

IOM

ANNUAL

REPORT

2021



FOREWORD

The activities encapsulated within the Annual Report for 2021 are reflective of a challenging, yet productive year, in which the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Thailand Country Office adapted and responded to the global COVID-19 pandemic and assisted its beneficiaries to overcome challenges brought by COVID-19.

Migrants are essential to the economic and social development of Thailand. They compensate for a growing shortage of labour and contribute substantially toward the economic well-being of many households. Migrant workers were among the hardest hit by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), but they continue to contribute to the economy across the region as essential workers during the pandemic, especially in key sectors such as health care, domestic work and agriculture.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that no one is safe until everyone is safe. To overcome the pandemic's effects and build back better, a more migrant-inclusive and mobility-sensitive response is essential. Such approach is also necessary to fulfil commitments made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) – leaving no one behind. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is dedicated to working together with the Royal Thai Government (RTG) and partners to fully leverage the results in support of economic resilience and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

ABOUT IOM THAILAND



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Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. As a related organization of the United Nations, IOM has 174 member states and a further eight states holding observer status.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. To advance this aim, IOM works with its partners to meet the growing operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the well-being and human rights of migrants.

In Thailand, IOM began its operations in 1975, assisting the resettlement of Indo-Chinese refugees to countries offering them permanent residence. Since then, IOM activities in the country have expanded significantly both in terms of their geographic reach and target populations.

With the Kingdom of Thailand joining as a member state in 1986, IOM's cooperation with the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has expanded to cover all aspects of migration affecting the Kingdom and its neighbours, including labour migration, migration health, counter trafficking, emergency and post crisis, institution building, border management, research and private sector collaboration.

Today, IOM has a strong presence in Thailand with over 300 staff working on more than 50 active projects in nine locations across the country. The IOM Country Office in Thailand has a main office in central Bangkok, four sub offices and six other project offices in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Mae Sariang, Mae Sot and Samut Prakarn.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON MIGRATION IN THAILAND

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the working conditions and labour migration dynamics in Thailand. Globally, workers in low-wage jobs and those in the informal sector were particularly hard-hit by the effect of lockdowns and disruption in the global supply chains, and in Thailand, many such workers were migrants from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. As of 2019, about three million migrants were registered workers in Thailand, approximately half of whom were from Myanmar, 34 per cent from Cambodia and 18 per cent from Lao People's Democratic Republic. In addition, the United Nations (UN) estimated that at least two million more migrants from these countries were working informally across the country.

While there is no official record of migrant job losses in Thailand, the Migrant Working Group estimated that as many as 700,000 migrant workers – mostly in tourism, services and construction industries – lost their jobs between March and July 2020. These figures likely never recovered throughout 2021 given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures put in place across Thailand, which resulted in a mass return of migrant workers to countries of origin. According to the Immigration Bureau of Thailand, 71,292 Cambodian nationals, 284,180 Laotian nationals and 183,375 Myanmar nationals departed Thailand between March 2020 and April 2021. However, it is likely that these figures are higher given the prevalence of irregular migration channels.



According to a recent IOM study “Socioeconomic Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers” published in November 2021, the vast majority of migrant workers who remained in Thailand were working the same hours for lower pay during the pandemic. Women migrant workers were disproportionately affected, with half of them being paid below the minimum wage. In many cases, migrants facing loss of income in Thailand had to take loans to pay for daily living costs and household expenses.

Lockdowns and restrictions to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19 have caused significant challenges in implementing IOM projects in 2021. IOM Thailand together with its partners continued, though, to support migrants and deliver its projects in 2021 and is preparing for reopening of borders.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

LABOUR MIGRATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour (MoL), UN agencies, private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs), IOM works to enhance the lives of labour migrants in Thailand by engaging government stakeholders and employers in promoting safe and regular migration, fair and ethical recruitment and employment of migrant workers and skills development.

492 migrant workers had enhanced access to tailored skills development programmes in 2021, of which 379 workers certified their skills with IOM support.

30,000 migrant workers were reached through IOM information outreach campaigns on safe migration capacity building directed to their employer on addressing modern slavery and promoting ethical recruitment and employment.

