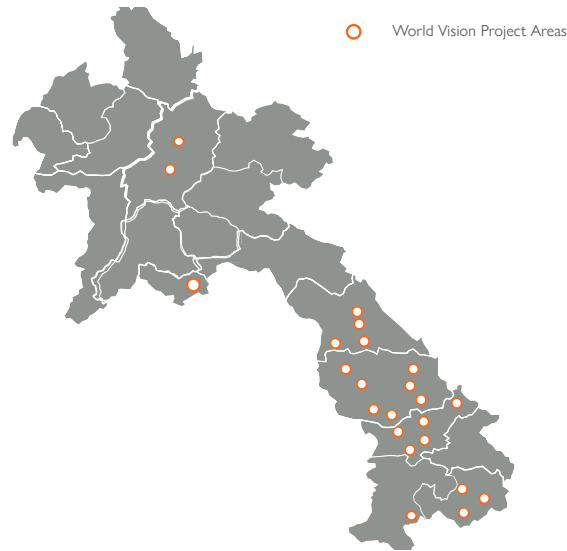




COVID 19 Update

4 new cases were detected during this reporting period: 2 Lao laborers from Thailand, detected 20 January and 2 February in Champasak province, a Chinese man who illegally entered Lao PDR by boat across the Mekong from Thailand to Bokeo province detected 21 January 2021 and a Lao national returned by air from Malaysia, detected on 24 January 2021 in Vientiane capital. Until 4 February 2021, there have been 102,332 samples tested, 45 cases positive, with 41 people recovered, 4 people undergoing treatment in hospital and zero deaths. Lao PDR has started COVID-19 vaccinations, with 300 medical staff receiving the first vaccinations at Mittaphab Hospital on 28 January as part of Sinovax Phase 3 trials. Wider level vaccination under the COVAX program is scheduled to start next quarter.



○ World Vision Project Areas

Overview of Covid-19 Cases

New cases: 4
Total cases: 45
Total deaths: 0
Total recoveries: 41

Lao PDR Administrative Profile

18
Provinces
 7,013,000
people

Source: Ministry of Health covid-19 bulletin

World Vision's Operations

7 Provinces, 23 Districts
 WVI-L staff 161
 Direct beneficiaries 178,869
 Children 58,068



COVID Response

Savannakhet Quarantine Camps: In partnership with WFP and the Savannakhet Government, World Vision's food assistance and cash project continued to support returnees, mainly migrant workers returning from Thailand in the Kaysone and Songkhone Quarantine centers. Returned migrant workers were required to stay in the quarantine centers during which time they received meals and upon receiving a negative test were allowed to return to their homes to self-isolate. To support compliance with the continued home quarantine, 528 migrant returnees were supported with a cash provision of LAK 200,000 (with total LAK 105,800,000 distributed). During January 2021, there was a large influx of returnees due to an upsurge in COVID 19 cases in Thailand, with a total of 917 people including 443 women entering into quarantine at the centers supported by WVIL. 27,794 meals were provided in January and additional shelter and sanitation needs due to the sudden influx shared with IOM and other partners. As of 29 January, 267 people remain in the supported quarantine centers.

Key Concerns



The influx in numbers of **returning migrant workers** remains difficult to predict and plan around as is reliant on the case-load of COVID 19 in neighboring countries, particularly Thailand and Vietnam. Due to the limitation of facilities in the Provincial Government Quarantine Centers concerns remain around the quality of sanitation and shelter facilities, access to required non-food items, including personal hygiene kits, and protection of women and children. **The well-being of Children** within these camps is of concern to WVIL as we recognize the lack of play materials and high levels of anxiety experienced by those within the centres.



The economic situation faced by migrant workers once they leave the center is highlighted by stories of migrant returnees spending the last of their savings in the lengthy process to return to their homes in Lao PDR. The majority of them lack social protection measures and do not have the skills or resources to attain a decent job or initiate business. There is a need for programming to support their **economic recovery and resilience**, and build their own social protection net. This should be done in conjunction with programming for youth and other vulnerable families living in rural areas and affected by the crisis, who are also at risk of falling into negative coping mechanisms, which could lead to exploitation.



