



# COVID Update and Plans for 2021-2022 Academic Year

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# Context and Background

- Thailand had the **first documented case outside of China** of COVID-19
- **ISDSI staff with relevant training and experience** in public health, epidemiology, and risk assessment, with long history working with NGOs and communities
- **Immediately started talking with Thai Public Health** and others, gathering data and hosting public forums with Public Health and community
- **Thailand went into lockdown, rural villages cut themselves off** from the outside, extensive COVID control measures, including domestic travel restrictions
- **Students were recalled home** and we went **online in March 2020** to finish the semester, cancelled all summer programs
- Put most **staff on furlough**, and **formed a core “reboot” team** to prepare to reopen if possible, based on planning from 3 years ago about pandemic preparedness



# How we ran Fall 2020 / Spring 2021

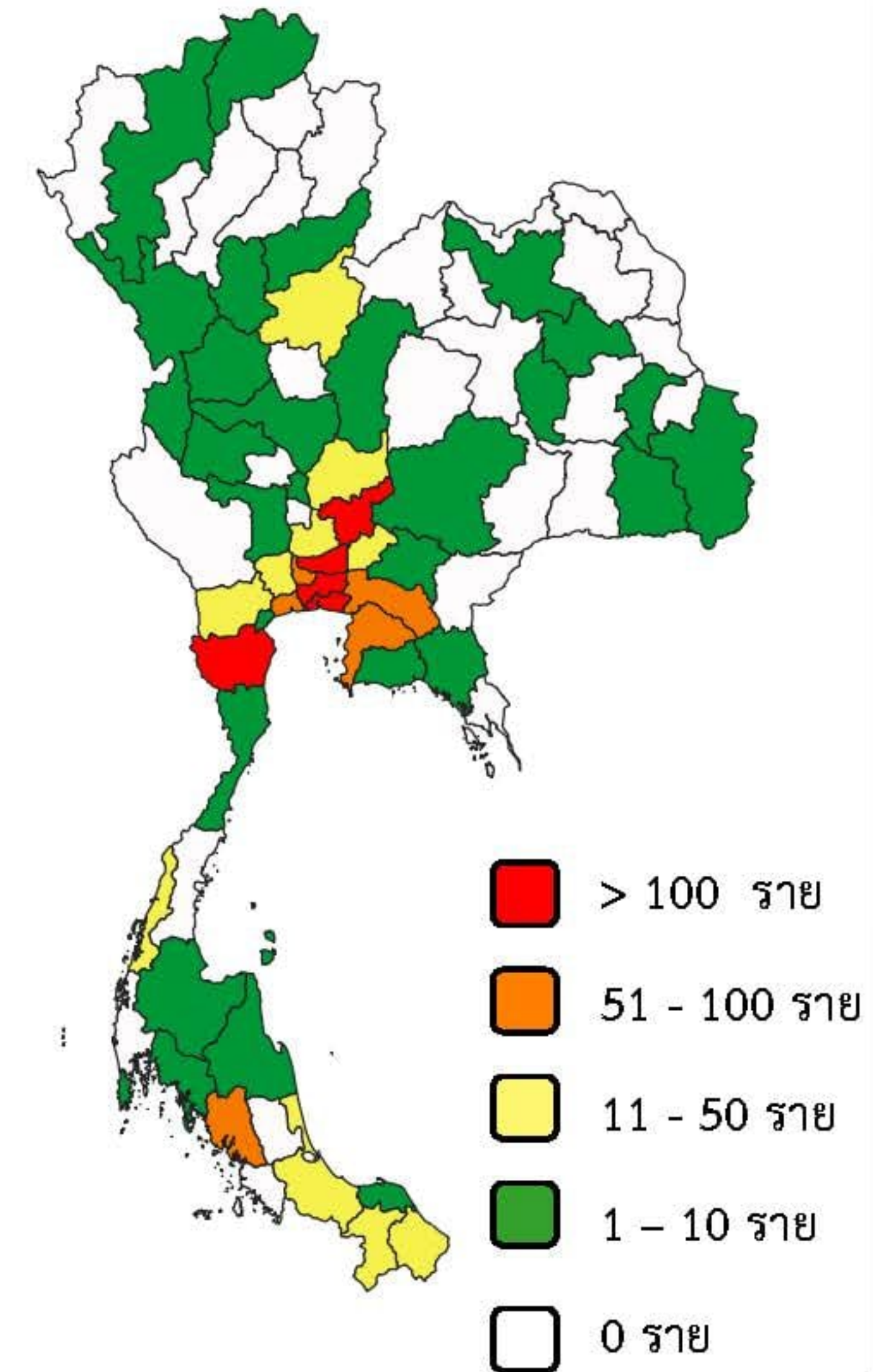
- **Numbers fell** to zero in Thailand after an extensive lockdown for months
- **A partner school contacted us** as well as a couple of students about possibly running Fall 2020
- **Called together the “reboot team”** and started planning along with US staff
- **Fall 2020: 6 students / Spring 2021: 16 students** (including launching a new program)
- **Worked closely with Thai Public Health and local communities** to plan COVID safe experiential studies, including testing, quarantine, modifying activities, etc.
- Dropped home stays in urban areas, modified in rural areas, **involving our partner communities in the decision making process**
- We **figured out the VERY complex process of entry into Thailand** with constantly changing visas, quarantine requirements, Certificates of Entry, new insurance requirements, and flights





