



**WFP EVALUATION**

# **End-Line Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP School Feeding in Laos from 2017 To 2022**

Decentralized Evaluation Report

Report Number: DE/LACO/2022/006

WFP Lao PDR



**World Food  
Programme**

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# Executive Summary

## *Evaluation type and purpose:*

The end-line evaluation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program for WFP School Feeding in Lao PDR (awarded September 2017) was commissioned by the WFP Country Office and took place from September 2023 to May 2023. The evaluation covered activities in all geographic areas of intervention, i.e., 8 provinces Phongsaly, Louangnamtha, Luangprabang, Oudomxay, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu, from its award in April 2018 to conclusion in September 30, 2023.

The scope of the evaluation included an assessment of all the activities outlined within the project Award including areas with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and literacy activities, and all types of beneficiaries including educators, cooks and storekeepers, smallholder farmers, and school-aged children and their parents/caregivers, as well as national and subnational governance structures.

This summative and formative evaluation had two mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning. In terms of accountability, the evaluation assessed whether targeted beneficiaries received services as expected and if the project met its stated goals and objectives in line with the results frameworks and assumptions. It is expected to inform implementation of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2025 USDA McGovern-Dole project framework covering similar school feeding, literacy and policy support activities and the eventual handover of 707 new schools to the National School Meals Program (NSMP).

The end-line evaluation used relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact criteria. It also analyzed incorporation of gender, equity, and wider inclusion objectives and gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) mainstreaming principles in the design and implementation of the project.

## *Intended users of the evaluation:*

The primary users of the evaluation include WFP Lao PDR and its implementing partners, the government at national and sub-national levels, adjacent partners working in the same sectors, USDA as the donor, as well as WFP's Regional Bureau in Bangkok (RBB), headquarters (HQ) and the Office of Evaluation for wider oversight and application of lessons learned in similar contexts.

## *Context:*

Lao PDR still has some of the poorest education indicators in the region, despite improvement over the past few years. Main education inequalities characterized by high primary school dropout rates, and significant disparities in literacy rates, particularly evident across diverse ethno-linguistic groups and urban and rural areas. Additionally, secondary school dropout rates also remain high.

Moreover, approximately 14% of households experience food insecurity, with the highest prevalence observed in Sekong, Louangprabang, and Phongsaly provinces (ranging from 23% to 26%). Food insecurity is more common in rural areas (17%) compared to urban areas (9%), and there is significant variation across districts, with 5% to 25% of households facing food insecurity. Gender plays a role in the impact of food insecurity. Female-headed households also experience higher rates of food insecurity (20%) compared to male-headed households (13%), and they consume less diverse diets.<sup>1</sup> The economic difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic further increased food insecurity. Households with a significant reduction in income (over 50%) are more than twice as likely to experience food insecurity. Additionally, households were consuming less diverse diets, relying heavily on staple foods like rice and vegetables.

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<sup>1</sup> "The household food consumption score is calculated according to the types of foods consumed during the previous seven days, the frequencies with which they are consumed and the relative nutritional weight of the different food groups" Lao 2022 Remote Household Food Security Survey Brief.

### ***Subject of the evaluation:***

WFP received \$27.4 million in 2017 through the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program administered by USDA to continue implementing a school feeding project focused on improving literacy of school-age children and increasing awareness of health and dietary practices. The evaluation covered all project activities in provinces mentioned above from 2018 to 2022.

### ***Methodology:***

The evaluation followed a theory-based, utilization-focused and quasi-experimental approach. It used both primary and secondary data collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative component was used for estimating extent of outcome changes for early grade students, teachers, parents, and other beneficiaries based on the baseline and monitoring data (and associated tools). It was followed up by qualitative data collection for developing a holistic understanding, contextualizing and further triangulating results. Secondary data collection involved content analysis of project documents, administrative records, monitoring reports, previous evaluations, and government policy and plan documents.

The evaluation utilized a quasi-experimental design methodology and a stratified random sample of schools under treatment ('project') and comparison groups. Data was collected in two phases from February to May 2023. For the first phase of quantitative data collection, a stratified random sampling of schools was applied. The relevant strata were defined based on the approach followed in previous rounds and the groups for which conclusions wanted to be reached (e.g., small vs. large schools, remote vs. non-remote, etc.). Sampling for the qualitative data collection was purposive and dependent on emergent findings from the quantitative data analysis.

### ***Findings:***

#### ***Relevance***

The project was highly relevant and influential in the Government of Lao PDR's (GoL) current and future plans for school feeding and social protection. It aligns with the GoL's policies and priorities related to education, school feeding, health, and nutrition. Its focus on capacity strengthening and transitioning schools towards a government-led school feeding program supported the government's goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2026. However, some adjustments in the project's design, particularly regarding food procurement and delivery, would further enhance its alignment with national policies and ensure long-term sustainability.

The project was consistently aligned with the WFP Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) and contributed to improved food security, learning outcomes, and community-driven service delivery in vulnerable areas. It made progress in achieving strategic outcomes outlined in the CSPs, such as sustainable access to food for school children, reducing stunting rates, and strengthening governance institutions for improved service delivery. Through capacity strengthening efforts and collaboration with government entities, the project supported GoL's efforts at enhancing local ownership and improve service delivery in hard-to-reach areas.

The handover of schools to the government was implemented according to plans and in consideration of the capacity of national stakeholders. Efforts were made to build GoL's capacity for establishing the NSMP fully funded and managed by the government. The project's handover strategy, although impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, was implemented in accordance with plans, assessments of readiness, alignment of project components with capacity needs, and beneficiary needs. However, improvements are required with regard to additional community-level and national assessments to plan for changes in modality and to ensure ongoing support post-handover remain in support of sustainability objectives.

#### ***Effectiveness and efficiency***

The project effectively narrowed the gap between intervention and comparison schools, with the latter performing better on key indicators at baseline, in terms of enrollment, attendance, and attentiveness, indicating its success. However, challenges persist in GoL's education system, with low learning outcomes and literacy standards among children from disadvantaged backgrounds and remote areas. Limited access to early childhood education and teaching resources contribute to high repetition and dropout rates. Highly effective schools demonstrate key factors for performance, including teacher content knowledge,

pedagogical skills, support, collaboration, parental engagement, and professional development. The project aimed to enhance literacy instruction through teacher training, materials provision, and literacy promotion. This component of the project was the most considerate of gender in its design and implementation, ensuring inclusive messages were shared through the developed and distributed books, however as a whole, the program did not otherwise consider and mainstream gender into its design, implementation nor monitoring (outside of tracking differences between girls and boys on key indicators).

Challenges related to sustainability include school closures, economic difficulties, teacher attrition, and limited resources for monitoring and capacity maintenance. Infrastructure investments were made, but water infrastructure was still poor or absent in some schools with critical gaps in this area, and challenges in maintaining facilities were observed. Some accessibility issues for students with disabilities, as discussed later, were also observed.

The evaluation found that the use of school gardens and fish farms contributed to dietary diversity and community engagement. However, integration of these improvements and facilities into daily routines (such as hygienic practices) and utilization in handed-over schools remain uncertain. Various factors influence school performance, including community contributions, teacher engagement, parental cooperation, infrastructure availability, teacher shortages, poverty, and agricultural constraints.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the project, causing school closures, learning loss, and disrupted regular food provision. Alternative measures like remote learning resources and direct food assistance were deployed in some areas, but their effectiveness varied based on resources, technological infrastructure, and community engagement. WFP demonstrated adaptability by developing online materials and utilizing virtual meetings, supported by GoL's commitment and adherence to timelines. While parents and caregivers reported that the provision of meals indirectly and positively affected household incomes, ensuring equal access and outcomes for marginalized groups and rural communities remained a challenge. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) addressed some of these gaps, utilizing their local reach and technical expertise, especially on literacy, to quickly reach schools in a short period of time after the delays and ensure most targets were met in this regard. However, active monitoring and participation in the handover was hindered by limitations in mobilizing stakeholders and resource constraints, especially given that some schools had already been 'handed over' by the time the pandemic hit.

The government established a nationally owned school feeding program driven by communities, but resource constraints and insufficient training impact ongoing coordination amongst engaged government stakeholders across levels and the community, and as such the likelihood of sustainability in schools. Cooperative relationships between schools and farmers ensured a fair and beneficial partnership, but engagement diminished over time, especially given this was a brief pilot component not reaching all schools. There is a recognized need for a comprehensive monitoring system for the NSMP, although implementation has been delayed due to technical capacity and funding challenges.

Finally, although the project achieved most of its output targets (with some variations), definitive conclusions on the efficiency criteria cannot be drawn due to the gaps in the project monitoring data. This indicates the need for better monitoring & reporting.

### **Impact**

The project had significant positive impacts on school enrollment, attendance, attentiveness, and community engagement. It specifically targeted underperforming schools, resulting in improvements in these areas. However, there was no measurable improvement in learning outcomes, which may be attributed to the adverse effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing schools to adopt alternative instructional methods for which they were unprepared.

Overall, the provision of meals at school had a positive impact on attendance, attentiveness and parental support for education as well as community participation. The project also contributed to improved dietary practices and increased community knowledge in farming and livestock management. However, challenges remained in ensuring the inclusion of children with disabilities and achieving broader integration due to societal stigma. The transition and handover phase highlighted both positive outcomes and challenges, with increased community ownership as well as limits to communities' ability to sustain contributions.

## **Sustainability**

The sustainability of school feeding activities after the handover to the government poses challenges. While the provision of school meals continues and establishment of a dedicated budget line is a considerable achievement, concerns arise regarding the reliance on community contributions and limitations in the budget and operational capacities of the NSMP. The allocated budget of 800 LAK per student per day is inadequate for ensuring dietary diversity, especially when community contributions vary by school and can be low. Despite schools continuing to provide meals, difficulties in sustaining project activities have been observed, especially due to the NSMP relying heavily on community contributions. Inflation and associated economic troubles brought on by the pandemic and reduced production affect the community's ability to contribute consistently. Limited funding and readiness challenges among communities and government institutions pose obstacles to the successful and ongoing implementation of the national program. Further efforts are also needed to promote gender equality and inclusivity during the handover process, to ensure community contribution does not reinforce gender norms. The government's fiscal capacity to consistently provide funds is uncertain, and there is no indication of secure external funding sources for long-term sustainability. Balancing government readiness, community contributions, and political momentum is crucial for a successful handover.

In addition to school meals, the sustainability of complementary activities such as literacy, hygiene, and school gardens is dependent on community involvement, which leads to variations across schools. Limited funding and the burden on communities pose challenges to maintaining these activities in the medium and long-term. There is a lack of information on funding and maintenance plans for WASH infrastructure, handwashing facilities, and school gardens. The reliance on community contributions for operation and maintenance hinders the sustainability of these activities. Lessons learned include the importance of community mobilization and readiness assessments, clarity in funding priorities, and the need to promote gender equality and inclusivity. The successful implementation of the handover requires addressing capacity challenges among communities, but most importantly with governmental institutions and ensuring sufficient funding and resources for the program's continuity.

## **Conclusions:**

The project is highly relevant and aligned with national policies and plans. It focuses on literacy, nutrition, and health, which are government development priorities. The handover of schools was executed according to the planned strategy and the capacity of national stakeholders. The program has had a positive impact on attendance, nutrition, and the learning environment. However, improvements are needed in community-level assessments, addressing challenges related to the transition from in-kind to cash-based systems, ensuring sustainability, and providing continuous support.

The project has been effective in achieving its objectives. It has strengthened local capacity through teacher training and instructional materials, leading to improvements in literacy instruction and increased student involvement. School meals have positively affected attendance and enrollment. However, challenges remain in terms of sustainability, monitoring, and training time.

The project has invested in infrastructure to support school feeding activities and increase awareness of nutrition and hygiene. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of these results, particularly with declining operational infrastructure and the contribution of school gardens to meals in handed over schools (though their educational purpose is still being served).

The project demonstrated adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting remote learning resources and distributing food assistance directly to households. The government's commitment and adherence to timelines facilitated a successful transition and handover. However, the pandemic disrupted the learning process and created knowledge gaps among students.

The project has had a substantial impact on the community, bridging the gap between intervention and comparison schools. It has increased school enrollment, attendance, attentiveness, and community enthusiasm for the program. However, the pandemic affected learning scores, and variations in outcomes exist among beneficiary groups, highlighting the need for nuanced strategies to ensure equitable results.

While the project showed success in enhancing child literacy, sustainability remains a concern due to inconsistent teacher attendance and potential decline in community enthusiasm. Nuanced strategies and continued efforts are necessary to maintain the project's gains.

The project has positively influenced school gardening, supported farmers, and provided more nutritionally diverse meals. There are potential nutritional and long-term educational benefits from these aspects.

The sustainability of the project's gains relies on factors such as consistent teacher attendance, community contributions, and governmental support. Inconsistencies in teacher attendance and limited monitoring pose challenges to sustainability.

The project has fostered community responsibility and involvement, but there are concerns about waning enthusiasm and over-reliance on community contributions after the project ends. Challenges exist in providing school meals and achieving dietary diversity. Gender disparities in community contributions and roles also persist, which may be reinforcing gender norms and hindering opportunities for economic empowerment, given that cooking is primarily volunteer based. Community-driven initiatives show promise, but uncertainties remain regarding governmental support and prioritization.

### **Lessons:**

Well-designed interventions can help overcome persistent challenges such as ethnic and gender-based differences in learning and health outcomes amongst school-age children. The project intervention, by targeting the more left behind areas and vulnerable population, did not just help narrow the overall differences across project and comparison schools but also helped bridge the gap between ethnic and gender-based groups.

Enhancing community involvement and ownership in school feeding activities leads to better sustainability, with sufficient national support, oversight and budget. Promoting community contributions within the bounds of the community's possibilities and limitations and assessing community readiness and capacity to contribute (and how much) are important steps.

Clarity on roles and responsibilities, along with effective collaboration between different government departments and levels (national, provincial and district), NGOs, and donors, is crucial for successful program implementation and handover.

Providing sufficient time for training and support to government partners and stakeholders involved in program management (across different levels and positions) helps ensure a smooth transition and effective implementation. Particularly, it is crucial to incorporate a comprehensive capacity building plan for local-level functionaries.

There is a need for more intentional efforts to mainstream, monitor and measure girls and women's equality, empowerment and inclusivity outcomes within the context of the project activities and the school handover. Government and community capacities in the subject require enhancement to ensure capabilities and greater visibility of gender sensitivity.

Achieving literacy improvements requires systematic pedagogical interventions along with tailored instructional strategies and resources, such as developing foundational reading and writing skills. Additionally, it is essential to provide continuous professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their teaching methodologies and keep up with evolving pedagogical practices. By incorporating these measures, is more likely to create a conducive environment for effective literacy instruction and ensure sustainable progress in enhancing overall literacy levels.

### **Recommendations:**

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping: Short/medium/long-term	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities	Priority: High/medium	By when
1	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Investigating causes of decline in learning scores for future interventions: Despite the increase in enrollment, attendance and attentiveness, which helped narrow the gap between comparison and intervention scores, the learning scores declined across all schools included in this study. This was likely the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however there is still a need for specific investigation and continued monitoring to (dis)confirm this. Therefore, WFP should collaborate with other partners such as UNICEF and the World Bank for targeted studies to investigate this decline and accordingly revise (or advise) future interventions in Lao PDR.</p> <p>Given the observed patterns and historical presence supporting schools through McGovern-Dole, it is essential for WFP to critically assess its strategic position concerning the delivery of literacy interventions in Lao PDR. Should WFP sustain its commitment to literacy initiatives through USDA McGovern-Dole, there is a pronounced need to reinforce the literacy component in subsequent proposals. Specifically, this should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring timely engagement with the most appropriate partners with technical capacity in this area for informing design and ensuring effective collaboration in its implementation</li> <li>• Refining the intervention framework to be more systematic</li> <li>• Advocating for prolonged intervention durations to achieve sustainable impacts</li> </ul> <p>If literacy outcomes, which are indirectly supported by school feeding, move beyond the primary remit of WFP, a strategic reassessment of WFP's engagement in literacy interventions as a complementary activity to SFP engagement should be undertaken.</p>	Medium	WFP CO, specifically M&E, with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	6-12 months
2	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Streamline and improve monitoring mechanisms: The project monitoring framework is robust, though could be streamlined and further targeted to country contexts. While this is outside the scope of WFP work, it is recommended to consider advocating for revisions to have fewer mandatory core- and a selection of project-specific indicators to ensure</p>	Medium	WFP CO, specifically M&E, with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	6-12 months

	<p>monitoring and evaluation frameworks and mechanisms are manageable and support targeted and context-specific learning agendas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the case of Lao PDR, improved mechanisms to effectively track teacher attendance and application of new learning techniques would be beneficial, to better understand the extent of contribution to learning outcomes. Indicators related to agriculture, procurement, and market development activities may also require more extensive monitoring in order to understand market capacity to contribute and sustain a nutrition-sensitive school feeding program. WFP should support and engage GoL in understanding these challenges and potential solutions.</li> <li>• Additionally, continue to revise and develop a plan for monitoring the transition and handover. This will also require capacity strengthening at national and local levels with regards to monitoring.</li> <li>• Emphasize the importance of understanding what is happening in the schools and the impact of the program, as well as how demonstrating the positive outcomes and impact of the program can serve as a means for effective resource mobilization.</li> </ul>					
3	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Increased community-level assessments and capacity strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more comprehensive yet concise process for community-level assessments that gather localized needs, challenges, and preferences, as well as resource requirements. These assessments can be effectively used to inform the implementation of the school feeding program, ensuring it is context-specific and responsive.</li> <li>• Support the government in integrating relevant components in their regular school inspections.</li> </ul>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	12-24 months
4	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Strengthen capacity and collaboration within and between local government entities towards the promotion of ownership: WFP should actively engage and collaborate with local governments to ensure the integration of school feeding programs into national policies and frameworks. This collaboration should include joint planning, resource allocation, and capacity-building efforts to promote long-term sustainability. In addition, prioritize timely and sufficient capacity-building initiatives at the community and local institutional levels. This includes training local staff, teachers, and community members on program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. By building local capacity and promoting ownership, the</p>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	12-24 months

	program can become more sustainable and effectively tailored to the specific needs of the communities.					
5	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Pay specific attention to addressing disparities among ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and gender inequalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop targeted strategies and interventions to monitor and improve equal access, outcomes, and inclusion for these marginalized groups. This may involve addressing transportation and language barriers, enhancing accessibility infrastructure, and providing adequate support for persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Additionally, it is recommended to promote gender equality and social inclusion by engaging more women in project implementation and seeking collaborations with potential women's empowerment projects.</li> <li>• Develop targeted interventions to increase VEDC/community involvement.</li> </ul>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	Medium	12-24 months
6	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Diversify funding sources: To mitigate the risks associated with limited budgets and donor dependency, WFP should explore opportunities to diversify funding sources. This could involve engaging with private sector partners, philanthropic organizations, and other potential stakeholders to secure additional financial support for the program.</p>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	Medium	12-24 months
7	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Promote sustainable agriculture and local procurement: WFP should support initiatives that promote sustainable agriculture practices and local procurement of food items. This can contribute to local economic development, enhance food security, and reduce dependence on external sources. Investing in agricultural training, supporting farmers' cooperatives, and facilitating access to markets can strengthen the resilience of communities and create long-term benefits.</p>	Long-term	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	Low	24-36 months

# 1. Introduction

39. World Food Program (WFP) received \$27.4 million in 2017 through the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program<sup>2</sup> administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue implementing a school feeding project in Lao PDR focused on improving literacy of school-age children (EnMGD SO1) and increasing the use of health and dietary practices (MGD SO2). The project aims to align with the WFP Lao PDR Country Strategic Plans' (2017 – 2021 and 2022 – 2026) first strategic outcome to improve food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals program. It also seeks to build on WFP's history of collaboration with both McGovern-Dole since 2008 and the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) on school feeding activities since 2002. In 2002, WFP distributed a mid-morning snack of corn-soya blend in three provinces as the primary SFP implementer, and 10 years later piloted the cash-based 'Home-Grown School Feeding' project, which served as a basis for the government to design its own model, i.e the cash-based National School Meals Program (NSMP), with national capacity strengthening support provided by WFP. This McGovern-Dole award was granted for an initial duration of four years (from 2017 to 2022), assisting WFP to shift from direct implementation to supporting the transition and scale up of national programs. Due to implementation interruptions caused by COVID-19, USDA approved a no-cost extension until September 30, 2023.<sup>3</sup>
40. This end-line evaluation report presents the results of the USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP School Feeding in Lao PDR from 2017 to 2023 (the project, henceforth). The evaluation has been commissioned by the WFP Lao PDR Country Office (CO) in order to assess project implementation and performance, comparing generated end-line evidence on both short and long-term outcomes to the baseline and mid-term findings (as available), therefore fulfilling accountability objectives under the award. In addition, the evaluation prioritized the learning objective, generating an understanding of why certain results were or were not achieved as well as recommendations for strengthening the ongoing project awarded in 2020 and the NSMP implemented by the GoL.

## 1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

41. This **evaluation was commissioned** by the WFP Lao PDR Country Office and took place from November 2022 to July 2023. The evaluation **covers activities in all geographic areas of intervention**, i.e., 8 provinces of Phongsaly, Louangnamtha, Luangprabang, Oudomxay, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu, from when WFP received the Award to present. The fieldwork was conducted in two phases: quantitative data collection occurred from February to March 2023, followed by qualitative data collection in May 2023.
42. This **summative and formative evaluation** has two mutually reinforcing **objectives of accountability and learning**. In terms of accountability, the evaluation assessed whether targeted beneficiaries have received services as expected and if the project met its stated goals and objectives in line with the results frameworks and assumptions, and in contrast to the baseline and mid-term findings. Additionally, the evaluation also assessed the extent to which the project addressed issues related to gender, equity, and inclusion. It is the last evaluation of the series of reviews/studies conducted for this specific Award (Fiscal Year 2017-2023).
43. The evaluation generated evidence on the long-term outcomes and the extent to which change occurred since baseline. In terms of learning, the evaluation determined the reasons why certain results were or were not achieved, identified good practices and provided lessons to form a platform for evidence-based policy dialogue internally at WFP and nationally with the government of Lao PDR, notably regarding the implementation of the various school feeding activities and their handover and incorporation in a nationally-owned and community-driven school feeding program. It is particularly timely as it will inform ongoing implementation of the new FY20-25 USDA McGovern-Dole project framework covering similar school feeding, literacy and policy support activities and the

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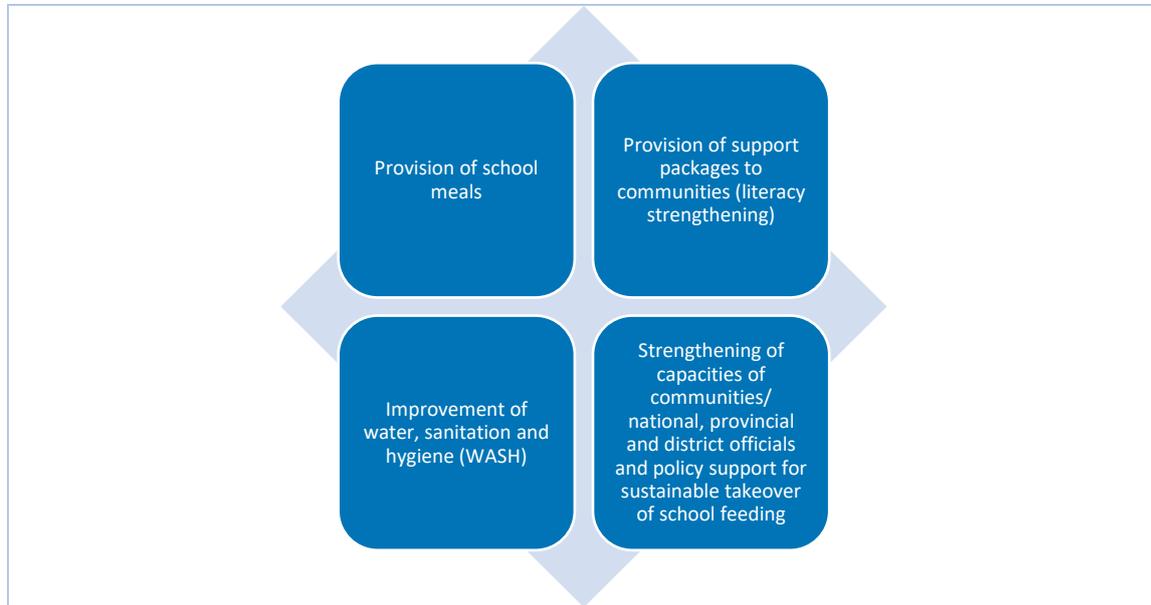
<sup>2</sup> The McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition program will be referred to as 'McGovern-Dole' or 'the project' throughout the remainder of the report.

<sup>3</sup> WFP Laos McGovern-Dole FY17 Semi-Annual Report (Apr - Sep 2022).

eventual handover of 707 new schools to the NSMP in the remaining 17 priority districts without school feeding activities.

44. The present endline evaluation has as its subject, the USDA McGovern-Dole Grant FY17 for WFP School Feeding in Lao PDR, whose main activities are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. The project activities**



45. The **primary users of the evaluation** are therefore WFP Lao PDR and its implementing partners, the government at national and sub-national levels, adjacent partners working in the same sectors, USDA as the donor, as well as WFP's RBB, HQ and the Office of Evaluation for wider oversight and application of lessons learned in similar contexts. For the donors, the primary purpose of the evaluation is to measure performance indicators and high-level results (outcomes). The evaluation is also accountable to the rights-holders, including those furthest behind, who are the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project's activities. Rightsholders include pre-primary and primary-age girls representing nearly 50% of school children served, women in the community, including the cooks employed by school feeding activities, students with disabilities (at the specialized school in Vientiane), and ethnic minorities representing a large percentage of population in WFP-supported districts. For WFP and the GoL key counterparts, particularly the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), the evaluation is important for understanding what has been done and what can be improved or considered to ensure sustainability of the integration of schools into the National School Meals Program.
46. The **scope of the evaluation** includes an assessment of all the activities outlined within the project including areas with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and literacy activities, and all types of beneficiaries from the beginning of the project in April 2018 to September 2023, including educators, cooks and storekeepers, smallholder farmers, and school-aged children and their parents/caregivers, as well as national and subnational governance structures. The evaluation provides a situational analysis to shed light on the context of the evaluation as well as assess the project progress based on the established performance indicators.
47. The end-line evaluation assesses the project's continued **relevance**, as well as focus on **the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact** of the project, and analyzes how gender, equity, and wider inclusion objectives and gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) mainstreaming principles were incorporated in the design and implementation, adding to the gender analysis conducted during the mid-term. The final evaluation also includes indicators and evaluation questions so that data collection responds to key USDA Learning Agenda research questions.

## 1.2. CONTEXT

48. Lao PDR is a landlocked country bordering Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and China with 7.4 million people (2021).<sup>4</sup> Lao's annual population growth is 1.4%<sup>5</sup> and 58% of the total population is under 25 years old.<sup>6</sup> The country has one of the highest adolescent birth rates in the region with 83 births per 1,000 girls (aged 15-19), with important differences between rural and urban areas (136 and 42 births per 1,000 adolescent girls, respectively).<sup>7</sup>
49. Lao PDR is a multi-ethnic society with 49 ethnic groups, with at least 240 subgroups. The ethnic subgroups can be classified in four broader ethno-linguistic groupings: Lao-Tai (62.4%), Mon-Khmer (23.7%), Hmong-Mien (9.7%) and Chinese-Tibetan (2.9%).<sup>8</sup> Although 63% of the population live in rural areas,<sup>9</sup> particularly the Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien ethnolinguistic families, live in remote areas. Moreover, despite the significant part of the population still living in rural areas,<sup>10</sup> the country is experiencing the fastest urbanization rate in the region (3.2% in 2021).<sup>11</sup>
50. Lao is considered a least developed country (LDC) -expected to graduate in 2026 from the LDC category<sup>12</sup> with a GDP growth of only 0.5% since 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the already vulnerable economy.<sup>13</sup> Before the pandemic, the country's macroeconomic situation had shown high growth over the previous two decades, with the poverty rate decreasing by 50% towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 of halving poverty and the proportion of hungry people<sup>14</sup>. Based on the most recent estimates of 2017, 23.1% of the population is multidimensionally poor while an additional 21.2% is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty<sup>15</sup>.

### *Agriculture and Climate Change Impacts*

51. Agriculture is the main sector of employment in the country, with over 70% of the population engaged. Women participate in over half of all agricultural activities.<sup>16</sup> The southeast Asian country has approximately 5 million hectares of suitable land for cultivation (21% of total landmass).
52. Despite the importance of the sector, agriculture in Lao PDR contributes only 16% to the country's GDP due to factors including low productivity and lack of modernization, among other issues.<sup>17</sup> Traditional farming methods on top of lack of knowledge of new technologies are one of the main obstacles to improve yields, in addition to declining soil fertility and lack of access to irrigation.<sup>18</sup> Eighty percent of the rural population work as subsistence farmers and the main crop they depend

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank Open Data. (n.d.). World Bank Open Data; The World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank Group. (2021). The World Bank Data [Report]. Lao PDR; The World Bank Group. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/LA>

<sup>6</sup> UNFPA. (n.d.). Lao People's Democratic Republic. UNFPA in Lao; UNFPA. <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/unfpa-lao>

<sup>7</sup> UNFPA. (n.d.). Lao People's Democratic Republic. UNFPA in Lao; UNFPA. <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/unfpa-lao>

<sup>8</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau. (2016). Results of Population and Housing Census 2015 (English Version) (p. 277). UNFPA. <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/publications/results-population-and-housing-census-2015-english-version>

<sup>9</sup> World Bank Open Data. (n.d.). World Bank Open Data; The World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>10</sup> WFP. (2021). Lao People's Democratic Republic country strategic plan (2022-2026) (p. 33). [https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document\\_download/WFP-0000132227](https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000132227)

<sup>11</sup> World Bank Open Data. (n.d.). World Bank Open Data; The World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Economic Analysis, LAO PDR, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category-lao-peoples-democratic-republic.html>

<sup>13</sup> The World Bank Group. (2021). The World Bank Data [Report]. Lao PDR; The World Bank Group. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/LA>

<sup>14</sup> WFP CO Lao PDR. (2017). USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 Mid-Term Evaluation in Lao PDR (October 2017 – September 2021) (p. 59). <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000128808/download/>

<sup>15</sup> UNDP. (2022). Unpacking deprivation bundles to reduce multidimensional poverty. UNDP. <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MPI/LAO.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> FAO. (n.d.). FAO in Laos. <https://www.fao.org/laos/fao-in-laos/laos-at-a-glance/en/>

<sup>17</sup> FAO. (2020). Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems in Lao People's Democratic Republic: Why it matters (p. 2). <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/fr/c/CB1776EN/>

<sup>18</sup> IFAD. (n.d.). Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao People's Democratic Republic. <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/w/country/laos>

on is rice (72% of total agricultural surface area is dedicated to rice)<sup>19</sup> which in turn, limits crop diversification and hinders the population's dietary diversity. The main sources of nutritious food include fisheries, which contributes 40% of protein consumption and is the main source of animal protein in the country. Around one-third of households are engaged in livestock and poultry production, fishing, aquaculture or hunting traded their animal products.<sup>20</sup> 33% of farmers are linked to the market.<sup>21</sup> In recent years, commercial crops have included maize, cassava, banana and vegetables, improving productivity among low-income households. Commercial, market-oriented, farming, has benefited rural communities by stimulating economic growth and poverty reduction.<sup>22</sup> The latter, however, despite creating opportunities for households to boost their income by growing cash crops, has become a disadvantage for non-Lao Thai ethnic groups, especially women, who have limited Lao language and business skills<sup>23</sup>

53. Although Lao PDR is not as exposed to natural hazards as other countries in the region, it is highly vulnerable to climate change, including cyclones, floods, erratic rains and extended dry seasons. It is expected that temperature in the Mekong Basin in the next 20 to 30 years will increase by 1-2 degrees and some areas are expected to face seasonal droughts while other areas will experience increasing rainfall.<sup>24</sup>

### **Food security, nutrition and health**

54. Around 14% (one in seven) households in Lao PDR are food insecure with the highest prevalence of food insecurity being in Sekong, Luangprabang, and Phongsaly provinces (oscillating between 23% to 26%).<sup>25</sup> Rural areas, compared to urban areas, have higher food insecurity on average (17% compared to 9%). Overall variation is significant: between 5% and 25% of households across various districts face food insecurity (Figure 2).
55. Food insecurity also affects population differently based on gender. The prevalence of severe food insecurity in the adult population is almost eight percentage points higher for female compared to men (31.3% and 23.9%, respectively).<sup>26</sup> At the household level, the differences between male-headed versus female-headed counterparts persists (13% as against 20%).<sup>27</sup> Additionally, female-headed households consume less diverse diets compared to male-headed households (21% compared to 14%)<sup>28</sup>. With the economic difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, as expected, households with significant income reduction (over 50%) are more than twice likely to be food insecure. In general, households have been eating less diverse diets. Staple foods, such as rice, and vegetables are primary food categories that are most consumed in a week, while dairy and pulses are eaten less than twice a week. As a result of the increase in food prices, due to increasing inflation rates and commodities' rising prices, almost 6 out of 10 households have relied on coping strategies to be able

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<sup>19</sup> FAO. (n.d.). FAO in Laos. <https://www.fao.org/laos/fao-in-laos/laos-at-a-glance/en/>

<sup>20</sup> Lao PDR Poverty Profile and Poverty Assessment 2020. (2020, October 20). The World Bank.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/publication/lao-pdr-poverty-profile-and-poverty-assessment-2020>

<sup>21</sup> FAO. (n.d.). FAO in Laos. <https://www.fao.org/laos/fao-in-laos/laos-at-a-glance/en/>

<sup>22</sup> World Bank. (2020). Poverty Profile in Lao PDR and Poverty Assessment 2020: Catching Up and Falling Behind.

<sup>23</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2022, June). Women's Resilience in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: How Laws and Policies Promote Gender Equality in Climate change and Disaster Risk Management. Women's Resilience in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: How Laws and Policies Promote Gender Equality in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. <https://www.adb.org/publications/women-resilience-lao-pdr>

<sup>24</sup> Mekong River Commission (MRC), <https://www.mrcmekong.org/about/mekongbasin/climate/>

<sup>25</sup> WFP, Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), September 2022. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000144949/download/>

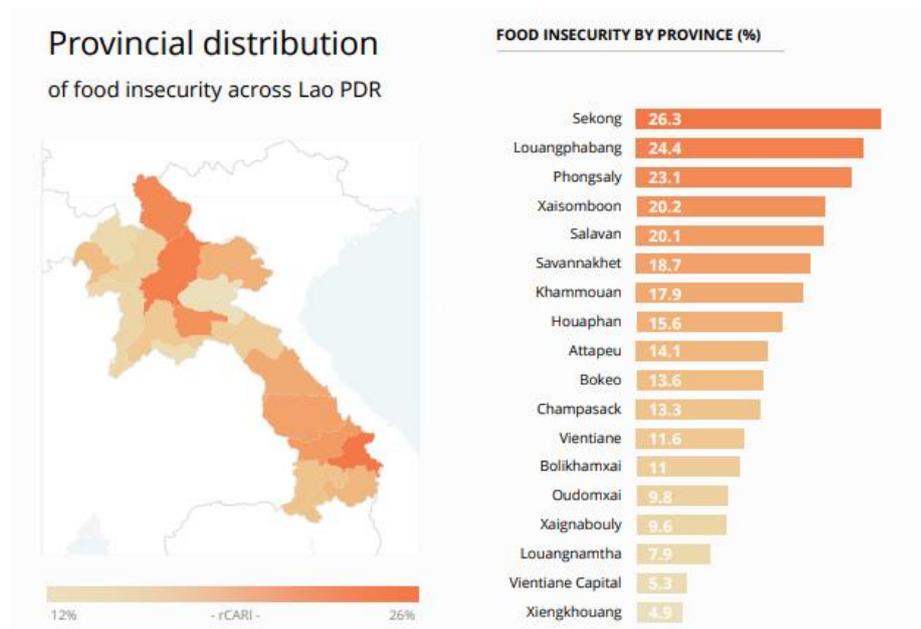
<sup>26</sup> Lao People's Democratic Republic. (n.d.). <https://data.unwomen.org/country/lao-peoples-democratic-republic>

<sup>27</sup> WFP, Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), September 2022. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000144949/download/>

<sup>28</sup> The household food consumption score is calculated according to the types of foods consumed during the previous seven days, the frequencies with which they are consumed and the relative nutritional weight of the different food groups" Lao 2022 Remote Household Food Security Survey Brief

to buy food or meet other essential needs. Among the coping strategies are spending savings, cutting on certain expenditures such as health, or borrowing money.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 2. Provincial distribution of food insecurity across Lao PDR, September 2022**



Source: Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), September 2022.

56. Despite the significant decrease of food security and malnutrition in the country in the past decade (with population affected by hunger decreasing from 47.7% to 25.7% approximately based on the country's score on the global hunger index), anemia and stunting continue to be high.
57. Approximately 44% of pregnant and lactating women and girls (aged 15 to 19) achieve the recommended minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W). The prevalence of anemia among children under five in 2018 was 40%,<sup>30</sup> while 33% were affected by stunting in 2019 (which is considered a "high severity prevalence of chronic malnutrition").<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the prevalence of wasting -measured based on a child's weight relative to their height- increased from 6% in 2012 to 9% in 2019, while overweight and obesity are increasing, with 15.7% of children under five classified as overweight.<sup>32</sup> Only one in four children receive a minimum acceptable diet.<sup>33</sup> With either not adequate nutritious food or a low dietary diversity at home, school feeding is considered a key strategy to address hunger and nutrition. Around 35% of Lao PDR households rely on food-based coping mechanisms such as turning to less desired foods, reducing portion sizes, or skipping adult

<sup>29</sup> WFP. (2023, January/February). Lao PDR – Food security Monitoring. Remote Household Food Security Survey Brief. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000144949/download/>

<sup>30</sup> The World Bank. (n.d.). Prevalence of anemia among children (% of children ages 6-59 months) -Lao PDR. Prevalence of Anemia among Children (% of Children Ages 6-59 Months) -Lao PDR.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.ANM.CHLD.ZS?end=2019&locations=LA&start=2000&view=chart>

<sup>31</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). NUTRITION. Good Nutrition Is the Bedrock of Child Survival, Health and Development.

<sup>32</sup> WFP. (2022, November). Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Strategic Plan (2022–2026). Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Strategic Plan (2022–2026). <https://www.wfp.org/operations/la02-lao-peoples-democratic-republic-country-strategic-plan-2022-2026>

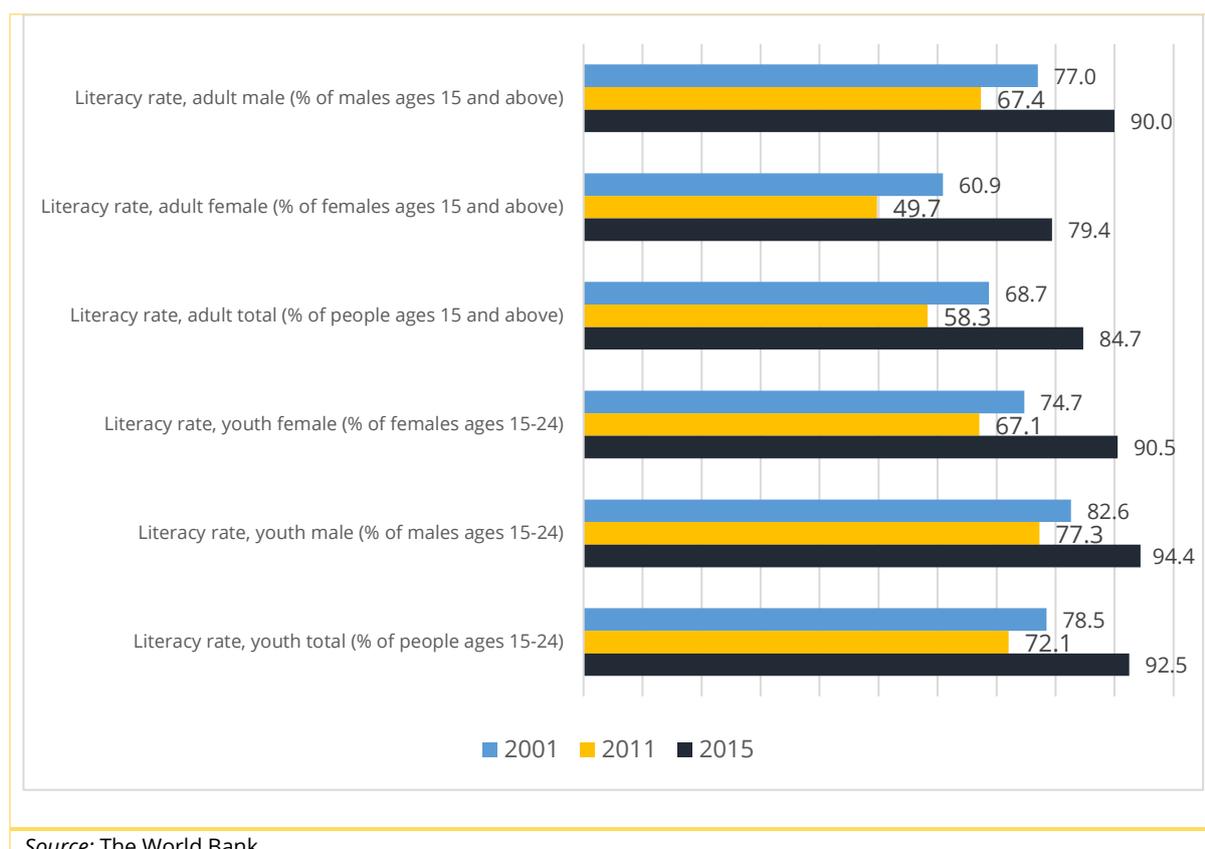
<sup>33</sup> FAO. (n.d.). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Healthy Diets. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca9692en/online/ca9692en.html>

meals for children. It is estimated that around 19% of adults sacrifice meals so that their children can eat.<sup>34</sup>

### Education and Literacy

58. Though literacy rates have improved over the years (Figure 3), Lao PDR still has some of the poorest education indicators in the region. Inequality in access and dropout are two of the main problems. Although net enrollment in primary education was 98.7% by 2017,<sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> only 30% of 5-year-old children were enrolled in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs (children typically attend pre-primary school from ages 3-5) as those in the most rural areas and poor families are excluded. Many ethnic groups do not speak the Lao language, which is a challenge considering that it is the official language of education.

**Figure 3. Literacy rates at a glance (% , years available)**



Source: The World Bank

59. As such, literacy rates vary significantly when comparing urban and rural areas (91% urban men vs. 72% rural men, 84.6% urban women vs. 51.9% in rural women) In the aggregate, the literacy rate is 78% for men and 62.9% for women. Disparities among ethno-linguistic groups are considerable (Figure 4).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> WFP, Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), September 2022. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000144949/download/>

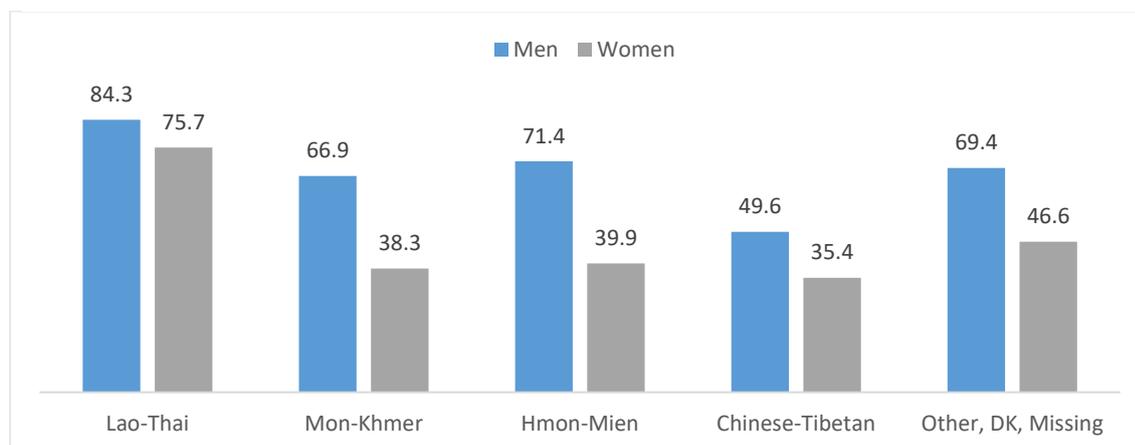
<sup>35</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). EDUCATION. Every Child Has the Right to Go to School and Learn. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/education>

<sup>36</sup> Net Primary School Enrolment rate varies depending on sources and years significantly. While the World Bank reports 91% in 2018, UNICEF reports in 2017 school enrollment was 98.7% (source MoES). Most recently, the 9<sup>th</sup> Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025) from the GoL reported 99% net primary school enrollment for 2020.

<sup>37</sup> While overall gender parity index in literacy rates in Lao PDR has improved from 0.90 in 2001 to 0.96 in 2015, but there is variation across regions and ethnicity (Source: The World Bank databank).

60. Moreover, the quality of education remains a challenge. Approximately 82% (2017) of enrolled children complete primary education despite compulsory education requirements, which is expected to last nine years. In lower secondary education, dropout rates are also high (46% for boys and 47% for girls). The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 report shows that 50% of students in Grade 5 were in the lowest Band (2)<sup>38</sup> and are still at the stage of matching single words to an image of a familiar object or concept.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 4. Literacy rate (%) disaggregated by ethno-linguistic group and sex, 2017**



Source: Own elaboration based on Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

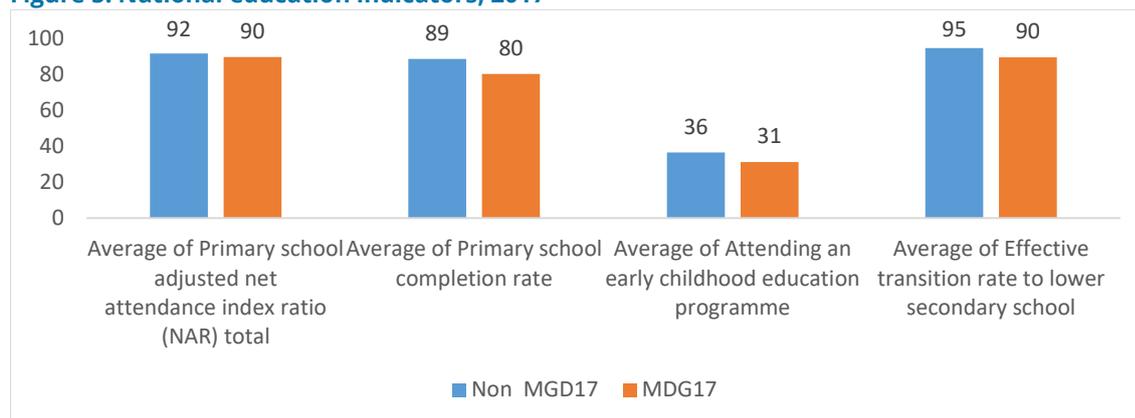
61. Overall, on average, provinces that were selected for the project lagged behind from the rest of the provinces. As shown in Figure 5, in four of the main education indicators. More recently, due to COVID-19, as highlighted in the Mid-Term Reviews, there was a decrease of 4% in school enrolment of the academic year of 2020-2021 compared to previous academic year in those schools participating in the project. Similarly, comparison schools decrease primary enrolment in 5%.<sup>40</sup> Also identified during the Mid-term Review, as part of the COVID-19 pandemic, the average student attendance between September 2020 and February 2021 was 92.3%, in project schools, which was lower than the 98% reported during the baseline (2016-17).

<sup>38</sup> The proficiency scale used in the assessment **includes five bands**, from Band 2 and below to Band 6 and above. Each band represents a different level of proficiency and is described in terms of what children can do. For example, in the lowest band, children can identify relationships between words and their meanings in their language of instruction. In Band 4, a reader understands simple texts and can make plausible interpretations of the information in texts. At Band 6 and above, a reader can understand texts with familiar structures, manage competing information, and comprehend implicit details.

<sup>39</sup> UNESCO. (2021). Lao PDR Case Study (p. 48). UNESCO. <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/9336/file/Sit%20An%20-%20Lao%20PDR%20case%20study.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Mid-term Review of WFA School Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (2022). Decentralized Evaluation Report No. 4.

**Figure 5. National education indicators, 2017**



Source: Own elaboration based on Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

### **Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)**

62. Access to good water, sanitation and hygiene remains a challenge. Inadequate environmental hygiene, such as the use of contaminated water, poor sanitation, and incorrect hygiene practices, including difficulties in access to public health services, is one of the underlying causes of malnutrition. Disparities in this area are also relevant. Based on 2017 available data, while only 18% of urban areas do not have water source at all, the figure is 40.4% in rural areas.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, around 24% of the population practice open defecation, while only 28% of children’s faces are disposed of safely. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the lack of water and hygiene facilities result in frequent diarrhea and other diseases and is the major cause of malnutrition in Northern Lao.<sup>42</sup>
63. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic accentuated the insufficient conditions of WASH facilities at school. Although there has been improvement in the infrastructure for WASH facilities, by 2017, only 66% of primary schools had both water supply and latrine facilities and 11% of primary schools do not have any WASH facility at all. As such, good standard hygiene practices continue to lag behind.

### **Gender and Equity and Social Inclusion**

64. Lao PDR ranks 53rd among 153 countries in the WEF Global Gender Gap Index 2020, an index that measures gender equality and quantifies the gaps between women and men in four key areas: health, education, economy, and politics.<sup>43</sup> Lao PDR has made progress in the representation of women in senior roles in both the public and private sectors: 30-40% in new entrepreneur opportunities are created by women. However, women still constitute the majority of workers in the informal sectors and are often left with the management of the household, including facilitating water supply and energy for cooking,<sup>44</sup> reinforcing traditional and constrictive gender roles. Most unpaid care work is taken up by women, largely due to gender roles and limited educational and productive opportunities. In 2015, 61% of women active in the labor force were unpaid family workers, compared to only 26% of men.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

<sup>42</sup> CCL. (n.d.). Why to work on wash (water – hygiene and sanitation)? <https://ccl-laos.org/activity-category/wash/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/infographics-145b9111f2>

<sup>44</sup> Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR: Key Findings. (n.d.).

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/03/01/key-findings-country-gender-assessment-for-lao-pdr>

<sup>45</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2022, June). Women’s Resilience in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic: How Laws and Policies Promote Gender Equality in Climate change and Disaster Risk Management. Women’s Resilience in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic: How Laws and Policies Promote Gender Equality in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. <https://www.adb.org/publications/women-resilience-lao-pdr>

**Figure 6. Gender Equality and Non-discrimination Laws and Frameworks in Lao PDR<sup>46</sup>**

Law/Policy	Summary of Gender References
Law on Gender Equality 2019 (LGE)	It references mainstreaming gender in all areas of work (Article 5[4], 22[3]) and includes gender responsive provisions on overcoming cultural beliefs that inhibit women's advancement (Articles 18, 30[4] and 34). However, it does not provide for substantive equality, nor define and prohibit both direct and indirect discrimination according to international standards (CEDAW).
National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021–2025) (NAPGE)	There are aspirational targets for capacity-building on gender equality for National Assembly members. There are also positive targets to promote equality and improve women's resilience to disasters and increase the participation of women in climate change and disaster risk reduction.
Law on Making Legislation 2012	It requires wide national and provincial consultations and enables the Women's Caucus to comment on laws before finalization. It does not mention the concepts of equality or nondiscrimination.

CEDAW = Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Note: Color coding: gender responsive (green), gender sensitive (yellow), not yet gender mainstreamed (orange).

Source: Asian Development Bank.

65. As highlighted above, although enrollment in basic education has shown progress, reaching 98%<sup>47</sup>, there are still gender disparities. Some of the causes for high secondary school drop-out include early marriage and early pregnancy.<sup>48</sup> In 2019, Lao PDR renewed its commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development 25 Agenda to increase efforts to reduce maternal mortality (185 per 100,000 live births),<sup>49</sup> provide needs for modern contraceptives and eliminate gender-based violence (GBV) - with one in seven women having experienced physical or sexual violence from their partners at least once in their lifetime.<sup>50</sup> The GoL has also committed to the integration of sex education through the national "Noi 2030 framework," which aims to empower adolescent girls with sexual and reproductive health in addition to raising awareness in the community through advocacy efforts.<sup>51</sup>
66. In terms of disability, although there is limited information on the status and number of people with disabilities, according to the most recent national survey, 2.8% of the population has a disability.<sup>52</sup> As per the 2017 Indicator Survey, disability is measured in the following domains: seeing, hearing, walking, fine motor skills, communicating, learning, playing, controlling behavior. Overall, 2% of children aged 2 to 4 have functional difficulty in at least one domain, while 3.8%, children in rural areas without roads also have difficulty in at least one domain.<sup>53</sup>
67. According to the Lao United Nations Country Team (UNCT) country analysis, Table 1 below describes the most relevant factors of discrimination and the groups that are left behind or are at risk of being left behind.

<sup>46</sup> Source: Women's Resilience in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: How Laws and Policies Promote Gender Equality in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. <https://www.adb.org/publications/women-resilience-lao-pdr>.

