

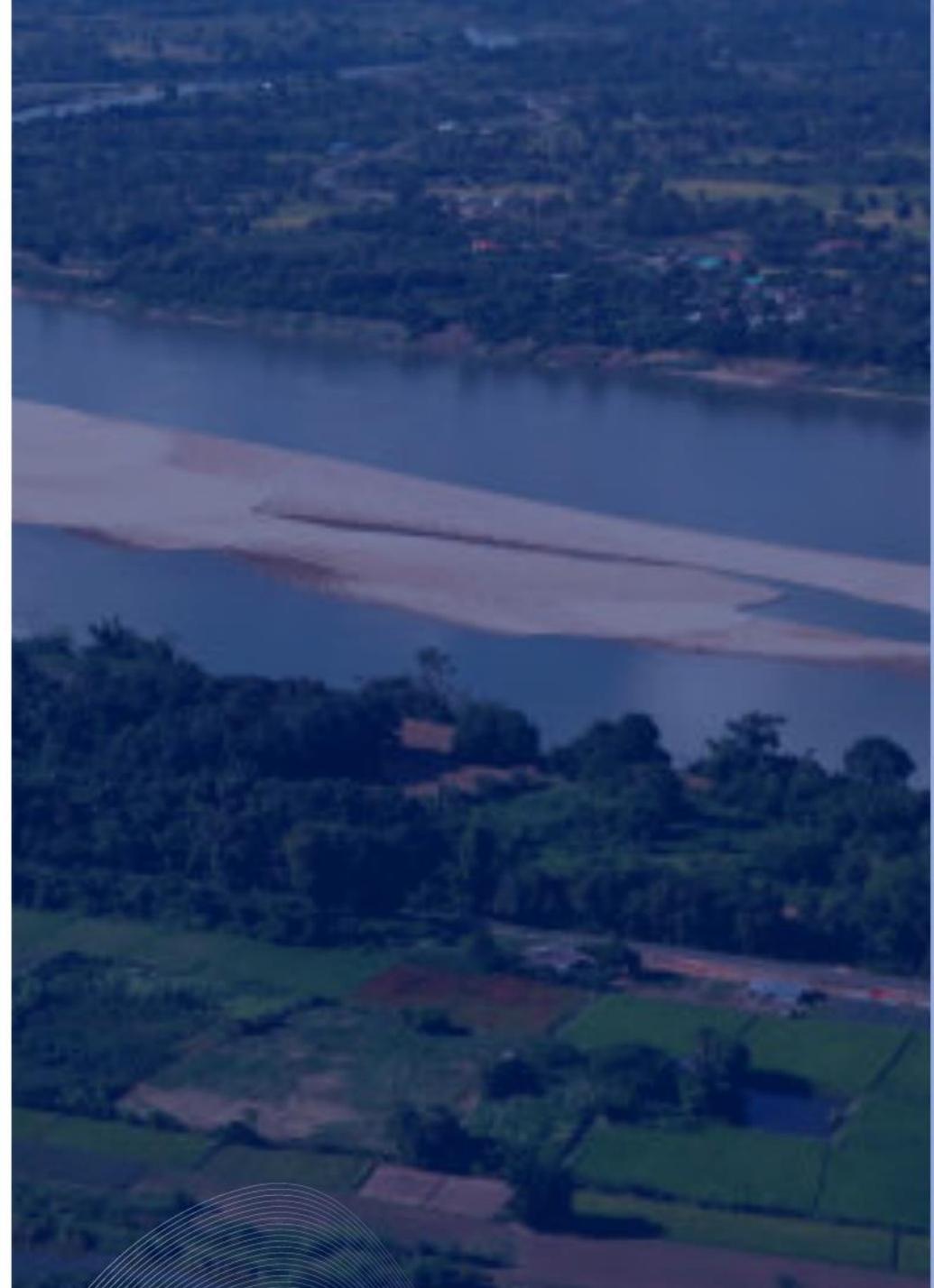


# MEKONG DIALOGUE ON LABOUR MOBILITY

MONDAY, 30 MAY 2022

2:00 PM – 5:30 PM (GMT+7)

Thank you for joining us,  
the event will start soon!



# Agenda

## Opening Remarks

*Alfredo Perdiguero, Director, Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB*  
*Mr. Chuop Narath, Deputy Director General, General Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Cambodia*

## Session 1 : Preparing for safe migration

*Nilim Baruah, Regional Migration Specialist for Asia and the Pacific, ILO*  
*Maximilian Pottler, Head of Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, IOM Thailand*

## Session 2: Promoting healthy labour mobility

*Dr. Patrick Duigan, Regional Migration Health Advisor, IOM*  
*Rikard Elfving, Senior Social Sector Specialist, ADB*

## Session 3: Facilitating return and reintegration

*Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq, Senior Regional Specialist for Migrant Protection and Assistance, IOM*  
*Rebecca Napier-Moore, Technical Officer, TRIANGLE, ILO*

## Closing Remarks

*Dr. Maria Nenette Motus, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, IOM*



# House Keeping Rules

-  Please note that this meeting is being recorded
-  Please change your zoom name into your name, organization, country
-  Please stay on mute unless you need to speak
-  Please turn off your microphone after speaking
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-  If at first you encounter a connection, audio, or video problem, please disconnect and rejoin the meeting



# Opening Remarks

Alfredo Perdiguero, Director, Regional Cooperation  
and Operations Coordination Division, Southeast  
Asia Department, ADB

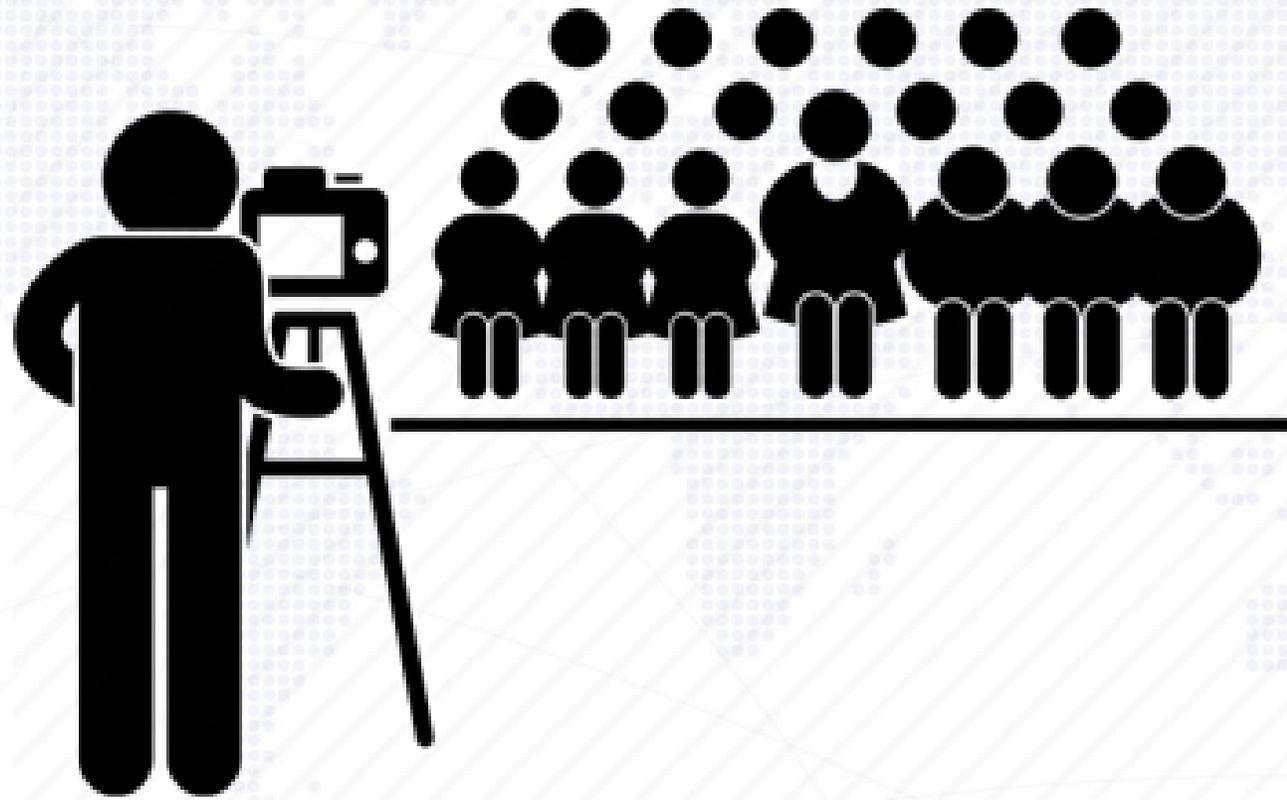


# Opening Remarks

Mr. Chuop Narath, Deputy Director General,  
General Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour  
and Vocational Training, Cambodia



# Group Photo



# Session 1 : Preparing for safe migration



Nilim Baruah,  
Regional Migration Specialist for  
Asia and the Pacific, ILO



Maximilian Pottler,  
Head of Labour Mobility and Social  
Inclusion, IOM Thailand



# Recovery and Labour Migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Mekong Dialogue on Labour Mobility

30 May 2021

# Outline

- Labour migration trends
  - Job losses
  - Outflows and inflows
  - Resumption of labour migration
- Labour migration governance – key issues highlighted and building back better



# Job losses

- In **Asia and the Pacific** 8.2% working hours were lost in 2020 (relative to 2019). This is equivalent to 133 million FTE jobs.
- **Women's** employment decreased more than men's (3.8% vs. 2.9%)
- **Recovery** in working hours stalled in 2021, with gap of 3.2% remaining as of Q4 2021



ILO. 2022. World Economic and Social Outlook: Trends 2022.

ILO. 2021. [Asia-Pacific Labour Market Insights: How did COVID-19 impact working hours in Asia-Pacific economies in 2020?](#)

ILO. 2021. [ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Eighth edition.](#)

# Outflows

## Total Outflows of Workers from Selected Asian Countries, 2019-2020, thousands

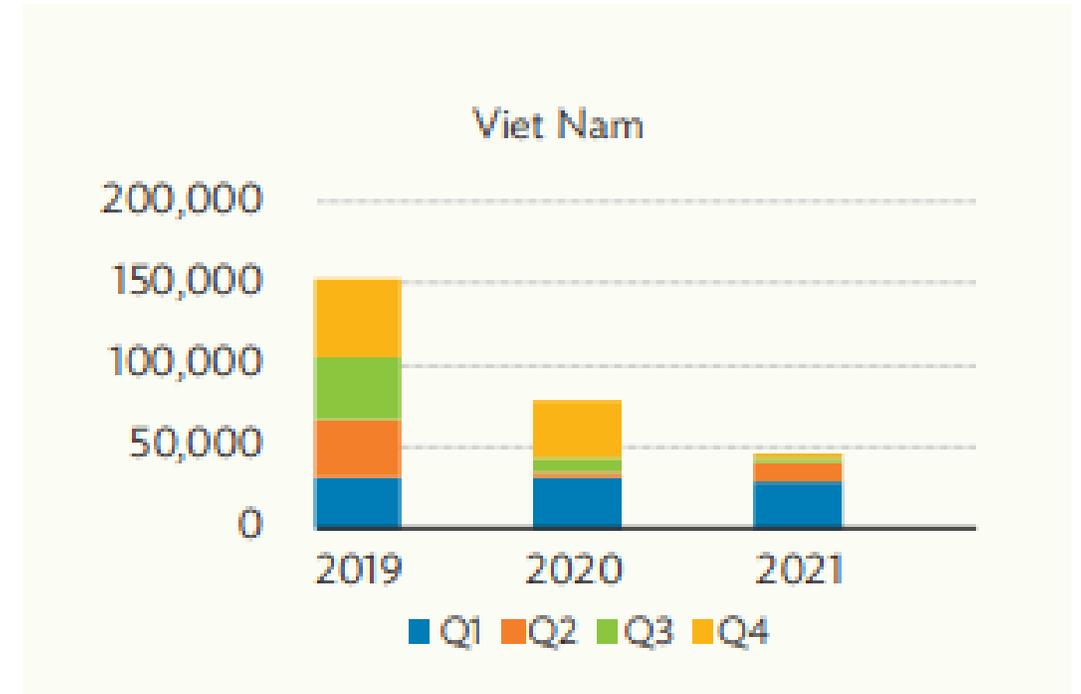
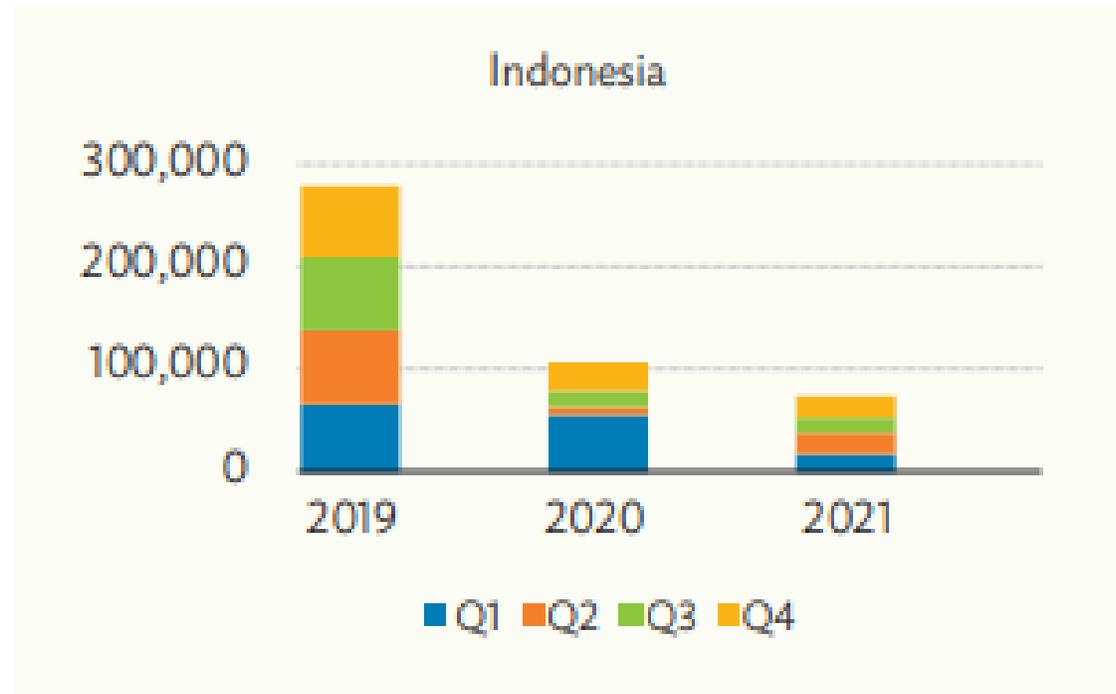
	2019	2020	2019/20 % change
<b>Philippines</b>	1 516	332	-78%
<b>PRC</b>	487	301	-38%
<b>Pakistan</b>	625	225	-64%
<b>Bangladesh</b>	700	218	-69%
<b>Nepal</b>	236	191	-19%
<b>Indonesia</b>	277	113	-59%
<b>India</b>	368	94	-74%
<b>Viet Nam</b>	153	79	-100%
<b>Myanmar</b>	238	77	-100%
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	190	54	-72%
<b>Thailand</b>	114	41	-64%