# Strategy and ongoing assessment

- **COVID is a moving target** and requires assessing how and when to run programs
- Thailand has had two additional waves, with the “3rd wave” still ongoing, but concentrated around Bangkok, with smaller numbers or zero in other provinces — **geography matters!**
- **Continued to engage** with and dialog with Public Health, NGOs, epidemiologists and our own assessments
- **Increased orientation and dialog** with incoming students and partner schools
- Planning for Fall 2021 includes **multiple scenarios** with vaccinated students, increasing vaccinations in Thailand, challenge of controlling COVID in country, changes in sending school COVID policies





# Things that helped us

- Most of our **course are already experiential and field based** so we could quickly **modify programs** and courses while being COVID safe
- **Staff with relevant experience** in social science, epidemiology, public health, and risk management
- Existing **relationships to experts in public health**, etc.
- **Previous planning** (3 years ago!) identified a pandemic as a risk in our SWOT analysis
- Ability to **cross-check data** from the Thai government to see if the numbers were reliable
- Two staff on furlough worked on COVID-19 testing locally in Chiang Mai and **learned the system** and who the key players are
- One American staff member stranded in the US helped **figure out the very complex process** of returning, and accompanied students back
- Thailand has an **excellent public health** and village health volunteer system, and **Thai people are on-board with efforts to control COVID**, including masking, social distancing, etc., along with daily briefings

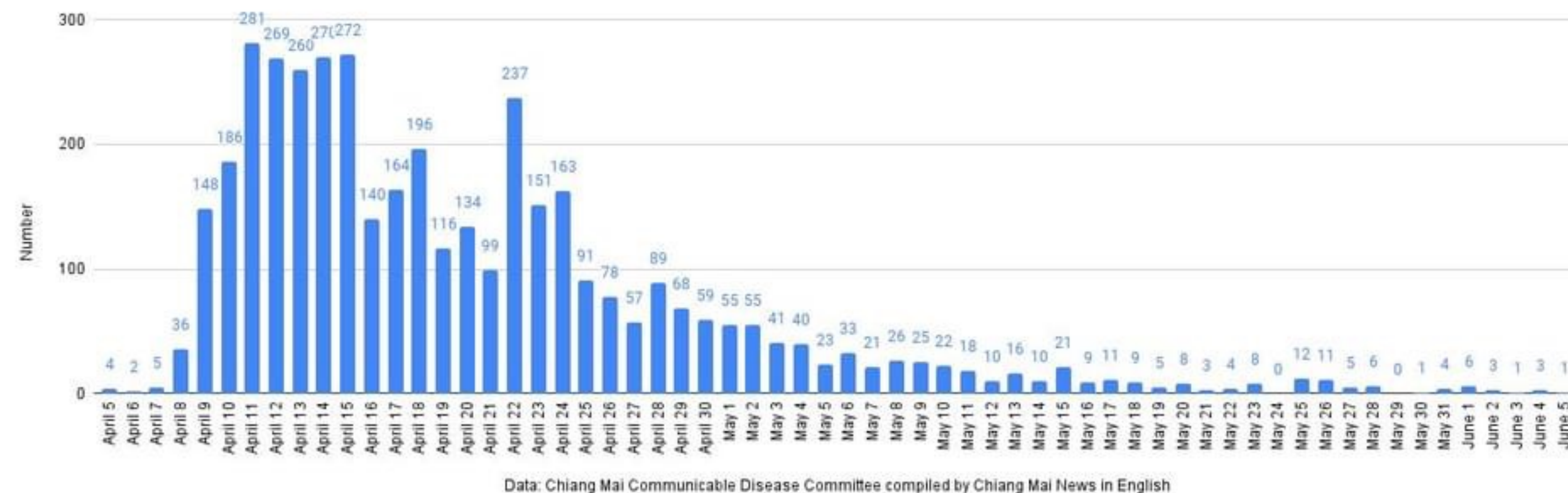




# Current situation and Fall 2021

- As of June 7 Thailand is CDC Level 3. **Northern Thailand would be Level 1** if calculated separately.
- **Vaccinations rolling out** across Chiang Mai and all ISDSI staff will be vaccinated.
- Anticipate all **incoming students will be vaccinated** by Fall 2021.
- Entry requirements are still challenging but **quarantine may get easier** before Fall for vaccinated travelers. Thailand is planning to eliminate quarantine for vaccinated travelers by January 2022.
- **All courses will be able to be offered**, modified for COVID and based on both provincial and community concerns / regulations.

Chiang Mai Province third wave COVID-19 cases by date and number



**Northern Thailand estimated at CDC level 1:**  
Cumulative cases over 28 days below 5 per 100,000 population (May 7-June 5 = 4.39) and in decline.

Population of Northern Thailand : 6,350,499



# Program Changes and COVID

- All courses and academic objectives can be done in a **COVID safe manner**.
- Following **Chiang Mai Public Health directives**, ISDSI campus requires temperature **screening on entry**, masks on campus, modifying classrooms as directed.
- Students will be required to **register for track/trace** with Thai national and Chiang Mai provincial apps.
- Students will be **required to follow all Thai government regulations** regarding COVID (e.g. universal mask wearing in public, check in/out at malls and restaurants, etc.).
- Housing in **single occupancy rooms** near campus.
- No home stays in urban areas, **village home stays on a case by case** basis. We will have Thai families in the city “adopt” students for the weekends.
- **Travel to other provinces depends on rates of COVID** as well as directions by Chiang Mai Public Health.

