

MALARIA FREE MEKONG

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



ABOUT THE MALARIA FREE MEKONG

The Malaria Free Mekong is a platform of Communities and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. It is also known as the CSO platform. The platform was established in 2014, as a community constituency of the Global Fund RAI RSC. Currently, the platform is funded by the Global Fund RAI grant. The main objective of the platform is to provide a common space to share information on best practices, issues, and challenges from the communities in the implementation of the RAI grant. The platform also plays a key role in advocacy, communication, and community engagement through various activities such as consultations, cross-partner learning visits, strengthening the capacity of CSOs by training and sharing the new information and tools, and improving coordination at the national and regional level. The platform provides opportunities to communities to meaningfully engage and represent in the Country Coordinating Mechanisms and Global Fund activities. The Malaria Free Mekong is hosted by the ALIGHT.

Cover photo by: Josselyn Nuekom – RAI RSC CSO representative.

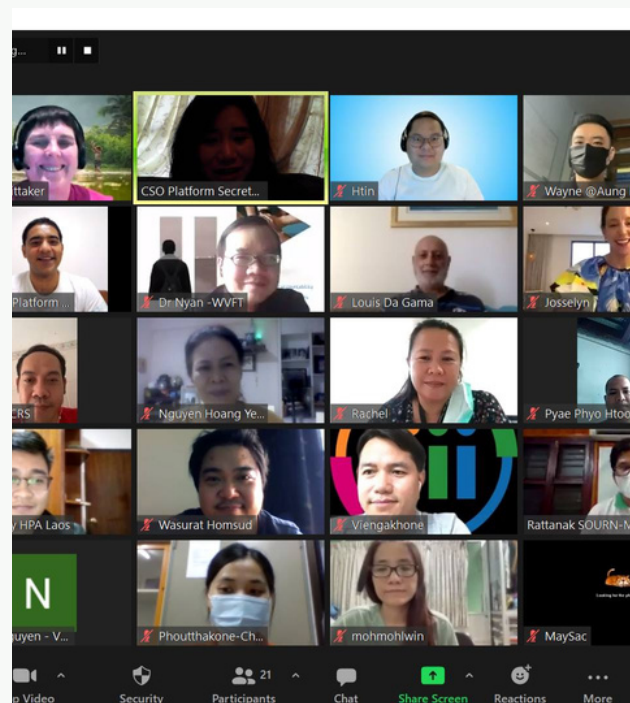
01 ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS WITH PARTNERS

It has been a tremendous year for the Malaria Free Mekong. From January to December of 2021 following COVID-19 restriction and measure the CSO platform secretariat organized a total of 47 individual virtual consultations with CSO partners in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) [Full report](#). One of which, was the first organized workshop between CNM, Cambodia, and all CSOs contributing to malaria elimination in Cambodia. The workshop allowed for a more comprehensive mapping of the implementing CSOs to increase efficiency and reduce duplication of effort.

These virtual consultations provided the opportunity to the partners to share program updates, innovations, challenges, and ways forward in the Global Fund RAI3E and C19RM grant implementation.

“Bringing Stakeholders together for partnership and co-ordination”

The Malaria Free Mekong also organized and participated in Malaria related consultations and dialogues at the regional level. That participation provided an opportunity for the platform and partners to share success, best practices, and challenges as well as the opportunity to network among partners. The platform was able to co-organize a session with APMEN on malaria and COVID-19 related discussions to share experiences from countries of how they are mitigating challenges in their day-to-day implementations.



02 LEARNING AND INFORMATION SHARING



Photo credit: Josselyn Nuekom- RAI RSC CSO representative.

Cross-partner Learning Visit

24th – 27th October 2021 – The RAI RSC CSO representative visited Malaria Consortium implementing area in Mondulkiri province, Cambodia. The objective of the visit was to understand the approach and intervention to reach at-risk populations in the forest and nearby. The visit was also conducted to support the CSO platform activities and stakeholder engagement in Cambodia, as well as inform the RSC on the success and challenges CSO experiencing. Learning from the visit was shared with the partners and RSC members during the meeting.

