

Strategies to Prevent (STOP) Spillover

Impact Brief

Cambodia

A Community Dialogue Process to Co-Design Bat Spillover Risk Reduction Interventions

Activity 2.2.2.3: Community-level risk reduction interventions at cave-associated bat guano harvest sites

INTRODUCTION

In November 2023, after a thorough site selection process, bat caves in two locations were identified and selected for crucial interventions: Mount Kuhear Loung in Kampot province and Mount Reach Trob in Battambang province. Both caves are under the careful stewardship of well-established community-based organizations.

Building on the approved site selection report, the STOP Spillover team held a community dialogue in January 2024. This dialogue aimed to involve key stakeholders, especially those involved in bat guano handling, in two critical steps:

- **Understanding Baseline Risks and Practices:** The dialogue allowed for a comprehensive assessment of existing risk factors and current practices related to bat guano handling in the communities.
- **Co-Designing Effective Interventions:** By actively involving community members, the dialogue facilitated the collaborative design of effective risk reduction interventions tailored to the specific needs and context of each location.

Members of the newly established OH-DReaM Working Group (OH-DReaM WG) were fully engaged as facilitators for the process. To ensure productive and inclusive discussions, they received prior training in best practices and guidelines for community dialogue. Their active participation helped foster a collaborative and productive dialogue process.

THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Outcomes

- The community dialogue was successfully facilitated by the OH-DReaM WG members from the Communicable Diseases Control Department, General Department of Animal Health and Production, Provincial Department of Health, Provincial Department of Environment, Forestry Administration's Cantonment, and a dedicated community leader.
- Stakeholders gained a clear understanding of the project's objectives and potential benefits.
- Stakeholders readily embraced the community dialogue's purpose and processes, actively participating in discussions and sharing their insights.



Training for the community dialogue's facilitators



A group of facilitators performed a health risk ranking mock exercise in Battambang Province

- The dialogue effectively gathered valuable baseline information on zoonotic disease awareness, existing risk factors, and current risk reduction practices.
- Through collaborative discussions, participants identified and co-designed potential risk reduction interventions, culminating in a prioritized list of actions.
- A roster of individuals committed to implementing the chosen risk reduction interventions was established, paving the way for tangible actions and sustained impact.

Results

- Twenty three OH-DReaM WG members (11 in Kampot and 12 in Battambang province) were trained in community dialogue techniques and process. They were exposed to concepts, tools, relevant questions and steps, and mock exercises during the training.
- In Kampot province, the community dialogue was conducted with 34 bat guano harvesters, traders, and transporters (50% women).
 - Two plenary sessions (on [a] problem and solution identification and analysis, and [b] intervention co-design); and three breakout group discussions ([a] male bat guano harvester group (14 pers.), [b] female bat guano harvester group (14 pers.), and [c] bat guano trader and transporter group (3 men, and 3 women) were conducted and facilitated.
 - Nine potential risk reduction interventions were identified and prioritized.
 - Four interventions were selected and co-designed.
 - All bat guano harvesters and traders were committed to implementing the interventions; each decided to try at least one and up to all four interventions and shall be able to cover 10-50% of the costs on their own.
- In Battambang province, 25 bat guano harvesters, carriers, packers, and transporters actively participated in the dialogue.
 - One plenary session (on similar themes covered in Kampot province); and two breakout group discussions ([a] female bat guano harvester group (13 pers.), and [b] male bat guano harvester group (12 pers.)) were facilitated.
 - Seven potential risk reduction interventions were identified and prioritized.
 - Five interventions were selected and co-designed.
 - All bat guano harvesters were committed to implementing the interventions; each decided to try at least one and up to all five interventions and shall be able to cover 20-50% of the costs on their own.



A community dialogue session in Kampot with female bat guano harvesters



A community dialogue session in Battambang with male bat guano harvester group

STOP Spillover Cambodia support to Cambodia's GHSA and JEE scores.

Year 4 Activities	GHSA priorities	JEE score (2016)
Activity 1.2.6.1 Bat guano farm study (continued from Y3)	Category 1: Preventing the emergence or release of pathogens with potential for international concern: Zoonotic diseases (1.2) and biosafety (1.4)	Indicator P.5.1 Surveillance of zoonotic diseases (JEE Score 2 for P4.1 surveillance systems in place for priority zoonotic diseases; and JEE Score 2 for P6.2 biosafety training and practices)
Activity 2.2.2.2 Coordination and capacity building of sentinel surveillance team		
Activities 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.3: Community level risk reduction interventions	3.5 Risk Communications	Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Indicator R5.2: Risk Communication and R5.3 Community Engagement (JEE score 3 for R5.4 Communication engagement with affected communities)