

**Laos: LIDC: 3.a Global Migration creates opportunities and challenges which reflect the unequal power relations between countries**

Number	Factor
6.8 million	Population of Laos
1.29	Laos emigrants (2013)
US\$1660	GDP per capita (2014)
73%	Employed in agriculture
930,000	Laotians in Thailand
200,000	Laotians in USA
90,000	Laotians in Bangladesh
40,000	Laotians in France
10,000	Vietnamese immigrants in Laos
<10,000	Chinese immigrants in Laos

- Laos has **limited influence** and **restricted ability** to respond to change within the global migration system. Laos is a **landlocked LIDC** in South East Asia **Communist** state, but member of ASEAN since 1997 and increasing has encouraged private enterprise. **Net migration loss** is high at 1.1 migrants per 1000. **Remittances** bring in much needed income, but human trafficking is a major problem for the government.

**The 7 main reasons for migration to Thailand: SURF FAM**

1. **Subsistence farmers** working on land have no way to break out of this cycle, increase financial gain or independence, so move away.
2. **Unskilled** jobs are perfect for Laotians who have **low levels of education**.
3. **Remittances** are a **main income** or many families in Laos.
4. **Food insecurity** is caused by insufficient land for farming and **periodic droughts**.
5. **Follow path** by others who have returned financially successful.
6. Lack of **alternative** jobs in **rural** areas (only farming)
7. **Minimum** wage in Thailand = 300baht Laos daily min. wage = 80baht.  
Made easier by familiarity with **culture, access and**

**Migration policies:**

- Laos is a source country for **human trafficking** 36% of the pop are under 15y/o.
- Market is **inundated** with workers.
- **Sex exploitation** in Thailand is a concern.
- Trafficking of **under-age footballers** from Liberia is also a major concern.
- **UN agencies** trying to help this.
- National POA for Human Trafficking =
  - **Prevention:** awareness & campaigns
  - **Protection:** women shelters
  - **Prosecution:** legal frameworks

**Opportunities created by migration**

- Laos – Thailand migrant corridor = one of the largest in ASEAN. It has **stimulated political and economic co-operation for trade, investment, development and security**.
- Economic co-operation with Vietnam = 400 investment projects in Laos.
- **Remittances** are important as **22% of families** in Laos live **below poverty line**, money has impact on a range of scales.
- **Political stability** between Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

**Challenges created by migration**

- Low skill = low education = **vulnerable** to human trafficking, forced labour and **exploitation**.
- Loss of skilled labour (carpenters and mechanics) to **Thailand as wages higher** there.
- Laos garment industry is the largest sector of manufacturing employment. Its growth depends on improved working conditions in factories. **Retention of young workers is hard as they can get higher wages in Thailand**.

**Interdependence with countries linked to Laos by migration**

- ASEAN countries are becoming increasingly interdependent.
- Laos-Thailand migration corridor is dominated by **outward flow of Laotians** to Thailand, jobs they do include: construction, agriculture, fisheries & factory work.
- **Remittances assist development** in Laos.
- **Friendship Bridge** has strengthened **communication and trade**.
- Thailand has funded a **health service & drugs treatment** centre in Laos.
- Laos and Thailand work together on Mekong River Commission to **manage flooding** and economic activities in the basin and the Don Sahong hydro-power project.
- Laos signed agreements to **build rail links** between Thailand, Vietnam and China.
- Laos & Thailand are members of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against **Trafficking** (COMMIT)