WFP Lao PDR
Country Brief
May 2023

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranked 140th 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 US$2,551.30 (World Bank 2021). The country is ranked 137th 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 2022 Global Hunger Index rates hunger levels as “moderate”.

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.

In Numbers

1,057 mt of food distributed

US$1.3 million six-month (June-November 2023) net funding requirements

181,480 people assisted

In May 2023

Operational Updates

- WFP provided multiple training sessions on food distributions to prepare for a lean season emergency response, bringing together a total of 248 participants, including representatives from the Government at national, provincial, and district levels, as well as the Lao Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross. Participants learned about designing operations including beneficiary registration, distribution site identification and establishment, as well as mitigating risks in emergency food distribution.

- Supported by the Global Logistics Cluster and in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, WFP delivered a humanitarian logistics training to staff from the Government, UN and international non-governmental organizations, involved in disaster response. The training covered the strategic and operational components of humanitarian logistics to prepare and respond in case of emergencies.

- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, conducted community-based disaster risk management training sessions for 27 government officials, 63 Village Disaster Management Committee representatives and 782 community members from 15 communities in Phongsaly Province. This training enabled local communities to better identify risks and implement community-led disaster risk management.

- WFP organized a media workshop and field visit for local journalists and media professionals from major media corporations in Lao PDR. Witnessing how WFP's activities change people's lives in Phongsaly and Oudomxay provinces, the participants gained an in-depth understanding of WFP's operations and its impacts on the people of Lao PDR. This helps WFP increase its visibility towards the public with the help of media outlets, including radio, TV broadcasts and newspapers.

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WFP briefed education authorities in Luang Namtha, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, and Phongsaly provinces on additional activities to support the school meals programme that WFP handed over to the Government. These include establishing greenhouses in schools and promoting nutrition education.

Story from the field

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