1,490 stakeholders were reached by disseminating Good Practices Guidelines for Skills Development for Migrant Workers developed by IOM. In addition, IOM completed the Shared Responsibility Framework on Ethical Recruitment, Migrant Employment and Skills Development, aiming at creating minimum standards that are in line with Thai laws for fair and ethical recruitment, decent work and skills development for migrant workers.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS



To improve the welfare of labour migrants, promote their rights and prevent exploitation, IOM collaborated with businesses and associations both large and small to promote fair labour, ethical recruitment, social compliance and sustainability in supply chains.

238 Myanmar migrants employed by IKEA's and Delta Galil's supply chain partners based in Thailand, provided their feedback on recruitment and employment experiences through a blockchain-based mobile application piloted in 2021 by IOM in partnership with Diginex Solutions, a technology provider. The information gathered enabled companies to pinpoint the stages of the labour migration journey where migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

One of the company representatives explained that the project helped identify areas where the brand must take a deeper dive to improve conditions for migrant workers in its Thai facility.

It has also informed the direction of a forthcoming review of its factory management system and the employer-worker communications channels.

In another joint project with IKEA, IOM developed audio-visual materials explaining working and living conditions of Thai berry pickers employed in Sweden as well as workers' rights and entitlements, including ways to access remediation abroad. That was the first time such materials were made available in Isaan dialect of North-Eastern Thailand, where the

majority of migrant workers employed in the IKEA berry supply chain are from.

1,000+ Thai berry pickers who returned from Sweden in 2021 are benefitting from these materials. The majority of them are likely to travel back during the 2022 berry season. Moreover, the materials will now be translated into central Thai language and incorporated into the pre-departure orientation programme run by the Thailand Overseas Employment Administration of the MoL. As a result, the materials will benefit between 3,000 to 5,000 Thai workers who go to Sweden annually to work as berry pickers.

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE



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IOM has been engaged in efforts to provide protection and assistance to migrants in need, including victims of trafficking (VoTs), smuggled migrants with protection needs, migrants in irregular situations, stranded migrants, unaccompanied and separated migrant children, and migrants exposed to violence exploitation and abuse.

759 vulnerable migrants (216 children and 543 women) were provided with needs-based rehabilitation and protection support, including shelter, medical support and psychosocial support counseling through IOM.

352 victims of trafficking (VoTs) (114 male, and 238 female) were identified and supported with direct assistance through Government screening, identification and referrals.

2,300 migrants in Immigration Detention Centers (IDCs), Shelters for Children and Families and Welfare Protection Centers for Victims of Trafficking were provided with needs-based rehabilitation and protection support, including medical and psychosocial assistance, food and non-food items.

19 migrants stranded in Thailand (eight men, five women and six boys) were assisted with voluntary return and reintegration.

28 Thai migrants stranded abroad (two men, 20 women, one boy and two girls), including two victims of trafficking, received assistance upon arrival and reintegration support.

850+ stakeholders from various ministries, CSOs and the general public were reached. IOM, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, including the Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons, has been supporting the development of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Victims of Trafficking in Thailand, and providing technical and capacity building support, including sensitization interventions.

IOM has supported the RTG on issues of irregular migration, through IOMs policies, best practices, guidelines and tools, such as the determinants of migrant vulnerability, integrated approach to reintegration. Through policy and technical support bilateral collaboration mechanisms were strengthened between Cambodia and Thailand, including through the development of standard operating procedures for return and reintegration, and the case management of VoTs.

As a leading agency in migrant-centred emergency preparedness, IOM established mobility tracking and flow monitoring capacities in border areas and developed a migrant's preparedness and response plan to new inflow of migrants from Myanmar into Thailand following the February 2021 coup in Myanmar.

MIGRANT
HEALTH

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IOM aims to ensure equitable access to health services for migrants and their host communities. In 2021, in close collaboration with the Thai Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and our partners, IOM continued to provide health services to migrants and adapted its existing capacities and resources to respond to the needs of our beneficiaries during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8,697 individuals, in particular, benefited from pre-migration health assessments including 2,252 refugees and 6,445 migrants.

17,602 beneficiaries received person-to-person health education and 133 volunteers were trained by IOM in efforts of capacity building.

100,000 migrants have been reached by IOM and partners through COVID-19 case finding, testing, treatment, training of health volunteers, care packages, health education and awareness raising. The provinces of Tak, Chiang Mai, Ranong and Songkhla were targeted for these interventions.

