Ms Dechen Pemo is the current Assistant Program Officer at the Vector Borne Disease Control Program based at the Department of Public Health in Thimpu, Bhutan. Ms Pemo has a Bachelor of Science from Tadong College in Sikkim and obtained her Masters of Tropical Medicine, majoring in Medical Entomology, in 2012.

Ms Pemo’s fellowship was focused on capacity building in vector borne disease control program under Department of Public Health based in Gelephu Bhutan. This involved Ms Pemo learning how to conduct biochemical assays that can be used to detect insecticide resistance mechanisms in mosquitoes, and the techniques and technologies that come with them. With Bhutan’s elimination efforts coming very close to reaching their goal, insecticide resistance remains one of the threats that could potentially impact the success of the program.

Ms Pemo was hosted by the Department of Medical Entomology at Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand. There her supervisor was Associate Professor Narumon Komalamisra, the head of the Medical Entomology Department, whose expertise lies with vector genetics, vector control and molecular entomology.

Ms Pemo enjoyed her time in Bangkok immensely, and has brought back many valuable skills to her home country. When asked about her experience; she said that the learning had been both challenging and enjoyable.

Ms Pemo is looking forward to implementing the techniques she gained through her fellowship, when the new facilities and laboratory space for mosquito cultivation in Bhutan are completed in the near future. In addition, there were many other skills Ms Pemo acquired during her fellowship that will be useful outside of her main objectives. She will be able to incorporate all the new information she has learnt from her time at Mahidol University into her training of new entomological staff in Bhutan.

“Without the APMEN fellowship, I would have not been able to acquire and update my knowledge and skills on the biochemical technique for monitoring the insecticide which is one of the main stay for vector control in Bhutan. I am sure that the knowledge which I have gained here through APMEN fellowship will contribute immensely in achieving the goal of my country, ‘Elimination of Malaria by 2020’”