<sup>47</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). EDUCATION. Every Child Has the Right to Go to School and Learn. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/education>

<sup>48</sup> The United Nations Common Country Analysis Lao PDR 2021 (2021). <https://reliefweb.int/report/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/united-nations-common-country-analysis-lao-pdr-2021>

<sup>49</sup> The World Bank Group. (2021). The World Bank Data [Report]. Lao PDR; The World Bank Group. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/LA>

<sup>50</sup> UNFPA. (n.d.). Lao People's Democratic Republic. UNFPA in Lao; UNFPA. <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/unfpa-lao>

<sup>51</sup> The United Nations Common Country Analysis Lao PDR 2021 (2021). <https://reliefweb.int/report/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/united-nations-common-country-analysis-lao-pdr-2021>

<sup>52</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). Children with disabilities. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

<sup>53</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). Lao PDR Child Protection Compendium of Factsheets. (March 2022). <https://www.unicef.org/laos/media/7356/file/UNICEF%20Lao%20PDR%20Child%20Protection%20Compendium%20of%20Factsheets.pdf>

**Table 1. Factors of Vulnerability/ Marginalization<sup>54</sup>**

Factors of discrimination	Groups left behind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex, age, or disability</li> <li>• Geographical location and/or fragile ecology</li> <li>• Vulnerability to climatic shocks &amp; nature hazards</li> <li>• Impact of governance (laws, policies)</li> <li>• Socio-economic status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women, particularly pregnant women</li> <li>• Ethnic groups (particularly the Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien who live in remote areas)<sup>55</sup></li> <li>• Children and adolescents</li> <li>• Migrants</li> <li>• Internally displaced persons</li> <li>• Persons at risk of statelessness</li> <li>• LGBTIQ</li> <li>• Persons with disabilities</li> <li>• Youth NEET (Not in education, employment or training)</li> <li>• People living with HIV</li> <li>• Older persons</li> <li>• Population in informal settlements</li> </ul>

**National policies, institutional capacities and priorities**

68. The 9<sup>th</sup> Lao National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) (2021), aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) governs sectoral policies and strategies. Under NSEDP, the GoL has addressed food insecurity and nutrition through various school related policies and strategies, such as Policy on Promoting School Lunch (2014), the School Meals Action Plan (2015), the National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NNSPA) (2015) establish school meals as one of the 22 priorities. In 2015, the GoL approved its National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action, which laid out the key drivers of malnutrition in Lao PDR and outlined a strategic framework for the next 10 years that aims to reduce maternal and child malnutrition rates while improving the nutritional status and food security of the country's multi-ethnic population in line with SDGs 2, 4 and 17.
69. Lao PDR is also party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which requires governments to protect economic, social, and cultural rights, including the rights to employment, food, health, and participation in cultural activities, and to conduct recurring reviews of the situation by the UN Expert Committee.
70. The school feeding program can directly and indirectly address some of the interconnected factors leading to malnutrition and food security. School lunches are likely to improve nutrient intake and dietary diversity which can help improve health-related outcomes<sup>56</sup> while also alleviating the economic burden for vulnerable families by reducing household's food expenditure. These savings can then be allocated towards other households' essential needs, such as access to health care, soap and detergent, and other items that can contribute to a more sanitary environment. WASH activities will address the poor environmental hygiene that leads to food, water, and vector-borne diseases, in addition it will provide dignity to the students. Furthermore, gender-responsive nutrition campaigns can reduce the unpaid burden of care of women and girls.
71. As per the terms of reference, high level policy support and capacity strengthening form the backbone of the transition to the NSMP under full government ownership in 2021. Through support to national legislation and guidelines, the strengthening of technical capacity, and the facilitation of knowledge sharing, GoL has taken over management of school feeding of 515 schools in 2019, and another 915 schools in 2021 in the 31 target districts in the 8 targeted provinces. According to MoES,

<sup>54</sup> The United Nations Common Country Analysis Lao PDR 2021 (2021). <https://reliefweb.int/report/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/united-nations-common-country-analysis-lao-pdr-2021>

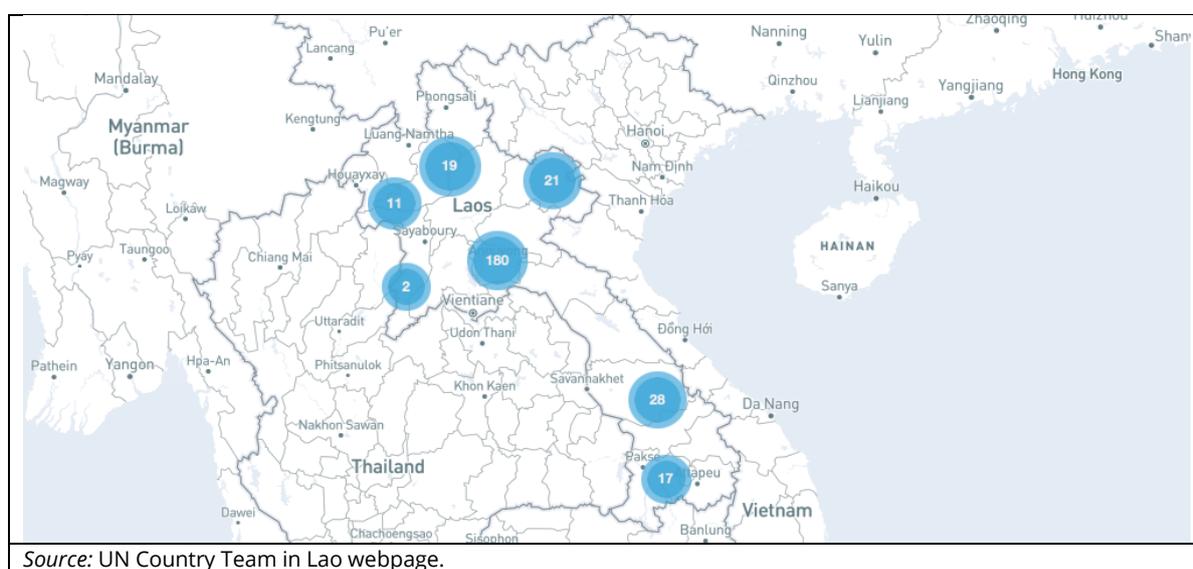
<sup>55</sup> WFP. (2021). Lao People's Democratic Republic country strategic plan (2022–2026) (p.7).

<sup>56</sup> Studies have shown that dietary diversity has nutritional and health benefits independent of other socioeconomic factors (Arimand & Ruel, 2004; Lim, 2018).

in school years 2019-2020, the total number of schools in Lao PDR was 8,518<sup>57</sup>, so the McGovern-Dole covers 17% of all primary schools in Lao PDR.

72. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic shock have significantly impacted students' learning in Lao PDR. This appears to have affected the government's ability to fully take over schools handed over, which necessitated modifications in the planned WFP interventions. Despite the economic impact, most recently, the Prime Minister signed in August 2022 a decree to ensure that the national budget integrates school feeding as well as guidelines on school meals implementation at the national, provincial, district and community levels.<sup>58,59</sup> As such, schools handed over to the MoES are expected to continue with the assistance since the funding for school feeding is apparently secured thanks to the decree. However, the fiscal capacity of the GoL, might be impacted by COVID-19 economic shock and the fuel price crisis, leading to difficulties to allocate and secure 800 LAK (~USD 0.05) per student per day.<sup>60</sup>

**Figure 7 UNCT Activities in Lao PDR in 2022**



### International and Humanitarian Assistance

73. In addition to WFP, the UNCT in Lao PDR consists of World Bank and seventeen UN agencies (including the UN Resident Coordinator's office). WFP, FAO, IFAD, ITC, UN-HABITAT and UNICEF are the UN agencies working on SDG 2 on zero hunger. The UN is implementing 207 Key Activities with USD 85.1 million in financial resources during the ongoing program cycle. The map below displays the number of activities per location. The UN was implementing 207 Key Activities in 2022 during the ongoing program cycle.

74. According to the most recent information, the country received Official Development Assistance (ODA) of 528.9 million USD (net) in 2020. The top five donors for the period 2019-2020 include the

<sup>57</sup> Annual School Census 2019-20, MoES in Lao PDR Global Partnership for Education III: Learning and Equity Acceleration Project (P173407), the World Bank, 2020, Project Information Document.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/305851599702642485/pdf/Project-Information-Document-Lao-PDR-Global-Partnership-for-Education-III-Learning-and-Equity-Acceleration-Project-P173407.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> WFP, Baseline Evaluation of WFP School Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant FY2020-25, p. 21.

<sup>59</sup> Lao PDR, Decree on Promoting School Lunch, 11 August, 2022.

[http://laoofficialgazette.gov.la/kcfinder/upload/files/%E0%BB%81%E0%BA%9B%E0%BA%94%E0%BA%B3%E0%BA%A5%E0%BA%B1%E0%BA%94%20%E0%BA%AD%E0%BA%B2%E0%BA%AB%E0%BA%B2%E0%BA%99%E0%BA%97%E0%BB%88%E0%BA%BD%E0%BA%87%20Update%20as%2011%20Oct%20\(1\).pdf](http://laoofficialgazette.gov.la/kcfinder/upload/files/%E0%BB%81%E0%BA%9B%E0%BA%94%E0%BA%B3%E0%BA%A5%E0%BA%B1%E0%BA%94%20%E0%BA%AD%E0%BA%B2%E0%BA%AB%E0%BA%B2%E0%BA%99%E0%BA%97%E0%BB%88%E0%BA%BD%E0%BA%87%20Update%20as%2011%20Oct%20(1).pdf)

<sup>60</sup> WFP Internal Document (2022). Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR, DRAFT DELIVERABLE 1 – Phase II (2022): Sophia Dunn and Jean-Pierre Silvéreano, June 2022.

Asian Development Bank (126.44 M USD), Japan (83 M USD), International Development Association (77.4 M USD), United States (58.8M USD) and South Korea (53.3M USD).<sup>61</sup>

75. As per the proposal of this project, WFP is one of the three largest providers of school meals in Lao PDR. It supported school lunch for 145,000 children in 1,423 schools across 30 districts at the end of 2022, while GoL delivered it to 30,000 children in 304 schools in 10 districts across five provinces, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) supported 40,000 children in 360 schools across seven districts in Savannakhet Province in 2021-22 school year. WFP is a member of Education Sector Work Groups chaired by Minister of Education and co-chaired by Australia and EU. These subgroups ensure coordination among all stakeholders on delivering inclusive education.
76. Among other prominent programs in the country, WFP partners with FAO and MoES for a pilot on integrating nutrition and school gardens as part of the curriculum. This initiative seeks to enhance knowledge among students, teachers and the community on improved agricultural techniques. Further, WFP, MoES, JICA and UNICEF support workshops on understanding causes for high drop-out and repetition rates among the non-Lao speaking children. The Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) program is the largest single donor funded education program in the country. Besides providing textbooks, teacher guides, and reading materials, it advocates for increased remuneration for teachers in remote and rural areas. Finally, an integrated nutrition and WASH project (NURTURE), funded by USAID and implemented by Save the Children in collaboration with SNV Netherlands, aims at improving the hygiene and child feeding practices towards improving health and learning outcomes.

#### **SDG2- END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

Despite significant improvements towards SDG2, Lao PDR still faces what is categorized as “serious” levels of hunger, with almost 32% of households experiencing mild, moderate or severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale. The country was ranked 82nd (out of 121 countries) in the 2022 Global Hunger Index (2020) which rates undernourishment, underweight and child mortality data.

#### **SDG 17. STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALISE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Lao PDR has relevant regional and international cooperation in line with its development agenda. The Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2016-2025) is the overarching framework for development cooperation. The country is member of organizations, such as ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the World Trade Organization, among others.

In line with SDG, the GoL reinforced its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation and achievement of the SDGs in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2018. As mentioned in the VNR, Lao PDR was among the earliest countries to integrate SDGs into its national planning framework. As such, more than 50% of the Eighth and Ninth NSEDP indicators are linked to SDG indicators.

### **1.3. SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED**

77. The subject of the study is the WFP USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding project (2017–22). WFP received \$27.4 million through the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue implementing a school feeding project in Lao PDR focused on improving literacy of school-age children (MGD SO1) and increasing the use of health and dietary practices (MGD SO2). The SFP activities are aligned with the WFP Lao PDR Country Strategic Plans’ (2017 – 2021 and 2022 – 2026) first strategic outcome to improve food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals

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<sup>61</sup> OECD DAC Aid at a glance by recipient new. (n.d.). Tableau Software. Retrieved December 14, 2022, from [https://public.tableau.com/views/OECDDACAidataglancebyrecipient\\_new/Recipients?:embed=y&:display\\_count=yes&:showTabs=y&:toolbar=no?&:showVizHome=no](https://public.tableau.com/views/OECDDACAidataglancebyrecipient_new/Recipients?:embed=y&:display_count=yes&:showTabs=y&:toolbar=no?&:showVizHome=no)

program and build on WFP’s history of collaboration with both MGD since 2008 and the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) on the national school feeding program (SFP) since 2002.

78. This project award was granted for an initial duration of four years (2017-2022) to assist WFP in shifting from direct implementation to supporting the transition of WFP-supported schools to NSMP. Due to implementation interruptions caused by COVID-19, USDA approved a no-cost extension until February 2023.
79. **Geographical coverage and beneficiary reach:** The project was implemented in 8 provinces (Phongsaly, Louangnamtha, Luangprabang, Oudomxay, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu) and its main categories of activities include (see [Annex 15](#) for the list of activities and expected outcomes per the strategic objectives of the project).
- Provision of school meals
  - Provision of support packages to communities (literacy strengthening)
  - Improvement of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
  - Strengthening of capacities at community, district, provincial and national levels, including policy support, for takeover of school feeding

Table 2 details the planned versus actual transfers for the McGovern-Dole:

**Table 2. Planned versus actual distribution in metric tons**

Year	Planned distribution (metric tons) of lentils, oil and rice <sup>62</sup>	Actual distribution (metric tons) of lentils, oil and rice <sup>63</sup>
2018/2019	4,322.61	4,144.741
2019/2020	3,619.3	3,069.85
2020/2021	1,301.9	2,146.81
2021/2022	-	168.2
2022/2023	-	71.8

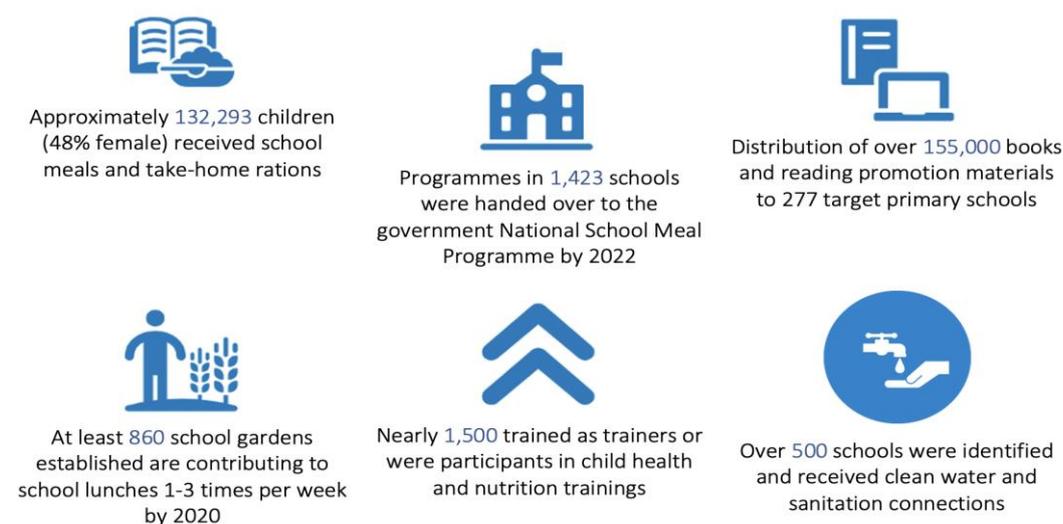
80. Over 130,000 children (nearly 50% girls) and 13,014 school administrators and officials, 10,000 Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) members, 3,000 cooks and 1,500 storekeepers across 1,423 schools in educationally disadvantaged districts<sup>64</sup> were targeted through the project, including areas with a large percentage of ethnic communities, gender disparities in education and nutrition outcomes, children with disabilities, and a high general prevalence of undernutrition and low education levels. Within the targeted schools are two specialized schools for 183 students with visual or hearing impairments. WFP has worked under the framework of the project with multiple partners including, for instance, non-governmental organizations such as Plan International, Big Brother Mouse, and Room to Read for literacy activities and materials; the Ministry of Health Department of Environmental Health and Rural Water Supply, private sector suppliers, and UNICEF to improve health and hygiene practices; amongst other partnerships, including with the community who contribute labor and local support on cross-cutting infrastructure projects, including school gardens, fish ponds, rice banks and school kitchens.

<sup>62</sup> WFP McGovern-Dole FY17 Full Proposal

<sup>63</sup> These numbers are drawn from the semi-annual reports. However, it should be noted that the distribution numbers in the semi-annual narrative reports and indicator summaries slightly vary, especially for 2021 – 2022, and therefore verification of the data will take place during the data collection period for this final evaluation.

<sup>64</sup> WFP MDG FY2017 Mid-term Review Report

**Figure 8. Key outputs of McGovern-Dole FY17 award by 2022**



81. In May 2018, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and WFP signed a School Feeding Handover plan for the GoL as well as allocating kip 7.5 billion<sup>65</sup> for the 2019/2020 school year to support implementation of school lunches under the National School Meals Program (NSMP) in 827 primary schools in the first phase of the transition, including 515 WFP-supported schools and 312 World Bank-supported schools. It was estimated that 22 billion kip would be needed per year in order to absorb the remaining 924 WFP-supported schools in Phase 2 of the transition. Overall, 515 schools were handed over in 2019 and 915 in 2021, though the convergence of some schools reduced the total to 1,423.

82. As part of the two-phased transition, meetings and workshops were held at the provincial-level to distribute information (153 participants (30% female) in Phase I, 282 (24% female) in Phase II), especially regarding preparation for handover and issued decrees to appoint school meal handover committees. Based on lessons from the Phase I handover regarding advanced planning to ensure a successful transition, other workshops were held with 495 educators (63% female) at district-level to finalize work plans. At the national-level, 15 pieces of legislation related to school feeding activities have been developed and started approval processes. The baseline evaluation and mid-term review of the project had confirmed the adequacy of GoL's strategies to implement the activities (as per the TOR, establishing education, school meals, school gardens and WASH-related infrastructure for all schools). The review of progress reports showed some variation with respect to key indicator targets and results. For example, 70,825 students attended USDA supported schools in 2021 as against the target of 116,784, likely because of fewer schools included in the handover. Similarly, only about three thousand school administrators were trained against a target of about thirteen thousand. In contrast, the project distributed more than 100,000 books, over two times the target.<sup>66</sup> Many of these changes were forced by the ongoing pandemic and associated school closures, which also necessitated changes in the design and timeline of planned interventions. For example, WFP had to continue providing supplemental support to 915 schools already handed over to the government at the request of the Government of Lao PDR due to socioeconomic impact of COVID in communities. As per the semi-annual report of the project for Oct 2021-Mar 2022, WFP, in line with the Aide Memoire signed in July 2021, delivered lentils and rice to a subset of schools handed over to the NSMP to ease the burden of the pandemic.

<sup>65</sup> This number was drawn from April – September 2019 Semi-annual Report; however, the October 2019 – March 2019 Semi-annual Report notes 10.5 billion Kip. Actual amount to be validated during data collection.

<sup>66</sup> ET notes some limits to the program's reporting on indicators by year, notably that the numbers vary across reports and performance measurement indicator frameworks. This is further constrained by the reporting cycles, which largely aligned with academic years spanning multiple years, and therefore there is anticipated to be some double counting in the semi-annual reports. With collaboration with WFP, the ET will work to further clarify and verify these numbers during the data collection phase.

83. In addition to assessing the changes for the project and comparison (i.e., supported and non-supported) groups, ET focused on issues such as differences in education and literacy outcomes for non-Lao speaking students, which were issues identified in past evaluations and reviews. Project documents and prior evaluation indicated that students in the intervention schools have higher dropout rates and lower literacy rates in contrast to schools in the comparison group. Falling student enrollments for both intervention (4% decline) and comparison (5% decline) schools also emerged as an issue at mid-term review. The mid-term review had suggested that students from lower socio-economic strata had higher dropouts as their parents could not afford schooling. Students with disability were also more likely to exhibit lower attendance and enrollment rates.<sup>67</sup> This was in line with the gender and social inclusion analysis in the project document, which found differences in educational outcomes by sex, ethnicity and disability status. Though semi-annual reports note that WFP started collecting more data on the number of school children with disabilities in WFP-supported schools, limited disaggregated data was available in semi-annual reports and evaluation reports. Even when disaggregated data by sex and geographic areas were available, limited information on concrete indicators measuring the gender, equity and inclusion elements and outcomes of the project was available on how McGovern-Dole may have contributed to gender responsive or transformative changes. This evaluation explored these changes in the design and implementation of intervention, as well their effect on expected results.

### Theory of Change (Revised)

84. Based on the review of documents, ET reviewed, reconstructed and validated theory of change with the country office ([Annex 5](#)) for use in this evaluation. The revised ToC clarified joint effects and the parallel interactions/ causal chains among various results that ultimately lead to the intended impacts. The overall objective of the project is to “promote better literacy, education and sanitation towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by and in Lao PDR.” This overall objective or vision is realized by **contributing** to two related specific objectives and one foundational result as follows:

- MGD Specific Objective 1 (MGDSO1): Improved literacy and education.
- MGD Specific Objective 2 (MGDSO2): Better health, sanitation and dietary practices.
- Foundational Result: Increased government and institutional capacity and community self-reliance for school meals.

**Table 3. Summary of key outcomes**

Key Outcome	Intermediate Outcomes	Immediate Outcomes
SO1. Improve literacy of school-aged children	Improved quality of literacy instruction	Consistent teacher attendance, improved literacy instructional material, improved knowledge, and skills of teachers and administration, better access to school supplies and materials
	Improved attentiveness	Reduced short-term hunger, provide access to school meals
	Improved student attendance	Increased economic and cultural incentives, reduced health-related absences, improved school infrastructure, increased student enrolment, and increased community understanding of benefits of education
SO2. Increased use of health and dietary services	Increase in knowledge related to health	Particularly - health and hygiene practices, safe food preparation and storage, nutrition
	Improved access	Better access to preventive health intervention, requisite food preparation, and storage equipment, clean water, and sanitation services

<sup>67</sup> While school enrollment and literacy rates in Lao PDR have significantly [improved](#) in recent years, the remaining population comes from multi-disadvantaged groups at the intersection of ethnicity, gender and disability (Hirosato & Kitamura, 2009).

Foundational Results
Increased Capacity of Government institutions
Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework
Increased Government support
Increased engagement of local organizations and community groups

85. To achieve these objectives, the project needed to deliver several important outputs and outcomes. Most of the outputs delivered by the project are inter-related and work across various immediate (e.g., change in knowledge) and intermediate outcomes (e.g., change in culture or behavior), while other outcomes are influenced by more than one output or even other outcomes. This is reflected in bi- and multi-directional arrows in the [\(Annex 5: Reconstructed Theory of Change\)](#).
86. The project seeks to make the impact outlined in MGDSO1 by achieving three main intermediate outcomes, viz., (1) improved quality of instruction (2) improved school enrolments and attendance, and (3) improved attentiveness. These intermediate outcomes, in turn, depend on other key (immediate or short-term outcomes) pertaining to better teacher attendance, access to school supplies and materials, instructional materials, skills and knowledge of teachers and administrators, and reduced short-term hunger. The corresponding outputs that make these outcomes possible are shown in the left-most column. The bi-directional arrows in the ToC show the interlinkages among various results, while unidirectional arrows indicate the causal chain among results. The results chain with regard to other objectives, outcomes and outputs are similarly shown in the ToC. It must also be mentioned that various “results blocks” or closely linked outcome groups also interact with each other to make a comprehensive intervention possible.
87. Overall, the project was an ambitious undertaking, both in terms of targeted outcomes and portfolio of activities. It covered most facets of literacy, education, sanitation, health, nutrition and food security for children in the country. It also sought to strengthen institutional capacity of frontline governmental stakeholders, and improve inter-agency coordination at national, regional levels and across relevant development partners and GoL.
88. It must also be highlighted that the project was implemented in a complex and challenging context due to factors such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic shock in the country. Thus, overall, ToC represented an ambitious attempt by WFP to intervene in a challenging environment.
89. The complete evaluation results matrix outlines performance indicators, data sources and collection method that were used to test key elements of this theory of change are included in [Annex 4](#).

#### 1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

90. The evaluation followed a **theory-based, utilization-focused and quasi-experimental approach**<sup>68</sup>. Detailed methodology is provided in [Annex 3](#). The evaluation used both primary and secondary data. Primary data collection involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative component was used for estimating level of outcome changes for early grade students, teachers, parents, and other beneficiaries such as cooks and storekeepers from local communities, it was followed up by qualitative data collection for developing a holistic understanding of results and the situational factors influencing them, as well as providing for further triangulation of project achievements. Secondary data collection involved content analysis of project documents, administrative records, monitoring plan/ reports, previous evaluation recommendations/action plans, and government policy and plan documents.
91. ET leveraged Contribution Analysis (CA) to analyze and test various elements of the project’s ToC/logframe. The evaluation matrix ([Annex 4](#)) shows various lines of inquiry with their respective data collection methods and tools that were used and triangulated to respond to the final selected

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<sup>68</sup> No modifications were made to the methodological design after the inception phase.

evaluation questions <sup>69</sup> under the selected criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact (See table below).

**Table 4. Evaluation Criteria and Questions**

Evaluation questions	Criteria
1. How relevant and influential has the project been with regard the Government of Lao PDR's current and future plans in school feeding?	RELEVANCE
2. How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?	EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS
3. How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts?	IMPACT
4. To what extent will the interventions continue past the handover of the school feeding project?	SUSTAINABILITY

92. The evaluation utilized a quasi-experimental design with difference-in-difference methodology (using the FY17 baseline data available to the team). ET used a stratified random sample of schools under treatment and comparison groups. Unlike the midterm review wherein telephonic means of data collection were employed, this endline evaluation conducted in-person data collection activities from February to May 2023.

#### Data collection

93. Given the limited timeframe between quantitative and qualitative data collection phases due to national holidays in Lao PDR in April, the workshop and subsequent review and finalization of qualitative data collection tools and sampling framework took place over a strict two-week period [the sampling framework is included in [Annex 3](#). All qualitative data was coded using Dedoose. The codebook was based on the evaluation matrix and coded data was checked for inter-rater reliability.

94. **Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions:** Interviews were conducted with stakeholders, including WFP, education officials, NGOs, UN agencies, and government representatives. Focus groups involved Village Development Committees, teachers, village leaders, and cooks/storekeepers. Qualitative data complemented quantitative analysis, explored lessons learned, and provided in-depth perspectives on project goals, rightsholders, and government priorities.

95. **Surveys:** Designed based on baseline and mid-term data, surveys focused on beneficiary satisfaction and quantifiable indicators aligned with the project logframe. They gathered information on key performance indicators related to learning outcomes, education outcomes, and increased adoption of health and dietary practices. To enhance demographic information, particularly on disability status, the surveys were slightly adjusted by incorporating the Washington Group/UNICEF Child Functioning Module (CFM). At the heart of children's survey was an instrument for Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA), which helps to understand the progress made in student learning outcomes attributable to the program. This instrument was administered to measure oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, letter recognition, and phonemic awareness, among other skills predictive of future reading success. Classroom observations were conducted to triangulate findings.

96. **Fieldwork Observations:** Direct observations of rightsholders and facilities validated results and examined the impact of gender roles, community norms, and beliefs on project implementation. Observation checklists were incorporated into focus group discussions for standardized data collection.

<sup>69</sup> Evaluation questions are unchanged from the inception phase.

## Sampling

97. For quantitative data collection, the DeftEdge team applied a stratified random sampling of schools, as requested in the ToR. The relevant strata were defined based on the approach followed in previous rounds and the groups/units for which conclusions want to be reached (e.g., small vs. large schools, remote vs. non-remote, etcetera). Guided by the ToR and insights gathered from inception meetings, A sample of 20<sup>70</sup> intervention schools and 5 comparison schools were selected across all 8 provinces. Overall, a total of 432 school-aged children (50% girls), 424 parents, 24 directors, 24 teachers, 19 cooks, and 19 storekeepers were randomly selected to participate in the survey. In total, 942 individuals were surveyed<sup>71</sup>.
98. The following groups/subgroups were identified for inclusion in the quantitative surveys:
- **Group 1:** schools that did not have school feeding activities during the project life cycle (comparison group).
  - **Group 2:** schools that were subject to the intervention. Within this overall treated group, several subgroups were defined and systematically compared (e.g., schools handed over in the first phase; schools handed over in the second phase).
99. This approach allowed the systematic comparison of outcomes across the comparison group (Group 1) and the comparison group (Group 2). In addition to the overall effect of the intervention, other secondary effects were identified by contrasting the outcomes across types of treated schools (handed over in the first phase versus the second; and should this variation exist, duration under the program). In other words, different counterfactuals can be defined for different beneficiaries and schools to examine the impact not only of the project as a whole, but also of variations in implementation among treated units. Overall, the main goals were to ensure that a) inferences can be drawn about the effects of the intervention for the populations of interest; and b) the data collected at this stage of the project can be measured against the baseline evaluation to allow for comparison of quantitative results over time.

**Table 5. Sample of schools per province and district**

Province	District	Type of school
Phongsaly	Bounnua	1. Arpaakhor (intervention)
		2. Huoilou (intervention)
		3. Lak70 (intervention)
		4. Panghouck (intervention)
	Phongsaly	5. Nongkinnarli (intervention)
Louangnumtha	Viengphoukha	6. Viengmai (Lar vaa) intervention

<sup>70</sup> \*The school located in Lakhonephen, Saravan District, turned out to be an FY20 school and, therefore, had not been handed over to the government. As a result, the school was excluded from all indicator calculations. Consequently, despite visiting 20 intervention schools and 5 non-intervention schools, the total count (N) is 19. All interviewees from that specific school have been excluded from calculations as well. This exclusion is necessary as the school does not represent the FY2017 project.

<sup>71</sup> Even though fewer schools were selected in line with the budget in the terms of reference, the schools were chosen carefully to represent the population accurately keeping in view factors such as language, distance to the road, ethnicity, etc. More importantly, number of students participating in the survey (432) was well-above the required sample size of 360 (a population size of 140,000 at a 95% confidence level, the margin of error is 5%) and representative of the larger student population.

	Sing	7. Narmmay intervention
	Long	8. Dankarng (intervention) 9. Mueangkharn (intervention) 10. Namhii (non intervention)
<b>Louangphabang</b>	Nan	11. Thongchalern (Non-intervention)
	Phonthong	12. Namai (intervention)
	Phonthong	13. Thongsy (intervention)
<b>Oudomxai</b>	Xai	14. Chanmai (intervention)
	Xai	15. Donena (intervention)
	Houn	16. Mounmaunng (intervention)
	Beng	17. Pangmeng (intervention)
<b>Attapue</b>	sanxay	18. Tadsang (intervention)
<b>Sekong</b>	Dukchueng	19. Darkdin (intervention)
	Kaluem	20. Ka ouang (Non-intervention)
<b>Saravan</b>	Laongarm	21. Lavad (intervention)
	Lakhonepheng <sup>*72</sup>	22. Lak94 (intervention)
<b>Khammouan</b>	Mahaxai	23. Nakham (Non-intervention)
	Nakai	24. Nakaytai (intervention)
		25. Sobon (Non-intervention)

### Students' random selection method during quantitative data collection

100. Prior to conducting the randomization, the team leader, along with the principal, made a list of all students in the school for sampling. The local team used "systematic random sampling" to randomly select students in each school after forming a list of all students and a list of male and female students in each school. From the male and female student list, they randomly selected 9 students from each list to complete a quota of 18 students per school, following these steps. First, they listed the students from 1 to the maximum number, which was equal to the total number of male or female students. Then, they selected 9 students as samples by dividing the total student number by 9. The resulting division was rounded down, and this rounded number became the "selection interval."

101. For example, if there were 25 male or female students, the interval would be 2 ( $25/9 = 2.7$ , rounded down to 2); if there were 50 male or female students, the interval would be 5 ( $50/9 = 5.5$ , rounded down to 5). Next, the principal was asked to choose a number from the student list (ranging from 1 to the maximum number), which would serve as the starting point for student selection. For instance,

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<sup>72</sup> \*The school located in Lakhonephen, Saravan District, turned out to be an FY20 school and, therefore, had not been handed over to the government. As a result, the school was excluded from all indicator calculations. Consequently, despite visiting 20 intervention schools and 5 non-intervention schools, the total count (N) is 19. All interviewees from that specific school have been excluded from calculations as well. This exclusion is necessary as the school does not represent the FY2017 project.

if the principal chose 18 from the student numbers 1 to 25, and the calculated interval was 2, the selected student numbers would be as follows: the first student (SD) would be  $18+2 = 20$ , the second SD would be  $20+2 = 22$ , and so on, until 9 students were selected. In cases where the calculated number exceeded the total student number, they subtracted the calculated number from the total student number, and the subtraction result became the next selected student at the beginning of the list. For example, if the 3rd SD was 24 and the interval was 2, but the total student number was 25, they subtracted 25 from 24, resulting in the 4th SD being 1 (the first SD number in the list). Consequently, the 5th SD would be  $1+2 = 3$ , the 6th SD would be  $3+2 = 5$ , and so on, until 9 students were selected. Furthermore, if there were fewer than 9 female students in the school, the survey team would interview all female students, and the remaining quota of female students would be added to the male quota to complete the total of 18 students in that school.

### Sampling for the qualitative data collection

102. The sampling (phase 3) was purposive and highly dependent on emergent findings from the quantitative data analysis. Using the demographic data collected in phase 2, the sample ensured to include diverse beneficiaries of the project's activities (considering age, sex, disability and socioeconomic factors), as well as duty bearers across targeted districts and national and subnational levels, and other related data sources identified in the inception and data collection phases.
103. **Key informant Interviews and focus group discussions:** ET conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders, including the WFP country office and field offices, district and provincial education officials, relevant local and international NGOs and UN agencies, and central government officials and other stakeholders. In addition, focus groups are tentatively proposed to be conducted with Village Development Committees, teachers, village leaders and cooks and storekeepers.
104. Qualitative data was collected with the purpose of deepening and expanding understanding of results obtained from quantitative analysis, as well as for highlighting lessons learned and case studies representative of the interventions. This provided in-depth, disaggregated analysis of a specific activity or outcome, such as increased use of health and dietary practices or highlighting specific schools. The KIIs and FGDs also provided in-depth information on the relevance of the project goals and activities to rightsholders and the Government of Lao PDR priorities and needs, the coherence of actions with other actors operating in this context, as well as in-depth perspectives on the project's effectiveness, sustainability and integration of protection, gender equity and human rights considerations in the design and implementation in Lao PDR. With community-level beneficiaries, they sought to understand to what extent the activities presented better opportunities to improve dietary diversity of boys and girls as well as school enrolment, attendance, and literacy and any other learning outcomes or any negative influences. Most notably, all interviews and FGDs provided insights on the handover process and its facilitating and hindering factors.
105. **Fieldwork observations:** Direct observations of rightsholders in different groups, of constructed/rehabilitated facilities, facilitated the further triangulation and validation of results. They provided insights into how gender roles, gender relations, community norms and beliefs affect project implementation and results. Observation checklists were integrated into focus group discussion protocols to standardize data collection.
106. The sample below was finetuned based on factors such as geographical location and distance to school locations, household income, status and size, and other demographic factors to understand potential disparities in access, satisfaction and outcome achievement, to the extent that data is available. These demographic factors were important, especially since the project adopted take-home rations, thus household size may have influenced food availability and subsequently dietary diversity of children when consumed at home versus in the school setting. Such factors can be assessed with appropriate and planned disaggregation.

**Table 6 Final sample for Quantitative Data Collection**

Group	Treatment	Comparison	Total
Schools	19 <sup>73</sup>	5	24
Students	342	90	432
Parents	342	82	424
Directors	19	5	24
Teachers	19	5	24
Cooks	19	0	19
Storekeepers	19	0	19
<b>TOTAL surveyed individuals</b>			942

**Table 7 Final sample for Qualitative Data Collection**

KII by stakeholder type	Total	Male	Female
WFP Lao PDR	19	10	9
WFP HQ	2	0	2
Bangkok Regional Bureau (WFP Bangkok)	4	0	4
International Non-governmental organization (INGO)	8	7	1
<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Group KII by stakeholder type</b>			
Provincial Level (6)			
Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)	6	4	2
Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS)	6	3	3
Provincial Health Office (PHO)	6	2	4
District Level- 6			
District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO)	6	1	5
District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB)	6	3	3
District Health Office (DHO)	6	4	2
<b>Group Key Informant Interviews (14)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>FGD by stakeholder type</b>			
Focus Group Discussion (11)			
LWU, VEDC and Cook	38	16	22
Teachers and Directors	31	14	17
Farmers	10	4	6
<b>Focus Group Discussion (11)</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Total Stakeholders</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>80</b>

<sup>73</sup> As explained above on the sample description the school located in Lakhonephen, Saravan District, turned out to be an FY20 school and, therefore, had not been handed over to the government. As a result, the school was excluded from all indicator calculations. Consequently, despite visiting 20 intervention schools and 5 non-intervention schools, the total count (N) is 19. All interviewees from that specific school have been excluded from calculations as well. This exclusion is necessary as the school does not represent the FY2017 project.

## Data analysis

107. ET used difference-in-difference methodology for assessing causal contribution of the project to the intended results outlined in the revised theory of change. This multivariate regression methodological approach allowed the team to estimate the effect of the intervention while controlling for other factors that may have a bearing on the results. It also allowed ET to test assumptions and validity of the constructed theory of change. All findings were triangulated using multiple data sources and methods. Detailed description of methods and tools utilized for data analysis is provided in [Annex 3](#).
108. **Mainstreaming of gender, equity and inclusion in the evaluation design:** ET ensured that human rights, gender, equity and inclusion were taken into account in all aspects of the evaluation, including data collection, analysis, and reporting. In the inception phase, an evaluability assessment was conducted to begin to assess the extent of integration into the program design. In terms of gender-related results, it was determined that no clear and purposeful gender and social inclusion analysis had been conducted in the design of the intervention activities, nor clear mainstreaming of gender into the activities, expected outcomes or performance indicators. As such, there was not any 'baseline' data from which to compare the extent to which the intervention contributed to gender outcomes. This is largely due to the structure of McGovern-Dole logical frameworks, which are mostly uniform across countries despite contextual variations. Sex disaggregated is available on beneficiaries, placing the majority of the results as 'gender-targeted' according to the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.<sup>74</sup>
109. As such, specific questions were included in data collection instruments to gather information on GEWE. For identifying broader equity-related issues that go beyond numerical equality, evaluators coded and analyzed qualitative data for specific indicators. Disaggregated data collected during the quantitative surveys on gender and age were used to select the sample for qualitative data collection, further exploring possible gender equality and empowerment outcomes.
110. The evaluation not only prioritized gender sensitivity in data collection but also ensured a gender-balanced team was involved in the process. By assembling a diverse team comprising both male and female members, the assessment aimed to promote a balanced representation and perspective throughout the data collection activities. Prior to the commencement of data collection, enumerators were trained on gender-sensitive data collection ethics and considerations. Respondents were also assured of confidentiality and informed consent in the data collection process.

## Ethical considerations

111. WFP decentralized evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. The evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.
112. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with international evaluation standards including the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) principles and guidelines. Additionally, the evaluation was guided by WFP's latest Gender Policy (2015-20) and ensured to integrate principles of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) into the methodology, tools, and data analysis and reporting techniques used to ensure the participation, protection, and privacy of participants (women, girls, boys, men, persons with disabilities, and other groups). For detailed description of ethical considerations followed by ET see [Annex 3](#).

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<sup>74</sup> INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE. (n.d.). The Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES): A Methodology Guidance Note. [http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/gender/GRES\\_English.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/gender/GRES_English.pdf)

113. The most recurrent challenges identified during data collection are summarized in Table 8. Limitations and mitigation strategies

**Table 8. Limitations and mitigation strategies**

Limitation	Mitigation Strategy
Students were absent because their parents travelled to work on farms and their return dates were uncertain.	Students were replaced in the sample. See <a href="#">Annex 3</a> for sampling strategy of students.
Students were absent due to specific situations such as illness, being a monk, already dropped out school or being too shy/refusing to participate in the interview.	
Gaps in the available monitoring data concerning Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).	The evaluation team extended its efforts to gather extensive primary data related to GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) in order to address the gaps in available monitoring data
Children and parents/caregivers belong to a non- Lao speaking ethnic group.	The use of a local translator was required during interviews to overcome this barrier.
Timeline for the qualitative data collection had to be pushed back due to logistical challenges.	ET worked overtime to stay on track.
An exact methodology used by the baseline evaluation team was not available for all indicators. Similarly, there were significant gaps in monitoring data and inconsistency in the way the baseline measured and reported on specific indicators relative to the expectations of the indicator and target (e.g., numbers were intended to be measured, but percentages were).	In such cases, ET re-computed the indicators for baseline to be comparable with those at the endline. In other words, reported results use same method for both baseline and endline indicators. The ET consolidated all available monitoring data to provide the most accurate picture of project progress.

## 2. Evaluation findings

### 2.1 RELEVANCE

**How relevant and influential has the project been with regard to the Government of Lao PDR's current and future plans in school feeding?**

#### Finding 1.

- The McGovern-Dole program aligns with WFP Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) and the Government of Lao PDR's policies and priorities related to education, school feeding, health and nutrition, contributing to improved food security, learning outcomes, and community-driven service delivery in vulnerable areas.
- The program's focus on capacity strengthening and transition of schools towards a government-led school feeding program aligned with and contributes to the government's goal to become a middle-income country by 2026.
- However, the design, in terms of its broad focus and limited budget on literacy as well as specific strategic gaps related to sustainable food procurement and delivery, would benefit from further adaptations to align with national policy and contexts and the ultimate goal of creating a government-led program.

**EQ1.1. To what extent did the project design and implementation, including its capacity strengthening activities, align with the Government of Lao PDR's policies, plans, strategies and priorities related to school feeding, school health and nutrition, sector specific [depending on the objectives of the NSMP] and national-level development commitments?**

114. The relevance criterion guides the assessment of alignment of the USDA McGovern-Dole 2017 award to WFP's CSPs (2017 – 2021 and 2022 – 2026) as well as with policies and priorities of the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) relating to school feeding, health and nutrition, and sector-specific and national development commitments.

115. The WFP CSP reflects Lao PDR's goal to graduate from the LDC category<sup>75</sup> in 2026, thus emphasizing throughout interventions, partnerships, priorities and targets to build capacity and enhance local ownership; in the context of school feeding, this involves reducing direct food transfers with the aim of handing over traditional WFP assistance to the GoL.<sup>76</sup> Alignment and relevance of McGovern-Dole has been consistently assessed across the baseline and mid-term evaluations, as well as recently analyzed in depth through the Lao PDR Policy Analysis for WFP Regional School Feeding Implementation Plan 2020 – 2030, which aims to define entry points for promoting a well-integrated and sustainable school health, nutrition and school feeding program.

116. One significant challenge encountered during the transition process was the disparity in modality between the project and NSMP. The former relies on in-kind contributions, while the latter follows a cash-based approach. As a result, communities continued to implement the in-kind model until the actual handover, with a limited understanding of the forthcoming cash-based model that was to be implemented post-handover. Additionally, the project provides guidance on food basket, including core items and fresh supplements. Moreover, it incorporates a broader range of activities, such as literacy, WASH, and support for school gardens, which are not explicitly mentioned in the NSMP.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, the NSMP lacks specific guidance in this regard, which can potentially limit its effect.

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<sup>75</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Economic Analysis, LAO PDR, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category-lao-peoples-democratic-republic.html>

<sup>76</sup> WFP Lao FY17 McGovern-Dole – Full Proposal

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

117. The evaluation found that the project activities are in alignment with the WFP Lao PDR CSPs (2017–2021 and 2022–2026). The baseline evaluation specifically confirmed the alignment with the strategic outcomes of the first CSP (2017–2021), whereas the mid-term evaluation confirms alignment with both the first CSP and the subsequent CSP (2022–2026). As outlined in the mid-term evaluation, CSP (2017–2021) is underpinned by three out of the four strategic outcomes: i) School children in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021 (SO1), ii) Stunting rates among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet nation targets by 2025 (SO2), and iii) National and local governance institutions are strengthened to ensure improves service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas (SO4).
118. The project contributed towards SO1 by implementing the school meals program. Whereas for SO2, it contributed by improving awareness on nutrition and addressing feeding practices. Additionally, by collaborating with government departments at various levels and enhancing their capacities to improve service delivery, it also contributes towards SO4. The project's capacity strengthening efforts and transition activities also align with the broader shift in WFP's strategy towards policy level engagements and capacity development, as emphasized in the CSP (See [Annex 7](#) for details).
119. The evaluation found the project to be consistent with the government's agenda, policies, and instruments. This alignment was also verified at the baseline and midterm stages. Similarly, the project aligns directly with SO1 of the CSP (2022–2026) by supporting school meals programs and facilitating the transition to a sustainable NSMP. It contributes to SO1 by improving food security, nutrition, and learning outcomes through the NSMP by 2026. Desk review and interviews confirm that McGovern-Dole activities, including providing nutritious meals, promoting community involvement in food supply and cooking, conducting awareness campaigns, and training cooks, have significantly contributed towards SO2 of the CSP. [Annex 8](#) provides detailed information the project's alignment and linkages with relevant government policies and instruments.
120. It is important to note that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project continued to remain highly relevant. Travel restrictions severely impacted both WFP staff as well as school going children, causing a major disruption in regular school feeding activities.<sup>78</sup> To address these challenges, WFP made a strategic shift to providing take-home rations to some children. This adaptive response aimed at fulfilling the nutritional needs of the most in-need school-going children and their families during the period of lockdown. To ensure fair and efficient targeted distribution, the WFP involved school principals in the process, ensuring that the rations reached the children who needed them most.
121. Although the World Bank is in the process of helping the country set up a social safety net registry,<sup>79</sup> Lao PDR currently lacks a comprehensive social safety net. There have been some initiatives for pregnant and lactating women, but school feeding programs such as NSMP and WFP projects are need to provide social protection. In fact, these programs currently serve as the largest initiative for providing some food security for households with school-going children.
122. The project's activities were designed to be highly relevant for addressing various challenges<sup>80</sup> in Lao PDR. By ensuring children have access to nutritious meals during school hours, the program helps alleviate the economic burden on vulnerable households, freeing up resources for other essential needs and reducing food insecurity. Additionally, the program plays a crucial role in promoting dietary diversity and knowledge about nutrition by incorporating curriculum development on nutrition and school agriculture.

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<sup>78</sup> Studies have shown that COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the economic activity in Lao PDR. For example, Jingyi et al. (2021) found that the pandemic led to unprecedented reduction in economic activity in southeast Asian countries including Lao PDR, which necessitated policy interventions to prevent workers and businesses from falling deeper into poverty. Specifically on educational outcomes, Kuhfield et al. (2020: p. 549) estimated that returning students were expected to “start fall 2020 with approximately 63 to 68% of the learning gains in reading and 37 to 50% of the learning gains in mathematics relative to a typical school year” and that this impact “was not universal, with the top third of students potentially making gains in reading.”

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/loans-credits/2020/03/30/lao-pdr-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-project>

<sup>80</sup> See context section for details.

123. Multiple stakeholders underlined the importance of school feeding activities of the project and NSMP for reducing school dropout rate in Lao PDR. These stakeholders emphasized that school feeding incentivized parents to send their children to schools more regularly. School feeding also increases motivation to study in the classroom, which in turn is expected to lead to improved attention and learning outcomes across schools.<sup>81</sup> Thus, the project and NSMP work hand-in-hand to align with national priorities on increasing literacy and investing in education for developing human capital in the country.
124. Despite progress, 70% of eligible children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and remote areas, do not yet have access to early childhood education programs. Lao PDR also faces low learning outcomes and high repetition and dropout rates in primary grades.<sup>82</sup> A 2017 Learning Assessment conducted by the MoES, found that one in three Grade 3 students met literacy standards for promotion to Grade 4<sup>83</sup> and the 2019 Southeast Asia assessment showed that students were not mastering reading, writing, math skills they need to learn at Grade 5.<sup>84</sup>
125. In 2021, UNICEF and the MoES collaborated on a 'Positive Deviance' study to identify how highly effective schools were able to perform despite shared challenges. Key drivers of performance included teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills,<sup>85</sup> higher levels of teacher support, collaboration and participation in decision-making processes, and higher levels of engagement of parents by teachers and principals on student assessment and progress.<sup>86</sup> In the same study, teachers across all schools expressed a need for more professional development opportunities.
126. Under strategic outcome 1, the project aimed to improve the quality of literacy instruction through training of teachers (USD \$60,000 budgeted) and the provision of literacy and instruction materials (USD \$10,000 budgeted) and books for school children (USD \$845,484 budgeted). Literacy promotion activities were primarily facilitated by cooperating partners in specific provinces, including Big Brother Mouse (Luang Prabang, Phongsaly, Luang Namtha), Plan International (Saravan) and Room to Read (Attapeu), and consisted of the development and/or procurement and distribution of over 300,000 storybooks, initiation of reading clubs and classroom libraries, and trainings for over 2,300 teachers and school administrators in pedagogical methods such as story-telling, games, production and use of local materials, supporting group discussions, as well as classroom library management.<sup>87</sup>
127. Based on the stakeholder interviews, FGDs and survey responses, the ET found that provision and availability of books in school libraries, as well as the establishment of reading rooms, helped improve reading culture among children. However, concerns were raised about the sustainability of the literacy aspect due to limited funding capacity of the government. On a more optimistic note, some stakeholders shared that there are model schools that have been able to continue promoting literacy independently. These schools can serve as examples for others on how to manage reading rooms and sustain the literacy aspect on a self-sufficient basis.
128. In terms of persons with disabilities, regular schools commonly lack their presence, and specialized schools cater to their needs. Limited accessibility infrastructure and inadequate support hinder the education of persons with disabilities. The project primarily supports with food the two schools, equipped to support disabled children, but further inclusion measures and support are necessary,

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<sup>81</sup> Prior studies (e.g., Ainley & Luntley, 2007) show that better attention in classroom leads to better learning outcomes. Such studies are in line with the design of school feeding activities for increasing attention.

<sup>82</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). EDUCATION. Every Child Has the Right to Go to School and Learn.

<https://www.unicef.org/laos/education>

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF. (January 2021). What makes a good school? <https://www.unicef.org/laos/stories/what-makes-good-school>

<sup>84</sup> UNICEF and SEAMEO, SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report: Children's learning in 6 Southeast Asian countries, Bangkok, Thailand: UNICEF and SEAMEO, 2020.

<sup>85</sup> Lao PDR MoES, UNICEF Lao PDR, and UNICEF Office of Research–Innocenti (2022). Policy Brief 1: Investing in Teacher Capacity – the Key to Effective Learning. Positive Deviance Research in Lao PDR.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Data extracted from implementing partner reports and monitoring data, though ET note variance in quality and accuracy across monitoring reports.

such as addressing accessibility challenges with resources, like wheelchairs and more accessible literacy materials.

129. Overall, key stakeholders across categories agreed that the project has been highly relevant for improvement of health and nutritional outcomes for school going children and their communities in general. As nutrition has been shown to lead to better long-term learning outcomes<sup>88</sup>, this in turn implies that the project is highly relevant for that purpose as well.

**EQ1.2. To what extent was the handover of the schools implemented in accordance with plans, coherent strategy and capacity of the national stakeholders?**

130. In Asia and Pacific, WFP's level of engagement in school feeding programs varies significantly in terms of size, scale, and scope. This variation includes activities such as direct implementation in schools that are not covered by national programs, augmenting government-provided meals with extra food items, and offering technical support for various aspects of school feeding. In Lao PDR, WFP's role is classified as 'Role 2C', involving both downstream direct implementation and upstream capacity strengthening to transition/handover with an active plan.<sup>89</sup>

**Figure 9. WFP roles in school feeding programs**

Role 1	Role 2A	Role 2B	Role 2C	Role 2D	Role 3
Operational support in fragile context	Operational support or technical assistance to localized government-led initiatives  (no national programme)	Package of operational support and capacity strengthening  (national programme being established)	↓ direct implementation ↑ support to transition  (national programme with active transition/handover plan)	Enhancements through pilots/ capacity strengthening  (established national programme)	Consolidation and strengthening of national programme

Source: WFP. Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau Implementation Plan 2021 – 2025

131. After 16 years of direct assistance, MoES and WFP developed a School Feeding Handover Plan in accordance with the national priority of promoting school meals and implementing a phased approach.

132. The primary objective of the handover plan was to establish a national school meals program fully funded and managed by the government, in alignment with the 2014 National Policy promoting School Lunch. In the initial phase of handover, despite WFP's efforts to build the capacity of the MoES, various challenges related to MoES's capacity existed. These challenges included limited government capacity to assuming program management responsibilities, the decentralization process<sup>90</sup>, and the government's financial capabilities to sustain the program. Consequently, WFP shifted its focus to strengthening capacity within the community, including VEDCs, local authorities, school staff, and parents. This was done specifically to ensure the eventual sustainability of the school meals by communities. The decentralization process also led WFP to specifically target provincial and district education offices for capacity strengthening.<sup>91</sup> However, this shift to focus on the local levels and communities rather than continuing to work towards national capacity to sustain the NSMP seems largely driven by prescribed timeline for the handover rather than a clear readiness

<sup>88</sup> Lundborg, Rooth & Borg (2022), for example, showed that the school lunch program in Sweden generated substantial long-term benefits, where students exposed to the program during their entire primary school period had 3% higher lifetime income. The effect was greater for students that exposed at earlier ages and those from poor households, suggesting that the program reduced socioeconomic inequalities in adulthood. Similarly, Sorhaindo & Feinstein (2006) showed that the diet of children has not potential long-term health repercussions, but also immediate effects on their physical and mental health and consequently their school experience and attainment.

<sup>89</sup> School Feeding Evaluation Questions: Guidance Note Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

<sup>90</sup> "Decentralization" refers to the focus on provincial and district levels of governance, as the ultimate goal was to transfer the management to the local level. Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR

<sup>91</sup> Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR

at the national level; with limited time and a national program highly dependent on community contributions, the focus prematurely shifted to community roles in the program's sustainability (which will be reviewed in more detail throughout the report).

**Figure 10. MoES - WFP Handover Timeline with key milestones Handover Plan**



Source: USDA FY19 Semi-Annual Report WFP School Lunch Program, April-Sep. 2019.

133. In 2017, the MoES, WFP, and MCF also conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the WFP-supported SFP and the cash-based NSMP to evaluate their economic impact and to advocate for allocation of government funds towards provision of ongoing meals. Findings of the analysis showed that for every USD 1 invested, the cash-based modality resulted in a return of USD 5, while the food-based modality yielded a return of USD 6.10 over the beneficiary's lifetime.<sup>92</sup>

134. Two other significant findings also emerged from the cost-benefit analysis exercise. First, it was observed that children receiving school lunches stayed in school for an additional year compared to those without access to such meals. Another notable finding was that communities in Lao PDR, on average, made in-kind contributions of vegetables, condiments, and labor equivalent to USD\$16 per child per year. This level of community engagement and contribution was one of the highest among countries where cost-benefit analyses were conducted.<sup>93</sup> This demonstrates both community commitment and buy-in to the model, as well as shows the level of financial strain the NSMP is placing on communities in a context where, in 2019, one-fifth of the population was living on less than \$1.1 dollar a day (despite general progress in reducing poverty rates).<sup>94</sup>

135. For the first phase handover, WFP also established a governance structure and coordination mechanism for the transition of the school meals program. This involved developing a Plan of Action and a corresponding timeline. Additionally, WFP provided additional field support such as recruiting community mobilizers at district level to assist and mobilize communities for school handovers. The support activities also included enhancing school infrastructure such as kitchens, handwashing stations, warehouses, storerooms, and establishment of school gardens.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> MoES, WFP, MasterCard (2018) Cost-Benefit Analysis of the School Meals Programs in Lao PDR.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> World Bank (2020). Lao People's Democratic Republic Poverty Assessment 2020: Catching Up and Falling Behind.

<sup>95</sup> Annex 8: Information about July 2019 handover. Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR

136.A collaborative work plan was established between the Government and WFP, covering all administrative tiers. This plan aimed to enhance the capabilities of national, provincial, and district levels, as well as communities through capacity strengthening investments. The plan included study visits and training sessions on various topics such as school lunch management, government investment in school meals, nutrition in food, and local diversity food processing in Thailand. Additionally, WFP provide technical assistance (e.g., guidelines on effective adaptation and management) to the GoL in developing seven legislations<sup>96</sup> to support the transition process.<sup>97</sup>

137.To assess the capacities of government stakeholders, the SABER-SF framework was used in 2015/16<sup>98</sup>, focusing on specific elements. Additionally, Community Capacity Assessments<sup>99</sup> were conducted as part of WFP's CSP 2017-21 to assess communities' readiness to manage school meal programs and identify the most capable communities for the first phase of handover to the government. To ensure a comprehensive assessment, the CCA tool was developed through an extensive desk review and FGDs with the community. It underwent field testing five times in collaboration with counterparts from the MoES and from the WB. This process ensured that the assessment tool captured relevant indicators and proxy variables to understand community capacity effectively.<sup>100</sup>

138.To prepare communities for the handover, WFP developed different support models tailored to the variations in communities identified resources and capacities. In collaboration with Lao Front for National Development (LNUF), WFP conducted cascade trainings for capacity strengthening at provincial, district, and village levels. Three support packages were developed based on community strength assessments to strengthen VEDCs, water infrastructure, and food availability and resilience<sup>101</sup>. In early 2019, WFP collaborated with MoES, PESS, and DEBS to conduct a community capacity readiness re-assessment in 229 out of the 515 communities scheduled for the first phase 2019 handover. The assessment found active community participation and regular in-kind contribution of fresh food for school lunches. The main challenge identified was ensuring program sustainability post-handover.<sup>102</sup>

**Figure 11. Handover Process and Design**



Source: USDA FY19 Semi-Annual Report WFP School Lunch Program 1 April to 30 September 2019.

139.To strengthen the government's capacity for the handover of school feeding programs, WFP organized study visits and training programs for government officials. These initiatives aimed to enhance their knowledge in school lunch management, nutrition, and food processing, with visits to Thailand and Sri Lanka to learn from successful programs. WFP also played a key role in facilitating workshops and meetings involving government officials, ministries, and international agencies.

<sup>96</sup> Legislations included: i. Minister's Decree on appointing National Committee for School Meals handover ii. Minister's Decree on appointing a provincial and District Committee for School Meals handover (completed in May and June 2018) iii. Minister's circular to 7 provincial governors on School Meals handover, circulated in August 2018. iv. School Meals Draft Take Over Plan v. Draft Prime Minister Decree on School Meals Financial vi. Two draft Guidelines on School Meals Finances at National Level and Budget Management at local level vii. Minister Directive on promoting School Gardening to practice nutrition education.

<sup>97</sup> USDA FY17 Semi-Annual Report WFP School Meals Program 1 April to 30 September 2018

<sup>98</sup> As mentioned in the consultancy document, in 2015-2016, a draft SABER-SF assessment was conducted by WFP Lao PDR and MOES to evaluate the government's capacity to implement school feeding and assume responsibility for WFP-supported schools. While the assessment results have not been officially reported or endorsed by MOES, they offer valuable insights into the capacity of MOES during that period.

<sup>99</sup> WFP (2018) Community Capacity Assessment (School Meal Program). October 2018.

<sup>100</sup> WFP Community Capacity Assessment 2017-18.

<sup>101</sup> USDA FY17 Semi-Annual Report WFP School lunch Program October 2018 to March 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid

These gatherings provided opportunities to share best practices, discuss policies, and coordinate efforts for the handover process. Collaborating closely with MoES, WFP developed the "Green Box" teaching materials to strengthen nutrition education in schools. Additionally, WFP supported MoES in developing a government plan for allocating funds and provided guidelines for smooth transition towards cash-based transfer model. Furthermore, WFP conducted high-level monitoring visits and assessments, involving senior government officials, to ensure the successful implementation of the handover. WFP also provided technical assistance in policy development, including revising the NSMP and participating in the review of the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action.

140. WFP also assisted in the technical aspects and budgeting for the Government's Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) operational manuals. Additionally, WFP supported preparations for training trainers and the target communities to ensure smooth transition to cash-based modality.<sup>103</sup> To support the integration of cash transfers for NSMP into the government's regular budget lines, WFP collaborated with the Government's senior staff and assisted MoES in improving the draft 2022 Prime Minister's Decree on school feeding.<sup>104</sup>

141. The Consultant Guidance Note for Country Office School Feeding and M&E Teams provides a list of recommended assessments to ensure a comprehensive capacity assessment. However, since the guidance was not available from WFP on transition until June 2022, some of these assessments were not carried out, resulting in gaps across certain levels of the system. Notably, there was a lack of assessment specifically addressing policy goal 3, which revealed deficiencies in institutional capacity and coordination. According to handover consultant documents only policy goals 1 and 5 had estimated established capacity.<sup>105</sup> This finding was also supported by stakeholder consultations, which identified gaps in institutional and financial capacity.

142. Drawing best practices and lessons from phase 1 of the handover process conducted in 2019, WFP conducted handover orientation workshops for the Phase II schools in July and August of 2019, two years ahead of the planned handover in mid-2021 to smoothly allow roll out packages of support during the 2019-2020 school year in response to identified needs. This ensured early preparation for successful handover for the Phase II schools.<sup>106</sup>

143. Overall, the handover strategy, although impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic was implemented in accordance with plans and the capacity of national stakeholders. Desk review as well as stakeholder perspectives reflected the efforts made to assess readiness, align program components with capacity needs, and address beneficiary needs. It is noteworthy that many handed over schools are providing meals to students, demonstrating the commitment of the community to sustain the NSMP under limited guidance. However, there were also identified areas for improvement, such as additional community-level assessments and more strategic capacity-building across levels with an eye towards sustainability, addressing challenges related to differences in the McGovern-Dole and NSMP modality, and ensuring clear expectations and ongoing support surrounding the roles and responsibilities of a post-handover NSMP run by the national government with some contributions from provincial counterparts and the community.

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<sup>103</sup> Source: USDA FY19 Semi-Annual Report WFP School Lunch Program 1 April to 30 September 2019

<sup>104</sup> WFP Lao PDR Country Brief June 2022

<sup>105</sup> Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR

<sup>106</sup> USDA FY19 Semi-Annual Report WFP School Lunch Program 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020

## 2.2 EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY

How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?

EQ2.1. To what extent did the project achieve its outcomes as stated in its results framework, including on capacity strengthening, national meal plans, health and nutrition practices and learning outcomes (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and other vulnerable groups, as relevant)?

### Finding 2.

- **The project has helped significantly bridge the gap between intervention and comparison schools in terms of enrollment, attendance, and attentiveness as comparison schools started off with higher enrollment, attendance and attentiveness at baseline. As a result, the differences between comparison and intervention schools had narrowed to be statistically insignificant, i.e., these schools exhibited comparable performance on these dimensions.**

144. This section reviews the key results observed through the various surveys under the project specific objectives 1 and 2 on key learning and health and nutrition outcomes, and the extent of change since the baseline study contrasted against comparison schools.

### *SO1 Intermediate Results: Improved quality of literacy instruction and improved student attentiveness and attendance*

145. Under strategic outcome 1, the project aimed to improve the quality of literacy instruction through training of teachers and the provision of literacy and instruction materials and books for school children; improving teacher attendance is also included as an outcome within the theory of change, and though falling outside of WFP's scope of work, progress on this indicator was measured at baseline (2017) and endline (2023).

146. In most cases, trainings on literacy instruction were designed as the 'train-the-trainer' methodology, with manuals for trained facilitators from PESS and DESB, and intent for PESS/DESB to continuously monitor and coach on teachers' application. Literacy interns were also engaged in Attapeu to further support schools in mono-linguistic ethnic communities with a shortage of teachers and low educational achievement; interns co-conducted literacy activities and were reported by partners to assist in building connections and coordination between teachers, principals, district education officers in DESB, and project staff.<sup>107</sup> Some partners specifically emphasized the procurement of inclusive storybooks, contracting external consultants and experts to analyze and develop content to ensure provided books, trainings and training manuals do not perpetuate negative and harmful stereotypes that reinforce gender inequalities and/or exclusion of particular groups, such as children with disabilities. While some storybooks were made more accessible through larger text, it was noted in partner interviews that improvements could be made to further assess different students' needs and fill accessibility requirements for persons with visual and sensory disabilities.

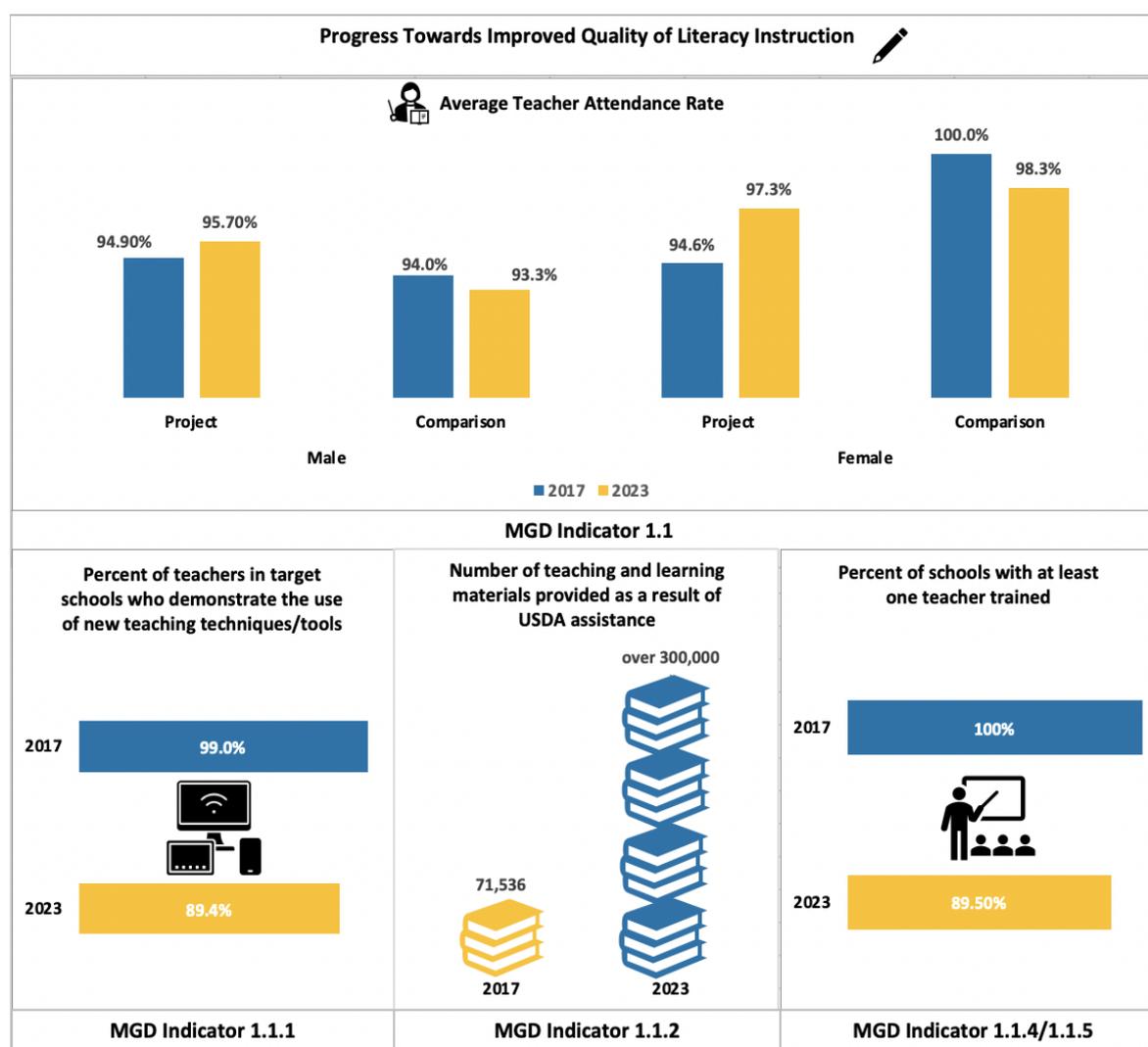
147. As a result of the distribution of inclusive storybooks and classroom libraries, implementing partner monitoring reports and interviews reported observable changes in children's learning habits, and teachers reported more enjoyment of their jobs given greater interest and involvement from children in learning. Partner reports indicated that children had borrowed books 14,326 times from newly established school libraries in Saravan and Attapeu provinces, which was reportedly an increase in borrowing and an indication of students' increased interest in learning.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Cooperating partner monitoring reports, 2020 - 2021

<sup>108</sup> The % increase in students borrowing books was included as an indicator across partner reports, however it was inconsistently measured; only some partners showed quantitatively the increased rate of borrowing, while others anecdotally reported an increase.

**Figure 12. Progress towards improved quality of literacy instruction outcomes and outputs**



148. As will be noted in subsequent sections, there were some challenges with the sustainability of the literacy activities. Notably, school closures and enhanced economic woes during the pandemic resulted in some significant changes and disruptions for households and schools, including attrition and turnover in teachers and reduced national quotas for hiring, varied levels of parental engagement in children’s learning, and reportedly lost learning gains. Though teacher attendance appeared to bounce back and remain similar to 2017 baseline levels, the intervention schools are generally operating in more unfavorable teaching conditions given WFP’s targeting strategy: only 26% of the intervention schools had separate classrooms for each grade as against 60% of comparison schools. In addition, while it is part of the national educational strategy for every school to have a library, interviewed partners noted that not all schools can implement or sustain it due to lack of funding. This was evidenced in the data: 31% of the intervention schools and 20% of the comparison ones reported to have a library or a bookstore.

*“Before [students] didn’t care about books but now they care about reading, even if it is newspapers.”*

*“I have noticed that there have been some changes during [the] second semester, if compared to October last year when the intervention started. Children are not the same now, they are trying to read after lunch. There is laughter and smiles in every corner now.”*

-Implementing partners.

149. Partners and teachers noted generally that training provided was not enough, both for trained trainers and teachers, as the one-off cascade training approach, given the varying skill levels of trainers across districts and the large number of training participants, provided insufficient time to fully absorb the content and expectations. Teachers themselves take on multiple roles, in addition to teaching multiple grades those interviewed also reported taking primary roles in managing purchases for the school meals and cooking, with little time to focus on improving literacy instruction or cascading lessons to others, instead highlighting how the provision of books has encouraged self-guided learning amongst students. As a result, 87.4%<sup>109</sup> of school directors reported that teachers in their school continue to demonstrate the use of new teaching and learning techniques; although high, it is a slight decrease from what was reported in 2017, showing diminishing return on trainings over time.

150. In addition, PESS and DESB, though eager to support and monitor, have insufficient resources to routinely monitor and maintain capacity levels for the large number of schools covered by the project. Given the constraints presented by context since 2019, the limited budget provided to improving literacy instruction through training of teachers (USD \$60,000 budgeted) and consequently the unsystematic method of training, it is not a surprise that there has been very little change in key expected performance indicators, such as teachers’ application of learning techniques, teacher attendance, and proportion of teachers.

**Figure 13. Picture of Library in Sanod primary school, Sangthong district of Vientiane capital**



The ET visited the library in Sanod primary school and found it stocked with the required books.

<sup>109</sup> The baseline survey reported this indicator as a percent, while the performance indicator target was a number (1,080). Available monitoring data on this indicator is also insufficient, primarily reporting on numbers trained rather than whether knowledge and techniques were applied.

**Table 9: Progress Towards MGD Indicator 1.2 – Improved Attentiveness**

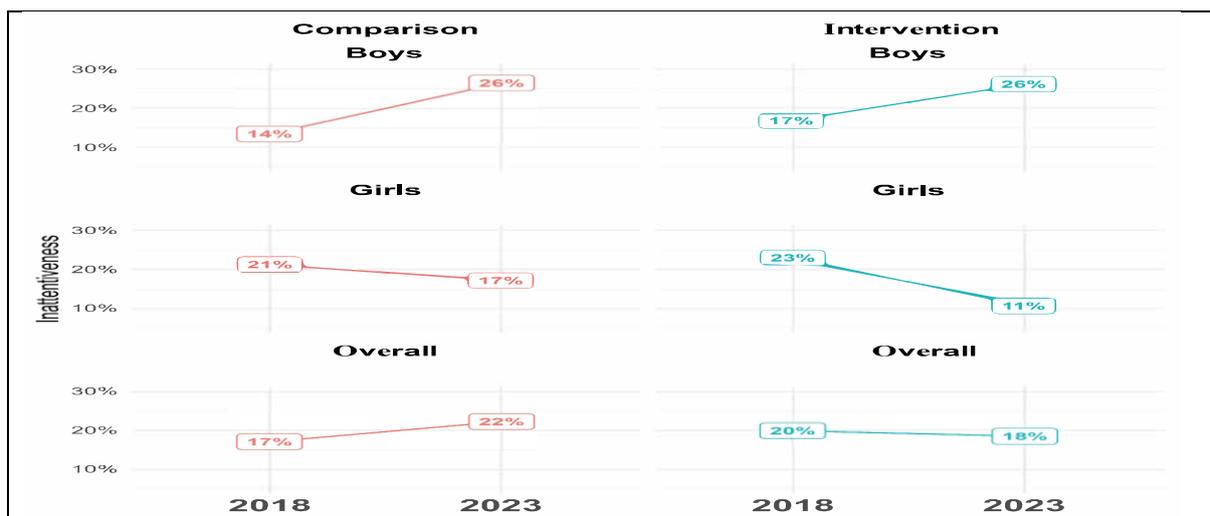
Result / Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Endline (2023)	Target
<b>MGD 1.2 Improved attentiveness</b> Percent of students in classrooms identified as inattentive by their teachers	Project: 19.8% Female: 22.9% Male: 16.9%	Project: 18.4% Female: 10.6% Male: 26.2%	<i>Inattentiveness decreased<sup>110</sup></i>
	Comparison: 17.1% Female: 21.2% Male: 13.5%	Comparison: 22.2% Female: 17.1% Male: 26.5%	
<b>MGD 1.2.1 Reduced short-term hunger*</b> / <b>MDG 1.2.1.1 Increased access to food</b> Number of schools provided school lunch every day for past 2 weeks	48.3% (28 schools of 58 sampled)	68.4% (13 schools of 19 sampled)	<i>Increase<sup>111</sup></i>
Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	138,790 <sup>112</sup>	131,227	<i>90% achievement (145,980)</i>

\* There is no indicator for the project on reduced short-term hunger in the performance measurement framework, though it is included as a short-term outcome. The ET has used ‘number of schools providing school lunch every day for the past 2 weeks’ as a proxy.

151. The importance of attentiveness to learning is well-recognized in prior research as well as evaluation studies.<sup>113</sup> In addition, respondents confirmed the importance of food and reduced hunger as drivers of attentiveness and attendance, which underlies the project’s theory of change. Since baseline, the proportion of schools providing school lunch every day in the past 2 weeks (from data collection) increased by 20%, showing progress towards addressing this gap.

*“I believe [school lunches are] useful for communities in rural and remote areas, helping them get out of poverty and providing nutrition for children who would struggle to study if they were hungry” –An implementing partner.*

**Figure 14. Percent of Inattentive Students: Baseline and Endline Teacher Surveys**



<sup>110</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Not presented in the baseline evaluation; measured through monitoring reports.

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Chen & Huang, 2014; Ainley & Luntley, 2007; Cicekci & Sadik, 2019; Au, So & Lee, 2016.

152. In the endline survey, teachers reported about 18.4% inattentive students in intervention schools as against 22.2% in comparison schools. Inattentiveness was reported to be less prevalent among girls (10.6%) than boys (26.2%) in comparison schools. This is not just an improvement over the baseline survey in which teachers had reported 19.8% of the students to be inattentive in intervention schools as against 17.1% in comparison schools, but also the improvement is entirely observable at intervention schools.<sup>114</sup> However, this difference in attentiveness across project and comparison schools was statistically insignificant ( $t=-0.78$ ,  $p<0.43$ ), i.e., there was no statistically meaningful difference among students in this regard across intervention and comparison schools, even after accounting for demographic factors such as ethnicity and language. Though not much statistical inference can be drawn from the data, it is fair to say that there was a small decline in attentiveness at comparison schools, while there was a small improvement at intervention schools.

153. Using the multivariate regressions, ET further explored differences across various categories. As seen in Figure 30 in the [Annex 10](#), none of the factors such as gender, ethnicity, grade and language that were considered to be important for improving attentiveness were found to be statistically significant. For example, though the attentiveness of girls appears to have improved (and that of boys declined) across both the project and comparison schools, these differences were not statistically meaningful across these groups. Interestingly, there were also no meaningful differences based on whether students had self-reported to have received enough food (or not). This could imply that the amount of food was not as significant as having received some food or that other factors besides food may also determine the level of attentiveness (e.g., pre-existing differences across intervention and comparison schools that were bridged via provisioning of food for students).

154. The qualitative exploration provided some clarifications in this regard. One WFP staff member and four provincial and district education, agriculture and health officers had observed an improvement in attentiveness and concentration among students. However, interviewed teachers and members of VEDCs and the LWU in Khammoune and Luang Prabang noticed gender differences in educational outcomes, which were primarily based on observations of attentiveness. It was believed that girls have better learning outcomes as they are more focused on studying, given they have less time for and interest in games and play; it was seen that boys have access to and frequently play on phones. Still, qualitative interviews emphasized realization of the overarching theory of school meals: With reduced absenteeism and improved concentration due to academic interest and immediate hunger resolved, students have better learning outcomes (cited in 10 interviews), including improved grades and literacy levels (explored further under ‘impact’ criterion).

**Table 10: Progress Towards MGD Indicator 1.3**

Result / Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Endline (2023)	Target
<b>MGD 1.3 Improved student attendance</b> Average attendance of students in USDA supported classrooms/ schools	Project: 73.3% Female: 75.5% Male: 71.4%	Project: 86.9% Female: 87.3% Male: 86.6%	<i>Increase</i> <sup>115</sup>
	Comparison: 65.0% Female: 69.7% Male: 60.6%	Comparison: 88.5% Female: 89.1% Male: 88.1%	
	Project: 8% Female: 5% Male: 11%	Project: 0% Female: 0% Male: 0%	<i>Decrease</i> <sup>117</sup>

<sup>114</sup> The results from the baseline survey may vary slightly because that survey asked two teachers if the student was inattentive for some students. They then summed-up the number of teachers that responded that a student was inattentive and then divided this number by the number of total students. With this calculation, they double counted some students if two teachers reported a student to be inattentive. As such, the endline recalculated the baseline value to make the indicators comparable.

<sup>115</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework, just a target on number of students regularly attending (target = 116,784)

<sup>117</sup> There is no target percent decrease in the project performance measurement framework.

<b>MGD 1.3.2 Reduced health-related absences<sup>116</sup></b> Repetition rate	Comparison: 5.5% Female: 6% Male: 5%	Comparison: 1.3% Female: 0% Male: 2.8%	
Reason for absence in the last one week	The baseline did not report the exact proportion of reporting health-related absences.	28.9% (35) of students who were absent at least one day in the last week, were absent to illness/health issues	N/A
<b>MGD 1.3.3 Improved school infrastructure</b> Percentage of schools with access to water for school gardens, cooking and WASH purposes.	Project: Garden – 66% Cooking – 76% Washing – 67%	Project: Garden – 83% Cooking – 79% Washing – 68%	<i>Increase<sup>118</sup></i>
Number of schools using an improved water source	20	Improved water connection: 206 schools	<i>28% achievement (740)</i>
Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	98	4,990	<i>199% achievement (2,510)</i>
<b>MGD 1.3.4 Increased student enrolment</b> Annual percent change in students enrolled in WFP-supported schools	Project: 1% Female: -1% Male: 3%	Project: 1% Female: 2.6% Male: 4.4%	<i>No change<sup>119</sup></i>
	Comparison: 14% Female: 13% Male: 15%	Comparison: 3.9% Female: 3.6% Male: 1.2%	
Average enrolment ratio of girls and boys at target schools	Project: 0.95 Comparison: 1.04	Project: 0.959 Comparison: 0.744	<i>No change<sup>120</sup></i>
Average drop-out rate	Project: 0.02% Female: 0.02% Male: .02% Comparison: 0.02% Female: 0.02% Male: 0.02%	Project: 0.5% Female: 0.2% Male: 0.7% Comparison: 0% Female: 0% Male: 0%	<i>No change<sup>121</sup></i>
<b>MGD 1.3.5 Increased community understanding of benefits of education.</b> Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar “school” governance structures supported	Baseline evaluation: 77.6% (45 of 58 schools sampled) Monitoring: n/a	Endline evaluation: 78.9% (15 of 19 schools sampled) Monitoring: 6,939	<i>120% achievement (5,784)</i>
Percent of parents in WFP-supported schools who can name at least three benefits of primary education	Project: 96% Female: 95.5% Male: 96.2% Comparison: 98.1% Female: 100% Male: 96.7%	Project: 67.5% Female: 68.6% Male: 66.2% Comparison: 65.9% Female: 64.3% Male: 69.25%	<i>Decrease<sup>122</sup></i>
Number of Community Volunteers supporting SFP	93.1% (54 schools of 58 sampled)	94.7% (18 schools of 19 sampled)	<i>Increase<sup>123</sup></i>
Value of new public and private sector investments leveraged as a result of USDA assistance	0	\$3,776,986.55 <sup>124</sup>	<i>45% achievement</i>

<sup>116</sup> There is no indicator for the project on reduced health-related absences, so there is no target and data presented were previously measured only in the baseline report

<sup>118</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework as this indicator was only measured at baseline as a ‘project-specific’ indicator.

<sup>119</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework as this indicator was only measured at baseline as a ‘project-specific’ indicator.

<sup>120</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework as this indicator was only measured at baseline as a ‘project-specific’ indicator.

<sup>121</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework as this indicator was only measured at baseline as a ‘project-specific’ indicator.

<sup>122</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework.

<sup>123</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework as this indicator was only measured at baseline as a ‘project-specific’ indicator. Calculated differently at baseline than indicator as well - Primary data here represents the number of schools that reported community contribution (in any form) for McGovern-Dole-SFP

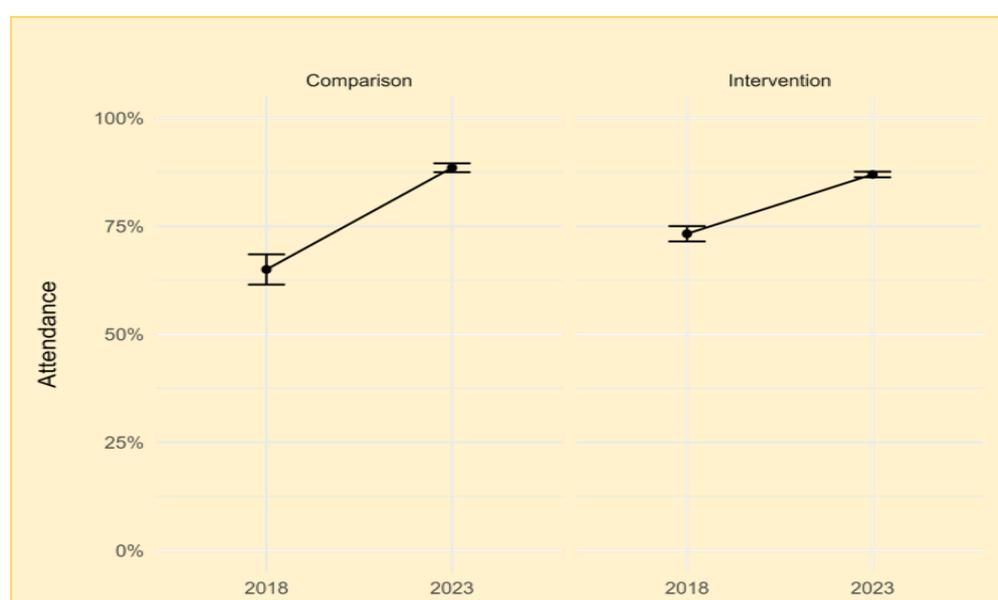
<sup>124</sup> Total estimated private (community) contributions from September 2018 to March 2022 in semi-annual reports



comparison was also found to be nearly identical and with statistically insignificant difference. The baseline did not report the exact proportion of reporting health-related absences, though it was noted as primary reason for absence. In addition, it is presumably a higher rate given the provided rates of absenteeism due to illness in the north (83%) and south (53%) are both higher than the overall average at endline (28.9%).

160. As attendance is one of the key drivers of school performance,<sup>126</sup> The project has targeted improved attendance as one of its goals. The baseline survey provided information on the average attendance rate and indicated that 73.3% (75.5% F, 71.4% M) regularly attended school as against 65.0% (69.7% F, 60.6% M) in the comparison group. It measured student attendance on the basis of fifteen randomly selected students from every sample school for the last academic semester. The endline survey also assessed the average attendance. It found a small, but statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) across intervention (86.9%) and comparison schools (88.8%). The evaluation also noted that the attendance had improved across both intervention and comparison schools as shown in Figure 16.<sup>127</sup>

**Figure 16. Observed attendance at intervention and comparison schools.**



161. As exemplified in the regression model in Figure 30 in the [Annex 10](#), the intervention appeared to have a positive effect on attendance, though its effect reduced in importance over time (as indicated by the negative interaction term). The statistically positive value on time indicates that there may either be an indication of a general and systematic trend towards increased attendance or other omitted variables also affect this relationship. One such factor that the evaluation noticed was the number of days the food was provided to students. The evaluation surveyed further showed that the attendance was higher when students received food on five days rather than four days in a week.

162. According to several stakeholders,<sup>128</sup> the project made it easier for parents to support their children's enrolment and attendance at school. Some parents were previously unable to send their children to school due to a lack of food at home. With the provision of school lunch and complemented by engaging literacy activities facilitated by teachers during mid-day and after school, students gained new interest in reading and learning. Caregivers simultaneously recognized the value of education, were relieved of some financial and parental responsibility of providing lunch,

<sup>126</sup> See, for example, Sekiwu, 2020; Stanca, 2006.

<sup>127</sup> As with attentiveness, the attendance indicator was re-calculated for baseline since information was only available for this outcome in the last week prior to the survey in comparison to the last months in the endline survey, making variance greater when calculating the percentage of students attending at least 80% of the classes.

<sup>128</sup> WFP staff and partners (4), school directors, teachers, and cooks (16), as well as national government representatives (2).

could now support their children's attendance. School directors across locations have reported that the meals led to increased enthusiasm and encouragement from parents for their children to attend school, which in turn resulted in improved enrolment and reduced absenteeism. Overall, the evaluation found robust evidence to indicate the project's intervention had a positive effect on student attendance in schools.

### ***SO 2 Intermediate Results: Improved health, hygiene and nutrition knowledge, practices and infrastructure***

#### **Finding 3.**

- **The project invested significantly in infrastructure as a critical step in supporting the institutionalization and sustainability of school feeding activities, including school-based gardens, kitchens and latrines.**
- **The focus on improved knowledge and infrastructure for nutrition and hygiene has resulted in increased awareness and practices to some extent.**
- **There is limited evidence on the extent to which these results will be sufficiently sustained and maintained in everyday routines and school processes, with already a decline in the operational WASH infrastructure and contributions of school gardens to meals in handed over schools.**

163. Poor sanitation facilities contribute to spread of diseases like worm infestations diarrhea and dehydration affecting not only child growth, but also their cognitive capacity and learning performance.<sup>129</sup> Underpinning the ToC and contributing to key objectives in the Plan of Action of School Meals Program 2016–2020 is a focus on improved knowledge and corresponding infrastructure to address basic nutrition, personal hygiene and environmental sanitation.

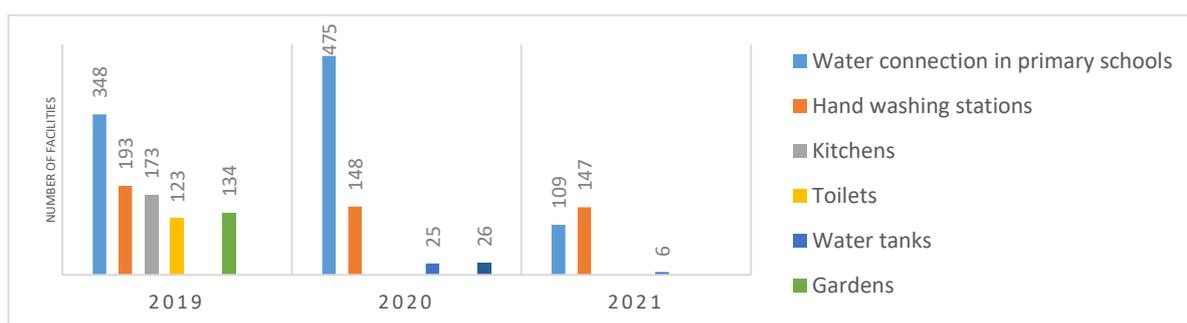
164. The project monitoring data showed that 69% (936/1360) schools had running water for cooking and washing in 2019, and that 70% of schools visited had running water all year round as WFP increased the number of water sources, especially at the schools in the northern provinces. From 2021-2022, though the original plan was to support only 240 schools with WASH in Phongsaly, Saranane and Attapeu provinces, WFP identified a more economical way of supporting WASH with community contribution of local materials and labor, extending WASH support to all 901 schools. The approach adopted relied on the community for contributing local materials and participating in voluntary labor efforts.

165. WFP continued to identify school facilities (kitchens, storerooms, dining rooms, handwashing stations and gardens) that were damaged or dysfunctional and provided the last round of construction materials to further rehabilitate and construct these facilities before the handover in 2021; by March 2022, 601 of the 669 schools had dining rooms. Infrastructure was noted through interviews as a critical strategy and input into the institutionalization and sustainability of school feeding activities.

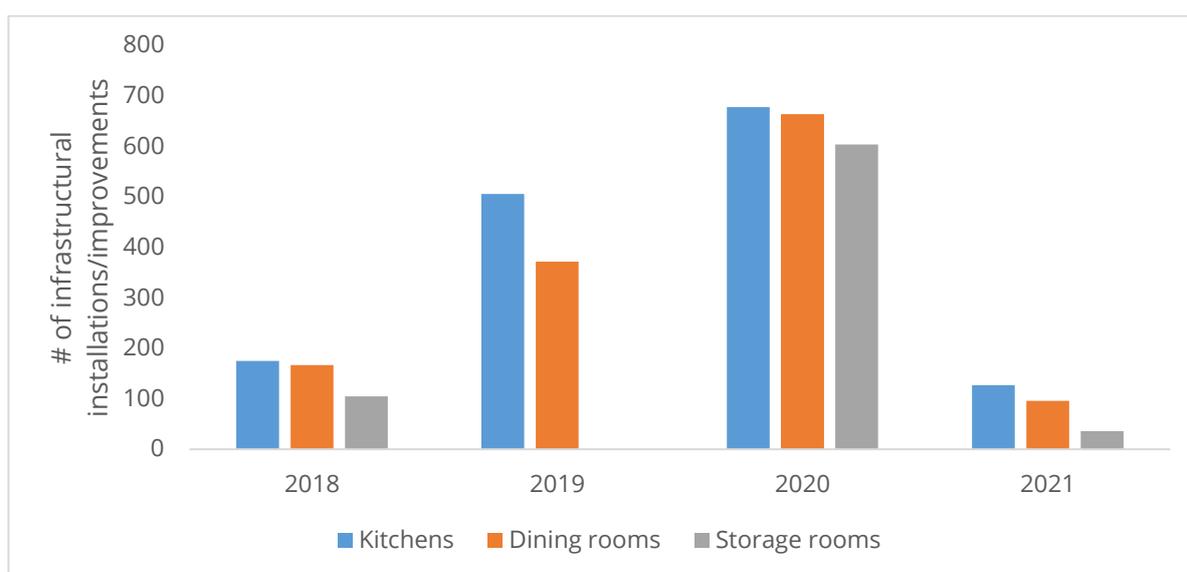
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<sup>129</sup> See, for example, Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; Gottfried, 2010; Jasper et al., 2012; Hoddinott et al., 2013; Schmidt, 2014. These studies provide robust evidence to show that children exposed to unsanitary food environments are affected in their cognitive, motor, and social-emotional development, which in turn affects their educational and subsequent economic performance. Grantham-McGregor et al. (2007) estimated that over 200 million children under 5 years were not fulfilling their developmental potential at the time of their study.

**Figure 17. Investments in School Infrastructure since 2018.**



**Figure 18. Improved school infrastructure (construction or rehabilitation) 2018-2021.**



Source: Own elaboration based on monitoring data (data available until Sep 2021).

166. However, further improvements are needed in areas such as toilet facilities and classroom infrastructure, as reported in evaluation surveys, with school infrastructure reportedly deteriorating or no longer functioning since its rehabilitation/construction. 53% of the school directors in intervention schools reported that their schools had toilets with functioning handwashing facilities as compared with 40% in the comparison schools. In the endline survey, the average number of total and functional toilets in intervention schools was reported to be 3.63 and 2.42 as against 2.8 and 1.8 in comparison schools (though the sample size was too small to calculate statistical significance). While 95% of intervention schools had food storage facilities either within (73%) or outside (22%) school premises, none of the comparison schools reported such facilities. 53% of these facilities had been built or rehabilitated with WFP support. While statistics are positive in terms of the comparison to non-intervention schools, they are still low given the investments made in schools.

167. One of the main challenges with maintaining and operating WASH facilities reported by schools was not with the infrastructure itself, but access to water sources. Although 12.5% of comparison and 62.5% of intervention schools had improved sanitation facilities, only 8.3% of comparison schools and 29.2% of intervention schools had improved water sources during the intervention period.

168. Similarly, cooks reported challenges with regard to infrastructure. While all respondents confirmed the presence of a dedicated kitchen room, with 17 out of 20 (85%) reporting good ventilation less than the 97% reported on baseline, 7 cooks reported the presence of rodents, and 7 others reported

the presence of insects like weevils.<sup>130</sup> Only one cook reported using improvised raised pallets for cooking, while 8 cooks cooked food off the ground (45%) also below the 50% reported at baseline. The cited challenges faced by the cooks with regards to cooking were the lack of vegetables and egg/meat, followed by a lack of water. Some respondents also mentioned a shortage of proper utensils for cooking and a lack of cleanliness in the kitchen. Nonetheless, all cooks reported cleaning the kitchen every morning before food preparation and after use.

**Table 12: Progress Towards MGD SO2 – Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices**

Result / Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Endline (2023)	Target
<b>MGD 2.1 Improved knowledge of health and hygiene practices</b> Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices.	<i>Not measured at baseline</i>	15 of 87 teachers surveyed were trained, and 100% of those trained apply practices (15 of 15)  % schools reporting persons trained: 26.3% (5 out of 19 schools)  # schools directors reporting persons apply training: 26.3% (5 out of 19 school directors)	13,792 <sup>131</sup>
Average dietary diversity score of school-aged children	Project: 6.1 Female: 6 Male: 6.2  Comparison: 4.7 Female: 4.7 Male: 4.6	Project: 7.7 Female: 7.7 Male: 7.7  Comparison: 7.5 Female: 7.2 Male: 7.6	Increase <sup>132</sup>
<b>MGD 2.2 Increased knowledge of safe food prep and storage practices</b> Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	Project: 87.9%	54.3% (31 out of 57 respondents)  For the 31 respondents; 5.2% (1 out of 19 cooks) 57.8% (11 out of 19 storekeepers) 100% (19 out of 19 teachers)	Increase <sup>133</sup> (13,034 target)
<b>MGD 2.4 Increased access to clean water and sanitation services</b> Number of schools using an improved water source	20	Monitoring: Improved water connection: 206 schools Evaluation: 16% of schools (3 of 19) reported wells and water systems have been rehabilitated with WFP support	27.8% achievement (740)
Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	53	Monitoring: 815 handwashing stations installed, and WASH support reported to be extended to all 901 schools	110.1% achievement (740)

<sup>130</sup> This was also corroborated in the storekeepers' survey. 5 of whom reported evidence of rodents in the store, while 8 of them reported evidence of insects such as weevils. Although, 5 storekeepers also reported that the school had a pest/insects management plan and 9 storekeepers reported that pest/insects control measures were carried out.

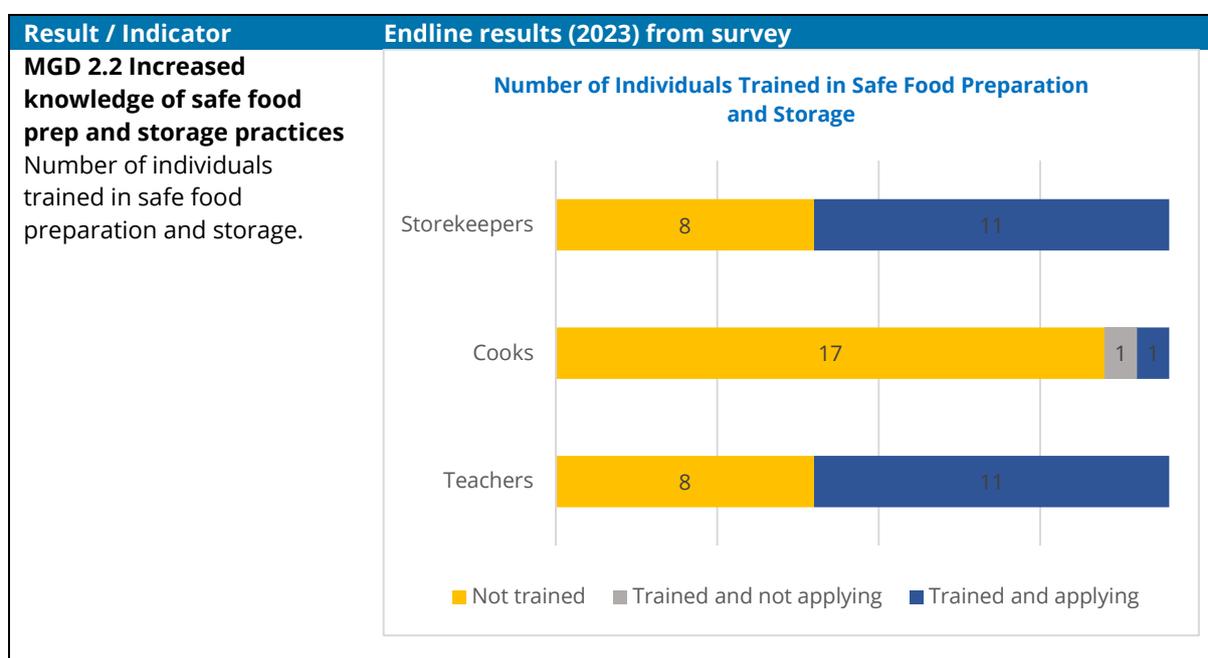
<sup>131</sup> This indicator was not monitored numerically nor measured at baseline in order to be able to report on any change relative to the target.

<sup>132</sup> There is no target percent increase in the project performance measurement framework as this indicator was only measured at baseline as a 'project-specific' indicator.

<sup>133</sup> This indicator was not monitored numerically in order to be able to report on any change relative to the target of 13,034, though there was an increase in proportion reporting they apply new knowledge in this area.

<b>MGD 2.6 Increased access to requisite food preparation and storage tools and equipment</b>	Semester 1 – 64% (37 of 58 schools) Semester 2 – 36% (21 of 58 schools)	6 (32%) school gardens in semester 1 and 18 (95%) in semester 2 were able to contribute with food for lunch at least twice in a month.	Inconclusive
	55% (32 of 58 schools)	3 (16%) of schools had a well-functioning and clean dining facility.	Decrease
	Unavailable	17 school directors indicated having “Improved infrastructure for school meals (e.g., dining, kitchen and storage facilities)	Inconclusive

**Figure 19. Number of Individuals Trained in Safe Food Preparation and Storage.**



169. WFP conducted several trainings, under the project, to raise awareness on health, hygiene, and nutrition (\$827,000). In 2018, it held training on nutrition in curriculum to Lao Women's Union, Provincial Education and Sports Services, District Lao Youth Union, District Education Sports Bureau, and district Lao Women Union. These 240 governmental staff (60% female) were in turn expected to deliver training at village level. In addition, the Green Box Initiative started for integrating nutrition knowledge and practice into primary education teaching and learning materials. In 2019, WFP reviewed the training manual on basic knowledge on nutrition and food processing and delivered the training for VEDC members, including school principals, teachers and farmer groups. In Nalae district, 50 participants (30 female) from MoES, PESS, DESB and DAFO attended, and the key trainers were from MoES, PESS and WFP. WFP also printed and distributed to all targeted schools 2,214 copies of the School Agriculture Training Guidelines in line with the Minister's Directive (by CRS, World Bank, WFP and EDF).

170. In 2020, the Research Institute for Educational Sciences (RIES) under the Ministry of Education and Sports approved 60 titles for Green Box development and a field-Level Agreement signed with Book Development and Reading Promotion House (Pum Ahn) for pedagogical materials on nutrition,

agriculture, climate change and environment. After the lockdown Training of Trainers (ToT) for 415 provincial and district government partners as well as WFP field staff on the concept and methodologies of establishing model schools and farmer groups ToT participants rolled out the training to 739 village level stakeholders. Multiple consultations and technical workshops with national partners to improve and finalize the prototype and the Teacher’s Guide, including participation from 10 schools in 9 districts across 3 provinces.

171. All teachers surveyed in the endline survey had received at least one training. 44% of the teachers reportedly (by school directors) used such training ‘very much so’ and the remaining 56% used it ‘somewhat’.

172. The students at intervention and comparison schools exhibited comparable awareness on hygiene practices. For example, the proportion of students, who reported the importance of washing hands with soap and water before eating was 94.1% at intervention versus 93.3% at comparison schools, though this difference is statistically insignificant. Similarly, 94.4% of parents in intervention (92.7% in comparison) reported using soap for handwashing in their households.

Support	Total (project teachers)	Percentage
Teaching / Learning techniques (at least 2 days or 16 hours)	15	78.9%
Safe food storage practices	6	31.6%
Hygiene and WASH	5	26.3%
Child health and nutrition	5	26.3%
Climate change and the environment	4	21.1%
Clean cooking and food preparation	10	52.6%
Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Tool	6	31.6%
Commodity Management	6	31.6%

**Figure 20. Types of Trainings Received.**

173. Eleven out of the 19 surveyed storekeepers indicated that they had received training in safe food preparation and storage practices and felt that their knowledge and/or skills in the subject area had improved as a result. The training covered areas such as commodity management, record-keeping, storage type and utilization, health and hygiene, food preparation and items required, checking food items before cooking, measuring food before cooking, ensuring personal health and hygiene, ensuring cleanliness of food commodities before cooking, prevention of nutrient loss, and storage equipment. Out of 19, only 5 teachers had received training in hygiene over the last year; however, all of them reported improvement in their knowledge, which was also confirmed in the school directors’ surveys. This same pattern was observed evaluating the application of the techniques and tools obtained in the subject. Similarly, in 52.6% of the schools surveyed, the storekeepers said that the training had improved their knowledge and skills in hygiene and health, while only 10.5% of the cooks reported this improvement. Although 90% of the cooks (18/20) had self-reported on the survey that they wash hands with soap and water before handling or preparing the food, only 30% of them were observed washing hands with soap and water (and another 40% with water alone) before doing so. Thus, despite the project efforts, it is not clear the extent to which hygienic practices have actually got embedded into daily routines.<sup>134</sup>

174. Stakeholder consultations substantiated evidence to showcase how the project had helped educate communities about hygiene, sanitation, and nutritious food practices. Students, teachers, schools, and responsible committees gained knowledge about agricultural practices, including preparation of school gardens and fish farming, food safety and nutrition, as well as hygienic food preparation, and learned how simple practices can increase dietary diversity and reduce food-borne illnesses both at school and in their households. By training students, teachers, cooks and storekeepers, and VEDC members, who are all members of the community, national, provincial and district government

<sup>134</sup> This could be because most of the cooks (14 out of 20) were volunteers (19 of them female) with 11 of them volunteering on some days and only of three on all days. Such volunteering unsurprisingly poses risks for long-term continuity and sustainability of knowledge and practices.

representatives all report a transfer or extension of this knowledge to the broader community. These consultations also indicated that communities had started fish farming and had better access to nutritious food (e.g., in Khammoune, Luang Namtha, Xanxay, Saman, Luang Prabang, Dak Jeung). As a result, children now consumed a more diverse range of food compared to previous years without school feeding activities. Community participation had increased, including collaboration with farmers in targeted areas, with various households and farmer groups contributing fruits, rice, fish, cabbage / vegetables, and other items. While there was some divergence in perspectives, the overall sentiment from farmers indicated that capacity strengthening, inputs and market linkages with schools had enabled them to increase food production, generate income, and improve their livelihoods.

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*“Since the introduction of the school feeding program, it has enabled us to grow and have more food. We have grown a variety of vegetables and sold them back to the school feeding programme. Previously, we only grew for self-consumption, there was no market to buy. Now there are markets so we can make money for gardening. Now I have a garden which could make an income for my family. Only this year, I could make about a few hundred thousand kip.” A Female farmer.*

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175. Witnessing the positive impact of the program on their own lives, farmers had become advocates for agricultural development, encouraging others in the community to engage in vegetable cultivation and greenhouse farming. This peer-to-peer knowledge sharing was facilitating the expansion of agricultural practices, leading to improved food security and self-reliance during both the dry and rainy seasons (e.g., Attapeu, Sekong). However, some farmers indicated that harvests did not change, they still relied on collecting wild vegetables from forests (e.g., Attapeu).

176. In addition to the benefits for farmers, the development of and linkages to school gardens and fish farms/ponds has fostered a strong connection between schools and local agricultural communities and practices. Communities that have embraced fish farming now have a sustainable source of fish for school meals, promoting environmentally friendly practices and enhancing the community's understanding of responsible food production. School gardens continued, though to a lesser extent than they had at baseline, cultivating a variety of vegetables that were used to provide nutritious meals to students. In Semester 1 of the previous academic year, 32% of school gardens still provided food for lunch at least 2 times in a month, while only 16% did in the second semester. This was a decrease from 63% and 36% in semesters one and two at baseline, respectively. The evaluation team did not find a consistent answer regarding the decrease in school garden use from baseline to endline across all sampled schools. However, during at least three FGDs, participants mentioned the lack of water and funds for infrastructure as contributing factors. Despite their more limited use in handed over schools, this integration of agriculture and nutrition reportedly improves the quality of the meals and also instills a sense of ownership and pride among students who actively participate in tending the gardens. Though there is not a clear inferential relationship, it should be noted that dietary diversity scores increased from baseline to endline for both intervention (6.1 to 7.7) and comparison schools (4.7 to 7.5), with children consuming in both cases at least two more food groups.

