



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

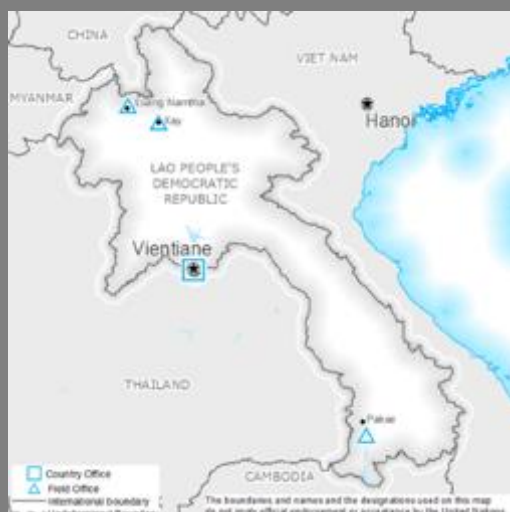
WFP Lao PDR Country Brief October 2022



Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 191 countries in the 2021/2022 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**

2021/2022 Human Development Index:
140 out of 191 countries

Income Level: **Lower middle**

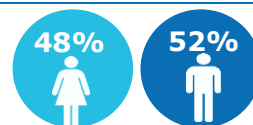
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children
between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

377.214 mt of food distributed

US\$0.96 million six-month (November 2022 – April 2023) net funding requirements

156,862 people assisted
In October 2022



Operational Updates

- WFP and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare oversaw the successful completion of 12 community rice banks in Phongsaly Province through the Food Assistance for Assets programme, where community members participate in building the rice banks in exchange for cash. Community rice banks operate as an important social safety net for vulnerable households allowing access to food during the lean season. WFP provided 54.9 mt of rice to start the rice banks.
- WFP continued supporting district education officials to monitor the school feeding programmes handed over to the Government of Lao PDR for incorporation into the National School Meals Programme (NSMP). WFP aims to strengthen the NSMP by optimizing the government counterparts' monitoring skills and procedures and by integrating school feeding monitoring into the regular operations of district education authorities.
- As part of a project aiming to improve the prevention, treatment and management of acute malnutrition in Phongsaly Province, WFP and UNICEF brought together 85 representatives from provincial and district health-, agriculture-, and Lao Women's Union offices. The meeting entailed introducing project activities, promoting their involvement, and setting out clear roles and responsibilities for project implementation. WFP and UNICEF also jointly conducted a 3-day training for 40 representatives from the provincial, district and village health providers. The training focused on the basic concept of nutrition, causes of malnutrition, assessment of acute malnutrition, the importance of screening children and referral services, and steps in the admission process.
- On 21 October, WFP co-chaired the annual meeting of the School Meals Technical Working Group of the Government of Lao PDR with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and Catholic Relief Services. The participants reviewed the progress made in school feeding practices throughout Lao PDR and the challenges, particularly the impact of increasing food prices this year. The key steps forward include providing technical assistance to the MoES to review school feeding legislation, nationwide dissemination of

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lao

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
85.93 m	41.68 m	0.96 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

the latest Prime Minister Decree on promoting school lunches and rolling out nutrition and health campaigns to target schools.

- WFP handed over electronic equipment such as computers, printers, and projectors worth over US\$100,000 to the MoES. The equipment will be used by the Ministry's departments at the national, provincial and district levels to facilitate the design, implementation and monitoring of the National School Meals Programme in 17 districts of 11 provinces in Lao PDR.
- From 24 to 27 October, representatives of WFP and the Ministry of Education and Sports participated in the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Cotonou, Benin. WFP took this opportunity to introduce the MoES delegation to international practices for school feeding, including nutrition, private sector engagement, rice fortification and home-grown school feeding. WFP also accompanied the delegation to visit school feeding programmes in Benin and facilitated the exchange of experience between the Government of Lao PDR and other public and private partners.

Story from the field



Meet Xayphone, who grew up enjoying school snacks and meals supported by WFP and now works as WFP field staff based in Oudomxay Province. In 2002, his school, in the small village of Thin, began receiving support from WFP.

He recalls his childhood memory: "I eagerly waited for the clock to strike 11. As the school cooks started the fire in the kitchen, the delicious smell of cooking spread all around the area. That was the happiest time of my day. It motivated me and my friends to get up in the morning to come to school."

What captured his eyes the most at that time was a man in a blue jacket. He seemed to have the power to persuade the teachers and community members to do good things for his community. Later, he understood that the man worked for WFP, and he understood that the blue jacket comes with an obligation and responsibility of developing a community for a better future. The inspiration that from the man in the blue jacket led Xayphone to study eagerly and, after finishing his studies, to return to his hometown to serve the community.

Today, he works as one of WFP's district community facilitators and hopes to lead communities out of poverty, offering an alternative to a brighter future.

Donors

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