



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

# WFP Lao PDR Country Brief 2021 May



## 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, and according to the Population and Housing Census, about 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas. 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:  
**137 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

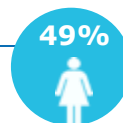
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

## In Numbers

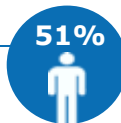
**US\$ 0.9 million** six-month (June – November 2021) net funding requirements

**565.9 mt** of food assistance distributed

**49%**



**51%**



**100,683 people** assisted

## Operational Updates

- Following community transmission due to border violations, the Government of Lao PDR has instated a lockdown in the capital Vientiane on 22 April which has subsequently expanded to cover all provinces. WFP Laos is adapting to the situation through direct COVID-19 response via food support for quarantine centres and adjustment of programmes, such as distribution of take-home rations to families of pre-primary and primary school students in schools that receive WFP's school feeding support. Since village visits were not possible throughout the month of May 2021, all field-level activities were temporarily suspended.
- During May 2021, WFP continued providing unconditional food assistance to returning migrant labourers in 16 quarantine centres across five provinces in Lao PDR through partnerships with World Vision International and the Swiss Red Cross. During May 2021, WFP provided the highest number of meals since the start of quarantine centre feeding with a total of 165,715 nutritious meals provided to 4,447 beneficiaries (2,274 women) at a commodity voucher cost of US\$ 280,787.
- Following the closure of all educational institutes ordered by the Government of Laos in late April, WFP worked with the Ministry of Education and Sports to distribute the remaining food stock in schools to students as take-home rations. As of late April, a stock of approximately 22 days of food remained across the 916 pre-primary and primary schools supported by WFP. Based on the experience from distributing take-home rations at schools in the 2020 nationwide lockdown against COVID-19, WFP updated the standard operating procedures with improved protective measures for the beneficiaries. After the donor approved the distribution of remaining food, WFP coordinated with the ministry to inform all the concerned provincial and district education authorities to take actions with the support of the WFP field offices.

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**Further information:** [www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic](http://www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic)

## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jun– Nov 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
88.53 m	91.87 m	0.9 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.

- Take-home rations distribution started in mid-May, with 498 mt of food distributed to 83,550 students across 916 schools in 8 provinces. This consists of 319 mt of rice, 86 mt of lentils, 82 mt of fortified cooking oil and 10 mt of canned fish. The distribution of the take-home rations at all the schools is expected to be complete by June.
- Together with the Government of Laos and the UN, WFP contributed to the national Food Systems dialogue through an online event on 2 June, in preparation for the Global Food Systems Summit in September. WFP, together with UNICEF, was leading preparations for action track 1 on ensuring safe and nutritious food for all, and contributed to the other action tracks.
- The Sun Business Network organised a multi-stakeholder call conference in May. The meeting, convening national actors from government and private sector, as well as development partners and the global Sun Business Network, focused on key achievements of the network, strengthening the collaboration among stakeholders and the way forward for the network.

## Images from the field



Parents of children from a Dakcheung district primary school in Lao PDR's southern province of Sekong wait in line to collect the food stocks remaining in school storage during the lockdown. After updated standard operating procedures, distributions are done in a safer manner, ensuring distancing while waiting and limited contact upon collection. Photos here and above: Namkong village Primary School Teacher, Sanamxay district, Attapeu province & Inpong Dakdome, Primary School Principal, Dakcheung district, Sekong province.

## Donors

USA, Japan, France, Russia, Korea, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Private Donors