10,000+ migrant workers affected by the lockdown measures in Thailand were provided with relief packages, food and non-food items and right-based information. In 2021, IOM established and led the UN Migration Network's sub working group on the COVID-19 response to migrants and published monthly situation reports about the impact of COVID-19 on Migrants in Thailand and neighboring countries.

IMMIGRATION AND
BORDER MANAGEMENT

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In view of border reopening, IOM continued to support the RTG and regional counterparts to tackle irregular migration, human smuggling and trafficking by enhancing the capacity of border officials to detect fraudulent travel documents, share information and identify smuggled persons or trafficked victims.

4 Points of Entry (PoEs) COVID-19 Rapid Assessments were conducted in 2021 in preparation for border reopening.

600 recommendations were collected from stakeholders, including employers, CSOs, recruitment agencies, government partners across Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand, through a series of national and regional consultations conducted by IOM, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and government counterparts (Ministry of Justice, MoL).

These recommendations informed a number of advocacy documents to trigger the discussion about participatory policies, processes and procedures ahead of the resumption of labour migration during COVID-19. An immediate outcome of these efforts was a set of recommendations on management of migrant workers after the pandemic, which will lead to a series of joint capacity building workshops for employers of migrant workers nationwide in 2022 to comply with the national legal framework, and enhance ethical recruitment and decent work for migrant workers in Thailand.

1,500 immigration and other Royal Thai Police Law enforcement officials were supported through capacity building training on Trafficking in Person (TIP), Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) and Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) investigation courses. In coordination with the Thai Office of the Attorney General, IOM created an operationalization plan for Thai Law Enforcement and Government agencies to effectively implement the new smuggling of migrants amendment to the Immigration Act (B.E. 2522).

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT



IOM conducts medical screening, pre-departure cultural orientation and arranges logistics and exit formalities for refugees selected for resettlement to third countries.

144,000+ refugees have been resettled to 14 countries from Thailand since 2004.

1,233 camp-based and urban refugees benefited from cultural orientation conducted by Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) and resettled abroad in 2021

28 camp-based and urban-based beneficiaries attended the Australian Cultural Orientation Programme (AUSCO) in Thailand in 2021.

2,252 refugees underwent Migration Health Assessment (MHA) and **901** refugees received pre-departure medical checks including COVID-19 tests prior to being resettled to the third country.

MIGRATION DATA AND RESEARCH



IOM conducts research on migration issues to promote evidence-based dialogue, identify gaps in policy frameworks and provide support for continued collaborative work with government stakeholders. IOM supports RTG to collect and analyze data on migration dynamics and characteristics through mobility tracking and flow monitoring, allowing effective coordination and strategic planning for migration management. Displacement and population mobility data are collected and analyzed under the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) which provides critical information to decision-makers and responders during crises and a better understanding of population flows.

1,300 migrant workers in Thailand and **800** returning migrants in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, were surveyed under a comprehensive study by IOM on the Socioeconomic Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Thailand, covering the following key themes:

-  Debt and remittances
-  Employment and employment protection
-  Access to information
-  Social protection and services
-  Return and Reintegration
-  Re-migration and re-employment
-  Fair and ethical recruitment
-  Skills development and training



Thailand Social Protection Diagnostic Review
Social protection for migrant workers and their families in Thailand



Moreover, the Background Study on Social Protection for Migrant Workers and Their Families in Thailand was developed in 2021 by IOM in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). This study offers the most recent and comprehensive review of Thailand's social protection system, including in relation to its design, coverage, and accessibility for nearly three million migrant workers residing in the country. The study is published as part of the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection for All in Thailand, funded by the Joint SDGs Fund.

UN NETWORK ON
 MIGRATION THAILAND



**United Nations
 Network on Migration**
Working Better Together



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In 2021, The UN Thailand Network on Migration supported the RTG, as a Global Compact for Migration (GCM) champion country, to ensure that migration is meaningfully mainstreamed into the Government's national policies as well as within institutional frameworks like the UN Country Team's Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The Network defined its first country workplan to provide clarity and strategic focus in the delivery of concrete and measurable results over a two-year period (2021 – 2023). The workplan was reviewed and endorsed by the RTG in April 2021.



IOM Deputy Director General, Amy Pope, meeting with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Thailand Gita Sabharwal © IOM 2022

DONORS AND PARTNERS



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UNITED NATIONS



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SDGs related to IOM	1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	13 CLIMATE ACTION	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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