Covid-19 cases rapidly increased after the Lao New Year celebration in mid-April, with 15 of 18 provinces recording positive cases. All Provinces issued an initial 14 day-lockdown following the lead of the central government from April 22, 2021 to control the outbreak. On 4 May, the lockdown was extended to 20 May 2020, with restrictions varying per province.

The Ministry of Health together with UN, development and civil societies partners are accelerating the COVID-19 vaccination program, with the 2021 target for vaccination increased from the original plan of 22% to 50% of the population (19% of the target had been reached by 5 May). All Provinces have a dedicated hotline number easing access to medical consultation and support on COVID-19 (covid19.gov.la).

Our Recommendations

Draw on listening to what boys and girls have told us (World Vision’s Act Now report)

* Ensure social protection measures are in place for the most vulnerable and equitable access to Vaccines.
* Children and young people must be protected from violence, equipped with practical help to fight the spread of COVID-19, supported to continue their education, and their families provided with livelihood opportunities.
* Improve access to and availability of age-appropriate and gender-responsive distance education methods to reach the most vulnerable children and young people.
* Distance learning curriculums should include life skills education to help children and young people to recognize and mitigate violence, exclusion, stigmatization and poverty-associated risks. This is crucial to preventing increased rates of child labor and child marriage.
* Act to scale up responses to malnutrition by investing in public health, food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene to address root causes of child malnutrition.
**Quarantine Camps in Savannakhet.** In partnership with WFP and the Savannakhet Province Government, World Vision Lao continued the food assistance program supporting migrant returnees, mainly travelling from Thailand, in the Kaysone and Songkhone Quarantine Centers. Between February to April 2021, 4,950 migrants, including 2,433 women, entered the quarantine centers, and were assisted with 3 meals a day. On 6 April 2021, WFP and the Ministry of Health extended the partnership via multilateral donations received, enabling meal support to continue through to July 2021, recognizing the quarantine protocol has been an essential element in preventing major outbreaks. Please click the below link to view video of a recent visit to the Kaysone Quarantine Centre in Savannakhet, where donors’ support is helping to bring nutritious meals to 500 people daily. [WFP video](#)

**Other response and community based disaster risk reduction and preparation**

* World Vision, in partnership with the district offices of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, has completed the 2020 flood and early recovery response for Thaphangthong District, Savannakhet Province. The project funded by World Vision Japan provided humanitarian assistance to affected communities through a multi-sectorial response including:
  - Unconditional cash transfer to the most affected 337 households
  - 8,880 kg of rice seed and water filter distribution to 296 vulnerable households
  - School renovation, including school furniture provision, to 2 flood-damaged schools
  - Distribution of school uniforms.

Child protection and community feedback and complaint mechanisms emphasized during the humanitarian intervention the importance of child rights and accountability of the project.

* As part of the ongoing Building Secure Livelihoods project, World Vision has increased resilience of households to environmental shocks by facilitating the hazard, vulnerability, and capacity assessment and mapping in 85 villages in Savannakhet and Khammuane Provinces, in partnership with the District Offices of Labor and Social Welfare, and Agriculture and Forestry. This intervention was designed to align with, and strengthen the rollout and operationalization of the recent Lao Law on Disaster Management (2020). The actions included: organizing inclusive meetings with community village members (ensuring participation of women, youth children and people living with disabilities); raised awareness on the new Law; supported the nomination of the village disaster preparedness committee by District Governor; prepared village hazard maps, disaster calendars, and disaster risk reduction plans. The maps and plans produced by the community collaborative effort were fixed onto the Village Hall as an ongoing reminder of the contingency actions agreed upon.

**Impact Story**

Kern, 27 years old, is a returning migrant from Thailand, who quarantined in the Kaysone centre. She was 5 months pregnant during her quarantine period and had left Thailand after the garment factory where she used to work closed due to the impact of COVID-19. Her other nine-year-old child had stayed in Laos living with her parents while she migrated to Thailand for work together with her husband.

“Before the COVID-19 outbreak, our living was good, the job and the factory were providing us employment and food every day. After COVID-19, everything is challenging, we couldn’t work and earn money as usual” said Kern. Kern decided to return home since she was pregnant but she is worried because her main family income has stopped. She

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- Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry