

Lao PDR Country Office

COVID-19 Situation Report

SitRep No: #9

Date: 28 April 2020

1. Situation in Numbers

Total Confirmed Cases in Country	Total Confirmed new cases in Country (since last SitRep)	Total deaths in Country
19	0	0

Please refer to WHO Sit Reps to populate this table. Available [here](#).

2. Key Issues

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- Key government updates, including mitigation and response measures.
- Brief contextual analysis of the situation, including impact on health, education and other essential services.
- Impact on children and families in ChildFund operational areas.
- Impact and effects on ChildFund team.
- The work of other agencies and ChildFund’s relationship with them.

According to government taskforce - lockdown in Laos could be lifted on 3 May if no new cases of Covid-19 are confirmed, and the situation in neighbouring countries remains stable. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. The taskforce suggested that organizations be allowed to reopen their offices, ensuring civil servants can work as normal, while offices with the capacity to continue working from home may do so.

Restrictions to be lifted

- **Travel:** People may be permitted to travel within their province as necessary.
- **Public Gatherings:** Gatherings, meetings, training sessions, and religious ceremonies of under 50 persons may be held, so long as protective measures are implemented.
- **Sports:** Outdoor sporting events will be allowed, however, participants may not number more than 50.
- **Industrial Production:** Plants, factories, and major development projects may resume operation provided they pass an inspection for proper precautionary measures against the coronavirus.
- **Schools:** Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools will be permitted to reopen (on May 11th per ministerial recommendation).

The taskforce warns that despite the lifting of lockdown measures, people must remain vigilant and continue to apply strict infection prevention measures including wearing face masks, frequent handwashing, and temperature checks.

Certain measures to remain in place

The taskforce report recommends the continuation of certain lockdown measures after 3 May.

- **Interprovincial Travel:** Non-essential travel between provinces will remain prohibited.

- **Closed Borders:** Local and international borders will remain closed for non-essential travel, and visas will not be issued to visitors from countries where Covid-19 is present.
- **Closure of Certain Businesses:** Entertainment venues, karaoke bars, spas, and massage parlours, night market, and indoor sports facilities are to remain closed.

3. Operations Update

3.1 People and Organisational Development

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- Number of staff affected by COVID-19, including the number of staff in self-isolation.
 - International arrivals and departures of staff since COVID crisis.
 - WFH arrangements, including any related challenges.
- There is a system for obtaining permission and arranging to work in the field offices.

3.2 Finance, IT and Administration

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- Challenges that relate to registration, MoU's, contracts, cash transfers and general banking.
 - IT situation.
- Since the beginning of 2019, CFL started using internet online banking to reduce the number checks issuance and finance staff's time going to the bank. This has been effectively implemented and very convenient. Despite the current situation, general cash transfers and banking transactions have been at ease. Finance officer from the field and Vientiane office could prepare all the payment transactions with given token online and SMT members could approve from home.
- All Finance team could access Sun-system from home, thus there should be no issue in closing and reporting one time. The challenge would be the physical documents. Some documents are digitally signed, which possess some difficulties. All and all, all documents will be reviewed and physically signed afterward.
- Month end booking is bit challenging looking at digital copies of documents rather than physical one.
- Sometimes communication among the team is a bit difficult, but the team is putting efforts to address this challenge. .
- Internet connectivity in some area is quite slow and may result in difficulties in accessing online apps
- Purchasing of hygiene materials and health equipment to support to COVID-19 response are limited and suppliers cannot find in provinces

3.3 Security

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- Update on general security level in ChildFund operational areas and security incidents impacting ChildFund since the last situation report. Please include *analysis* where necessary/possible.
- Any changes/updates to the security guidelines/evacuation plans.

n/a

3.4 Office Status

OFFICE	OFFICE STATUS			
	Open, Fully Operational	Majority of staff working from home	100% Working from Home	Shutdown, non-operational
VTE		X		
XKH				
HP				

4. Programs Update

4.1 Programs Activity Level (indicator of current programming level)

OFFICE	PROGRAM OPERATIONS				
	75 - 100%	50 - 74%	25 - 49%	< 25%	0%
VTE		x			
XKH			x		
HP			x		

4.2 Overview of ChildFund Activities (with a focus on COVID work)

Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programme team has explored potential collaboration with UNICEF on the use of LFA platforms to convey learning and COVID related messages to schools/communities - Procurement of PPE and preventive materials under SABEL and CINIA funding was completed and items were handed over to relevant government authorities in HP and XKH - Financial support on COVID awareness raising has been provided to Khoun and Nonghet DHOs to begin activities in which CFL will join where possible
Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SABEL team developed a plan on learning and IEC materials which will be further discussed with CFK for possible funding within SABEL - CFL COVID assistance plan and implementation coordinated and to be shared by 29th April with MoES and Edu Cluster who is mapping out existing assistance from DPs and identifying the gap.
Health:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handed over PPE and preventive materials to provincial government and set a follow-up plan on the use of provided items - Set the plan to monitor COVID awareness raising activities in KO and NH - CINIA team started working on phase2 COVID response/recovery plan with supplying soap and hygiene kits in prospect
SEL:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiated discussion with CINIA team on having R4L youth trainers carry out awareness raising campaigns on COVID preventions to their peers and in their community when schools reopen on 11th May

4.3 Partnerships

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- The status of partner organisations and to what extent they have been able to continue operations during the reporting period.
- What, if any, support, monitoring, information sharing and/or collaboration has taken place with local partners during the reporting period?

- With the government restrictions, our partners (government and NPAs) are in the same situation. The lockdown will end on 03 May 2020.
- Since the new EU PEAR project is on hold, the Grand Funded Project Agreements with our partners (LSDA and ACDA) and project staff recruitment for this project are put on hold too.
- Support provided to the government partners:
 - a. provided the Department of Education and Sports in Huameuang District, Huaphanh Province with necessary supplies such as soap and face masks to people in 62 target villages, and to share knowledge on how to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at the community level, this activities supported by ChildFund Korea.
 - b. provided the Department of Health in Xiengkhouang province with the PPE and prevention materials such as face masks, gloves and thermometers.

4.4 Safeguarding

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Number of child safeguarding incidences reported since the last SitRep:	0
Number of cases open and in progress:	0
Number of cases closed:	0

PSEAH

Number of PSEAH incidences reported since the last SitRep:	0
Number of cases open and in progress:	0
Number of cases closed:	0

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- What new child safeguarding or PSEAH risks have been identified since the last sitrep?
- What new mitigation actions have been implemented to respond to child safeguarding or PSEAH risks since the last sitrep?

N/A

5. Urgent Issues

Include a brief statement on each of the following:

- Urgent or significant issues.
 - Support required from the Sydney Office.
- Managing Transition
 - Plan how to manage the program return after lockdown end on 3 May 2020
 - Build and maintain staff motivation. Support from Sydney is to continue to be in touch with SMT members (particularly HR team) how to maintain team spirit/motivation/courage

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

Provide any additional information here.

ChildFund Laos is going to phase out from Xiengkhouang province (Nonghet and Khoun district), we plan to handover and organise a closing ceremony in early of Jun 20, however if the COVID-19 situation is not improved we may have to delay a bit. The most of staff employment contract in Xiengkhouang province will be terminated on 30 Jun 20. So this is very challenge for project team to handle.