WFP Lao PDR
Country Brief
February 2020

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia. 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of USD 2,270 (World Bank 2017). The country is ranked 64 out of 144 in the Global Gender Gap Index 2017. While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry poor to 23 percent, the 2017 Global Hunger Index still rates hunger levels as “serious”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural livelihoods, and the country is 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.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1975.

In Numbers

- **US$ 1.34 million** six-month (Mar – Aug 2020) net funding requirements
- **476.98 mt** of food distributed
- **93,437 people** assisted

Operational Updates

- WFP signed field-level agreements with the local literacy NGO, Big Brother Mouse, and Plan International to roll out reading promotion activities in Luangnamtha, Phongsaly and Saravan Provinces.
- In a new cooperation with WFP, the Centre of Environmental Health and Water Supply (locally known as Nam Saat) completed a preliminary assessment of water needs in Attapeu, Xekong and Saravan Provinces. This will be followed by the design and construction/rehabilitation of boreholes and gravity-fed water systems for WFP-supported schools and villages without sufficient water supply.
- Under the French-supported nutrition project, WFP constructed irrigation systems in three villages in Ngommalath District, Khammoune Province, with 3.5 km of canals which can irrigate 76 ha, benefitting 103 households with food production all year. Two of the villages have already begun using the irrigation systems for this dry season, making up for the lost harvest last year due to the floods.
- Following the completion of the farmer nutrition school modules in Ngommalath, WFP disbursed garden/livestock grants to 435 households. The grants will help beneficiaries implement their household nutrition plans to ensure nutritious crops in their gardens and an increase in protein consumption through small animal raising.
- Also in Ngommalath, WFP set up village loudspeakers in six target villages with training for the village chiefs and village health volunteers through a partnership with Health Poverty Action. Nutrition messages are now being distributed twice a day.
- In partnership with the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction for promoting climate-smart villages and agriculture, WFP ran an inception workshop in Vientiane and a scouting mission in Phongsaly Province to identify target villages and potential activities. The target villages will serve as learning sites for testing and scaling climate-smart and resilient practices, while also supporting community-driven school feeding. These climate-smart practices include developing weather pattern boards to raise awareness on how the changing climate impacts agriculture.
- WFP organized a training on utilization of hermetic bags for grain storage to the staff of the Pakse field office which they will be able to apply in 40 rice bank communities in the southern districts of Sanamxai and...
**Operational Updates (continued)**

- WFP held provincial Country Strategic Plan (CSP) annual review workshops in Phongsaly, Attapeu, Xekong and Saravan provinces to review achievements in 2019 and to plan for the year ahead.
- WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) teams in Lao PDR hosted a mid-term review mission for the Agriculture for Nutrition project. The final report is scheduled to be finalized in March.

**Story from the field**

Maimon and her garden.

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After severe floods that affected all of Lao PDR in 2018, most of Ms. Maimon Lovanhxay's belongings were lost or destroyed. She started attending the Farmer Nutrition School in Ngommalath district of Khammouane Province to learn about rebuilding her livelihood and creating a more sustainable environment for her only child. She started her own garden and began to raise chicken and ducks.

Her submission of a garden grant application was successful, and with the USD 100 received, she boosted her household garden and bought more chicken. In addition, her son receives Nutributter from WFP, a food supplement that grants him important nutrients he needs to be strong and healthy.

“Knowledge from the Farmer Nutrition School, as well as the garden grant and the Nutributter have helped us stand up again. They give me and my family a better variety of food, which makes us stronger and more resilient in the face of future severe weather events,' Maimon says.

**Donors**

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