Note: PRC = People's Republic of China

Source: National authorities (in ADBI-OECD-ILO (2022))

# Outflows

## Worker Outflows, Deployments from selected origin countries, 2019-2021

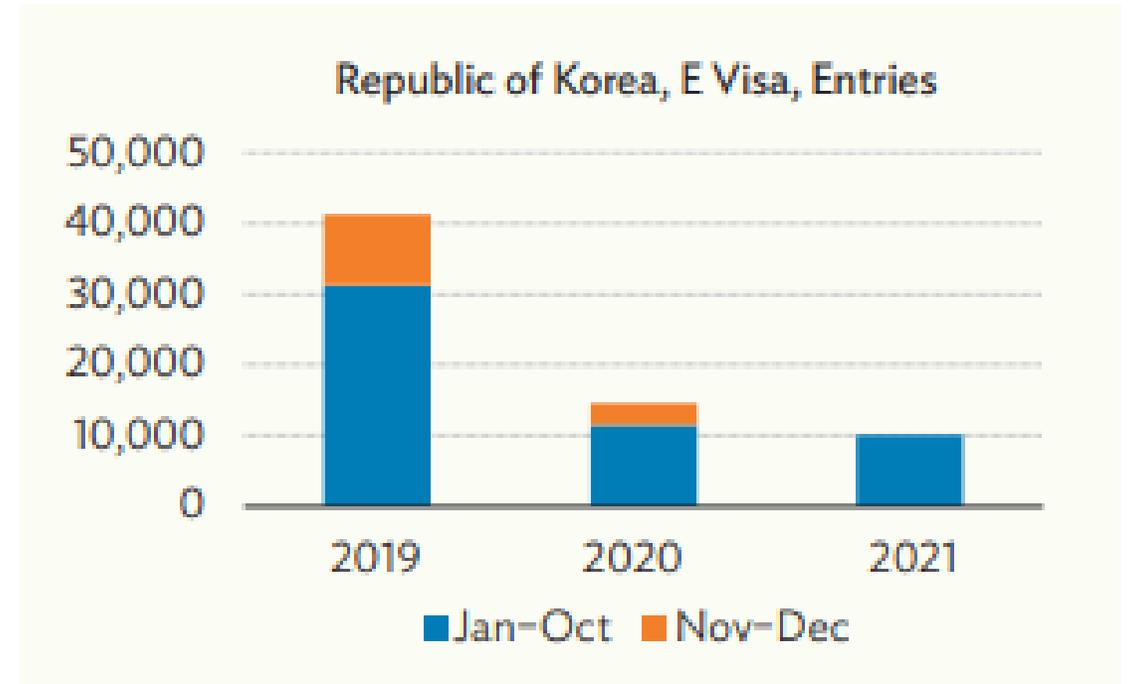
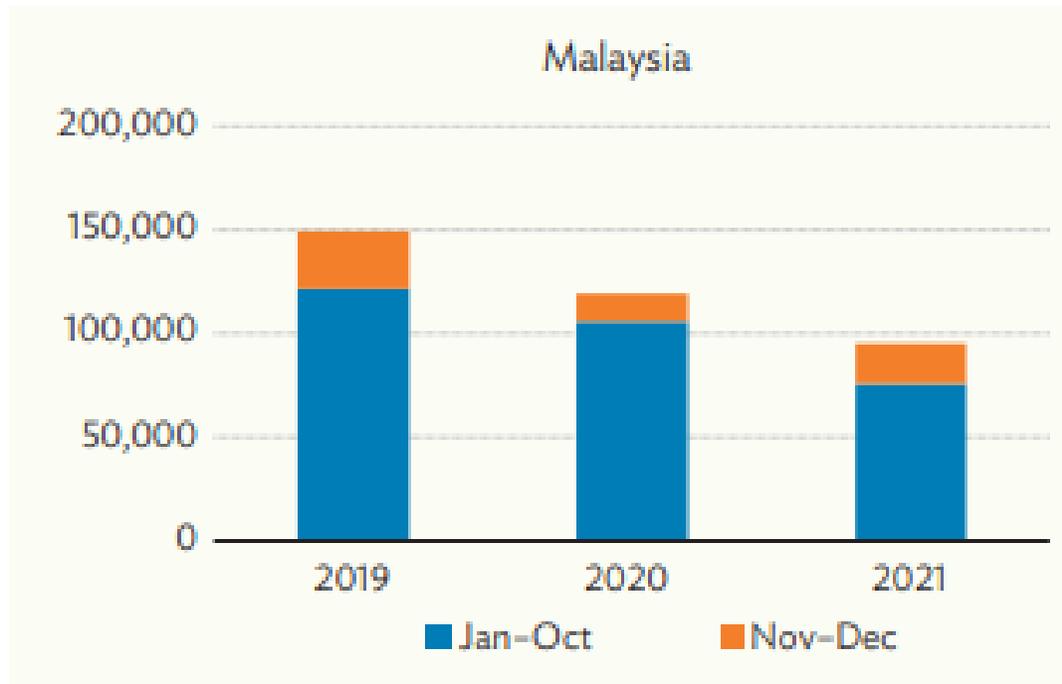


Note: PRC=People's Republic of China, Q=quarter

Sources: Official data from national authorities in ADBI-OECD-ILO, 2022.

# Inflows

## Inflows of workers *to selected destinations, 2019-2021*

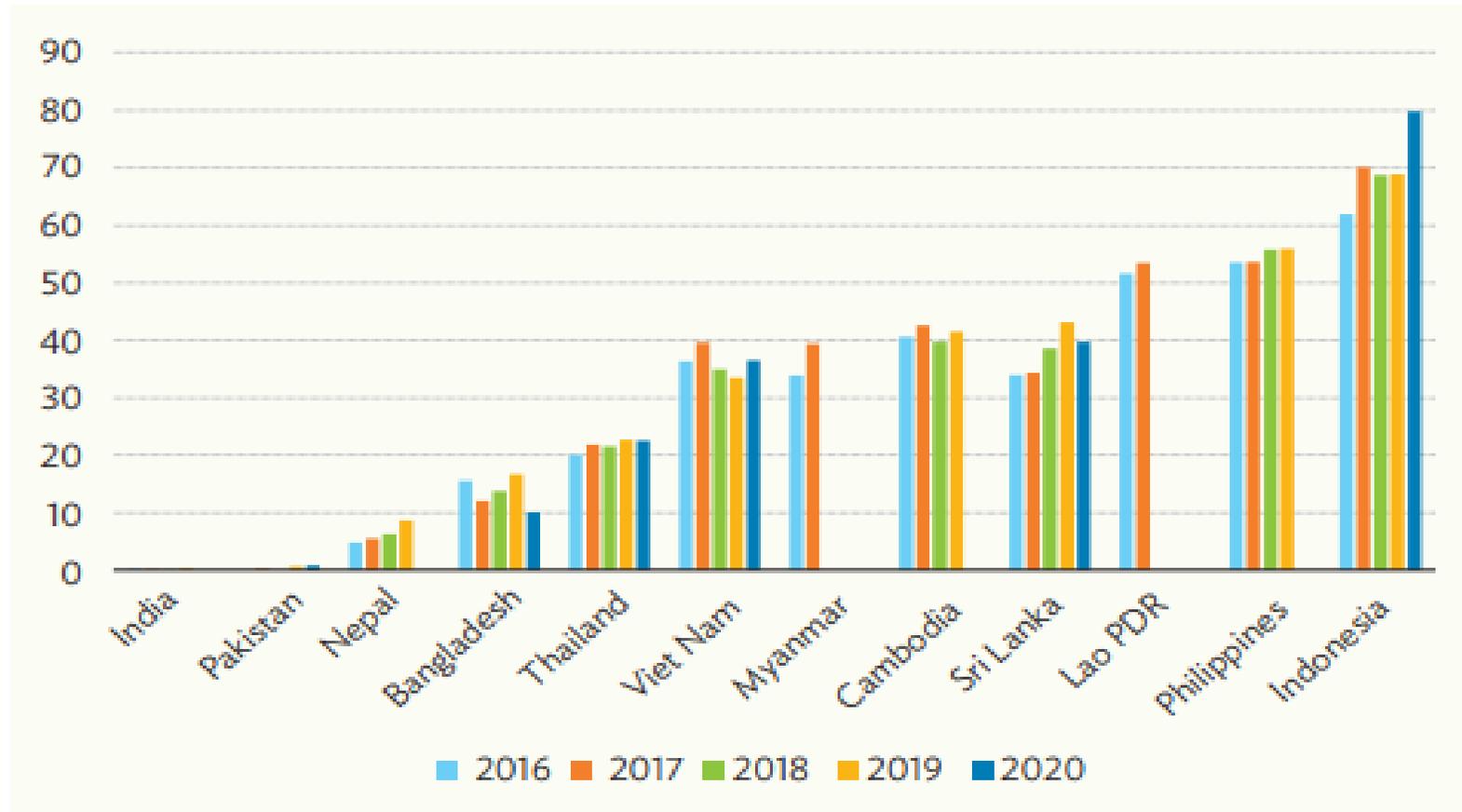


Note: Malaysia includes only Employment Pass (higher skilled workers). The Republic of Korea includes all E-visa holders

Source: Official data from national authorities in ADBI-OECD-ILO, 2022.

# Women migrants

Share of women among labour migrants, by origin country (selected Asian countries), 2016-20 (%)



Note: Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic

Source: Official data from national authorities; ILO (2018), for the Philippines, data refer to flows of overseas Filipino workers (in ADBI-OECD-ILO, 2022)

# ASEAN labour migration trends

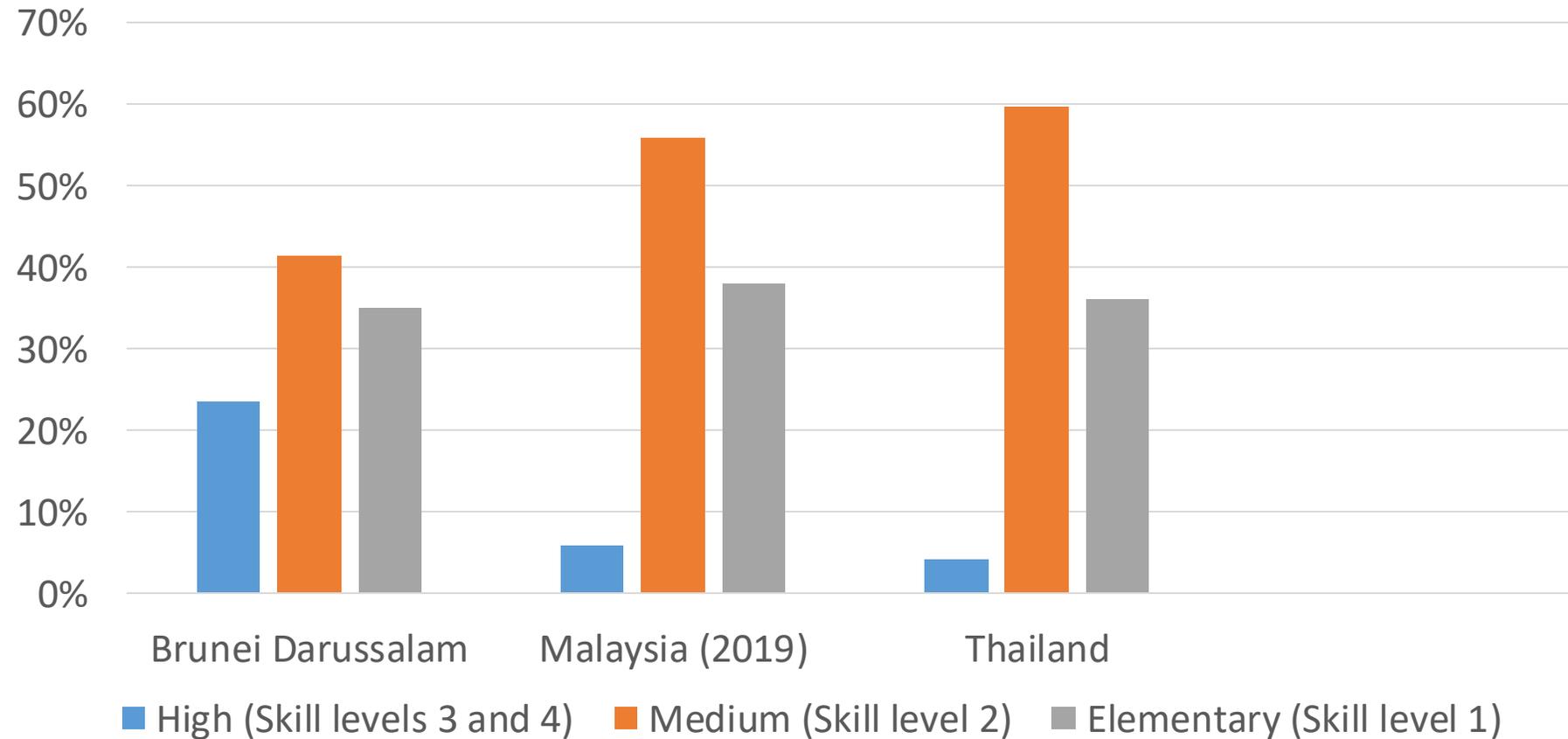
## Stock of employed migrants in ASEAN labour migration net receiving countries, 2020

	Brunei Darussalam	Singapore	Thailand
Total	71,801	1,231,500	1,116,994
Male	53,096	-	629,976
Female	18,705	-	487,018
Female share (%)	26%	-	44%

Note: Singapore does not share stock data of employed migrants by sex.