177. Indices were created -A female farmer. by the ET to further explore variances in performance in specific areas related to knowledge and use of good health and hygiene practices and established infrastructure<sup>135</sup>. Table 13 shows that the status of infrastructure varied with schools across provinces: Phongsaly (Panghouck, Nongkinnarly) and Luang Namtha (Narmmay) had more operational and established WASH infrastructure and Luang Prabang (Thongsy), Loungphaban (Namai) and Phongsaly (Nongkinnarly) had more established food infrastructure (such as kitchens

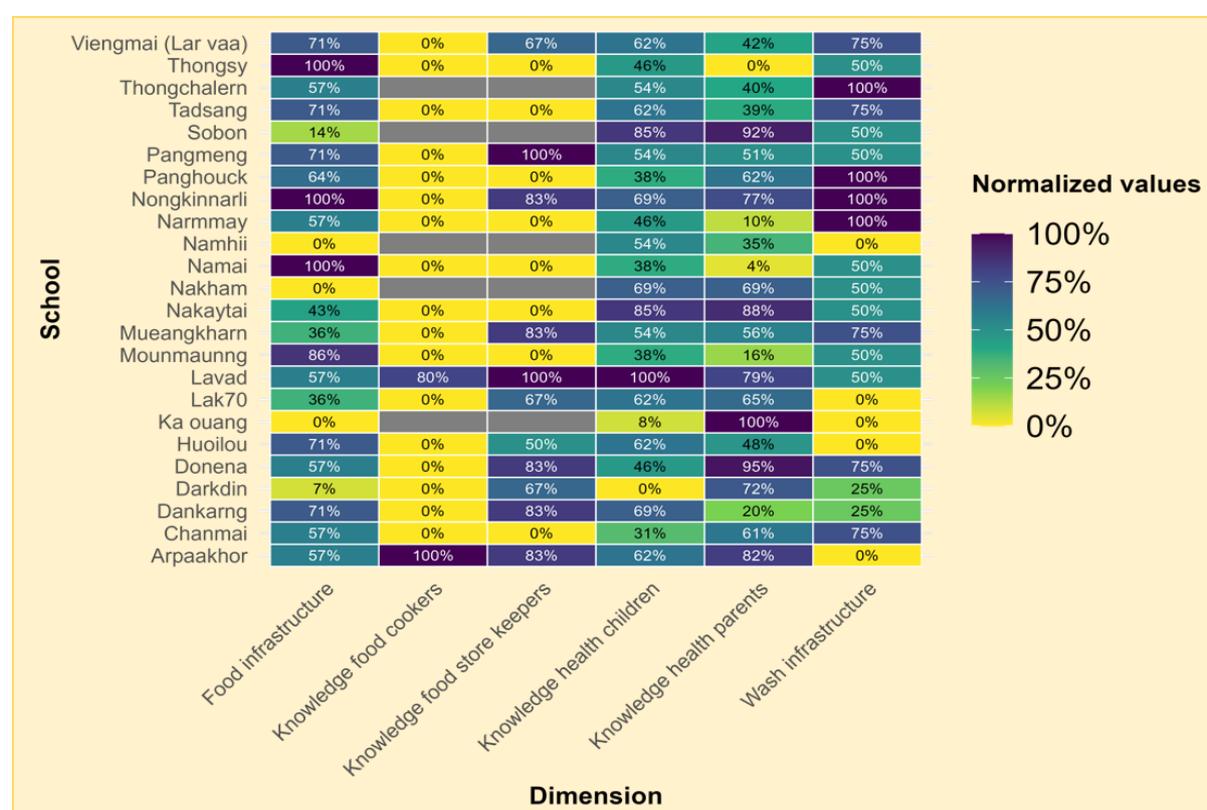
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<sup>135</sup> Detailed description of the methodology to create these indices is contained in the Data analysis section in the Annex 3.

and storage Lower performing schools on this indicator were also distributed amongst schools (Dankarn, Darkdin) handed over in 2021 in two different provinces; and those reporting zero progress in WASH infrastructure (Arpaakhor, Huoilou, Lak70) all in Phongsaly province and handed over in 2019, with two on average more remote (5-30 kilometerskilometres on average from a main street).

178. In Darkdin, though not of the lowest performing, interviews highlighted the challenges of implementing school feeding activities without infrastructure. Since there is no water supply, the VEDC has worked to mobilize the students to bring water from home for drinking and washing hands and also bring eating utensils; school meals are also prepared in the village where there is water access and then carried to school, creating greater operational difficulties in terms of getting the produce to cooks and then the meals to the school; as well as in ensuring sanitary conditions and practices in schools. ). As such, this school serves as an example of a gap in the CCA process, considering its great need in access to water infrastructure was left unmet, presenting a constraint to continuing with school feeding activities and as such the sustainability of the handover.

**Table 13. Indices on indicators related to health and hygiene practices and infrastructure.**



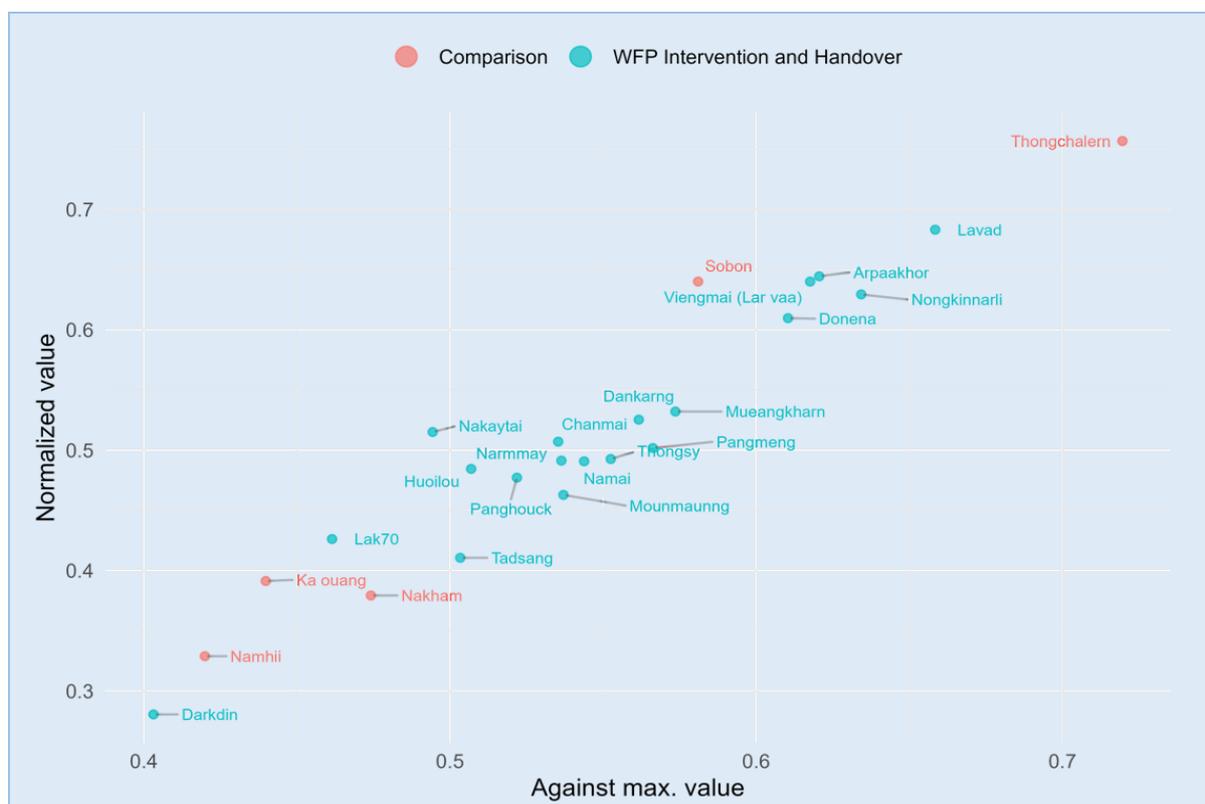
179. Children’s and parents’ knowledge of health and hygiene practices also varied across schools and provinces, with no distinct province greatly underperforming relative to others nor schools in more remote areas. In terms of generalized performance across indicators, ET calculated the mean ‘performance’ of schools across indices and indicators measuring key dimensions (attendance, attentiveness, literacy, community contribution, dietary diversity, infrastructure and health and nutrition knowledge) to visually compare comparison and intervention schools.

180. Figure 21. Mean ‘performance’ of schools across indices and indicators.

181. presents the performance indicator results for schools, with the horizontal axis representing the value each school has achieved against the maximum possible value, while the vertical axis representing the normalized value (in which 0 represents the lowest value and 1 the highest value). It is expected that values in both axes correspond to each other, with slight variations, since they

represent two different ways of measuring the same phenomenon (where the horizontal axis contrasts the value of each school against the maximum possible, and the vertical axis contrasts the value of each school against the one that achieved the best result). If a school has high values on both variables (up and to the right), it is a school with better results. Conversely, if a school has lower values (down and to the left), it means it had worse results in the different measured dimension. In general, comparison schools charted lower across values, primarily driven by gaps in infrastructure and awareness and knowledge of health and hygiene practices.

**Figure 21. Mean 'performance' of schools across indices and indicators.**



182. Amongst intervention schools, possible contributing factors to schools' low or high performance varied, those handed over in Phongsaly in 2019 had lower performance, driven down by community contributions, dietary diversity and infrastructure. indicated in previous analysis, factors like higher attendance or attentiveness didn't always link to better literacy results, showing how critical the quality of teaching is in the intervention logic towards this long-term objective. Some schools that trended lower in literacy, also trended lower in community contributions, parents' knowledge of health, and dietary diversity. This was corroborated in interviews with schools and district officials, who noted that an active VEDC can help to generate awareness and interest in school feeding activities, healthy foods and the need for community contributions amongst caregivers. Engaged and active teachers were noted in higher performing schools to monitor children's studies and engage parents, seeing also greater cooperation amongst parents towards the provision of healthy food in the schools.

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*"The VEDC knows that the cooperation between the school and the parents is very good. They pay attention to help each other in cooking food in the school so that the children can eat healthy food that makes the children want to come to school regularly." -A Male VEDC Member.*

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183. On the other hand, low performing schools noted teacher shortages, poverty and agricultural productivity constraints, and more limited participation from the VEDC and subsequently the community.

EQ2.2. What was the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the project with specific reference to school children's return to school and the achievement of project outcomes? What alternatives did WFP propose in these circumstances and what impact did they have on program effectiveness?

**Finding 4.**

- **The pandemic posed significant challenges to students' learning outcomes.**
- **Though WFP undertook several steps to mitigate its impact, the extent of their reach and effectiveness was limited by the country context.**

184. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to activity implementation and outcomes. The closure of schools disrupted the learning process, resulting in learning loss and hindering students' return to school. Parents, unprepared for facilitating home-based education, struggled to provide adequate support, leading to limited instruction and a knowledge gap among students. While efforts were made to continue education through online means, access to certain areas and maintaining the quality of teaching have been hindered, and school directors interviewed noted a need to hold students' back in their grades. Furthermore, the provision of meals was disrupted, and interviewed stakeholders, including teachers and district and provincial officials, reported this to deprive children of nutritious meals and potentially affect their health.

185. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, WFP and its partners proposed alternative measures. These included providing remote learning resources and support through educational materials and online platforms, including on the government's website for nationwide access. Efforts were also made to distribute food assistance directly to households, including lentils, vegetable oil and rice. However, the effectiveness of these alternatives varied depending on available resources, technological infrastructure, and community engagement. For example, since government, WFP staff and students were not allowed to travel, VEDCs and/or parent-teacher committees would determine the number of students targeted with take-home rations, and the school principal and district government officials would then inform WFP of how to facilitate distributions to households. It was noted in interviews with WFP staff and partners that the target number of students receiving school lunches during this period was not achieved, and there was insufficient post-distribution monitoring in order to understand fully the accessibility, use and benefits of the distributed rations. As such, there were concerns that the nutritional value of the meals intended for one student would then be distilled across the household, affecting dietary diversity and health goals of The project.

186. The pandemic also led to delays in implementing various activities, such as WASH initiatives and community mobilization and monitoring at handed-over schools. Nevertheless, partners demonstrated adaptability by developing online learning materials and utilizing virtual meetings to continue program implementation. The government's commitment and adherence to timelines, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, contributed to a generally successful transition and handover process as well.

187. In the endline survey, only 15% of the parents from intervention schools reported having received any additional assistance for their children in the aftermath of the pandemic outside of the take-home rations. This demonstrates the unique positioning of WFP for acting as a social protection mechanism in response to shocks given the scale of its school feeding activities in Lao PDR and its targeting of the most vulnerable areas/schools.

**EQ2.5. Has there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative, from the project (disaggregated by stakeholder groups, gender, age and ethnicity, as relevant)?**

**Finding 5.**

- **Assurance of child safety during school hours enabled parents to work, which positively affected household incomes.**

188. One frequently mentioned unintended impact of the project, was that school feeding activities provided parents with the assurance of child safety during school hours, allowing them to work without worrying about their children's well-being. This leads to increased income-generating opportunities for parents. The program's provision of meals and the option for children to stay at school throughout the day created opportunities for parents to extend their working hours. Another unintended and important effect of the project was observable in learning scores, which declined across project and comparison schools, due to the pandemic.

189. While efforts have been made to address differential impact and promote inclusion, for example through development of inclusive books, challenges remain in ensuring equal access and educational outcomes for ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and rural communities. This is inherent in the project targeting strategy, which intentionally included remote districts with larger ethnic minority populations despite the anticipated challenges due to higher transportation costs to deliver food assistance and greater barriers to learning given variances in the language of instruction with the primary language spoken at home. This was exacerbated during the pandemic, as children of parents without formal education fell further behind. Further to this point, some ethnic communities are more nomadic wage laborers, which has presented challenges to district officials, LWU and the VEDC which are charged with mobilizing households around school enrollment and school feeding activities.

EQ2.3. How efficient and effective was WFP's approach to strengthen national capacities vis-à-vis the NSMP? To what extent was WFP able to timely mobilize the required human and technical resources to provide support to national actors (at technical, project management and advocacy levels)?

**Finding 6.**

- **WFP's approach to strengthening national capacities vis-à-vis the National School Meals Program had both positive and negative aspects facilitating and/or hindering the efficiency and effectiveness of the handover.**

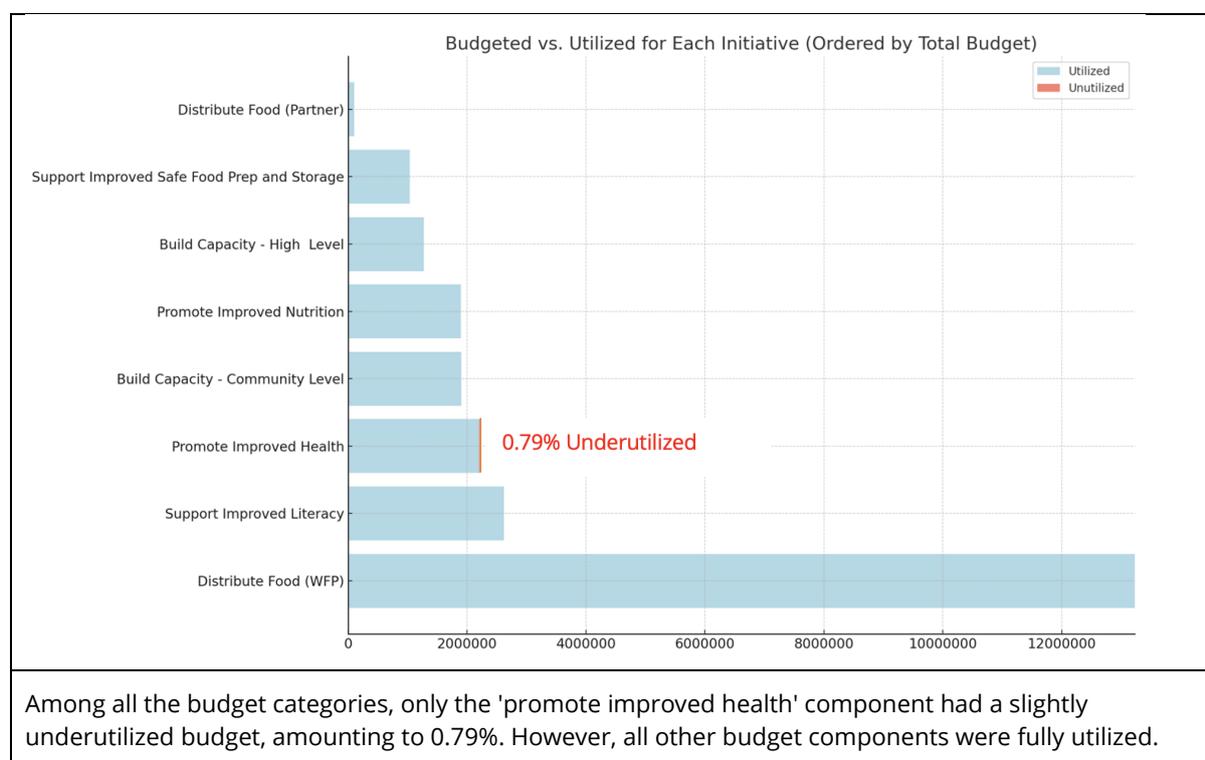
190. Both Catholic Relief Services and WFP are working in select areas in Lao PDR on school feeding, with CRS operating in one province and WFP's reach extending to eight provinces and aiming for country-wide coverage and transition to the establishment of a nationally owned school meals program. As such, WFP's direct capacity strengthening is primarily provided at the national level, there is less direct interaction at the community-level. Extensive partnerships with international NGOs were not originally planned but were later established given challenges with reaching remote communities and ensuring the quality and effectiveness of activities outside of WFP's expertise (e.g., literacy) and implemented by small local organizations. This indicates flexibility and adaptability on the part of WFP in leveraging external resources to fill capacity gaps. However, these partners are often under-resourced and less established or professionalized in terms of documented policy, procedure and subject-specific resources, which potentially affected the effectiveness of the project.

191. WFP conducted various capacity strengthening activities and trainings to address gaps and prepare for the handover of school feeding activities to the government. The trainings' foci were identified through community capacity assessments conducted one year before the planned handover, and the primary gaps observed were in community mobilization, agriculture and management of the school feeding activities. The target audience for these activities were thus those expected to carry forward school feeding activities under the government's cash transfer model, including provincial and district-level officials from PESS and DESB, as well as community members and groups, such as cooks and storekeepers, LWU and VEDC.

192. Weaknesses in monitoring data as well as the unprecedented crises faced by the global economy, which forced continued support for some schools, do not allow the evaluation to assess the

efficiency of the handover, although it must be noted that the budget was almost fully utilized (Figure 20) in line with the project documents.

**Figure 22. Budget Utilization.**



**Finding 7.**

- The project has put in place the groundwork for a community-driven school feeding program, with increased awareness from caregivers on its benefits and active participation from engaged teachers, VEDC and other community members.
- However, resource constraints remain amongst local and national governments to ensure active monitoring and participation (including time, staffing and budget), as well as amongst community members who are already constrained by circumstances of the national context, such as poverty and inflation, and the training provided was insufficient to overcome these realities.

193. Interviews with LWU and VEDC confirmed their participation in management and budgeting trainings, which raised their awareness and understanding of the NSMP cash model and the process for schools to request and receive funds from districts or provinces, as well as how to subsequently manage budgets and record expenditures. Members of the LWU and VEDC in Attapeu also confirmed that they continue to work closely with teachers and school directors to manage the budget and to purchase more nutritious, supplementary food items, such as meat or fish. However, multiple stakeholders – from WFP staff to school directors and community members – felt the management trainings specifically were too little and too late considering the change in modality for delivering food assistance between the project and NSMP, and the amount of buy-in and community contributions it would require to be sustained.

194. Another challenge was the mobilization of government stakeholders at different levels, including primarily, district and provincial authorities. While these stakeholders understood the objectives of the NSMP and the gaps that needed to be filled in contributions given the limited budget available and transferred to each school, there was a need for increased awareness of their specific responsibilities, the risks and opportunities presented by the model, and commitment to support and collaborate with the community and schools. Significant resources were invested by WFP to raise

awareness of provincial and district officials, however, these officials frequently changed. Their offices did not have a designated point of contact for the NSMP to manage the shifting staff and institutional knowledge loss. The selection process for officials attending trainings was not clearly defined and there was uncertainty regarding whether the right people were trained based on officials' everyday duties. Some felt this lack of clarity and the absence of clearly defined roles or focal points, created a transactional dynamic focused on training numbers and achieving outputs rather than fostering collaboration and ownership of the activities. At the same time, economic crises, inflation, and other factors stretched officials thin and posed uncertainties regarding the government's ability to fulfill gaps and prioritize school feeding and other supportive activities, such as school gardens and market development.

195. The data highlights the cooperative relationships and price negotiation practices observed within the school feeding programs. In Luangnamtha, farmers are aware of a bidding process where vegetables are sold to the school at a lower price based on the district market rates. However, the vegetables specifically produced under the program are not sold, and instead, farmers sell their own bananas to the school at a reduced market price. This arrangement is facilitated by the village's remote location and the familiarity among community members, leading to a sharing system. The school determines the price, ensuring it is fair for both parties. Farmers did not disprove of the lower prices, seeing schools as a consistent market for goods previously produced and used primarily for household consumption.

196. Furthermore, the school and farmers in Luangnamtha maintain regular consultations to ensure an adequate supply of vegetables for daily cooking. They have jointly devised a plan that involves sharing vegetables among households based on the timing of harvests. The teacher keeps a record of the participants, and an agreement is established before the project commences. Under this agreement, a portion of the vegetable production is allocated to the school, a percentage is sold and shared with the school, and the remainder is retained by the farmers. Although there is no selling involved, farmers surpass the minimum requirement of providing 10 kg of vegetables per semester.

197. In Oudomxay, the school feeding program has successfully fostered cooperative relationships with farmers. The program supports farmers in growing vegetables, raising poultry, and fish. Farmers receive assistance in the form of agricultural materials and vegetable seeds from related departments involved in the school lunch program. Farmers actively contribute vegetables and fish to the program, notifying the responsible person when the food items are ready for sale. Additionally, each participating household voluntarily contributes 1 kilogram of vegetables per month (12 kilograms per year) to support the school feeding program.

198. These findings highlight the importance of collaboration and mutual understanding between schools and farmers in ensuring the success and sustainability of school feeding programs. Cooperative relationships, regular consultations, and price negotiations contribute to a fair and beneficial partnership that supports the goals of the program while addressing the needs of the farmers. However, few schools had any engagement with farmers, and evidence of the farmers' ability to continuously contribute to schools is limited.

EQ2.4. To what extent does the government have a monitoring system to enable themselves to know the effectiveness and impacts of the National School Meals Program?

#### **Finding 8.**

- **The monitoring system is expected in the next phase of the project.**

199. There is a recognized need for a comprehensive monitoring system for handed-over schools to identify areas for further intervention with the project schools, to draw lessons informing the transition and handover of future schools, as well as to support the government in assessing the ongoing value of school feeding and its contributions to the country's development goals. Efforts have been made to introduce digital monitoring systems with the School Meal Management App, which is a digital and offline application for managing food distribution and recording outcome information, such as enrollment. WFP field offices have aimed to provide "on-the-job" training to school directors, teachers, cooks, storekeepers and other involved stakeholders, such as the VEDC; however, the training and uptake of the application was delayed by COVID-19 and due to limited technical capacity to manage and use the technology.

200. At the community-level, some districts continue to monitor on an ad-hoc basis while others report challenges in sustaining monitoring due to limited funding. In one district (Xanxay), monitoring is incorporated into the annual work plan, and the district education officers conduct quarterly monitoring visits in collaboration with offices in four village clusters and one municipality. This coordinated effort ensures regular monitoring of school meals in the district. In other districts, the monitoring mechanism relies on quarterly reports from the VEDC and schools or brief check-ins over the phone, while data continues to be collected over the tablets at the school level and submitted to the DESB, or via a WhatsApp group between schoolteachers and PESB. The district offices noted that there is not sufficient budget to continuously and routinely monitoring handed over schools, however the DHO and DAHO continued to monitor on an impromptu basis when needing to visit schools for other assignments, such as inspecting a handwashing system, attending an agricultural training, or conducting animal vaccination campaigns.

201. Overall, schools in Lao PDR employ different monitoring mechanisms and strategies depending on their resources and budget constraints. While some districts/provinces face challenges due to limited funding, efforts are made to integrate monitoring activities into existing work plans and utilize available communication tools like tablets, WhatsApp groups and site visits. Collaboration among district and provincial education offices, health offices, and other partners has been useful in continuing some monitoring school feeding activities. Ongoing discussions with the government are focused on finding ways to overcome these limitations and continue monitoring handed-over schools effectively. It is worth noting that some monitoring activities are embedded in existing government systems, which provides some level of oversight. In addition, efforts are being made to work closely with the government to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework that will break down the different components of the school feeding program across ministries, budget allocations, and responsibilities of different stakeholders. It is anticipated that the collaborative development of this framework, which is taking place more under the next phase of project, will help assess NSMP impact and improve its reach, effectiveness, and sustainability.<sup>136</sup>

## 2.3 IMPACT

### How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts?

EQ3.1. Did the project achieve its SDG impacts (e.g., learning outcomes, health and nutrition of target school children, and improved frameworks for social protection, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, and other vulnerable populations) as stated in its result framework? If so, how and to what extent?

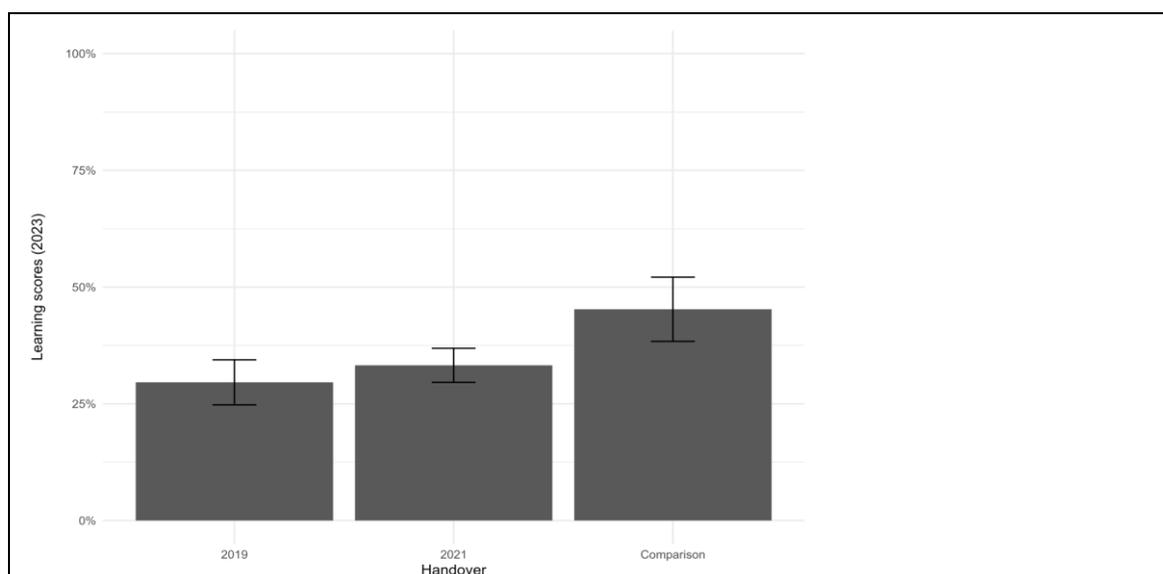
#### Finding 9.

- The project interventions were designed to target schools that were lagging in EGRA learning scores. The intervention helped the lagging schools in closing the learning gap.
- The analysis also showed that mother tongue (Lao language), grade, attentiveness of students, and the year of handover had an impact on learning scores.

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<sup>136</sup> EQ2.6 is covered under sustainability section and EQ3.2 is combined with EQ3.1 and other sections for better flow of the report.

**Figure 23. Regression model between learning scores, intervention and other significant variables.**



202. As in the case of baseline, learning scores were better at comparison schools, which is not surprising as WFP interventions are purposefully designed for schools lagging behind on education outcomes. The mean learning score at comparison schools was 0.45 (S.D. = 0.21), while that at intervention schools it was 0.32 (S.D.= 0.17), which is statistically significant ( $t=3.46$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Age, gender and ethnicity did not reveal any statistically significant differences in overall learning scores, however mother tongue (i.e., Lao language) did make a difference in the learning scores of students across all schools. Grade and attentiveness of students, also as expected, showed an effect on revealed learning scores as seen in

203.

204. Figure 32 in [Annex 10](#). The year of handover also appeared to make a difference (Figure 19) which shows that the longer intervention period was associated with the higher learning scores.

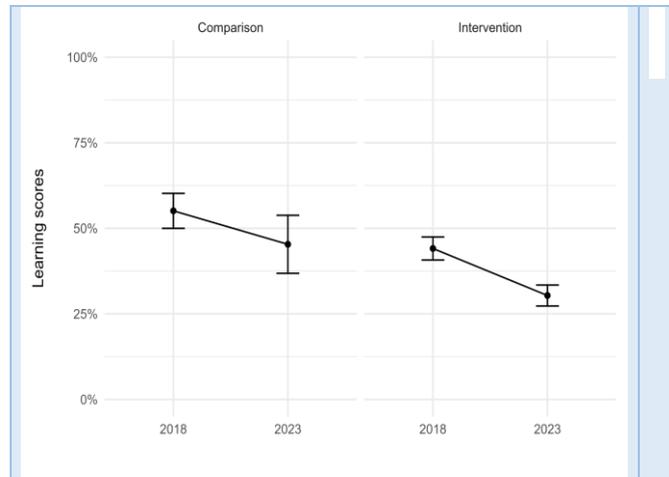
205. Similar patterns were observed when sub-tests (literacy, letter sounds, understandings, used words, matching, phrase matching and comprehension) are utilized rather than the overall learning scores.

#### **Finding 10.**

- **The learning scores across both intervention and comparison schools were lower in 2023 (endline survey) compared to 2018 (baseline survey).**

206. More importantly, the evaluation compared the learning scores at intervention and comparison schools over time. As seen in Figure 23, there was a decline in learning scores across both comparison and intervention schools between 2018 and 2023. Stakeholder interviews suggested that this was in line with their expectations as pandemic forced schools to adopt alternative modalities for which schools and students were equally unprepared. As detailed in the regression of

**Figure 24. Learning scores outcomes.**



207.

208. Figure 33 in [Annex 10](#), the variable “time” provides proxy evidence for this decline to be the adverse effect of the pandemic during the intervention period.

209. Further exploration in the data indicated that the effect was more pronounced for girls than boys, i.e., their learning scores were 6% lower than those for boys. The learning scores were higher for Lao speakers when compared with non-Lao speakers and reported attendance and attentiveness improved scores as well. The pronounced effect of attendance may also provide further evidence on the effect of pandemic as students who were less affected by the changed instruction modality likely improved learning, while those without such access did not. Note that further data exploration revealed that similar patterns most sub-tests as in the case of overall learning scores.

**Finding 11.**

- The project had positive effects on school enrolment, attendance, attentiveness, and community engagement.
- The provision of meals at school had a significant impact on attendance and parental support for education.
- There was no observable improvement in learning scores over the intervention period.

210. Thus, overall learning appears to have been affected by the pandemic. As a result, the effect of intervention on learning scores is not yet discernible from the test scores in this quasi-experimental evaluation study.

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*"In schools, students attend school regularly and concentrate on studying better than previously. The study outcomes have improved generally."*

*"The most important change in the communities as a result of the school lunch program activities is to make the community have knowledge in the field of farming and raising livestock and sell it, which generates income for the household to live a better life, to eat a variety of food, to make it healthy and the rate of school dropout is reduced."*

*-Provincial officials*

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211. Overall, while the project demonstrated a substantial and transformative effect on communities, schools, and households in terms of a marked enhancement in school enrollment and attendance as well as improved attentiveness, no measurable progress was discernible on learning outcomes. Although, some qualitative evidence was available to suggest that the provision of meals at school not just served as a powerful catalyst for regular attendance, but it also fostered an environment conducive to encouraging parental reinforcement of education. There had also been notable shifts in community behavior and attitudes towards literacy, food production and WASH practices.

212. Moreover, the program, unintendedly, had also stimulated local agricultural engagement. As mentioned in Semi-Annual Report of the project for Apr-Sep 2020, 23 fishponds were operationalized and 13 communities/schools were supported to raise animals (e.g., chickens, ducks) The livestock provided to farmers seemed to be supplementing household food security and contributing to the supply chain for school meals. These contributions had also led to increased ownership and community involvement, resulting in availability of hot meals for children, while simultaneously supporting community.

213. At the community level, the project also contributed towards improvement in dietary practices and a reduction in overall household expenditure. The project also contributed to improved capacity of community with knowledge on farming and livestock management, which was acknowledged to have been especially impactful in the aftermath of the pandemic.

214. Desk review and interviews provided first indications that the project had also made efforts to incorporate disability accommodations into project design. WFP had been proactive in seeking collaborations with organizations that specialize in disability support for enhancing the inclusivity of the project. This includes adjusting food preparation to meet the needs of children with chewing difficulties or autism. However, stigma associated with disability also posed challenges for its broader integration, which requires societal support. To overcome these challenges, WFP is exploring partnerships with organizations such as with Humanity & Inclusion specializing in disability support. By collaborating with these organizations, WFP aimed to create a more meaningful impact and ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in the school feeding programs, however some stakeholders suggested that this was not always possible. For example, a key informant suggested that students with disabilities were generally in separate schools where they provided food, but it is difficult to consider this as improved access to education since they were excluded from the regular school system.

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*"Children with disabilities face challenges in accessing schools, and there is a need for more societal support." -KII with an implementing partner*

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215. Stakeholder consultations suggested that WFP made efforts to link this project to the Women's Empowerment Project, which operates in collaboration with district-level governments. This was aimed at creating pathways for women's economic empowerment. However, given some differences in geographic coverage of the two projects, this was not always possible. That said, Lao has made

significant progress in closing the gap between girls and boys in education. As per the UNICEF and World Bank data, the gender parity index had already gone up from 0.90 in 2010 to 0.96 in 2015. The literacy tests on the survey did not reveal major gaps between boys and girls. As per stakeholder consultations, the project also improved access to education for sexual and ethnic minorities in terms of access to materials. The cooperation with the Inter-Ethnic Unity and Economic Empowerment project fostered unity among different ethnic groups within communities. Stakeholders noted that the initiative has been a unifying force, leading to joint decision-making processes, especially around school-related issues. One school, for example, initiated a profitable cassava project that benefitted both the school and the community.

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*"The other day, I went to a school which was 95% ethnically minority, and the principal was very active. He was sending all the kids to become the best in reading, and the school meal program is very successful there as well. He is driven in that area as well." –A staff member*

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216. Overall, the project positively influenced several outcomes that contribute to improving child literacy and education. Most significant of these changes included improved school attendance and attentiveness, support for farmers for raising livestock and agricultural cultivation, increased community enthusiasm for the school lunch program, improvement in community food consumption habit -by adopting certain practices learned in schools and implemented them in their homes and home garden-, better nutrition for children and increased community contribution for school cooking, and increased satisfaction with current educational and nutritional outcomes. It also promoted equal participation for boys and girls in learning and increased student participation in vegetable garden maintenance. Local communities began initiatives such as fish farming and market provision, while others worked towards capacity strengthening at the community level, however, visible effect on the educational impacts as proxied via EGRA learning scores was not yet discernible. As such scores also went down at comparison schools, it is possible that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had a negative and unintended impact on the larger goals of improving literacy and other educational outcomes. Finally, the transition and handover phase highlighted both positive outcomes and challenges. On one hand, it stimulated a rise in community ownership and self-sufficiency, marked by increased voluntary contributions towards the provision of school meals. On the other hand, there were apprehensions regarding the sustainability of this elevated community participation post-project. Thus, from an impact and sustainability perspective, much remains to be done.

## 2.4 SUSTAINABILITY

**To what extent will the interventions continue past the handover of the school feeding project?**

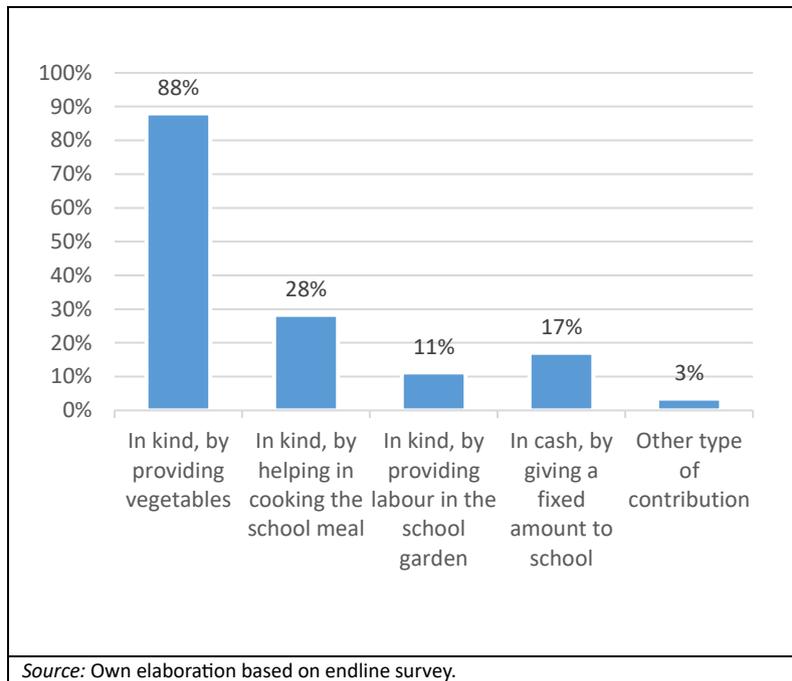
**EQ4.1. To what extent are all handed over schools continuing to provide high-quality school lunch after handover to the Government under the National School Meals Program?**

### Finding 12.

- The provision of school meals continues after the handover, but there are concerns regarding the reliance on community contributions and the limitations in the NSMP budget and operational capacities, posing challenges for the project's transition to a cash-based modality.
- The allocated budget of 800 LAK per student per day is inadequate to ensure dietary diversity in sufficient quantities, especially when community contributions are low.

217. As outlined in the project proposal, the MoES had envisioned a plan where communities would play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability and continuity of NSMP. This involved active community participation in the ownership and management of school meals activities, including “the procurement of local rice and the provision of cash transfers”<sup>137</sup>, which were intended to cover not only the meals but also salaries for cooks and storekeepers. In line with this, the Prime Minister’s Decree on the integration of the NSMP into the government’s national budget lines and the raised minimum allocation standard implies a significant step towards ensuring the sustainability and prioritization of the program.

**Figure 25. Contribution from family members to school lunches**



218. As per available evidence also suggests that the continuity of school meal provision has posed challenges after the handover to the Government, as certain schools have encountered difficulties in sustaining project activities.

219. The evaluation survey revealed that all 19 sampled schools that were handed over in 2019 and 2021, continue to provide school meals for their students.<sup>138</sup> In 13 of these schools, directors reported receiving contributions from parents, in different forms (see Figure 25. ). A similar proportion of cooks reported having made contributions of some kind to the school. In addition, all 19 teachers and storekeepers reported having made some contribution to the school feeding activities. 88% of parents (N=258, F=143, M=115) provide vegetables for school lunches, which is 4 percentage points higher compared to contribution reported on the midterm evaluation. On the other hand, only 28% support by helping in cooking the school meal, significantly lower than the 59.5% reported in the midterm evaluation.<sup>139</sup> There was no significant difference in the perception of parents regarding whether their children received sufficient food between those who confirmed contributing vegetables (77.5% with N=176) and those who did not contribute (80.6% with N=26). This suggests that there is no apparent change in the quantity of meals, irrespective of parents' contribution to school meals.

220. Community members during interviews and FGDs expressed challenges in providing daily meals for the students. Transitioning from an in-kind to cash transfer modality has caused operational challenges and a shift in responsibilities. While the continuation of the school feeding program is secured through a signed decree confirming budget and an increased commitment of the GoL towards enhanced student education and health outcomes, significant challenges in its

<sup>137</sup> WFP McGovern-Dole FY17 Full Proposal, p.49.

<sup>138</sup> School directors reported receiving school lunches and year of handover. ET does not have details whether WFP continued supplemental food distribution in these schools. All school directors reported ‘(continue to receive school lunch for students’ under the NSMP.

<sup>139</sup> WFP McGovern-Dole FY2017 Mid-term Review Report, p.9.

implementation persist. First, the specified amount of 800 KIP (\$0.044 USD) per student per school day has proven to be insufficient for covering the ongoing costs of food and other management expenses. Second, although the program expects to receive and supplement grants from various sources, “including individuals, entities, families, communities, and local and international organizations”<sup>140</sup> the reliance on parents and the community to provide ingredients for school meals has resulted in inconsistent provision, in quantity and quality, of school lunches.

221. As the transition to government oversight approached, community members recognized the need to build their capacity and self-sufficiency as the activities would eventually be handed over to the government. Consequently, as shown also in Figure 23, some districts became more proactive, contributing not only their time and resources but also actively mobilizing funds within the community “through community-driven income-generating activities or fundraisers.” Nevertheless, the community’s contribution of food items and the level of community involvement varies across districts. A teacher in the Attapue Province mentioned “before the contribution of the community was very good, now there is a lot of production due to economic problems. People have to work harder to have enough for their families to eat.” According to another teacher, “some days, only a few families participate”, which may affect the quality and quantity of the meals provided. According to a WFP staff member, the cooks frequently make adjustments to the menu because they are unable to obtain certain items, such as animal protein.

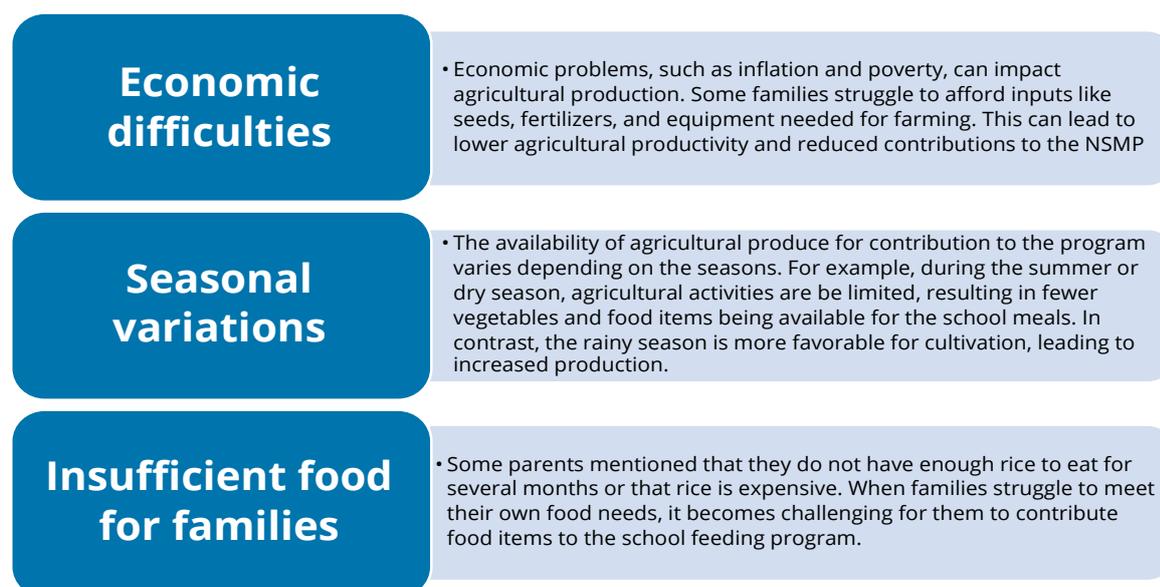
222. Based on the completed community capacity assessment, it was found that private (community) contributions to the school lunch program accounted for approximately 76%. Furthermore, Table 12 provides a summary of both in-kind and cash contributions from various stakeholders, aiming to assign a monetary value to these contributions for the purpose of comparison and listing.

**Table 14. Value on contributions**

Item	Unit	Value (Kip)	Value (USD)
Labor and local support	1468 schools (2019)		\$463,138
Tax exemption 2019	from imported oil (100M) and canned fish (338.64MT)		\$70,920
Labor and local support	3,090 labor days + 372 labor days		\$17,310
Tax exemption 2020			\$134,922
Government contribution	827 schools	5.9 billion	\$325,337
Labor, cash and in-kind food from community	No monitoring data-unspecified contribution		
Government transfer	Oct 20 - Mar 21		\$390,864
1629 school infrastructures * 20 persons' labor value * \$5/person * 3 days			\$488,800
373 greenhouses * 20 persons * \$5 * 3 days			\$111,900
30 livestock schemes * 30 persons * \$5 * 2 days			\$9,000
Government transfer value from Apr - Sep 21			\$53,300
school facilities * 20 persons' * \$5 labor value/person/day			\$180,300
104 greenhouses * 20 persons * \$5 * 3 days			\$31,200
182 livestock schemes * 30 persons * \$5 * 2 days			\$54,600
Government transfer 2020: 132,450 students in 1,423 schools during 120 school days	800 kip/day/student	12,715,200,000	\$701,141
<b>Total government and community contributions</b>			<b>\$2,021,105</b>

<sup>140</sup> Lao PDR Policy Analysis, 20210731, p.9.

Figure 26. Summary of main challenges on community contributions for NSMP



Source: Based on evaluation survey, KIIs and FGDs.

223. The community's ability to contribute to the NSMP is impacted by economic problems, such as inflation and reduced production. Families are required to exert more effort to meet their own food needs, potentially restricting their capacity to contribute to the program. Figure 24 provides a summary of the primary challenges that can influence the community's consistent contribution to the school feeding program.

224. Moreover, there was mixed evidence on the extent to which a school feeding model based on community contributions challenged or reinforced gender norms. On one side, women-only or women-inclusive groups affiliated with schools, such as the LWU, farmer groups, and the 'Women's Economic Empowerment in support of Home-Grown School Feeding,' have shown positive results in terms of women's engagement and participation. For example, the project aimed to increase production of farmer groups, including for prioritized groups with persons with disabilities, women-headed households, and pregnant or lactating women, who in turn contributed food to schools. Recognizing the value of school meal provisions, contributions came even from members without children enrolled in the schools. This involvement indicates a shift in their perception of their roles within the community, emphasizing the importance of collective support and community well-being.

225. While efforts were underway to enhance local government capacities, promote community ownership, and ensure accountability, stakeholders at the district and school levels expressed concerns about the system's readiness to transition to a cash-based SMP modality. Budgetary and implementation challenges could hinder the sustainability of the program's impact. While the national government's takeover of schools and the provision of cash to communities aim to foster community involvement and ownership of the NSMP, adequate capacities and resources at the local level are necessary to ensure smooth implementation, effective management, and sustainable provision of school meals.

226. Additionally, delays in budget allocations from the government after handover created further difficulties. While capacity strengthening activities were conducted to enhance understanding of fund management processes, delays in budget disbursement impacted the timely support to schools, and some villages had to borrow funds from their own resources. As highlighted by multiple stakeholders, there are concerns regarding the timing and adequacy of cash transfers to schools. According to feedback received, cash transfers are often delayed, and the allocated amount was not always as expected. For example, in 2023, one interviewee reported a reduction in the allocated amount to 650 KIP (\$0.036 USD) instead of the anticipated 800 KIP.

227. It is important to note that the challenges faced by the NSMP extend beyond budget constraints. These challenges include the financial burden on resource-scarce communities, variations in allocated budgets, and the need for sufficient capacities to streamline the program effectively. Some

of the capacity strengthening areas for the government that were mentioned in interviews, included: monitoring of the NSMP, day-to-day implementation, cash transfer guidelines for the NSMP, and cross-cutting issues such as gender equality. Additionally, a WFP stakeholder acknowledged challenges related to “the understanding and participation of parents in the school feeding program,” highlighting potential gaps in communication and awareness about the program—especially under the cash-transfer modality.

#### **Finding 13.**

- **The project showed mixed results in challenging or reinforcing gender norms.**
- **Women-only or women-inclusive groups affiliated with schools have demonstrated positive engagement and participation, indicating a shift in their roles within the community.**
- **However, gender differences exist in community contributions, with women primarily responsible for cooking and men engaging in manual labor tasks.**
- **Further efforts are needed to promote women's equality, empowerment, and inclusivity during the school handover process.**

228. Generally, the project has fostered a sense of unity and collaboration amongst all community members, male and female. As mentioned above, the contributions made by individuals varied in nature, ranging from providing in-kind support or labor for activities such as cooking meals or working on school gardens to making cash contributions (Figure 21). There were reports of men actively involved in cooking activities, challenging traditional gender roles and promoting inclusivity, and also reports that women’s burden of time cooking was reduced if not required to return home from other income-generating activities to prepare lunch. However, community contributions vary, with some providing in-kind products, and others offering time/ labor for cooking or tasks such as maintaining school gardens. And, amongst these tasks, gender differences exist, with women primarily taking on cooking responsibilities at schools.

229. According to the endline evaluation survey, 18 out of 19 interviewed cooks were women. 13 of them were volunteers, 6 were ‘appointed’, and only 4 reported receiving a salary. On the other hand, from the parents’ survey, men reported engaging in tasks requiring more manual labor, with the frequency and time required by women for carrying water and cooking more regular and greater than one-off infrastructure projects. Geographic differences were reported as well, with more remote, forested and mountainous areas’ communities contributing more of their time, while areas with ample food resources contributing primarily through food items. The evidence highlights the need for more intentional efforts to mainstream, monitor and measure women’s equality, empowerment and inclusivity within the context of the school handover and expectations surrounding contributions.

#### **EQ4.2. To what extent are the WASH, hygiene, literacy, school gardening and other activities that WFP supported in line with the Government’s guidelines for school feeding programs are continuing in the handed-over schools?**

#### **Finding 14.**

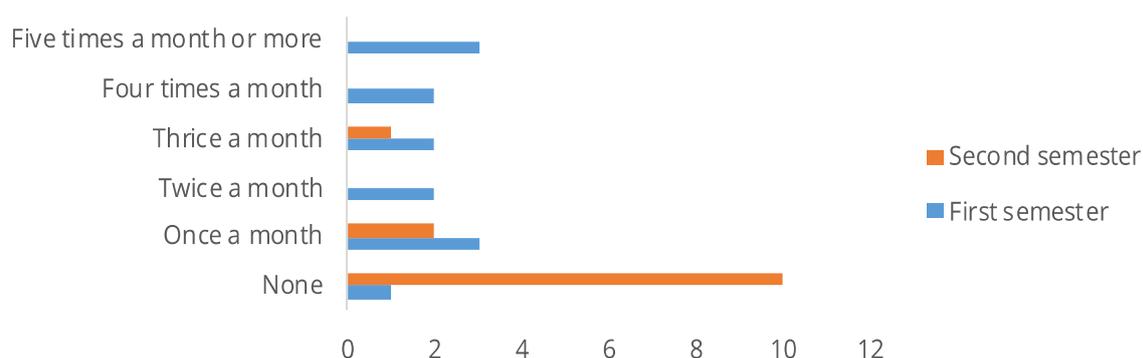
- **The sustainability of activities beyond school meals, including literacy, hygiene, and gardening, is dependent on community involvement, leading to variations across schools.**
- **Limited funding by the GoL and the burden placed on communities in terms of resources and capacities pose challenges to maintaining these activities in the medium and long-term.**

230. As expressed in the project proposal, with a long-term objective of transitioning the responsibility of school feeding to communities and schools, the involvement of communities, school principals, and teachers was envisioned to be crucial in managing school meals and associated support activities such as hygiene training, WASH initiatives, water source maintenance, literacy programs, and school

grant management, even if no longer funded by WFP.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, the continuity of these activities varies across the handed-over schools under NSMP. Stakeholder consultations revealed that the project was more comprehensive than the NSMP as the latter did not incorporate activities like literacy, WASH, or support to school gardens. These activities are no longer a priority for GoL, as resources, capacity and efforts since handover have been limited to school meals.

231. As previously noted, surveys and interviews highlighted that only six schools visited during data collection (handed over in 2019-2021) had a dedicated library or designated space for storing books. Furthermore, it was unclear whether there were ongoing programs or partnerships with organizations such as Room to Read and Big Brother Mouse to sustain literacy promotion activities in those schools where WFP previously supported such initiatives. 65% of surveyed schools (N=20) had a school garden (project Indicators 2.1 and 2.2), but only 46% of those schools had vegetables or fruits sown or growing. The most mentioned vegetables were cabbage (including Chinese cabbage and mustard greens), as well as plants like coriander, dill, lemon grass, and ginger. The frequency of school garden providing vegetables for school lunch varied from the first to the second semester. While most of these schools did not provide vegetables, some provided it once a month and few provided five times or more during the first semester. In the second semester, only three schools reported getting vegetables.

**Figure 27. Frequency of School Garden Contributions to School Lunch, 1<sup>ST</sup> VS 2<sup>ND</sup> Semester.**



232. Moreover, there is a lack of information regarding the allocation of funds or maintenance plans for WASH infrastructure, hand washing facilities, and school gardens. Apart from the unspecified funds allocated for general school maintenance through block grants, specific financial provisions for the maintenance of school feeding infrastructure were not evident.<sup>142</sup> As highlighted in the Lao PDR Policy Analysis, the government's guidance regarding school gardens lacked specific information on the expected quantity and type of food to be produced, as well as the responsibilities assigned for their maintenance. The guide merely mentions that 'school gardens and household gardens or animal rearing can contribute to the food supply for schools' without providing further clarification on these aspects.<sup>143</sup> As expressed by a WFP staff during an interview, "resources are lacking to make the meals truly nutritious without external support...another potential risk is water access, as it is crucial for cooking meals. Infrastructure improvements may be necessary to ensure long-term accessibility."

233. As previously highlighted in the effectiveness section, the pre-existing lack of infrastructure posed a significant constraint to the sustainability of the NSMP. From WASH facilities to subpar conditions of kitchen rooms were reported deficient. Hence, the communities bear the responsibility of

<sup>141</sup> WFP McGovern-Dole FY17 Full Proposal

<sup>142</sup> Internal document, Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR, 20 June 2022.

<sup>143</sup> Policy Analysis for WFP Regional School Feeding Implementation Plan 2020-2030, Lao People's Democratic Republic, July 2021, p.11

overseeing supplementary activities in addition to providing school meals. The chair of VEDC was expected to handle the direct management of school feeding, including handwashing, school gardens, infrastructure, and other related aspects. This placed an additional burden on communities that were often already overwhelmed with donations of their time or resources. The involvement of communities in managing and maintaining various aspects of the project, implied that they were expected to take on additional responsibilities beyond providing meals. These responsibilities included ensuring the availability of resources, coordinating activities, and addressing maintenance needs. However, communities were already stretched thin in terms of their time and resources. Hence, due to budget constraints and lack of local institutionalization, the continuity of these activities was reportedly affected.

**EQ4.3. To what extent have WFP and the government planned and implemented for supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP support? Are there interventions that are more effective at securing community, local or national government investment into the school feeding programs? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment?**

**Finding 15.**

- Evidence shows that despite the policy commitment of the GoL to continue the implementation of the NSMP, there are emerging concerns regarding the fiscal capacity of the MoES to provide consistent funds for the program.
- The GoL mostly relies on the allocation of domestic resources, despite the uncertainty of its fiscal capacity.
- Moreover, there is no indication of other external sources of financing that could secure long-term financial sustainability of the NSMP.

234. WFP took several measures to strengthen the operating capacities of government officials at different levels (national, provincial and district) to continue school feeding activities. A Provincial government official highlighted during a FGD, “WFP contributed to some government’s priorities, such as the human resource development plan, especially the development of Early Child Education, the Nutrition Program and activities related for food security (school garden activities)” referring to the MoES, ‘Guideline on implementing the SLP promotion for Early Childhood and Primary Education levels of Public Schools, National, Provincial and District level’.