WVI is concerned with the current level of community resilience and readiness to recover from shocks, climate-related such as floods, droughts, or others. The new Law on Disaster Management (2020) outlines the establishment of disaster committees at different level, including in villages. There is a need to support their structure and capacity building so to led emergency preparedness and response plan, such as the creation of **community early warning systems**, in order to allow forecasted early action and forecasted based financing.

Accelerating Healthy Agriculture for Nutrition Project: Under the ongoing integration of COVID 19 actions into the AHAN project, 8 WASH/COVID-19 awareness events were organized with the participation of 820 villagers, 234 men, and 586 women in Saravan province. Village Community News board constructions were supported in 124 target villages to display Health information including both COVID-19 related information and WASH posters.

Access to water to fight COVID-19: WVI has initiated COVID-19 integration activities in Xebangfai in partnership with Khammuane Government and the Foundation Group EDF. Between November and December 2020, a participatory approach has been conducted in 9 villages in the district to input in the installation of the new water systems, including the development of a safe and sound structure plan and bill of quantities. To combat Covid-19, access to water and basic sanitation is essential.



Flood Response

- WVIL implemented a Cash program to assist the food security needs of vulnerable households and their transition back to normal life, in partnership with Savannakhet and district Government, ECHO, Save the Children, World Vision Japan and BCEL. LAK 500,000 for each household was distributed in two districts severely affected by the flooding of last October 2020.
- In December 2020, under the SAFER II project (ECHO funded) in Xonnabuly district, WVIL distributed cash to 1,377 vulnerable households (9,123 beneficiaries), and a post monitoring was conducted in January 2021.
- Initial findings from the post monitoring indicate that cash was most commonly used for: 1. Food and rice to improve food security and nutrition needs, 2. Seeds, fertilizer, community-food storage, aquaculture items, 3. Building materials to restore damaged houses along with house safety kits, 4. Education fee for children and 5. Medical supplies for primary health care
- The Japan funded flood response in Thapangthong District completed the second cash distribution for 321 households and commenced post monitoring, adjusted also to assess primary education needs. Cleaning activity and transport for construction materials in preparation for repairs is underway in 2 flood-affected schools.
- Under the support received from WV Australia to support the repair of flood damaged schools in Xonnabouly, a kick off meeting was conducted and staff oriented. Renovation of schools commenced and the upgrading of the playground in Thankhamluem School completed.

Impact Stories



Facing COVID-19 has been a challenge for Bear, 26 years old, who along with his wife, is a returned Lao migrant from a neighboring country. “When I heard that we needed to quarantine for 14 days before returning back to our family, I worried so much about where do we stay and how do we survive for each day, we did not have money”. World Vision has been partnering with World Food Programme and the Lao Government to ensure Lao migrants wouldn't suffer from hunger and treating them with dignity during those uncertain times, by providing daily meals to the

returning migrants in the biggest quarantine center in Savannakhet province.

“I am very happy that we got very good support during our stay in the quarantine center, we got daily meals and a safety place to stay. Thank you to donors for provided very convenient for us during our quarantine”.

“The water came spilling from the river into my village. It took everything from us. The rice fields and crops won't produce this year, and we also lost some animals. We all had to go to higher places to run away from the water, and we desperately needed food”. - explains Chanh, now in her 8th month of pregnancy.

Last October, Mrs. Chanh, and her community were victims of yet another flooding episode in southern Laos, caused by multiple successive tropical storms South-East Asia experienced. To mitigate the impact of the flood, World Vision through partnership with ECHO, Provincial Labour and Social Welfare, and Save the Children, has supported the most affected communities in Xonnabuly. Through the SAFER II Project World Vision has provided cash to 1373 of the most vulnerable households to compensate for their loss.

“I am very happy that we received the money from the project. The 500,000 KIP have been helpful for our family, to buy food during my pregnancy”.



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