

**LAO PDR:
MIGRATION
PROFILE 2023
AT A GLANCE**

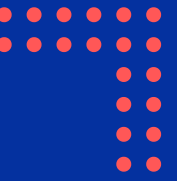
BACKGROUND



The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a landlocked Southeast Asian country with a population of 7.2 million.

Around 18.3% of the population lives below the poverty line, with rural-urban disparities in income and services.

A youthful, predominantly rural populace faces labor market challenges due to educational limitations and scarcity of jobs, leading to significant urban and international migration.



MIGRATION



As of 2020, about 1.296 million Laotians lived abroad, mainly for employment and career prospects.

Lao PDR sees net emigration due to limited job opportunities, with most crossing the border to Thailand as a means of improving living standards.

Internal migration, mainly rural-urban, is driven by job and education opportunities, with 16.7% living outside their birth district.

There is a small gender gap in internal mobility, with men (17.3%) migrating more than women (14.6%).



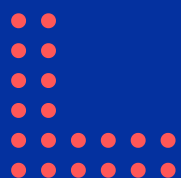
REMITTANCES

Lao PDR is a net recipient of remittances, contributing about 2% to the GDP and helping to stabilise the national balance of payments.

It is estimated that remittance transfers occurring through informal channels are significantly higher.

Remittances support those left behind by migrants, enabling them to cope with labour and skill shortages, food price fluctuation, and seasonal migration patterns.

Around 15% of Lao households receive remittances, significantly reducing poverty rates and improving living conditions.





DEVELOPMENT

Migration opens up new avenues for economic diversification in Lao PDR, as return migrants bring diverse skills, knowledge, and experience that can contribute to the development of various sectors.

The economic development of Lao PDR could be significantly boosted with increased foreign direct investment, facilitated by migratory networks.

Diasporas can contribute to development not just through remittances, but by investing in their communities.

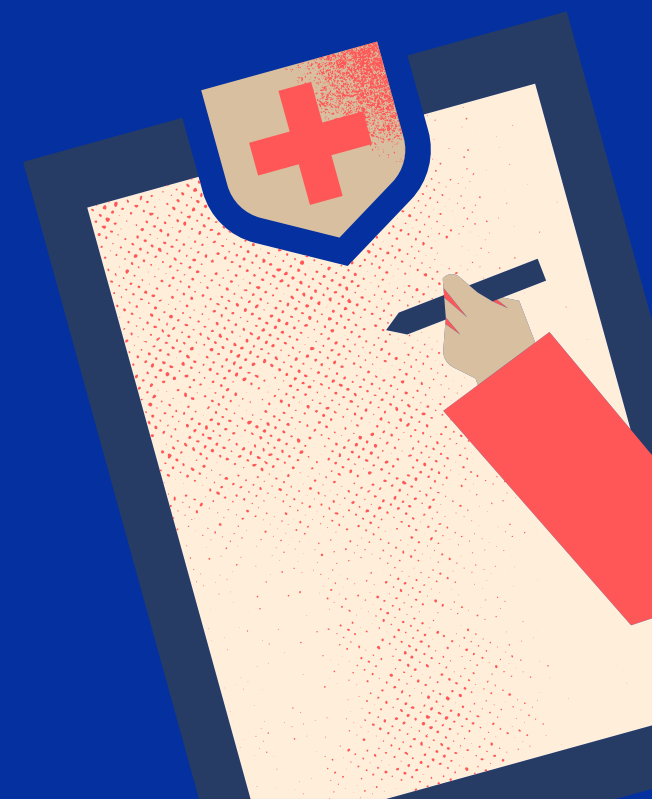
HEALTH



The interplay between migration and health is complex and bidirectional, highlighting the social disparities in the respective systems.

Migrants' health status can be affected by their journey and their living conditions in the host country, and the health status of a population can also influence migration patterns.

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) is home to numerous communicable diseases. The movement of populations facilitates the spread of these diseases across borders. Regional coordination is necessary to address these cross-border health issues.



YOUTH



Lao PDR has one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia. This provides a significant 'demographic dividend' if appropriately harnessed.

Despite their potential, young people have often faced difficulties securing employment. This issue can fuel migration, both internally and externally, as young people seek better opportunities elsewhere.

Including young people in decision-making processes can provide valuable insights into the realities of migration and its effects on their generation.