235. Stakeholder consultations indicated that WFP worked with the government to develop guidelines for clarifying roles, responsibilities, target and expectations after handover.<sup>144</sup> As described in the Policy Analysis for WFP Regional School Feeding Implementation Plan 2020-2030, the Plan of Action included priority areas of action, including budgets for certain activities but not for the meals per se.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, while the Plan called for 100% self-reliance in food production through agriculture, it was not clear whether self-reliance meant schools and parents producing all the required food or ensuring the availability of diverse, nutritious, and high-quality food within the local community or if farmers and communities were expected to ensure sufficient, diverse, nutritious and good quality food available in the locality. Moreover, the policy analysis indicated the Plan expects full coverage in identified poorest districts, with parental and community ownership, supported by the government and/or development partners. However, the budget plan lacks clarity on financing, with uncertainties regarding the government’s contribution and a gap between estimated costs and development partner contributions.

236. According to the SABER-SF framework and assessment, for a sustainable SFP, the government needs to have capacity in five key areas: policy and legal framework, finance, institutional capacity, program design, and implementation, with clearly defined roles for non-state actors. The government should be able to effectively design, implement, manage, monitor, and evaluate school feeding activities. An external consultancy for WFP conducted a preliminary assessment of Lao PDR’s national capacity

<sup>144</sup> While it was not clear which specific guidelines were referenced in these consultations, it is possible that these referred to the NSMP 2015, which served as a reference for setting objectives and targets for the NSMP 2020.

<sup>145</sup> Policy Analysis for WFP Regional School Feeding Implementation Plan 2020-2030, Lao PDR, July 2021, p.11

under each theme,<sup>146</sup> which is depicted in Table 15. SABER SF- Estimated capacity of Lao PDR per theme, 2015/2016 below.

**Table 15. SABER SF- Estimated capacity of Lao PDR per theme, 2015/16**

	<b>SABER-SF Policy Goal</b>	<b>Estimated Rating</b>
<b>1</b>	Policy Frameworks	ESTABLISHED
<b>2</b>	Financial capacity	EMERGING
<b>3</b>	Institutional capacity and coordination	EMERGING/ESTABLISHED
<b>4</b>	Programme design and implementation	EMERGING
<b>5</b>	Roles of non-state actors	ESTABLISHED

237. The figure shows that while the government's policy reflects a commitment to school health and nutrition, there remains uncertainty regarding its fiscal capacity and ability to consistently provide funds, even at the rate of 800 LAK per student per day, as outlined in the Prime Minister's Decree. Furthermore, the consultancy document indicated that the NSMP lacked clear guidance on the contents of the food basket and alternative resourcing options.

238. While the government has made changes in its approach by allocating domestic resources to fund the NSMP in 2019, there have been significant modifications in the funding priorities. The reliance on external funds from international aid or agencies, such as the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in the past indicates a dependence on international support, however there is no sign of secure external funding for the future. For instance, the discontinuation of World Bank funding raises concerns about the long-term financial sustainability of the program.<sup>147</sup> During interviews, it was noted that there is targeted support from other donors, such as funds from Russia and Ireland to complement activities for specific geographic areas, as well as investments from the private sector. To ensure sustainable funding for school feeding programs, exploring funding options beyond in-kind contributions, such as partnerships with the private sector, can offer flexibility and long-term viability. Additionally, support from multiple donors, allows for adaptability in program design. Integration with other sectors such as agriculture, health, and women's unions can enhance the effectiveness of school feeding activities and contribute to broader development objectives.

239. In terms of the program design and implementation, as mentioned before, the reliance on community contribution, even for the operation of the program, such as having cooks with no salary under the NSMP, could hinder the sustainability of the program in the long term. Furthermore, a national stakeholder has expressed that the government may have expectations for WFP to take on certain responsibilities, including ensuring the quality of WASH infrastructure and the school garden activity. However, there is no evidence to suggest that WFP's plan includes dedicated funding for infrastructure maintenance. This lack of budget allocation poses a challenge for the MoES, as it limits the available resources for fulfilling these specific requirements.

<sup>146</sup> As mentioned in the consultancy document, in 2015-2016, a draft SABER-SF assessment was conducted by WFP Lao PDR and MOES to evaluate the government's capacity to implement school feeding and assume responsibility for WFP-supported schools. While the assessment results have not been officially reported or endorsed by MOES, they offer valuable insights into the capacity of MOES during that period.

<sup>147</sup> DRAFT DELIVERABLE 1 – Phase II (2022): Sophia Dunn and Jean-Pierre Silvéreano Synthesis of learning for way forward in building a sustainable School Lunch Program in Lao PDR 20 June 2022

EQ2.6. What are the key enabling factors and challenges for the handover? What are the lessons learnt and good practices that should be taken into consideration for future school feeding activities?

- Finding 16.**
- **Limited budget and readiness challenges among communities and government institutions pose obstacles to the successful implementation of the program.**
  - **While not all communities and schools were fully ready for the handover, community mobilization and readiness assessments were recognized as important factors in ensuring preparedness for implementing activities and fostering ownership.**

**Table 16. Key Enabling Factors and Challenges**

Key Enabling Factors	Key Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Institutional Commitment and Policy Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited readiness of communities and capacity for in-kind/cash distribution</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Involvement and Mobilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget constraints under the National School Meals Program</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusion of Transferable Components and Capacity Strengthening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inadequate filling of capacity gaps among communities and government institutions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited donor flexibility of WFP funding</li> </ul>

240. With strengthened institutions across levels, it would be anticipated that the project would continue contributing to improved learning outcomes of target school children. However, while there is national institutional commitment and policy, the limited budget available under the NSMP placed extraordinary responsibility on communities to uphold activities with limited evidence on the extent to which the communities and local markets could assume the procurement and supply of goods.

241. As highlighted, governments were aware of the handover, however capacity has been identified as uneven at both local government and community levels. The broad consensus, with some variance, was that communities were not fully ready, which was exacerbated by the pandemic. Insufficient time and resources to fully pilot a program based on cash-based transfers, homegrown school feeding and/or to adequately fill capacity gaps amongst the community and with government at the provincial and district levels also affected their readiness. As such, while there is commitment and policy support at the national level, the limited budget and readiness challenges among communities and government institutions posed obstacles to the successful implementation of the program. The Lao WFP CSP report also identified that the handover approach relies on strong community ownership of the school meals program, but the results of efforts to increase community ownership were mixed. While some communities successfully embraced the model -the reports mention- others faced challenges such as high turnover of staff, limited government funding, and lack of incentives for local authorities; “these factors posed challenges for capacity strengthening efforts and the management and monitoring of post- handover activities. The capabilities of communities were not reassessed just before handover, resulting in limited understanding of their readiness for the handover.”<sup>148</sup>

242. Another barrier, identified by at least three internal stakeholders from WFP, was the limitation in the use of the donor’s funds and its containment for the use of funds. However, it has been addressed by the next phase of the project, which incorporates the new literacy framework and the new WASH framework, as well as the local and regional procurement (LRP) component. Unlike the current phase, the new phase allocated 10% of its budget of \$25 million for local purchases, which allows them to buy local palm oil and other locally available cost-effective food items.

243. The handover process acknowledges the significance of community participation and includes assessments at the community and school levels to ensure preparedness for implementing activities. However, it should be noted that not all communities and schools were fully prepared for the handover, and it may not have been realistic to expect 100% readiness across all areas. Striking

<sup>148</sup> Evaluation of Lao People’s Democratic Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021, October 2021, p. vi.

a balance among factors such as government readiness, political momentum, and community contributions is essential in determining the appropriate timing for the handover.

244. Lastly, regarding gender bias and unequal contributions, it is worth noting that the burden of school feeding activities primarily fell on women, indicating a gender bias. It is crucial to promote a more balanced and equitable participation from both genders and enhance government procurement plans to involve the entire community.

# 3. Conclusions and recommendations

## 3.1. CONCLUSIONS

### Conclusion 1- Finding 1, 13

245. The project showed high relevance for and coherence with national policies and plans, aligning with the government's strategy and leveraging existing structures and mechanisms for implementation. Its focus areas—literacy, nutrition, and health—closely matched the government's development priorities. In addition, the handover of schools in Lao PDR under the project FY17 School Feeding Project was executed in accordance with the planned strategy and the capacity of national stakeholders. The process considered factors such as institutional readiness, political momentum, and practical realities. Technical assessments at regional and community levels were conducted to ensure efficient resource allocation and a context-specific approach. Capacity strengthening activities were carried out to enhance coordination, budget planning, and relevant skills. In terms of readiness for handover, the project under NSMP encounters challenges beyond budget constraints, as resource-scarce communities willingly shoulder the substantial burden of meal provision and the expectation for communities to sustain this contribution raises uncertainty about their capacity and duration of support. Beneficiary perceptions highlighted the program's positive impact on attendance, nutrition, and the learning environment. However, there are areas for improvement, including community-level assessments and capacity-building, addressing modality challenges (in-kind versus cash-based), sustainability, and ensuring ongoing support post-handover. There is a need for further adaptations in the program's design, particularly related to food procurement and delivery, to align with national policy and contexts and ensure sustainability.

246. The project also demonstrated coherence in its approach, with different interventions supporting and reinforcing each other. For example, the provision of school meals increased school attendance, which in turn facilitated the literacy and hygiene practices taught in schools. Overall, the project responded to identified needs; fostering an environment conducive to improving attendance and nutrition, though as discussed in subsequent sections challenges in its effectiveness and sustainability remain. By closely aligning with the institutional needs and strategic direction in the context of Lao PDR, the project demonstrated a strong sense of relevance.

### Conclusion 2- Finding 2, 4, 5, 7, 8.

247. The project demonstrated effectiveness in achieving most of its key objectives. Particularly notable are the efforts to strengthen local capacity, as evidenced by the improvement of literacy instruction through teacher training and provision of instructional materials. This contributed towards visible changes in children's learning habits and increased involvement. However, challenges were also noted in terms of sustainability of these literacy activities, as highlighted by limited monitoring and insufficient training time. These challenges affected the application of new learning techniques and teacher attendance and proportion of teachers trained.

248. The evaluation found provision of school meals under the project to have a positive effect on overall student attendance, enrolment, and reduced absenteeism. Parents found it easier to support their children's enrolment and attendance due to the availability of school meals, relieving them of some financial and parental responsibilities. Since improved enrollment trends were observed in both intervention and comparison schools it was not possible to establish a direct causal relationship between the intervention and the increased enrollment.

249. Although the project achieved most of its output targets (with some variations, e.g., it far exceeded some such as supply of learning material), definitive conclusions on the efficiency criteria cannot be drawn due to the gaps in the project monitoring data. This indicates the need for better monitoring & reporting.

### **Conclusion 3- Finding 3**

250.The program has also invested significantly in infrastructure, such as school-based gardens, kitchens, and latrines, as a step toward supporting institutionalization and sustainability of school feeding activities, as well as increased awareness and practices related to nutrition and hygiene. However, there are concerns about the extent to which these results will be sustained in daily routines and school processes, particularly with a decline in operational WASH infrastructure and the contribution of school gardens to meals in handed over schools.

### **Conclusion 4- Finding 4, 8**

251.WFP and its partners demonstrated adaptability in the face of COVID-19 by adopting alternative measures such as remote learning resources and distributing food assistance directly to households. The government's commitment and adherence to timelines also contributed to a successful transition and handover process. However, the pandemic also disrupted the learning process, leading to a knowledge gap among students and hindering their return to school.

### **Conclusion 5- Finding 1, 5, 11**

252.One positive unintended impact is that school feeding activities have provided parents with the assurance of child safety during school hours, allowing them to work without worrying about their children's well-being. This has increased income-generating opportunities for parents and reduced food expenses.

253.WFP demonstrated excellence in delivering commodities and providing school meals at scale, particularly in remote and challenging locations. The organization's capacity strengthening efforts primarily focused on national-level coordination, logistics, and policy support, while partnering with local and international NGOs for community-level capacity strengthening. This flexibility in leveraging external resources filled capacity gaps and allowed for adaptability.

254.However, challenges persist in ensuring equal access and outcomes for ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and addressing gender disparities. The targeting strategy of including remote districts with larger ethnic minority populations has presented transportation and language barriers, affecting the delivery of food assistance and learning outcomes. Limited accessibility infrastructure and inadequate support hinder the education of persons with disabilities, emphasizing the need for further inclusion measures. Gender disparities also persist, with more boys attending school and girls demonstrating better learning results.

### **Conclusion 6- Finding 6, 8**

255.The project had a substantial impact on the community, particularly in bridging the gap between students at intervention and comparison schools. It boosted school enrollment, attendance and attentiveness, supported farmers, increased community enthusiasm for the school lunch program, and fostered community-driven initiatives, among other accomplishments. While the pandemic appears to have affected learning scores at both intervention and comparison schools, a narrowing of the gap between these schools was observable. The project also demonstrated a positive ripple effect in the communities it served, sparking a greater interest in education and literacy and strengthening local capacities.

### **Conclusion 7- Finding 7, 10, 11**

256.However, the impact of the project on literacy was not uniformly experienced across all beneficiary groups. Significant variations were observed based on factors such as language, although other differences such as ethnicity observed in previous evaluations no longer appeared significant. This suggested the need to continue developing nuanced strategies in future interventions to ensure equitable outcomes, Further, while the project showed success in enhancing child literacy, the sustainability of these gains remains a concern once the project ends.

### **Conclusion 8 – Finding 9, 10**

257.The intervention has also positively influenced local agriculture by sourcing food locally. This not only supported local farmers but also helped in making the meals more nutritious and culturally

appropriate. The school feeding program was found to have potential nutritional benefits through increase dietary diversity, although these require further investigation and measurement.

258. Active VEDCs generate awareness and interest in school feeding activities and healthy foods and engaged and active teachers better monitor children's learning outcomes. Schools that trended lower in literacy, also trended lower in community contributions, parents' knowledge of health, and dietary diversity. They had limited participation from the VEDC and subsequently the community.

### **Conclusion 9- Finding 12, 13, 14**

259. Despite the overall effectiveness of the project, the sustainability of these gains is contingent upon several factors, including consistent teacher attendance, community enthusiasm, and governmental support. Teacher training, as part of the project, improved teaching practices and job satisfaction. However, inconsistencies in teacher attendance, possibly due to insufficient training time or limited monitoring, could threaten the sustainability of these improvements.

### **Conclusion 10- Finding 10, 11, 14**

260. At the community level, the project has successfully fostered a sense of responsibility and involvement. Nevertheless, the potential waning of community enthusiasm and over-reliance on their contributions after the project's conclusion is a concern, with existing challenges regarding the provision of school meals after the handover. The allocated budget per student per day is inadequate to ensure dietary diversity and regular meals, especially when community contributions are low. Transitioning from an in-kind to cash transfer modality has posed operational challenges, and some districts have reported decreases in cash contributions from community members.

261. Similarly, although women-only or women-inclusive groups associated with schools have shown encouraging involvement and active participation, suggesting a transformation in their roles within community, there are still disparities in community contributions based on gender. However, gender disparities also persist in community contributions, with women primarily taking on cooking responsibilities and men engaging in manual labor tasks. Moving forward, efforts should focus on promoting gender equality and inclusivity, ensuring a more balanced distribution of roles and responsibilities within the community.

262. Encouragingly, the project has already spurred several community-driven initiatives, which indicates the possibility of sustained impact even after the project's conclusion. In the context of governmental support, although the GoL has shown interest in sustaining the school feeding program, economic crises and limited resources have raised uncertainties regarding the prioritization of school feeding and related activities in the future.

263. Overall, the project program in Lao PDR has shown positive effects on enrollment, attendance, and community engagement. And while sustainability looks promising based on community involvement and governmental interest, there are significant challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the continuity and longevity of the project's results given the transition to a community-driven and cash-based modality. Further adaptations, increased resources, and ongoing support are needed to address these challenges and enhance the program's effectiveness and impact.

## **3.2. LESSONS**

264. Well-designed interventions can help overcome persistent challenges such as ethnic and gender-based differences in learning and health outcomes amongst school-age children. The project intervention, by targeting the more left behind areas and vulnerable population, did not just help narrow the overall differences across project and comparison schools but also helped bridge the gap between ethnic and gender-based groups.

265. Enhancing community involvement and ownership in school feeding activities leads to better sustainability, with sufficient national support, oversight and budget. Promoting community contributions within the bounds of the community's possibilities and limitations and assessing community readiness and capacity to contribute (and how much) are important steps.

266. Clarity on roles and responsibilities, along with effective collaboration between different government departments and levels (national, provincial and district), NGOs, and donors, is crucial for successful program implementation and handover.
267. Providing sufficient time for training and support to government partners and stakeholders involved in program management (across different levels and positions) helps ensure a smooth transition and effective implementation. Particularly, it is crucial to incorporate a comprehensive capacity building plan for local-level functionaries.
268. There is a need for more intentional efforts to mainstream, monitor and measure girls and women's equality, empowerment and inclusivity outcomes within the context of the project activities and the school handover. Government and community capacities in the subject require enhancement to ensure capabilities and greater visibility of gender sensitivity.
269. Achieving literacy improvements requires systematic pedagogical interventions along with tailored instructional strategies and resources, such as developing foundational reading and writing skills. Additionally, it is essential to provide continuous professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their teaching methodologies and keep up with evolving pedagogical practices. By incorporating these measures, is more likely to create a conducive environment for effective literacy instruction and ensure sustainable progress in enhancing overall literacy levels.

### **3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping: Short/medium/long-term	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities	Priority: High/medium	By when
1	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Investigating causes of decline in learning scores for future interventions: Despite the increase in enrollment, attendance and attentiveness, which helped narrow the gap between comparison and intervention scores, the learning scores declined across all schools included in this study. This was likely the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however there is still a need for specific investigation and continued monitoring to (dis)confirm this. Therefore, WFP should collaborate with other partners such as UNICEF and the World Bank for targeted studies to investigate this decline and accordingly revise (or advise) future interventions in Lao PDR.</p> <p>Given the observed patterns and historical presence supporting schools through McGovern-Dole, it is essential for WFP to critically assess its strategic position concerning the delivery of literacy interventions in Lao PDR. Should WFP sustain its commitment to literacy initiatives through USDA McGovern-Dole, there is a pronounced need to reinforce the literacy component in subsequent proposals. Specifically, this should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring timely engagement with the most appropriate partners with technical capacity in this area for informing design and ensuring effective collaboration in its implementation</li> <li>• Refining the intervention framework to be more systematic</li> <li>• Advocating for prolonged intervention durations to achieve sustainable impacts</li> </ul> <p>If literacy outcomes, which are indirectly supported by school feeding, move beyond the primary remit of WFP, a strategic reassessment of WFP's engagement in literacy interventions as a complementary activity to SFP engagement should be undertaken.</p>	Medium	WFP CO, specifically M&E, with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	6-12 months
2	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Streamline and improve monitoring mechanisms: The project monitoring framework is robust, though could be streamlined and further targeted to country contexts. While this is outside the scope of WFP work, it is recommended to consider advocating for revisions to have fewer mandatory core- and a selection of project-specific indicators to ensure monitoring and evaluation frameworks and mechanisms are manageable and support targeted and context-specific learning agendas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the case of Lao PDR, improved mechanisms to effectively track teacher attendance and application of new learning techniques would be beneficial, to better understand the extent of contribution to learning outcomes. Indicators related to agriculture, procurement, and market development activities may also</li> </ul>	Medium	WFP CO, specifically M&E, with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	6-12 months

	<p>require more extensive monitoring in order to understand market capacity to contribute and sustain a nutrition-sensitive school feeding program. WFP should support and engage GoL in understanding these challenges and potential solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additionally, continue to revise and develop a plan for monitoring the transition and handover. This will also require capacity strengthening at national and local levels with regards to monitoring.</li> <li>• Emphasize the importance of understanding what is happening in the schools and the impact of the program, as well as how demonstrating the positive outcomes and impact of the program can serve as a means for effective resource mobilization.</li> </ul>					
3	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Increased community-level assessments and capacity strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more comprehensive yet concise process for community-level assessments that gather localized needs, challenges, and preferences, as well as resource requirements. These assessments can be effectively used to inform the implementation of the school feeding program, ensuring it is context-specific and responsive.</li> <li>• Support the government in integrating relevant components in their regular school inspections.</li> </ul>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	12-24 months
4	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Strengthen capacity and collaboration within and between local government entities towards the promotion of ownership: WFP should actively engage and collaborate with local governments to ensure the integration of school feeding programs into national policies and frameworks. This collaboration should include joint planning, resource allocation, and capacity-building efforts to promote long-term sustainability.</p> <p>In addition, prioritize timely and sufficient capacity-building initiatives at the community and local institutional levels. This includes training local staff, teachers, and community members on program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. By building local capacity and promoting ownership, the program can become more sustainable and effectively tailored to the specific needs of the communities.</p>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	High	12-24 months
5	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Pay specific attention to addressing disparities among ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and gender inequalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop targeted strategies and interventions to monitor and improve equal access, outcomes, and inclusion for these marginalized groups. This may involve</li> </ul>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	Medium	12-24 months

	<p>addressing transportation and language barriers, enhancing accessibility infrastructure, and providing adequate support for persons with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additionally, it is recommended to promote gender equality and social inclusion by engaging more women in project implementation and seeking collaborations with potential women’s empowerment projects.</li> <li>• Develop targeted interventions to increase VEDC/community involvement.</li> </ul>					
6	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Diversify funding sources: To mitigate the risks associated with limited budgets and donor dependency, WFP should explore opportunities to diversify funding sources. This could involve engaging with private sector partners, philanthropic organizations, and other potential stakeholders to secure additional financial support for the program.</p>	Medium	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	Medium	12-24 months
7	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Promote sustainable agriculture and local procurement: WFP should support initiatives that promote sustainable agriculture practices and local procurement of food items. This can contribute to local economic development, enhance food security, and reduce dependence on external sources. Investing in agricultural training, supporting farmers' cooperatives, and facilitating access to markets can strengthen the resilience of communities and create long-term benefits.</p>	Long-term	WFP CO with support from WFP RB	Country office	Low	24-36 months

By implementing these recommendations, WFP can enhance the sustainability of its interventions, promote local ownership and capacity, and create lasting positive impacts on the communities it serves.

# Annexes

## Annex 1. Summary of Terms of Reference

### 1. BACKGROUND

1. The terms of reference (ToR) for the McGovern-Dole FY2017-2021 have been prepared by the WFP Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) Country Office (CO) based on consultations with relevant stakeholders and following the guidance of the standard Decentralized Evaluation (DE) ToR template. The purpose of these terms of reference is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and to specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

2. The terms of references are for an end-line evaluation of WFP Lao PDR's school feeding programme under the USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 project. The end-line evaluation aims to critically and objectively evaluate the performance of the project for the purposes of learning and accountability covering from the time of inception of the project (since April 2018) to October 2022. This evaluation is commissioned by WFP Lao PDR CO and will commence from 28 November 2022 to 31 July 2023. In addition, the TOR aims to 1) provide key learning themes, project scope, and other key information to guide the evaluation team in conducting the evaluation; and 2) to involve stakeholders early on, keeping them informed of progress achieved at the end of the programme implementation, and providing opportunities for inputs to secure their support and commitment to the findings and recommendations from this endline evaluation.
3. The evaluation will provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the results of the project to enable WFP Lao PDR CO, the Government of Lao PDR, and Cooperating Partners (CPs) to demonstrate results and learning to feed into future school feeding initiatives, in particular the government-led and managed National School Meals Program (NSMP), while also making it possible to quantify the impacts of the project.
4. The purpose of the end-line evaluation will serve several critical purposes: (1) measure performance indicators for the McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives as well as the highest-level results (outcomes) that feed into the strategic objectives as part of the final evaluations; and (2) provide a situational analysis at the end of the project's implementation period and provide important context necessary for the final evaluation to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.
5. The evaluation process within WFP will be managed by an evaluation manager appointed by WFP Lao PDR's Country Director. This evaluation manager will be the main focal point for the day-to-day contact during the evaluation period. An external independent firm (evaluation team) will be contracted to carry out the actual evaluation and will appoint their own evaluation team leader and managers.
6. In 2017, WFP Lao PDR was awarded \$27.4 million to implement the USDA McGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme FY2017-2021 Programme in 8 target provinces (Phongsaly, Oudumxay, Luang Namtha, Luang Prabang, Saravane, Sekong, Attapeu and Khammouane) over a four year period. As part of this, the

project provided school lunch in 1,430 schools, supported inclusion of agriculture and nutrition education as part of school curriculum, built capacities of community, supported government in take-over of project across several schools under its national school meals program, and established systems for monitoring the progress of the project.

## 1.2 CONTEXT

7. The World Food Programme (WFP) received US\$ 27.4 million to implement a school feeding project in Lao PDR, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) McGovern-Dole program. The programme's strategic objectives are to improve the literacy of school-age children (McGovern-Dole's SO1) and increase the use of health and dietary practices (McGovern-Dole's SO2). These strategic objectives are achieved through various activities and intermediate outcomes visualized in the Results Framework (Annex 7). The McGovern-Dole support also contributes to Strategic Outcome 1 of WFP's Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021: *school children in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021* and Strategic Outcome 1 of WFP Country Strategic Plan 2022-2026: *Schoolchildren in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals programme by 2026*. The McGovern-Dole award was granted for an initial duration of four years but was extended to February 2023. The award covered 8 provinces, including Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Luangprabang, Khammouane, Attapeu, Saravane, and Sekong.
8. Lao PDR has progressed steadily across multiple economic, health and nutrition, education, and poverty indicators over the past three decades, and the country aims to graduate from its status as one of 47 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by 2024. Between 2004–2006 and 2016-2018, undernourishment in Laos declined from 27 percent to 16.5 percent. Under-five mortality also halved between 1995 and 2015. More children are attending school, with the proportion of children over age 6 who have never attended school falling from 38 percent in 1995 to 13 percent in 2015. Children are also attending school at an early age, with national primary enrolment rates of the 6-11 year-olds increasing from 86 percent in the 2007 school year to 98 percent in 2021. As of the 2019/20 school year, 82 percent of all 5-year-olds attended school nationally, with equal numbers of boys and girls.<sup>149</sup>
9. Yet despite the considerable progress, there is still far to go to tackle poverty and malnutrition, and improve education, water access and hygiene and sanitation. Nearly 19 percent of the population live under \$1.90 a day. Overall, 33 percent of children under the age of 5 are stunted, while 21.1 percent are underweight, and 44.1 percent suffer from anaemia. For school-aged children (ages 5–19), 9 percent are thin or severely thin – on par with Indonesia and the Philippines (10 percent). Over four out of five households had source water contaminated with *E. coli*.
10. The country has experienced unequal growth, with large disparities between the more remote, upland provinces and lowland provinces, between ethnicities, and between genders. There are 49 officially recognized ethnicities, classified into four ethno-linguistic families: Lao-Tai, Hmong-Mien, Sino-Tibetan, and Mon-Khmer. The majority Lao-Tai population has a 75.7 percent literacy rate, while literacy among the other ethno-linguistic groups is below 40 percent. Only 19.3 percent of Mon-Khmer children attend upper secondary school or higher. Women across all ethno-linguistic groups have lower literacy rates (65% for female, and 72% for male).
11. School feeding is seen as a key component of these strategies and a platform for addressing hunger and nutrition awareness as well as increasing attendance and contributing to learning outcomes. The Nutrition Strategy/Plan of Action and Social Protection Strategy specifically highlight the National School Meals Program as a core instrument to improve diets and nutrient intake.

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<sup>149</sup> Source: LSIS II (2017)

### **Agriculture (smallholder farmers) and food security**

12. Agriculture and rural livelihoods provide income to more than two-thirds of the population in Lao PDR, although only 4 percent of the total area in Lao PDR is arable – the smallest amount of any country in Southeast Asia – due to its mountainous terrain. Most of this land is devoted to paddy production, with glutinous (sticky) rice making up almost 80 percent of rice production.

### **Education and literacy**

13. There are 8,854 primary schools (public and private) and 3,432 pre-primary schools in Lao PDR. Compulsory education lasts nine years in the country, from Grade 1 (G1) through G9. When accessible, children typically attend pre-primary school from ages 3–5, enter primary school at age 6 and attend Grades 1–5 until age 10. There are four grades in lower secondary school (G6–G9), and three grades in upper secondary school (G10–G12). The school year generally runs for 175 days from September to June. Enrolment reached 770,659 students in public and private primary schools in the 2018/19 school year, and 66 percent of new entrants in G1 had pre-school experience. On average, there are fewer than 100 students per primary school in Lao PDR, which adds to the challenge and expense to reach each school in the country.<sup>150</sup>
14. While significant progress has been made across all levels of the Lao education structure in previous decades, literacy remains a significant challenge with many students lacking the basic literacy skills necessary to engage in classroom learning. One assessment showed that over 30 percent of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders could not read a single word, and among those who could read, 57 percent did not understand what they had just read. This issue is most pronounced in early grades where students first begin to fall behind in Lao language and readings skills, particularly for non-Lao speaking students. Inadequate learning at the primary level has flow-on effects to higher levels of education. Nationally, 83 percent of students who enrol in G1 complete G5, 51 percent complete lower secondary school, and 33 percent complete upper secondary school.

### **Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)**

15. Accessing clean water and sanitation facilities remains a critical need in most schools in Lao PDR and is a priority of the MoES. According to MoES data from 2017, only 66 percent of primary schools in Lao PDR had both access to water and sanitation facilities. This lack of access can have detrimental effects on attendance, enrolment, and learning outcomes, and rural and marginalized communities are most affected. Diarrheal disease and parasitic infections – both sanitation-related – are leading causes of mortality and malnutrition through reduction in food intake leading to a decrease in absorption of nutrients especially in the under-five age group and missed school days and disability among children of all ages.

### **Overview of the Lao PDR School feeding program**

16. With nearly 90 percent of children of primary school age attending primary schools, the Government of Lao PDR clearly sees schools as a key platform through which to deliver an essential integrated package of health and nutrition services to children. The enrolment rate has been risen from 86 percent in 2007 to 98.8 percent in 2021.
17. School feeding has gained importance among government priorities for its role in increasing attendance, educational outcomes and improving the nutritional status of school-aged children. The 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan attributes increased attendance and lower

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<sup>150</sup> Source: MoES – EMIS (2021)

drop-out rates to school lunch and food supplements, among other initiatives (p.32–33), and highlights the importance of promoting a diverse diet and eating behavior among children through school feeding, as well as micronutrient supplementation and deworming (p.34). The 2014 Policy on Promoting School Lunch states as one of its objectives, “instill good values and principles of proper nutrition and good health practices with children acting as agents of change at home and in the communities” (p.4–5).

18. The first school feeding program (SFP) in the country began in 2002, when WFP began distributing a mid-morning snack of corn-soya blend (CSB) to students in the three northern provinces of Phongsaly, Luangnamtha and Oudomxai. In 2012, WFP carried out a “Home Grown School Feeding” cash-based pilot project in Oudxomai and Phongsaly provinces. The Government took over the pilot schools and used the pilot to design their own model, which became the cash-based NSMP. With funding from the World Bank, the NSMP gradually expanded to cover over 24,600 students in 306 schools across 10 districts by the end of 2018.
19. Since 2014, WFP has moved away from simply providing school meals towards capacity strengthening of schools, communities and the Government, with the aim for an eventual handover of the school feeding program to the GoL, in line with WFP’s global School Feeding Strategy 2020–2030, which envisions a shift from direct implementation to supporting the transition and scale up of national programs.
20. In May 2018, WFP and the MoES signed a School Feeding Handover Plan, which outlined a phased approach to the handover of SFPs. WFP-supported programs in the first 515 schools in nine districts were handed over under the government take over in July 2019, and in September 2021, WFP handed over school feeding programs in the remaining 915 schools to the government of Lao PDR.
21. The successful first phase of the handover in 2019, and the second phase hand over in 2021, were made possible through close engagement with the Government and communities; it was the culmination of support to institutional frameworks, legislation, school meals management and school infrastructure. Following the agreement in 2018, a School Meals Handover Committee within MoES – as well as committees at the provincial and district levels - were established. WFP also supported the development of several decrees and legislation, including a Prime Minister’s Decree to integrate school feeding into the national budget (endorsed in May 2022) and guidelines on school meals implementation at national, provincial, district and community levels. In the 2019-2020 school year, the Government re-allocated funds to provide cash to the 821 schools that were part of the NSMP, representing the first ever domestic budget allocation to school feeding.
22. Today in Lao PDR, approximately one-third of all primary and pre-primary school children (almost 2,800 schools) receive school lunch through SFPs implemented by the GoL (through the NSMP), WFP and CRS. WFP directly supports 64,000 pre-primary and primary school students in 707 schools across 17 districts in Vientiane Capital and 10 provinces. MoES supports 192,513 students in 1,782 schools in 48 districts through the NSMP. CRS supports 28,171 children in 302 schools across six districts in Savannakhet Province. In addition, the Humana People to People organization supports two schools in Borikhamxay Province.
23. The current SFPs offer a mix of in-kind food commodities, paired with awareness raising and community activities, as well as cash disbursements. The Government’s NSMP currently provides a cash budget of LAK 800 child/day, used by schools for the local procurement of food items. Students in schools supported by WFP receive a daily lunch consisting of fortified rice, lentils, canned fish, and fortified vegetable oil through USDA. CRS provides a similar food basket. The in-kind food provided is supplemented by fresh produce (meat, fish, eggs and green leafy vegetables or root vegetables) donated by parents and the community to provide more nutritious and diversified lunches for the children. WFP also provides take-home rations of rice for cooks and storekeepers, once per semester, as an incentive.

24. Lao PDR has the highest under-5 child mortality rate in the region, and at 16.5 percent, the prevalence of undernourishment in the population in Lao PDR is higher than any other South-East Asian countries with the exception of Timor-Leste. Stunting among children under 5 is prevalent among all income levels, from 48 percent for the poorest quintile (“very high” according to World Health Organization (WHO) classification) to 13.9 percent for the richest (medium, WHO classification). Over 30 percent of children under 5 from the poorest quintile and 25 percent from the second-poorest quintile are underweight.
25. It is clear that there is a need for further education and awareness-raising about nutrition and the need for diverse, healthy diets – not only in the first 1,000 days but throughout childhood and adolescence to ensure that children grow up to realize their potential. If the early gains from the first 1,000 days are to be sustained, and children are to achieve their full potential as adults, they need to maintain good health and nutrition throughout the periods of development that continue through the first 8,000 days of life. By its School Feeding Strategy 2020-2023, WFP aims to provide an integrated package of support to schoolchildren to invest in the critical window of child development.

### **Nutrition implementation strategy**

26. In 2015, the GoL approved its National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016–2020. The Government laid out the key drivers of malnutrition in Lao PDR and outlined a strategic framework for the next 10 years that aims to reduce maternal and child malnutrition rates while improving the nutritional status and food security of the country’s multi-ethnic population.
27. The school feeding program can directly and indirectly address some of the interconnected factors leading to malnutrition and food security. School lunches are likely to improve nutrient intake and dietary diversity while also alleviating the economic burden for vulnerable families by reducing household’s food expenditure. These savings can then be allocated towards other households’ essential needs, such as access to health care, soap and detergent, and other items that can contribute to a more sanitary environment. WASH activities will address the poor environmental hygiene that lead to food, water, and vector-borne diseases, in addition it will provide dignity to the students. Furthermore, gender-responsive nutrition campaigns can reduce the unpaid burden of care of women and girls.
28. WFP’s experience implementing nutrition awareness campaigns showed that villagers were engaged when learning in their own language. By leveraging the lessons learned from its previous nutrition interventions as part of broader nutrition awareness raising, this project has an opportunity to have an impact on maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN).

### **Policy Support/Government Capacity Strengthening**

29. High level policy support and capacity strengthening form the backbone of the transition to the NSMP under full government ownership in 2021. Through support to national legislation and guidelines, the strengthening of technical capacity, and the facilitation of knowledge sharing, The Government of Lao PDR has taken over management of school feeding of 515 schools in 2019, and other 915 schools in 2021 in the 31 target districts within the 8 target provinces<sup>151</sup>

## **2.Reasons for the evaluation**

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<sup>151</sup> The 8 target provinces: Phongsaly, Louangnamtha, Luangprabang, Oudomxay, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu.

## 2. RATIONALE

30. WFP Lao PDR CO is commissioning an activity evaluation as an end-line evaluation for the USDA McGovern Dole FY17 award. The McGovern-Dole project in support of WFP's School Feeding Program (SFP) activities in Lao PDR, will be evaluated from the period November 2022 to July 2023 (inception phase of the evaluation process to submission of the final report), in order to be able to critically and objectively assess performance of the project for the purposes of learning and accountability.
31. The end-line evaluation is being commissioned as the final stage in the evaluation cycle to fulfil USDA's McGovern-Dole project requirement to critically and objectively evaluate the implementation and performance with an eye to generating recommendations that will inform WFP and partners' support to strengthening the expanding NSMP, as well as the ongoing FY20 USDA McGovern-Dole project implementation.

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES

32. Evaluations serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability (performance and results of the operation) and learning (the reasons why certain results occurred, and lessons learned for the continuance of school feeding in Lao PDR) for WFP and partners, including government and other stakeholders, to strengthen the NSMP. Evaluation findings will also be used by the key government counterparts for this project, most notably the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES).
  - **Accountability** – The evaluation processes will assess and report on the performance and results of the USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding project during the project period. For accountability, the evaluation will assess whether targeted beneficiaries have received services as expected, and if the project has achieved the stated goals and objectives aligned with the results frameworks and assumptions comparing to the baseline and mid-term findings. In addition, the evaluation will also examine to what extent recommendations of the midterm were incorporated. what all course-corrections were done.
  - **Learning** – The evaluation processes will determine the reasons why certain results occurred or not to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. They will provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. Findings will be actively disseminated, and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson sharing systems. For learning, the evaluation components will aim at critically and objectively reviewing and taking stock of participants' implementation experience and the implementation environment.

### 2.2 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

33. The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of WFP internal and external stakeholders. A number of stakeholders will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process in light of their expected interest in the results of the end-line evaluation and relative power to influence the results of the programme being evaluated. Table 1 provides a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which should be deepened by the evaluation team as part of the inception phase.
34. Accountability to affected populations is tied to WFP's commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in WFP work. WFP is committed to ensuring gender equality, equity and inclusion in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of women, men,

boys and girls from different groups (including persons with disabilities, the elderly and persons with other diversities (such as ethnic and linguistic).

35. The primary users of this evaluation will be:

- a. WFP Lao PDR and its partners and NGOs such as Big Brother Mouse (BBM), Plan International (PI), and The World Bank in decision-making, notably related to programme implementation, design and partnerships;
- b. USDA as funder for the project and the evaluation;
- c. WFP's Regional Bureau Bangkok (RBB) is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, programme support, and oversight;
- d. WFP HQ may use evaluations for wider organizational learning and accountability as well as program support on school feeding;
- e. WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into evaluation syntheses as well as for annual reporting to the Executive Board;
- f. The government at the national and sub-national levels are expected to take over the management and monitoring of the school feeding program over time, therefore, information on whether the programme is yielding the desired results is of primary importance. The Ministry of Education and Sports will use evaluation findings as inputs for its take-over strategy;
- g. Other partners such as World Bank, UN agencies and INGOs such as BBM, Plan International, Save the Children International, and the World Bank involved in the education sector may also be interested in the results of the evaluation.

36. The evaluation will be shared and disseminated to the primary users primarily through email. An internal and external communication plan will be prepared. The communication plan will identify the means and channels for sharing and disseminating the evaluation to the primary users in each respective phase.

**Table 1: Preliminary stakeholder analysis**

Stakeholders	Interest and involvement in the evaluation
<b>Internal (WFP) stakeholders</b>	
<b>WFP country office (CO) in Lao PDR</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - Responsible for the planning and implementation of WFP interventions at country level. The country office has an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making. It is also called upon to account internally as well as to its beneficiaries and partners for performance and results of its programmes. The country office will be involved in using evaluation findings from this end-line evaluation for its support to strengthening the expanding NSMP, as well as for strengthening programme implementation of the USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 school feeding project.
<b>WFP field offices in Phongsaly, Oudomxay and Pakse</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - Responsible for day-to-day programme implementation. The field offices liaise with stakeholders at decentralized levels and has direct beneficiary contact. They will be affected by the outcome of the evaluation.

<b>Regional bureau (RB) for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - Responsible for both oversight of country offices and technical guidance and support, the regional bureau management has an interest in an independent/impartial account of operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply this learning to other country offices. The regional bureau will be involved in the planning of the next programme, thus it is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, programme support, and oversight. The regional evaluation officers support country office/regional bureau management to ensure quality, credible and useful decentralized evaluations.
<b>WFP HQ divisions</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - WFP headquarters divisions are responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of normative guidance on corporate programme themes, activities and modalities, as well as of overarching corporate policies and strategies. They also have an interest in the lessons that emerge from evaluations, as many may have relevance beyond the geographical area of focus. Relevant headquarters units should be consulted from the planning phase to ensure that key policy, strategic and programmatic considerations are understood from the onset of the evaluation. They may use the evaluation for wider organizational learning and accountability.
<b>WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV)</b>	<b>Primary stakeholder</b> – The Office of Evaluation has a stake in ensuring that decentralized evaluations deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality as well as roles and accountabilities of various decentralized evaluation stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy. It may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into centralized evaluations, evaluation syntheses or other learning products.
<b>WFP Executive Board (EB)</b>	<b>Primary stakeholder</b> – the Executive Board provides final oversight of WFP programmes and guidance to programmes. The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP programmes. This evaluation will not be presented to the Executive Board, but its findings may feed into thematic and/or regional syntheses and corporate learning processes.
<b>External stakeholders</b>	
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Key informants and primary/secondary stakeholders</b> - As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. Among the beneficiaries receiving capacity strengthening are schoolteachers, women and men small-holder farmers, women and men members of Village Education Development Committees and the students themselves. The level of participation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups will be determined and their respective perspectives will be sought.
<b>Government of Lao PDR</b>	<b>Key informants and primary stakeholder</b> - The Government has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonized with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability will be of particular interest. Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) is one of the key partners in the design and implementation of School Meals activities.

	At sub-national level, Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS), District Education and Sport Bureau (DESB), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO), District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO), Provincial Health Office (PHO), District Health Office (DHO), and District Lao Women Union will all play key roles at implementation level.
<b>United Nations country team (UNCT)</b>	<b>Secondary stakeholder</b> - The harmonized action of the UNCT should contribute to the realization of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that WFP programmes are effective in contributing to the United Nations concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level.
<b>Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)</b>  Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Save the Children International, Room To Read, Lutheran World Federation, Comité de Coopération avec le Laos	<b>Key informants and primary stakeholder</b> - NGOs are WFP partners for the implementation of some activities while at the same time having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientation and partnerships. They will be involved in using evaluation findings from this end-line evaluation for programme implementation.
<b>Donor</b>  USDA,	<b>Primary</b> - The key donors for this school feeding programme is USDA McGovern-Dole. WFP interventions are voluntarily funded by a number of donors. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programmes. USDA has specific interest in ensuring that operational performance reflects USDA standards and accountability requirements, as well as an interest in learning to inform changes in project strategy, results framework, and critical assumptions. That is the main reason for including USDA in the Evaluation Reference Group.
<b>Others</b>  DFAT, Japan, JAWFP, Russia Embassy, Chinese private sector, YUM and World Bank	A wide range of actors, such as other donors, local suppliers, school administrators and local communities, are involved in the provision of school meals and are expected to benefit from some of the capacity development activities. WFP-Lao PDR also has established partnerships with the World Bank, Australian DFAT, FAO, and Lao Women’s Union to achieve project objectives. Their respective perspectives will be sought during the evaluation as the engagement of these actors influences the effectiveness of the programme as well as its sustainability.

### 3. SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

#### 3.1. SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

37. The World Food Programme (WFP) received US\$ 27.4 million to implement a school feeding project in Lao PDR, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) McGovern-Dole program on improving literacy of school-age children (McGovern-Dole's SO1); increasing use of health and dietary practices (McGovern-Dole's SO2). The McGovern-Dole support contributes to Strategic Outcome 1 of WFP Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021: *school children in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021* and the Strategic Outcome 1 of WFP Country Strategic Plan 2022-2026: *Schoolchildren in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals programme by 2026*. The McGovern-Dole award was for an initial duration of four years but extended to February 2023, and covered 8 provinces, including Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Luangprabang, Khammouane, Attapeu, Saravane, and Sekong. The project activities to achieve the strategic outcome are, amongst others, provision of school meals to children in Lao PDR, provision of support packages to communities such as literacy strengthening, improving water and sanitation and strengthening the capacity of communities to take and lead the implementation of school feeding.
35. The support reaches approximately 140,000 children, 13,000 school administrators and officials including teachers, 10,000 VEDC members, 3,000 cooks and 1,500 storekeepers, in 31 districts in 8 provinces. This includes areas directly supported by WFP and 15 schools in Nakai District in Khammouane Province supported by an NGO partner - the Education for Development Fund (EDF-Lao). WFP has also been working with three other partners to support the promotion of literacy, namely Plan International, Big Brother Mouse (BBM), and Room To Read (RtR). These three organizations provide books, community engagement, and teacher training to target schools and conduct targeted literacy activities for children in these schools. WFP has been working with World Education to strengthen Big Brother Mouse (BBM)'s capacity to deliver literacy promotion activities. WFP has also been working with the Department of Water (Namsaat) of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve health and hygiene practices. Also, WFP has worked in partnership with two other NGOs – LWF and CCL to support the review and follow-up of the handed over schools in Viengkhoukha, Nalae and Bounneua districts.
36. WFP handed over school feeding programmes in 515 schools in July 2019 and programmes in the remaining 915 schools in September 2021. Capacity strengthening activities have been implemented at all levels to lead and drive school meals implementation forward. Awareness raising and support to central level were also provided including the Prime Minister's Office, National Assembly and the Ministry of Education, so as to increase the knowledge about school meals as an important element in social safety-net policies and to ensure the Government's budget allocation for taking over school meals. In this regard, study visits for the government officials responsible for school meals were organized to neighbouring countries (Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia). At the community level, peer-to-peer exchange visits have also been organized.
38. In 2018, the baseline study for the FY17 McGovern-Dole project was conducted and found that the USDA McGovern-Dole school feeding project was well-positioned to continue with the school meal activities carried out under the FY14 award and for a smooth handover to MoES at the end of the project in 2021. In 2021, mid-term review of USDA McGD FY17 School Feeding was conducted and found that the SFP FY17 was completely aligned with government's policies and strategies for improving nutrition, education, gender and social equality in the country's context.
39. It was also coherent with WFP's larger strategy to gradually shift from direct implementation of food assistance to providing technical and policy support to the government, as a result of which, handover of schools to NSMP had been initiated and tested throughout the FY17 project cycle.

The project had succeeded in establishing education, school meals, school gardens and WASH related infrastructure for all schools. Capacities of all key stakeholders at the community level (cooks, storekeepers, teachers, VWUs etc.), district, provincial level and national levels (with government officials of different departments) had been strengthened prior to handover of schools. For the recently handed-over schools, this is expected to result in improved outcomes at end-line.

40. The FY17 project has also proved to be a major learning step in the trajectory of school meal project in Lao PDR's context. It has allowed for extensive piloting and review of different project components which has produced learnings relevant for school feeding programs as a whole (as well as other future programs in the space of education and nutrition).

### **3.2. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**

41. The end-line is part of an evaluation plan that includes three key products: a baseline evaluation, a mid-term review, and a final evaluation. The evaluations will be carried out by an independent evaluation firm in a representative sample of the intervention areas in all target districts, including areas with WASH and literacy activities, and all types of beneficiaries. The evaluation will be managed by WFP's Lao PDR Country Office with the support from the Regional Evaluation Officer, and the School-Based Programs Evaluation Officer and Office of Evaluation at WFP's Headquarters.
42. The end-line evaluation will serve several critical purposes: (1) measure performance indicators for McGovern-Dole's strategic objectives as well as the highest-level results (outcomes) that feed into the strategic objectives as part of the end-line evaluations, (2) provide a situational analysis at the final stage of the project and confirm the full evaluation design as prepared during the inception period. This analysis will inform project implementation and will provide important context necessary for the end-line evaluation to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.
43. The end-line evaluation will therefore be designed to include data collection for indicators that are suitable for both monitoring and evaluation, and integration of gender, equity and wider inclusion issues. The end-line evaluation will also include evaluation questions, so that the indicators and data collection will support the future evaluations, as well as the specific USDA Learning Agenda research questions.

## **4. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **4.1. EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND CRITERIA**

44. The evaluation will address the following key questions, which will be further developed and tailored by the evaluation team in a detailed evaluation matrix during the inception phase. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the key lessons and performance of the end-line evaluation of the USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding Programme, with a view to informing future strategic and operational decisions.
45. The evaluation should analyse how gender, equity and wider inclusion objectives and GEWE mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and whether the evaluation subject has been guided by WFP and system-wide objectives on GEWE. The gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions should be integrated into all evaluation criteria as appropriate.
46. The evaluation will apply the international evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability. Gender equality and empowerment of women should be mainstreamed

throughout. The table below outlines those focus areas, along with key evaluation questions and the relevant data sources.

**Table 2: Evaluation questions and criteria**

Evaluation questions - End-line	Criteria
<b>EQ1</b> – How relevant and influential has the project been with regard the Government of Laos' current and future plans in school feeding?	Relevance
<b>EQ2</b> – How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?	Effectiveness and Efficiency
<b>EQ3</b> – How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts?	Impact
<b>EQ4</b> – The extent to which the programme interventions continue post handover of school feeding programme.	Sustainability

47. **The evaluation** should analyse how GEWE objectives and GEWE mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and whether the objectives have been guided by WFP and system-wide objectives on GEWE. The GEWE dimensions should be integrated into all evaluation criteria as appropriate.
48. **The end-line conclusion** should draw together what the findings to these questions mean for implementation and monitoring: what needs to be modified or strengthened to maximise results?
49. **End-line recommendations** should outline any missing concrete steps to enabling a continuation of a sustainable NSMP following handover of the schools under the USDA McGovern-Dole FY2017 Program, i.e. school meals, water access, hygiene promotion, literacy, community mobilization, agricultural support, policy support, and health and nutrition awareness activities, through strengthened capacities of the host government and communities in school feeding. The recommendations should take into consideration the geographic, political, economic, and enabling environment. Additionally, the lessons learned, challenges and recommendations related to GEWE must also be included and presented in the findings of this end-line evaluation.

#### 4.2. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

50. The methodology will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase in accordance with the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) as well as USDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Also, the methodology for this end-line should be in line with its baseline and mid-term. Where necessary, the same data collection tools and protocols should be used at endline to allow for comparison of quantitative results over time. Based on the requirements described in the TORs, further analysis done at inception phase and consultations with key stakeholders, the end-line team will formulate an appropriate evaluation design, sampling strategy, and methodological approach for each stage of evaluation process.
51. The methodology chosen should demonstrate attention to impartiality and reduction of bias by relying on mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative, participatory etc.) and different primary and secondary data sources that are systematically triangulated (documents from different sources; a range of stakeholder groups, including pre-primary (5 years) and primary school students (6-11 years), teachers, parents, cooks, storekeepers, members of the Village Education Development Committees and village leaders; direct observation in different locations; across evaluators; across methods etc.). It will take into account any challenges to data availability, validity or reliability, as well as any budget and timing constraints. The evaluation questions, lines of inquiry, indicators,

data sources and data collection methods will be brought together in an evaluation matrix, which will form the basis of the sampling approach and data collection and analysis instruments (desk review, interview and observation guides, survey questionnaires etc.). All data collection will be in alignment with WFP's Beneficiary Personal Data Protection and Child Protection standards.

52. The methodology should be sensitive in terms of GEWE, equity and inclusion, indicating how the perspectives and voices of diverse groups (men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups) will be sought and taken into account. The methodology should ensure that primary data collected is disaggregated by sex and age; an explanation should be provided if this is not possible.
53. Looking for explicit consideration of gender and equity/inclusion in the data after fieldwork is too late; the evaluation team must have a clear and detailed plan for collecting data from women and men in gender and equity-sensitive ways before fieldwork begins.
54. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect gender and equity analysis. The findings should include a discussion on intended and unintended effects of the intervention on gender equality and equity dimensions. The report should provide lessons/challenges/recommendations for conducting gender and equity-responsive evaluations in the future.
55. There is already useful data from the mid-term review of the McGovern-Dole FY 17 project by using a quasi-experimental approach to analyze the overall impact of school feeding versus no school feeding. With this end-line evaluation of McGovern-Dole FY17, the evaluation team will look into the performance of different types of schools within the project along various characteristics (some are listed below, but the final variables will be determined during the inception phase). The evaluation team will thus still apply quasi-experimental techniques by breaking the schools according to categories e.g remote and non-remote areas. and then randomly selecting within these (i.e. stratified random sampling). Similar to the mid-term review, a sample of at least 20 intervention schools and 4 comparison schools should be selected across all 8 provinces. The interventions schools should include an equal mix of schools handed-over to the government in the first and second phases. For each school, a sample of 10 children (5 boys and 5 girls) and 10 parents should be randomly selected to participate in the quantitative survey.
56. The aim of monitoring and evaluation is to understand the extent to which project strategies can compensate for specific vulnerabilities and deprivations. The sample size for the end-line will be determined based on the degree of change that is expected amongst the performance indicators (enrolment, literacy after five years of school, attendance, drop-out and retention rates, nutrition awareness, etc.), levels of statistical significance desired and acceptable levels of statistical error. Gender will also be considered and is an important variable for WFP's gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) agenda. The sampling frame, methodology, and sample size calculations will be the responsibility of the Evaluation Team in consultation with the WFP CO.
57. Specific data collection methods are expected to include: a desk review, quantitative surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus groups (to ensure that a cross-section of stakeholders is able to participate so that a diversity of views is gathered) and observation during field visits. Participants for focus group discussions will include school principals/teachers, parent-student associations, village education development committee members and community members/small-holder farmers. Participants for (semi-)structured interviews will include district and provincial education officials, relevant local and international NGOs and UN agencies, and central government officials.
58. The survey modules utilized will include household and child questionnaires, suppliers and smallholder farmers as well as school questionnaire (with teachers and school directors). The key respondents have been identified as critical for the primary data collection as outlined in Table 3

with the list and survey modules to be reviewed and further detailed based on methodology proposed by the Evaluation Team and agreed by WFP CO.

