Lao PDR
School Re-opening WASH Components and Lessons Learnt
COVID-19 and School Re-opening Plan

• Lao PDR went into a lockdown on 1 April, Prime minister Order No.06
• To respond to COVID-19, the Ministry of Education & Sports established a taskforce with representatives from various departments led by the Permanent Secretary Office. The ministry taskforce works closely with National Taskforce for COVID-15 response.
• During the lockdown MoES issued more than 30 notifications to provinces and districts.

Intervention activities during the lockdown and preparation for reopening:
• Ministry allowed both public and private schools using online learning if possible, for the rural remote schools, teachers organized a small group of students and provided homework. Some school provided with home-based learning materials.
• Developing teaching-learning programmes for TV, radio and social media platform.
• School re-opening campaign, including promoting key hygiene practices.
• Schools used as Quarantine Centers were disinfected before reopening.
• Schools with no access to water – working with communities and schools.
Innovation in WASH for school Re-opening

- Based on global guidelines, a school re-opening framework and safe school guidance on COVID-19 were developed for the Lao context.

- With UNICEF support, a Back to School survey was conducted to help guide the campaign to promote return to school of children while continuing to protect the community from transmission of Covid19.

- The Back to School campaign was launched using both social media and traditional media.

- Risk communication materials were produced and disseminated. Videos were also produced to help guide schools on cleaning and producing tippy taps for practicing handwashing with soap in schools.
Challenges

WASH related:
- Access to clean water by schools located in remote rural areas.
- Availability of masks in schools and practicing social distancing.

Others:
- School access to online learning.
- Lack of preparation for online learning.
- Lack of training of school principals and teachers on teaching in emergency situation.
- Contingency Plan in Education (long term intervention).
Lessons learnt on WASH for school re-opening

What have you noticed during school-reopening on WASH?

• School principals, teachers and students are more aware about key hygiene practices such as washing hand with soap regularly.

• Schools in rural remote areas with no access to clean water are getting help from communities, parents and higher grade students help carry water to schools.

What have you learnt?

• The involvement of communities and parents during the lockdown and when school reopened are significant.

• Both social media and traditional media played an important role in promoting and guiding the society.

• Schools should be prepared for Education in Emergency situation.
What you want to share with other countries?

• Parental involvement in the teaching-learning process during the lockdown, including promoting key hygiene behaviours.

• National Guideline against COVID-19 and Ministry Guideline are aligned.