Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Poverty Reduction Fund



TaLoung Village, Nong District, Savannakhet Province, By PRF district team

Final Project Report Progress of Implementation of COVID-19 Pandemic Prevention through Awareness Raising and Information Delivery in the targeted areas of PRF August 2020 – April 2021

This report is a summary of the implementation of the COVID-19 Pandemic Prevention Project through Awareness Raising and Information Delivery in targeted areas of PRF, funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), with a total amount of US\$ 500,000, aiming to support the Government effort to reduce epidemiological risks in the rural areas to save lives through awareness raising, at the targeted villages on how to protect themselves from COVID-19 and any eventual communicable diseases; and transmission of other virus. This report will summarize the project's achievements, challenges, lessons learnt, and some suggestion for future improvement.

Abbreviation

AF	Additional Financing
AL	Agriculture for Livelihood
AWPB	Annual Worl Plan and Budget
CD	Community Development
CDD	Community Driven Development
CEGGA	Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and the Rule of Law
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DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
Deepen CDD	Deepen Community Driven Development
DNO	District Nutrition Officer
DPO	District Planning Office
DRM	Disaster Risks Management
DSEDP	District Social Economic Development Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FRM	Feedback and Resolution Mechanism
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GOL	Government of Lao
GIS	Geography information system
GPAR	Governance Public Administration Reform
HH	Household(s)
HR	Human Resource
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IFR	Interim Un-Audited Financial Report
LAK	Lao LAK (Lao Currency)
LN	Livelihood and Nutrition
LWU	Lao Women Union
LYU	Lao Youth Union
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MNS	Minutes
MoE	Ministry of Education and Sport
МоН	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPL	Non-Performance Loan
NRDS	National Rural Development Strategy
PDO	Project Development Objective
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
PRFIII AF	Poverty Reduction Fund Project III Additional Financing
POM	Project Operational Manual
PM	Prime Minister
PMT	Project Management Team
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNECEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VHV	Village Health Volunteer
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

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I. Background

In early 2020, due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world is considered to be a serious issue, therefore, fighting this pandemic is not only a Global Humanitarian Aid issue but also a Health System issue and ability of local authorities to deliver public services and ensure the safety and wellbeing of Lao citizens nationwide, especially, people in remote areas, including the target areas of PRF, where villagers have limited access to basic information and media about how protect themselves from this virus. Thus, it is important to strengthen their capacity and awareness to prevent and control the spread of this pandemic.

As already mentioned, the growing crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has dire implications for the developing countries like the Lao PDR where the treatment capacity is still weak. As is often the case, the most vulnerable segments of society, especially those living in poverty within the rural area, are being hit the hardest.

Despite the no-death and contaminated case recorded within the rural areas of the Lao PDR, the epidemiological risks are very high due to its inadequate medical test and treatment system. Therefore, the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) has taken the very strictly and carefully preventive measures with the aim to avoid the second wave of Covid-19 infections which will be obviously uncontrollable situation particularly for rural poor people (As already occurred in early 2021 and harder than what happened in 2020).

In addition, with around 200,000 (estimated as of June 2020) Lao returnees from Thailand and other countries have been back home in the countryside. In some cases, many of them crossed the border illegally without passing any immigration controls and medical tests, which is considered to be a risky issue too.

In order to prevent the rural poor from further impoverishment, the local authorities particularly the health sector have been making efforts to fight against the Covid-19 through the awareness raising and provision of some materials. It seems that these efforts made are still far from sufficient to assure the adequate coverage and effectiveness under the Lao rural realities of poverty and ethnicity.

Therefore, on behalf of GoL, the PRF under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has requested financial support from SDC for the immediate term, with a total of US\$ 500,000 and received the approval in July 2020 for nine months' implementation period (August 2020- April 2021).

The objective is to support the GoL's effort to reduce epidemiological risks in the rural areas to save lives through awareness raising, at the targeted villages on how to protect themselves from COVID-19 and any eventual communicable diseases; and transmission of other virus.

II. Implementation Progress and achievements

The implementation had been done according to the Project Proposal (Annex 1), by using the existing mechanism of the PRF, in cooperation with local actors: grassroots organizations such as the Lao Women's Union, district health and educational staff, as well as with other active development projects in the target areas.

During September –2020 April 2021, the PRF team had worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH), particularly the health offices at district level who is the key implementer of this project, this collaboration would help to reduce the risk of duplication with other awareness raising initiatives and ensures the coherence in the messages delivered by the PRF teams. The key activities and achievement against expected results can be summarized as below:

2.1. Development and printing of IEC tools

The development of the IEC tools was done in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Department of Disease and Prevention. This confirmed that the PRF had used existing IEC on Covid-19 preventions that were developed by MoH in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF. Those IEC tools have been used during the awareness raising trainings in the 992 villages and schools which covered by the project activity, including hand sanitizer, 90% alcohol solution, and masks for demonstration during the trainings at the village level. In addition, IEC materials and posters (see posters in Annex 2) have been provided to raise awareness to villagers as well, which is visual and easy to communicate. Details of the equipment were given to all 900 target villages and 92 schools as detailed below:

Table 1: The List of Equipment and Poster have been delivered to target villages and schools

