

Updates from National Societies

Philippines: Protecting children against life-threatening Polio virus amidst COVID-19 pandemic



In the middle of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippines Red Cross (PRC) is working hard to prevent the resurgence of the life-threatening polio virus by administering polio vaccine to children in all corners of the country. Routine immunizations had been postponed due to COVID-19 but is now being resumed. To ensure the safety of everyone, volunteers and staff with personal protective equipment (PPE) are observing physical distancing and no-touch policy, limiting their interaction time, and practicing hand hygiene in between vaccinations. The PRC recently concluded the third round of door-to-door [polio vaccination in Mindanao](#), reaching more than 102,000 children in 245 communities in 36 cities and municipalities- exceeding the target by 28 per cent. Volunteers played a key role in expanding their reach to 40,000 children in regions, where strains of poliovirus were found.

Mr. Patrick Elliott, the acting Head of IFRC Philippine Country Office said: *“We are worried over the sharp decline of childhood immunization coverage in the country resulting in outbreaks of preventable diseases such as measles and polio last year. Now due to quarantine, it is feared that more children may miss out on life-saving vaccination. Continuous strengthening of routine immunization is needed to bring these diseases under control.”*

Singapore: Delivering customized care during COVID-19

The Singapore Red Cross (SRC) has sealed a partnership with DHL to deliver customised care packages to SRC's beneficiaries till the end of the year. On 11 and 12 July, DHL supported the distribution of over 280 customised care packages to elderly persons at their households. Besides planning the distribution route, SRC worked closely with DHL to carefully inspect the care packages at the distribution centre to ensure the elderly beneficiaries received the essential items they requested. The bags of love were then loaded onto DHL's delivery vans and delivered all over the island to bring cheer to the beneficiaries.



Thailand: Field visits in the times of COVID-19



For the first time since lockdown was lifted and travel restrictions around COVID-19 containment were relaxed in Thailand, the Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) and IFRC facilitated a field visit together with a USAID representative – Mr. Jonathan L. Baker to project sites in Krabi province of Thailand from 14th to 16th July 2020.

Temperature checks, use of hand sanitizers and face masks and maintenance of physical distance were the new norms followed throughout. The USAID representative observed the implementation of the Community Based

Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) and School Based Disaster Risk Reduction (SBDRR) programs being implemented with support from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). For more information and photos please see [here](#).

Laos: Preventing COVID-19 through awareness building



Awareness raising continues to be key in the Lao Red Cross's (LRC) efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. The Champasak branch conducted awareness sessions in six villages reaching 1,042 people (524 women) during the last week of July. Similarly, the Xaiyabuly branch conducted awareness sessions in another six villages for 570 people (328 women). These sessions involve discussions on Covid-19, its symptoms, prevention measures and the emergency helpline number for COVID-19 in the province. The session also demonstrates the correct method of hand washing and wearing facemasks.

Youth in the region: A webinar series on Youth and COVID-19



Hundreds of youth from across ASEAN and other countries joined in the first episode of the Interactive Webinar Series on ASEAN Youth and COVID-19 under the theme *#ASEANYouth at the Forefront of COVID-19 Response*. This two-hour virtual event was jointly organised by the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Foundation, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The webinar presented inspiring contributions to COVID-19 response by the ASEAN youth at community level. In the first session named *The Conversation*, four young front-liners shared about the challenges they overcome and the insightful

experiences they gained while serving their communities in these challenging times. A second session called *Fun Lecture*, guided the participants in a reflection on the importance of mental health and self-awareness to cope well with adversities. Through some exercises and practical suggestions shared by the lecturers, participants gained a better understanding of the concept and practice of resilience and adaptability. This youth-led webinar featured interactive activities in the form of live polls, virtual Q&A, fun lecture, a light exercise, and a WordCloud quick survey.

Established as a cross-sectoral initiative, this Interactive Webinar Series forms part of the ASCC COVID-19 Webinar Series with the overarching theme *The Impact of COVID-19 on ASCC Sectors and Post COVID-19 Strategies*, co-led by the SOCA Viet Nam and ASEAN Secretariat.

This initiative will contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021–2025, the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB) Action Plan in mainstreaming biodiversity in human health and wellbeing, and the ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Education (AWGEE) Action Plan in fostering active participation of empowered youth in promoting environmental protection.

The next episode of the Webinar Series is scheduled for August 2020, in commemoration of ASEAN Day and International Youth Day. The second episode will focus on the theme *#ASEANYouth and the Wise on Resilience in Adversity* and will feature an inter-generational panel.

The graphic includes logos for ASEAN Foundation, IFRC, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. It is titled 'Activity #1 The Conversation: Chit-Chatting with ASEAN Youth Leading the Fight Against COVID-19'. It lists the following participants:

- Nattasuang Phakkawan**: Youth Volunteer from Thai Red Cross Youth Bureau
- Phan Van Quyen**: Founder of 'Ethnicity' in Vietnam
- Moderator: Angga Dwi Martha**: Youth Leader Representative of Indonesia at the 36th ASEAN Summit
- Marlon Palarion**: Medical Technologist from Philippine Red Cross
- Dwi Riyan**: Environmental Educator from Borneo Nature Foundation and Pongo Ranger Community

Below this is 'Activity #2 Fun Lecture: Build Back Better: YOU(th) need to adapt!' featuring **Cheng Yang Chong**, CO-Chair of the IFRC Southeast Asia Youth Network. An illustration shows people fighting off COVID-19 viruses.

