

# REGIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY AND RESILIENCE FORUM

Monthly Updates – April 2020



*The Lao Red Cross has been raising awareness on prevention and protection from COVID-19 all over the country. Here is a team member raising awareness among vendors in a wet market in Luang Prabang.*

Welcome to our newsletter providing updates of Southeast Asia for the months of April 2020. All photos used in this publication are from the respective Red Cross Red Crescent National Society or IFRC unless mentioned otherwise. In addition to these monthly updates we send every month, you can also find Southeast Asia Red Cross Red Crescent's resources, tools, events and updates at the Resilience Library at <http://www.rcrc-resilience-southeastasia.org>.

## Updates from National Societies

### Viet Nam

The Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) is now gearing up to prepare for the aftermath Covid-19. VNRC launched a campaign called “Humanitarian Month of May” across the country-appealing to the public to make donations for vulnerable people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It will have humanitarian marketplaces as shown in the picture, in all 63 provinces where vulnerable people will be assisted with in-kind and cash donations from the public.



VNRC aims to reach at least one million people who lost their income as a result of the pandemic, in-patient cases who are unable to recover their livelihoods, the elderly, and women with this support. In the past two months of March and April, VNRC reached at least 1,475,667 people (F959,183; M516,484) by providing them facial masks (2,475,555 pieces); hand soap & gel (352,815 pieces); flyers (15,256); and cash grants (8,912 households). and video clips, news and set up information counters in almost 63 provinces nationwide. Through public awareness and public education campaigns, thousands of people have donated their blood to counter the blood shortages nationwide, which is acknowledged as a serious consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, VNRC has made in-kind donation of facial masks to the Cambodian RC, Lao RC, American RC and a cash donation to IFRC’s Global Appeal for the Corona Virus pandemic.

### Singapore



Singapore is home to about 1.4 million migrant workers who come largely from South and Southeast Asia. They work mainly as housekeepers, domestic helpers, construction workers and manual laborers. A rising wave of COVID-19 infections recently, has been reported among these migrant workers. In response, the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) delivered over 50,000 masks and hand sanitizers to migrant workers living in dormitories all over the island. This effort was carried out in coordination with several partners on the ground. SRC will press on with more deliveries in the weeks ahead.

## Philippines

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) started testing for COVID-19 among overseas Filipino workers (OFW) who arrived in the country, at its newly inaugurated [molecular laboratory](#) in Mandaluyong City. Around 120 seafarers who returned on April 29 arrived at the testing center for tests. The test is being done to ensure that the returning OFWs are free from coronavirus before they go home to their families. The PRC's Welfare Services is also providing counselling services for repatriated, stranded and distressed OFWs. Some OFWs cannot go home to their families even after the prescribed quarantine period because of limited or restricted transportation resulting from community quarantine. Trained volunteers and staff connect with the concerned government agencies to ensure appropriate remedial actions are taken.



## Myanmar



In April, Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the Movement partners in Myanmar continued to work with returning migrants from China and Thailand for prevention and protection from COVID-19. The services provided to returning migrants in border crossings include disinfection of bags, temperature screening, and registering returnees' names and addresses, and awareness raising. In quarantine facilities, MRCS services for returning migrants include disinfection, temperature screening, distribution of hand sanitizers, masks,

awareness raising pamphlet, psychosocial support, preparing the building to receive incoming people and sensitizing outgoing people. The photograph here features Ms. Dashi Rai San, Red Cross volunteer, Momauk township, Kachin state, Myanmar who speaks of her experience in reaching out to the returning migrants [here](#).

## Lao PDR

The Lao Red Cross completed a Training of Trainers (TOT) on First Aid for provincial staff and volunteers, with technical support from the Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS). The training was held on 9-13 March 2020 in Luang Prabang province for 16 participants (7 females) from eight provinces. LRC mobilized two trainers from Vientiane headquarters office and three from the Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) to provide technical support to trainers and participants.



The training was held for five days combining theoretical and practical concepts of First Aid. The training also offered participants opportunities to learn and demonstrate knowledge and skills on various subjects such as Principles of First Aid, Unconsciousness, Seizure, Stroke, Heart Attack, CPR, Choking, Bleeding, Broken Bones, Transportation, Paper Test for Basic First aid Course, General Teaching

Technique, Practice in General, Teaching Technique First aid, Teaching Technique First aid and training skills. This training was held before the lockdown in the country due to COVID-19.

## Cambodia



As of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the number of positive COVID-19 cases in Cambodia was 122, 119 people had recovered, three persons were under treatment and no deaths were reported. The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) continues to coordinate with the Ministry of Health (MoH), UN agencies, and development partners for responding to the pandemic and in prevention activities. A total of 550 banners and 20,000 flyers with key message on hand washing for COVID-19 prevention were distributed among all 25 branches with funding support from IFRC. The ICRC is also supporting CRC across thirteen branches for prevention activities. The CRC also received a donation from the Viet Nam Red Cross (60,000 facial masks and 300 units of personal protective equipment) and from Sakura XSP company (10 spraying machines and 40 units of disinfectant solution). CRC has reached nearly 121,068 peoples (F: 68,479 & M: 52,589) through this response operation.

