

Since the Participatory IEC Development Training Workshop in Myanmar in early November, country IEC teams have been planning for IEC material production workshops with target populations. The workshops will allow the IEC teams to gather more information, and representatives from target groups can participate and contribute more into what should be in each material. At the same time ideas from participants can be collected for development of IEC guidelines. Later on the IEC team can finalize the draft materials and prepare for pre-testing. The production of IEC materials and guidelines will take place between December 2003 and May 2004.

We have received news from our malaria partners in Vietnam, Medical Committee for Netherlands and Vietnam (MCNV) malaria research team supported by MCNV in Khanh Phu Commune. They have informed us that Khanh Hoa Province has been conducting an efficacy study of insect repellent for malaria prevention among forest workers where they cannot really hang-up bednets. The preliminary results show good protection from mosquito bites.



This insect repellent has approval from Ministry of Health and is available in the market. It has DEET 15% as the main ingredient. One application of insect repellent in the early evening can protect till the next morning. One bottle of 70 ml. can last for 30 applications. It costs 15,000 Dongs, around \$US1 so it is not too expensive for foresters. Ron Marchand, Director of the MCNV told us that the research team is analyzing the data and the study will be released within the next few months. Results of this study will hopefully result in an alternative for malaria

prevention to this group of people as the sleeping situation in the forest does not allow people to use bednets and might open up an opportunity to involve the private sector in the malaria control programme.

For more information on the efficacy of insect repellent study, please contact Ron Marchand, email: ron.marchand@mcnv.nl and mcnv@netnam.org.vn

One of the active partners for malaria control in Cambodia is Health Unlimited, (HU) Health Unlimited is a health development organization and also partner for malaria control supported by Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria in Rattanakiri Province. HU puts



emphasis on a community participation approach for malaria control by promoting the use of insecticide treated bednet, and seeking early diagnosis and prompt treatment by trained personnel. In 2004, the first year of implementation, the project plans to cover every village in 5 districts and the last 4 districts in 2005, a total of 279 villages.

The Cambodia IEC Project team is working with target populations, provincial and district health personnel and in close collaboration with HU, in developing IEC materials and guidelines for malaria control focusing on ethnic minorities.



A Kreung man shows the condition of the bednet they have been using to the IEC team

The National Malaria Centre for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control (CNM) in Cambodia is taking the lead in IEC related activities. A pilot strategy development project for malaria IEC supported by GTZ will focus on:

- improving coordination and collaboration of malaria IEC activities on a national scale,
- increasing capacity within the public health system to design and implement malaria IEC, and
- developing national policy to better prioritize community level issues into the national strategy for malaria IEC.

One of activities under this project is to create a database system to categorize relevant documents, studies, researches and IEC materials related to malaria. This database will provide good access and reference to all partners working in a malaria control programme. Please contact Dr Boukeng Thavrin or Kate Hencher for more information at cnm@bigpond.com.kh

Also, this month in RBM IEC Project News, Dr Maung Maung Lin, IEC Specialist from Myanmar, has provided information about ethnic groups in Shan State. There are 3 main ethnic groups that the IEC Project will be working with.

Ethnic groups in Myanmar

Prepared by Dr. Maung Muang Lin

Myanmar has often been called a "racial melting pot" because members of many ethnic groups have entered the country from Southwestern China and Tibet, mixing with the original inhabitants and other earlier migrants. The Union of Myanmar came into being on 4th January 1948 as a nation of many ethnic groups. The Bama-majority live in the main river valleys of the Ayeyarwady, the Than Lwin and



Sittaung, while tribal minority groups mostly inhabit the hills and mountains that surround Myanmar on the East, North and West.

Officially there are 135 ethnic groups clustered in eight major groups according to the 1983 census which are: Bamar, Kachin, Kayin, Kayah, Chin, Mon, Rakkine and Shan, each of which has its own cultures and traditions.

Main Ethnic Groups in Myanmar bordering the Mekong Sub region and Shan State

The main ethnic groups, which reside in Myanmar bordering the Mekong sub region are the Kachin, Shan, Kayin, Kayah and the Mon.

In Shan State, there are 35 ethnic groups namely: Shan, Yun (La-O), Kwe, Pyin, Thao, Da-naw, Palay, Eng, Sone, Kamu, Kaw, Ahkha (E-Kaw), Kokant, Khamti-Shan, Gon (Khun), Taung-Yo, Danu, Palung, Myaung-Zee, Yin-Kya, Yin-Net, Shan Galay, Shan Gyi, Lahu, Lwela, Inthar, Aiktwe, Tainglyan, Tainlone, Tainlay, Mainthar, Maw-Shan, Lishaw, Wa and Mutno. We are going to mention about 3 ethnic groups, Shan, Akha and Lahu, that are majority in the area we are working in Eastern Shan State.

