

## Using Social Capital to Mitigate Impacts of Covid-19: Lessons from Returning Migrant Workers and Their Families in a Laotian Province Bordering Thailand

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### Abstract

In the global context of the Covid-19 pandemic, migrant workers and their families are subject to job cuts, state-imposed restrictions, hostility, discrimination, prejudice and harassment from communities who fear catching the virus from them. They receive little or no state support compared to other population groups. How have migrant workers and their families managed these challenges? What could be learned from them in terms of pandemic management and support to vulnerable groups? Findings from a study in a Laotian province bordering Thailand show that returning migrant workers and their families sourced and used social capital to mitigate the impacts of the first wave of Covid-19. Their social-capital strategies have helped them to cope with the pandemic. Implications are discussed along with recommendations for support and intervention.

Keywords: Covid-19 impacts, migrant workers in Laos, resilience, returning migrants, social capital

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