Active Learning Workshop

On the 17th – 19th of November, The platform participated and contributed to an active learning workshop on improving Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) networking, and enhancing creative thinking on RAI3E activity design for their communities. The workshop was organized by Raks Thai Foundation, Thailand. Together with Raks Thai Foundation, ALIGHT, and World Vision Foundation of Thailand Project implementing staff had an opportunity to learn the SBCC aspect and approach from this workshop.



02 LEARNING AND INFORMATION SHARING

Joint International Tropical Medicine Meeting 2021.



The Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University hosted the Joint International Tropical Medicine Meeting (JITMM), the largest tropical-medicine conference in Southeast Asia. The platform participated in the conference and also coordinated and supported partners for their participation.

Symposium On Civil Society's Perspective On Community Engagement On Research

The CSO platform secretariat and its partner Malaria Consortium were given the opportunity to present learning from the RAI grant implementation on civil society's perspective on community engagement on research to the Australian malaria researchers to better understand affected communities' needs and civil society organizations' involvement within research. The objective was to learn and share the importance of community engagement in research; discuss real-life case studies of community engagement in research from a researcher's perspective and from a community perspective; and finally, distill key principles and next steps.



Photo credit: MAM

03 STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Vietnam



Photo credit: CHD

The CSO platform coordinated with the Center of Health Consultation and Community Development (CHD) to support community health volunteers and the Community Malaria Action Team (CMAT) network providing awareness-raising materials for malaria and COVID-19 prevention. The CSO platform helped volunteers and CMAT with face masks, hand sanitizer, and raincoats with awareness messages.

The materials were delivered during training for the new volunteers and CMAT in Phu Yen province, Vietnam.

The CSO platform secretariat and CHIAs in Laos held a workshop to strengthen Community Network in Champasak province. The workshop was chaired by the Head of Communicable Disease Control, in Champassak province. This workshop incorporated CSOs and other key stakeholders to strengthen coordination, communication and improve capacity from national to sub-national level in addressing Vivax malaria targeting malaria workers and volunteers at the district and village level.

Lao PDR



Photo credit: CHIAs

Thailand



In partnership with the ALIGHT RAI3E team, the CSO platform organized a community network strengthening activity in Kanchanaburi province. The activity bring district-level stakeholders and communities together and learned to conduct a needs assessment and work together on creating the project Behavior Changes Communication and Community Mobilization(BeCom) on Malaria prevention. The BeCom project is a local initiative led by the community. In addition, the platform provided technical support to develop training for community health workers and migrant volunteers on reaching out to risk populations at the workplace and providing them malaria prevention, testing, and treatment services [full report](#)

04 TOOLS AND ASSESSMENT

COVID-19 Mitigation Tools

The CSO platform produced practical, simple-to-use, illustrative guidebooks for community health workers and malaria workers. Following two guidebooks were produced in 2021

- Job-aid for Malaria Volunteers to safely deliver malaria services during COVID-19 Pandemic
- COVID-19 guide for community healthcare worker and malaria worker

The tools contain information such as COVID-19 Prevention, COVID-19 vs Malaria signs and symptoms, how to deliver malaria services during COVID-19, and finally, what to do if a community health worker has been in contact with a COVID-19 infected person. [download](#) tools.

Moving Steadily Towards Malaria Elimination In Times of COVID-19: A Case Study In The Greater Mekong Subregion

APMEN, APLMA, and Malaria Free Mekong have jointly produced a case study that highlighted the elimination activities done in the GMS countries by partners and mitigating COVID-19 challenges as well as responding to the pandemic across the GMS region.

The publication highlighted the importance of three factors that contribute to malaria elimination which include 1) political commitment, 2) leveraging the network of community health workers/volunteers, and 3) readjusting and intensifying malaria elimination. [Download](#) the full case study.

Integrated Diseases Handbook

The Malaria Free Mekong produced the 'Integrated Disease Guidebook' in 5 languages: Lao, Thai, Myanmar, Khmer, and English. The handbook is prepared to support community health workers and malaria volunteers with basic information about other diseases than malaria as an additional supporting tool. The book's content covered the following diseases: Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Dengue, Malnutrition, Diarrhoea, and respiratory infections. Each of the sections provided information on General information about the disease, transmission, risk groups, risk behaviors, symptoms and signs, prevention, testing, treatment, and management. [Download](#)

05 SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

The CSO platform regularly updates social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The content focuses on Malaria, Malaria innovations from around the world, COVID-19 News and prevention, and partner's stories. In 2021, the CSO platform published 163 posts on social media which can be divided into shared content and original content. The number of original contents is 53: 10 videos, and 43 pictures/stories.



