



Investigation of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Local and Indigenous Communities' Socio- Economics

2021

1. Key Research Findings

Finding 1: COVID-19 had negative impacts on local and indigenous communities' employment and incomes

44.2%

of the respondents lost their job during the COVID-19 pandemic

**30,000–40,000
Riels reduced to
20,000–25,000
Riels**

The daily average incomes of indigenous people per person/per day

**17,000–20,000
decreased to a
low of 10,000–
12,000 Riels/kg**

Fish prices decreased leading to loss of income for indigenous people, from about

There was reported discrimination in local employment, in particular for widows, elders, and people with disabilities

Finding 2: COVID-19 had negative impacts on education in rural and indigenous communities

40–50%

of indigenous and rural primary school students could not access education

**0.4%
increased
to 1.65%**

school drop-outs rate from 2018/19 to 2020/21

All schools in the research sites were closed for some period during the pandemic. The quality of education was reported to have declined with a reduction of learning hours

Finding 3: COVID-19 had positive and negative impacts on health behaviors

Some reported improving their hygiene practices, such as hand washing. It was challenging for many indigenous people to access clinics and health centers. Some experienced challenges in collecting medicine, especially for those with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, high blood pressure, and others

Finding 4: Domestic violence increased in some villages

Respondents reported increased domestic violence and their perceived linkages with increased alcohol consumption, stress, and loss of income

Finding 5: There were both positive and negative impacts on Natural Resource Management

There was decreased demand for wood and an increase in travel restrictions which led to a reduction in illegal logging in Nhang Shum village. Lower levels of patrolling led to increased cases of land encroachment in indigenous communities in Chrob village.

There was an increase in the number of fishers because of migrants returning and looking for local employment and/or subsistence opportunities

2. Adaptive Strategies Applied by Indigenous Communities



1. Indigenous communities sought local employment and opportunities to support their livelihoods

- They sought farming, fishing, and other local employment opportunities
- They tried to connect to local markets to sell local community products
- They also turned to non-timber forest product collection (NTFP)
- They relied on government incentives to support poor families

4. Migrants changed their behaviors amidst the pandemic

- Many migrants sought out other types of employment (fishing, agriculture) to make up for lost wages
- These populations also had to quarantine in order to travel between provinces

2. Students from indigenous and rural communities strived to stay in school

- They sought" Students relied on a mixture of online/home visits to keep up with their education
- Older students mentored and tutored younger students
- Scholarships for students from poor families supported them to stay in school
- Schools worked directly with parents to communicate

5. Domestic violence was an issue in the community

- Restrictions on the sale of alcohol were thought to prevent domestic violence as alcohol was identified as a root cause of this behavior

3. Communities tried to stay healthy amidst changes in the context

- COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeted indigenous and rural communities
- These communities also turned to traditional medicine
- Some people were not able to access their medications so they had to find alternative means or to go longer periods without directly with parents to communicate

6. Natural resource management was an important area of interest for these communities

- Patrol groups had to diminish in size in order to adhere to social distancing guidance
- CFiC and CFMC also needed additional grants to be able to focus on NRM conservation

3. Recommendations



Livelihoods

- Agricultural techniques on animal raising and vegetable growing should be provided for poor families in order to have supplemental food and additional income generation.
- Credit groups should be formed so that indigenous communities can access credit with low interest rates and without collaterals.
- Trainings on money and savings should be designed within the local context so that indigenous communities can access this information.
- Commune councils (CC) should allocate budget to support indigenous communities for the investment initiative capitals.



Education

- Parents should support their kids in learning such as collecting papers/lessons from schools.
- The government should provide financial support/incentives (such as gasoline) so that families can transport their children from the rice fields to school to collect work
- Teachers should visit students at their homes to supplement online education, especially for those who do not have internet.
- Local authorities, including commune councils, should raise awareness on e-learning to parents.
- Community education volunteers should be offered incentives so that they can more regularly support students and youth.
- Teachers/schools should continue to announce the class schedule to parents to ensure that as many children as possible are able to attend school.
- Online lessons should be conducted in indigenous and/or local languages to reach students in these communities.
- Older students should continue to support younger students as tutors/mentors whenever possible.
- Equipment and materials should be provided students from poor families.



Health

- Dissemination of information around how to prevent COVID-19 should continue in indigenous communities.
- Information should be disseminated about domestic violence in these communities.