## Southeast Asia Youth Network (SEAYN)



Red Cross Red Crescent  
Southeast Asia Youth Network

Facilitated by the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society and the Philippine Red Cross Society, the Southeast Asia Youth Network (SEAYN) has been revitalised into a vibrant network of youth volunteers in the region. The new Coordination Team consists of Samuel Ng Ser Kiat and Simin Say from Singapore Red Cross as Chair Person and Supporting Member, respectively; Nam Pham Hai and Hang Tran Thu from Vietnam Red Cross as Deputy Chairs; Zaw Lin Aung and Hnin Phyu Phyu Myint from Myanmar Red Cross Society as Officers. The elections for the position of Co-Chair will be held in the coming weeks.

SEAYN now has a Communications Task Force which is actively engaged in COVID-19 prevention communication ([Show Compassion: SERVE – Show Love: STAYHOME campaign](#)) and sharing best practices in youth initiatives for COVID-19 prevention and response through a series of Weekly Sharing Sessions on Youth Initiatives in prevention and response to COVID-19. Throughout April, all 11 National Societies in the network have shared information on a range of activities like: face-shield making, creating and distributing [IEC material](#), disinfection activities and online volunteering. The Communications Task Force has continued creating IEC materials in response to questions and concerns collected through national society help-lines. They have also shared a series of [Qi Gong videos](#) to foster the personal resilience of youth and volunteers during these challenging times.

## Feature Story – Thailand Red Cross Society (TRCS)

### ‘Pinto’- the Robot and Telepresence System enhance Safety and Care in Hospitals with COVID-19 affected persons



“Pinto”, a Quarantine Delivery Robot, is currently assisting health workers in the Emergency Room at the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital (KCMH), under the Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS). Developed by the Faculty of Engineering at Chulalongkorn University in collaboration with HG Robotics and Obodroid company under the project of “CU-RoboCovid”, these robot systems available since 3rd April 2020 help to reduce the risk of the medical team from contracting COVID-19 while interacting with patients.

Pinto helps to take care of the patients, moving around the patient’s bed to deliver food and medicine. The robot is equipped with a telepresence system which helps doctors and patients communicate with each other from a distance via tablets. Pinto is operated by a remote control.

This enables the medical staff in

maintaining physical distance while providing timely care, thus enhancing their protection from the virus. Pinto also helps by cutting down on the amount of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used which is in severe shortage all over the country. It also saves the time spent by medical staff in wearing/and removing PPE several times, thus saving their time to care for more patients. Currently there are 31 patients under investigation for COVID-19 at KMCH. Pinto can easily be cleaned and disinfected, so the medical staff can use it any time.



These robots are presently assisting the medical teams in four hospitals including KCMH. More than 50 hospitals have requested for the robot and the company plans to produce 103 robots for hospitals all over Thailand.



### Innovation for enhancing protection from COVID-19: Negative pressure cabinets for specimen collection

The KCMH is using eight negative pressure cabinets, to ensure protection of its medical staff while increasing the number of specimens collected daily. Developed by the Faculty of Medicine at Chulalongkorn University – these “mobile negative pressure cabinets for COVID-19 specimen collection” protect the medical staff from contracting the virus by contamination from fluid or droplets from the person being tested. Conventionally, hospitals only have one negative pressure room with a ventilation that generates “negative pressure” (pressure lower than of the surroundings) to allow air to flow into the isolation room but not escape from the room, as air will naturally flow from areas with higher pressure to areas with lower pressure, thereby preventing contaminated

air from escaping the room. This technique is used to isolate patients with airborne contagious diseases such as SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, Influenza and Corona Virus.

Building a negative pressure room is expensive and unaffordable for every hospital in the country. The negative pressure cabinets however, cost much less while delivering the same efficiency. It can contain the spread of virus inside, is mobile, transparent and convenient for use. The cabinet is made based on the medical standards for specimen collection. It is made of 15-milimetre thick acrylic which is resistant to disinfecting liquids and has wheels. It is transparent and has an air vacuum inside with a High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter which can filter 99.995% of particles as small as viruses. It is also installed with UV-C light which offers additional protection against the virus. These features make the negative pressure cabinet 1,000 times more efficient than N95 masks, in preventing cross contamination - thus offering better protection for medical personnel and persons seeking testing.