No.	Description	Size Inches	Unit	QTY	Remarks
I	Equipments and Posters:				
1	Posters "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
2	Posters "Coronavirus Disease Symptoms and Prevention"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
3	Posters "Hand Washing Steps"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
4	Posters "Should You Wear a Mask"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
5	Poster "How to Make Antibiotics"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
6	Poster "Protect Other from Getting Sick"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
7	Poster "The Five Keys to Safer Food "	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
8	Poster "Hygiene 3 Types (Eating, Clothing, Personal Cleaning)"	33 x 48	Sheet	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools
9	Coronavirus Disease Protection Hand Book		Book	992	1 Book per village and school
10	Music Production about Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)		Song	3	In Lao, Hmong & Khmu language.
11	Hand Gel (Hand Soap)		Bottle	992	1 Bottle per village and school (1000 ml)
12	Kills Bacteria and Virus Spray/Liquid (Alcohool 90%)		Bottle	992	1 unit (1500 ml) per village and school
13	Face Masks for proctection from virus (normal standard)		Box	992	1 unit per village and school
14	Small Speaker with Bluetooth for Village Implementation Team (VIT)		Village	992	1 unit per village and school
15	Protection materials for Trainers during Trainings		Village	992	For PRF district staff and concern sectors
16	Materials for Making Face Mask Protection		Village	992	For 900 villages and 92 schools

Source: Procurement Unit, PRF office

The PRF also produced a song about COVID-19's prevention that was translated in 3 languages (Lao, Hmong and Khmu), which would be an effective tool to encourage high number of participants in the targeted villages. The PRF team assumed that at least the villagers have understood the concept and basic technic to protect and deal with COVID-19 and other virus that would occur in their villages in future.

Lessons Learned about the procurement of materials:

- The procurement of materials and IEC tools was slightly delayed as some of the equipment had to be imported, especially the small Bluetooth speakers for listening to the song about Covid-19's prevention produced by PRF.
- As urgent actions are being taken as protective measures against Covid-19 pandemic in many villages and schools during this period, it is thus very difficult to implement the procurement process in this situation.
- It would be better if the procurement guidelines are created and accepted by the concerned parties (MOF, WB, etc), and allow the procurement process to be undertaken at the local level so that the local materials can be procured for mask sewing, and the procurement time could be shortened as well. We should also come up with local potential resources (local project procurement staff) to ensure the sustainability of this project.

2.2. Training of Trainers (ToT)

The Training of Trainers was initially planned to be held in one Northern Province and in one Southern province, but since the COVID-19 pandemic was still expanding in the northern part the ToT training was therefore held twice in two locations for the Northern part (Luangprabang and Huaphan). The training was carried out by experts from the Ministry of Public Health and the Lao Women's Union (LWU). The objectives of the training are: (1) to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of how to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic and other viruses and how to train to Village Health Volunteers (VHVs), teachers, and community members in the target areas, and (2) to enable participants to learn how to make a simple mask using locally available material to teach target groups.

The training topics focused on: (1) how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses by raising awareness of the community peoples, promoting hygiene and hand washing, using of mask, social distancing (2) how to make simple mask with locally raw material and (3) how to organize the training in the villages and schools.

The training was held in three locations with a total of 279 participants, 90 of whom were women from the central, provincial and district levels, each representing the Ministry of Health, the Lao Women's Union, the Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and PRF staff. For any district level that wants to form two teams (because there are many target villages) in this case, each relevant office has added one more participant, as detailed in table below:

Table 2: ToT Training of COVID-19 project under PRF

No.	Venue	Date			Participan	ts		Provinces
			Total	Women	Central	Province	District	
1	Luang Prabang	22-23/10/2020	113	28	9	10	94	Huaphan+ Xieng Khuang
2	Saravan	22-23/10/2020	123	44	8	23	88	Salavan+ Savanakhet+ Sekong+ Attapeu
3	Huaphan	26-27/10/2020	43	18	9	15	22	Luangprabang+ Luangnamtha+ Oudomxay+ Phongsaly
			279	90	26	48	204	

Source: PRF Office, Vientiane 2021

Remark: In the project proposal, we highlighted that at least 5 representatives from district authority, mainly from health, agriculture, education, districts planning, and labour and social welfare offices at each targeted district are invited to join, as at least a total of 175 persons in total to join this project, the actual number is 204 which is higher than the target. In particular, **25** people from the COVID-**19** Provincial and District Task Force for Prevention and Control also participated.

Lessons Learnt:

- To avoid crowded participants (social distancing) we adjusted the ToT accordingly, especially in the northern provinces from one training course into two courses.
- According to the Project Proposal, a one-day ToT was planned, but in practice with many topics to be covered it was therefore not possible to achieve effectively in a day. Therefore, it was necessary to organize a two-day training and to leave some time for discussions and review.
- Also, in the proposal, we missed the participants from the Provincial Taskforce for COVID-19 prevention and control, they are key people to deal with this issue in their province and districts, they should be counted as key participants.

III. Awareness raising on the Covid-19 pandemic

3.1. Awareness Raising for the target groups

The awareness raising and promoting behavior changes in hygiene and handwashing, including other measures of prevention, such as the use of face masks, practicing physical distancing, and reduction of mass gathering are basic concepts to prevent communities from the risks of the pandemic. PRF team in cooperation with district health as well as LWU expressed that these activities are key measures to protect the community from the transmission of highly contagious diseases like COVID-19, and these are ways to keep the

community healthy, as the GoL was gradually lifting the restrictions during the reporting period.