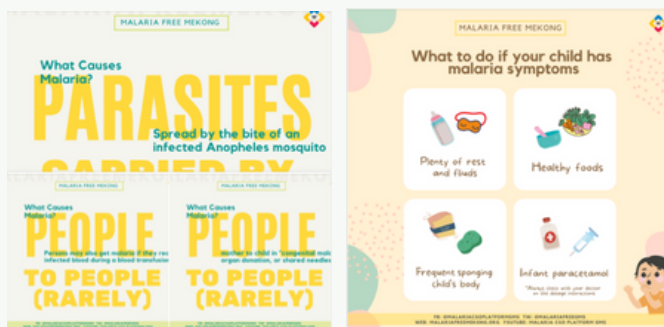
Community Stories

Community stories were developed and shared with platform partners and networks. Stories highlight volunteer and community workers' experiences, project best practices, and challenges.

[For stories please click here](#)

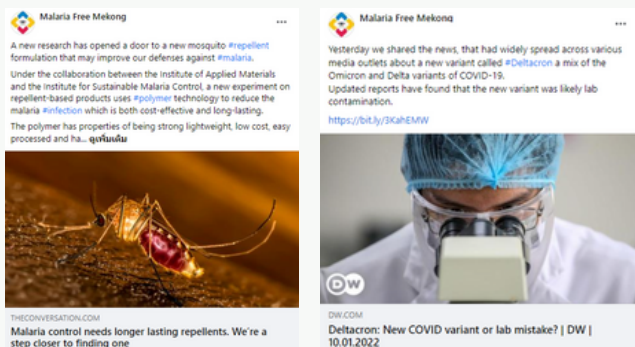
Infographics

The CSO platform has produced 13 posts of Malaria information in the format of a set of photos and infographics to attract the audience and also make it easy to understand.



News – update on Malaria and COVID-19

The platform also shared malaria and COVID-19 related news, updates, and interesting research that are useful for the partners on malaria and COVID-19.



06 ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGN

#Worldmaskweek Campaign

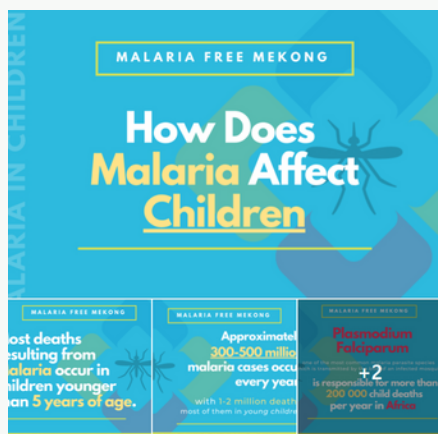
The Malaria Free Mekong contributed 7 posts on social media to the #WorldMaskWeek campaign during 12 – 18 July 2021. The posts included 1 article, 2 [infographics](#), and 4 videos in [Thai](#), [Myanmar](#), [Vietnamese](#), and [Lao](#). The campaign objective is to highlight information on COVID-19 prevention and the proper use of masks and to help people in each country to understand the importance of masks and encourage them to wear masks for COVID-19 prevention.



Malaria In Children

The CSO platform produced a set of informational images on malaria in children. This series has 3 sets of posts:

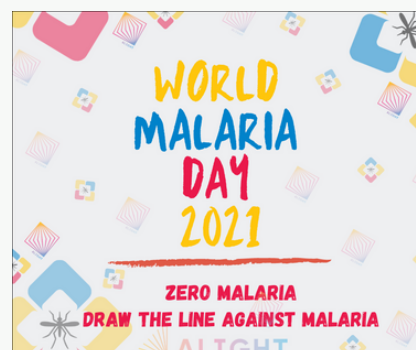
- [Why do children get malaria and why is it so important?](#)
- [How does malaria affect children?](#)
- [What are the signs and conditions of malaria in children?](#)



World Malaria 2021 Campaign

The CSO platform conducted an online campaign for World Malaria Day to celebrate the success of the enormous effort in the fight against malaria and highlight the global effort to end malaria. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the malaria pandemic across Mekong regions, emphasize the great progress of the malaria fight around the world, and amplify the voices of malaria heroes around the world. see the videos in the campaign.