Source: ASEAN ILMS, ILO 2021. LFS in Brunei Darussalam and Thailand. Administrative records in Singapore.

# Skill level of migrant workers in selected ASEAN countries (in per cent), 2020



Note: 2019 for Malaysia.

Source: ASEAN ILMS, ILO 2021. LFS in Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Thailand.

# Resuming labour migration

- ▶ Labour migration flows have increased to some extent in the second half of 2021 (compared to 2020) and are likely to further increase in 2022. With health protocols in place.
- ▶ Pre-pandemic labour migration levels may not be reached in 2022.
- ▶ Key sectors remain dependent on a migrant workforce.
- ▶ **Republic of Korea:** 51,365 EPS workers entered in 2019, and only 10,501 in 2021. The quota for 2022 is 59,000 workers.
- ▶ **Thailand:** Ministry of Labour guidelines on implementing MOUs (November 2021); regularization of undocumented MWs (Cabinet Resolution, September 2021)
- ▶ **Malaysia:** As a result of a moratorium there has been a big fall in issuance of visit passes. However, MOHR expects more demand for workers in 2022 from industry with higher economic growth. SOPs drafted.

# Resuming labour migration

## Good practices and recommendations

- ▶ There should be no difference between migrant workers (MWs) and other entrants on health requirements
- ▶ Additional migration costs (testing, quarantine, health insurance) should not be borne by MWs. As indeed is policy in **Japan, Malaysia and Thailand**. But effective enforcement required.
- ▶ The practice of quarantine exemption or stay at home for vaccinated MWs is being followed by **GCC countries, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand**.

# Labour migration governance issues highlighted during COVID-19

- Access to health
- High-risk work settings and OSH deficiencies
- **Sub-standard and crowded housing**
- **Social protection** and Wage protection
- Domestic work
- Return and reintegration
- **Protection of all migrant workers and enhancing the effectiveness of legal pathways**

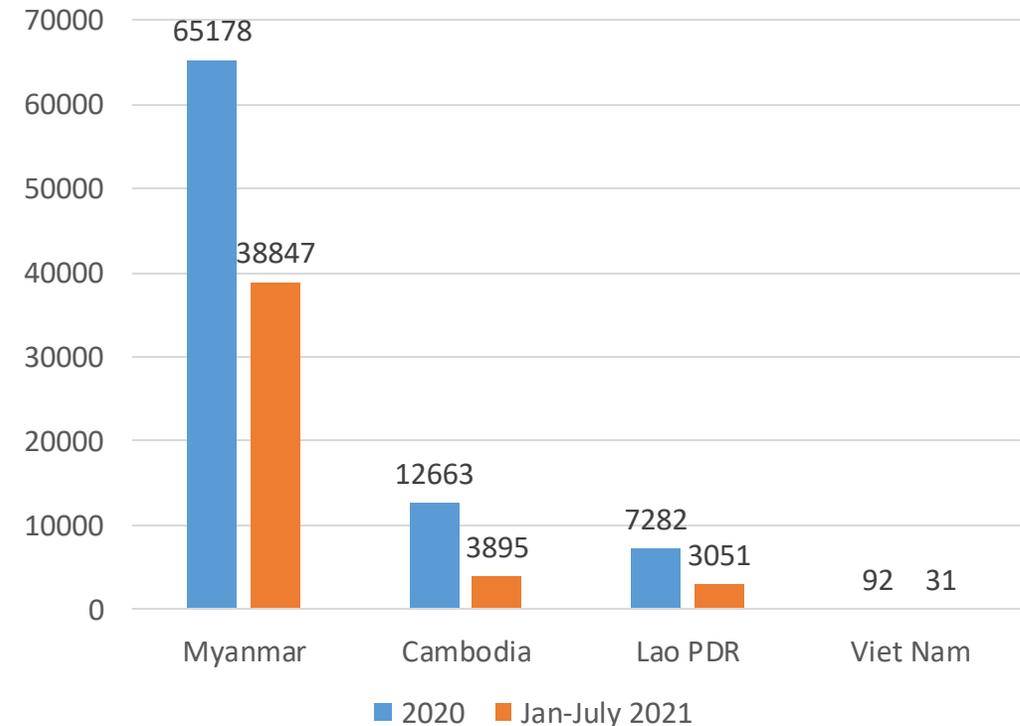
# Selected standards regarding minimum floor/personal space per worker

Source of standard	Minimum floor or personal space per worker
<b>Malaysia (2020)</b>	3 m <sup>2</sup> (dormitories) or 3.6 m <sup>2</sup> (other accommodations) sleeping space per worker
<b>Singapore (pre-pandemic standard)</b>	3.5 m <sup>2</sup> (dormitories) minimum living space per resident
<b>Singapore (2021)</b>	Temporary quarters during COVID measures: At least 6 m <sup>2</sup> (sleeping quarters space, excluding toilets) for CTQ or TOLQ Revised standards (September 2021): At least 4.2 m <sup>2</sup> living space per resident in new dormitories
<b>Thailand – construction sector (2016), extended to all employer-provided worker housing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic</b>	3 m <sup>2</sup> The minimum width of accommodation should be no less than 2.5 metres with the total area of no less than 9 square metres and the height shall be no less than 2.4 metres.
<b>Republic of Korea (1997, updated 2011)</b>	The area of dormitory bedrooms shall be not less than 2.5 square meters per person.
<b>Sphere Association (2018)</b>	Minimum 3.5 m <sup>2</sup> of living space per person, excluding cooking space, bathing area and sanitation facility (4.5–5.5 m <sup>2</sup> of living space per person in urban settings where internal cooking space and bathing and/or sanitation facilities are included). Internal floor-to-ceiling height of at least 2.6 metres in hot climates at the highest point.
<b>New Zealand</b>	For one person: 6m <sup>2</sup> of floor space, increasing to 9m <sup>2</sup> for two people; For larger groups: 9m <sup>2</sup> for the first two people and 4.5m <sup>2</sup> for every extra person.

# Access to social protection: Unemployment insurance and COVID-19 related support in Thailand

- Migrant workers were not included in a mid-2021 **COVID-19 pay-out** of THB 2,500 (US\$ 74) (only for nationals).
- In Thailand migrant workers in the **formal sector** are entitled to a range of social protection benefits, including unemployment benefits. These are however not always easy for migrant workers to claim.
- See chart for social security payouts to migrants during the first 1.5 years of the pandemic

CLMV migrants receiving benefits under the Social Security Fund, Jan 2020-July 2021



# Enhancing the effectiveness of legal pathways

- ▶ An ILO survey (2020) among migrant workers from **Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar** working in **Thailand** found that only 38% entered through regular channels.
- ▶ Regular channels are perceived as cumbersome, lengthy and more costly
- ▶ While paying less in recruitment costs and fees irregular MWs make trade offs as they are more likely to earn less and have poorer employment conditions with less protections.
- ▶ Increasing the effectiveness of legal pathways will act as a disincentive for irregular migration.
- ▶ Without impinging on the rights of States to control their borders, the human and labour rights of all migrant workers, including those who are undocumented, should also be upheld.
- ▶ Labour Rights (ILO Convention 143); No Collective Expulsion (UN Convention, 1990)

# Building back better and global and regional frameworks

- Human rights and international labour standards apply to all migrant workers, unless otherwise stated
- Decent work and migration is well integrated in the SDGs
- Global Compact on Migration – developed under the auspices of the UN. IMRF concluded at the UNGA on May 20 with a Progress Declaration. The role of migrants as essential workers as well as the severe and disproportionate impact on migrants was recognized.
- ASEAN Consensus - Action Plan (2018-2025) to Implement the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers
- Ten ASEAN MS, social partners and CSOs adopted 15 recommendations on labour migration recovery and labour migration in the post pandemic future (14<sup>th</sup> AFML, September 2021)



# Thank you

**Nilim Baruah**

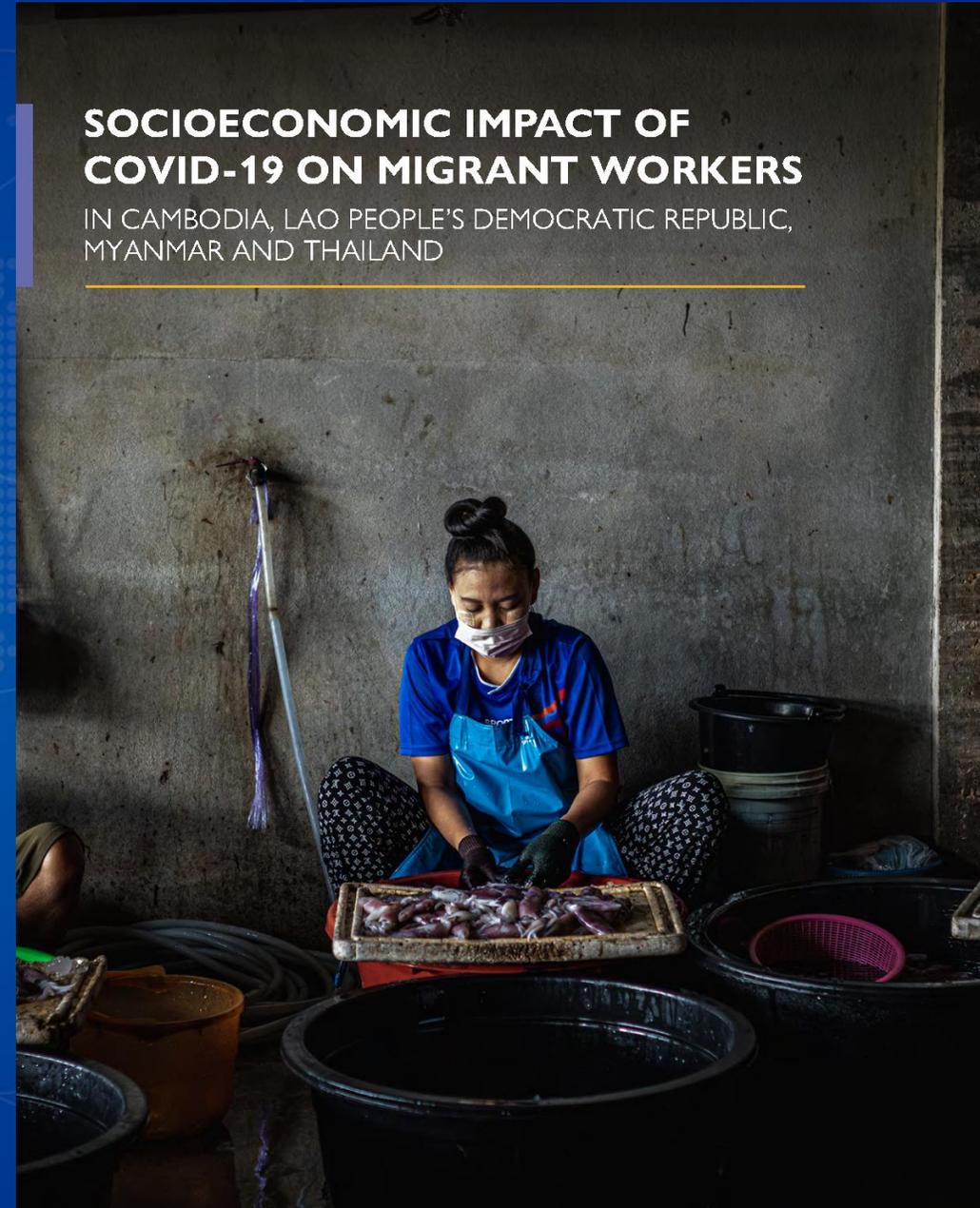
Senior Regional Labour Migration Specialist  
DWT / Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO  
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# SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANT WORKERS

IN CAMBODIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC,  
MYANMAR AND THAILAND

## SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANT WORKERS

IN CAMBODIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC,  
MYANMAR AND THAILAND



## Economic impact

- After the onset of the pandemic, more migrants were paid below minimum wage.
- 16 per cent of migrants reported owing higher levels of debt compared with their pre-COVID-19 debt
- Remittance dropped by 34 per cent of migrants who stayed in Thailand (av. 25 %)

	Women	Men	People with SOGIESC	Total
% Migrants paid below minimum wage pre-COVID	41%	22%	0%	31 %
% Migrants paid below minimum wage post-COVID	55%	30%	11%	42%

Table: Migrants paid below minimum wage prior to and during COVID-19 by gender

## Social Protections

83 per cent had access to some kind of health care during COVID-19

24 per cent of interviewed migrant workers were enrolled in some social protection scheme (as of March 2021)

Social Security Fund: 44 per cent  
Migrant Health Insurance Scheme: 56 per cent (of 300)

78 per cent were unaware about compensation entitlements under Social Security Fund

Lack of access due to documentation status (54 %)

Significant lack of understanding of the enrolment process and their rights (44 %)

27,882 migrants had applied for unemployment benefits from March to May of 2021

Migrants in domestic work and seasonal agricultural work are not covered by the Social Security Fund

Migrants highlighted the important support from civil society organizations and employers during COVID-19



## Recommendation :

Leverage lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance protections and economic resilience of migrant workers in Thailand.

1

The Ministry of Labour is encouraged to engage with employers of migrant workers to reiterate that national minimum wage laws apply to all migrant workers.

2

Reduce barriers to accessing social protection among migrant workers in Thailand.

3

In the interim and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Royal Thai Government should continue its efforts to guarantee access to essential services and expand access to compensation schemes to migrant workers regardless of their occupation or migration status.

## Migration Status

- 13 per cent followed the MOU process
- 29 per cent had extended their permit while in Thailand
- 25 per cent held the pink card
- 24 per cent had the border pass
- 11 per cent with other types or no documentation

Migrant workers in Thailand find it difficult to maintain regular migration status.

The costs for regularization and extensions included payments for work permits, visas, COVID-19 testing and health check-ups. These costs amounted to approximately 8,000–9,000 THB.

Migrant workers often rely on brokers who charges additional fees to obtain identity documents and visa, and to facilitate the regularization process.

