



Mekong RBM IEC Project News

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Nguyen Ngoc Thuy, IEC Specialist from Vietnam updated on the activities and role of central and provincial radio stations in malaria prevention and control.

The role of Mass Media in Health Promotion and Malaria Education among ethnic minorities in Vietnam

Vietnam has a powerful network of media with four levels - national, provincial, district and commune. Channel 4 of the National Radio The Voice of Vietnam (VOV 4) now broadcasts in 5 ethnic languages. They are Khmer, H'Mong, Ede, Giarai, Bana and Xedang. The country also boasts of 64 provincial radio stations 528 district stations including 319 FM stations, and 5,000 loudspeaker systems at commune level. All remote and mountain districts are equipped with low power FM transmitters. Half of district stations in mountainous areas have been upgraded to provide better coverage.



Ms. Yen, speaker for TV programmes in Raglai language

For its part, channel 5 of Vietnam Television (VTV5) provides broadcasts in 10 ethnic languages. Some provincial TV stations have their own programmes in ethnic languages. At the district level, there are systems, which relay programmes from the provincial TV stations.

In Khanh Hoa province, where the Raglai ethnic group lives, the TV station broadcasts a 20 minute-programme in Raglai language every second week. The programme, which is put on air Thursday evening and rebroadcast the next morning, consists of the news and current affairs and features. The Raglai section of the TV station has 4 Raglai collaborators from Khanh Son district, which is famous for the discovery of the stone



Khanh Hoa TV staff making programmes in Raglai language

xylophone. One of the speakers is Bo Bo Thi Yen, 27, who is a Raglai and also works as secondary school teacher (photo). The senior editor of the Raglai programme, Mr. Mau Quoc Tien told me that the script of the Raglai was not available until recently thanks to the tireless efforts of a Vietnamese researcher, Mr. Nguyen Tan Sang. Mr. Sang, who died 2 years ago, left behind valuable studies into Raglai culture including the recovery of the Raglai script. According to Tien, the Raglai language still has a limited vocabulary of some 7,000 words. To make the messages come across, quite a few words have to be borrowed from the Kinh, the majority language.

Despite the lack of studies on the impact exerted by radio and TV on ethnic groups, the prospect seems bright for the use of mass media in spreading the messages for the ethnic groups, given the high level of public appreciation. The challenge that remains, however, is how best to make these programmes more educational and entertaining, thus enriching the cultural life of the ethnic people.



The Lao National Malaria Control Programme has reproduced malaria calendars and pictorial cards for distribution to target populations. The calendars are distributed to every household in Phouvong and Sanxay Districts in Attapeu and to all malaria partners in 18 provinces. The interactive malaria pictorial cards are distributed to Attapeu, Sekong and Salavanh Provinces based on Global Fund for malaria control activities. Through discussion with provincial malaria staff, it was decided that the pictorial cards should be distributed to every village in 5 districts of Attapeu and every village in selected districts of Salavanh and Sekong Provinces.

From discussions with Dr Phoupasong, Head of Attapeu provincial malaria station and heads of Phouvong and Sanxay districts health and malaria units, they suggested that this card set should be utilized by village volunteers, village heads and

school teachers. The provincial and district teams will train them how to use the cards through re-training of malaria village volunteers and incorporate into ACT and RDT training at village level. These cards can also be used by the bednet dipping teams when they are going to the village for bednets impregnation during March and April.

In Salavanh, Dr Bouathong, head malaria station and Mr Thong-savanh, Deputy agreed that these pictorial cards should be utilized at village level, and said they could be used by VHVs, village heads and teachers. The cards can be brought to villages by the district health mobile teams that provide basic health services on EPI, mother and child health, water sanitation, malaria and diarrhoea to every village 3 times per year. Mr Thongsavanh emphasized that the strength of the mobile teams is that they can use this card set to discuss and demonstrate with VHV and village heads on how to use the cards to educate people about malaria prevention. The cards set could increase people's awareness of being at risk of malaria, and also encourage them to use and look after bednets properly.



Dr Soudsady (*left*) is discussing with Mr Thongsavanh (*right*) how to utilize malaria interactive pictorial cards

Dr Thongkay, head of Admin office, Sekong provincial health and Mr Pany, head of provincial malaria station also agreed and suggested a similar way to utilize the pictorial cards as Salavanh suggested. They can be utilized through the health mobile teams in Lamam and Kalume districts that WHO is supporting. In the other two districts, it can be channelled to some villages through the project supported by Health Unlimited and the ACF.



Training Attapeu provincial malaria and health staff how to use pictorial cards to train village volunteers and educate community members

The IEC team provided training to the provincial and district staff on how to use the card set effectively, and everyone has shown interest in using this card set. They have noticed how these cards can create discussion and active learning within the groups. These cards make people learn through 5 senses, for example, looking - eyes, touching - hands, listening - ears, thinking - brain and discussion - mouth. Everyone said this is a new method to use this kind of educational material and they feel very positive about it. They have realized that a good health educator needs to be a good listener and facilitate the discussion, not

be a lecturer.

A unique situation in Sekong province is that nearly 50 per cent of the population is Taliang ethnic group. Therefore the audio material that the IEC team developed with the Taliang in Sanxay district in Attapeu can be used in Sekong well. At the same time 18 provincial malaria stations that received audio material in Lao language will utilize it through provincial radio stations and district health mobile teams.

There is a growing concern about fake drugs, especially Artesunate in the Mekong Region. We have received a message regarding fake Artesunate from Dr Paul Newton, Welcome Trust Southeast Asia Tropical Medicine Research Unit bases in Vientiane, Lao PDR. It shows pictures of different fake Artesunate and how to notice them. For normal circumstance people will not be able to tell the different between the fake one from the real one. Malaria kills people, so does fake Artesunate. We really need to pay attention on this issue and try to drive it out from our region. If you like to know more, please contact Dr Paul Newton at email: paul@tropmedres.ac or these websites:

http://www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/ndm/Tropical_Medicine/News.htm

http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/pdf/FakeArtesunateWarning_Jan2005.pdf

<http://mosquito.who.int/docs/FakeArtesunateWarningJan2005.pdf>