Shan

The Shans are the second most populous people in Myanmar and widespread in Myanmar. The Shan have their own written language and literature. They have also translated Tripitakas text in the Shan language. The Shan also have folk tales, classical dramas, stories and poems. The Shans are mostly engaged in cottage industries.

Akha

Previously they were known as Kaw but now they prefer to be called Akha. They believe in 6 kinds of Nats or spirits. Children are named according to the name of the father's clan or tribe. The administrative system is based on tradition and customs.

Some paddy is always kept inside a hollowed bamboo as a token of offering. A 4-day festival is held after the paddy harvest to celebrate the successful harvest and everybody joins in the celebration. Cultivation is the main source of livelihood but many also engage in hunting and logging. Their musical instruments are basically bamboo flutes, drums and gongs.

The Akha villages have animist signs or other markers at the entrance. At the intended village site, an egg is thrown down to the ground and if it shatters the site is regarded as an auspicious ground to settle and set up a village.



Lahu

Some call them Muso and some as Kwi. They belong to the Lolo subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman group that diverted to the East. There are altogether two Lahu subgroups. They are found mainly near Mongsat, Mong Pan and Kyaington. Some are even found around Mong Lun.

The main festivals are the harvest festival and the New Year festival. The Lahus are mainly engaged in agriculture and hunt in their spare time. They believe in foretelling of the future and the village shaman will use the bones of a rooster for this purpose. Only the eldest son has the right of inheritance.

Study Area (Eastern Shan State)

Eastern State is situated in the Eastern part of Myanmar and is the sparsely populated. The total area is 37,092 square kilometers. There are ten townships with a total population is 627,421. The capital of Eastern Shan State is Kyaingtone. Eastern Shan State borders with the People's Republic of China on the North, Lao People's Democratic Republic on the Southern Shan State on the West.



Dr Maung Maung Lin and team members with Lahu village leaders during field research.

The ten townships in Eastern Shan State are-Kyaingtone, Tarchileik, Mong Pyin, Mong Phyak, Mong Yaung, Mong Yang, Mong Khat, Mong Hsat, Mong Tone and Met Man.

Eastern Shan State was purposively selected because of among the States/Division, because it borders with Thailand and Laos and is the focus of Mekong RBM, and its population are mainly ethnic groups, Shans, Akhas and Lahus who are the target populations for the Mekong RBM IEC Project.

Malaria was the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Eastern Shan State in 2002.

Approximately 89% of the entire population living in the Eastern Shan State is deemed to be under malaria risk. Most of them live in the rural areas of Eastern Shan State. Ecologically they are forested, foothill and forest fringe areas where vulnerability and receptivity are rather high, transmission intense and vectors are efficient. About 82% of the total populations of Eastern Shan State are residing in these areas.

All people in the urban areas eastern Shan State except Kyaingtone and Tarchileik are living in moderate risk area. People living in the



urban areas of Kyaingtone and Tarchileik towns are living in the low risk area. Ecologically they are plain areas where vulnerability and receptivity is low. About 11% of the total populations of Eastern Shan State are residing in these areas.

Progress of the Field Study

Tarchileik Township, which has a total population of 95,929, was selected for the study as:

- Malaria is one of a leading cause of morbidity and mortality
- Interventions for malaria control implemented (partial distribution of ITNs, early diagnosis and treatment.)
- Represents major Shan ethnic groups in Eastern Shan State
- Share State common boundaries with Lao PDR and Thailand

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

In depth interviews as well as focus group discussions have been conducted among various groups in the community such as community members, village leaders (both formal and informal), various categories of health care providers, religious personnel which includes monks as well as lay Christian preachers, school teachers as well as community members who had malaria. A quantitative study using structured questionnaire has also been utilized for these three ethnic groups and data entry and analysis will soon be completed. These were carried out among three ethnic groups, which are the Shans, Lahus and Akhas in which the traditions and customs are quite different.



A villager proudly shows the bednet they have been using to sleep in to the research team.



As the festive season is approaching within a few days, the Mekong RBM IEC Project Team wishes you a Merry Christmas, and Prosperous and Successful New Year. See you after New Year for more project implementation updates and malaria news and information.