## Skills Development

Skills development training attendance among migrant workers remains low (10%), with the majority trained in technical skills by employers and recruiters in Thailand. However, almost all trained migrant workers (90%) reported that skills development led to better work opportunities.

Most migrant workers did not receive any skills development trainings due to lack of time outside work and lack of awareness of existing training programmes.

Migrant workers are more interested in technical and vocational skills trainings while employers are more interested in soft skills training.

## Recommendation:

Recognize and enhance the role of migrant workers in socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, through simplified access to regular migration status for migrant workers.

1

Create cheaper, more efficient, safer and less complex regular labour migration pathways.

2

Establish rules and procedures for regular labour migration when borders reopen, and ensure these measures are clearly understood by migrant workers, employers and private recruitment agencies in advance of reopening.

3

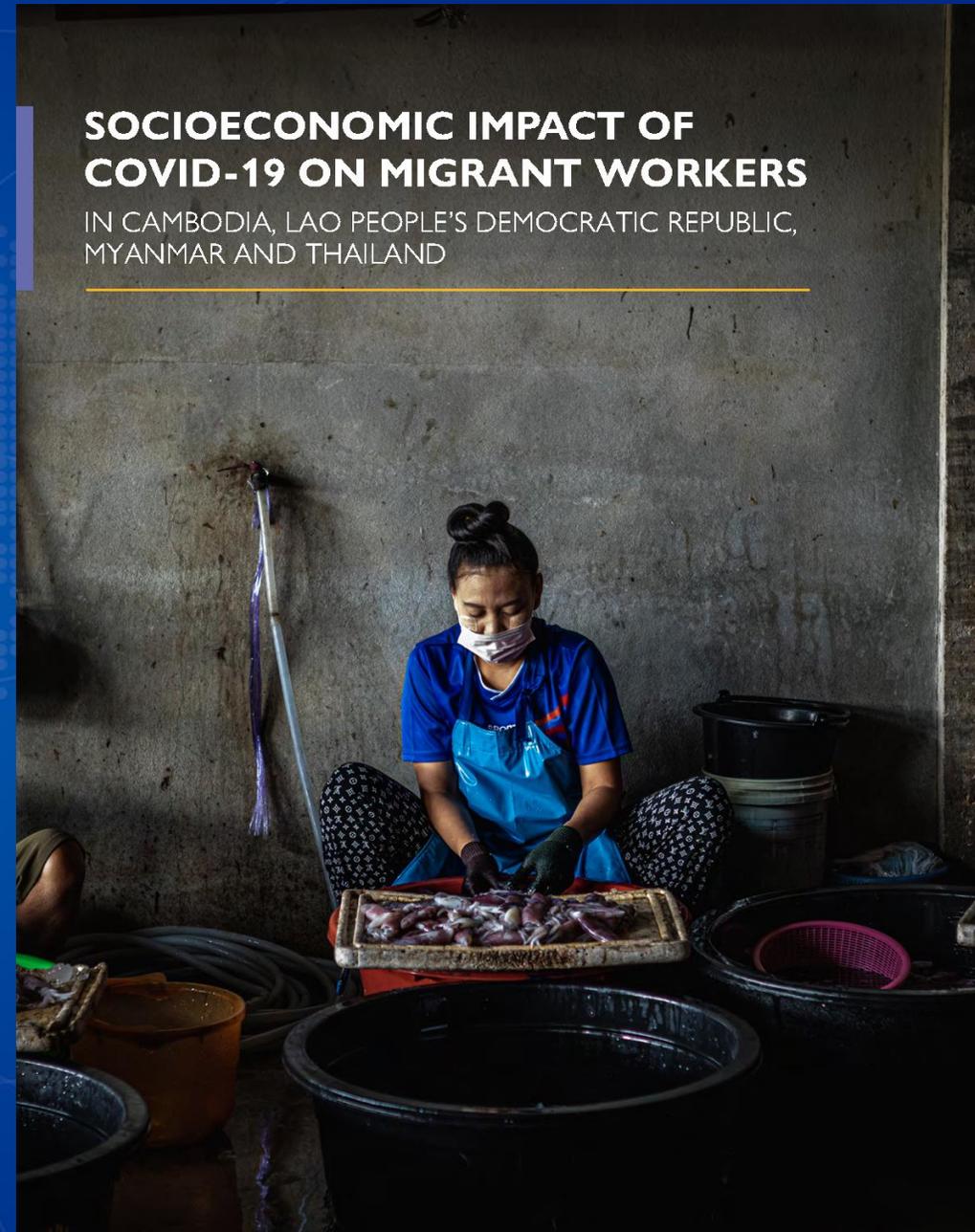
Further support skills development trainings for migrant workers to encourage sustainable investment from employers.

# SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANT WORKERS

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## SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANT WORKERS

IN CAMBODIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC,  
MYANMAR AND THAILAND





Country Respondents

Open Discussion



# Session 2: Promoting healthy labour mobility



Dr. Patrick Duigan,  
Regional Migration Health Advisor,  
IOM



Rikard Elfving, Senior  
Social Sector Specialist, ADB



# Mekong Dialogue on Labour Mobility

## Promoting healthy labour mobility

Dr Patrick Duigan

Regional Migration Health Advisor  
IOM Office for Asia and the Pacific



# Questions

- Why focus on health of migrant workers?
- Who should focus on the health of migrant workers?
- How to focus on the health of migrant workers?



# Migration Health Myths

## *Common myths:*

*Migrants are carriers of disease*

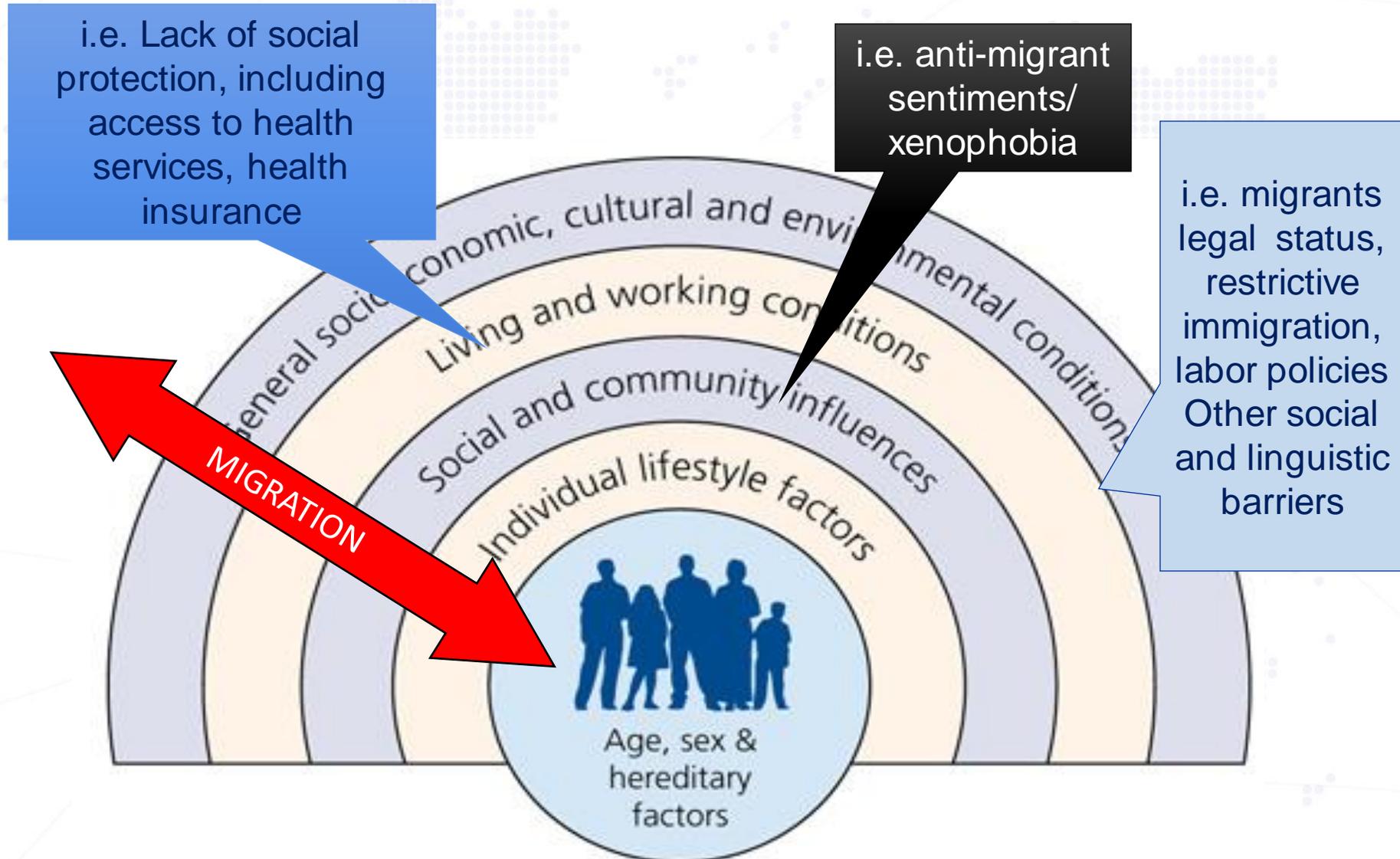
*Migrants are a burden on the health system*

## **Realities:**

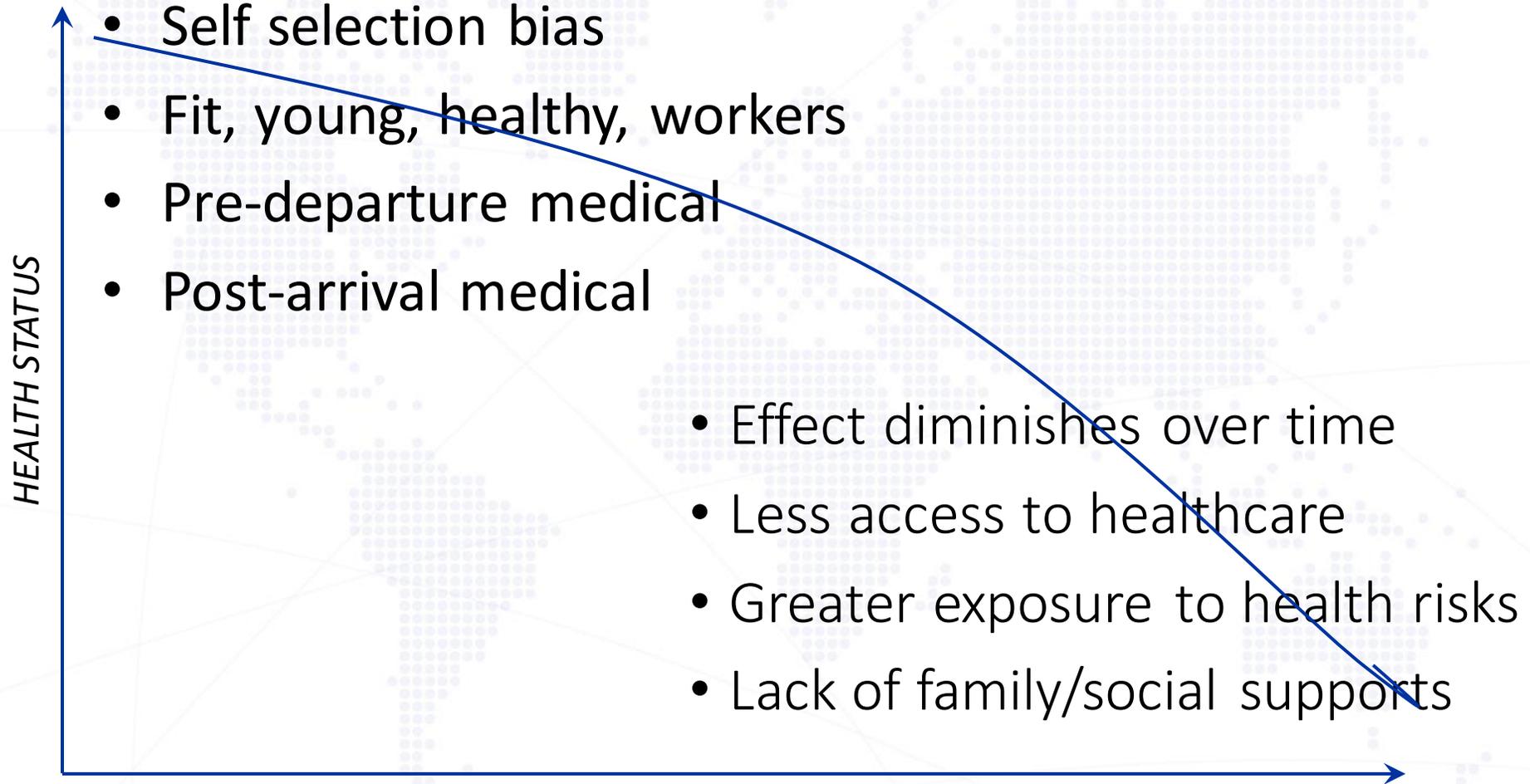
- Migrants might be more vulnerable than nationals to health risks.
- Migrants often underutilize services.
- Migrants contribute hugely to development.
- Migrants are very diverse – the health profile of a migrant depends on the characteristics of the migration process at all stages.



# Social Determinants of Health



# Healthy Migrant Effect



TIME



# Why focus on health of migrants?

Migrants have a **right to health**.

Migrant-inclusive health systems **improves public health and global health outcomes**.

