, she became a community advocate and aimed to protect other children in Marina community from malaria.

When Zamfara State began planning for the ITN and SMC campaign in 2020, Suwaiba, though a beneficiary, became a community champion. While she sold waina, she spoke to other caregivers, encouraging them to collect their ITNs during the campaign and to take the SMC medications for their children. She also shared with others her own experience, demonstrating the importance of how easy it can be to protect children under five against severe and uncomplicated malaria. Suwaiba also ensured she received ITNs, and her three children received SPAQ.

*"* Through  
**champions like  
Suwaiba**  
and the collaboration and  
support of many others,



PMI and the Zamfara State Government have distributed almost **six million** mosquito nets to residents between 2020 and 2023 and administered SMC medicine to over **three million** eligible children over the same period. *"*