- [Josselyn Neukom, CSO Reps](#)
- [Maxine Whittaker, CSO Reps](#)
- [Dr. Moh Moh Lwin, PSI, Myanmar](#)
- [Tuan Dang Nguyen, VPHA, Vietnam](#)
- [Viengkhone Souriy, CHIAs, Laos PDR](#)
- [Wasurat Homsud, Raks Thai Foundation, Thailand](#)
- [Linna Khorn, CRS, Cambodia](#)



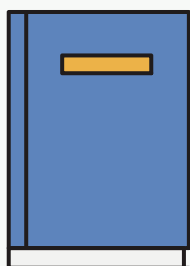
07 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR 2021



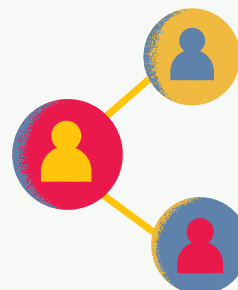
47 National Consultations



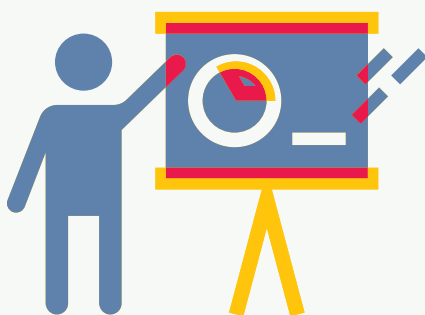
6 Regional Consultation



1 Tools of Capacity Development



4 Community Network Building



3 Capacity Strengthening



1 Cross-learning Visit



15 Participation in malaria events

08 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY PARTNERS



“With great obstacles comes great opportunities”

This year our CSO partners experienced a multitude of challenges from the global COVID-19 pandemic to flooding in the implementation areas. COVID-19 related travel restrictions and measures had a major impact on implementing projects in all 5 countries. Most of the activities planned were changed to virtual or door-to-door implementation. **In Cambodia**, the implementing CSOs faced challenges with the population movement and information about MMP along the border. Most of the volunteers' tablet is broken therefore unable to record data on time. **In Laos**, some of the partners reported stockout of RDT and ACT for a short period of time, volunteers and staff did not have sufficient PPEs including face masks and hand sanitizer. **In Thailand**, the dengue outbreak and COVID-19 are adding an additional workload to local health authorities. Patients are not able to come for the follow-up. Conflict **in Myanmar** is increasing increased population movement on the border including illegal border crosses. Whilst **in Vietnam**, the COVID-19 lockdown has affected the supply chain which has led to supplies not being delivered on time. This has also led to the delay in LLIN distribution. Finally, due to the political instability in Myanmar, there has been a far more noticeable rise in the number of positive cases which has led to shortages of key commodities including antimalarial drugs and RDT. Banking and financial constraints continue and there has been an interruption in drug supply and online data reporting. Project staff and volunteers' security is one of the major concerns.

09 OPPORTUNITIES AND INNOVATIONS

Due to the unique challenge that 2021 has brought, this has led partners to think divergently and produce innovative approaches to their challenges. All CSOs **utilize virtual platforms such as zoom** for meeting and monitoring their project implementation. Further approaches include; **door-to-door distribution** of LLINs instead of mass LLIN campaign distributions and **Malaria Job-aids** were also produced to help facilitate an easy method of recording data and reporting for VMWs. Furthermore, some CSOs were able to support their staff and volunteers to get **COVID-19 vaccinations** to ensure the safety of workers and continue services.

In Thailand, a community malaria working group was created and supported by CSO partners to coordinate between the community, CSOs, and the local government authorities which **focused on sustainability** to continue after donors or CSOs leave.



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The Malaria Free Mekong would like to thank malaria workers, volunteers, and partners for their perseverance and dedication towards malaria elimination by 2030

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