Healthy migrant workers contribute to **positive sustainable development outcomes for employers, economies, as well as host & home communities**



# COVID-19 Impacts on Migrants



Increased risk of transmission and reduced ability for prevention d/t living and working conditions



Exclusion or lack of access to health systems



Limited social protection during shutdowns or upon return home



Potential transmission during migration and in areas of return



Stigma and discrimination at source, transit, destination



Impacts on families d/t reduced remittances





# Exclusion costs, Inclusion protects

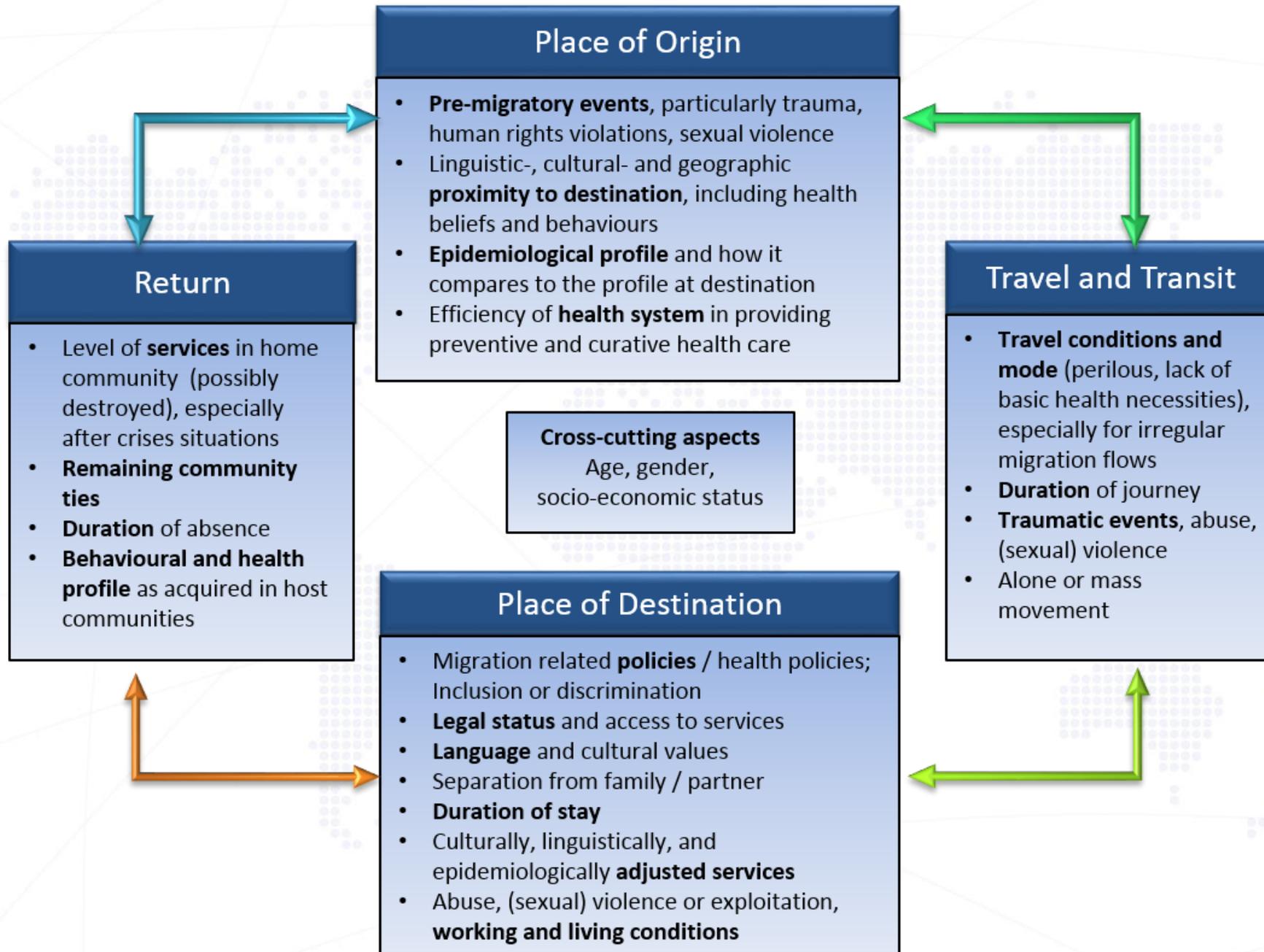
- Migrants are not a health threat;
- It is our systems' (health, immigration systems, social services etc) inability to provide accessible services along the migration cycle that is a threat to both migrants and communities' health
- Exclusion ultimately costs; inclusion protects migrants and communities



# Conditions of migration

- Migration does not cause disease,
- It is the conditions under which people migrate that can make them more vulnerable to illness;
- Mobility does link communities with differing epidemiological profiles





## Legal context

- Cost and complexity of registration
- Police harassment, brutality and extortion
- Fear of venturing outside

## Employment context

- Informal contracts
- Lack of registration
- Sequestration
- Passport confiscation
- Exploitation/overwork
- Poor work and living conditions
- Crowding

**- Increased vulnerability to illness and injury**  
**- Reduced access to treatment**

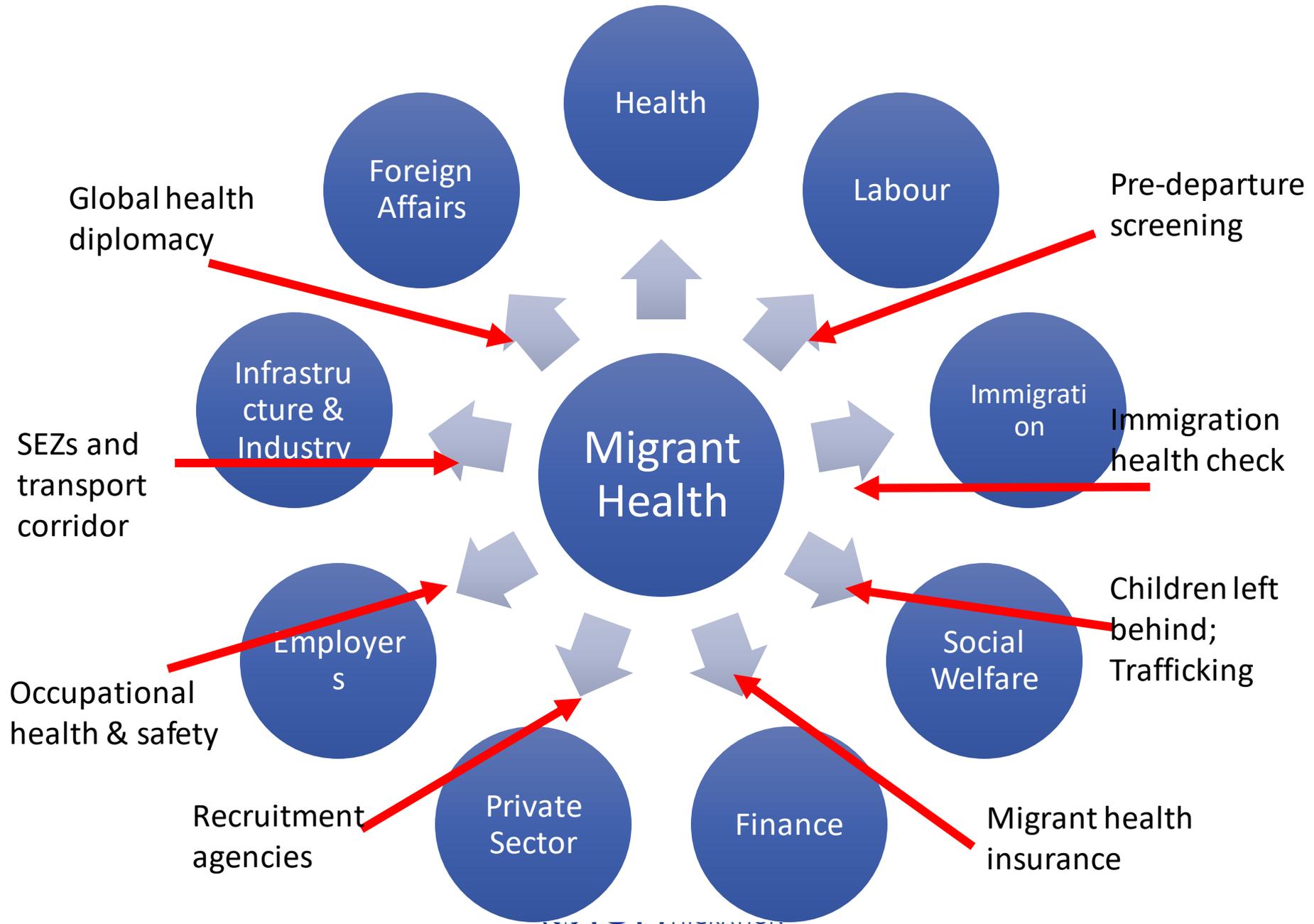
- Fear of deportation
- Health worker fees and bribes

- Poor health
- Malnutrition
- Treatment-seeking delays

## Health care context

- Barriers to health care
- Health care worker attitudes
- Health system structure: PHC vs. TB
- Language and cultural barriers





## Monitoring Migrant Health



## Policy and Legal Framework



## Migrant Friendly Health Systems



## Networks, Partnerships, Multi-sector engagement



# Summary

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No-one is safe, until everyone is safe.

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Everyone can not be safe until our systems prioritize health of all,

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Exclusion costs; inclusion protects everyone

---

The future relies on collaboration between sectors, countries and communities

---

Migrants are not a “problem”, they are in fact a critical part of the solution



# The proposed “GMS Border Areas Health Project”

Rikard Elfving  
ADB





# GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION HEALTH COOPERATION STRATEGY 2019–2023

JUNE 2019



# THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2030

SEPTEMBER 2021



# Regional Cooperation and Integration

- RCI has led to increased movement of people, both cross-border and internal, as people seek to take advantage of economic opportunities
- GMS region has a set of unique health challenges, driven by the dynamics of communicable disease spread, environmental and the health seeking behaviors of mobile populations
- Health challenges linked to mobility are most pronounced in border areas linked to major economic corridors
  - these areas serve both as a transit point for departing and returning cross-border migrants and a destination point for internal migrants seeking job opportunities in SEZs
- Health systems in border areas where migrants pass through or reside are often poorly equipped to respond to progressively complex health problems linked to population mobility
- GMS countries have collectively agreed on a need to strengthen protection for vulnerable communities from the health impacts of regional integration



# Migration in Cambodia

- As of 2020, 76% of Cambodia's population reside in rural areas, where high rates of rural poverty combined with a lack of work opportunities act as catalysts for migration.
- In 2018 over 1.1 million Cambodians migrated to Thailand for work using recruitment agencies, 428,027 (40%) of whom were female.
- The total number of Cambodian nationals working in Thailand is far higher when individuals migrating through irregular channels are considered.
- Internal migration is also highly prevalent, with rural labor seeking employment opportunities in urban areas and the country's SEZs
  - approximately 1.2 million people had migrated internally in the five-year period from 2015-2019.
- Remittances from international and internal migrant workers, which totaled \$1.5 billion in 2019.



# Banteay Meanchey province in Cambodia – project site

- Banteay Meanchey province is located in Cambodia's far northwest, sharing a border with Thailand.
- Two international border crossings, both located in Poipet Municipality, serving the economic corridor between Phnom Penh and Bangkok.
  - these border crossings are major transit hubs with up to 30,000 individuals and 400 vehicles passing through daily.
  - cross-border movement into Thailand also occurs through the province's local border gates.
- Banteay Meanchey is home to four SEZs, three of which are located in Poi Pet district.
  - in 2020, 10,654 workers were registered as formal SEZ employees (7,051 female)
  - the true number of migrant workers in the province is far higher than those registered in formal employment.
- **Limited** provision of on-site health services within the SEZs
  - workers requiring health care access services through the Poipet Referral Hospital and the Mongkol Borei Provincial Hospital



# Provincial health system capacity

- The dual demand from local area populations and incoming migrants creates unique challenges for the local health system
- In 2020, Poipet hospital's bed occupancy rate was 124.8%.
  - it recorded 22,234 outpatient visits (67% female), of which at least 30% were estimated to be migrants.
- The Banteay Meanchey Provincial Hospital serves as the referral hospital for the province's district-level facilities
  - the bed occupancy rate exceeded 100% in 2019 and 2020.
- Both hospitals lack infrastructure, equipment and resources to deliver the level and mix of inpatient and outpatient services.
- Capacity constraints were highlighted in 2020, with the influx of returning migrant workers through the Poi Pet border crossing, overwhelming health systems capacity for quarantine, COVID-19 case detection, and treatment.



# Health of Migrants

- Vulnerabilities throughout the migration cycle increase a migrant's susceptibility to health threats, including infectious diseases, occupational health hazards and injuries, etc.
- Despite efforts of GMS countries to expand universal health coverage, migrant workers are increasingly unaccounted for in health systems at home and abroad.
- In Cambodia, individuals deciding to migrate through regular channels face complex pre-departure requirements for health screening and preventive interventions
  - this may lead to individuals opting-out of regular migration channels, increasing their vulnerability when they use irregular channels
- A lack of dedicated services at pre-departure, particularly with respect to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), maternal health and GBV leaves women ill-equipped to manage their health



# Health financial protection

- In Cambodia, out-of-pocket payments accounted for 64% of current health expenditure in 2019.
- Options for social health insurance coverage for internal migrant workers, the majority of whom are employed in informal sector roles, are limited.
- The National Social Security Fund operates a scheme accessible to both formal and informal sector workers, uptake in the informal sector is low.
  - the current eligibility criteria, registration procedures, and contribution arrangements present a barrier to access.
- Cross-border migrants similarly face financial barriers to accessing health care when returning to Cambodia.