The training was organized in the targeted villages (900) and selected schools (92) and the purpose was to provide community members, VHVs, teachers, and students in the target groups with an in-depth understanding of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses on their own and to educate members of the Village Women's Union, VHVs, and other interested parties on how to make a simple mask using locally available materials for use in the family, as well as in the community.



Picture 1: villagers participated the training of COVID prevention activity

Namnoypaman village, Viengphoukha District, Luangnamtha Province, taken by Ms. Keosomphone

- Main achievements: Village Participation of 57,393 villagers who are representing each household, of which 52% are women and 79% are ethnic, with total of 454,572 beneficiaries which is 10.2% is higher than target (406,999) in 900 villages, 50% of total are women and 83.3% are from ethnic group (See table below).

Table 3: Number of beneficiaries estimated VS actual

	v	Estima	ited number	r of bene	ficiaries	Actual number of beneficiaries			
	#	#				#			
Provinces	District	Villages	Population	Female	Ethnicity	Villages	Population	Female	Ethnicity
Attapeu	3	42	22,779	11,350	15,945	69	28,680	14,271	28,680
Luangnamtha	3	50	19,985	9,758	13,989	68	31,299	15,363	30,708
Luangprabang	6	182	65,455	31,707	45,819	184	82,572	42,104	79,687
Saravan	3	103	55,613	27,137	38,929	100	55,590	27,091	54,371
Savannakhet	5	186	113,132	56,042	79,193	216	119,434	59,353	87,364
Sekong	3	88	30,164	14,733	21,115	107	31,813	15,429	31,813
Huaphanh	4	75	29,868	14,743	20,908	75	28,450	14,275	12,077
Oudomxay	2	20	10,589	5,271	7,412	20	11,447	5,633	11,447

Phongsaly	4	88	29,351	14,661	20,546	88	31,339	15,391	20,236
Xienkhuang	2	65	30,064	14,930	21,045	65	33,948	16,744	22,340
Grand Total	35	900	406,999	200,332	284,900	992	454,572	225,654	378,723
								50%	83%

Source: Vientiane PRF Office, June 2021

Remark: the number of villages is also higher than estimated 92 villages (estimate is 900 while actual 992 villages).

- In the proposal, it was planned to have 5 VHVs per village to participate in the training (target 4,500 VHV), but there are actually only 1 to 3 VHVs per village, hence only 3,082 people were reached. However, since the Lao Women's Union, the Lao Youth Union and some volunteers at village level are key people who will help to continue activities after ending this project, there were hence invited to join the training. The implementation of this project is aligned the policy of PRF through encouraging high number of women and ethnic people to involve in the activity as the result 62% of total VHVs are women and 82% out of total are from ethnic groups.

Table 4: Number of VHVs actual vs target

Provinces	#	# Villages	#VHVs	#VHVs	Women	Ethnic
	District		(Target)	(Actual)		
Attapeu	3	69	212	93	33	93
Luang Namtha	3	68	248	130	80	179
Luang Prabang	6	184	912	796	449	762
Saravan	3	100	517	238	123	238
Savannakhet	5	216	930	948	686	746
Sekong	3	107	442	103	32	103
Huaphanh	4	75	375	266	223	113
Oudomxay	2	20	100	76	33	54
Phongsaly	4	88	440	211	90	140
Xieng Khuang	2	65	325	221	163	110
Grand Total	35	992	4,500	3,082	1,912	2,538
Percentage					62%	82%

Source: PRF Office, Vientiane 2021

- At the 92 selected schools: a total of 643 teachers attended the session of COVID-19 prevention, which is higher than the estimated number of 184 as mentioned in the plan, together with the number of 4,733 students involved in the session, which is higher than the estimated target of 2,760 students. This is important to open opportunities for teachers and students in remote areas to be aware of the risk of this virus and they know how to prevent and be away from it.

Table 5: Number students and Teachers involved the session of COVID's project

	#				Student		Teacher
Provinces	District	#Villages	# Schools	Students	Female	Teachers	Female
Attapeu	3	69	13	700	350	361	144.4
Luang Namtha	3	68	3	192	71	17	5
Luang Prabang	6	184	18	650	300	55	23
Saravan	3	100	10	656	252	26	13

Savannakhet	5	216	29	1580	774	77	41
Sekong	3	107	19	955	471	107	30
Total	23	744	92	4733	2218	643	256.4
Target	23	652	92	2760		184	

Source: PRF Office, Vientiane 2021

During the ToT trainings and awareness raising activities in the villages, facemasks, hand gels, alcohol spray, soaps were provided to the trainees and communities that participated at the activities, which is a compulsory requirement from MoH (details of the supply in Table 1).



Picture: Primary School at Deingthamei village, Sepone District, Savannakhet Province, by PRF team

3.2. Training on the production of face masks

The trainings had been done in collaboration with the representative of the Lao Women's Union in the target villages. The trainees at the VHVs at the villages that we already mentioned, PRF provided basic equipment for mask making material, which were provided by PRF at national office (see Details in Table 1). This is also suggested that we should encourage the use of local material which is available at each target villages.

The process of mask making training: The trainer explains the importance of the mask as bellow:

- ✓ The virus COVID-19 is a very dangerous disease that can spread easily from person to person if we have not properly prevented, putting people around the World at high risk of contracting this disease.
- ✓ As the number of cases of the disease continues to increase daily in the world, including in Laos, which increases the demand of masks, which also directly affects the people in rural areas, especially in the poor communities. Therefore, this project promotes the production of handmade masks that meet the normal standards of MoH and LWU.

