IOM in Migration Health

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) delivers and promotes comprehensive, preventive and curative health programmes which are beneficial, accessible, and equitable for migrants and mobile populations. IOM dedicates its work to address the needs of both migrants and IOM Member States, contributing towards the physical, mental and social well-being of migrants, enabling them and host communities to achieve social and economic development.

IOM in Lao People’s Democratic Republic

IOM Lao PDR has been working closely with the Lao government since 2002, and commencing its migration health programme since 2007. Recently, IOM Lao PDR has developed and implemented a range of health projects in the country, addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), Avian and Human Influenza (AHI), and Malaria. IOM has advocated and coordinated closely with Lao national authorities for the inclusion of migrants in national health policies and action plans responding to the health risks and threats from human rights and public health perspectives. Key components of these programme activities have focused on awareness raising, outreach initiatives, capacity development and social mobilization.

Migration Health Projects in Lao PDR

IOM Lao PDR Flood Response: Health response in Sanamxay district, Attapeu province, July 2018 - currently

The main objective is to support the Lao Provincial Health Department and District Health Office on disease outbreak control and disease prevention for disaster-affected population, with a focus on both physical and mental health.

The main partner is Ministry of Health, Provincial Health Department in Attapeu Province and District Health Office in Sanamxay district.

IOM has provided 4x4 vehicles to support the transportation on the ground for both IOM and government health staff, medical equipment, food and drugs, vaccines and other donated materials.

IOM has also provided basic medical supplies to affected population, and has trained 16 Village Health Workers on communicable disease control and social psychology support.

“Mobile and Migrant Populations: Regional Capacity Development Technical Assistance for Malaria and Communicable Diseases Control in Mobile and Migrant Populations in Lao PDR”, 2016-2018

The Technical Assistance for Malaria and Communicable Diseases Control project is managed by IOM Lao PDR, in partner with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Health (MOH), various health and non-health stakeholders at central and district level, with the support from Asian Development Bank (ADB). This project targets two Southern districts in Champasak and Attapeu provinces, to increase access to malaria testing, treatment and prevention methods for Mobile and Migrant Populations (MMPs). This migrant health project aims to strengthen regional coordination on malaria and communicable disease control in Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) as part of the regional capacity development project.
This project covered 10 districts in two Southern border provinces of Savannakhet and Champasak, which have the highest prevalence of TB in Lao PDR. During the implementation phase, the project successfully screened 363,878 individuals in seven months and built the capacity of 1,628 individuals including health centre staff and village health volunteers on planning and conducting active mass screening. In addition, the project strengthened the capacity of 26 laboratory technicians to conduct Acid Fast Bacilli Microscopy, which improved hard-to-reach populations and migrant communities’ access to health services, and raised their awareness on TB.

This project contributed to Lao PDR’s national behavioral change and outbreak communication response and Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) pandemic preparedness activities for migrants. During the influenza pandemic in 2009, IOM implemented health activities in Vientiane and Bolikhamxay provinces through comprehensive strategies of advocacy, communications, social mobilization, and community involvement. IOM advocated and coordinated closely with the national authorities to ensure the inclusion of migrants in national policies and action plans responding to the influenza threat.

This project targeted selected sites in Borikhamxay province in Lao PDR, aiming to reduce HIV vulnerability and risk among migrants, mobile workers and mobility-affected communities, this was done through capacity building initiatives at the Ministry of Communication, Transportation, Post and Construction (MCTPC) to officials on implementing HIV prevention. During the implementation phase, IOM developed and distributed a migrant-friendly tool- For Life, With Love- a video and life skills activity package on HIV prevention and safe mobility. This was designed to deliver HIV prevention and safe mobility messages to workers in road construction, and to surrounding communities and entertainment venues.