



Villagers attending safe migration community campaign in Vientiane Province.

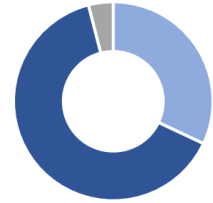
KEY FACTS

Population: 7.1 million

Urban Population: 33%

Population Density: 27 people/ km²

Age Structure:



■ Age 0-14 ■ Age 15-64 ■ Age 65+

✈ International Airports: 4

➔ Points of Entry (PoEs): 107

** all border checkpoints remain closed*

Migration Status

No. of Foreigners in country: 48,275

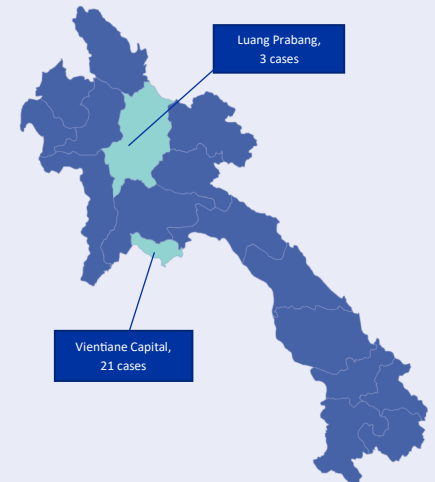
No. of Laotians abroad: 483,021

COVID-19 Situation in Lao PDR:

24 confirmed, 23 recovered, 0 death.

Quarantine & Isolation Facilities: 32

People in Quarantine facilities: 2,878



SITUATION OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused more than 44 million confirmed cases, and over one million deaths around the globe since 16 January 2020. The outbreak has caused unprecedented impacts on human mobility and leave migrants and mobile populations among the most vulnerable as they often lack access to social security.

Lao People's Democratic Republic confirmed case 24 on 20 October 2020. With the new patient being an imported case, the country has had no new local infections since 12 April 2020. International, local and traditional Points of Entry (PoEs) nationwide remain closed, except for designated PoEs that are approved to open for logistics purposes. Lao migrant workers are allowed to return via various PoEs.

According to Prime Minister's Notice No.1202 /PMO issued on 31 October, the Lao Government will continue the consultation on relaxing entry and exit measures between Lao People's Democratic, ASEAN member states, and Japan. The Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Public Security, and local authorities are assigned to strengthen monitoring of border checkpoints and prevent crossings of irregular migrants.

While the Royal Thai Government further extended the State of Emergency until the end of November, more exceptions are made under the new normal. A group of 41 tourists from China on 20 Oct were the [first foreign tourists visiting Thailand](#) since the ban on commercial flights in April. IOM is closely monitoring for further development regarding the relaxation of re-entry requirements for Lao migrant workers returning to Thailand.

A STORY FROM AN INTERNAL MIGRANT

The Northern and Southern Bus station in Vientiane Capital are transit hotspots for internal migrants searching for jobs in the Capital or neighbouring Thailand. There are numerous routes running across Lao People's Democratic Republic and crossing the border to China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Ever since the pandemic, travel restrictions in place have significantly changed the mobility flows at these locations.

Kham was one of the many Laotians who had to change their plans. Initially planning to go Thailand in search of job opportunities, the COVID-19 situation left him with limited options as the borders remain closed. As a contingency, he is now hoping to find a shop assistant job in Vientiane Capital, as there are more opportunities compared to other provinces.



PROPOSED RESPONSE AND ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED DURING OCTOBER, 2020

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP



- Ongoing monitoring and sharing on the situation of migrant workers returning from neighbouring countries.
- Provided direct assistance to four stranded Mongolian nationals and facilitated their return to Mongolia through coordination with the Lao Government, Mongolian Embassy, and IOM Mongolia. The support included expenses for their immediate needs (accommodation, electricity bill, food, medicines, visa overstay fees) and some COVID-19 information sheets. The four migrants safely arrived to Mongolia on 19 October 2020.

RISK COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



- Distributed 4,042 copies of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on employment information, psychosocial support, dengue/ malaria prevention, avian flu, HIV/AIDS prevention, reproductive health, and COVID-19 precautions to local communities.
- Distributed 400 polo shirts and 400 bags with COVID-19 messaging to 18 villages in Vientiane province.
- Conducted safe migration community campaigns in three villages with high migration flows in Vientiane province, reaching 245 direct beneficiaries.
- Provided safe migration training to 52 provincial, district, and village level officials in Vientiane province.
- Distributed 36 USBs with key messages on safe migration and HIV/AIDS prevention to district and village officials.
- Continued the [bus campaign](#) on safe migration and COVID-19 prevention. The number of passengers reached is estimated at 2,461 people per day across five routes.