Although the efficiency of the villagers' handmade masks was not high enough, but it can reduce the prevention of spreading the virus to others to some extent.

- ✓ In the target village, the training was divided into small groups (5-6 participants).
- ✓ Share equipment to each participant such as: yarn, scissors, tick paper, rulers, fabrics to sew, needles, pencils
- ✓ The trainer explains the technique of sewing the mask.
- ✓ Each group performed a hands-on experiment while the trainer walked around each group as a guide.
- ✓ The trainer summarizes and rewards the best performers.
- ✓ The facilitator encourages the participants to apply this lesson in their own home. Use homemade fabrics or other clean fabrics that they have in the house, as well as instructions on how to use, clean it, and save it for later use



Picture 1: Mask production training to VHVs at Naphanied village, Thaphangthong district, Savannakhet province, by PRF staff at district.

IV. The Follow-up and Refresher ToT

The purposes of the follow-up are: (1). to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of activities, meetings, and training on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the target villages and schools; (2) to summarize the opinions from the observation and consultation with district trainers to improve or develop the method of conducting activities, meetings and training on how to prevent COVID-19 at home and in schools.

4.1. The mission of SDC in Luangnamtha

During the mission of SDC in Luangnamtha in November 2020, the team took the opportunity to visit the COVID-19 prevention activities in some villages. Overall, the team observed that the villages and schools well collaborated with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Sport, e.g involving doctors/health practitioners from the provincial/district levels. Training of masks production was conducted by the Lao Women's Union, in

collaboration with the district health department and PRF staff, some villages' representatives. As the masks are currently made from white cloth procured in Vientiane Capital by PRF, the PRF team was advised to look for, in consultation with MoH, local textile available in the villages/or at district, for villagers to use for future masks making. This is a very important aspect to ensure that villagers can continue to produce masks by themselves after the support by PRF and other development partners ended.

4.2. Follow up by the central and provincial teams.

During February to March 2021, the team comprised of PRF, MOH, and LWU from central level outreached in the field to follow up the progress and results of the COVID-19 activities supported by PRF. This was divided into two parts: the morning part is to attend a meeting at the village or school to monitor and observe the implementation, and in the afternoon, part is to organize a meeting to exchange lessons learned with the district training committee and village authorities. The mission team confirmed that villagers acknowledged the activities provided by this project, at least they know how to prevent themselves, for example: when they go out from their village, they had to wear a mask, avoid the crowded place. For the VHVs, they could produce simple masks that could use in their community; however, there are some limitations that we could highlight as below:

- In some villages, the participants could not attend the training due to they were engaged with their crop harvest season;
- Most equipment provided by the national PRF, it was difficult to deliver to villages because at district offices there are only motorbikes available. In the future, it should be suggested to add transportation for equipment delivery;
- Posters on how to make a mask should be distributed to each village and target school, because we have only the guideline how to make mask;
- Hand gel should be provided for each family if possible because we found only the VHVs and some people who attended the training received it.
- District dispensaries proposed to have some equipment/supplies for preventing the COVID-19 outbreak, such as mask, soap, temperature check tool, COVID testing tool, etc.
- The task force for Covid-19 prevention and control at district and province should involve and be counted as key participants of this activity.
- Monitoring needs to be continued, particularly to follow up the performance of target villages after handing over the activities to local communities.

4.3. Follow-up by the concerned sectors (DAFO, Health, etc.)

The objectives of following-up are: (1) to monitor and support the implementation of the COVID-19 prevention method in the target villages and schools after the completion of the trainings; (2) to observe the feedback and suggestion of the beneficiaries on the prevention of Covid-19 as well as other viruses at the community level; and (3) to continue promoting community ownership in the prevention of Covid-19. A total of 201 out of 992 villages and 23 out of 93 schools were selected for this following-up and evaluating the result of this work.

To follow up the feedback of the COVID-19 pandemic prevention project funded by SDC, the district team (DHO, DAFO, DESO, and PRF) was set up and trained, the follow up session had completed in early April 2021, in which 8094 participant and 3,758 women (46%) who involved this session. This project had been implemented accordance with the project objective, by providing the awareness raising and information delivery in the target areas of PRF. Therefore, the behavioral change of villagers is considered to be a key message to prove the impacts of this project. The team stated that the behavior change of community could be clarified by following these practices:

- 1. Villagers in those target villagers at least they wash their hands before every meal (also people in school), and they could continue to produce mask for themselves by using available local material, and they could save budget;
- Regulation of village was acknowledged, by treatment of people from other villages or other
 places by 14-day quarantine before get in to the village. Furthermore, Village heads and
 community leaders continued to deliver the massage to villagers about prevention of the
 pandemic;
- 3. Villagers were aware of the keep social distancing in the society, the visitors must always wear a hygienic mask, either brought by themselves or made by the villagers/VHVs who got trained, as many villages could make the mask by using local material in their community;
- 4. Villager aware that travelling to the district or market or other places, a mask must always be worn and strictly follow with other COVID-19 Prevention Rules of the other concerned sectors; and
- 5. As confirmed by village heads in the target areas of this project that the promptly report to the responsible committee or organization for any illegal migrant cases. These are basic knowledge that we assume that at least they have learned from this COVID-19's project activities and also to protect the outside pandemic to be spread up at their villages.

