



Mekong IEC Project News

The training workshop, on field research focusing on ethnic target groups and baseline data collection, that took place 16th – 21st June in Vientiane, went well. Each country presented their situation and stakeholder analysis, had identified ethnic groups to work with, examined lessons learned on IEC, and made contact with partners to work with in the project. Country team members were refreshed on how to use participatory learning and action approach (PLA), conduct focus group discussion, in-depth interview and observation, to collect information needed. By the end of the workshop, each country team had developed research protocols and plans of action that aim to:

- assess ethnic target group's attitude, beliefs and practices regarding malaria prevention and control for development of appropriate IEC materials
- gain a good understanding of malaria concepts and terminologies used by the group
- identify communication channels and appropriate IEC materials to be developed

Following is a summary of the situation analysis that each country presented during the training workshop.

China has identified the Wa ethnic group in Ximeng County, Yunnan province to work with. Wa is one of 19 ethnic groups who live along the international borders and one of the ethnic groups with high malaria prevalence. Sixty percent of malaria incident in Yunnan is from these border areas and official report of malaria cases has been increasing in the recent years. The farm workers and border migrants are the high

risk groups. The findings showed that malaria IEC can collaborate with other sectors like agriculture, education and mass media, and village committee, women committee and youth league at community level. Mr. Xu Jianwei, and Yunnan Institute of Parasitic Disease staff, will conduct field research mid July. *Picture: Ms Xia Min and Mr. Xu Jianwei.*

Lao PDR IEC project team has identified Lave, a Mon-Khmer ethnic group in Attapeu, the southern province to work with. Malaria mortality and morbidity have been decreased but Attapeu still has higher malaria case incidence, mortality, and slide positivity rates than other provinces in the country. The Lave group is the most populous minority group in Attapeu, comprising 17.4% of the total provincial population. The Lave group experience a high burden of malaria - some of it drug resistant. From the situational analysis it is



recommended to collaborate with local government offices, including village health and development committees, and international organizations working in health and community development in the selected district of Attapeu. Dr. Soudsady, Dr. Somsanouk and Dr. Supachai will start working with provincial staff on research in the 3rd week of July.



Dr Supachai, National IEC officer, Dr. Somsanouk and Dr. Soudsady from CMPE.

Karen, in Mae hongsorn province, were identified as an ethnic group to work with for the RBM IEC project in Thailand. Malaria cases in Mae hongsorn are the highest compared to the other 5 provinces in the northern region, Region 10 – Chiangmai, and the Karen, have higher malaria prevalence than other groups. Most of the malaria IEC materials developed are for general populations. There have not been any IEC materials developed to suit the situation and the need of the

Karen ethnic groups. From the situation analysis, it was found that health staff and village volunteers understand the importance of IEC for malaria prevention but there are no appropriate materials to use and they lack skills to do something. Mr. Prayuth and Vector Borne Disease staff will start field research in the 4th week of July.



Picture: Ms. Nadlatda, Mr. Prayuth, Dr. Krongthong, MK RBM officer, and Mr. Trailath (standing).

The Cambodia team has identified the Kreung ethnic minority in Rattana kiri in the Northeastern province to work with. Originally the team wanted to work with a few different groups in Rattanakiri and Mondokiri. With the timeframe and budget the team decided to work with Kreung but will test IEC materials developed with other ethnic groups. There are different government departments and international organizations to work with. Mr. Bunphoeun and Dr. Thavrin from CNM have started working on the field research but actual field information collection and analysis will be conducted right after the general election is finish.



Dr. Thavrin in pink, Dr. Yadany, Mr. Bunphoeun and Dr Som-on during coffee break.





Picture: Mr. Thuy, Dr. Dai and Dr. Anh were discussing about the findings from Situation Analysis.

Raglai ethnic group, in Khanh Hoa province in central Vietnam, were selected to work with to develop appropriate IEC materials and guidelines. From the situation analysis, it was found that there is good political commitment at different levels, there are radio broadcasts on malaria information, which has a high coverage, some IEC materials were translated into main ethnic languages, and there are good commune and village

networks that could be mobilized. Despite those positive points there are still gaps that IEC could be strengthened through developing appropriate strategy and materials to suit ethnic groups, strengthening coordination between malaria and other health sectors, integrating malaria education into school, and increasing village volunteer and commune health staff's communication skills. The team is planning to conduct field research in Khanh Vinh and Khanh Trung communes of Khanh Vinh district. Mr. Thuy and NIMPE staff will travel to prepare a team in Khanh Hoa for a field research at the end of July.

The last week of June Mr. Pricha Petlueng, the Project Coordinator visited Myanmar. He had meetings with Dr. Wan Moung, General Director Department of Health, Dr. Ye Myint, Director Disease control Department and Dr. Saw Lwin, Deputy Director Vector Borne Disease Control, to update them on project implementation from each country member and discuss about the project implementation in Myanmar. Dr Saw Lwin will establish a working group to conduct a situation analysis to identify ethnic groups and field research to assess target group knowledge and beliefs related to malaria prevention and control. Prior to conducting the research Mr.



Township health staff, a potential channel to mobilize community for disease prevention and control.



Pricha Petlueng and Ms. Cecelia Hugo, Executive Coordinator of ACTMalaria, will organize a 3 day workshop at the end of July for the working group to familiarize them with field research procedures and techniques, and assist with adapting research protocols and tools from other country members for Myanmar. *Malaria information leaflets in different ethnic languages.*



We would like to inform colleagues that the Advisory Committee meeting and Mid-term Review for the project will be organized on the 4th - 5th September 2003 in Vientiane. Representatives from 6 country members, ADB, UNICEF and WHO, will attend. During the meeting there will be presentation of project implementation, discussion on the development of Mekong RBM IEC indicators, recommendation for further project implementation, and the introduction and discuss of an extended IEC project focusing on common ethnic groups along the international border of GMS countries.

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