Table 3. Key respondents for primary data collection by program	
Type	Respondents for End-line,
End-line 2017-2021	Schools (school directors and staff responsible for provision of school feeding; school children), Village Education Development Committees (VEDC members), Parents, Teachers, Communities, Government (MoES, MAF, MoH), Cooperating Partner NGOs (LWF, CCL, BBM, SNV, Plan International, World Education, EDF), other NGOs and UN agencies in the education sector, WFP Officials at Country Office and Regional Bureau

59. The following mechanisms for independence and impartiality will be employed

**Independence:** The Evaluation Manager ensures that the independent evaluators selected have not had prior involvement with the subject to be evaluated and have no vested interest.

**Impartiality:** The Evaluation Manager prepares the TOR following this Process Guide to ensure the absence of bias in terms of scope and design. A reference group, which includes key stakeholders, is formed to help steer the evaluation and reduce the risk of bias. The Evaluation Manager has demonstrated his/her ability to maintain impartiality towards the evaluated subject, i.e. should not be biased with respect to what is being evaluated.

60. The following potential risks to the methodology have been identified.

The COVID-19 pandemic may pose challenges, particularly related to international travel into Lao PDR. Mitigation measures include adopting a hybrid approach to data collection, with a subset of the evaluation team present in-country, while other members may operate remotely. Key government and cooperating partner NGOs and WFP officials who are key informants will be interviewed by the in-country evaluation team (face-to-face) and remotely-called-in from the outside-country evaluation team. Data collection at the sub-national levels (provincial, district and school) will be done by the in-country evaluation team by either face-to-face or remotely-called-in in case of lockdown or domestic travel restriction. The approach will need to be adapted to the evolving situation and the internal evaluation committee, the external reference group (including USDA) will be updated of the changes. The evaluation team should clearly identify the data collection approaches in the inception report.

61. Potential COVID-19 related limitations. Depending on the prevailing circumstances at the time of the evaluation the evaluation team may be requested to mitigate the following potential limitations if adopting remote data collection:

- The lack of visual cues (that ease communication), loss of non-verbal visual data and the inability of the evaluator to use body language for probing were limitations.
- Poor mobile connectivity also leading to dropping of some sample points and re-sampling new respondents.
- Limited time and complexity of questions: While the tools to be used during a end-line face-to-face evaluation can be more detailed, phone surveys are unavoidably constrained by time and hence, require shorter and concise tools.
- Selection bias of respondents: using remote data collection mechanisms can limit the reach to the vulnerable population of the evaluation regions.

- Also, the protracted timelines and delay caused in conducting a evaluation owing to the pandemic can add to the challenge of finding relevant and up to date data.
- Lack of observation data: Key outcome indicators (skills of teachers, administrators, cooks; personal hygiene; sanitation behavior by students) could not be reported due to lack of observation data.

62. The methodology will be GEEW-responsive, indicating what data collection methods are employed to seek information on GEEW issues and to ensure gender equality is considered when designing and performing data collection.

63. For this end-line evaluation, the evaluation team will need to expand on the methodology presented in the ToR, and develop a detailed evaluation matrix in the inception report.

## Annex 2. Timeline

Based on the kick-off meeting, the agreed evaluation timeline was as below.

Phases, deliverables and timeline	Key dates
<b>Phase 2 - Inception (28 Nov 2022 – 14 Feb 2023)</b>	
Brief core team	28-Nov-22
Desk review of key documents	28-30 Nov 2022
Inception interviews	9- 14 Dec 2022
Draft inception report	7-15 Dec 2022
Quality assurance of draft IR by EM and REO using QC, share draft IR with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS	16-22 Dec 2022
Review draft IR based on feedback received by DEQS, EM and REO	23 Dec 2022 – 13 Jan 2023
Share revised IR with ERG (including USDA team)	13-Jan-23
Review and comment on draft IR	14-20 Jan 2023
Consolidate comments	23-Jan-23
Review draft IR based on feedback received and submit final revised IR	24-31 Jan 2023
Review final IR and submit to the evaluation committee for approval	1-7 Feb 2023
Approve final IR and share with ERG for information	7-14 Feb 2023
<b>Phase 3 – Data collection (15 Feb 11 Mar 2023)</b>	
Brief the evaluation team at CO	15 Feb 2023
Data collection: Phase 1: Quantitative Data Collection	16 Feb - 7 Mar 2023
Development and revision of Qualitative Tools	20-24 Mar 2023
Phase 2A: Qualitative Data Collection Online)	1-10 Apr, 2023
Phase 2B: Qualitative Data Collection (Field mission)	
In-country debriefing (s)	11 Apr 2023
<b>Phase 4 – Reporting (12 Apr – 31 Jul 2023)</b>	
Draft evaluation report	11 May- 10 Jun 2023
Quality assurance of draft ER by EM and REO using the QC, share draft ER with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS	9-23 Jun 2023

\*\*Evaluation Team will require two weeks to integrate and respond to USDA revisions.

# Annex 3. Methodology

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

1. Primary data collection involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. While the quantitative component will be used for estimating level of outcome changes for early grade students, teachers, parents, and other beneficiaries such as cooks and storekeepers from local communities, it was followed up by qualitative data collection for developing a holistic understanding of results and the situational factors influencing them, as well as providing for further triangulation of project achievements. Quantitative data collection utilized the same tools used at baseline and therefore allow for pre- / post- project comparisons. However, some results from the baseline survey may vary slightly for two indicators. The first one is the one on attentiveness because the baseline survey asked two teachers if the student was inattentive for some students (similarly to endline survey), but for the calculation it was summed-up the number of teachers that responded that a student was inattentive and then divided this number by the number of total students. With this calculation, some students are double counted if two teachers reported a student to be inattentive. The other indicator with changes was the one on attendance. This indicator was re-calculated for baseline since information was only available for this outcome in the last week prior to the survey in comparison to the last months in the endline survey, making variance greater when calculating the percentage of students attending at least 80% of the classes. The preliminary analysis and findings from the quantitative data collection will be shared and discussed with the primary evaluation users through a 2-hour workshop. Within and following the workshop, members of the evaluation committee and evaluation reference group had the opportunity to identify new lines of inquiry, confirm the qualitative data collection sampling framework, and validate the qualitative data collection tools. Given the limited timeframe between quantitative and qualitative data collection phases due to national holidays in Lao PDR in April, the workshop and subsequent review and finalization of qualitative data collection tools and sampling framework took place over a strict two-week period.
2. Secondary data collection involved content analysis of project documents, administrative records, monitoring plan/ reports, previous evaluation recommendations/action plans, and government policy and plan documents. This complemented primary data and help with triangulation of quantitative data points. During the Inception Phase, the team became familiar with the activities and reviewed the basic documentation provided as well as additional literature on school feeding, food and nutrition security, gender-responsive value chain development, and comparative data and knowledge on education, such as the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). During the quantitative data collection phase, ET continued to identify and request other supplementary documents and access to monitoring data, as needed and available.
3. The adopted methodological approach allowed answering the evaluation questions centered on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact that are described in [Annex 4: Evaluation matrix](#).

**Table 15. Evaluation Criteria and Questions**

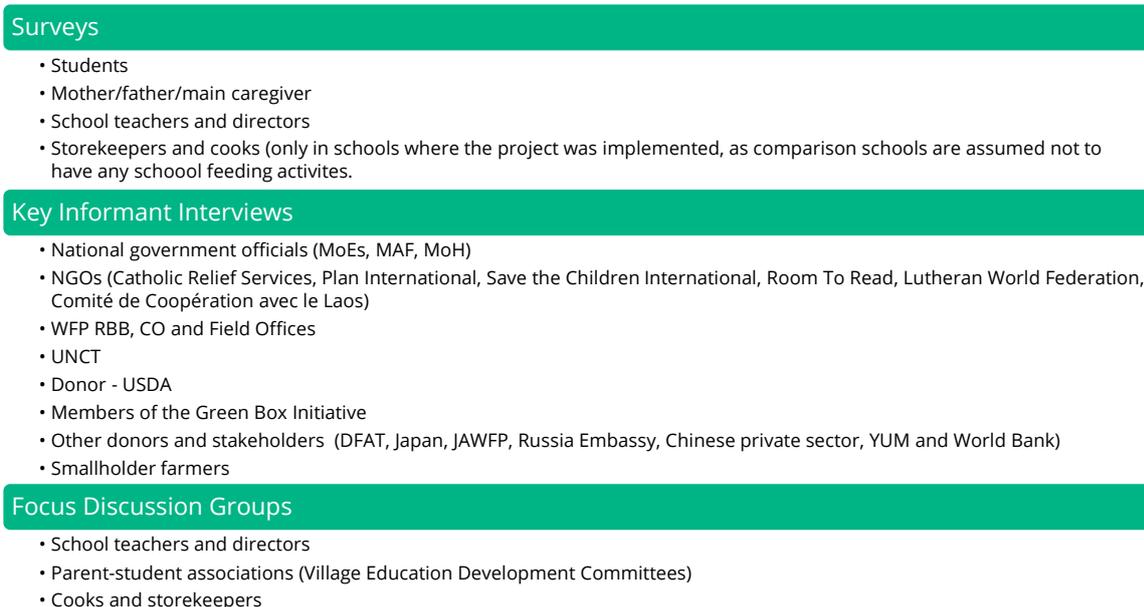
Evaluation questions	Criteria
1. How relevant and influential has the project been with regard the Government of Lao PDR's current and future plans in school feeding?	<b>RELEVANCE</b>
1.1 To what extent did the project design and implementation, including its capacity strengthening activities, align with the Government of Lao PDR's policies, plans, strategies and priorities related to school feeding, school health and nutrition, sector specific [depending on the objectives of the NSMP] and national-level development commitments?	
1.2 To what extent was the handover of the schools implemented in accordance with plans, coherent strategy and capacity of the national stakeholders?	

2. How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?	<b>EFFICIENCY &amp; EFFECTIVENESS</b>
2.1 To what extent did the project achieve its outcomes as stated in its results framework, including on capacity strengthening, national meal plans, health and nutrition practices and learning outcomes (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and other vulnerable groups, as relevant)?	
2.2 What was the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the project with specific reference to school children's return to school and the achievement of project outcomes? What alternatives did WFP propose in these circumstances and what impact did they have on program effectiveness?	
2.3 How efficient was WFP's approach to strengthen national capacities vis-à-vis the National School Meals Program? To what extent was WFP able to timely mobilize the required human and technical resources to provide support to national actors (at technical, project management and advocacy levels)?	
2.4 To what extent does the government have a monitoring system to enable themselves to know the effectiveness and impacts of the National School Meals Program?	
2.5 Has there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative, from the project (disaggregated by stakeholder groups, gender, age and ethnicity, as relevant)?	
2.6 What are the key enabling factors and challenges for the handover? What are the lessons learnt and good practices that should be taken into consideration for future school feeding activities?	
3. How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts?	<b>IMPACT</b>
3.1 Did the project achieve its SDG impacts (e.g., learning outcomes, health and nutrition of target school children, and improved frameworks for social protection, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, and other vulnerable populations) as stated in its result framework? If so, how and to what extent?	
3.2 What were the external factors (political, economic, social, other) that contributed to the project's observed impacts? Did the relationship with government change over the project's delivery timeline? If so, how? Were any external obstacles identified? How were these obstacles overcome/mitigated?	
4. To what extent will the interventions continue past the handover of the school feeding project?	<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>
4.1 To what extent are all handed over schools continuing to provide high quality school lunch after handover to the Government under the National School Meals Program?	
4.2 To what extent are the WASH, hygiene, literacy, school gardening and other activities that WFP supported in line with the Government's guidelines for school feeding programs are continuing in the handed-over schools?	
4.3 To what extent have WFP and the government planned and implemented for supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP support? Are there interventions that are more effective at securing community, local or national government investment into the school feeding programs? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment?	

## Data collection methods

Data collection methods are summarized in Figure. 27 Stakeholder data collection method.

**Figure 28. Stakeholder data collection method**



### Surveys:

4. Using the same quantitative data collection tools as used at baseline, the surveys contributed to the evaluation's accountability purpose, updating key performance indicators on learning and education outcomes and increased use of health and dietary practices. The survey was adjusted slightly in order to better capture demographic information regarding the comparison and intervention groups, primarily on disability status through the addition of the Washington Group /UNICEF Child Functioning Module (CFM), which was developed to collect information on children aged 5 – 17 years by a knowledgeable proxy respondent providing information on children's difficulties across numerous functional domains: vision, hearing, mobility, communication/comprehension, behavior and learning, as well as self-care, remembering, focusing attention, coping with change, relationships and emotions.<sup>152</sup> Staging the data collection allowed ET to gather additional information on intersectionality within the beneficiary groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, disability status, socioeconomic status, etc.), allowing for the qualitative data collection sample to be more inclusive of diverse perspectives.
5. The surveys tools were designed considering baseline and mid-term data, as well as the FY20 baseline survey modules, however noting there are slight differences between these. They focus on the satisfaction of beneficiaries, as well as the quantifiable indicators based on the project logframe, in addition to cross-cutting indicators of long-term outcomes of social inclusion and gender equity. The surveys also focused on key process indicators, understanding constraints and supportive factors in implementation, and possible effects on improved access to school meals, water, improved literacy, community mobilization, agricultural support, policy support, and health and nutrition awareness activities.
6. After in-person training from ET members (see 3.7 Quality Assurance), the Laos-based evaluation team members, along with locally recruited and trained enumerators - fluent in oral and written Lao but also to the extent possible in other languages spoken in the project areas, administered it in-

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<sup>152</sup> The module has undergone extensive review by experts, and testing in several countries to determine the quality of questions being asked and ascertain cultural understanding by respondents. It has been incorporated into the most recent round of UNICEF-sponsored Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the module, tabulation plan and syntax are available at: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-unicef-child-functioning-module-cfm/>

person to the beneficiaries of the project activities, including household and child questionnaires, cooks and storekeepers questionnaires, as well as a school questionnaire (with school directors).

#### Data analysis

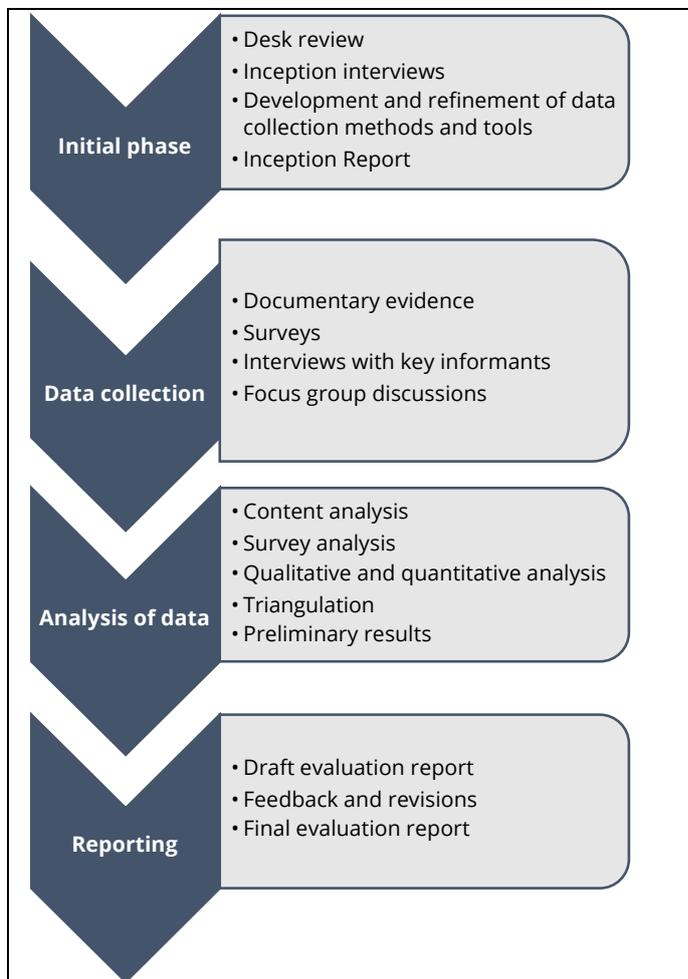
7. ET used contribution analysis to assess and identify the activities' contributions towards results through the lens of the revised theory of change. This methodological approach will allow the team to analyze collected data on the project and test the assumptions and validity of the constructed theory of change. Following methods and tools for data analysis were utilized:
8. As a first step, **descriptive analysis** was carried out to describe the internal and external contexts of the intervention. It also helped describe the key elements of the project management and governance. In addition to analyzing basic descriptive statistics and trends over time, the evaluation relied on various quantitative strategies for causal inference with observational data, in order to rigorously assess the effects of interventions. Following a quasi-experimental logic, evaluation used multivariate regression and difference-in-differences (DID) analysis as appropriate with for the data available and collected. For Table 13, ET developed indices to analyze variations at the school level across six dimensions. For each dimension, an average proportion was calculated based on the following variables:
  - Access to wash infrastructure: source of drinking water, functioning toilet, separate toilets for boys and girls, and hand washing facilities.
  - Access to food preparation and storage tools/equipment: storage room/facility to store food items, food stored off the ground, storage room with wooden pallets above the ground, kitchen, food items in the kitchen are on a raised platform, dining area for school lunch, dining area with chairs/benches and tables.
  - Increased knowledge of safe food preparation and storage practices for cooks: training, perception of improved knowledge and skills, and knowledge still used.
  - Increased knowledge of safe food preparation and storage practices for storekeepers: training, perception of improved knowledge and skills, and knowledge still used.
  - Parents improved knowledge of health, hygiene and nutrition practices: percentage of options considered when answering about the importance of having a good and balanced diet, the importance of hygiene, and when it is important to wash hands.
  - Children Improved knowledge of health, hygiene and nutrition practices: washing hands after using the toilet, before eating and relationship about sickness and healthy food.
9. The average for schools was determined for each dimension, representing the extent to which observations answered affirmatively to the questions. A score of 1 or 100% indicated that every observation responded positively to all questions, while a score of 0 or 0% indicated that every observation answered negatively. Subsequently, the results were normalized, with a score of 1 or 100% representing the highest outcome and a score of 0 or 0% representing the lowest.
10. **Content analysis** was used to organize and convert information gathered through document review, interviews, and focus groups into quantitative data. The developed codebook was closely aligned with the evaluation matrix to answer evaluation questions, as well as to extract lessons, good practices, and recommendations.
11. **Comparative analysis** was used to study and contrast findings emerging from the field visits, documentary review, and the views expressed by different stakeholders including marginalized groups to assess differential results.
12. Triangulation was used throughout to ensure the reliability of information and increase quality to arrive at credible, reliable, and unbiased findings. ET utilized a mixture of primary and secondary sources of data to base individual findings on several lines of inquiry and data sources. The evaluation report explicitly indicated cases where triangulation was not been possible. Qualitative and quantitative analysis software used NVivo and R respectively, which was complemented by STATA and MS Excel, as required.

13. Preliminary results was shared through a validation and learning workshop for some intended users of the report, in particular the ERG, in two phases. This informative discussion helped validate the findings and testing conclusions prior to the development of the qualitative data collection strategy and the final report. The evaluation then delivered this preliminary report for review, which shall incorporate stakeholder comments and be structured in accordance with the guidelines detailed in the WFP DEQAS and delivered by July 2023.

**Evaluation process**

14. This evaluation was carried out in four phases: (1) inception; (2) quantitative data collection and analysis; (3) qualitative data collection and analysis; and (4) reporting, as shown in Figure 28. The **Inception Phase** began with a kick-off meeting with the evaluation reference group. This initial briefing included a discussion of the ToR, the proposed work plan and timeline for data collection and proposal arrangements. An initial list of documents was shared after the kick-off meeting and

**Figure 29. Evaluation methodology at a glance**



reviewed to perform the evaluability analysis and further define the assessment scope, methodology, and sampling frame presented in this inception report.

15. **The second phase** of the evaluation — quantitative data collection —officially began in February 2023 for the surveys. Data collection in this phase included in-person surveys with primary beneficiaries/rightsholders at the school-level, including primary-age children and their parents/caregivers (including girls, boys, children with disabilities at specialized schools, and diverse ethnicities representative of the comparison and treatment locations), school teachers and administrators, as well as cooks and storekeepers. The data collected was analyzed and preliminary findings presented and validated with the primary evaluation users through a 2-hour workshop, in which additional lines of inquiry and criteria for case study development were identified for the next phase. Review of documentary evidence and archival sources was continued through both data collection phases.

16. **The third phase** involved qualitative data collection and analysis. This phase, and most notably the review of documentary evidence and archival sources and triangulation of data was ongoing. However,

in April 2023 additional fieldwork was conducted focusing on key informant interviews and focus group discussions with duty-bearers and rightsholders at all levels, including implementing partners, Village Education and Development Committee members, government from national, provincial and district levels, as well as school-level stakeholders again.

17. Qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques were employed. Content analysis was used to convert content from the documents and interview notes into quantitative data according to the evaluation matrix. Qualitative analysis provided illustrative examples to extract lessons and good practices. Quantitative analysis was used with the surveys and archival data from the previous data

collection phase. More advanced analytics such as multiple and panel data regression as well as difference-in-difference (DiD) analysis was used (utilizing the FY17 baseline. Results were disaggregated (e.g., by gender, age, disability and ethnicity) where applicable.

18. **The fourth and final phase** focused on reporting and validation of findings and recommendations. A preliminary draft of the evaluation report was reviewed and commented on by the EC before being shared more widely for feedback and comments by the ERG. A final evaluation report was provided as the principal output of the evaluation process, which included 2-3 brief case studies on specific processes or themes defined in phase 2 and addressed in phase 3. Reporting has been in line with DEQAS, UNEG guidelines, UNEG Ethical Standards for Evaluations, and UN SWAP standards.
19. WFP decentralized evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. The contractors undertaking the evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

**Table 16 Detailed stakeholder data collection method**

Stakeholder	Data Collection Method		
	Survey	KII	FGD
<b>Internal stakeholders:</b>			
WFP CO Lao PDR		X	
WFP field Offices in Lao PDR		X	
WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific		X	
<b>Beneficiaries (External Stakeholders):</b>			
Students and main caregivers	X		
School teachers and directors	X		X
Smallholder farmers		X	
Members of Village Education Development Committee			X
<b>Central External Stakeholders</b>			
National government officials (MoEs, MAF, MoH)		X	
NGOs (Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Save the Children International, Room To Read, Lutheran World Federation, Comité de Coopération avec le Laos)		X	
United Nations country team		X	
Donor (USDA)		X	
Other donors and stakeholders (DFAT, Japan, JAWFP, Russia Embassy, YUM and World Bank)		X	
<b>Provincial External Stakeholders</b>			
Provincial officials (PESS, PAFO, PHO)		X	
<b>District External Stakeholders</b>			
District officials (DESB, DAFO, DHO, District Lao Women Union)		X	
Parent-student associations			X
Cookers			X

**Table 17 Ethical considerations, risks and safeguards**

Phases	Ethical issues and Risks	Safeguards
<b>Inception</b>	<p>The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria on the participation of donors and beneficiaries' states that, "wherever appropriate, the views and experience of affected groups should form an integral part of the evaluation. This includes in the inception phase, in which the evaluation design is finalized. One risk in that sense is the timeline, which is constrained by a strict deadline for the inception report and availability of data from baseline and midterm evaluations, which restricts opportunities for identifying participation and relevant information from previous assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First, in close collaboration with the Evaluation Committee, evaluation team ensured that evaluation report conforms to the ethical norms and standards of WFP and UNEG.</li> <li>• ET conducted a few initial interviews with internal stakeholders to gain consensus on the terms of reference and expectations for this evaluation.</li> <li>• DeftEdge ensured the participation of vulnerable groups, including women and other socially marginalized groups, are included in its sample selection.</li> <li>• A reconstructed ToC was developed, which was discussed with stakeholders during the data collection phase.</li> </ul> <p>Other standardized tools and relevant tools to school feeding outcomes were drawn from</p>
<b>Data collection</b>	<p>There are several ethical questions and risks that need to be answered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats posed by COVID-19 that might affect fieldwork.</li> <li>• Participants in data collection come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds that may influence their full and equal participation (including language and mobility barriers).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ET provided training to enumerators in ethical standards and processes for data collection, including data collection on sensitive topics.</li> <li>• DeftEdge employed a standardized approach to preparing and recording interviews and focus group discussions that take into account ethical and protection principles.</li> <li>• ET made sure that participants know their rights, as well as the scope and limits of confidentiality.</li> <li>• To encourage openness, respondents were assured that their views will not be quoted or individually identified in assessment reports unless they provide explicit written consent.</li> <li>• Evaluation team worked closely with WFP field teams to monitor the situation and ensure the safety and availability of participants. This included selecting times and locations for in-person and remote data collection that are safe and accessible and being available to change data collection strategies quickly</li> <li>• Due to the threat of the pandemic, our data collection methodologies and approaches was guided by the overall responsibility to ensure the health and safety of DeftEdge consultants, WFP staff, rights holders and all stakeholders. In addition, all the required steps and Standard Operating Procedures were followed to minimize the risk of contracting COVID-19 for both ET members and the beneficiaries.</li> </ul>

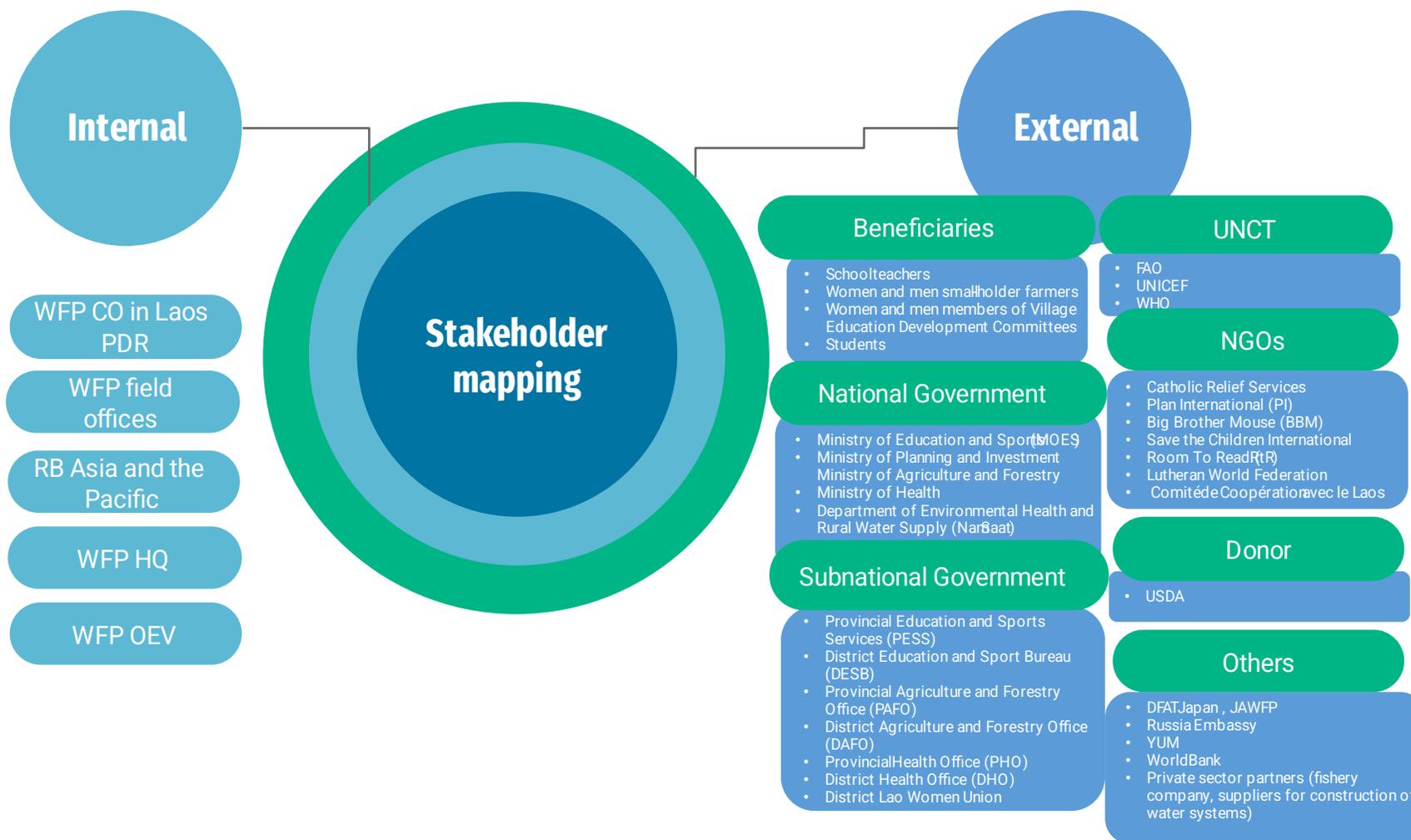
<b>Data analysis</b>	In data analysis, the primary ethical concern revolves around the ongoing protection of participants and their data.	DeftEdge's assessment team has signed the Long-Term Agreement (LTA) on confidentiality, internet and data security statements, and other guidance documents and industry best practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ET complied and maintained ethical practices such as the 2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation, including the WFP Ethical Conduct Commitment and Technical Note on gender, the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 , to protect raw data files, transcripts and images/videos, and ultimately the privacy of participants.</li> <li>• The names of the participants or interviewees will never appeared on the interview transcripts and the ET used codes to protect their identity.</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting</b>	The main ethical consideration during the reporting phase remains the protection of the participants and their right to withdraw their consent at any time.	Our evaluation team, as well as the quality assurance expert, ensured that the report and other deliverables complied with the ethical norms and standards of the WFP and UNEG.

20. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with international evaluation standards including the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) principles and guidelines. Additionally, the evaluation was guided by WFP's latest Gender Policy (2015-20) and ensured to integrate principles of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) into the methodology, tools, and data analysis and reporting techniques used to ensure the participation, protection, and privacy of participants (women, girls, boys, men, persons with disabilities, and other groups).
21. Accountability to affected populations is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organizations seek to assist (Inter-Agency Standing Committee). In all circumstances, due consideration to feedback and accountability will be given. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring beneficiaries and communities are aware in advance of the purpose of the evaluation, engaging with representatives of all beneficiary groups, explaining how selection for respondents has been undertaken, ensuring informed consent for participation. Respectful and transparent communication is a priority while ensuring that local customs and norms are understood and respected. In the COVID-19 context, this also includes strict adherence to social distancing and any other public health requirements, part of the "Do No Harm" principle.
22. As direct program beneficiaries are under the age of 18, ethical approvals from the relevant national review boards will be sought, as required. The DeftEdge team sought the assent of children and consent of parents with the help of the appropriate authority before data collection with parents and children. This consent covered participation and use of the data collected for evaluation purposes. Parents/guardians were informed about the nature of the assessment and given the opportunity to approve their participation.
23. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that children are not merely passive recipients; rather, they have the right to participate, in accordance with their abilities, in decisions that affect them and to exercise their growth. Children were provided opportunity to express their views and perceptions about the services provided and how the different activities affect them. This was done using specific techniques designed to engage children in surveys and literacy assessments, while informing them of their right to withdraw at any time. The confidentiality of data was also guaranteed to safeguard and protect children. All identifying information was deleted to maintain confidentiality.
24. Data from the survey was triangulated to assess the reliability and validity of the data by comparison of perspectives of different stakeholders on the same issue. GEEW was mainstreamed

in different evaluation processes including analysis to ensure analyses are disaggregated by sex, and sampling of rightsholders has equal representation of women and men, assessing any need to engage women and men separately according to social and protection norms in Lao PDR.

## **STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS**

25. The ToR presented a good overview of the main stakeholder groups that should be involved in the evaluation. Based on this analysis, stakeholders can be summarized as follows:



The main interest of internal stakeholders in evaluation is focused on learning and accountability. In particular, these stakeholders have an interest in the lessons that emerge from the evaluation to inform decision-making. At the country-level to support the expansion of NSMP and program implementation of the USDA The project FY20 school feeding project. At the regional level evaluation findings will be used to provide strategic guidance, program support, and oversight. At the HQ level, the lessons from the evaluation will contribute beyond Asia and the Pacific.

The following table includes a deeper stakeholder analysis built on the related ToR section.

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation	Involvement in the evaluation	Key Stakeholders
<b>Internal (WFP) stakeholders</b>			
<b>WFP country office (CO) in Lao PDR</b>	Responsible for the planning and implementation of WFP interventions at country level. The country office has an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making, particularly in regards to the handover process and packages of support for school feeding activities. It is also called upon to account internally as well as to its beneficiaries and partners for performance and results of its programs. The CO will be involved in using evaluation findings from this end-line evaluation in several phases: (1) First, in iterating on the findings of the inception report, and specifically the evaluability assessment, in order to learn from and improve on sampling and data collection processes and plans; (2) in reviewing, analyzing and validating the findings from the quantitative data collection in order to develop detailed lines of inquiry for the qualitative data collection; (3) finally, findings, conclusions and recommendations of the report will provide support to strengthening the expanding NSMP, as well as for strengthening program implementation of the USDA The project FY20 school feeding project.	<p>Focal point for operation/liaison for evaluation fieldwork</p> <p>Participants in the Evaluation Committee and Evaluation Reference Group, which includes participation in several phased findings validation discussions</p> <p>Respondents of qualitative data collection, including inception interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation Manager</li> <li>• WFP Lao PDR Country Office management</li> <li>• SFP Unit, particularly SO1</li> <li>• Deputy Country Director</li> <li>• RAM Unit</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• M&amp;E</li> </ul>
<b>WFP field offices in Phongsaly, Oudomxay and Pakse</b>	Responsible for day-to-day program implementation and has an interest in learning as well from experience to inform decision-making to strengthen operation of the project in the next phase.	<p>Liaison with stakeholders at decentralized levels and direct beneficiaries</p> <p>Respondents of qualitative data collection</p> <p>Though not member to the evaluation committee, suggest participation in several phased findings validation discussions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Field Offices</li> <li>• Field teams</li> </ul>

<b>Regional bureau (RB) for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok</b>	<p>Interest in an independent/impartial account of operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply this learning to other country offices. The regional bureau will be involved in the planning of the next program, thus it is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, program support, and oversight.</p>	<p>Responsible for both oversight of COs and technical guidance and support</p> <p>The regional evaluation officers support country office/regional bureau management to ensure quality, credible and useful decentralized evaluations</p> <p>Respondents for inception interviews</p> <p>Participants in the Evaluation Committee and Evaluation Reference Group, which includes participation in several phased findings validation discussions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Feeding</li> <li>• M&amp;E</li> </ul>
<b>WFP HQ divisions</b>	<p>WFP headquarters divisions are responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of normative guidance on corporate program themes, activities and modalities, as well as of overarching corporate policies and strategies. They also have an interest in the lessons that emerge from evaluations, as many may have relevance beyond the geographical area of focus. They may use the evaluation for wider organizational learning and accountability.</p>	<p>Relevant headquarters units should be consulted from the planning phase to ensure that key policy, strategic and programmatic considerations are understood from the onset of the evaluation</p> <p>Participants in the Evaluation Reference Group, which includes participation in several phased findings validation discussions</p> <p>Respondents for inception interviews</p>	<p>School-based programs HQ representative</p>
<b>WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV)</b>	<p>The Office of Evaluation has a stake in It may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into centralized evaluations, evaluation syntheses or other learning products.</p>	<p>OEV's role in the evaluation is ensuring that decentralized evaluations deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality as well as roles and accountabilities of various decentralized evaluation stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy.</p>	<p>No interviews will be conducted.</p>

<b>WFP Executive Board (EB)</b>	The Executive Board provides final oversight of WFP programs and guidance to programs. The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP programs. This evaluation will not be presented to the Executive Board.	Findings may feed into thematic and/or regional syntheses and corporate learning processes.	No interviews will be conducted.
<b>External stakeholders</b>			
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. The level of participation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups will be determined and their respective perspectives will be sought. Beneficiaries of all ethnicities who are recipients of the project will be considered.	Primary respondents of quantitative and qualitative data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and parents/caregivers</li> <li>• Schoolteachers, Directors</li> <li>• Women and men small-holder farmers/ suppliers</li> <li>• Storekeepers</li> <li>• Cooks</li> <li>• Village Education Development Committees</li> </ul>
<b>Government of Lao PDR</b>	As key partners in the design and implementation of the SFP and the NSFP the GoL has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonized with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability will be of particular interest.	Respondents of qualitative data collection. Participants in the Evaluation Reference Group, which includes participation in several phased findings validation discussions	<b>National level:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)</li> <li>• Ministry of Planning and Investment</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Environmental Health and Rural Water Supply (Nam Saat)</li> </ul> <p><b>Sub-national level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS)</li> <li>District Education and Sport Bureau (DESB)</li> <li>Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)</li> <li>District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO)</li> <li>Provincial Health Office (PHO)</li> <li>District Health Office (DHO)</li> <li>District Lao Women Union</li> </ul>
<b>United Nations country team (UNCT)</b>	The harmonized action of the UNCT should contribute to the realization of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that WFP programs are effective in contributing to the United Nations concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level. (see table below for description of activities)	Respondents of qualitative data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNICEF - Chief of WASH</li> <li>FAO</li> </ul>
<b>Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)</b> Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Save the Children International, Room To Read,	NGOs are WFP partners for the implementation of some activities (provision of books, community engagement, and teacher training and literacy activities) for the project FY17, while at the same time having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientation and partnerships. They will use evaluation findings from this end-line evaluation for program implementation.	Respondents of qualitative data collection	<p><b>Partners for promotion of literacy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan International</li> <li>Big Brother Mouse (BBM),</li> <li>Room To Read (RtR)</li> <li>World Education</li> <li>Education for Development Foundation</li> </ul> <p><b>Partners for review and follow up handed over schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lutheran World Federation (LWF)</li> </ul>

Lutheran World Federation, Comité de Coopération avec le Laos			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comité de Coopération avec le Laos (CCL)</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional provider of school meals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catholic Relief Services</li> </ul>
<b>Donor</b> USDA	The key donor for this school feeding program is USDA The project. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programs. USDA has specific interest in ensuring that operational performance reflects USDA standards and accountability requirements, as well as an interest in learning to inform changes in project strategy, results framework, and critical assumptions.	Respondents of qualitative data collection  Participants in the Evaluation Reference Group, which includes participation in several phased findings validation discussions	Katherine McBride- USD ERG Member
<b>Others</b> DFAT, Japan, JAWFP, Russia Embassy, Chinese private sector, YUM and World Bank	A wide range of actors, such as other donors, local suppliers, school administrators and local communities, are involved in the provision of school meals and are expected to benefit from some of the capacity development activities. WFP-Lao PDR also has established partnerships with the World Bank, Australian DFAT, FAO, and Lao Women’s Union to achieve project objectives. Their respective perspectives will be sought during the evaluation as the engagement of these actors influences the effectiveness of the program as well as its sustainability.	Respondents of qualitative data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Bank</li> <li>Australian DFAT</li> <li>Lao Women’s Union</li> <li>Members of the Education and School Meals Technical Working Groups not identified under other categories</li> <li>Private sector partners (fishery company, suppliers for construction of water systems)</li> </ul>

## Annex 4. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation questions				Criteria	
1. How relevant and influential has the project been with regard the Government of Lao PDR's current and future plans in school feeding?				RELEVANCE	
Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Data sources	Methods of analysis	Expected data availability
1.1 To what extent did the project design and implementation, including its capacity strengthening activities, align with the Government of Lao PDR's policies, plans, strategies and priorities related to school feeding, school health and nutrition, sector specific [depending on the objectives of the NSMP] and national-level development commitments?	<p>1.1.1 Examples of degree and quality of alignment between the project activities and objectives with the WFP CSP (2017 – 2021 and 2022 – 2026) strategic outcomes</p> <p>1.1.2 Duty bearer perceptions on the relevance of the school feeding project in the context of CSPs and the WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 - 2030</p> <p>1.1.3 Examples of degree and quality of alignment between the project activities and objectives with the objectives, guidelines and activities for the Lao PDR National School Meals Program</p> <p>1.1.4 Duty bearer perceptions on the relevance of the school feeding project in the context of the Lao PDR National School Meals Program</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports, WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 – 2030 as well as Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), budget revision documents, UNDAF/UNSDCF documents, and associated centralized evaluations</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	High

	<p>1.1.5 Examples of degree and quality of alignment between the project targeting, activities and objectives with the national objectives and proposed interventions of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Socio-Economic Development Plans, Education and Sports Sector Development Plans (2016 – 2020 and 2021-25), National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020, National Social Protection Strategy 2030, the Agriculture Development Strategic 2025 and Vision to 2030 (including gender elements of sector policies)</p> <p>1.1.6 Evidence that external partners (including Government) perceive WFP as adding value to the priorities of other sectors and to the implementation of school feeding projects</p>				
<p>1.2 To what extent was the handover of the schools implemented in accordance with plans, coherent strategy and capacity of the national stakeholders?</p>	<p>1.2.1 Evidence that the selection of schools for handover was based on specific context/situation analyses and capacity assessments</p> <p>1.2.2 Alignment of the program components, intended targeting implementation modalities and handover packages with identified capacity needs of the government at</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports, Capacity Assessment Reports, Handover Strategy Documents</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	<p>Medium</p>

	national, provincial/district, and school levels  1.2.3 Participant perceptions on whether the school feeding project and handover plans addresses their needs		government officials at national and provincial/district levels  Data from interviews, surveys and FGDs of intended beneficiaries		
2. How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?				<b>EFFICIENCY &amp; EFFECTIVENESS</b>	
<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Methods of analysis</b>	<b>Expected data availability</b>
2.1 To what extent did the project achieve its outcomes as stated in its results framework, including on capacity strengthening, national meal plans, health and nutrition practices and learning outcomes (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and other vulnerable groups, as relevant)?	<p>2.1.1 Comparison of the nature, quantity, and quality of actual results against baseline values and expected results/milestones for USDA McGovern Dole indicators in Lao PDR, including for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SO1 learning outcomes, such as literacy levels, attentiveness and attendance of school-aged children</li> <li>• SO2 health and dietary practices, including dietary diversity, health and hygiene knowledge, nutrition knowledge, access to clean water and sanitation services, and food preparation and storage practices</li> <li>• Cross-cutting foundational results at national, provincial/district and school/community levels related</li> </ul>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Evaluation surveys</p> <p>Focus groups with student beneficiaries</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p> <p>Data from surveys, FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p> <p>Descriptive and inferential analysis (as possible)</p> <p>Data disaggregation (sex/ethnicity/location/other vulnerability aspects)</p>	High

	<p>to advocacy, capacity strengthening, policy/regulatory frameworks and material support for education and literacy, improved infrastructure for water, sanitation, school gardens</p> <p>2.1.2 Extent of different beneficiary groups' satisfaction with the delivery and results across provinces/districts, including composition of food rations (specifically, children/ caregivers, schools, and educational/ school feeding community disaggregated by identity and poverty and vulnerability aspects)</p> <p>2.1.3 Proportion of beneficiaries who say that school meals supported their child's continued studies</p> <p>2.1.4 Comparative stakeholder perceptions, and monitoring and evaluative evidence, of capacity strengthening contributions to government systems to assess, plan and respond to the school feeding needs of targeted schools / children</p> <p>2.1.5 Examples of factors affecting the extent of contribution as identified by consulted stakeholders</p>				
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	and through internal monitoring exercises and evaluations				
2.2 What was the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the project with specific reference to school children's return to school and the achievement of project outcomes? What alternatives did WFP propose in these circumstances and what impact did they have on program effectiveness?	<p>2.2.1 Degree of impact of COVID-19 in the program areas and communities</p> <p>2.2.2 Examples of how the project SF model (including targeting, assistance modalities and food supply, storage and preparation strategies, literacy, WASH, school gardens etc.) and implementation plans for capacity and awareness-raising were adjusted to take into account changing contexts of COVID-19 and shifting government priorities</p> <p>2.2.3 Examples of the strengths and weaknesses in the Project's assistance modalities and ability to adapt to changing conditions and contexts and contribute to results in timely manner, including ensuring food reaches beneficiaries and without harm</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports, WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 – 2030 as well as Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), budget revision documents, UNDAF/UNSDCF documents, and associated centralized evaluations</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p> <p>Data from FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	High
2.3 How efficient was WFP's approach to strengthen national capacities vis-à-vis the National School Meals Program? To what extent was WFP able	2.3.1 Technical and allocative efficiency of the project, including timeliness of logistical aspects (e.g. deliveries), quality of management tools and practices, adequacy and timeliness of resources to deliver on time and as planned	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports, WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 – 2030 as well as Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), budget revision documents,	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Financial statement analysis</p>	Medium

<p>to timely mobilize the required human and technical resources to provide support to national actors (at technical, project management and advocacy levels)?</p>	<p>2.3.2 Analysis of cost-efficiency through relevant unit cost comparisons</p> <p>2.3.3 Evidence of quality coordination, communication and information exchange (or in contrast, duplication) in the work of WFP and other actors to develop national and local government capacity to deliver school meals and improve learning outcomes</p> <p>2.3.4 Extent to which different actors express/have similar views on roles and opportunities for collaboration</p> <p>2.3.5 Coherence between actors in terms of assessment of risks and responsibilities for attenuating these</p>		<p>UNDAF/UNSDCF documents, and associated centralized evaluations</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p> <p>Data from FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	
<p>2.4 To what extent does the government have a monitoring system to enable themselves to know the effectiveness and impacts of the National School Meals Program?</p>	<p>2.4.1 Confirm existence and review quality of WFP, The project and GoL monitoring and reporting against key objectives of the program and standards of good practice</p> <p>2.4.2 Availability, clarity and depth of monitoring reports tracking progress</p> <p>2.4.3 Examine and review effectiveness of monitoring</p>		<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports, WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 – 2030 as well as Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), budget revision documents, UNDAF/UNSDCF documents, and associated centralized evaluations</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	<p>High</p>

	arrangements and use of monitoring data for decision-making				
2.5 Has there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative, from the project (disaggregated by stakeholder groups, gender, age and ethnicity, as relevant)?	<p>2.5.1 Examples of significant positive or negative unintended, effects which have been generated</p> <p>2.5.2 Analysis of how different groups (geographic, ethnicity, gender, etc) benefit from the intervention outcomes and the extent to which gender and equity outcomes were realized</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Evaluation surveys</p> <p>Focus groups with student beneficiaries</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p> <p>Data from surveys, FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p> <p>Descriptive and inferential analysis (as possible)</p> <p>Data disaggregation (sex/ethnicity/location/other vulnerability aspects)</p>	High
2.6 What are the key enabling factors and challenges for the handover? What are the lessons learnt and good practices that should be taken into consideration for future school feeding activities?	<p>2.6.1 Analysis of internal and external factors influencing the handover</p> <p>2.6.2 Extent to which government actors express/have similar views on roles, processes, opportunities for handover and consider they were adequately prepared and resourced to take over school feeding</p> <p>2.6.3 Analysis/ identification of the factors that explain differences</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports, WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 – 2030 as well as Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), budget revision documents, UNDAF/UNSDCF documents, and associated centralized evaluations</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	Medium

	<p>between expected roles of WFP, internal project actors and the government and the role that was played in practice</p> <p>2.6.4 Assessment of community-level and national-level systems of governance and management from perspectives of consistency, complexity, levels of demands on men and women involved</p> <p>2.6.5 Participants' assessments of community-level governance mechanisms in terms of legitimacy, clarity, efficiency, sustainability, challenges experienced</p>		government officials at national and provincial/district levels		
3. How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts?				<b>IMPACT</b>	
<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Methods of analysis</b>	<b>Expected data availability</b>
3.1 Did the project achieve its SDG impacts (e.g., learning outcomes, health and nutrition of target school children, and improved frameworks for social protection, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, and other vulnerable populations) as stated	<p>3.1.1 Differences in outcomes for girls and boys between the WFP-supported schools and the comparison schools (as well as current and handover schools) in the 8 provinces, including on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SO1 learning outcomes, such as literacy levels, attentiveness and attendance of school-aged children</li> </ul>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Evaluation surveys</p>	<p>Data from document review, including Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	Medium

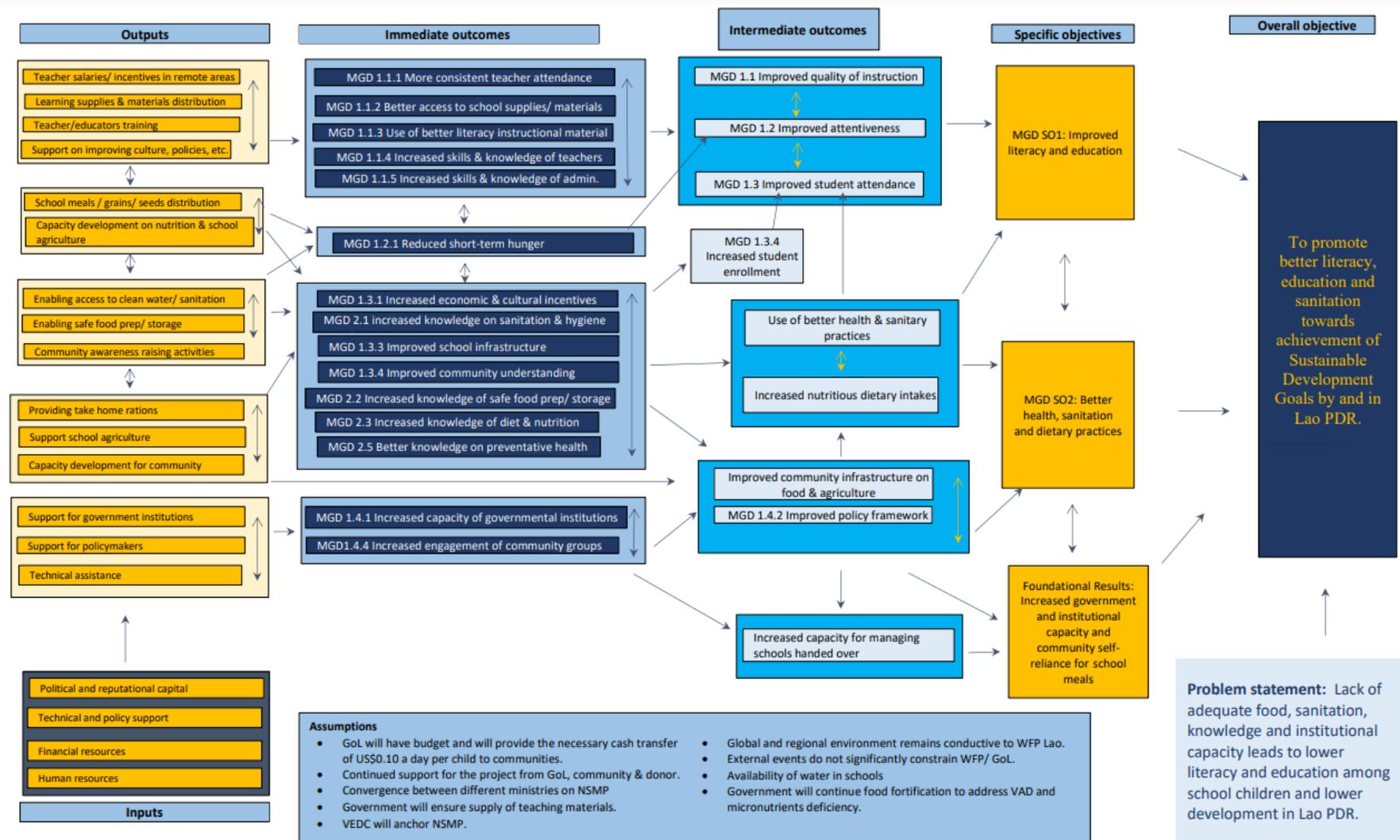
<p>in its result framework? If so, how and to what extent?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SO2 health and dietary practices, including dietary diversity, health and hygiene knowledge, nutrition knowledge, access to clean water and sanitation services, and food preparation and storage practices</li> </ul> <p>3.1.2 Differences in foundational results between the WFP-supported schools and the comparison schools (as well as current and handover schools) in the 8 provinces, including on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-cutting foundational results at national, provincial/district and school/community levels related to advocacy, capacity strengthening, policy/regulatory frameworks and material support for education and literacy, improved infrastructure for water, sanitation, school gardens</li> </ul>	<p>Focus groups with student beneficiaries</p>	<p>Data from surveys, FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Descriptive and inferential analysis (as possible)</p> <p>Data disaggregation (sex/ethnicity/location/other vulnerability aspects)</p>	
<p>3.2 What were the external factors (political, economic, social, other) that contributed to the project's observed impacts? Did the relationship with government change</p>	<p>3.1.3 Analysis of external factors influencing observed impact, including analysis of external operating environment, funding climate, external incentives and pressures, protection concerns, etc.</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p>	<p>Medium</p>

over the project's delivery timeline? If so, how? Were any external obstacles identified? How were these obstacles overcome/mitigated?	3.2.3 Examples of how constraints were addressed and mitigation measures designed and implemented	Evaluation surveys  Focus groups with student beneficiaries	government officials at national and provincial/district levels  Data from FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers		
4. To what extent will the interventions continue past the handover of the school feeding project?				<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Methods of analysis</b>	<b>Expected data availability</b>
4.1 To what extent are all handed over schools continuing to provide high quality school lunch after handover to the Government under the National School Meals Program?	4.1.1 Extent to which school meals are being provided post- handover, including analysis of frequency and quality  4.1.2 Institutionalization of delivery modalities and approaches within existing administrative structures	Desk review using a structured framework  Key Informant Interviews	Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases  Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels  Data from surveys, FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data  Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)  Data disaggregation (location)	<b>High</b>
4.2 To what extent are the WASH, hygiene, literacy, school gardening and other	4.2.1 Evidence of national and local political (and/or policy), financial, institutional, technical, social/community, and	Desk review using a structured framework	Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data	<b>Medium</b>

<p>activities that WFP supported in line with the Government's guidelines for school feeding programs are continuing in the handed-over schools?</p>	<p>environmental capacities, will and ownership to safely, sustainably and equitably procure and provide nutritious school meals to boys and girls</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p>	<p>Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p> <p>Data from surveys, FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p> <p>Data disaggregation (location)</p>	<p></p>
<p>4.3 To what extent have WFP and the government planned and implemented for supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP support? Are there interventions that are more effective at securing community, local or national government investment into the school feeding programs? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment?</p>	<p>4.3.1 What measures did WFP take to increase financial and human capital contribution and reinforce operating capacities of other stakeholders, including government</p> <p>4.3.2 Extent to which the government discussed setting up/supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP support</p> <p>4.3.3 Comparative analysis of advocacy, incentives, and capacity-building interventions for securing community (e.g. parents, village education development committees, storekeepers/cooks), school (school management, teachers, school cooks) and sub-national and national government investment into the school feeding activities and logistics</p>	<p>Desk review using a structured framework</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Evaluation surveys</p> <p>Focus groups with student beneficiaries</p>	<p>Data from document review, including: Proposal, Contracts and Agreement, Semi-annual Reports, Annual Country Reports (2017 – 2020), Baseline and Endline evaluation reports and databases, monitoring databases</p> <p>Data from key informant interviews with: WFP across levels, senior government officials at national and provincial/district levels</p> <p>Data from surveys, FGDs and observations of intended beneficiaries, including school-aged children, parents, educators, VEDC, cooks and storekeepers</p>	<p>Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Discourse analysis of primary data (interviews/ focus groups)</p> <p>Descriptive and inferential analysis (as possible)</p> <p>Data disaggregation (sex/indigenous population/location/other vulnerability aspects)</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>

	<p>4.3.4. Extent to which there are gendered dimensions to contributions</p> <p>4.3.5 Examples of key enablers and barriers (both internal and external) towards sustainability securing investment</p>				
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# Annex 5. Reconstructed Theory of Change



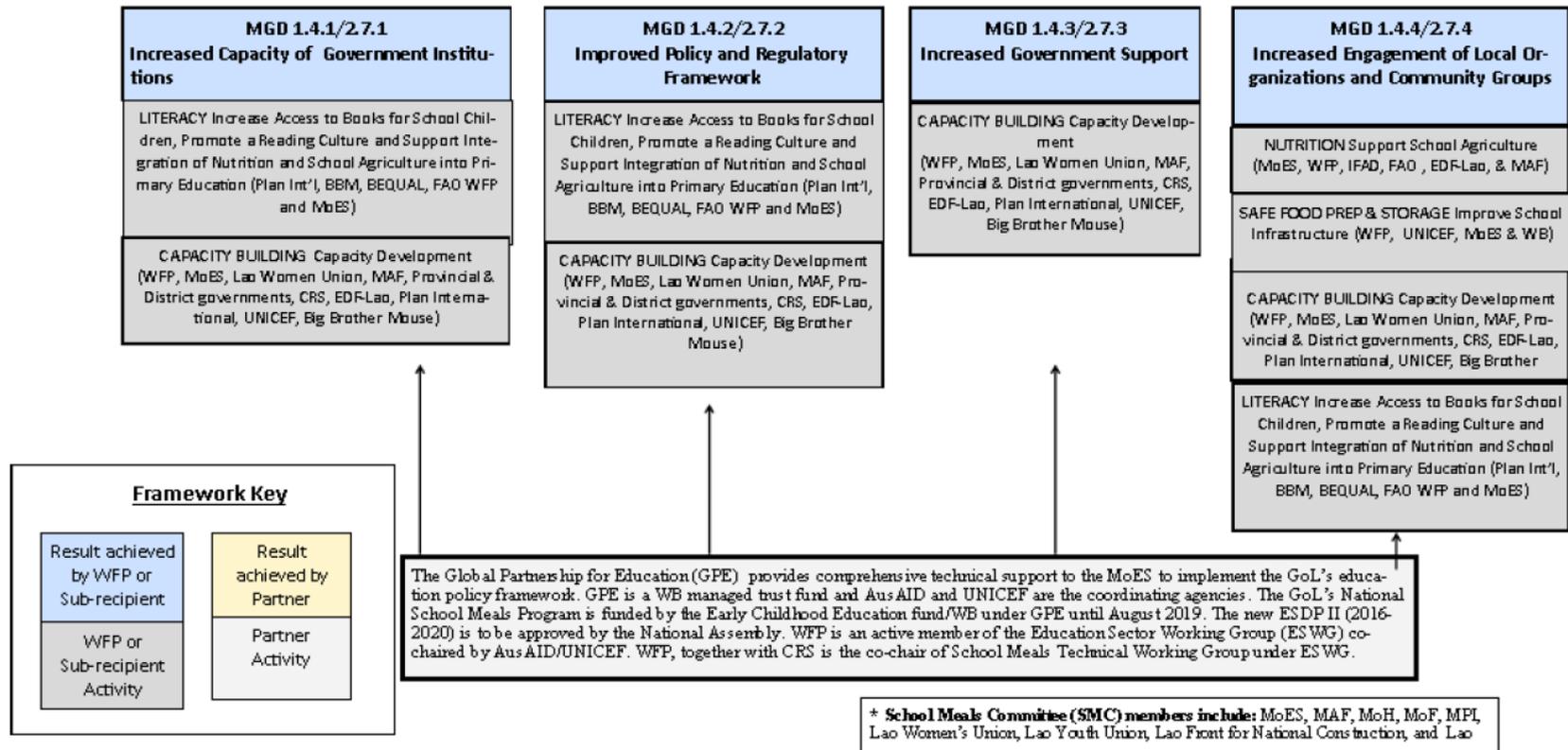
# USDA McGD FY17 School Feeding Program- Project Results Framework

WFP-LAO PDR FY2017-20  
 McGovern-Dole  
 Project-Level Results Framework

## Foundational Results

**Critical Assumptions**

- The government continues to will take over WFP's program into the National School Meals Program (NSMP).
- The government allocates budget line items for NSMP.
- The community resumes implementation of NSMP.