Voices from the Field – Cambodia Red Cross



Ms. Theang Samart, 56 years old, is a Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) volunteer living in Prey Char Village of the Prey Veng Province. She says *“My goal is to ensure that my community stays healthy and is able to get better livelihood opportunities”*.

She is actively working to ensure prevention of coronavirus in her community. She participated in the COVID-19 related trainings organized by the Prey Veng branch and is also aware of the guidance from the Ministry of Health.

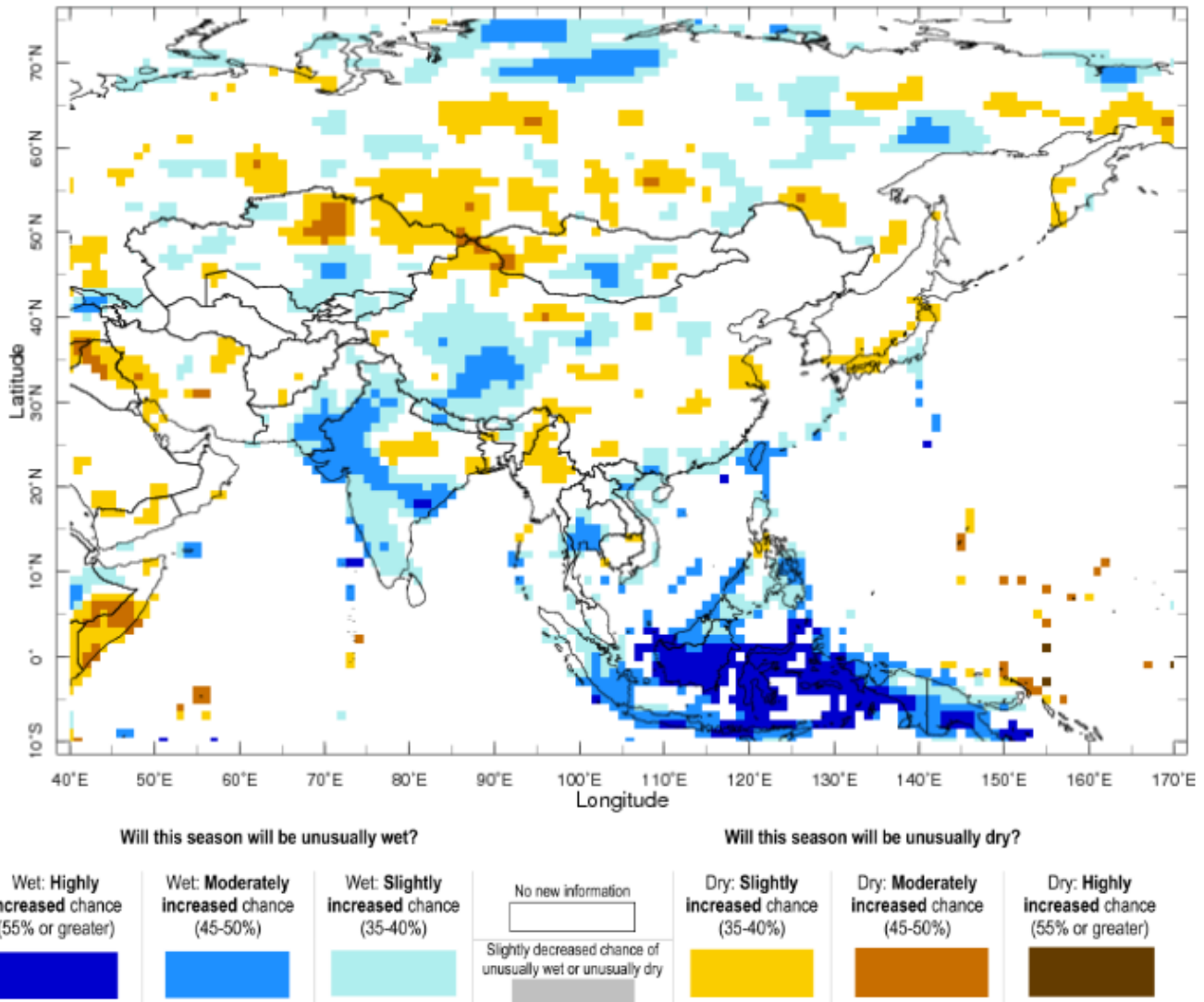
She goes around her community disseminating IEC materials on prevention of COVID-19 and importance of hand washing, use of face masks, soaps and hand sanitizers, while also publicizing prevention messages using a loudspeaker. During home visits, she demonstrates the correct technique for handwashing and reinforces the importance of maintaining physical distance.

She enjoys being a volunteer and hopes that everyone in the community will become aware of the ways to prevent coronavirus and adopt healthy and hygienic practices to keep themselves safe. Afterall, health is the greatest wealth one can have!

Seasonal Forecast

August to October 2020

Forecast for Aug-Oct 2020, Forecast Issued Jul 2020



For the interactive map from IFRC IRI, click [here](#)

Meteorological agency in the respective Southeast Asian countries:

[Brunei Darussalam](#) | [Cambodia](#) | [Indonesia](#) | [Laos](#) | [Malaysia](#) | [Myanmar](#) | [Philippines](#) | [Singapore](#) | [Thailand](#) | [Timor-Leste](#) | [Viet Nam](#)