Notice: Sample of feedbacks from some target district in annex 2

4.4. Financial Report

Expenditure vs budget: The total budget of this 500,000.00 USD which was already used **USD 495,164** with variance to the total of quarterly 99.03%. The payment process is implemented following the initial planning; especially the purchase of material related to the training on Covid 19 pandemic prevention,

The total expenditures up to 17/04/2021 are **USD 495,164** the total amount is supported by SDC "Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation" only. The main activity is training on Covid19 pandemic prevention through awareness raising and information delivery in PRF targeted area.

Table 6: Expenditure vs budget

No.	Activity	Budget Allocation	Allocation Expenditure		Percentage
1	Equipment and posters	191,906.00	191,906.00	0.00	100.00%
2	Capacity building	273,360.00	273,360.00	0.00	100.00%
3	Follow up/monitoring	29,734.00	29,898.00	-164.00	100.55%
4	Audit	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
	Total	500,000.00	495,164.00	4,836.00	99.03%

Source: Finance and Administration Division, June 2021

The above table has showed actual expenditure of the implementation less than the initial planning as amount USD 4,836.00 or 0.97% only and the payment will be preceded after audit report completely and submitted to the donors

(For the details, please see on Interim Un-Audited Financial report (IFR COVID19 report)

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Even this project had been implemented in a short period (less than 9 months), the project could come out with positive results, at least the poor people in the remote areas covered by PRF could access to basic information to protect themselves from the Covid-19 and other viruses which might occur in their villages. It could support the GoL's effort to reduce epidemiological risks in the rural areas at least 992 villages (454,572 people) to save lives through awareness raising, at the targeted villages on how to protect themselves from COVID-19 and any eventual communicable diseases; and transmission of other viruses. In addition, at least 3,082 VHVs have learned how to produce simple masks that can use in their communities. Students and teachers in 92 schools have acknowledged the measures and methods to protect and prevent themselves from the serious pandemic as Covid-19. These people can also utilize their knowledge and skill to other villages near by their communities.

In terms of behavioral changes of villagers under this project, after receiving training, we can consider that they can adapt their living condition to prevent COVID-19 pandemic by following these practices: 1) at least they wash their hands before every meal; 2) treatment of people from other villages or other places by 14-day quarantine; 3) keep social distancing in the society, the visitors must always wear a hygienic mask, either brought by themselves or made by the villagers/VHVs who got trained; 4) Travelling to the district or market, a mask must always be worn and strictly follow with other COVID-19 Prevention Rules of the other concerned sectors; and 5) Promptly report to the responsible committee or organization for any illegal migrant cases. These are basic knowledge that we assume that at least they have learned from this COVID-19's project activities.

To achieve such remarkable results, we can highlight some strengths, challenges, suggestions, and propose for the next steps as below:

***** Strengths:

- Relevant government officials at the provincial, district and village levels have been trained and have a good understanding of the lessons before going to the village level for guidance or training;
- The PRF's target villages have been trained on the general knowledge of how to prevent COVID-19 and other viruses, such as social distancing, wearing a mask when going out, knowing how to wash hands properly, etc.
- Village women's unions, VHVs and villagers understood and worked together on sewing masks. Each person can sew on their own now, and they can advise to villages near by about the mask making process
- In Long District, Luangnamtha Province, district authorities began to provide training for the communities who live along the border with Myanmar, and in other high-risk villages in the same area (not covered by this project), district authorities used their budget to carry out similar activities;
- Organizing training at the village level is very important because, after the training, the community has a plan for self-defense: they are mindful of the distance, use masks, and they monitor people coming and going in and out of the community. If there is a case, the village will be able to report it to the district.

***** Challenges:

- This project was prepared and implemented in a short period, which might miss some key activities and stakeholders that would link to unsustainability after the end of the project.
- The training at the village level takes a short time, it is done in a hurry, and the training is done only once and then it is implemented;
- The training covers only some target villages and PRF schools. Many villages and schools still do not have the opportunity to participate despite the high risk. In addition, remote villages that are not targeted by the project have not learned how to prevent the virus;
- Some villages do not have big meeting rooms so it is difficult to keep a distance, if the weather was good, it suggested to do open or outdoor meeting;
- In some villages, communication is difficult because ethnic groups which required to use local interpreters; thus, it consumed more time;
- The equipment provided in the COVID-19 training is not enough, especially cloth, needle, scissors for sewing masks, because the villagers were very interesting about the activity under this project;
- At the village level, there is no thermometer to check people in and out of the village, thus risk of infection, this is considered as risk of outside people to get in the village with virus and no one can check;
- There are still foreigners who crossed the border with Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar illegally into some villages with high risk to get infection;
- In some areas, events such as weddings, ethnic festivals were still organized without sufficient disease prevention measures, such as keeping distance and wearing masks;
- Many villages do not have available raw materials for making masks which are challenging for the sustainability of this activity.

* Recommendations:

- Develop a variety of communication tools, especially video clips related to COVID-19, to make it easy for people to understand;
- Some posters should be further developed, including children or others who have recently returned from studying or working abroad who are at risk for COVID-19 infection;
- The TOT should take at least 5 days, and the appointment of district trainers from the relevant office should be better technicians than administrative officers;
- Training at the village level, it should be the district leader and the district task force for Covid-19 prevention and control to participate in order to provide more support and follow up the work after ending activity;
- All villages in the same cluster should be trained so that each village receives the same information and implements protection at the same time;
- Masks should be provided to all participants of the training at the village (because number
 of participants were higher than in the plan). Including the purchase of a thermometer in
 each village.
- There should be a budget for the provincial level to follow up or support from the beginning to improve the training in the village, that should also invite the provincial task force for Covid-19 to involve since the beginning of this activity.
- Provide funding to continue to support the training of schools and target villages in PRF to cover 100%, and also to the high-risk villages along the border with Myanmar and other villages within the district.

