



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief JULY 2021



Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index. Around 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (US\$ 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of US\$ 2,270 (World Bank 2017). While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry people to 23 percent, the 2017 Global Hunger Index still rates its hunger levels as “serious”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural population, and the country is vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptability and high 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**

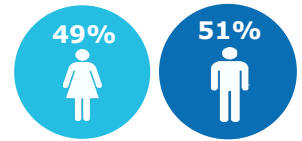
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

30 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 1.03 million six-month (Aug 2021 - Jan 2022) net funding requirements

22,017 people assisted



Operational Updates

- WFP, through its partners Swiss Red Cross and World Vision International, provided more than 350,000 meals to 12,273 people (5,922 women) undergoing mandatory quarantine during July. WFP extending support to Saravanh Province on 26 July, becoming the 7th supported province. Due to the currently high rates of returning migrants, without additional funding sources, the Quarantine Centre Food Assistance risks to phase-out at the end of August. WFP is calling for additional funding to continue this critical assistance.
- WFP, in partnership with BCEL bank as the financial service provider, distributed USD 35,000 of cash and 18 mt of sunflower oil to 1,707 households in 25 villages (9,744 beneficiaries, 4,776 females) under the Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) Project in Phongsaly Province. This assistance was provided to those who participated in project activities which saw the creation of 50 community assets (rural roads and fishponds). Food and cash distribution is still ongoing in 25 villages and will be completed in August.
- For the Agriculture for Nutrition (AFN) project, consultation workshops were conducted in four northern provinces, to report on the progress of WFP’s activities and present the forthcoming workplan. A learning workshop was also conducted in Houphanh province which provided an opportunity for nutrition and agriculture stakeholders to share best practices, challenges and lessons learnt from their respective projects and to encourage efficient multi-sectoral coordination to achieve the National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NNSPA). Several other training sessions were also conducted for government staff and village nutrition volunteers to strengthen their ability to identify and support child malnutrition, and to train farmers on agriculture skills.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
88.53 m	93.42 m	1.03 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

Operational Updates, continued

- Under the school feeding program, WFP has delivered non-food items (NFIs) to support improvements of school gardens, greenhouses, water connections and cooking facilities in 148 model schools in 7 provinces. Government officials provided technical support to setup farmer groups in the same villages, with about 1,480 farmers (450 female) participating. In addition, WFP started providing fingerlings and baby frogs in Oudomxai province, to increase food diversity (protein) for school children.
- In preparation for the handover of 915 schools under WFP’s school feeding programme to the government of Laos, WFP and the Ministry of Education and Sports organized a high-level consultation meeting in July. Key challenges and opportunities were discussed and incorporated into a handover Aid Memoire. Due to COVID-19 constraints, WFP will provide additional in-kind food support to the 915 schools, while also continue to provide capacity building for a sustainable National School Meals Program (NSMP), including legislatives and monitoring systems.
- With some of the COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, WFP’s partners working on literacy projects in the supported school feeding schools, resumed activities. In Saravan province, Plan International Laos has conducted reading festivals in 20 villages and delivered a village volunteer-training for community libraries with 46 (26 female) participants. The libraries aim to help children accessing more storybooks and enjoy games and songs during the summer break (July-Aug).

Image from the field



Village orientation workshop for new McGovern-Dole school feeding project in Lakhonepheng District, Salavan Province. Photo by WFP Lao PDR.