# Indicative summary of the proposed project

- The proposed project will improve access to affordable health services for populations residing in and migrating through border areas in Banteay Meanchey Province
- Investment under three project outputs will :
  - expand the availability of quality primary and clinical care and migrant specific health services at Poipet referral Hospital and Mongkol Borei Provincial Hospital
  - extend health financial protection to internal and cross border migrants
  - enhance systems for integrated and gender responsive delivery of health services within and across borders



Country Respondents

Open Discussion



# Session 3: Facilitating return and reintegration



Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq,  
Senior Regional Specialist for  
Migrant Protection, IOM



Rebecca Napier-Moore,  
Technical Officer, TRIANGLE, ILO



# Facilitating return and reintegration in The Greater Mekong Subregion

*Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq; Sr. Regional Specialist, Migrant Protection*

*30.05.2022*

# Normative Framework around Return and Reintegration

- Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) - **Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration.**
- ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers
- ASEAN Guidelines on Return and Reintegration: **elaborates a set of guiding principles for ASEAN Member States to ensure effective and sustainable return and reintegration of migrant workers.**
- Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR): **in line with GCM objective 21, AVRR is an integrated approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration.**



Global Compact  
FOR Migration

ASEAN CONSENSUS  
ON THE PROTECTION AND  
PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS  
OF MIGRANT WORKERS



one vision  
one identity  
one community

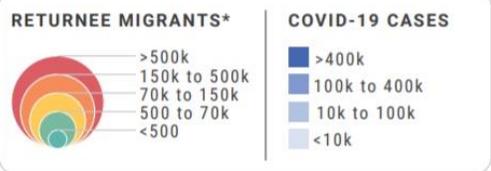
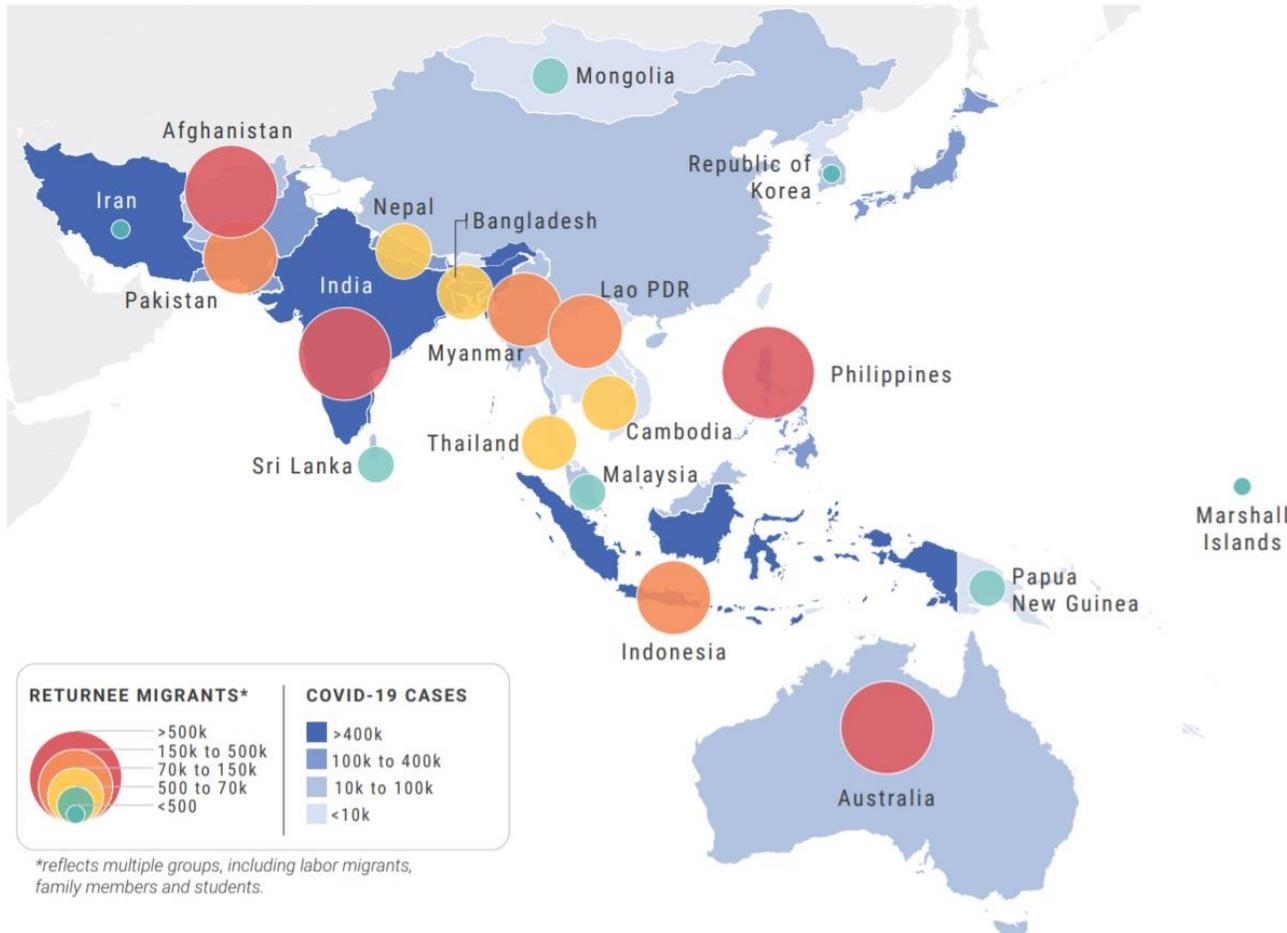
ASEAN GUIDELINES  
ON EFFECTIVE RETURN  
AND REINTEGRATION  
OF MIGRANT WORKERS



one vision  
one identity  
one community

## Mass returns

### COVID-19 CASES AND MIGRANT RETURNS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



\*reflects multiple groups, including labor migrants, family members and students.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

**12,223,500**  
TOTAL CASES

**224,900**  
TOTAL DEATHS

**6,980,000**  
TOTAL RETURNEE MIGRANTS

## Covid-19 challenges

### January – October 2020: Stranded migrants

- 2, 319, 998 migrants stranded abroad
- 561,448 migrants on list in need of support to return

**Where?** Asia and the Pacific or the Middle East.

**Who?** An estimated 600,000 Nepalese migrants remained abroad facing an uncertain situation, as well as 300,000 Malaysians, 300,000 Pakistanis, 233,000 Filipinos, 170,000 Indians and 50,000 Sri Lankans.

# Economic impact of COVID-19 on Cambodian and Laotian returnees

FIGURE 48. TOP 5 REINTEGRATION CONCERNS BY NATIONALITY (RETURNEES)

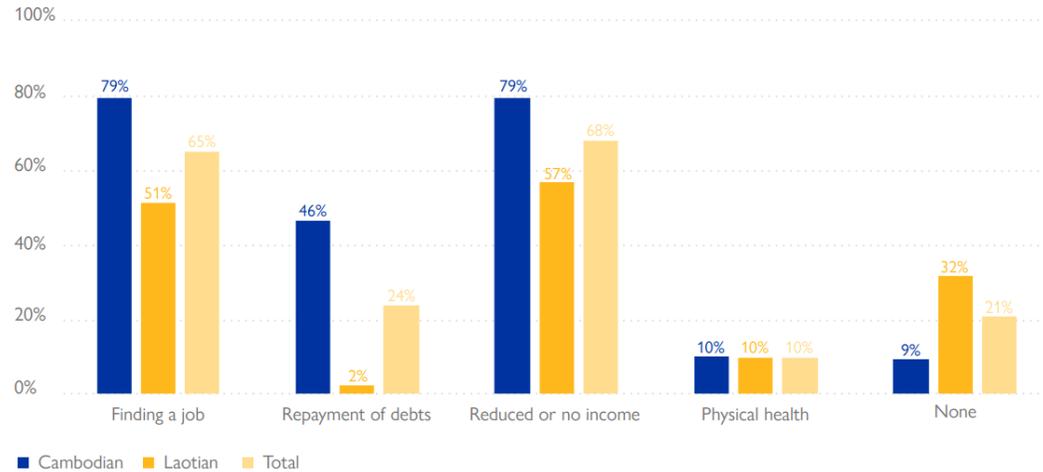


FIGURE 55. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT THE TIME OF SURVEY BY NATIONALITY AND GENDER (RETURNEES)

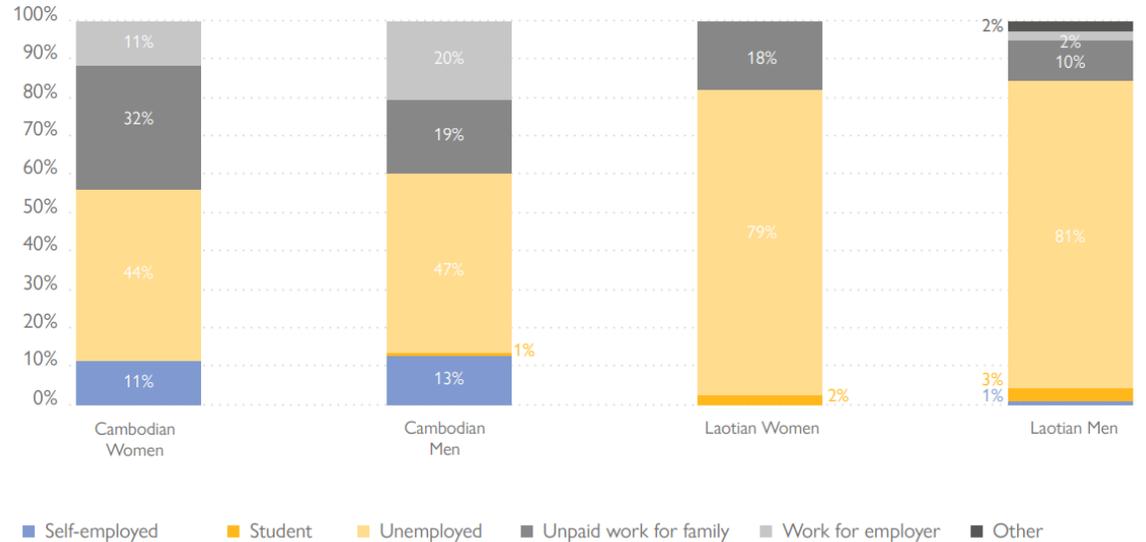
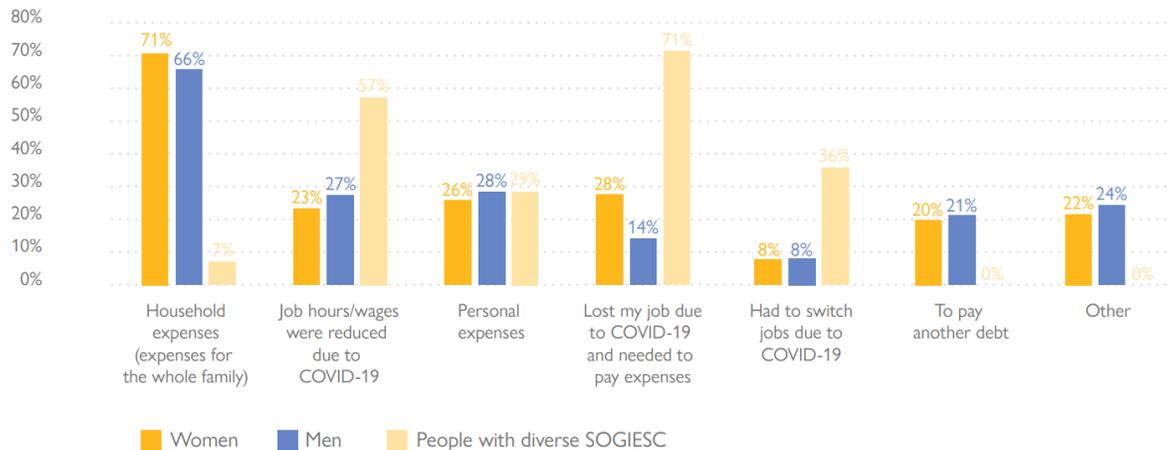


FIGURE 21. RESPONDENT REASONS FOR INCREASED DEBT DURING COVID-19 (STAYEES AND RETURNEES)



Unemployment was very high among surveyed returnees. 80% Laotians reported higher unemployment rates than Cambodians (46%). 26% of Cambodian returnees were doing unpaid work for their families, with women (32%) more likely than men (19%) to report this as their current occupation.

# SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANT WORKERS

IN CAMBODIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC,  
MYANMAR AND THAILAND



## IOM's Return and Reintegration studies: focus on Cambodia post COVID-19

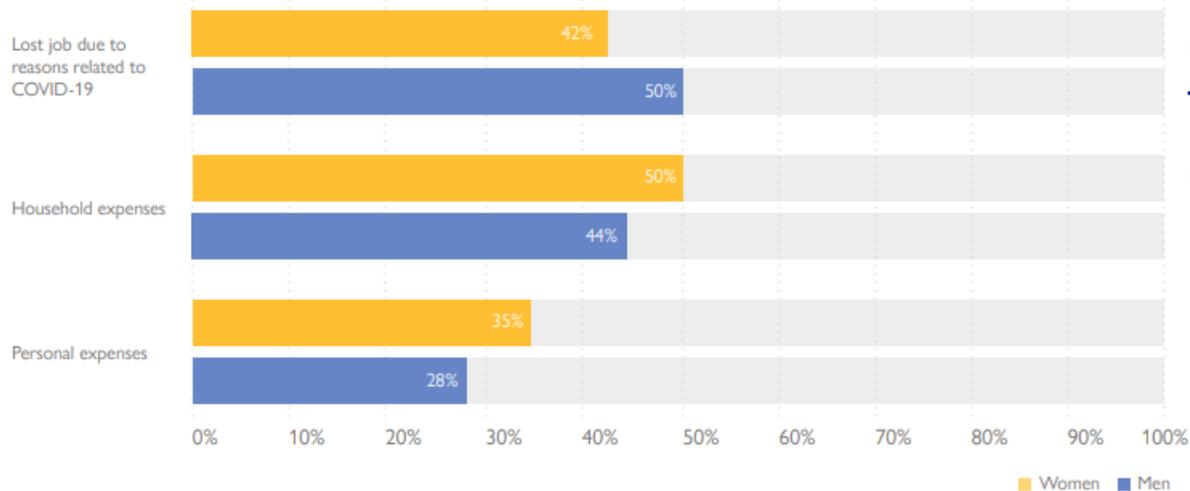
### Migrant workers post return:

- **77% of women and 89% of men** were looking for a job but were **unaware of how to find it or doubted any jobs were available**
- **44% of Cambodian returnees** were applying to jobs
- **41%** were taking on **irregular or occasional work**
- **36%** were reducing expenditures on **health and essential items**
- **38%** were taking **loans to cope with being unemployed**
- **25%** said they were **reducing their food intake to cut down on costs.**

# Economic consequences of COVID-19 on Cambodian returnees and their families

## Debts:

FIGURE 58. TOP 3 REASONS FOR INCREASED DEBT SINCE THE ONSET OF COVID-19 AMONG SURVEYED CAMBODIAN RETURNÉES BY GENDER



## Remittances - Livelihood:

**Cambodian returnees remitted 51% of their income. Reduced remittances from Thailand clearly impacted the well-being of their families in Cambodia. They were resorting to concerning behaviours in response, particularly the families of women workers:**

- 38% were reducing food intake;
- 42% were reducing spending on health essentials (hygiene, water...);
- 71% were reducing spending on non-essentials (clothing...).

