

## **Prevention of reintroduction of malaria in the pilot malaria elimination area**

Ramree and Munaung Townships are islands of Southern Rakhine State where malaria transmission has been very low. Defeat Malaria in collaboration with NMCP piloted malaria elimination activities started in late 2018. On the move towards malaria elimination, prevention of reintroduction and re-establishment of malaria transmission becomes the crucial strategy for these areas. In order to manage the risk for re-establishment of malaria transmission effectively, early detection, mandatory notification, prompt treatment of all malaria cases, determination of the probable causes and taking immediate actions, and monitoring of receptivity and vulnerability became very important.

In Ramree Township, there are two migrant fishing worksites named San Tin Maw and Shwe Pyi Taw. The nature of work is seasonal, and it is usually begun after monsoon season from October to May. Most of the fishermen are migrants who come from Munaung Township.

### **Surveillance activities conducted by Defeat Malaria**

#### ***On arrival malaria screening for migrant fishermen***

Defeat Malaria township team has been alerted on the influx of migrant people and for that reason has approached focal persons of the fishery worksites in collaboration with Township Malaria Elimination Coordination Committee. After conducting a short advocacy, a proactive case detection for migrant fishermen was completed at San Tin Maw in January 2019. Malaria screening was regulated to 46 migrants with record of their place of origin. It was noted that 17 migrants were from Bu Yae Myet village and 13 from Peik Seik of Munaung township. The remaining were from 12 different villages of Munaung township. All their results were negative. A similar approach was conducted at Shwe Pyi Taw in February 2019. Malaria screening was carried out on eight migrants who were from four different villages of Munaung township which also revealed negative results.

It was decided to establish screening sites at the two fishery worksites in collaboration with VBDC and Public Health Supervisor (PHS-2) from Lay Taung RHC could be mobilized for regular malaria screening at Shwe Pyi Taw on weekly basis, and one malaria volunteer could be deployed at San Tin Maw as malaria surveillance agent. Migrant workers were also encouraged to seek blood test within 24 hours of onset of fever.

***Malaria screening for migrant fishermen before departure***

According to the nature of the works, migrant workers who work in Ramree plan to go back to their original residences in Munaung before the start of the rainy season. The Defeat Malaria township team visited those worksites during the first weeks of May 2019 and organized malaria screening activities before the migrants left for their homes in Munaung township. A total of 16 migrants were tested with malaria RDT at Shwe Pyi Taw and six migrants at San Tin Maw. All the results were negative. The addresses of the migrants were also recorded. At the screening sites, the township team provided health education to the migrant workers to encourage them to seek blood tests as soon as the onset of fever began when they arrived back to Munaung. It was also explained that Munaung is currently free of malaria and community involvement is very important for maintaining a malaria free status.

***On arrival malaria screening for migrant fishermen***

After getting information from Ramree team, Defeat Malaria Munaung team planned to conduct proactive case detection for fishermen who came back from Ramree. The team went to Hmyaw Taw U village where most of the migrant fishermen gathered after coming back from Ramree. The fishing boats and nets are cleaned at this village. Defeat Malaria team informed the focal malaria surveillance agents, Midwives, and met with the owners and three groups of fishermen. A total of 42 fishermen were tested to 42 with no positive case detection among them. Close vigilance for up to one incubation period to prevent onwards transmission was also discussed with the focal Midwives



*Blood testing at U Aung Kyaw Zaw Pike Seik, Myaw Taw U village*



*Blood testing at U Kyaw Shwe Pike Seik, Myaw Taw U village*

**Impression**

Defeat Malaria in coordination with the Township Health Department and Township Fishery Department, accomplished a collaborative approach for preventing the

reintroduction of malaria to Munaung Township. Close surveillance system, proactive risk mitigation, multi-sectoral coordination, and community involvement could be important for tackling the vulnerability of malaria transmission. Malaria free status in all 139 villages of Munaung township could be maintained in this year again.

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