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**MALARIA
CONTROL
IN CAMBODIA**

TECHNICAL BRIEF

MALARIA CONTROL IN CAMBODIA:

Lending scheme for Long-lasting Insecticide Nets to Mobile and Migrant Workers

Prioritizing mobile and migrant workers in malaria control

Mobile and migrant workers travel and work throughout Cambodia, providing short-term and seasonal labor to farm owners near the Cambodian-Thai border. These marshy farms are breeding sites for mosquitoes that carry *Plasmodium falciparum*, the most common and deadly malaria-causing parasite. These lands are also the epicenter of a growing number of malaria cases that have shown resistance to the most commonly used antimalarials.

URC-MCC conducted formative research to identify entry points for malaria control. The research found that mobile workers are connected through networks that link farmers, their extended families living in other regions of the country, and past and current mobile workers. These networks serve as the workers' source of information on what kind of work is available in different areas. The research also indicated that while workers consider bed nets desirable to prevent mosquito bites, most are unaware of the link between nets and malaria prevention or between mosquitoes and malaria.

The URC-MCC Approach

Based on formative research, URC-MCC designed a multi-pronged approach to increase malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment among mobile and migrant workers. The approach provides various innovative malaria interventions by reaching out to people who come into contact with mobile and migrant workers, including taxi and bus drivers, farm owners, and other seasonal laborers.



Nets are prepared for distribution among farms in the area

One such innovation is the institution of an LLIN lending scheme for mobile and migrant workers. URC-MCC developed a pilot initiative to achieve complete LLIN coverage of all migrant workers and their accompanying family members in target villages in Battambang Province. URC-MCC mapped the locations of farms where migrant and mobile workers worked and resided and then distributed LLINs to the farm owners.

With the support of URC-MCC, provincial and district staff and village chiefs, village malaria workers (VMWs) disseminated malaria prevention information and LLINs to farm owners, who were urged to loan the LLINs to their mobile and migrant workers and retrieve them once the harvest was complete.

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workers. URC-MCC will continue to track LLIN coverage and malaria cases to monitor results.

Key Achievements

URC-MCC in collaboration with Cambodia's National Malaria Control Program (CNM) has implemented the LLIN lending scheme in 29 villages in Pailin and 12 in Chakrey. The number of LLINs distributed totalled 22,805, given to almost 2,000 farm owners who employ mobile and migrant workers in the Chakrey health center catchment area. Due to its success, CNM has scaled up distribution of LLINs to land owners to an additional 29 villages in Pailin province.

Lessons Learned

Mobile and migrant workers are highly vulnerable to malaria due to 1) limited access to health resources in the areas where they live temporarily and 2) exposure to malaria parasites in the marshy and forested terrain. As most migrants and mobile workers function outside the community and have limited health information and services, special efforts are needed to reach them.

Logistical challenges make it difficult to distribute LLINs to these workers in remote areas. Working with the country's public health system to reach the farm owners who employ these workers is a sustainable prevention approach.

The Way Forward

Future LLIN distributions should occur in February–May to coincide with the return of mobile and migrant workers for the planting season.

The Malaria Control in Cambodia (MCC) Project, implemented by University Research Co. LLC (URC), is a community-based malaria control and prevention project that aims to reduce malaria in the Western part of Cambodia, home to drug-resistant malaria. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development Regional Development Mission for Asia (USAID/RDMA) since October 2007, the project provides technical assistance and support to Cambodia's National Malaria Control Program (CNM), in collaboration with Partners for Development and other non-governmental organizations working to control malaria.

The LLIN distribution process is explained to participants

Results

URC-MCC performed a follow-up assessment of the LLIN lending scheme to investigate its function and usefulness from the perspectives of the farm owners, VMWs, and village chiefs. The study examined:

- The acceptability of the LLIN lending scheme,
- Behaviors and knowledge of farm owners relating to malaria, and
- Communication and distribution channels among stakeholders.

The findings suggest that farm owners generally understand the reason for the lending scheme and their roles as educator and distributor within it. Farm owners could explain the financial benefits and community health reasons for instituting the scheme among their workers. One owner from the village of Sourn Koma expressed appreciation for the scheme, saying, "When we have free nets, ... the mobile and migrant workers are happy and are encouraged to work for us, because they think we take care of them." All farm owners easily explained what the LLIN sticker meant.

VMWs and village chiefs understand and support the LLIN lending scheme as a critical and unique means to reduce malaria in their communities.

Relations between farm owners, VMWs, and village chiefs have been found to be mutually supportive and helpful in maintaining the success of the LLIN scheme. A farm owner in Occheu Krom explained, "I have not used all my nets this season because I was not able to hire some... but if some owners need [nets], they can take some from me."

The LLIN scheme is well accepted among farm owners, migrant and mobile workers, VMWs, and village chiefs and is thus proving a successful way to reduce the malaria burden among these

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