# IOM's Return and Reintegration studies: focus on Lao People's Democratic Republic post COVID-19

## Remittances - Livelihood:

Reduced remittances from Thailand also **impacted the well-being of returnees' families in Lao People's Democratic Republic:**

TABLE 20. AVERAGE REMITTANCE AMOUNT PRE-COVID-19 BY NATIONALITY AND GENDER (RETURNEES)

	Women	Men	Total
Laotian	3,780 THB	4,263 THB	4,026 THB

TABLE 21. AVERAGE REPORTED HOUSEHOLD INCOME REDUCTIONS BY NATIONALITY AND GENDER (RETURNEES)

	Women	Men	Total
Laotian	-39%	-28%	-29%

They were resorting to **concerning behaviours in response:**

- **47% were reducing food intake;**
- **32% were reducing spendings on health essentials (hygiene, water...);**
- **45% were reducing spending on non-essentials (clothing...).**

Gender-breakdown:

- **55% of women** returnees said their families were **reducing food intake** compared to **38% of men;**
- **42% of women reduced spending on essentials** compared with only **22% of men.**

# Facilitating Return and Reintegration in Viet Nam:

Several countries, such as Viet Nam, put in place systems to support their migrant workers affected by the pandemic, helping those who had been stranded to return home (IOM 2022).

The Government issued a notice directing its citizens abroad to restrict their return. But, in cases of necessity for return, to register with Vietnamese diplomatic missions and consulates to coordinate the registration of their return.

Between April and July 2020, the government brought back more than **19,600 civilians by 80 aircrafts** (Thời 2020).

The Government required recruitment agencies to provide a review and report:

- Of migrant workers abroad at risk of infection of COVID-19;
- A list of returned migrant workers;
- A list of those expected to return by the end of 2020.

Awareness raising for migrant workers:

Coordination with the Television of Viet Nam, the Viet Nam News Agency and other mass media and press to disseminate information to migrant workers about regulations, medical warnings, prevention measures and travel advisories.

Efforts to support stranded workers after return:

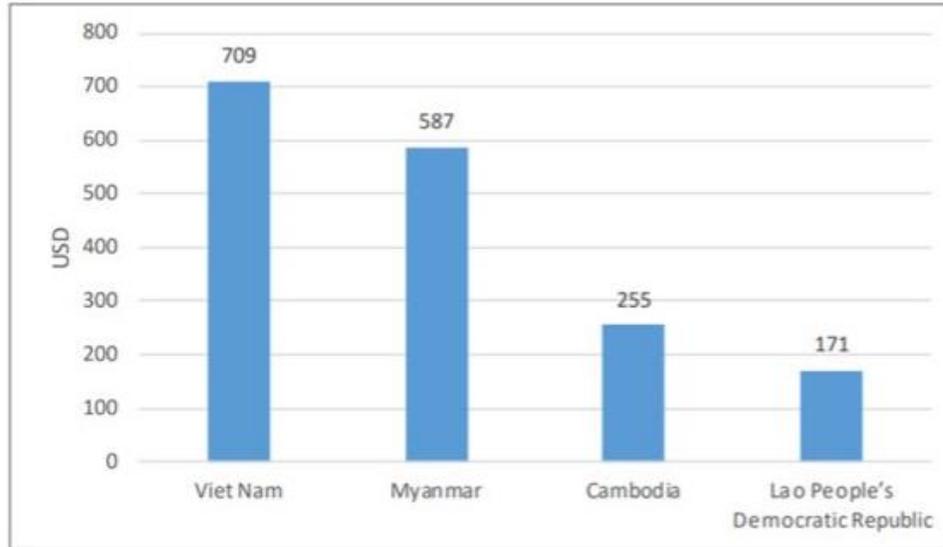
- Cash transfers to poor and near-poor households;
- Income Security Support for workers ineligible for unemployment insurance and for workers without contracts;
- Financial support provided to workers on unpaid leave or experiencing reduced working hours.



## DEBT AND THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE:

INSIGHTS FROM SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Figure 2. Average migration cost by country of origin



Source: B. Harkins, D. Lindgren and T. Suravoranon, Risks and Rewards survey raw dataset, provided to the author through the ILO.

Table 4. Means of financing migration

Means	Percentage of respondents (N = 1,808)
Loans	42
Savings	52
Wage deductions	12
Selling or pawning assets	7
Others	5

Source: B. Harkins, D. Lindgren and T. Suravoranon, Risks and Rewards survey raw dataset, provided to the author through the ILO.

Note: Respondents could report more than one means of financing migration; thus, the total does not equal 100 per cent.

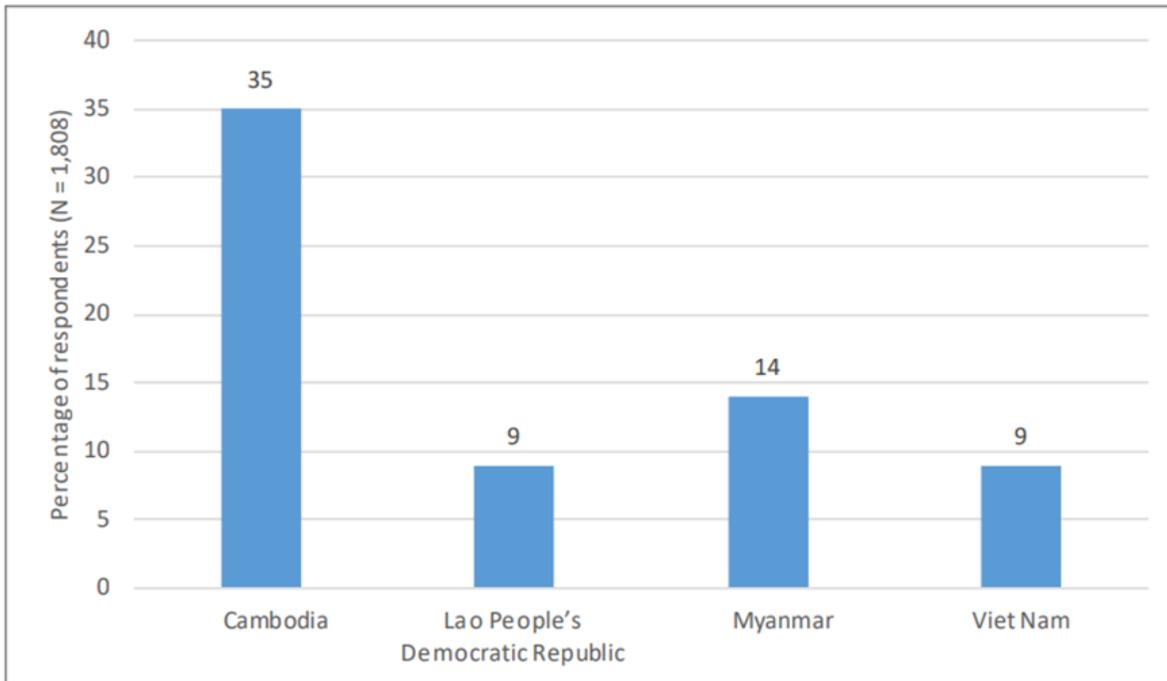
## Debt, return and reintegration

- **Indebtedness is associated with negative return outcomes;**
- **Increase vulnerability to trafficking and labour exploitation;**
- **Play as a barrier to sustainable return.**

# High Debt Burden

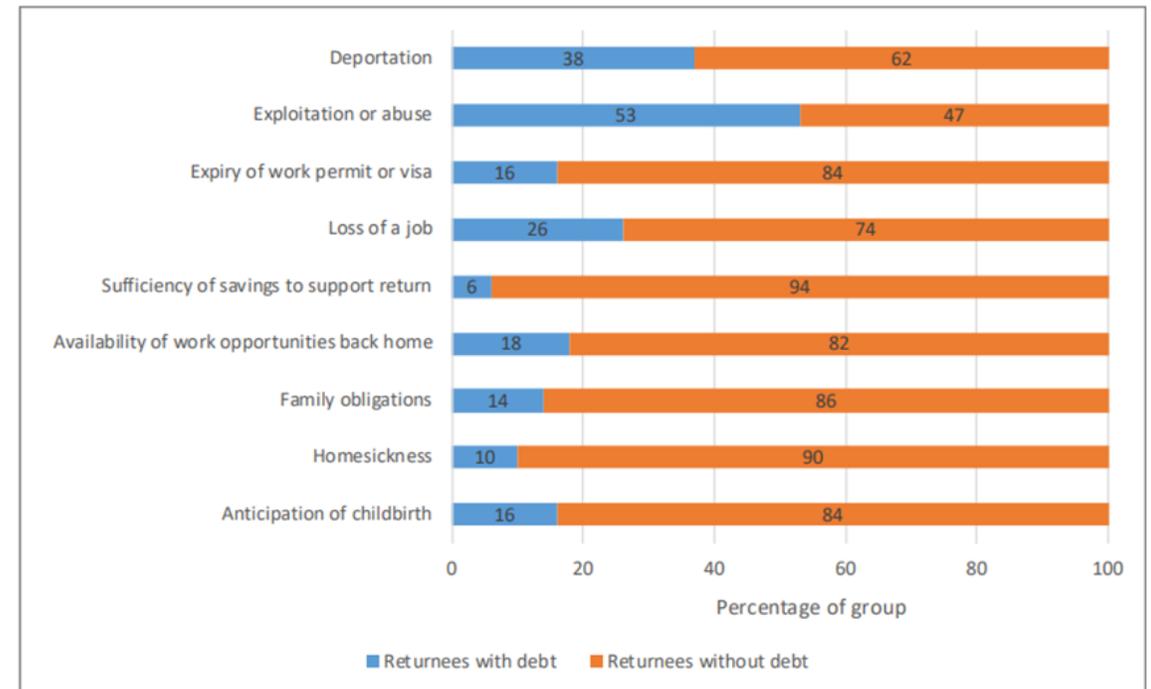
- High Debt Burden causes returnees to take up less desirable work, as it appears more immediately available.
- Decent work remains inaccessible to returnees in rural areas in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam. Upon return with large debts, there are strong incentives for remigration or for the subsequent migration of a family member.

Figure 7. Returnee indebtedness by country of origin



Source: B. Harkins, D. Lindgren and T. Suravoranon, Risks and Rewards survey raw dataset, provided to the author through the ILO.

Figure 17. Returnee indebtedness, by primary cause of return



Source: B. Harkins, D. Lindgren and T. Suravoranon, Risks and Rewards survey raw dataset, provided to the author through the ILO.



# An Integrated Approach to Reintegration

The **economic dimension** contributes to re-entering the economic life and sustain livelihoods.

The **social dimension** reflects the access to public services and infrastructure in including access to health, education, housing, justice and social protection schemes.

The **psychosocial dimension**: the reinsertion of returning migrants into personal support networks (friends, relatives, neighbours) and civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations). This also includes the re-engagement with the values and way of living of the country of origin's society.



The **individual level**: to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of returnees and returning family members

The **community level**: initiatives that respond to the needs, vulnerabilities, and concerns of communities to which migrants return.

The **structural level**: promote good governance of migration through engagement with local and national authorities and stakeholders and supports continuity of assistance through adequate local public services.

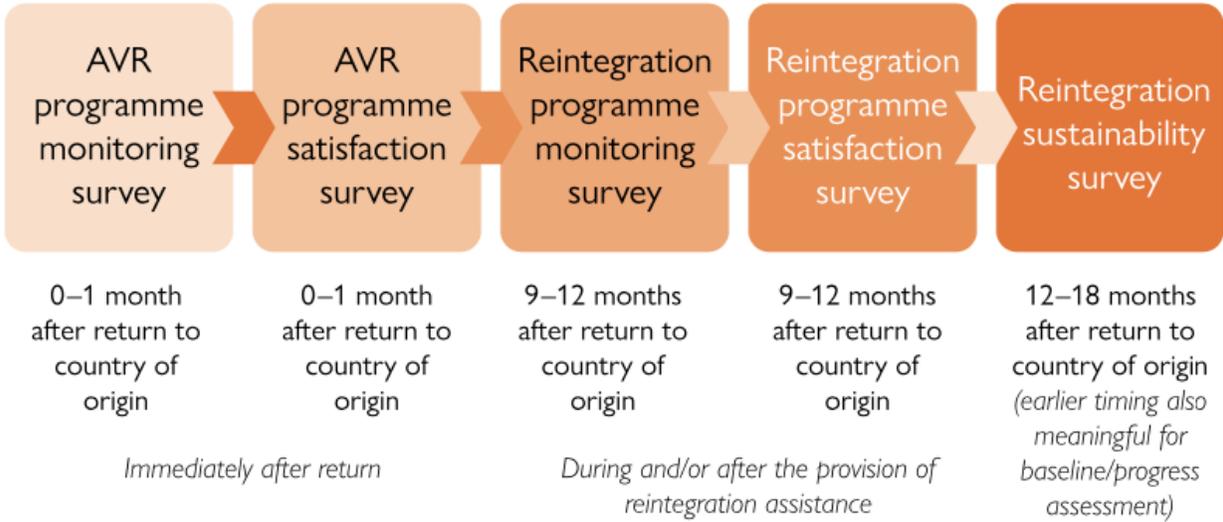
# Complementarity with ASEAN Guidelines on Return and Reintegration



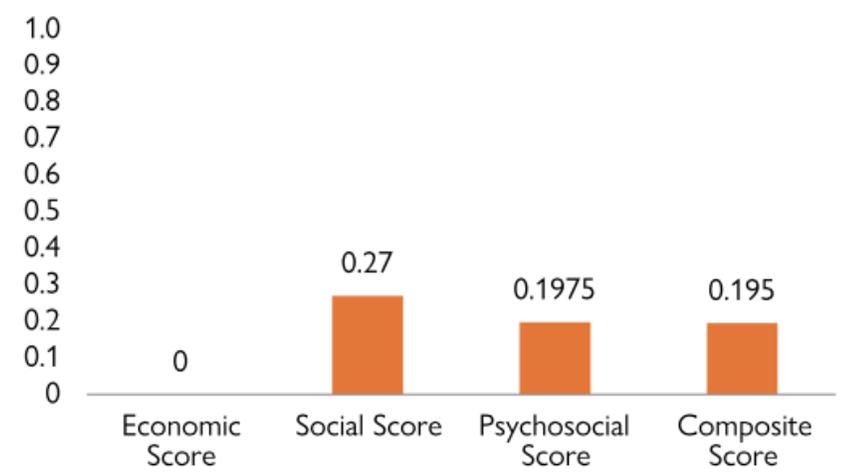
ASEAN Guiding Principles	IOM's Operational Guidance & Best Practice
Develop and improve overall legal & policy framework & institutional mechanisms	Structural level interventions – SOP guidance, NAPs, bilateral MOUs
Multistakeholder coordination mechanisms	Guidance on operationalizing NRMs & TRMS. Community policing in Indonesia
Assessment of needs of migrant workers	Screening forms and tailored reintegration plans
Economic, social, and cultural reintegration	Integrated approach – economic, social and psychosocial dimensions. Pre-departure- cultural orientations
Pre-departure and post-arrival support	Detailed PDOT and POA assistance and orientation
Capacity building	Detailed reintegration training modules. ToTs for govt, CSOs, staff
M&E	Reintegration Sustainability Survey: 32 questions based on core indicators, and a scoring system
Information management	Case management approach; data sharing and anonymity, MiMOSA (IMAP for partners)