❖ Next Plans:

- All activities under the support of the PRF project to be undertaken at the community level must strictly follow the COVID-19 prevention measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, hand washing (By DHO).
- Follow up the feedback with concerned sectors after handing over the work to the local authority, particularly the provincial and district taskforce for Covid-19 control and prevention, because it is their responsibility and they are acknowledged by the Government.
- Establish a WhatsApp group between districts and target communities of PRF to continuously disseminate information related to the disease prevention.
- Organize an official meeting to present the outcome, lessons learnt, challenges, and suggestion between Government and SDC as well as other development agencies to help in the prevention of COVID-19 in Lao PDR (Using Online Application).
- Due to the second wave of Covid-19 is expanding in 2021 (since April) which is wider than in 2020, the GoL has taken the very strictly and carefully preventive measures with the aim to solve the current issue and to avoid the spread of *Covid*-19 infections which will be obviously uncontrollable situation particularly for rural poor people, this would suggest the GoL to request some additional to continue this work in target areas of PRF and also nationwide.

Annexes

Annex 1: The Central team of PRF and MOH, LWU to follow up

No	Province	Date	Responsible	# of village
1	Oudomxay and Phongsaly	1-7/2/21	 Mr. Saychamphone MOUA (PRF) Mr. Khamphao, Technical from Department of Health promotion and Hygiene, Ministry of Health Ms. Bouaphone, from Technical Vocational Training Centre, Lao Women Lao Union. 	5 villages
2	Xekong and Attapue	25/1- 2/2/21	 Ms. Sonemany (PRF) Mr. Phousavath, Technical from Department of Health promotion and Hygiene, Ministry of Health. Mis Chansamone SENGHALATH, from Technical Vocational Training Centre, Lao Women's Union 	3 villages 1 school
3	Savanakhet and Salavanh	8-13/2/21	 Mr Alounyadeth, (PRF) Mr. Soukpadith PHONSENA Technical from Department of Health Promotion and Hygiene, Ministry of Health Miss Sayphone LATTANA, Technical from Technical Vocational Training Centre. 	2 villages, 2 Schools and 1 health center.
4	Luangnamtha Louangprabang	15- 26/3/2021	 Mr Sengphet VANNAVONG, (PRF) Mr Sengthavy Sihaphon, (PRF) Mr. Sengalouan, (PRF) 	4 villages, 3 Schools

Annex 2: Number of selected villages and schools (out off total) to be used for following-up and assessing the feedback after the Awareness Raising activities.

N.T.	D :	D: 4 : 4	# of target	were selected t	o follow-up	# of participant in the follow-up session		
No	Province	District	# of village	# of school	Total	# participants	# of women	
1	Luangnamtha	Nalae	5	1	6	196	99	
2	Luangnamtha	Viengphoukha	5	1	6	94	46	
3	Luangnamtha	Long	5	1	6	259	80	
4	Luangprabang	Phonexay	7	1	8	98	25	
5	Luangprabang	Phoukhoun	5	1	6	260	125	
6	Luangprabang	Parkseng	7	1	8	465	182	
7	Luangprabang	Nambark	7	1	8	182	65	
8	Luangprabang	Phonthong	5	1	6	195	92	
9	Luangprabang	Viengkham	7	1	8	146	83	
10	Savannakhet	Sepone	7	1	8	185	46	
11	Savannakhet	Nong	7	1	8	344	112	
12	Savannakhet	Assaphone	7	1	8	342	175	
13	Savannakhet	Thapangthong	7	1	8	305	107	
14	Savannakhet	Phin	7	1	8	281	109	
15	Saravan	Taoy	7	1	8	103	39	
16	Saravan	Toumlane	7	1	8	645	287	
17	Saravan	Samouy	7	1	8	208	95	
18	Sekong	Dakcherng	7	1	8	272	132	
19	Sekong	Lamam	5	1	6	147	52	
20	Sekong	Kalerm	7	1	8	169	40	
21	Attapeu	Sansay	7	1	8	303	165	
22	Attapeu	Sanamsay	4	1	5	183	72	
23	Attapeu	Phouvong	4	1	5	110	75	
24	Phongsaly	Bountai	4		4	150	97	
25	Phongsaly	Mai	6		6	420	196	
26	Phongsaly	Khua	6		6	235	111	

27	Phongsaly	Samphane	4		4	44	25
28	Oudomxat	Namor	4		4	78	47
29	Oudomxat	La	2		2	137	87
30	Huaphanh	Kouan	4		4	257	139
31	Huaphanh	Xone	2		2	122	98
32	Huaphanh	Xamtai	6		6	346	196
33	Huaphanh	Huamouang	6		6	234	114
34	Xiengkhuang	Nonghet	8		8	517	302
35	Xiengkhuang	Kham	6		6	62	43
		Total:	201	23	224	8,094	3,758

Sample of the fey finding confirmed by the district team can summarize as below:

- ✓ Some districts they found that the villages still could continue to produce the mask for themselves which could be much save their budget to purchase in the market as before (*Nalae district, Luangnamtha province, and also the villagers in Houay Heuy and Buamphanh at Mai district, Phongsaly province.*
- ✓ Regulation set up: After received training provided by this project, most of villages had established the rules to prevent the COVID-19 outbreaks and another disease as well (*Confirmed by team at kuan district, Huaphanh province*).
- ✓ The village head takes lead to advice all villagers to prevent further COVID-19 outbreaks through community speaker, and encouraged villagers to continue making the community mask by using local textile or cotton which are available in their villages. (Expressed by the team at Sone district, Huaphanh province).
- ✓ In basic, the villagers know how to make masks, maintain good health, eat clean and know how to protect themselves from COVID-19, it observed that after receiving the training, a number of household who participated in training, got back and sewed masks for their own household use. (feedback from the team at Nonghet district, Xiengkhouang province)
- ✓ As confirmed by the follow up team at Asphone district (Savannakhet province) that villagers can be able to sew their own masks using the local materials they have and how to keep themselves hygienic, such as washing their hands with soap and so on.
- ✓ The villagers in each village were aware of the impacted of COVID-19 and other diseases and knew how to prevent it by wearing mask making by themselves, and changed their hygiene behavior such as washing hands with soap and gel, social distancing in pub; ic. When working in the field use natural leaves to wash the hands, especially guava leaves and so on. (*Phin district, Savannakhet province*)
- ✓ In Saravan province, confirmed that the villagers in target areas could make their own masks using the available local materials such as 645 peoples in Tumlan district, 103 peoples in TaOy district and 208 peoples in Samuay district, they are also known how to prevent and control the virus outbreak.

✓ Villagers know how to make masks using available local materials, know how to prevent themselves such as cooking cooked food and washing hands. (*Duckjing district, Sekong province*)

In addition, the follow up team observed that after ending the project, the district health sector still continues working with the village leader to deliver the information gaining from this project to the villagers through community speaker and village meeting. At school, since the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, the lock-down announced and all schools were closed, the information that teacher and student received still being used in their daily living. The village Women Union and VHVs were still active to encourage villagers to make mask by using local material to use in their community and so on.

Annex 3: Total beneficiaries, VHVs, Teachers and Student involved in Covid-19's project activities, breakdown by district.

No	Province	District	# of target Village (Est)	Actual Villages	Population			#Villages Health Volunteers			
110	Trovince				Total	Women	Ethnic	Est.	Actual	Women	Ethic
1	Attapeu	Sansay	22	27	8555	4258	8555	110	22	8	22
2	Attapeu	Sanamsay	21	26	11021	5596	11021	105	54	19	54
3	Attapeu	Phouvong	13	16	9104	4417	9104	65	17	6	17
4	Luangnamtha	Nalae	18	19	9730	4870	9730	90	36	20	44
5	Luangnamtha	Viengphoukha	23	24	12043	6028	12043	115	46	41	90
6	Luangnamtha	Long	24	25	9526	4465	8935	120	48	19	45
7	Luangprabang	Phonexay	35	39	19664	9496	19664	175	170	111	170
8	Luangprabang	Phoukhoun	21	23	12691	6610	12691	105	103	67	103
9	Luangprabang	Parkseng	33	37	15687	7646	15560	165	160	80	160
10	Luangprabang	Nambark	23	27	13603	6767	13081	115	110	58	106
11	Luangprabang	Phonthong	23	25	9668	6135	7431.926	115	113	56	83
12	Luangprabang	Viengkham	31	33	11259	5450	11259	155	140	77	140
13	Savannakhet	Sepone	50	54	26,239	13169	25,214	250	232	162	222
14	Savannakhet	Nong	39	43	14,493	7224	10,069	195	195	137	195
15	Savannakhet	Assaphone	39	48	35,642	17,809	14493	195	214	160	55
16	Savannakhet	Thapangthong	25	28	24,718	12,378	21,321	125	155	117	142
17	Savannakhet	Phin	34	43	18,342	8773	16,267	170	152	110	132
18	Saravan	Taoy	32	36	19304	9745	19304	160	94	49	94
19	Saravan	Toumlane	29	31	24791	11601	24782	145	86	44	86

20	Saravan	Samouy	29	33	11495	5745	10285	145	58	30	58
21	Sekong	Dakcherng	35	48	12962	6368	12962	175	35	9	35
22	Sekong	Lamam	21	24	9522	4750	9522	105	36	12	36
23	Sekong	Kalerm	32	35	9329	4311	9329	160	32	11	32
24	Phongsaly	Bountai	15	15	7797	3845	5842	75	45	12	34
25	Phongsaly	Mai	27	27	9163	4413	4480	135	45	18	22
26	Phongsaly	Khua	30	30	9286	4622	4821	150	76	45	39
27	Phongsaly	Samphane	16	16	5093	2511	5093	80	45	15	45
28	Oudomxat	Namor	14	14	9208	4523	9208	70	54	23	35
29	Oudomxat	La	6	6	2239	1110	2239	30	22	10	19
30	Huaphanh	Kouan	17	17	4907	2402	867	85	32	23	7
31	Huaphanh	Xone	5	5	3205	1622	1583	25	15	10	6
32	Huaphanh	Xamtai	30	30	10739	5313	4606	150	150	144	56
33	Huaphanh	Huamouang	23	23	9599	4938	5021	115	69	46	44
34	Xiengkhuang	Nonghet	36	36	17032	8278	16150	180	72	55	64
35	Xiengkhuang	Kham	29	29	16916	8466	6190	145	149	108	46
		Actual number	900	992	454,572	225,654	378,723	4,500	3,082	1,912	2,538
		Total:	Estimate	900	406,999	200,332			4500		

