



Roll Back Malaria

Mekong IEC Project News

On the 4th and 5th of September, we organized the project mid-term review and second advisory committee meeting in Vientiane. There were representatives from each GMS country and also Dr Holly Williams, special advisor from CDC Atlanta, Dr Wan Azmin and Dr Indu Bhushan from ADB, and representatives from JICA Malaria Control in Myanmar, UNICEF and the WHO. The objectives for this 2-day meeting were:

- to present the project implementation update to the advisory committee members;
- to present and discuss preliminary findings of field research and make recommendations for IEC package development;
- to discuss development of MK RBM IEC indicators;
- to introduce an extended IEC project focusing on common ethnic groups along the international borders of GMS countries

Following the opening speech by Dr Deodato, Representative of WHO Vientiane and remarks from Dr Kevin Palmer and Dr Samlane, the Project Coordinator presented the project implementation update, which included the concept of IEC, steps in behaviour adoption, extended initiative on malaria control focusing on ethnic groups, and constraints encountered during the project implementation. Then a representative from each country presented the country's malaria situation and project implementation to date. Some of the country presentations also included preliminary findings from field research. The preliminary findings from the field were as follow:

- People have a basic knowledge of malaria transmission and prevention.
- People generally use bednets when staying at home.
- Many families have bednets but not enough for every family member.
- Mobile populations are vulnerable to malaria infection.
- Village malaria workers or health staff do not normally provide malaria education.
- Health facilities are far from the villages.
- People display inappropriate treatment-seeking behaviour.

More findings from each country team will be presented after information from the field has been analyzed.

Following the findings, behaviour objectives, IEC strategy and appropriate materials will be provisionally identified by each country team. A training workshop for participatory IEC materials development is scheduled for the last week of October 2003. The training workshop will strengthen country teams' capacity in identifying main messages for IEC and appropriate IEC channels and materials, and will provide



training in a participatory approach for IEC materials development. Each country team will develop protocols and plans for development of IEC to suit their target ethnic populations.



Front row from left: Dr Wan Azmin from ADB; Dr Somsak Prajakwong, VBD Bureau Thailand; Dr Deodato, Representative WHO Lao PDR; Dr Samlane Phompida, Director CMPE Lao PDR; Dr Tran Quoc Tuy, Dep Dir NIMPE Vietnam; Dr Boukheng Thavrin, Chief CNM IEC Unit Cambodia; Dr Daw Lwin, Dep Dir VBDC Myanmar; and Dr Supachai, National IEC Specialist Lao.

Back row from left: Dr Monti, Malaria officer WHO Lao PDR; Pricha Petlueng, Project Coordinator; Dr Kevin Palmer, Regional Advisor and Project Manager, WPRO; Dr Kunstadter, University California San Francisco; Ms Cecil Hugo, Executive Coordinator ACTMalaria; and Dr Nakamura, JICA Malaria Control Programme Myanmar.

Also attended: Dr Indu Bhushan from ADB; Dr Holly Williams from CDC Atlanta and Special Advisor for the Project; and Dr Intong, UNICEF Lao PDR.

There was a discussion among participants on IEC indicators. Everyone agreed that it was too early to set indicators for IEC when strategy and materials have not yet been developed and tested. Therefore the RBM IEC Project should focus on operational indicators in accordance with the immediate objectives. The indicators for the RBM IEC Project will be the development of an IEC package from each country, the strengthening of national capacity through providing training in the community-based approach in IEC development, and the development of a draft regional IEC plan for regional malaria control and prevention based on the needs of populations at country level.

The advisory committee members also suggested that RBM IEC country teams collect existing malaria IEC materials systematically, including reports and reviews of IEC programmes, evaluation of IEC materials, and samples. All this information will be put into the Mekong Malaria Documentation Centre (MMDC) in Hanoi and the Partnership for Social Science in Malaria Control (PSSMC) for sharing among interested parties and for promoting the RBM and malaria control programme in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.



Dr Tran Quoc Tuy is presenting Vietnam Malaria situation and RBM IEC Project implementation update.

All presentations, reports and documents from six member countries at the meeting will be put on compact disc. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of these materials should contact Ms Souphab at WHO Vientiane Lao PDR, phone 021 – 413431 or email <southas@lao.wpro.who.int>

At the beginning of September, the Project Coordinator visited project areas in Simao county, Yunnan Province. Dr Zhang Zaixing gave a brief summary of the malaria situation in Yunnan, and Mr Xu Jianwei, national IEC specialist, gave a summary of the field research and preliminary findings. The field research took place in Xiaozhai, Wengbielie and Yonggu villages, two of which (Wengbielie and Yonggu) are more than 1,500 metres above sea level. There was an outbreak of malaria in Yonggu in 2002 with 56 cases, most of which were *P.falciparum*

Through using different research methodologies, the research team found that;

- most of malaria cases in the area were *P.vivax*;
- a single size bednet in the market costs around \$2 - \$4;
- few people have bednets because of the high cost of the nets;
- people in poorer villages seek treatment less than those in better off villages;
- malaria treatment with Chloroquin or Primaquin is around 5 Yuan, treatment with Artesunate is 12 Yuan, Artesunate and Primaquin, and injectable drugs cost even more;
- most of the people interviewed cannot read or write Chinese;
- people receive news and information from the village leader at regular village meetings;
- people in better off villages also get information from television.



A Wa ethnic lady in Amo village, Ximeng country, southwest of Yunnan.



Xu Jianwei is talking to Amo village health worker about malaria situation

During visit to Amo village in Ximeng County, in which the majority of the population are ethnic Wa, the IEC team and Project Coordinator learned that malaria is the third main health concern after respiratory infection and diarrhoea according to the village health worker. Malaria is most common among people who travel to and from Myanmar to trade and do labouring work.

The village health worker gives health messages when patients come to see him but he find it difficult to give good information without any tools or materials. He said that visual materials such as posters or flipcharts would help him to give better malaria information, but messages should be relevant to their situation. The Amo village leader said that health and malaria information can be given to heads of families during village meetings which are organized 2-3 times a month. Malaria information in VCD format can also be useful, as most villages have televisions and VCD player.

In this issue of the MK RBM Project News, we would like to introduce a few web sites on malaria and malaria related issues. Some of them have been mentioned in earlier RBM News issues. We hope you find them useful.

- Roll Back Malaria official web site: www.rbm.who.int and www.mosquito.who.int
- Roll Back Malaria official web site for Western Pacific Region: www.wpro.who.int
- Malaria Journal: www.malariajournal.com and www.malaria-info.net
- Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: www.globalfundatm.org
- Malaria Foundation International: www.malaria.org
- Information on development research related to malaria: www.id21.org
- Mekong Malaria Documentation Centre: www.mmdc.org.vn
- Information of best practices related to prevention and treatment of malaria during pregnancy: www.mnh.jhpiego.org/best/ptmal.asp
- ACTMalaria web site: www.actmalaria.org
- Communication Initiative web site: www.comminit.com
- Partnership for Social Sciences in Malaria Control, write to
 - Dr Holly Williams HBW2@CDC.GOV
 - Dr Caroline Jones caroline.jones@lshtm.ac.uk