# Annex 6. Data collection Tools

## Data Collection Tools

Before each survey, focus group, or interview, information about the study is explained, why it is being carried out and the possible benefits it could receive, such as contributing to the improvements of the project and expanding its scope. The answers provided by the participants are confidential, personal data will not be shared or used in a way that puts the life of the participants or their family at risk. Participation is voluntary and informed consent is requested for all adult participants. In addition, the consent of parents/caregivers is requested for the participation of children and adolescents, and the assent of the children themselves.

Enumerator: This questionnaire should be administered to individuals identified in the sampled villages.  
Please double check to ensure:

- You have gained informed consent for the individual
- You have sought to interview the individual in private and safe place

**Informed Consent:** Before beginning the interview, it is necessary to introduce the stakeholders to the survey and obtain their consent to participate. Make it clear to them that their participation in the survey is voluntary. Please read the following statement in the language of the interview:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. We are an independent research team from DeftEdge, working on behalf of World Food Programme (WFP). We are conducting an evaluation to learn more about school feeding, primary school education, and other nutrition, health, literacy and capacity development activities in this community. We will also interview other people in your community and in other parts of Laos, including other school directors, teachers, parents and caregivers of young school children. This information will help WFP and the Government of Laos to understand community needs and inform any possible future projects and policies in these areas. The questions in this survey will take approximately **xx minutes** to complete and your participation is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can choose to stop at any time or to skip any questions you do not want to answer. We assure you that whatever information you share with us shall be treated with maximum confidentiality; we will not share information that identifies you with anyone. However, we hope that you will participate in this evaluation because your opinions are important.

Do you have any questions about the study or what I have said? If in the future you have any questions regarding the evaluation, or concerns or complaints we welcome you to contact **DeftEdge, [NAME at [email] or at [phone]]**. Would you like to take a moment to copy down this contact information?

## CONSENT

Do you agree to participate? Yes/No – if no, provide justification \_\_\_\_\_

If the participant selected no, please specify why she did not want to respond. (Refused, Did not have time, Was not happy with WFP or government programming, No reason provided, Other)

## CONSENT/ASSENT FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

**Parents:** In addition, we intend to speak to several children in this school. Do you consent to your child being asked just a few questions regarding their schooling? Yes/No – if no, provide justification \_\_\_\_\_

**Children:** My name is \_\_\_\_, and I'm here to understand a bit more about your schooling and the WFP and government school meals program. I will be speaking to many children just like you all over Laos. The questions will take approximately **xx minutes**. You may be sure that nothing you say here won't be revealed to your parents or teacher. There is no right or wrong response, and you can answer as best as you can. Would you like to ask me any questions? Anytime you want to ask a question, you can interrupt me. Additionally, if you are unsure of the answer to a question or don't want to provide one, simply let me know so that we can skip. Do you feel ready to start?

**QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: School Director**

**Section A: Interview and Demographic Information**

A0.a	Name of the enumerator		
A0.b	Name of the fieldwork supervisor		
A1.	Name of the province ( <i>Code aligns with EMIS</i> )	Phongsaly	2
		Oudumxay	4
		Luang Namtha	3
		Luang Prabang	6
		Saravane	14
		Sekong	15
		Attapeu	17
		Khammouane	12
A2.	Name & code of the district		
A3.	Name & code of the village		
A4.	EMIS code of the school		
A5.*	Intervention/treatment OR Comparison school	WFP Intervention and Handover	
		Comparison	
A6.	Area type	Urban	1
		Rural	2
A7.	Date of visit (dd/mm/yy)		
A8.	Time of visit/survey (hour, AM/PM)		
A9.	Timing of survey administration	Before lunch	1
		During lunch	2
		After lunch	3
A10.	Gender	Male	1
		Female	2
		Non-binary	3
		Prefer not to say	4
A11*	Which ethnicity best describes you?	Hmong – Eiw Mien	1
		Mon - Khmer	2
		Lao Tai	3
		Chinese - Tibetan	4
		Prefer not to specify	5
		Others (Specify)	
A12.*	Age		
A13.	Designation of the respondent	School principal/head	1
		School vice principal	2
		School teacher	3
		Other (specify)	4
A14.	Does this school have a pre-primary unit?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Pre-primary	1

A15.	Number of grades in the school (select all that apply)	Primary	2	
A16.	Number of children in the school		Boys	Girls
		Pre-primary		
		Primary		
A17.*	Number of teachers in the school		Men	Women
		Pre-primary		
		Primary		

### Section B: School Feeding Participation

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes
B1.*	[TREATMENT ONLY] What was the nature of WFP assistance received by this school? (Select all that apply)	School lunch for students	1
		Take-home rations for students	2
		Support to school agriculture	3
		Training and incentives for cooks and storekeepers	4
		Access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure	5
		Improved infrastructure for school meals (e.g. dining, kitchen and storage facilities)	6
		Improved learning infrastructure (e.g. libraries, playgrounds, classrooms)	7
		Teacher training on child health and nutrition	6
		Access to books for school children	7
		Literacy instruction materials and training for teachers and administrators	8
		Community awareness raising on school feeding and education	9
	Training of VEDC members	10	
B2.	[TREATMENT ONLY] When did this school start receiving support from the school feeding programme supported by WFP? <i>Ask for the year in which the WFP support started. The initial school feeding support may be in the form of mid-morning snack.</i>	Mention the year and month when it started: ____ Year ____ Month	
B3.		Yes	1

	[TREATMENT ONLY] Did the school receive support in the form of mid-morning snack (MMS) under the WFP school feeding programme?	No	2
		I don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	4
B4.	[TREATMENT ONLY] In which year did the <b>school lunch programme</b> start in the school? <i>This is asking about the year the support transitioned from mid-morning snack to lunch and/or when school lunches started in the school.</i>	2014	1
		2015	2
		2016	3
		2017	4
		2018	5
		2019	6
		2020	7
		2021	8
		2022	9
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	11
B5.	[TREATMENT ONLY] In which year were school feeding activities at your school handed over by WFP to the government-supported National School Meals Programme?	2019	1
		2021	2
		I don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	4
B6.*	What type of support do you (continue to) receive under the government-led National School Meals Program (NSMP)?	School lunch for students	1
		Take-home rations for students	2
		Support to school agriculture	3
		Training and incentives for cooks and storekeepers	4
		Access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure	5
		Improved infrastructure for school meals (e.g. dining, kitchen and storage facilities)	6
		Improved learning infrastructure (e.g. libraries, playgrounds, classrooms)	7
		Teacher training on child health and nutrition	6
		Access to books for school children	7
		Literacy instruction materials and training for teachers and administrators	8

		Community awareness raising on school feeding and education	9
		Training of VEDC members	10
		We do not have school meals / None of the above activities currently take place under the National School Meals Program	11
		I don't know	12
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	13
B7.*	[Aside from WFP for intervention schools], has this school <b>previously</b> benefitted from any other similar project focused on school feeding, nutrition, literacy and capacity building with a partner, for example, another UN Agency, NGO, charity, private company or government?	Yes	1
		No	2
		I don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	4
B8.	Does this school <b>currently</b> benefit from any other similar project focused on school feeding, nutrition, literacy with a partner, for example, another UN Agency, NGO, charity, private company or government?	Yes	1
		No	2
		I don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	4

Section C: Community and School Leadership on School Feeding and Literacy			
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes
C1.	Does the school have a Village Education Development Committee (VEDC)?	Yes	1
		No	2
		I don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	4
C2.	[If yes to C1] How many members are there in the VEDC?	Male	
		Female	
		Total	
C3.*	[If yes to C1] What is the frequency of planned meetings for the VEDC per academic year?	___ Number of meetings planned	
C4.*	[If yes to C1] How many times has the VEDC actually met in the most recent academic year (2022-2023)	___ Number of meetings held	
C5.	[If yes to C1] In general, how would you describe the functionality of the VEDC? <i>Read options aloud. Only one response possible</i>	Non-functional / Provides no support to the school.	1
		Somewhat functional / Provides some support to the school	2

		Highly functional / Provides strong support to the school	3
		I don't know	4
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	5
C6.*	In which ways does the VEDC support the school?  <i>Select all that apply.</i>	Planning, operating budget and financial oversight	1
		Oversight on learning inputs and materials, including local curricula	2
		Oversight of students, in terms of enrolment, attendance and drop-out	3
		Oversight of teachers, including issues of teacher absenteeism	4
		Organizing volunteer activities and contributions	5
		Other (please specify)	6
		I don't know	7
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	8
C7.	What is the kind of support that the VEDC provides to the school meals program?  <i>Select all that apply.</i>	Management of food stock	1
		Organization of cash contributions from parents	2
		Organization of in-kind support from parents	3
		Organization of cooking by parents	4
		Grievance redressal of parents for any school lunch related issues	5
		No support	6
		Other (please specify)	7
		I don't know	8
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	9
C8.	[TREATMENT ONLY] Did the VEDC members receive any training intervention from WFP?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	4
C9.*	What does the school authority or administrator do to improve teaching/classroom environment?  <i>Select all that apply.</i>	Nothing	1
		Regular monitoring of teacher teaching techniques	2
		Provide feedback to teachers on performance and areas for improvement of the quality /use of techniques	3
		Conduct regular training for teachers	4
		Keep attendance records of teachers*	5
		Facilitate VEDC meetings*	6
		Other (Specify)	
		Don't know	6
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	7
C11.*	[TREATMENT ONLY] Have the teachers in your school received any training from WFP	Yes	1
		No	2

	and its partners (such as BBM, Room to Read, World Education) since 2019?	Don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	5
C12.*	[TREATMENT ONLY] Have the teachers in your school received any training from WFP and its partners (such as BBM, Room to Read, World Education) in the last one year?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Don't know	3
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	5
C13.	[TREATMENT ONLY] [If yes on C7] On which aspects have the school teachers received training (last one year)?  <i>Select all that apply.</i>	Teaching / Learning techniques (at least 2 days or 16 hours)	1
		Food storage practices	2
		Hygiene and WASH	3
		Child health and nutrition	4
		Climate change and the environment*	5
		Clean cooking and food preparation*	6
		Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Tool*	7
		Commodity Management	8
		Other (specify)	
		Don't know	10
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	11
C14*	[TREATMENT ONLY] On a scale of 1-4, did you feel that teachers' knowledge and/or skills in the subject area have improved as a result of the training by the end of [xyz insert] training course? <b>[This question should repeat for each training type selected]</b>	Yes, very much so	1
		Somewhat	2
		Not really	3
		Not at all	4
		Don't know	5
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6
C10.*	[TREATMENT ONLY] In your observations on average, have the teachers continued to use the knowledge, skills, techniques and/or tools acquired during [xyz insert] training in day-to-day work? <b>[This question should repeat for each training type selected]</b>	Yes, very much so	1
		Somewhat	2
		Not really	3
		Not at all	4
		Don't know	5
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6
C15.	How do you support adoption of new techniques by the teachers?  <i>Select all that apply.</i>	Do nothing	1
		Supplementary reading materials are made available to teachers	2
		Encourage teachers to prepare handmade posters / locally made visual aids	3
		Encourage teachers to adopt participatory teaching techniques (e.g. Role play / Story telling/Group Discussion / Problem solving)	4
		Reward/recognition for teachers	5
		Other (Specify)	
C16.	How do you monitor adoption of new techniques by teachers <i>Select all that apply</i>	Do nothing	1
		Classroom observation	2
		Feedback from students	3
		Feedback from teachers	4

	Feedback from parents	5
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Section D. Community Contribution to school lunch				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
D0	Just to confirm, does this school provide/cook school meals for students?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to Section E
D1a.	Does the school <b>buy</b> food items (e.g. corns, rice, vegetable, fruits) from local farmers / farmer's group for students (for school meal)?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Skip to D2
D1b. *	On average, how much is purchased from the community/farmers' groups on a monthly basis? (Provide in kips)	_____ Kips		
D2.	Does the school get <b>voluntary contributions of food items</b> from <b>farmers/ farmers groups</b> for students (for school meal)?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
D3.	Does the school have any formal / informal partnership with Farmer's group?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Go to 5
D4.	How many farmer's groups does the school have partnership with?			
D5.	Does the school get voluntary contributions of <b>food items</b> (such as vegetables, fruits, meat or eggs) from <b>parents</b> of students for school lunch?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
D6.	Does the school get voluntary contributions from <b>parents</b> for <b>cooking</b> the school lunch?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Go to 8
D7.	How many days of a school week, do the parents volunteer to cook the school lunch?	_____ number of days ( <i>maximum 5 days</i> )		
D8.	Is there an assigned cook to prepare the school lunch?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Go to 12
D9.	How many days of the week does this assigned cook prepare the school lunch?	_____ number of days ( <i>maximum 5 days</i> )		
D10.	Does this assigned cook receive a salary or incentive (either in-kind or monetary)?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Go to 12
D11.	How is this salary paid for?	In kips by contribution from parents	1	
		In kind, through provision of food items from the parents	2	
		In kind, through provision of take home ration provided by school	3	
		Others		

Section D. Community Contribution to school lunch			
D12. *	What is the amount per semester (in kips, and/or if in-kind, in kgs)?	____ Kips ____ Kgs	
D13.	Does the school ask the parents to contribute in cash for the school lunch?	Yes	1
		No, not in this school year but contributions used to happen in the past years	2
		No such contribution has been taken from parents	3
D14.	If yes, then what is the frequency of this contribution?	Once a week	1
		Once a month	2
		Twice a month	3
		Once every semester	4
		Twice in a semester	5
		Once in a year	6
		Twice in a year	7
		As and when the school asks	8
D15.	If yes, then what is the amount per month that is contributed by parents every month?	_____ In kips/per student	
D16.	Non-food item contribution by Parents	Contributed during academic year 2022 - 2023? 1. Yes 2. No ( <i>go to Next</i> )	Approx. % of requirement met. 1. More than 100% 2. 100% 3. 50% 4. 25% 5. 10% 6. <10%
	1.1.	1.2.	1.3.
A	Water		
B	Firewood		
C	Cooking Utensils		
D	Cleaning Products		
E	Plates and cutlery for students		
F	Cooks Salary		
G	Volunteering as cook		
H	Storekeeper Salary		
I	Labor for construction/ rehabilitation of kitchens		
J	Labor for construction/ rehabilitation of storage rooms		
K	Labor for construction/ rehabilitation of dining area for the children		

Section D. Community Contribution to school lunch			
L	Timber for construction/ rehabilitation of kitchen/storage room		
M	Other (specify) _____		

Section E: School Garden				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Observe and code accordingly. Click a picture of the school garden.</b>				
E1.	Does the school have a vegetable garden?  <i>Ask the school head to show you the school garden. Only after observing the school garden, mark the correct answer.</i>	Yes	1	Go to E3
		No	2	Go to next section
E2.	Is there any vegetable/fruit sown or growing in the garden?	Yes	1	Go to E3
		No	2	Go to E5
E3.	Write the names of the vegetables/fruits that you see are planted.	1		
		2		
		3		
		4		
		5		
		6		
		7		
		8		
		9		
		10		
E4.	Have you taken a picture of the school garden?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>For the next set of questions, ask the respondent for the information.</b>				
E5.	How many times in a month, does the school garden provide vegetables for the school lunch in the first semester (September to January)?	Once a month	1	
		Twice a month	2	
		Thrice a month	3	
		Four times a month	4	
		Others		
E6.	How many times in a month, does the school garden provide vegetables for the school lunch in the second semester (February to May)?	Once a month	1	
		Twice a month	2	
		Thrice a month	3	
		Four times a month	4	
		Others		
E7.	What is the source of water for irrigating the school garden?	River/stream/canal	1	
		Pond within the school	2	
		Pond outside of the school premises	3	
		Rain water	4	
		Piped water from the district administration	5	
		Others		
E8.		Never	1	

Section E: School Garden				
	How often is it a challenge to have sufficient water for the garden?	Rarely	2	
		Sometimes	3	
		Always	4	

F. SCHOOL FACILITIES				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<p><b>From this point in the survey, the enumerator will begin touring the facilities while completing the questionnaire. For each facility that is present, OBSERVE the facility and code accordingly. Take a picture of every facility.</b></p> <p><b>ASK FOR BOTH INTERVENTION AND COMPARISON SCHOOLS</b></p>				
1.	Number of classrooms	_____		
2.	Does the school have a separate classroom for each grade?	Yes	1	Go to F4
		No	2	
3.	If no, then how many such grades are sharing their classroom with other grades?			
4.	How many classrooms have been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/USDA support? (from August 2017 until now)			
5.	Does the school have a library or a place where books are stored?	Yes	1	Go to F7
		No	2	
6.	Has the library been stocked with books with WFP/USDA support (including from Big Brother Mouse, Room to Read)? (from August 2017 until now)	Yes	1	
		No	2	
7.	Does your school have a storage room/facility to store food items?	Yes, within the school	1	Go to F9
		Yes, outside the school premises	2	
		No	3	
8.	If no, then where is the food stored?	In a classroom	1	Go to F10
		In teacher's room	2	
		In the kitchen	3	
		Open space	4	
		Dining area	5	
		In the house of the school head/teacher	6	
9.	Is the storage room built on the ground or is the floor raised by stilts?	On the ground	1	
		Raised upon stilts	2	
		Not clear	3	
10.	Is the food stored off the ground?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Could not observe	3	
11.		Yes	1	
		No	2	

F. SCHOOL FACILITIES				
	Does the storage room have wooden pallets above the ground for storage of commodities?	Could not observe	3	
12.	How many storage rooms has been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/USDA support? (from August 2017 until now)			
13.	Does the school have a kitchen?	Yes	1	Go to F15
		No	2	
14.	If not, where is the food normally prepared?	In a classroom	1	
		Open space / School yard	2	
		Other	3	
15.	In the kitchen or where the food is prepared, are the food items kept on the ground or on a raised platform?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Could not observe	3	
16.	How many kitchens have been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/USDA support? (from August 2017 till now)	—		
17.	Did your school receive any smoke reducing/ Energy Saving Stove from WFP/USDA?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
18.	If yes, then is the smoke reducing/energy saving stove being used for cooking?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Could not observe	3	
19.	Does the school have a dining area for the school lunch?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
20.	If no, then where do the children eat their meals?	In their classrooms	1	
		In open space/school yard	2	
		Others	3	
21.	Does the dining area have chairs/benches and tables for eating or do the children have to sit on the ground?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Could not observe	3	
22.	Has the dining area been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/USDA support? (from August 2017 until now)	Yes	1	
		No	2	
23.	Does the school have a source of drinking water for students near or at school?	Inside school premises	1	Go to F24
		Outside school premises	2	
		No drinking water facility	3	Go to F27
24.	What is the source of drinking water?	Tap water	1	
		Bottled water	2	
		RO plant within school	3	
		Borehole	4	
		Protected dug well	5	
		Unprotected well	6	
		Protected spring	7	
		Unprotected spring	8	

F. SCHOOL FACILITIES				
		Rainwater collection	9	
		Rivers or ponds	10	
		Vendor-provided water	11	
		Tanker truck water	12	
		Other (Specify)		
25.	Has the water been treated for drinking by boiling etc?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
		Not required	4	
26.	Is this drinking water available only during lunch or during other times of the day as well? <i>(Ask as well as observe by going to the drinking water facility)</i>	Only available during lunch hour	1	
		Available during all times of the day	2	
27.	If NO, how does the students get drinking water during school hours?  <i>Select all that apply</i>	Buy Bottled water from shops	1	
		Children carry water from home	2	
		Get water from neighbours	3	
		Other (Specify)		
28.	How many wells and water stations/systems have been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/support? <i>(from August 2017 until now)</i>			
29.	Does the school have a functioning toilet for the students?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
30.	Are there separate toilets for boys and girls?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
31.	How many toilets are there?	___ Total toilets ___ Functional toilets		
32.	How many toilets have been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/support? <i>(from August 2017 until now)</i>			

33.	Do the toilets have a functioning hand washing facilities within or within the school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	Go to F35
		No	2	
34.	Does the hand washing facility have soap?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
35.	How often is it a challenge to have sufficient water for the hand washing facility?	Never	1	
		Rarely	2	
		Sometimes	3	
		Always	4	
36.	Are there measures in place and functioning for improvement and maintenance of school infrastructure?	No measures are in place	1	
		Cleanliness of the school surrounding	2	

	<i>Select all that apply</i>	Regular cleaning of classrooms	3
		Regular cleaning of teacher's rooms	4
		Proper maintenance of school latrines	5
		Proper maintenance of classroom and furniture	6
		Availability of water for teachers and students	7
		Other	

G. OBSERVATION OF SCHOOL LUNCH				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>ONLY ASK FOR SCHOOLS RESPONDING 'YES' TO QUESTION D0</b>				
G1	On an average, how many days in a school week does the school provide lunch to the students?	1 day	1	
		2 days	2	
		3 days	3	
		4 days	4	
		5 days	5	
		Others		
G2	In the previous school week how many days was school lunch provided to the students?	1 day	1	
		2 days	2	
		3 days	3	
		4 days	4	
		5 days	5	
		Did not provide on any day	6	
G3	In the last one month, how many days was school lunch provided to the students?	_____ days		
G4	What are the main challenges your school has faced in regularly providing school lunch?  <i>Select all that apply</i>	Irregularity of cooks/absence of cooks	1	
		No food available due to delay in delivery of stock	2	
		No food available due to consumption of available stock	3	
		Lack of fresh vegetables or meat or eggs along with rice	4	
		Lack of water	5	
		Lack of cooking fuel	6	
		Students do not like the food	7	
		Others (specify)		
G5	At this school, is access to <b>WATER FOR COOKING</b> a barrier to the provision of school lunch...?	Never	1	
		Rarely	2	
		Sometimes	3	
		Always	4	
G6		Never	1	

G. OBSERVATION OF SCHOOL LUNCH				
	At this school, is access to <b>WATER FOR CLEANING</b> a barrier to the provision of school lunch...?	Rarely	2	
		Sometimes	3	
		Always	4	
G7	Was the school lunch provided today? <i>Based on your observation.</i>	Yes	1	Go to G9
		No	2	
G8	If no, then why was the school lunch not provided?	No cooks	1	Go to next section
		No food available due to delay in delivery of stock	2	
		No food available due to consumption of available stock	3	
		Lack of fresh vegetables or meat or eggs along with rice	4	
		Lack of water	5	
		Lack of cooking fuel	6	
		Students do not like the food	7	
		Others		
G9	What were the main foods provided for school lunch today? (as per your observation)  <i>Select all that apply</i>	Rice (provided by school)	1	
		Vegetables	2	
		Meat	3	
		Fish	4	
		Eggs	5	
		Others		
G10	Did the children wash hands with soap before eating lunch?	Yes	1	
		No	2	

Section H: Students Current and Past Enrolment								
TO BE ASKED TO BOTH INTERVENTION AND COMPARISON SCHOOLS								
S.No.	Question			Options		Codes	Skip	
H1.	Does the school have records of Student Enrolment for past academic years?			Yes complete records		1		
				Yes partial records		2		
				No		3		
If coded 3 in Q.H1, then skip to the next section								
If coded 1 or 2 in Q.H1, then Complete this section for PRE-PRIMARY and PRIMARY SCHOOL (grades 1-5) only								
Enter "999" if the class does not exist								
Enter "888" if data is not available								
H2. FILL THE DATA FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR								
Grade	Enrolment (current academic year)		Total number of students present today (head count)		Total number of students who have dropped out		Total number of students who have transferred or are deceased	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	1.1.	1.2.	1.3.	1.4.	1.5.	1.6.	1.7.	1.8.

**Section H: Students Current and Past Enrolment**

**TO BE ASKED TO BOTH INTERVENTION AND COMPARISON SCHOOLS**

Pre-primary								
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
Total								
Comments								

**Students Enrolment for prior academic school years**

**H3. ENROLMENT FOR PRIOR ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEARS**  
 Complete for PRE-PRIMARY only  
 Enter "999" if the class does not exist  
 Enter "888" if data is not available

Academic year	Enrolment at start of academic school year		Numbers advanced to next class		Numbers remaining in the same class (repetition)		Transfers or deceased	Left without reason (dropout)
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	1.9.	1.10.	1.11.	1.12.	1.13.	1.14.	1.15.	1.16.
2022-2023								
2021-2022								
2020-2021								
2019-2020								

**H4. ENROLLMENT FOR PRIOR ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEARS**  
 Complete for PRIMARY only (Grades 1-5)  
 Enter "999" if the class does not exist  
 Enter "888" if data is not available

Academic year	Enrolment at start of academic school year		Numbers advanced to next class		Numbers remaining in the same class (repetition)		Transfers or deceased	Left without reason (dropout)
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	1.17.	1.18.	1.19.	1.20.	1.21.	1.22.	1.23.	1.24.
2022-2023								
2021-2022								
2020-2021								

Section H: Students Current and Past Enrolment								
TO BE ASKED TO BOTH INTERVENTION AND COMPARISON SCHOOLS								
2019-2020								

Section I: Students Attendance Data in the last 1 year				
TO BE ASKED TO BOTH PROGRAMME AND CONTROL SCHOOLS. AT THIS POINT, IT WILL BE REQUIRED TO BRING IN SCHOOL TEACHERS INTO THE CONVERSATION TO ASSESS THEIR STUDENTS.				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
I1.	Does the school have records of Student Attendance for last academic years?	Yes complete records	1	
		Yes partial records	2	
		No	3	
If coded 3 in Q.I1, then skip to the next section				
If coded 1 or 2 in Q.I1, then Complete this section for PRIMARY SCHOOL (grades 1-5) only Enter "999" if the class does not exist Enter "888" if data is not available				
First, enter the total number of school days for each month (not including holidays or school closures). Then, from the prior year's attendance records (2017-2018) write the attendance for the 10 selected children (1 boy and 1 girl from each grade). Enter the number of days the students attended school each month.				

		September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023	February 2023	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
I2. Number of school days								
Please enter the number of days that the selected students were present each month. Enter "888" if data is not available								
Student code	Grade	Sex (male=1, female=2)	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023	February 2023
1.1.	1.2.	1.3.	1.4.	1.5.	1.6.	1.7.	1.8.	1.9.
	1							
	1							
	1							
	1							
	2							
	2							
	2							
	3							
	3							
	3							
	3							
	4							
	4							
	4							
	5							
	5							
	5							
	5							

Section H: Students Attentiveness Data					
TO BE ASKED TO BOTH INTERVENTION AND COMPARISON SCHOOLS					
This section is to be filled for 18 students selected for the survey. From each class three to four students have been pre-selected for the survey. For each student fill their student code carefully and fill the rest of the information after asking the teachers who teach the respective students.					
	Student code	Grade	Sex (male=1; female=2)	According to teachers, is the pupil generally attentive in class? Yes=1, No=2, Not applicable / no more teachers=9	
				Teacher 1	Teacher 2
	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)
		1			
		1			
		1			
		1			
		2			
		2			
		2			
		3			
		3			
		3			
		3			
		4			
		4			
		4			
		5			
		5			
		5			
		5			

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: Teacher			
Section A: Interview and Demographic Information			
A0.a	Name of the enumerator		
A0.b	Name of the fieldwork supervisor		
A1.	Name of the province	Phongsaly	2
		Oudumxay	4
		Luang Namtha	3
		Luang Prabang	6
		Saravane	14
		Sekong	15
		Attapeu	17
		Khammouane	12
A2.	Name & code of the district		

A3.	Name & code of the village		
A4.	EMIS code of the school		
A5.*	Intervention/treatment OR Comparison school	WFP Intervention and Handover	
		Comparison	
A6.	Gender	Male	1
		Female	2
		Non-binary	3
		Prefer not to say	4
A7.*	Which ethnicity best describes you?	Hmong – Eiw Mien	1
		Mon - Khmer	2
		Lao Tai	3
		Chinese - Tibetan	4
		Prefer not to specify	5
		Others (Specify)	
A8.	What is your age?		
A9.	How long have you been teaching in this school? (In years and months)	_____ Number of years _____ Number of months	
A10.	What position do you currently hold in this school?	Head teacher/principal	1
		Assistant/ Deputy headteacher	2
		Senior Teacher	3
		Teacher (permanent/ regular)	4
		Teacher (paid contract)	5
		Teacher (volunteer)	6
		Others	
A11.	What is your highest educational qualification?	MSc or higher	1
		Bachelor	2
		Diploma	3
		Higher/Advanced diploma	4
		Technical/vocational	5
		Secondary (G9-G11)	6
		Middle (G6-G8)	7
		Primary (G1-G5)	8
		Untrained	9
		Other	10
A12.	Which grades do you teach? <i>Multiple responses possible</i>	Class/grade 1	1
		Class/grade 2	2
		Class/grade 3	3
		Class/grade 4	4
		Class/grade 5	5
A13.	Which subjects do you teach? <i>Multiple responses possible</i>	Literature / Language ( Lao)	1
		Literature / Language (English / other foreign language)	2
		Science	3
		Mathematics	4
		Social science/World around us (Loke om tua)	5
		History	6

		Arts / Painting	7
		Life skills	8
		Others	
A14.	In the last 30 days, how many times were you absent from teaching at school?	___ Number of days	

**Section B: Teacher Training and Practice**

B1.	[TREATMENT ONLY] Have you received any training from WFP and its partners (such as BBM, Room to Read, World Education) since 2019?  (Yes=1; No=2)	Teaching / Learning techniques (at least 2 days or 16 hours)	1
		Safe food storage practices	2
		Hygiene and WASH	3
		Child health and nutrition	4
		Climate change and the environment	5
		Clean cooking and food preparation	6
		Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Tool*	7
		Commodity Management	8
B2 *	[TREATMENT ONLY] On a scale of 1-4, did you feel that your knowledge and/or skills in the subject area has improved as a result of the training by the end of [xyz insert] training course?  <i>[This question should repeat for each training type selected]</i>	Yes, very much so	1
		Somewhat	2
		Not really	3
		Not at all	4
		Don't know	5
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6
B3 *	Do you continue to use the knowledge, skills, techniques and/or tools acquired during [xyz insert] training in day-to-day work?  <i>[This question should repeat for each training type selected]</i>	Yes, very much so	1
		Somewhat	2
		Not really	3
		Not at all	4
		Don't know	5
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6
B4.	How have the trainings contributed towards your skills and knowledge base?	Increased level of understanding of the subject	
		Enhanced teaching methods	
		Started to develop and use additional teaching materials besides textbooks	

		Better organization and management of classroom arrangement		
		Better communication with parents		
		Better communication with students		
		Helped prepare and use teaching plans		
		Provide better support based on student learning skills and personalized learning		
		Better record keeping and follow-up on lessons		
		Better access and use of technological equipment		
		Started to make the class more interactive		
		No change		
B5.	Have you been able to share/transfer your skills to other teachers/staff members?	Yes		
		No		
B6.	How often do you use supplementary books, manuals and/or the library facility?	Frequently (almost every day)		
		Often (2-3 times/week)		
		Sometimes (once per week)		
		Rarely (bi-monthly/monthly)		
		Never		
		Prefer not to answer / Skip		
B7.	How has the availability of supplementary books and library corner impacted the students?	Increased student presence in the library		
		Increased interest of students in reading and borrowing books.		
		Better reading ability		
		Increased motivation to study		
		No change		
		Do not know		
		Prefer not to answer / Skip		
B8.	Do you interact with parents of your students?	I regularly communicate with parents of all students	1	
		I communicate with parents, though only when students are having learning and attendance challenges	2	
		I only communicate with parents through VEDC	3	
		I don't interact with parents much at all	4	
B9.	What proportion of parents show interest in these interactions?	Few (0-25%)	1	
		Little less than half (25-50%)	2	
		Little more than half (50-75%)	3	
		Almost all (75-100%)	4	
B10.	How do you do to engage students and parents to improve learning outcomes?	Rewarding students with certificates	1	
		Sending letters to parents explaining about children's reading performance	2	

<b>Multiple answers possible</b>	Use new methods of teaching as learnt in the trainings	3	
	Have regular meetings with parents	4	
	Do nothing	5	

<b>Section C: Teacher Engagement with School Feeding Activities</b>				
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Skip</b>
<b>This section is only for schools with meals programs, so this would include intervention schools and possibly a few schools selecting yes under D0</b>				
C1.*	[INTERVENTION SCHOOLS ONLY] What has been the impact of the school meal programme at the school-level?	Increase in enrolment of boys	1	
		Increase in enrolment of girls	2	
		Increase in enrolment of children with disabilities	3	
		Increase in enrolment of ethnic minorities	4	
		Increase in attendance of boys	5	
		Increase in attendance of girls	6	
		Increase in attendance of children with disabilities	7	
		Increase in attendance of ethnic minorities	8	
		Reduced health related absences for boys	9	
		Reduced health related absences for girls	10	
		Reduced health related absences for children with disabilities	11	
		Reduced health related absences for ethnic minorities	12	
		Improved attentiveness of boys	13	
		Improved attentiveness of girls	14	
		Improved attentiveness of children with disabilities	15	
		Improved attentiveness of ethnic minorities	16	
		I don't know	17	
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	18	
C2.	[INTERVENTION SCHOOLS ONLY] According to you, if the school meal would stop today, what would be the consequence on student attendance?	No consequence, attendance will remain the same	1	
		Attendance will drop by 25%	2	
		Attendance will drop between 25% and 50%	3	
		Attendance will drop by more than 50%	4	
		Students will drop out	5	
C3.	[INTERVENTION SCHOOLS ONLY] According to you, if the school meal	No consequence, enrolment will remain the same	1	
		Enrolment will drop by 25%	2	

Section C: Teacher Engagement with School Feeding Activities				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>This section is only for schools with meals programs, so this would include intervention schools and possibly a few schools selecting yes under D0</b>				
	stop today, what would be the consequence on student enrolment?	Enrolment will drop between 25% and 50%	3	
		Enrolment will drop by more than 25%	4	
C4.	Do you have a child who also attends pre-primary or primary classes in this school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C5.	Have you ever made any contribution for the school lunch program? (giving vegetables or volunteering to cook or working in the school garden /providing labor for infrastructure building or in cash)	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C6.	If yes, then how did you contribute?	In kind, by providing vegetables	1	
		In kind, by helping in cooking the school meal	2	Show C7a-c
		In kind, by providing labour in the school garden	3	
		In cash, by giving a fixed amount to school	4	
		Others (specify)		
C7a.	How many days in a school week do you cook the school lunch?	_____ Number of days		
C7b.	For one time of cooking, what is the average time spent by you on cooking?	_____ Number of hours		
C7c.	Do you have to skip teaching any class for cooking school lunch?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C9.	How often did you make contributions to the school meals program?	Once a week	1	
		Once a month	2	
		Twice a month	3	
		Once every semester	4	
		Twice in a semester	5	
		Once in a year	6	
		Twice in a year	7	
		Whenever school requested	8	
		Other (specify)		

Section D. General status of education and impact of COVID-19				
Q	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
D1	How has the status of primary education changed in the area since 2018?	Increased willingness to educate children	1	
		Decreased willingness to educate children	2	
		Increased focus on girls' education	3	

Section D. General status of education and impact of COVID-19				
Q	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
		Reduced focus on girls' education	4	
		Increased community participation in children's education	5	
		Decreased community participation in children's education	6	
		Increased student enrolment	7	
		Decreased student enrolment	8	
		Increased student attendance	9	
		Decreased student attendance	10	
		Increased quality of teaching	11	
		Decreased quality of teaching	12	
		Improved literacy and learning outcomes of students	13	
		Decrease in literacy and learning outcomes of students	14	
		Others (specify)	15	
		I don't know	16	
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	17	
D2	What has been the impact of the pandemic period on your overall motivation to return to school and teach?	Improved motivation	1	
	Reduced motivation	2		
	No change in motivation	3		
	I don't know	4		
	Prefer not to say / skip	5		
D3	How do you think the extended school closure due to COVID-19 affected students' learning outcomes?	Increased reading capability	1	
	Deterioration in reading capability	2		
	Increased writing capability	3		
	Deterioration in writing capability	4		
	Increased ability to concentrate	5		
	Decreased ability to concentrate	6		
	Increased motivation to learn	7		
	Decreased motivation to learn	8		
	No changes	9		
	Other (specify)			
	I don't know	11		
	Prefer not to say / skip	12		

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: School Cooks				
Section A: Interview and Demographic Information				
Q	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
A0.a	Name of the enumerator			
A0.b	Name of the fieldwork supervisor			
A1.	Name of the province	Phongsaly	2	
		Oudumxay	4	
		Luang Namtha	3	
		Luang Prabang	6	
		Saravane	14	
		Sekong	15	
		Attapeu	17	
		Khammouane	12	
A2.	Name & code of the district			
A3.	Name & code of the village			
A4.	EMIS code of the school			
A5.	Gender	Male	1	
		Female	2	
		Non-binary	3	
A6.*	Which ethnicity best describes you?	Hmong – Eiw Mien	1	
		Mon - Khmer	2	
		Lao Tai	3	
		Chinese - Tibetan	4	
		Prefer not to specify	5	
		Others (Specify)		
A7.	What is your age?			
Section B: School Feeding Participation				
B1.	Are you the appointed cook for the school lunch or do you volunteer to cook?	Appointed cook	1	
		Volunteer to cook all school lunch days	2	
		Volunteer to cook on some school lunch days	3	
B2.	Since when have you been appointed as the cook/volunteered as a cook?	_____ Number of months		
B3.	How many days in a month do you cook the school lunch?	_____ Number of days		
B4.	For preparing for one school lunch, what is the average time spent by you on cooking?	_____ Number of hours		
B5.	Are you a teacher in the school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B6.	Do you have a child who also attends pre-primary or primary classes in this school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B7.		Yes	1	

	Do you receive a salary/payment or incentive for cooking the school lunch (either in-kind or monetary)?	No	2	Skip to B9
B8.	What is the amount per semester (in kips, or if in-kind, in kgs)? <i>Be sure to clearly specify whether it is kips or kgs.</i>	_____ kips _____ kgs		
B10.	Have you ever made any other contribution for the school lunch program? (giving vegetables or working in the school garden /providing labor for infrastructure building or in cash)	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B11.	If yes, then how did you contribute?	In kind, by providing vegetables	1	
		In kind, by providing labour in the school garden	2	
		In cash, by giving a fixed amount to school	3	
		Others (specify)	4	
		No, I don't contribute in any other way	5	Skip to B13
B12.	How much do you contribute per month, on average?	_____ Kg		
		_____ hours		
		_____ Kip		
B13.	Are you trained in safe food preparation and storage practices?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B14.	If yes, then how many such trainings did you receive...	In the last 1 year		Write 99 if does not remember
		Before last 1 year		
B15.	Have you received a cookbook?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't remember	3	
B16.	Has the school received smoke reducing stoves?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't Know	3	
B17.	Have you received any training in using smoke reducing stoves?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't remember	3	
B18.	Do you use smoke reducing stoves for cooking? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B19*	On a scale of 1-4, did you feel that your knowledge and/or skills in the safe food preparation and storage has improved as a result of the training?	Yes, very much so	1	
		Somewhat	2	
		Not really	3	
		Not at all	4	
		Don't know	5	
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6	
B3*	Do you continue to use the knowledge, skills, techniques and/or tools acquired during the training in day-to-day work?	Yes, very much so	1	
		Somewhat	2	
		Not really	3	
		Not at all	4	
		Don't know	5	

		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6	
B4.*	In which areas have the trainings improved your skills and knowledge base?	No change in knowledge/skills in any area	1	
		Commodity management	2	
		Recordkeeping	3	
		Storage type and utilization	4	
		Health and hygiene	5	
		Food preparation and items required	6	
		Checking food items before cooking	7	
		Measuring food before cooking	8	
		Ensuring personal health and hygiene	9	
		Ensuring cleanliness of food commodities before cooking	10	
		Checking of cooked food	11	
		Prevention of nutrient loss	12	
		Storage equipment	13	
		Other (specify)		
B5.	What has been the impact of the pandemic period on your overall motivation to return to school and cook?	Improved motivation	1	
		Reduced motivation	2	
		No change in motivation	3	
		I don't know	4	
		Prefer not to say / skip	5	

### Section C. OBSERVATION OF THE KITCHEN AND FOOD PREPARATION

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
C1.	Are the cooks clean and well groomed? (e.g. Clean hands and clothes) <b>DIRECT OBSERVATION</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C2.	Do they use a uniform or apron for use in the kitchen? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Have but not use	1	
		Have and use	2	
C3.	Does the school have a dedicated room as a kitchen? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	Skip to C5
		No	2	
C4.	If not dedicated room, where do you prepare food?	Inside school premise, in open air/outside	1	
		Outside school premise, in open air/outside	2	
		Inside school premise, in roofed shed	3	
		Outside school premise, in roofed shed	4	
		At own home	5	
		Others (specify)		
C5.	Is the kitchen properly ventilated? <b>DIRECT OBSERVATION</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C6.	Is there any evidence of presence of rodents in the kitchen? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C7.	Is there any evidence of presence of insects (weevil and others)? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C8.	Is the food cooked off the ground? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	Skip to C10
		No	2	
C9.	If yes, does the school use improvised raised pallets for cooking? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C10.	When do you clean your kitchen area?	Every morning before food preparation, and after use	1	
		After food preparation	2	
		At the end of the week	3	
		Others		
C11.	Were the pots/utensils in which the food is cooked and stored, cleaned before cooking? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C12.		Yes	1	

Section C. OBSERVATION OF THE KITCHEN AND FOOD PREPARATION				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
	Do you wash the pots/utensils in which the food is cooked and stored, after cooking?	No	2	
C13.	Did you use soap to wash the pots/utensils? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C14.	Were the vegetables and rice used for cooking washed and cleaned before cooking? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C15.	What is the primary source of water that is used for cleaning and cooking food?	Piped water	1	
		Water from the river/streams	2	
		Water from a pond	3	
		Bottled water	4	
		Water from tanker supplied to school	5	
		Rainwater	6	
		Borehole	7	
		Protected well	8	
		Unprotected well	9	
	Others			
C16.	When do you usually wash your hands for food preparation? <b>Multiple answers possible</b>	Before handling food and often during food preparation	1	
		After using the toilet	2	
		After finishing food preparation	3	
		Do not wash hands	4	
C17.	What do you use to wash your hands?	Only water	1	
		Water and soap	2	
		Water and mud	3	
		Water and ash	4	
		Others		
C18.	Did the cooks wash their hands before handling the food/ preparing the food?  <b>Direct observation</b>	Yes, with only water	1	
		Yes, with water and soap	2	
		Yes, with water and mud	3	
		Yes, with water and ash	4	
		Did not wash	5	
		Could not observe	6	
C19.	What is the most important thing to check in food before cooking?	Expiry date, packaging, colour of the food, presence of pests	1	
		Source of food	2	
		Colour of the package	3	

Section C. OBSERVATION OF THE KITCHEN AND FOOD PREPARATION				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
C20.	How do you store cooked food prior to serving the students? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Store cooked food in covered cooking pots in a clean, safe place before serving the students	1	
		Store cooked food in open containers	2	
		Store cooked food outside the kitchen without covers	3	
C21	On the days that the school provides lunch, are vegetables available for cooking?	Always (All 5 days)	1	
		Sometimes (3-4 days)	2	
		Rarely (1-2 days)	3	
		Never	4	
C22.	What according to you are the issues that you face in preparing the school lunch? <b>Multiple answers possible</b>	Lack of food (rice)	1	
		Lack of vegetables	2	
		Lack of egg/meat	3	
		Lack of water	4	
		No availability of kitchen	5	
		Kitchen is not clean	6	
		Lack of proper utensils to cook	7	
		Lack of involvement of community	8	
		Storekeepers are absent	9	
	Others			
C23.	If you have fallen short on food materials (options 1-3 above), why does this usually happen?	Food shortages is not a problem	1	
		Inadequate supply	2	
		Lack of funds	3	
		Erratic supply	4	
		Other (Specify)		
C24.	In the last month, how many days did you use vegetables from the school garden?	1 day in the month	1	
		2 days in the month	2	
		3 days in the month	3	
		More than 3 days in the month	4	
		Never	5	
		Can't say	6	

### QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: School Storekeepers

#### Section A: Interview and Demographic Information

A0.a	Name of the enumerator		
A0.b	Name of the fieldwork supervisor		
	Name of the province	Phongsaly	2
		Oudumxay	4

A1.		Luang Namtha	3
		Luang Prabang	6
		Saravane	14
		Sekong	15
		Attapeu	17
		Khammouane	12
A2.	Name & code of the district		
A3.	Name & code of the village		
A4.	EMIS code of the school		
A6.	Gender	Male	1
		Female	2
		Non-binary	3
A7.*	Which ethnicity best describes you?	Hmong – Eiw Mien	1
		Mon - Khmer	2
		Lao Tai	3
		Chinese - Tibetan	4
		Prefer not to specify	5
		Others (Specify)	
A8.	What is your age?		

