



Community members participating in a positive deviance orientation

# PROJECT BRIEF

## Positive deviance pilot

The aim of this study is to pilot an innovative positive deviance approach in order to increase health knowledge and improve attitudes and practice around malaria in high-risk communities in Myanmar

### Project outline

Malaria Consortium is implementing an innovative project that will pilot positive deviance in six villages of Kyunsu Township, in Kadan Kyun – the largest island in the Mergui Archipelago, and a high-risk malaria area of Thanintharyi region in southern Myanmar. The majority of Kadan Kyun's population is involved in rubber tapping and fishing, occupations which further increase an individual's risk of malaria.

The positive deviance (PD) approach is a mechanism for promoting positive knowledge, attitudes and behaviour around malaria prevention and control. It identifies existing positive, preventative and care-seeking behaviours in the community, empowering people to share these behaviours with the rest of their community.

PD recognises that in most societies, the uncommon behaviours of a few successful 'positive deviants' enables individuals and their families, who may have the same or worse resources as their neighbours, to find more effective solutions to pervasive problems. A PD inquiry rapidly identifies – at low cost and with the community – those uncommon practices linked to a good outcome that can be spread more widely in the community through a follow-on programme.

Malaria Consortium, along with partner the Myanmar Medical Association (MMA), conducted a qualitative PD process, including focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with community members across six villages, to

#### Country

Myanmar

#### Donor

UK Government/UKaid

#### Length of project

April 2013–March 2014

#### Partners

Myanmar Medical Association



Positive deviance volunteers in Kyun Su Island attending a monthly meeting

establish standard behaviours and identify potential role models (positive deviants) within the community. A quantitative survey was also conducted in the target communities to establish the base line for the PD project.

The volunteers and role models received training in the identified positive behaviours, malaria prevention and control, and communication and facilitation skills.

The positive deviance pilot in Myanmar is part of Malaria Consortium's wider behavioural change communication activities and seeks to investigate how positive deviance can support efforts to reduce malaria. The experience and outcomes of this project will inform recommendations to scale up the approach across other high-risk areas of the country.

## Project objectives

- » Evaluate the effectiveness of a positive deviance approach in order to increase knowledge, attitudes and practice related to malaria in at-risk communities
- » Empower the positive deviant role models to be essential to behavioural change communication
- » Provide relevant and appropriate health education on malaria control to six communities in Kyun-su, Myanmar
- » Contribute towards the elimination of artemisinin-resistant parasites by supporting innovative ways of implementing behavioural change communication activities



Each village maps the homes visited by volunteers to identify local positive deviance practices

A 'village malaria map' (a visual and participatory monitoring tool) developed by the volunteers to record malaria cases, shows the coverage of PD sessions and is used to plan future events. Role models conduct regular sessions in their communities to share the PD behaviours with other community members, and also meet monthly with Malaria Consortium, the Township Medical Officer and the MMA team to discuss challenges and achievements.

### This project supports efforts to deliver:

- ✓ Malaria control
- ✓ Capacity building / human resource development
- ✓ Behaviour change communication / Information, education, communication
- ✓ Operational research
- ✓ Support for at-risk populations

#### Malaria Consortium Asia

Room No 805, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University  
420/6 Rajavidhi Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand  
Tel: +66 (0)2 354 5628

info@malariaconsortium.org  
www.malariaconsortium.org

**malaria consortium**

disease control, better health