



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief January 2021



Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 137 out of 189 countries in the 2020 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 GDP per capita of USD 2,534.9 (World Bank 2019). The country is ranked 137 out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2020. While the poverty rate in Lao PDR more than halved in the past two decades, the 2020 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.



Population: **6.5 million**

Human Development Index:
140 out of 189 [inconsistent]

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

US\$ 0.42 million six-month (Feb – Jul 2021) net funding requirements

136.2 mt of food distributed

87,632 people assisted

48%



52%



Operational Updates

- In January 2021, WFP continued providing food assistance to returning migrant labourers across seven quarantine centres in Lao PDR through partnerships with World Vision International and the Swiss Red Cross. During the month, there was a significant increase in feeding needs whereby WFP and partners provided over 95,970 nutritious meals to 3,845 beneficiaries (including 1,750 women) at a total commodity voucher cost of US\$ 167,556.
- WFP completed distributing 1,100 tons of food commodities to 916 schools, including two special education schools, for the second semester of the school year 2020/2021. Of these schools, 15 are supported in partnership with the Education for Development Foundation.
- WFP organized the high-level joint mission to Phongsaly and Oudomxay provinces for officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Prime Minister's Office and the National Assembly. The delegation visited six schools in total, inspecting school gardens, greenhouses, kitchens, storerooms, and observed cooking and feeding, comparing schools where WFP's school feeding programme had been handed over to the Government already to those who are still receiving food and full support from WFP. The delegation found that, to sustain the programmes, schools are exploring different ways of income generation.
- WFP held an Annual Review meeting with the Ministry of Planning and Industry and all line ministries, to review the achievements through WFP's activities in 2020 and discuss priorities for 2021. The Ministry of Planning and Investment coordinates all official development assistance to Lao PDR.
- As part of a partnership with WFP to support primary schools, Room-to-Read completed setting up classroom libraries in 16 target schools of Phouvong district in Attapeu province.
- WFP is supporting the Ministry of Health in organizing a logo competition for food fortification. 145 logos have been received, and the shortlist was created by the Food Fortification Technical Working Group. This logo will be used for any product that is fortified and approved by the Ministry of Health.

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Feb – Jul 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
88.53 m	82.56 m	0.42 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

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

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

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

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

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

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

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

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

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

Donors

USA, Japan, France, Russia, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Government of Lao PDR, Private Donors

Story from the field



Hoomphan, grade-three student at Sopkhan primary school carries water for the school garden. Photo: © WFP Laos/Lathtana Phetchaleun

Sopkhan is a remote village in Luang Prabang province, only reachable by boat. The community in Sopkhan is excited about WFP's support to their small school of 24 students. They are especially enjoying the school garden - which ensures that students receive hands-on nutrition education, highlighting the link between agriculture and nutrition. The students water the vegetables in the garden under the instruction of their teacher, even on weekends. Not only do the healthy greeneries colour the students' lunch plates, but the school generates income by selling the surplus.

"I saw on the notice board that this week our school gained about US\$ 10 from selling vegetables from the school garden. We are saving this income to buy our favourite ingredients for our school lunches," says Xay Sayyakone, a student of the school.

The garden has a variety of benefits to both students and the whole community. It is instilling a sense of responsibility and diligence in the students for taking care of plants, but also building solidarity among the students.

Villagers are also happy to buy the fresh produce: "I like buying vegetables from the school garden because I want to support the school, but also because vegetables from the school garden are grown without using pesticides, hormones, or antibiotics," Ms. Neuk and Ms. On, community members say.



Neuk and On like buying fresh produce from the school garden. Photo: © WFP Laos/Lathtana Phetchaleun