SURVEILLANCE



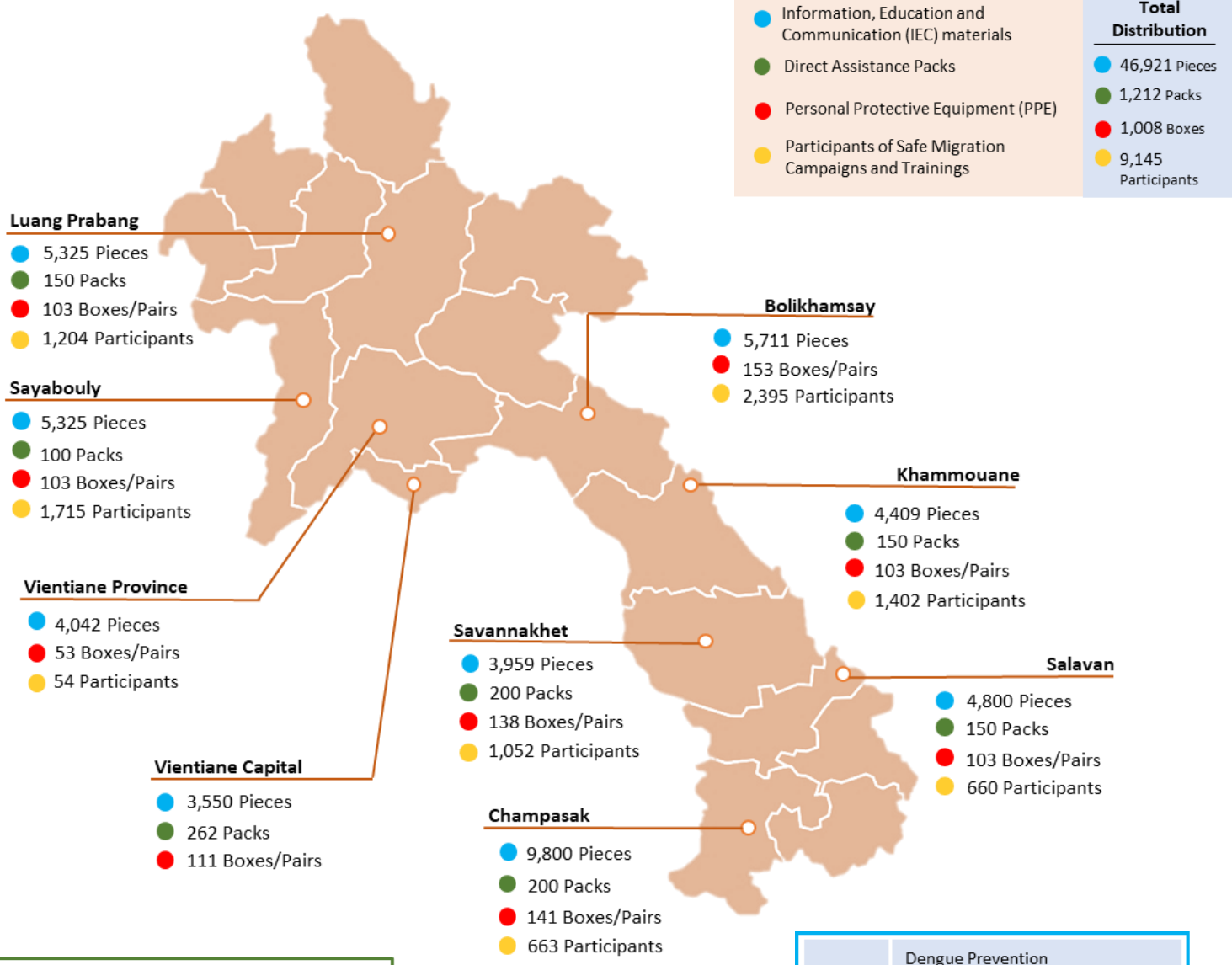
- Using the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) flow monitoring survey tool, IOM interviewed 312 Lao migrants at frequently used internal transit points and bus routes since July. The survey sets to enhance the understanding of human mobility amid COVID-19, assess migrants' situations, and support evidence-based interventions.
- Published the [Returning Migrant Survey #2](#), which provides insights into the conditions of 326 returned migrants who were staying at the quarantine centres at the time of the interviews. Questions were asked on their profiles, migration journey, onward plans, and how COVID-19 impacted their lives. Additionally, a section focusing on 40 Victims of Trafficking was produced to demonstrate the impacts COVID-19 has on vulnerable groups.

POINTS OF ENTRY (PoEs)



- Conducted five [rapid assessments](#) at Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge II and III in Savannakhet and Khammouan, Savan International Airport (SVN), Vangtao-Xongmek Checkpoint, and Pakse International Airport (PKZ) in Champasak.
- Met with the five PoE authorities to collect first-hand information on border management and identify gaps.
- Handed over Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supports and IEC materials to the visited PoEs to address their imminent and short-term needs.
- Together with UNODC and WHO, IOM provided Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Training to 55 PoE frontline officials from Wattay International Airport and Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge I to strengthen border management response under the COVID-19 pandemic.

ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTED FROM JUNE—OCTOBER, 2020



1. Components of Direct Assistance Pack



2. Components of PPE

HEALTH (WHO)	Dengue Prevention
	Malaria Prevention
	Avian Flu Prevention
	Basic Health
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (UNFPA)	Family Planning, Noi
PARENTING (UNICEF)	Relieving Stress
IOM / IOM JOB CENTER INFOSHEET	
UNAIDS INFOSHEET	
LAO WOMEN'S UNION INFOSHEET	
CENTER OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION FOR HEALTH INFOSHEET	

3. List of IEC Materials

IOM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE IS SUPPORTED BY...



Australian Government



From the People of Japan



UNITED NATIONS
LAO PDR



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



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