



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief March 2022

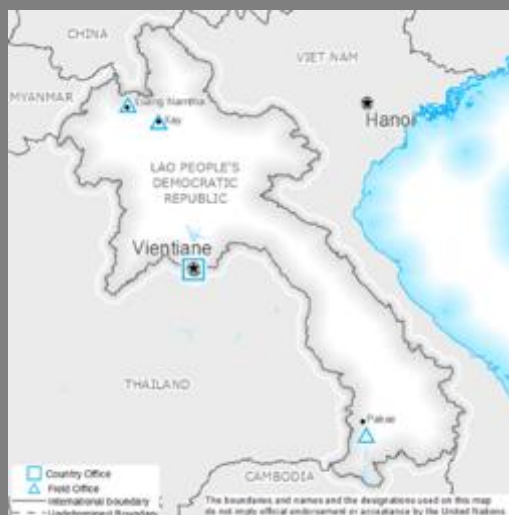


Farmer groups grow fresh vegetables that are a healthy addition to school lunches for children in Phongsaly Province.

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 (US\$ 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 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**

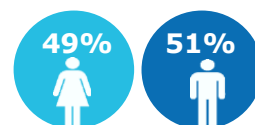
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

130.8 mt of food distributed

US\$ 680,000 six-month (April 2022 - Sept 2022) net funding requirements

97,014 people assisted
In March 2022



Operational Updates

- In March, WFP organised provincial school feeding handover ceremonies in Oudomxay and Phongsaly provinces, following the national handover ceremony that was held in November 2021. During the ceremonies, participants reviewed the progress and achievements of the school feeding programmes and visited the schools to observe the serving of lunch and hear about the benefits of the programme.
- WFP distributed lentils and cooking oil to over 1,000 schools, benefitting over 80,000 students around Laos. WFP handed over school feeding programmes in these schools to the Government in 2019 and 2021. At the request of the Government, WFP provided supplemental food commodities to these schools even after their programmes had been handed over to the government, to bridge challenges faced by COVID-19.
- To launch the start of community-level implementation of its new school feeding programme in 707 schools around Lao PDR, WFP organised an event at Sanot village Primary School, 70 km outside the capital Vientiane. With the presence of the US Ambassador to Lao PDR and the Vice Minister of Education and Sports, the programme gained visibility via coverage in national media.
- In collaboration with Helen Keller International, WFP completed a study to understand the drivers of dietary choices and the snack food environment of school-aged children in Lao PDR. The study concludes that consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages is a common practice in school-aged children. These types of foods are usually purchased at school and consumed between main meals. Children's interest in eating unhealthy foods and beverages is primarily driven by taste, followed by seeing their friends and other adults in their household do the same. WFP will use the findings of the research study to inform programmes and policies for school-based health and nutrition interventions.

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Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

| Total Requirement (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 79.16 m | 34.40 m | 0.19 m |

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals programme by 2026

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide direct support and technical assistance to the Government to strengthen and complement the national school meals programme and to facilitate a sustainable handover of the programme to the Government

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable people at risk of any form of malnutrition, in particular women and girls of reproductive age, children under 5 and school-age children, have improved nutrition outcomes in line with national targets by 2026

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide universally accessible nutrition support services for targeted populations and nutrition-related technical assistance, advocacy and evidence-based advice to the Government and other stakeholders, including in the private sector

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable people in disaster-affected or at-risk areas have enhanced food and nutrition security all year round and increased capacity to mitigate and manage risks associated with climate and other shocks by 2026

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide assistance and technical support to targeted communities and government entities to build communities' resilience to climate and other shocks through strengthened capacity in disaster and climate risk management and social protection

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Crisis-affected populations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic are able to meet their food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after disasters

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide nutrition-sensitive cash-based transfers or food assistance to help meet the essential needs of crisis-affected people

Donors

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

- To help communities recover from disasters, WFP and World Vision International completed beneficiary registration and community consultations in 46 target communities in Savannakhet Province. A total of 30,553 beneficiaries will receive food assistance in exchange for their labour, contributing to the rehabilitation of community assets, such as water systems, roads, community latrines and community rice banks which were damaged by recent floods.
- WFP completed distributions of livelihood grants of US\$ 40 per participating household across 35 communities in Attapeu and Sekong provinces. In total, US\$ 106,094 was distributed to 2,708 people in March 2022. The grants will be used for household livelihood activities such as raising small animals and growing and vegetables.
- On March 11th, WFP celebrated International Women's Day together with Saochanh Lodsouly — the Head of a District Education and Sports Bureau in Phongsaly Province — who talked to WFP staff about her journey as a woman in community leadership. Staff engaged in discussions around gender roles in their personal lives, communities, and male staff made commitments to further support women in their life and work.

Story from the field



Piao, enjoying her lunch of fish, lentils and rice.
Photos: WFP Laos/Ildiko Hamos

"I enjoy coming to school now when we have good food. I feel like I have less trouble learning and concentrating. Maybe it's the proteins from the healthy food we are receiving – our teachers told us about how the food we receive makes our bodies stronger," Piao, a student from Sanot Primary School's grade 5 says.

Piao's school belongs to one of the target districts prioritised by the Government of Lao PDR for school lunch activities. In October 2021, the school received equipment for the construction of a school kitchen and storage room. With contribution of the community, the construction was finished in early 2021. Two teachers from Sanot school were trained in the management and delivery of school lunches. In February 2022, the school started cooking daily lunch with the food commodities donated by the US Department of Agriculture.