

Oxfam and PACE Project Partners Mobilize on Covid-19 Relief Efforts

As pandemic presses on to second year, many will fall back into poverty

Women, the elderly, children, persons with disabilities, and minority groups are the most vulnerable to socio-economic marginalization. During a pandemic, the challenges and risks experienced by these groups intensify, affecting health and wellbeing, livelihoods, and nutrition.

The impact of the pandemic in Lao PDR is predominantly socio-economic. In recent decades, Laos has made remarkable achievements in reducing poverty. Halving the poverty rate from 40% in 1993 to 18.3% in 2019¹. However, with ongoing disruptions to livelihoods, and income losses caused by halts in regional supply chains and business closures, many are expected to fall back into poverty—pushing the poverty rate to over 20%². Food insecurity levels, compounded by rising food prices³, will continue to impact the nutrition and health of individuals and families, particularly those from low-income households.

To help address and mitigate the shocks experienced by vulnerable groups, Oxfam and Partnership for Citizen Engagement (PACE) programme partners, the National Assembly, the Provincial People's Assembly, and the Lao Youth Union are collaborating on an initiative to provide relief supplies and support to groups who have lost income and livelihoods. Under the project, protective equipment such as masks, hand sanitizer, thermometers, and gloves will be provided to nine provinces for distribution to constituents. Target provinces include Bokeo, Houaphan, Xiangkhuang, Vientiane Province, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Saravanh, Sekong, and Attapue.

“The Delegation of the European Union to the Lao PDR is proud to provide to the National Assembly new COVID-19 prevention material, during this critical time. Today, this is made possible thanks to the excellent cooperation established between the National Assembly and OXFAM, as part of the ‘PACE programme’. The Lao government has done an excellent job in its efforts to prevent COVID-19 spreading and to keep its citizens safe. This additional targeted support will allow OXFAM and partners to continue supporting those most at risk, and further strengthen our collaboration.” – Francesca Arato, EU Delegation to the Lao PDR

The PACE project, funded by the European Union and Oxfam, contributes to good governance and the rule of law as a basis for equitable and inclusive development in Lao PDR. The project engages National Assembly members, Provincial People's Assemblies, parliamentary staff, Mass Organizations, and Lao civil society in nine provinces. It builds skills and knowledge to promote citizen participation through dialogue, outreach missions, and improved interactions with local communities.

1 <https://laopdr.un.org/index.php/en/98698-75th-anniversary-fao-un-says-food-and-nutrition-security-turns-critical-lao-pdr-socio>

2 <https://laopdr.un.org/index.php/en/98698-75th-anniversary-fao-un-says-food-and-nutrition-security-turns-critical-lao-pdr-socio>

3 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/brief/monitoring-the-impact-of-covid-19-in-lao-pdr>

“It’s a privilege to work with our partners the National Assembly, Provincial People’s Assemblies, and the Lao Youth Union on this important issue. Stopping COVID-19 requires everyone engaging together including citizens and their local and national representatives, to ensure the safety of the nation. Oxfam with the support of EU funding through the PACE programme is helping to bridge these voices and increase transparency, accountability and participation for all. Working together is now more important than ever.”

Brooke Bush, Partnerships & Quality Manager, Oxfam in Laos



ENDS

Notes to Editors

- In Lao PDR, the Centre of Information and Education for Health had confirmed 41 cases as of 18th December 2020. Governments have imposed various measures to contain the spread of the virus, including lockdowns of borders, the economy and transportation, virus surveillance through mass testing and contact tracing, as well as social distancing and quarantine policies. Many Laotian migrant workers lost their jobs when shops, retail outlets and local markets in Thailand were closed to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Oxfam in Laos and partners conducted an assessment to gain insights on the [socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 on returnee migrant workers](#).
- The impacts of the pandemic are far reaching and perpetuated by inequality. ‘The Hunger Virus Multiplies: How the coronavirus is fuelling hunger in a hungry world’, Oxfam’s report on the impact of Covid-19 on global hunger, observes global trends that are driving food insecurity and threatening the lives of millions. [Download the brief](#).

Oxfam has had a presence in Lao PDR since the late 1980s and supports in areas such as building civil society capacity, community development, social protection, gender justice and natural resource management. Oxfam in Laos works in a wide range of programs such as: empowering Lao women leaders with capacity and knowledge to develop sustainable livelihoods sources, working with youth-led groups to increase youth participation in development, and collaborating with Trade Unions and the private sector to promote worker rights and access to national welfare schemes.

More information on Oxfam in Laos’ programs can be found on the website: laos.oxfam.org

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[Link to Press Release Media](#)

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Oxfam in Laos team stand in front of supply truck prior to leaving for NA. © Oxfam in Laos



Delivery team unload covid-19 relief materials at the NA building. © Oxfam in Laos

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Delivery team load covid-19 relief materials on to truck at Oxfam Office. © Oxfam in Laos



Kong, Oxfam Support Team. © Oxfam in Laos

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