



World Food Programme



In Numbers

37.6 percent of boys and **33.6 percent of girls*** affected by **chronic malnutrition** (stunting)

Among children aged 24-59 months, **25.5 percent are underweight** and **9.6 percent are affected by acute malnutrition** (wasting).

258,054 people** affected by natural disasters in 2017.

US\$8.2 m six month (January-June 2018) net funding requirement, representing 46 percent of total requirements

157,846 people assisted in December 2017



WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

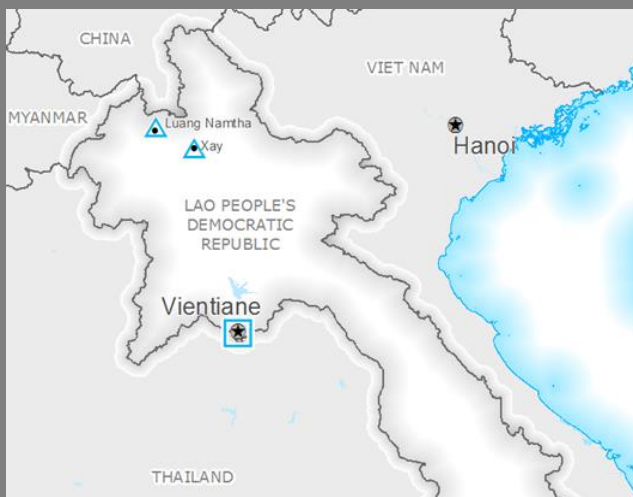
January 2018

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 138 out of 188 countries in the 2015 Human Development Index. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia at 27 people per km². Up to 28 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of USD 1,740 (World Bank 2015). The country is ranked 57 out of 145 nations in the Global Gender Gap Index 2015.

While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry poor to 23 percent, the 2015 Global Hunger Index still rates hunger levels as "serious". Malnutrition remains a major challenge with stunting affecting 37.6 percent of boys and 33.6 percent of girls (Lao Child Anthropometry Assessment Survey, 2015).

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural livelihoods, and the country is the world's 73rd most vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptability and its dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. Changing climate patterns, combined with poor access to both markets and diverse livelihoods, further worsen the situation in remote upland areas, where 25 percent of households are food insecure.



Population: **6.5 million**

2015 Human Development Index: 141 out of 188

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: 35.6% of children between 6-59 months

Operational Updates

- As part of the phased hand-over of WFP School Meals Programme to the Government and communities, to commence in 2019, WFP and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) held a joint technical workshop to finalise the hand-over action plan and discuss next-steps. WFP reiterated its commitment to supporting MoES throughout the transition through continued provision of technical assistance, once the handover is completed in 2021.
- WFP started the roll-out of customised packages of assistance in the first ten districts targeted for handover by the end of 2019. All packages look to increase community awareness and strengthen capacities of Village Education Development Committees, while some villages are targeted specifically for water resource management and increased food availability and resilience activities, depending on their assessed capacities.
- In January, the National Nutrition Committee Secretariat, with technical assistance from WFP, held a stakeholder consultation for the endorsement of the Food Fortification Strategic Action Plan. The Plan is considered critical for the creation of an enabling environment and in moving towards actual food fortification in the medium to longer-term and securing the Government and the private sector buy-in. The plan will support decision makers to commit to and endorse policies and regulations for food fortification, leading to budget commitments from public and private sectors.
- Under the multi-stakeholders Agriculture for Nutrition project, funded by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, WFP rolled out social behaviour change modules for the farmer nutrition schools in 61 villages. Three social behaviour change communication modules on basic nutrition, causes of malnutrition and improved Infant and Young Child Feeding have been finalised targeting mainly pregnant and lactating women and mothers with children aged 6-23 months.

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Main Photo Credit: WFP/Rein Skullerud
Caption: A student of a WFP-supported school in northern Lao PDR.

*Ministry of Health, 2015-2016
**Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Feb 2018

	Total Requirement (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
Lao PDR Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)			
Overall	85.3 m	38.9 m (46%)	8.2 m
Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021			
SR: 1 - Everyone has access to food Focus area: Root causes	48.7 m	27.9 m (57%)	5 m
Strategic Outcome 2: Stunting levels among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet national levels by 2025			
SR: 2 - No one suffers from malnutrition Focus area: Root causes	23.6 m	7.8 m (33%)	1.7 m
Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts are more resilient to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses			
SR: 4 - Food systems are sustainable Focus area: Resilience	8.4 m	1.4 m (10%)	1.2 m
Strategic Outcome 4: National and local governance institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas, by 2025			
SR: 5 - Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs Focus area: Root causes	4.6 m	1.89 m (52%)	0.3 m

*January, 2018 – June, 2018

Monitoring

- **Monitoring coverage:** in January, 26 post distribution monitoring sites on nutrition activities were visited, and 32 post distribution visits took place to monitor the implementation of the school meals programme.
- **Monitoring assessments:** field teams continued to collect data for the community capacity assessments in 13 villages. The capacity of approximately 1,200 out of 1,450 communities were assessed. As part of the intensification of community involvement and engagement in the then districts where the handover of over 5,000 schools will take place, community mobilisers were trained in mobilization skills, practice and messages.
- In January, many schools cooked lunch on only 10-12 days out of a planned 15 days due to semester exams. Because of funding constraints for the nutrition activities, WFP ended the distribution of supplementary nutritious foods to pregnant and breastfeeding women one year ahead of June 2019, the planned end date. However, distribution of specialized nutritious food to children aged 6-23 months continued. WFP used various communication channels to inform beneficiaries about this change, from radio campaigns to additional field visits by WFP field staff and district health staff.

WFP Lao PDR's Activities

Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021.

- 1) Provide policy support, technical assistance and transfer of capacities
- 2) Accelerate the implementation of the Government's plan of action of the school meals programme
- 3) Support a national process for community and Government hand-over of the schools

Strategic Outcome 2: Stunting levels among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet national targets by 2025.

- 4) Provide technical assistance for evidence-based policy dialogue
- 5) Stimulate access to local specialized nutritious food for children aged 6 to 23 months
- 6) Develop a social behaviour change communication and establish farmer nutrition schools

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts are more resilient to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses.

- 7) Build community resilience through the creation of productive assets and sustainable livelihood opportunities

Strategic Outcome 4: National and local governance institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas, by 2025.

- 8) Invest in national capacity for food and nutrition security governance
- 9) Enable communities to lead and own their food and nutrition security solutions
- 10) Enhance government capacity at all levels to prepare for and efficiently respond to natural disasters

Challenges

- WFP continued to work with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and World Bank to advocate for inclusion of a designated budget line for the school meals programme into the Ministry's 2019 budget. WFP and partners are building the capacity of the Government to take over the school meals programme.

Partnerships

- With the start of the Country Strategic Plan, WFP made great efforts to engage stakeholders, build partnerships, and prepare plans for longer-term capacity strengthening activities that will be implemented over the course of the five-year period. The key partners include IFAD and FAO on the Agriculture for Nutrition Project, UNFPA on nutrition for adolescent girls and boys, and UNICEF on WASH. WFP concluded agreements with non-governmental organizations, such as Plan International and Big Brother Mouse, to help improve literacy.