Source: PRF Center Office, June 2021

	Province	District	# of target school						
No			#Schools	Students	Student Women	Teachers	Teacher Women		
1	Attapeu	Sansay	5	345	173	173	69		
2	Attapeu	Sanamsay	5	162	81	86	34		
3	Attapeu	Phouvong	3	193	97	102	41		
4	Luangnamtha	Nalae	1	32	18	7	2		
5	Luangnamtha	Viengphoukha	1	69	36	5	2		
6	Luangnamtha	Long	1	91	17	5	1		

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		Exceed target	-	1,973	2,218	459	256
		Target	92	2760		184	
		Total:	92	4,733	2,218	643	256
23	Sekong	Kalerm	3	249	113	32	10
22	Sekong	Lamam	3	248	129	27	7
21	Sekong	Dakcherng	13	458	229	48	13
20	Saravan	Samouy	4	105	43	6	3
19	Saravan	Toumlane	2	335	112	9	5
18	Saravan	Taoy	4	216	97	11	6
17	Savannakhet	Phin	9	336	157	18	9
16	Savannakhet	Thapangthong	3	186	93	9	6
15	Savannakhet	Assaphone	9	639	330	24	13
14	Savannakhet	Nong	4	266	108	15	8
13	Savannakhet	Sepone	4	153	86	11	5
12	Luangprabang	Viengkham	2	40	36	5	3
11	Luangprabang	Phonthong	2	50	40	7	3
10	Luangprabang	Nambark	4	192	0	8	1
9	Luangprabang	Parkseng	4	122	91	23	11
8	Luangprabang	Phoukhoun	2	140	77	3	3
7	Luangprabang	Phonexay	4	106	56	9	2

Source: PRF Center Office, June 2021

Poster 1> Coronavirus Disease (COVID – 1

ພະຍາດປອດອັກເສບຈາກເຊື້ອຈຸລະໂລກສາຍພັນໃໝ່ (COVID-19)

ອາການ:

ໄຂ້, ຂໍ້ມູກຍ້ອຍ, ໄອ ແລະ ເຈັບຄໍ. ບາງຄັ້ງຖ້າອາການໜັກຂຶ້ນອາດເຮັດໃຫ້ຫາຍ ໃຈຍາກ ຫຼື ເກີດພະຍາດອັກເສບປອດ. ອາການຈະສະແດງພາຍໃນ 14 ວັນ ພາຍຫຼັງຈາກທີ່ໄດ້ສຳຜັດກັບເຊື້ອພະຍາດ.





ການປ່ອງກັນຕົວເອງ:

- ໝັ່ນລ້າງມີດ້ວຍສະບູ ແລະ ນ້ຳ ຫຼື ໃຊ້ເຈ່ວລ້າງມີທີ່ມີສ່ວນປະສີມ
- ຫຼືກລ່ຽງການສຳຜັດຕາ, ດັ່ງ ແລະ ປາກ ຖ້າບໍ່ໄດ້ລ້າງມື
- ຫຼືກລ່ຽງການສຳຜັດໃກ້ຊິດກັບຄືນທີ່ມີອາການໄຂ້ ແລະ ໄອ

ເມື່ອເວລາໄອ ຫຼື ຈາມ ຕ້ອງປົດປາກ ແລະ ດັງ ດ້ວຍຂໍ້ສອກ ຫຼື ໃຊ້ເຈັ້ຍອະນາໄມ



ຖິ້ມເຈັ້ຍອະນາໄມທີ່ໃຊ້ແລ້ວ ໃສ່ຖັງຂຶ້ເຫຍື້ອທີ່ມີຝາປິດ



ຖ້າທ່ານສິ່ງໄສມີອາການທີ່ກ່າວມາ ຂ້າງເທິງ ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ທີ່ເບີ +856 20 5406 6777

(ພະນັກງານປະຈຳການ ທັງພາສາອັງກິດ ແລະ ລາວ)











Poster 2. Coronavirus Disease Symptoms and Prevention



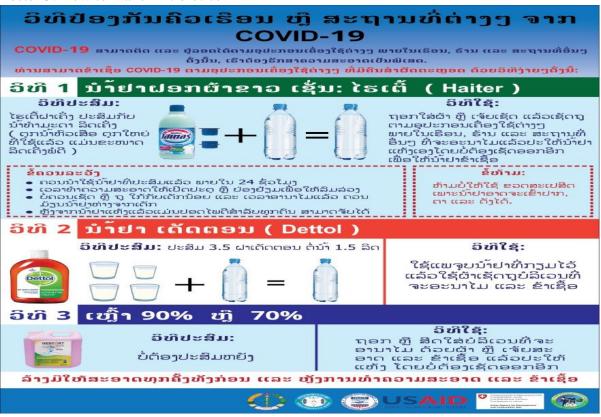
Poster 3. Hand Washing Steps



Poster 4. Show You Wear a Mask



Poster 5. How to make Antibiotics



Poster 6. Protect Other from Getting Sick



Poster 7. The Five Keys to safer Food



Poster 8. Hygiene 3 Types (Eating, Clothing Personal Cleaning)

