WFP Lao PDR
Country Brief
November 2022

In Numbers

- **403.6 mt** of food distributed
- **US$220,000 (LAK 3,843.8 million)** of cash-based transfers disbursed
- **US$960,000** six-month (December 2022 – May 2023) net funding requirements
- **157,721 people assisted** in November 2022

Operational Updates

- WFP, in collaboration with Food and Agriculture Organization and International Fund for Agricultural Development, hosted a visit of the U.S. Ambassador to the Rome-based UN agencies. The Ambassador visited the southern part of Lao PDR to learn about the WFP-supported school feeding programme, for which the United States is a longstanding partner.

- WFP distributed this semester's second batch of food commodities to 707 schools where WFP directly implements school feeding programmes. The additional rice, lentils, vegetable oil and canned fish topped up the remaining commodities from last school year and the first batch of distributions.

- WFP organized a launching ceremony for a food assistance project funded by the Government of China through its newly upgraded Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund. 930 mt of rice and 120 mt of canned fish donated from China will be used for topping up lunches for 132,450 students in 1,400 primary schools in the second semester of the ongoing school year.

- WFP organized a 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) event for its staff, by inviting external guest speakers including Payengxa Lor, Miss Universe Laos 2022, who is also the co-founder of the Hmong ethnic group women's network. The event emphasized the linkage between food insecurity and GBV, and addressed gender inequality and associated power imbalances as a root cause of food insecurity.

- WFP distributed garden and livestock cash grants worth US$120 each to 2,350 participating women of WFP-supported Farmer Nutrition Schools. This cash grant will allow the women to make small investments in their home gardens, aiming to increase household dietary diversity and nutrition, with the potential to earn some additional income by selling the produce.

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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 2,551.30 (World Bank 2021). 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.
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Result</th>
<th>Everyone has access to food</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Requirement (in USD)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.93 m</td>
<td>41.97 m</td>
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### 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

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**Donors**

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

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WFP held a consultation workshop to discuss anticipatory action approaches in case of disasters. The workshop brought together 32 representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, Natural Resources and Environment, and Labour and Social Welfare, as well as representatives from 5 provinces in Lao PDR. The participants discussed how an early warning and early action approach to humanitarian action can reduce costs and suffering, protect hard-won development gains, and help better and faster recovery from disasters.

On 30 November, as part of WFP’s continued support to the National Food Fortification Technical Working Group, partners such as the Ministries of Health, Education and Sports, Agriculture and Forestry, Information, Culture and Tourism, private sector organizations and other development partners including Catholic Relief Services and the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development came together to identify further steps to develop and endorse the national nutrition standard for rice fortification.

### Story from the field

Meet Kesah (on the left), a mother of three daughters and a participant of a Food Assistance for Assets project supported by WFP in partnership with World Vision in Savannakhet Province.

When a tropical storm hit Kesah’s village in 2020, the school was destroyed. Supported by WFP, the people in her village worked together to renovate the damaged school. “Each family participated in the rebuilding of the school, and we received rice and cooking oil. We had to rotate between me and my husband to complete the construction work on time,” says Kesah. “We really needed this rice, because we started being short of food by the end of the rainy season.”

The school they completed to rebuild is not only safer and more comfortable than before, but also serves as an evacuation site in case of emergency. Thanks to the generous donation from the Government of Japan, the school is also equipped with loudspeakers helping to spread information and keep everyone safe in the case of an emergency.