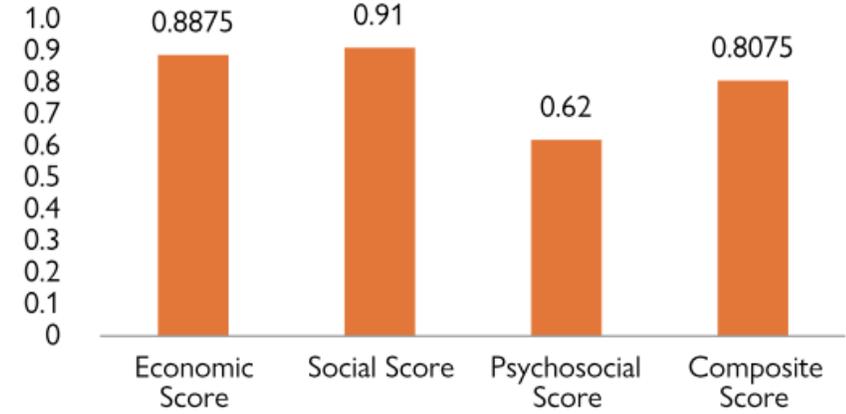
# M&E



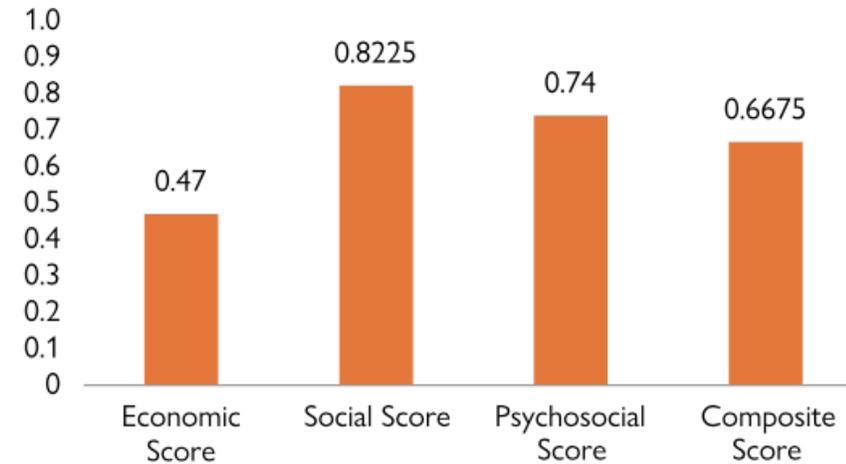
**44-year-old male  
Ethiopian returnee**



**19-year-old male  
Afghan returnee**



**24-year old female  
Iraqi returnee**



**THANK YOU**



# Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers in the GMS

Mekong Dialogue on Labour Mobility

- 30 May 2022

## Three types of migration cycle and return preparedness

Complete migration cycle	Incomplete migration cycle	Interrupted migration cycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To run a business concern in the country of origin</li> <li>• Termination of job contract</li> <li>• To complete training/studies at home</li> <li>• Achieved migration objective (e.g. successful completion of studies)</li> <li>• Situation in the country of origin has improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job precariousness in the destination country</li> <li>• Family and personal problems</li> <li>• Adverse social and cultural environment/ racism &amp; discrimination abroad</li> <li>• Migration objectives not achieved (e.g. studies not completed, targets not attained)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-renewal of residence permit in the destination country</li> <li>• Expulsion/readmission/ removal</li> <li>• Administrative/financial hurdles</li> <li>• Loss of job</li> <li>• Serious health problems</li> <li>• Family constraints/pressures</li> <li>• Forced marriage</li> <li>• War Conflict</li> </ul>
<p><i>High level of return preparedness</i></p>	<p><i>Low level of return preparedness</i> (source; Cassarino, 2014)</p>	<p><i>No return preparedness – e.g. in COVID-19</i></p>

# Types of Returnees, Repatriated or Stranded Workers during COVID-19

Type	Remarks
<i>Workers who returned due to expiry of their contracts</i>	They were not directly influenced by the pandemic although it may have been a factor in not seeking renewal of contracts when there was an option.
<i>Workers returning because job terminated by employer, or employers asked them to leave because of COVID-19</i>	Not all may be able to return immediately; wage and benefit arrears a major issue for them.
<i>Workers wanting to return home but cannot do so because of lack of funds or flights</i>	Stranded workers—can include laid off workers, those who want to leave because of pandemic, and others who suffered lower working conditions.
<i>Workers returning before end of the contract due to fear of the pandemic</i>	They may voluntarily terminate contracts.
<i>Workers who returned on short-term leave from their jobs before the pandemic but currently unable to return due to travel restrictions</i>	Employers may not hold their jobs beyond a certain period. Origin country governments are negotiating with destination countries for extensions.
<i>Workers who returned temporarily to migrate to new jobs but unable to join due to mobility restrictions</i>	Employers may terminate jobs.
<i>Undocumented workers</i>	May be given amnesty to leave (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) or deported as in the case of Malaysia.
<i>Newly-arrived migrant workers in destination countries whose contracts were cancelled</i>	They may have reached the country of destination on the eve of the pandemic and got stranded; they may face problems of return and financial issues (no income and high debt burdens).

# Experiences of Return and Reintegration during COVID-19

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Some thought that returned migrants bring COVID-19 diseases.  
▶ Myanmar female returned from factory work in Thailand

---

When I just came back from Thailand, my neighbours were so scared of the disease, so they asked me not to visit their houses.  
▶ Myanmar female returned from domestic work in Thailand

---

## Issues encountered during quarantine

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Lack of food

High temperature, no fan or air conditioning

**Most mentioned issues**

Shared drinking glasses

Crowded shared sleeping areas

Exclusion, isolation, depression

# International instruments and reintegration

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Art.13**
  - Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to **return to his country**
- **Article 67: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families**
  - 1. States Parties concerned shall co-operate as appropriate in the adoption of measures regarding the **orderly return of migrant workers** and members of their families to the State of origin when they decide to return or their authorization of residence or employment expires or when they are in the State of employment in an irregular situation.
  - 2. Concerning migrant workers and members of their families in a regular situation, States Parties concerned shall co-operate as appropriate, on terms agreed upon by those States, with a view to promoting **adequate economic conditions for their resettlement and to facilitating their durable social and cultural reintegration** in the State of origin.
- **Section VII: ILO Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86) to ILO Convention 97**
  - 20. When migrants for employment or members of their families who have retained the nationality of their State of origin return there, that country should admit such persons to the benefit of any measures in force for the **granting of poor relief and unemployment relief**, and for promoting the **re-employment of the unemployed**, by exempting them from the obligation to comply with any condition as to previous residence or employment in the country or place
- **The 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda** document calls for: “Underline the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recall that States must ensure that **their returning nationals are duly received**”
- **The Global Compact on Migration – Objective 21**: Cooperate in facilitating **safe and dignified return and readmission**, as well as **sustainable reintegration**

# Asean Instruments and Reintegration

## ASEAN Declaration on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers (2007)

### Commitments by Sending States:

13. Set up policies and procedures to facilitate aspects of migration of workers, including recruitment, preparation for deployment overseas and protection of the migrant workers when abroad as well as **repatriation and re-integration** to the countries of origin; and

### Commitments by ASEAN:

16. Establish and implement human resource development programmes and **reintegration programmes** for migrant workers in their countries of origin;

## ASEAN Consensus on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers (2017)

26. The Sending State will develop a comprehensive **reintegration programme** for returned migrant workers and their families as well as an **employment programme** for returned migrant workers **taking into account their skills obtained overseas**.

28. The Sending State will ensure the right of returned migrant workers to **establish associations, participate in policy making and programmes affecting migrant workers**, and to **access services** for returned migrant workers and their family members in accordance with the national laws, regulations and policies of the Sending State.

# ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers

## Process and Timeline:

- Yogyakarta workshop with 'zero draft' August 2019
- Further circulation for comment
- Final draft November 2020

## Priority in ASEAN

- June 2020 ACMW workplanning and final ACMW Action strongly feature R&R commitment and activities

**Yet shortcomings** in the Guidelines due to the political process – minimal country of destination role. This can be overcome with good practice

# ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers

ASEAN Guidelines definition: “Effective reintegration means successful **reintegration of returning workers into their families, communities, the economy and society**”

## General Guiding Principles:

1. Rights-based
2. Principle of fair treatment
3. Recognition of different categories of returned workers and their needs
4. Targeted support for vulnerable groups
5. Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive
6. Community focus
7. Transparency and integrity
8. Representation of voice of migrant workers
9. Multi-stakeholder participation
10. Principle of shared responsibility between origin and destination countries
11. Evidence-based

# ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers

## **Guidelines:**

1. Regulatory Framework
  1. Development and improvement of the overall legal and policy framework and institutional mechanisms
  2. Return process
  3. Information and databases on returned workers
  4. Assessment of needs of returned migrant workers
2. Economic reintegration
3. Social and cultural reintegration
4. Social protection

## **Conducive and contributory strategies for the success of the reintegration programme**

1. Overall economic, political and social environment
2. Pre-departure process
3. Post-arrival and during employment abroad

## **Capacity building of implementing organizations and partners**

## **Resource mobilization for reintegration**

## **Implementation and M&E of the ASEAN Guidelines**

# Why are R&R policies are necessary

- Temporary migration cycles affect most GMS workers
- Reintegration programmes are required to address the diverse needs of returnees
- Development potential of return migration
- Returnees fell through the cracks during **COVID-19**, highlighting urgent need for policies
  - The time is now. Capture the momentum.

# Challenges

- Lack of data on returnees and their patterns of reintegration
  - ASEAN International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database reports return migration data only for Indonesia
  - Some special surveys provide country level information.
- Lack of proper laws, policies and institutions to deal with return and reintegration
- Stagnant home economic situations
- Inadequate public employment services.
- Coordination between different ministries and agencies
- Stigmatisation of migrant returnees
- Resource constraints
- Bilateral and regional cooperation

# Reintegration provisions in national legal and policy frameworks

- **Cambodia**

The National Labour Migration Policy Goal 16 states: “Productive return and reintegration of women and men migrant workers is enabled through evidence-based policy, and strengthened service provision for social and economic reintegration, including employment services, skills development and recognition, enterprise development training, and investment programmes

# Skills certification and recognition of prior learning

- **Recognition of prior learning – Cambodia**
  - The ILO is working with the National Committee for Tourism professionals (NCTP) of Cambodia in implementing a pilot project recognition of prior learning assessment on housekeeping for Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum, Certificate II, (Level 1) for returnee. of domestic migrant workers.
  - Training of assessors and trainers
  - Training of target groups
- Current MOLVT, ILO, NZ programme to provide **skills and create jobs in remittance dependent communities**, targeting returned migrants and vulnerable HHs

# Vietnam-Employment services & Fund for Overseas Employment Support

- Job fairs organized by Bac Ninh Employment Service Center (ESC) with Center for Overseas Labour (COLAb) connect return workers with Japanese, South Korean or Taiwan (China) firms operating in Bac Ninh or nearby Bac Ninh provinces
- Since 2012, over 10 job fairs organized for more than 1500 return migrant workers with 15-20 firms in each job fair
- Now the job fairs have connected online with the other Employment Service Centers of Hanoi, Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen.
- Impact of Job Fairs:
  - Positive impact of the job fairs for encouraging return
  - Help employers who want to hire return migrant workers with skills
  - Help return migrant workers who have been away for long time and have limited accessibility to information to find jobs.
- Use of the Fund for Overseas Employment Support to support to migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Though the annual total of compensation paid decreased during the pandemic and requests from MWs increased, nonetheless US\$63,234 was paid in compensation in the first 2 years of the pandemic

# Destination country support to R&R

## Case study: Republic of Korea

- **The Happy Return Programme of the Employment Permit System (EPS)**
- **Also, Regional Guidelines on the R&R of MWs participating in the EPS**
- **Features**
  - Recognition that successful reintegration is a **shared responsibility** between the COO and the Korean EPS.
  - Training in **vocational skills** (not nec. related to current skills); pre-return **recruitment** services; administrative support such as **insurance claims and social security**.
  - Support on **insertion in jobs** back in the origin country is provided through job matching and job fairs; **Links to Korean firms in COO**
  - Databases of returnees under EPS

# Way forward

- **Return preparedness** should start from the pre-migration phase and cover the entire migration cycle including **in COD**.
- Broad-based **consultative** and participatory processes – all stakeholders
- Mainstreaming of **gender** considerations in reintegration policies and programme
- **Capacity building** for supporting reintegration efforts
- Close **cooperation** between COO and COD

# Way forward - 2

- Reintegration measures should address the **diverse needs** of returnees.
  - All cannot be entrepreneurs - high rate of failures of business enterprises
  - Offer returning workers a range of options - labour market opportunities, skilling and recognition of skills, access to justice when needed, among others.
- Promoting development and decent work **opportunities at home**

# Way forward – 3

## Additional COVID-19 lessons learned

- Formulate and implement **crisis and emergency preparedness plans** at the national level
- **Streamlining** repatriation processes
- **Decentralized** provision of support and services, at local and community levels
- **Facilitating remigration** to relieve domestic labor markets & livelihood challenges, with safeguards for migrant health

Country Respondents

Open Discussion



# Closing Remarks

Dr. Maria Nenette Motus,  
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, IOM



# Thank you!

For more information, please contact  
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