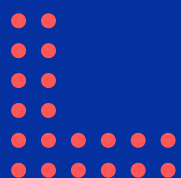
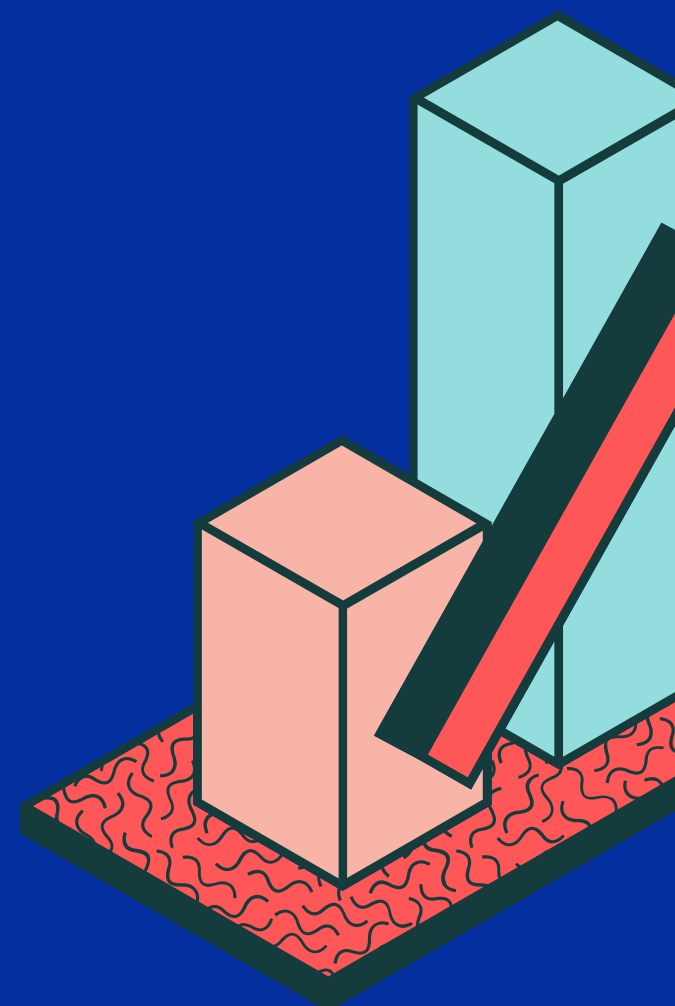
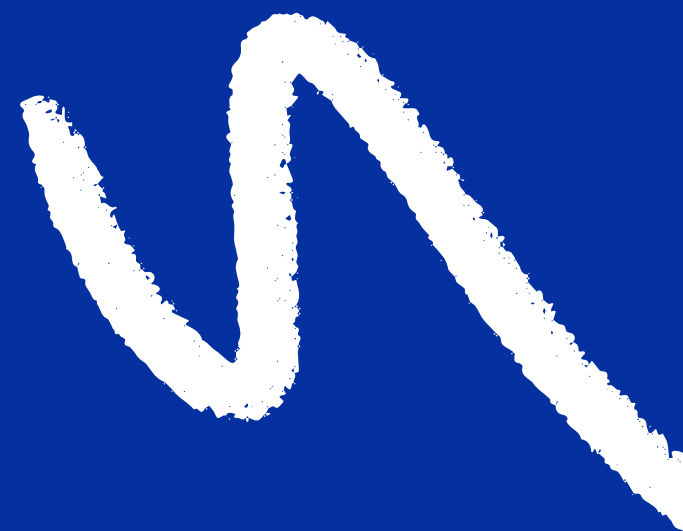


DATA

Historically, data collection and analysis have been significant challenges in Lao PDR, leading to an information gap and limiting the effectiveness of policy-making.

Data-driven policy is crucial for understanding the current situation, evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, and making informed decisions. It is particularly relevant in areas such as migration, where nuanced understanding of trends and impacts is vital.

To address data scarcity, capacity-building initiatives have been implemented to improve data collection, analysis, and usage.





TECHNOLOGY

Investing in digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for leveraging technology for migration policy. This involves improving internet connectivity, establishing data centers, and adopting modern digital tools.

Technology facilitates fast, efficient communication and information sharing among relevant stakeholders. This can enhance inter-agency cooperation, both within Lao PDR and with international partners.

Embracing technological innovation can lead to new solutions for migration challenges. With continued investment in infrastructure, capacity building, and inclusion, technology can drive more efficient and effective migration management, leading to better outcomes for migrants and Lao PDR as a whole.