### Seeking Plasma Donations for treating Severely Affected COVID-19 patients



*Dr. Dootchai Chaiwanichsiri, MD., Associate Professor and Director of the National Blood Centre (NBC), TRCS.*



*Prof. Dr. Yong Poovorawan, Head of the Centre of Excellence in Clinical Virology at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, and advisor of the NBC, TRCS*

Given that the vaccine for Corona virus is still a long way away, Dr. Dootchai Chaiwanichsiri, MD., Associate Professor and Director of the National Blood Centre (NBC), TRCS, is promoting the use of plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19 to treat those who have severe symptoms. The NBC, which is already collecting plasma to cure other diseases, is now inviting those who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate their plasma. Donors have to have fully recovered, display no symptoms and should have completed the 14-day self-quarantine.

Prof. Dr. Yong Poovorawan, Head of the Centre of Excellence in Clinical Virology at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, and an advisor of the NBC, TRCS, explains that the plasma from those who have recovered from COVID-19 will be very useful to treat severely ill patients. The virus antibody, which is mostly generated during the 2nd and 4th week, is like the serum which can cure illness. In severely affected patients, it can prevent COVID-19 from damaging lungs that leads to pneumonia and further complications.

Studies on using plasma to treat patients in Shanghai and Wuhan, China, have shown this treatment to be effective. WHO and US-FDA are also in agreement on using plasma to cure COVID-19 infected patients in this emergency situation. Hence, TRCS is calling for more recovered persons to donate their plasma, as well requesting for more blood donations from the public in general following the guidelines below:

#### Self-screening before blood donation

1. People travelling from countries where COVID-19 has spread have to wait 4 weeks after returning to Thailand before donating blood
2. People in close contact with COVID-19 patients have to wait 4 weeks before donating blood
3. People who have contracted COVID-19 have to wait 4 weeks after full recovery without any symptoms before donating blood
4. After donating blood, if you are detected as COVID-19 positive, please inform the blood donation unit immediately
5. Blood donor is required to give true answers on his/her own health

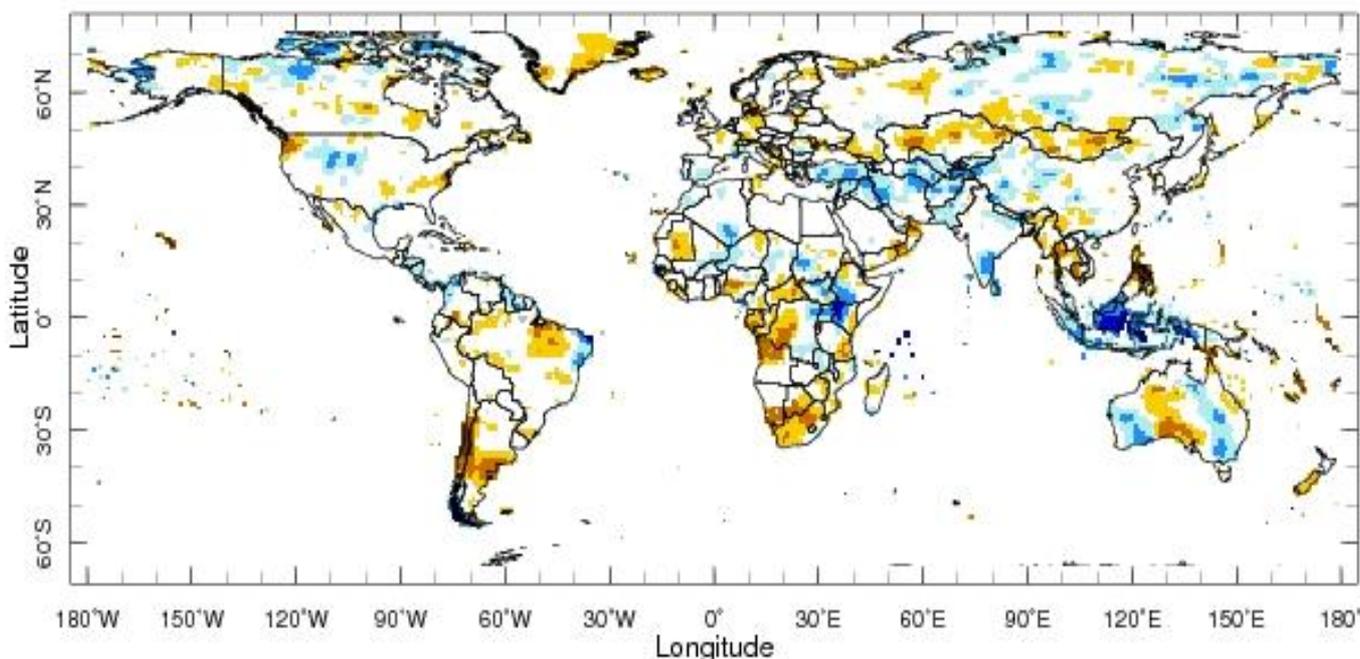
## Upcoming Events

Most events have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely due to the Corona Virus Pandemic.

## Seasonal Forecast

### May to July 2020

Forecast for May-Jul 2020, Forecast Issued Apr 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](#)