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
B1.	Since when have you been appointed as the storekeeper?	_____ Number of years		
B2.	Are you a teacher in the school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B3.	Do you have a child who also attends pre-primary or primary classes in this school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B4.	As a storekeeper, how much time do you spend on this role in a school day?	_____ Number of hours		
B5.	Do you have a record book where you keep a stock of the food?	Yes	1	If response is 2, Skip to B8
		No	2	
B6.	Ask to see the record book. Were you able to see the record book?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B7.	When was the last time that the record book was updated?	This week	1	
		Last week	2	
		Last month	3	
		Two months back	4	
		More than 2 months back	5	
		Last year	6	
		No record found in the book	7	
B8.	Do you receive a salary/payment or incentive for being a storekeeper here (either in-kind or monetary)?	Yes	1	If response is 2, Skip to B11
		No	2	

B9.	What is the amount per semester (in kips, or if in-kind, in kgs)? <i>Be sure to clearly specify whether it is kips or kgs.</i>	_____ In kips		
		_____ In Kgs		
B10.	If the person is teacher, then is this amount additional to teacher's salary?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Not a teacher	3	
B11.	Have you ever made any other contribution for the school lunch program? (giving vegetables or working in the school garden /providing labor for infrastructure building or in cash)	Yes	1	
		No	2	
B12.	If yes, then how did you contribute?	In kind, by providing vegetables	1	
		In kind, by providing labour in the school garden	2	
		In cash, by giving a fixed amount to school	3	
		Others (specify)	4	
		No, I don't contribute in any other way	5	Skip to B14
B13.	How much do you contribute per month, on average?	_____ Kg _____ hours _____ Kip		
B14.	Are you trained in safe food preparation and storage practices?	Yes	1	If response is 2, Skip to B19
		No	2	
B15.	If yes, then how many such trainings did you receive...	In the last 1 year		Write 99 if does not remember
		Before last 1 year		
B16*	[TREATMENT ONLY] On a scale of 1-4, did you feel that your knowledge and/or skills in the subject area has improved as a result of the training?	Yes, very much so	1	
		Somewhat	2	
		Not really	3	
		Not at all	4	
		Don't know	5	
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6	
B17*	Do you continue to use the knowledge, skills, techniques and/or tools acquired during the training in day-to-day work?	Yes, very much so	1	
		Somewhat	2	
		Not really	3	
		Not at all	4	
		Don't know	5	
		Prefer not to answer / Skip	6	
B18.*	In which areas have the trainings improved your skills and knowledge base?	No change in knowledge/skills in any area	1	
		Commodity management	2	

		Recordkeeping	3	
		Storage type and utilization	4	
		Health and hygiene	5	
		Food preparation and items required	6	
		Checking food items before cooking	7	
		Measuring food before cooking	8	
		Ensuring personal health and hygiene	9	
		Ensuring cleanliness of food commodities before cooking	10	
		Checking of cooked food	11	
		Prevention of nutrient loss	12	
		Storage equipment	13	
		Other (specify)		
B19.	Have you received a book about Warehouse management in Lao language within the last 12 months?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't remember	3	
B20.	What has been the impact of the pandemic period on your overall motivation to return to school and cook?	Improved motivation	1	
		Reduced motivation	2	
		No change in motivation	3	
		I don't know	4	
		Prefer not to say / skip	5	
<b>Section C. OBSERVATION OF THE STORAGE FACILITY</b>				
C1	Does your school have a dedicated food storeroom?	Yes	1	If response is 2, Skip to C14
		No	2	
C2	Is the storeroom outside the school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C3	If yes, then how far is the distance of the store room?	_____ in km		
C4	Can the food storage room be locked? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C5	Is the storeroom properly ventilated? <b>DIRECT OBSERVATION</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C6	Is there any evidence of presence of rodents in the store? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C7	Is there any evidence of presence of insects (weevil and others)? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C8		Yes	1	

	Is there any evidence of mold and excess of humidity? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	No	2	
C9	Is there any evidence of spillage or leakage? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C10	Is the food stored off the ground? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	If response is 2, Skip to C12
		No	2	
C11	If yes, does the school use improvised raised pallets for commodities' storage? <b>(Question and observe)</b>	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C12	Does the school have a pest/insects management plan?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C13	Does the school carry out pest/insects control measures?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C14	What is the frequency of arrival of food items in school?	Once at the start of school year	1	
		In the beginning of each semester	2	
		As and when the food is near to finishing (on need basis)	3	
C15	Is the quantity of food (rice) provided enough to cook school lunch for every school day?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	
C16	Is the quantity of oil provided enough to cook school lunch for every school day?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	
C17	Is the quantity of fish provided enough to feed all students once a week?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	
C18	If you have fallen short on food materials, why does this usually happen?	Food shortages is not a problem	1	
		Inadequate supply	2	
		Lack of funds	3	
		Erratic supply	4	
		Other (Specify)		

## QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: Parents

### Section A: Interview and Demographic Information

A0.a	Name of the enumerator		
A0.b	Name of the fieldwork supervisor		
	Name of the province	Phongsaly	2
		Oudumxay	4
		Luang Namtha	3

A1.		Luang Prabang	6
		Saravane	14
		Sekong	15
		Attapeu	17
		Khammouane	12
A2.	Name & code of the district		
A3.	Name & code of the village		
A4.	EMIS code of the school		
A5.	Student code		
A7.	Age of child		
A8.	Class in which the child is enrolled		
A9.	Gender of child	Male	1
		Female	2
		Non-binary	3
A10.	Date of visit (dd/mm/yy)		
A11.	Name of parent/caregiver (respondent)		
A12.	Gender of parent / caregiver (respondent)	Male	1
		Female	2
		Non-binary	3
A13.	Age of parent / caregiver (respondent)		
A14.	Respondent relationship to the child	Father	1
		Mother	2
		Elder brother	3
		Elder Sister	4
		Grandfather	5
		Grandmother	6
		Others (Specify)	
A15.	Which ethnicity best describes you?	Hmong – Eiw Mien	1
		Mon - Khmer	2
		Lao Tai	3
		Chinese - Tibetan	4
		Prefer not to specify	5
		Others (Specify)	
A14.	Which language do you most often speak at home?	Lao	1
		Phouthay	2
		Makong	3
		Tri	4
		Taoy	5
		Katang	6
		Thai	7
		Prefer not to specify	8
		Others (Specify)	9

S.No	Question	Options	Codes	Skip	
<b>Section B: Household Information</b>					
B1.	Number of children in primary and pre-primary in the household	_____ Boys _____ Girls			
B2.	What type of walls does your house have? <i>Read options aloud and choose only one answer</i>	No walls	1		
		Cane/palm/trunks	2		
		Clay or mud	3		
		Bamboo	4		
		Wood	5		
		Stone or bricks or cement	6		
		Others			
B3.	What type of floor does your house have? <i>Read options aloud and choose only one answer</i>	Earth/sand	1		
		Dung	2		
		Palm/bamboo	3		
		Wooden planks	4		
		Cement/tiles	5		
		Others			
B4.	What type of roof does your house have? <i>Read options aloud and choose only one answer</i>	No roof	1		
		Thatch/grass	2		
		Bamboo	3		
		Wood	4		
		Iron-sheets	5		
		Cement or tiles	6		
		Others			
B5.	Are these following items in your household?	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
		1. Radio	1	2	
		2. Electricity	1	2	
		3. Refrigerator	1	2	
		4. Bicycle	1	2	
		5. Toilet	1	2	
		6. Mobile Phone	1	2	
		7. Television	1	2	
		8. Motorbike	1	2	
		9. Car	1	2	
		10. Tuktuk/tractor	1	2	
B6.	What is the main source of drinking water?	Piped water into the house	1		
		Piped water to yard/plot of the house	2		
		Surface water (river, lake, stream, canal, etc)	3		
		Protected well	4		
		Unprotected well	5		
		Protected spring	6		
		Unprotected spring	7		
		Borewell	8		
		Rainwater	9		
		Bottled water/water vendor	10		
		Tanker	11		
		Others			



S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section C: Questions related to the selected child</b>				
		He/she had to stay at home to help out (with household chores, farm work, take care of siblings)	2	
		Our home is far away from school/ He/she did not feel like walking back to school	3	
		Teacher was not in school	4	
		He/she was hungry and did not get enough to eat during the day	5	
		Due to bad weather conditions	6	
		There was a festival in my village/ family function at home	7	
		No particular reason	8	
		Don't want to say	9	
		Others		
<b>C4.</b>	How many days was ( <i>name of the child</i> ) absent from school <b>in the afternoon after lunch</b> in the last one week?	__ Days		
		Reasons	Code	Number of days
		He/she was sick/health issues	1	
		He/she had to stay at home to help out (with household chores, farm work, take care of siblings)	2	
		Our home is far away from school/ He/she did not feel like walking back to school	3	
		Teacher was not in school	4	
		He/she was hungry and did not get enough to eat during the day	5	
		Due to bad weather conditions	6	
		There was a festival in my village/ family function at home	7	
		No particular reason	8	
		Don't want to say	9	
		Others		
<b>C5.</b>	What was the reason of this absence?  (Do not prompt; probe for reasons)			
		Stomach ache	1	
		Fever	2	
		Headache	3	
		Tiredness	4	
		Cold and Cough	5	
		Vomiting	6	
		Diarrhoea	7	
		COVID-19 specifically		
		Others		
<b>C6.</b>	If coded 1 in C3 or C5 then ask, You said ( <i>name of the child</i> ) was sick. What was the reason for this sickness?			

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section C: Questions related to the selected child</b>				
<b>C7.</b>	In the last 1 week, how many days did <i>(name of the child)</i> eat breakfast/ morning meal at home?	__ Days		
<b>C8</b>	In the last 1 week, how many days did <i>(name of the child)</i> eat lunch at home?	__ Days		
<b>C9</b>	In the last 1 week, how many days did <i>(name of the child)</i> eat dinner at home?	__ Days		
<b>C10</b>	In the last 1 week, how many days did you give <i>(name of the child)</i> a school tiffin/lunch/snacks <b>to eat during lunch</b> time in school?	__ Days		
<b>C11</b>	In the last 1 week, how many days did you give <i>(name of the child)</i> a school tiffin/lunch/snacks <b>to eat apart from lunch</b> time in school?	__ Days		
<b>The questions below are for intervention schools</b>				
<b>C12</b>	In the last 1 week, how many days did the school NOT provide lunch to <i>(name of the child)</i> ?			If >0, go to C13; if 0 go to C14
<b>C13</b>	If greater than 0 , then ask, On such days, when school lunch is not provided, what does <i>(name of the child)</i> do for lunch?	Take lunch from home	1	
		Came home to eat lunch and went back to school	2	
		Came home to eat lunch and stayed back at home	3	
		Stayed at home and ate lunch at home	4	
		Gave money to child to buy food from canteen	5	
		Go hungry/skip meal	6	
		Eat with friends	7	
		Others	8	
<b>C14</b>	On days when the school lunch is provided, do you give any lunch from home (apart from rice) to <i>(name of the child)</i> take to school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Sometimes	3	
<b>C15</b>	Normally, if you become aware that there will be no school lunch the next day, does <i>(name of the child)</i> go to school the next day?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>C16</b>	In the last week did the school provide you free food to take home at school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't remember	3	
<b>C17</b>	Do you think that the school lunch provides enough food to satisfy your child's hunger?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section C: Questions related to the selected child</b>				
C18	Has ( <i>name of the child</i> ) ever told you that he/she felt hungry even after eating lunch in the school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	
C19	Do you or your family members contribute to the school for the school lunch as well? ( <i>by either giving vegetables or volunteering to cook or working in the school garden or in cash</i> )	Yes	1	
		No	2	
C20	If yes, then how do you contribute?	In kind, by providing vegetables	1	
		In kind, by helping in cooking the school meal	2	
		In kind, by providing labour in the school garden	3	
		In cash, by giving a fixed amount to school	4	
		Others		
C21	How much do you contribute per month, on average?	___ Kg ___ hours ___ Kip		
C22	If cash, then what is the frequency of this contribution?	Once a week	1	Only show if selected 4 to C20
		Once a month	2	
		Twice a month	3	
		Once every semester	4	
		Twice in a semester	5	
		Once in a year	6	
		Twice in a year	7	
		As and when the school asks	8	
	Others			
C23	What is the amount paid in cash for every contribution?	_____ In kips		Only show if selected 4 to C20
C24	What is the total amount that you have paid in the last school year? (since start of school year in September 2022 till the time of the survey)	_____ in kips		
C25	Do you think that your household costs on food have reduced as a result of school lunch program?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	
C26.	According to you what are the benefits of the school meal programme? Multiple responses possible	My child is getting nutritious food for lunch	1	
		My child stays in school all day/improves attendance	2	
		The child does not stay hungry in school	3	
		The child can pay more attention in class	4	
		Less household expense on food	5	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section C: Questions related to the selected child</b>				
		Motivates my child to attend school	6	
		Improves awareness of nutrition among children	7	
		No advantages	8	
		Others		
<b>C27.</b>	In the wake of COVID-19 related shut down, did you, your children receive any assistance to meet their educational/ learning needs?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>C28.</b>	If yes, what type of assistance your children received to meet their educational/ learning needs? Multiple options	Reading materials	1	
		Online counselling	2	
		Online teaching	3	
		Parent training	4	
		Any other (specify)		
<b>C29.</b>	Has COVID had any impact on the food security and nutrition situation of the household?	Improved food security and nutrition levels	1	
		Deteriorated food security and nutrition levels	2	
		No impact	3	
<b>C30.</b>	Did you receive any support or assistance during COVID?	Yes, received ration	1	
		Yes, received cash	2	
		Yes, other (specify)	3	
		No assistance received	4	
<b>C31.</b>	If yes, then who provided this support?	Government	1	
		NGO	2	
		School	3	
		Community	4	
		Other (specify)	5	

<b>Child Functioning Module (CFM)</b>				
S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>VISION</b>				
CF1	Does <i>(name)</i> wear glasses?	1. Yes		
		2. No (SKIP to <b>CF3</b> )		
CF2	When wearing his/her glasses, does <i>(name)</i> have difficulty seeing? Would you say... [ <i>Read response categories</i> ]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
	(Skip to <b>CF4</b> )	7. <i>Refused</i>		
		9. <i>Don't know</i>		
CF3	Does <i>(name)</i> have difficulty seeing? Would you say... [ <i>Read response categories</i> ]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. <i>Refused</i>		
		9. <i>Don't know</i>		

HEARING				
CF4	Does (name) use a hearing aid?	Yes		
		No (Skip to CF6)		
CF5	When using his/her hearing aid, does (name) have difficulty hearing sounds like peoples' voices or music? Would you say... [Read response categories] (Skip to CF7)	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
CF6	Does (name) have difficulty hearing sounds like peoples' voices or music? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
CF6		9. Don't know		
MOBILITY				
CF7	Does (name) use any equipment or receive assistance for walking?	Yes		
		No (Skip to CF12)		
CF8	Without his/her equipment or assistance, does (name) have difficulty walking 100 yards/meters on level ground? That would be about the length of 1 football field. [Or insert country specific example]. Would you say... [Read response categories]	2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty (Skip to CF10)		
		4. Cannot do at all (Skip to CF10)		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
CF9	Without his/her equipment or assistance, does (name) have difficulty walking 500 yards/meters on level ground? That would be about the length of 5 football fields. [Or insert country specific example]. Would you say... [Read response categories]	2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
CF10	With his/her equipment or assistance, does (name) have difficulty walking 100 yards/meters on level ground? That would be about the length of 1 football field. [Or insert country specific example]. Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty (Skip to CF14)		
		4. Cannot do at all (Skip to CF14)		
		7. Refused		
CF11	With his/her equipment or assistance, does (name) have difficulty walking 500 yards/meters on level ground? That would be about the length of 5 football fields. [Or insert country specific example]. Would you say... [Read response categories]	9. Don't know		
		1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
CF12	Compared with children of the same age, does (name) have difficulty walking 100 yards/meters	7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
		1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		

	on level ground? That would be about the length of 1 football field. [Or insert country specific example]. Would you say... [Read response categories]	3. A lot of difficulty (Skip to CF14)		
		4. Cannot do at all (Skip to CF14)		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
CF13	Compared with children of the same age, does (name) have difficulty walking 500 yards/meters on level ground? That would be about the length of 5 football fields. [Or insert country specific example]. Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>SELFCARE</b>				
CF14	Does (name) have difficulty with self-care such as feeding or dressing him/herself? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>				
CF15	When (name) speaks, does he/she have difficulty being understood by people inside of this household? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
CF16	When (name) speaks, does he/she have difficulty being understood by people outside of this household? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>LEARNING</b>				
CF17	Compared with children of the same age, does (name) have difficulty learning things? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>REMEMBERING</b>				
CF18	Compared with children of the same age, does (name) have difficulty remembering things? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>CONCENTRATING</b>				
CF19		1. No difficulty		

	Does (name) have difficulty concentrating on an activity that he/she enjoys doing? Would you say... [Read response categories]	2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>ACCEPTING CHANGE</b>				
CF20	Does (name) have difficulty accepting changes in his/her routine? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR</b>				
CF21	Compared with children of the same age, does (name) have difficulty controlling his/her behaviour? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. Refused		
		9. Don't know		
<b>MAKING FRIENDS</b>				
CF22	Does (name) have difficulty making friends? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. No difficulty		
		2. Some difficulty		
		3. A lot of difficulty		
		4. Cannot do at all		
		7. <i>Refused</i>		
		9. <i>Don't know</i>		
<b>ANXIETY</b>				
CF23	How often does (name) seem very anxious, nervous or worried? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. Daily		
		2. Weekly		
		3. Monthly		
		4. A few times a year		
		5. Never		
		6. Refused		
		7. Don't know		
<b>DEPRESSION</b>				
CF24	How often does (name) seem very sad or depressed? Would you say... [Read response categories]	1. Daily		
		2. Weekly		
		3. Monthly		
		4. A few times a year		
		5. Never		
		6. Refused		
		7. Don't know		

S.No .	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section D: Questions related to the dietary diversity of the child</b>				

D1	Food Items (In the last 24 hours (during the day and night), did (CHILD NAME) eat any of these food items? Ask about every single item and record the answer. If any items are consumed less than one teaspoon, record response "2. NO"; Only count them "1.YES" if consumed $\geq 1$ teaspoon.)	1=Yes 2=No 99 = Don't know
	a. Any [local foods], bread, rice noodles, sticky rice, biscuits, or any other foods made from millet, sorghum, maize, rice, wheat, or [any other locally available grain]	
	b. White potatoes, white yams, manioc, cassava, [other local root crops] or any other foods made from roots or tubers	
	c. Any foods made from beans, peas, or lentils	
	d. Any foods made from nuts or seeds such as [add any local nut/seed names]	
	e. Milk	
	f. Cheese, yogurt, or other milk products	
	g. Eggs	
	h. Any beef, pork, lamb, goat, rabbit wild game, chicken, duck, or other birds, liver, kidney, heart, or other organ meats, or Any flesh from wild animals?	
	i. Fresh or dried fish, shellfish, or seafood, shrimps, crabs	
	j. Grubs, snails, frogs or insects such as worms Grasshoppers, larvae,	
	k. Any dark green leafy vegetables such as [local dark green leafy vegetables] Bamboo shoots, pumpkin shoots, long bean	
	l. Pumpkin, carrots, squash, or sweet potatoes that are yellow or orange inside or [other local yellow/orange foods]	
	m. Any other vegetables	
	n. Ripe mangoes, ripe papayas or [other local vitamin A-rich fruits] guava	
	o. Any other fruits	
	p. Foods made with red palm oil, red palm nut, or red palm nut pulp sauce (Vitamin A rich oil)	
	q. Any oil, fats, or butter, ghee, or foods made with any of these	
	r. Sweets: sugar, honey, sweetened soda or sweetened juice drinks, sugary foods such as chocolates, candies, cookies and cakes	
	s. Condiments for flavor, such as chilies, spices, herbs, fish powder or [add any local condiment names]	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section E: Questions related to knowledge and attitude towards education, health and hygiene and school lunch</b>				
E1.	At home, do you or someone in your family read stories to ( <i>name of the child</i> )?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	
E2.	At home, do you or someone in your family help ( <i>name of the child</i> ) in studies or completing the school work?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Can't say	3	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section E: Questions related to knowledge and attitude towards education, health and hygiene and school lunch</b>				
E3.	What according to you are the benefits of primary education?	Improves literacy rate	1	
		Improves future opportunities of work for children	2	
		Helps child's skill development	3	
		Helps girls to remain in school and delay early marriage	4	
		Helps children from different social and ethnic groups to bond	5	
		Helps children learn more about the world	6	
		Helps break the cycle of poverty	7	
	Others			
E4.	Did/does your child show interest in studying at home?	Yes		
		No		
		Can't say		
E5.	On average, how many days does the child study at home in a week?	____ days		
E6.	On average, how long does the child study at home in a day?	____ minutes		
E7.	How satisfied are you with the quality of education provided at this school?  (Rate all of the categories on a scale of 1-4)  1= Highly dissatisfied 2=Moderately dissatisfied 3= Moderately satisfied 4= Highly satisfied 5= Can't say	Regularity of class	1-5	
		Regularity of teachers/ teacher attendance	1-5	
		Need-based support to student	1-5	
		Teacher's behavior towards children	1-5	
		Availability of supplementary reading materials	1-5	
		Engagement of children in extra-curricular activities	1-5	
	Use of teaching materials	1-5		
E8	How satisfied are you with the amenities at this school?	Mid-day meals	1-5	
		Textbooks and reading materials	1-5	
		Reading corners	1-5	
		Materials on health and nutrition	1-5	
		Materials on agriculture	1-5	
		School toilets and sanitation facilities	1-5	
E9.	Why is it important to have a good and balanced diet? <i>Multiple response possible, do not prompt</i>	Protect against diseases	1	
		Contribute to adequate body weight	2	
		Promote growth and development	3	
		Other (specify)		
		Do not know	5	
E10.	I will read out some statements and would like to know your degree of agreement or disagreement with each one of	Healthy food is for sick people	1-5	
		Healthy food is not tasty	1-5	
		I encourage my child to eat fruits	1-5	
		I encourage my child to eat vegetables	1-5	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section E: Questions related to knowledge and attitude towards education, health and hygiene and school lunch</b>				
	them. (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree; (5) Can't say	Eating fruits and vegetables helps in preventing diseases	1-5	
		Healthy food is not enjoyable for children	1-5	
		It is difficult to persuade children to give up outside food and beverages	1-5	
		On certain days, it is difficult for us to arrange for a diverse and healthy diet	1-5	
		I can prepare healthy meals that my child finds tasty	1-5	
		There is not much that I can do to influence the long-term health of my children	1-5	
<b>E10.</b>	Why is personal hygiene important? <i>Multiple response possible, do not prompt</i>	Keeps us healthy	1	
		Prevents catching illness and disease	2	
		Prevents spreading illness and disease	3	
		Less absenteeism from school	4	
		Other (specify)		
		Do not know	6	
<b>E11.</b>	Do you have a handwashing facility inside your household/in the yard/plot?	Yes, piped water with tap	1	
		Yes, water in a bucket or a container	2	
		Yes, tippy tap	3	
		No	4	
<b>E12.</b>	Do you use soap for handwashing in your household?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>E13.</b>	Can you tell me the times when according to you should one wash hands?	Before eating a meal	1	
		After eating a meal	2	
		Before feeding a child	3	
		Before preparing/handling food	4	
		After using toilet	5	
		After handling farm work/animals	6	
<b>E14.</b>	According to you, what are the times when you wash hands? (Ask with soap- yes or no for each coded option)  <i>Multiple responses possible</i>	Options	Codes	With soap (yes-1/ no-2)
		Before eating a meal	1	
		After eating a meal	2	
		Before feeding a child	3	
		Before preparing/handling food	4	
		After using toilet	5	
		After handling farm work/animals	6	
Others				
<b>E15.</b>		Local health clinic/hospital	1	
		School Health and hygiene Brochures	2	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section E: Questions related to knowledge and attitude towards education, health and hygiene and school lunch</b>				
	Where do you get your information related to health, hygiene and nutrition?	School teachers	3	
		Community meetings	4	
		School PTA meetings	5	
		NGO/GoL Community health workers	6	
		Poster and Pamphlet	7	
		Notice board/ wall magazine / Wall paintings/hording board	8	
		Radio / Television	9	
		Video/Documentary Street Drama Show	10	
		Newspaper / Magazine	11	
		Others		
<b>E16.</b>	Is there a parent teacher association in your school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
<b>E17.</b>	If yes, then are you a part of the Parent Teacher Association?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>E18.</b>	Do you know about the Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) in your village?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>E19.</b>	If yes, then are you a member of the VEDC?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
<b>E20.</b>	How can you get information about the school feeding program or make complaints if necessary?	Meetings with VEDC	1	
		Meetings with School Administrators	2	
		Suggestion Box	3	
		Informal communication (verbal) with teachers / VEDC members	4	
		My child (student)	5	
		Others		

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: CHILDREN				
S.No .	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section A. Demographics</b>				
A0.a	Name of the enumerator			
A0.b	Name of the fieldwork supervisor			
A1.	Name of the province	Phongsaly	2	
		Oudumxay	4	
		Luang Namtha	3	
		Luang Prabang	6	
		Saravane	14	
		Sekong	15	
		Attapeu	17	
	Khammouane	12		
A2.	Name & code of the district			
A3.	Name & code of the village			
A4.	EMIS code of the school			
A5.	Code of the student			
A6.	Gender	Male	1	
		Female	2	
		Non-binary	3	
		Prefer not to say	4	
A3.	What is your age?	_____		
A4.	In which grade do you study?	Grade 1	1	
		Grade 2	2	
		Grade 3	3	
		Grade 4	4	
		Grade 5	5	
A5.	Which ethnicity best describes you?	Hmong – Eiw Mien	1	
		Mon - Khmer	2	
		Lao Tai	3	
		Chinese - Tibetan	4	
		Prefer not to specify	5	
		Others (Specify)		
A6.	Which language do you most often speak at home?	Lao	1	
		Phouthay	2	
		Makong	3	
		Tri	4	
		Taoy	5	
		Katang	6	
		Thai	7	
		Prefer not to specify	8	
		Others (Specify)		
A7.	How do you commute to school?	Walk	1	
		Motor-vehicle (private)	2	
		Motor-vehicle (public)	3	
		Bicycle	4	
		Other		
A8.	How long does it take for you to reach school? (in minutes)	_____ minutes		

## LITERACY ASSESSMENT

motherconsent	<p>Has the teacher/caregiver given consent for her child to participate in this survey?</p> <p>1. No thank them and terminate the survey and select the next child on your list.</p> <p>2. Yes "timeofsurvey"</p>	_	
<p>If the teacher says No, thank them, terminate the survey, and proceed to the next child on your list.</p>			
timeofsurvey	<p>Is the survey administered in the...</p> <p>1. Morning (before 12 pm)</p> <p>2. Noon (between 12pm and 1pm)</p>	_	select only one option

### Dear student:

To learn more about the WFP School Feeding Program, my name is \_\_\_\_, and I'm here to take questions from children just like you. You may be sure that nothing you say here won't be revealed to your parents or teacher. There is no right or wrong response. I want you to answer honestly and as best as you can. Would you like to ask me any questions? Anytime you want to ask a question, you can interrupt me. Additionally, if you are unsure of the answer to a question or don't want to provide one, simply let me know so that we can skip. Do you feel ready to start

LITERACY ASSESSMENT:

Expressive vocabulary

Now let's try a word game. Imagine you are going to the market and name some foods that you can eat in the market. Try to name as many things as you can think of.

Record the number of items the child lists until the child has listed 10 items. You can tally on the score sheet as the child enumerates the objects.

When the child pauses for 5 seconds or more, PROMPT ONCE by saying, Can you think of any others?

When the child cannot think of more items, move on to the next question and say:

expressvocab 1	Can you tell me the names of things you can eat in Lao? (Specify the number of items child says they can eat in Lao 0-10)  1. 0 2. 1 3. 2 4. 3 5. 4 6. 5 7. 6 8. 7 9. 8 11.10 10. 9		*Select only one option
----------------	---	--	-------------------------

Now, I want to know what animals you are familiar with. Tell me the names of some animals that you know. Try to name as many animals as you can think of and I will keep count again.  
When the child pauses for 5 seconds or more, PROMPT ONCE by saying, Can you think of any others?

Expressvocab2	<p>Can you tell me the names of animals in Lao? (Specify the number of animals a child counted in Lao 0-10)</p> <p>1. 0 2. 1 3. 2 4. 3 5. 4 6. 5 7. 6 8. 7 9. 8 10. 9 11. 10</p>	_	*Select only one option
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**Letter Sounds**

Now we will play a listening game. This one is about the sounds in words. The word “cat” starts with /c/ (Say the sound, not the letter name). /c/ is the first sound in cat. Now listen to the words I say and tell me which one starts with the same sound, the sound /c/ (Say the sound, not the letter name) star, ball, or cup?  
If the child gives an incorrect response, say: cup starts with /c/ just like cat

Wordpair1	<p>I will read three words to you with the sound ("c") Child matches the letter "c" and the correct word)</p> <p>1. Not able to match/Don't know 2. Able to match</p> <p>000 Did not understand the</p>	_	ຫມາ, ຄມວ, ດອນ
Wordpair2	<p>I will read three words to you with the sound "c" -child matches the letter "c" with the correct word</p> <p>1. Not able to match/Don't</p>	_	ເມ, ກວຍ, ຕນ

Wordpair3	I will read three words to you with the sound "ג" - Child was able to match the letter "ג" with the correct word  1. Not able to match/Don't know? Able to match	_	ג, תג, גג
-----------	--	---	-----------

### Understanding Letters

1. Give the child the list of letters and say to the child:
2. Say: Let's look at some letters. Can you start here (point to first letter) and tell me what these letters are moving in this direction? (indicate left to right direction) Do you understand? Ok, you can begin.
3. Correct letters are:
  - the letter name in the home language or language of instruction
  - any sound that is acceptable for in the home or instructional language
  - a response which says "It begins like..." giving a word for which the letter is the initial letter
4. If the child read the letters out of order, then remember to bring his/her attention to the ones they might have skipped.
  - Make sure you marked all of the incorrect letters
  - Move to the Most Used Words section.

What to do if a student is struggling:

5. If the student is struggling, and hesitates at any letter for five seconds, ask follow up questions: Do you know its name? What sound does it make? Do you know a word that starts with this letter?
6. If the student still hesitates for five seconds, ask: Can you tell me any of these letters?
7. If the student still hesitates for five seconds, then stop and thank him/her for trying his/her best.
8. Mark letters not identified or not attempted as incorrect.
9. Move to the Most Used Words section.

א	ב	ב	ג	ד
ה	ו	ז	ח	ט
י	כ	ל	מ	נ
ס	ע	פ	צ	ק
ר	ש	ת		
תא	תב	תג		

### Most Used Words

1. Give the pupil the laminated copy of the "Most Used Words" list.
2. Say: I would like you to read some words to me. They are words from your textbook. Please point to and say each of these words starting here (point to first word) and moving across each line like this (indicate left to right direction). Do you understand? Ok, you can begin.
3. Remember that pronunciations of words in local dialects are acceptable.
4. If the child reads the words out of order then remember to bring his/her attention to the ones they might have skipped.
5. Make sure you marked all of the incorrect words.

ລດ	ນາ	ງ	ຈານ
ມາ	ກອບ	ຍງ	ກະບ
ໄພ	ປມ	ຕະຫາດ	ອາຍ
ແຂງແຮງ	ເສອ	ອະນຍາດ	ໂສງ
ອະນາໄມ	ແມ	ຕງ	ເດອນ

Matching 1

Practice: Car Point at the word for "car". Then point at the picture of the car. Ask if the child understands.

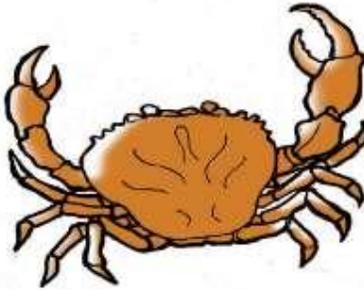
Bicycle



Snake



Shirt



Bucket

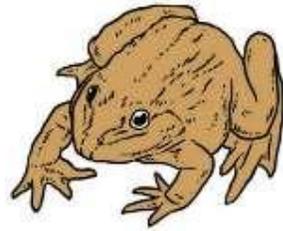


Crab



Matching 2

Mosquito



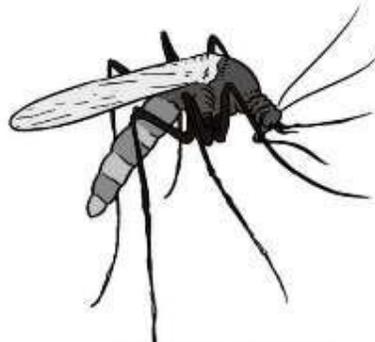
Table



Frog



Fire



Book



## PHRASE MATCHING

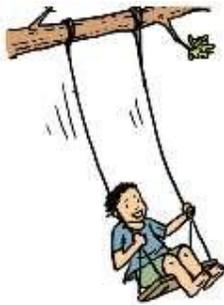
### Instruction to enumerator:

Do not read the phrases to children. Children must read these themselves. This is to test students' comprehension, not their reading competency. If the child reads the phrase out loud incorrectly or reads it in their own home language but matches the phrase correctly to the picture that is a correct response. STOP RULE: If the child reads slow, encourage them to continue. But, If the child cannot match five phrases consecutively at any point, then mark everything after that incorrect and move to the next test.

### Instruction to children:

Please read the phrase and point to the picture that the phrase describes.

You don't need to read the words aloud. You can if you want to, but it isn't necessary. Just point to the picture you think matches the phrase.



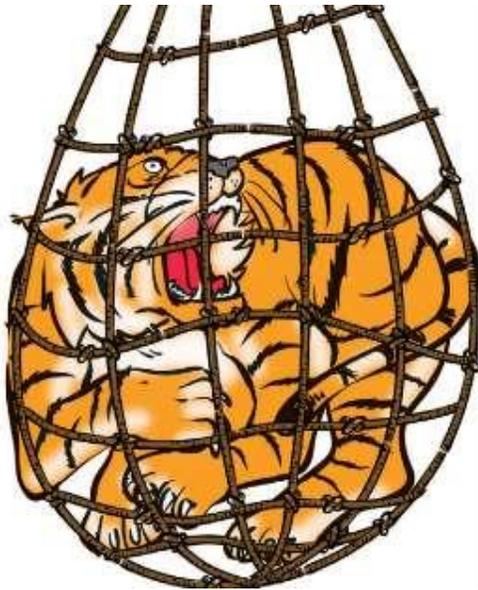
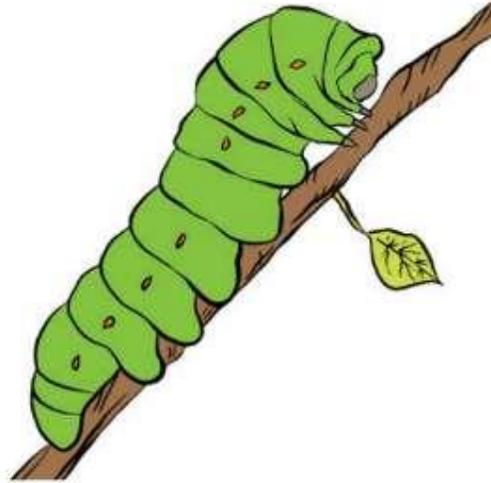
### 1. Child jumps (example)



2. A boy is sleeping



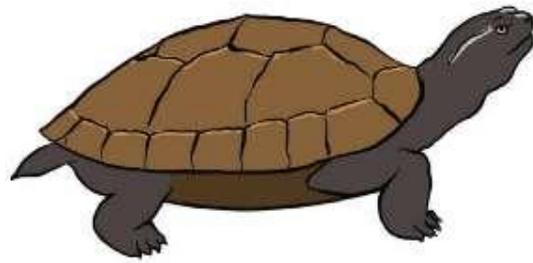
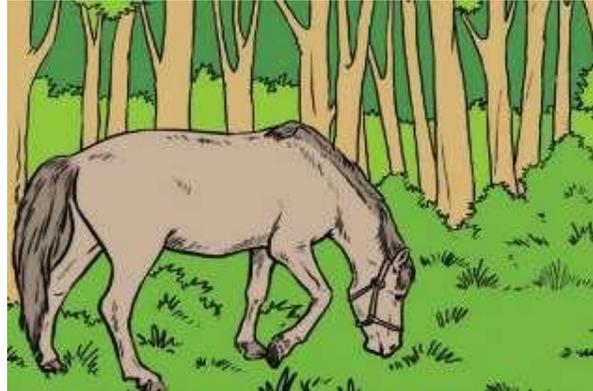
3. A boy is singing



4. A rat is eating rice



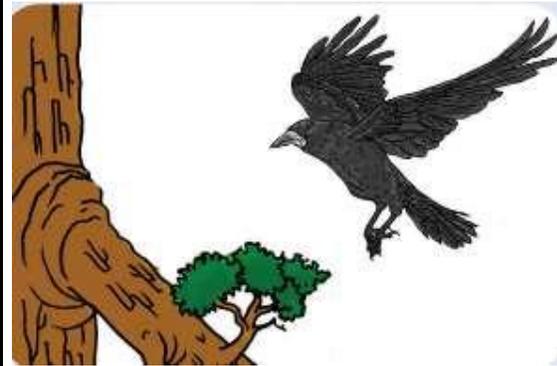
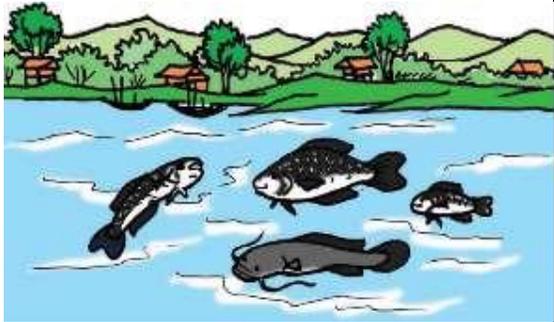
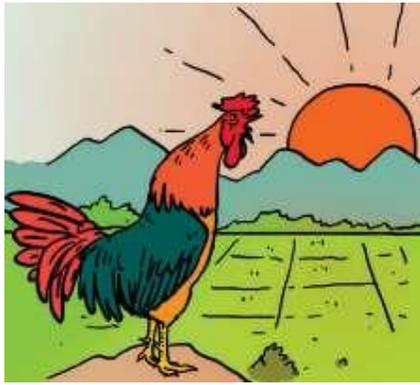
5. A child is yawning



6. A Rabbit is sitting



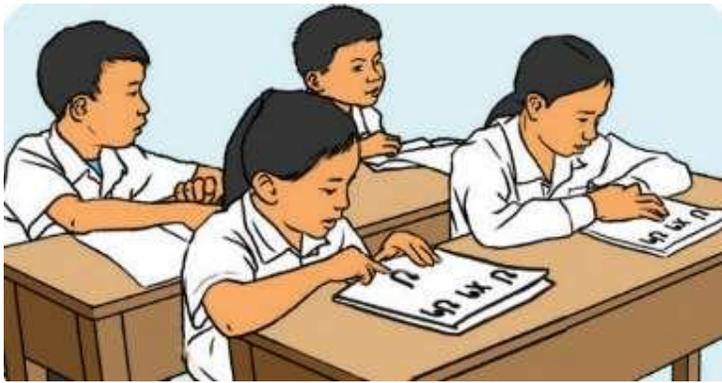
7. A girl and a boy are planting a tree



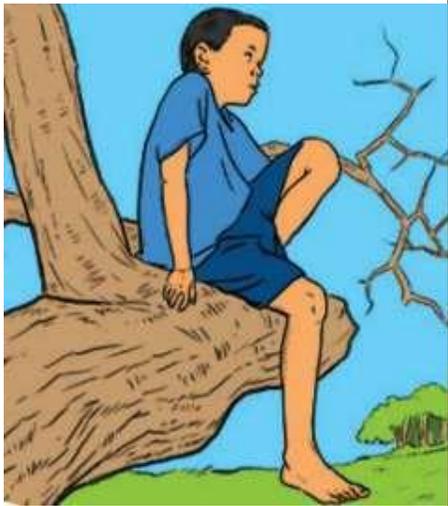
8. A mantis is standing



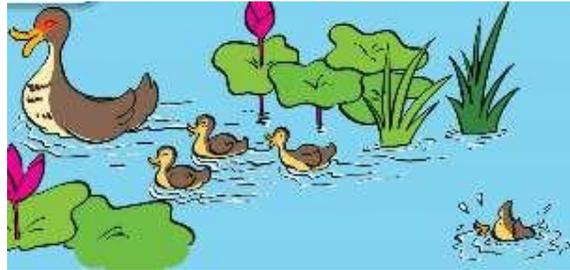
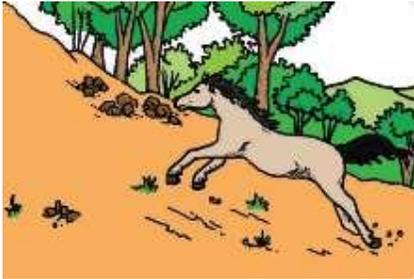
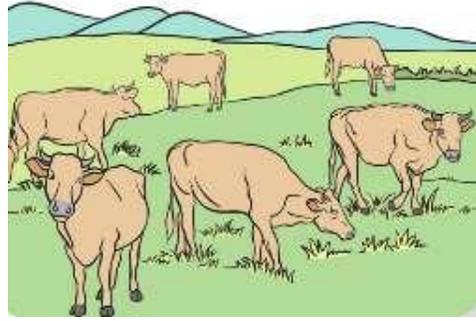
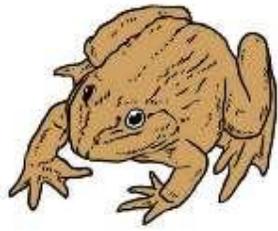
9. A kid is brushing his teeth



10. A girl is making up the bed



11. A man is sitting



**12. Ducks are swimming**



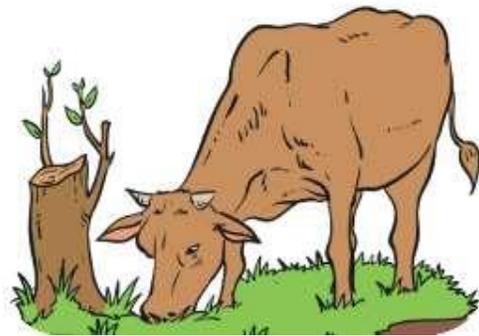
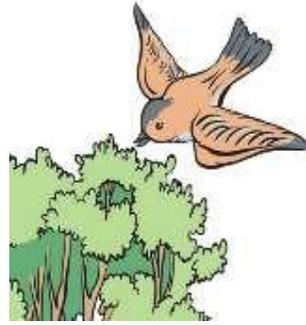
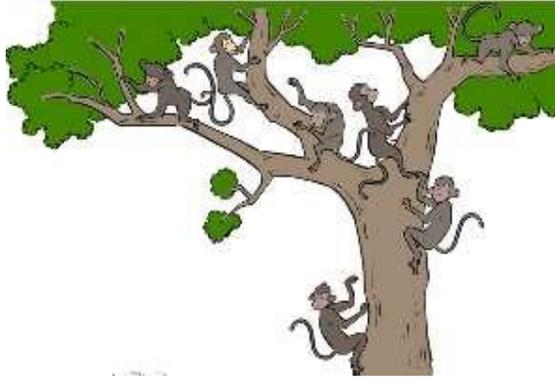
13. Two women are dancing



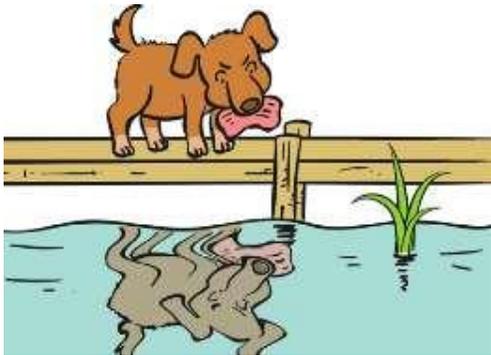
14. Mother bathes the baby



15. A boy is running



16. Monkeys are sitting on the tree



17. The dog is eating meat

## COMPREHENSION PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS

### Instructions

1. Give the pupil the reading passage. Say: When I say 'begin,' start reading aloud from the title on this page. Try to read each word. If you come to a word you don't know, I'll tell it to you. Be sure to try to do your best reading. Do you understand what I want you to do?
2. Say: 'Begin' and when the pupil begins to say the first word of the title press START. As the pupil reads, follow along on your screen. Click on words read incorrectly (they will have line through them).
3. If the pupil stops reading before the end of the passage, encourage the pupil to keep reading. Show the pupil where he/she stopped, if necessary. Follow along on your copy.
4. After 30 seconds, a message will flash, "Please mark the item being attempted." Mark the word that the child was reading when the message came, and a blue box will appear around it. When the screen flashes at the end of 30 seconds, do a quick count of the correct words. If the pupil has read less than 5 words correctly, then: Politely stop the child and Press STOP. Say: Thank you. On the next page, mark NON-READER or Return him/her to class
5. If the pupil has read 5 or more words correctly, then Allow the pupil to finish the passage. Continue marking which words are read incorrectly by clicking on them.
6. As soon as the pupil finishes the last word of the passage, click the STOP button. Say: Thank you.
7. On the next page, for the question, 'Was the student a reader or non-reader?' mark READER. Move to the Reading Comprehension questions

### The red ant family

The sky darkened and it soon rained, and the red ants crawled in and out of the nest because they could not get out when it rained. Red ants are strong animals that can carry food that is larger than their bodies. Ants live in hocks and communicate with one another through scent. Ants are as connected as humans.

reader	Is child a reader or a non-reader?  1. A non-reader read less accurate than 5 per 30 seconds) 2. A reader (read correctly 5 per 30 seconds)	I__I	Select only one option
--------	--	------	------------------------

### Comprehension Questions

Comp1	What happened in the story?  1. Ants store the food 2. Ant is a very strong animal 3. They are living together 4. They are harmonious 5. None	I__I	mark every main point mentioned by the child
Comp2	Ant was bringing the food when it was dark (When the sky nearly dark) 1. False 2. True	I__I	Don't read the answer to them

Comp3	Ants can bring food when it is raining (cannot) 1. False 2. True	__	Don't read the answer to them
Comp4	Ants are strong animals (Yes) 1. False 2. True	__	Don't read the answer to them
Comp5	The ants can carry the food bigger than their body (Yes) 1. False 2. True	__	Don't read the answer to them
Comp6	The ants are animals who live together (Yes) 1. False 2. True	__	Don't read the answer to them
Comp7	The ants are harmonious like humans (Yes) 1. False 2. True	__	Don't read the answer to them
Comp8	Ants communicate with each other by scent (By scent) 1. True 2. False	__	Don't read the answer to them
Thank you very much for answering my questions.			

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section A: Attendance</b>				
<b>A1.</b>	Did you attend ECD/preschool?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
<b>A2.</b>	When you started at this school, which grade were you in?	Pre-primary	0	
		1	1	
		2	2	
		3	3	
		4	4	
		5	5	
<b>A3.</b>	Did you repeat any grades	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		I don't know	3	
<b>A4.</b>	Which grade did you repeat?	Pre-primary	0	
		1	1	
		2	2	
		3	3	
		4	4	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section A: Attendance</b>				
		5	5	
A5.	Does your teacher teach other grades in your classroom?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		I don't know	3	
A6.	In the previous week, have you missed any school days?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		I don't know	3	
A7.	How many school days have you missed?			

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section B: HEALTH</b>				
B1.	Have you been sick anytime during the last week?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
B2.	During last week, did you miss school because you were sick?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		I don't know	3	
B3	How many days did you miss school because you were sick during the last week?			
B4.	Why is it important to have a good and balanced diet?	Gives us energy	0	
		Helps us grow	1	
		Stops us from getting sick	2	
		Other (specify)	3	
		I don't know	4	
B5.	Why is personal hygiene important?	Keeps us healthy	1	
		Prevents the spread of diseases	2	
		Other (specify)	3	
		I don't know	4	
B6.	I will read some information and tell me if you think it is true?  We should wash our hands with water and soap after using the toilet?	True	1	
		Not true	2	
		I don't know	3	
B7.	We should wash our hands with water and soap before eating?	True	1	
		Not true	2	
		I don't know	3	
B8.	Sickness can be caused by eating healthy food	True	1	
		Not true	2	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section B: HEALTH</b>				
		I don't know	3	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section B: HEALTH</b>				
<b>B1.</b>	Have you been sick anytime during the last week?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
<b>B2.</b>	During last week, did you miss school because you were sick?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		I don't know	3	
<b>B3</b>	How many days did you miss school because you were sick during the last week?			
<b>B4.</b>	Why is it important to have a good and balanced diet?	Gives us energy	0	
		Helps us grow	1	
		Stops us from getting sick	2	
		Other (specify)	3	
		I don't know	4	
<b>B5.</b>	Why is personal hygiene important?	Keeps us healthy	1	
		Prevents the spread of diseases	2	
		Other (specify)	3	
		I don't know	4	
<b>B6.</b>	I will read some information and tell me if you think it is true?  We should wash our hands with water and soap after using the toilet?	True	1	
		Not true	2	
		I don't know	3	
<b>B7.</b>	We should wash our hands with water and soap before eating?	True	1	
		Not true	2	
		I don't know	3	
<b>B8.</b>	Sickness can be caused by eating healthy food	True	1	
		Not true	2	
		I don't know	3	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section C: FOOD SECURITY</b>				
<b>C1.</b>	Did you eat something for breakfast today?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section C: FOOD SECURITY</b>				
C2.	Did you feel full after eating breakfast? Or could you have eaten more?	I felt full	1	
		I could have eaten more	2	
		I don't know	3	
C3	Did you eat something for lunch today?	Yes	1	If no, go to next section
		Not yet, but I will	2	
		No	3	
C4.	[FOR INTERVENTION SCHOOLS] Did you eat the school meal?	Yes	1	If no, go to next section
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
C5.	[FOR INTERVENTION SCHOOLS] Did you like the taste of the school meal?	Not at all	1	
		A little bit	2	
		Very much	3	
		I don't know	4	
C6.	How hungry do you feel right now?	Not at all hungry	1	
		A little hungry	2	
		Very hungry	3	
		I don't know	4	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section D: HOUSEHOLD &amp; SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>				
D1.	During the last week, did you see anyone in your house reading?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
D2.	During the last week, did anyone in your house encourage you to study?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
D3	During the last week, did anyone in your house read to you?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
D4.	Are your parents or family members asking you questions about the stories they tell you or read to you?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
D5.	During the last week, did you read outside of school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Don't know	3	
D6.	Do you like coming to school?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		I don't know	3	

S.No.	Question	Options	Codes	Skip
<b>Section D: HOUSEHOLD &amp; SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>				
<b>D7</b>	How often in the last week did you play a game in the classroom around the alphabet or a reading activity?	Everyday	1	
		Several times during the week	2	
		Once during the week	3	
		Never	4	
		I don't know	5	
<b>D8.</b>	Does your school have story books other than textbook for you to take home and borrow?	Yes	1	
		No	2	End survey
		I don't know	3	
<b>D9.</b>	How often in the last week did you borrow story books other than textbook from school to take home to read?	Everyday	1	
		Several times during the week	2	
		Once during the week	3	
		Never	4	
		We are not allowed to take books home at this school	5	
		I don't know	6	

## Annex 7. The project and CSP Linkages

26. The table below shows the project’s alignment with specific CSP SOs. As highlighted in the previous baseline and mid-term evaluations and confirmed by the end-line evaluation, The project continues to demonstrate strong alignment with the priorities of the GoL in various critical areas such as overall development, poverty reduction, school feeding, education, nutrition, and agriculture. It also addresses important cross-cutting concerns like climate change and disaster risk reduction.

**Table 18. The project and CSP Linkages**

CSP	Strategic Outcome (SO)	Linkages and contributions
<b>2017 - 2021</b>		
	SO1. Schoolchildren in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals program by 2026.	The project not only implemented the school feeding program directly, but it simultaneously engaged with the GoL to ensure smooth transition of the school meals program into a sustainable NSMP, which is directly aligned with SO1. This was done by providing direct support as well as technical assistance in the form of enhancing Government and community capacities to facilitate a sustainable transition. Moreover, The project also provided adequate school infrastructure to ensure a timely and smooth second phase of handover 2021. Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns, The project adapted by providing take-home rations to the families of students who were unable to access school meals due to school closures.
	SO2. Stunting rates among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet nation targets by 2025	The project contributed towards SO2 by improving awareness on nutrition and implementing activities that lead to improved nutrition outcomes. Nutritious school meals are provided to school children, promoting access to balanced and healthy diets. Additionally, The project encouraged the contribution of nutritious food items from the community, which further enhances the nutritional value of the meals. Awareness activities on nutrition were conducted, aiming to educate parents and community members on the importance of proper nutrition for children's growth and development. By addressing discriminatory gender roles and feeding practices, the project also worked towards improving nutrition outcomes, particularly among vulnerable groups.
	SO3. Vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts are more resilient to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses	The project is also in alignment with CSP's SO3. Some of The project activities focus on promoting resilience among vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts. One of the notable contributions is through construction and promotion of greenhouses to help build resilience against climate-related challenges.
	SO4. National and local governance institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas, by 2025	The project contributes towards SO4 by engaging with government departments, building their capacities, and conducting policy-level activities. Through these efforts, the program aims to strengthen national and local governance institutions to ensure improved service delivery, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. By working closely with government entities at different levels, the program supports the development and implementation of effective policies and strategies related to food assistance and nutrition. Additionally, by building the capacities of government departments, the program enhances their ability to provide improved services to vulnerable populations.

	<p>The 2017 – 2021 CSP Evaluation assessed progress towards delivery of outputs and outcomes as “very limited,” suggesting that outcomes will fall significantly short of expectations. According to the evaluation, while WFP reached about 74% of schools in targeted provinces, the level of vulnerability and the remoteness of the schools that were not reached were not clear. There was also an absence of a clear, overarching approach for strengthening institutional capacity.</p>
<b>2022 - 2026</b>	
<p>SO1. School children in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results by 2026</p>	<p>SO1 is intended to continue to build on progress made in facilitating a sustainable transition of school feeding activities to GoL. The project provided a platform to WFP to provide direct support and build capacity for the transition and handover of school feeding activities, which has informed the CSP 2022 – 2026 and the new McGovern-Dole FY20 award design. Through the engagement of smallholder farmers, establishment and maintenance of school gardens and fishponds, as well as general training and infrastructure for cooks, storekeepers and households on nutrition, food storage and handling, and WASH, The project is also contributing to nutritional outcomes for school-aged children and food security for local farmers and other households.</p>
<p>SO2. Vulnerable groups, in particular women and girls of reproductive age, children under five, and school-aged children have improved nutrition outcomes by 2026</p>	<p>Desk review and interviews confirm that the project activities, including providing nutritious meals, promoting community involvement in food supply and cooking, conducting awareness campaigns, and training cooks, have significantly contributed towards SO2 of the CSP.</p>
<p>SO3. Vulnerable people in disaster affected or at-risk areas have enhanced food and nutrition security and increased capacities to mitigate and manage risks associated with climate and other shocks by 2026</p>	<p>The project program also supports small-scale farmers, with a particular focus on empowering women, to improve agricultural production and ensure a consistent supply of nutritious and diverse crops within the community for the school meals. For example, the program supports the creation and maintenance of school gardens, fishponds, and poultry farming initiatives. Furthermore, it provides assistance in livestock raising, which not only enhances resilience but also contributes to the overall sustainability of the program.</p>

# Annex 8. McGovern-Dole and Linkages with Government Policies and Instruments

Table 19. McGovern-Dole and Linkages with Government Policies and Instruments

Area	Title	Alignment
Overall national development	National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016 - 2020	Prioritizes school health and nutrition, including promotion through awareness-raising campaigns and integration into school curricula. This aligns with The project strategic outcome 2 results and strategies for improved health and nutrition, such as through the Green Box educational toolkit for sharing nutrition, climate change and WASH knowledge with primary school students.
	National Green Growth Strategy (NGGS) (2019 – 2030)	NGGS establishes priorities for improving the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of natural resource use to ensure optimal benefits, reduced environmental degradation, and minimized vulnerability of the economy to shocks. Improving and promoting sustainable and effective agricultural production practices is a priority, which was facilitated by the project through trainings and infrastructure for school gardens and fishponds, as well capacity strengthening and inputs for smallholder farmers and building of local markets through links to school feeding for a community-driven NSMP. However, the international procurement model of the project, with most commodities purchased and transported from the United States and associated emissions is misaligned with the NGGS goals, to some extent.
School feeding specific instruments	Plan of Action of School Meals Program 2016 - 2020	This set objectives and targets for the NSMP, which served as a foundation from which the project operated. The plan aimed to achieve full coverage of pre-primary and primary schools in the identified poorest districts, with the parents and communities taking full ownership, while GoL and cooperating development partners supported capacity strengthening and provision of food.
	Decree for Promotion of School Lunch, 2017	This document’s development was supported through the project advocacy and institutional capacity strengthening activities and confirms the policy of the government for promoting the provision of school lunch, allocating budget to the NSMP and expecting community and external partners to significantly contribute.
	Decree On Promoting School Lunch, 2022	The document is a decree from the Lao government that promotes the provision of nutritionally prepared meals in schools. It outlines the principles including comprehensive and unified management, nutritionally correct meals, equality, transparency, and participation from various sectors of society. The decree also details the responsibilities of MoES and other stakeholders in implementing the school lunch.
	Minister Directive on the Restoration of Agriculture Production in the Education Institutes, 2019	This direction orders public and private education institutions to engage in agricultural production through school gardens and use agricultural products in school lunches, which was prioritized in a select number of example schools within the project.

Education	Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2016 - 2020	The project aligns with the Education Sector Development Plan 2016-2020 by promoting health and nutrition, supporting disadvantaged children, and involving the community. It directly contributes to the plan's emphasis on health and nutrition in schools. The project's activities, including the provision of school meals, increase enrolment and retention rates, particularly among disadvantaged students. Additionally, the wash-related activities of The project align with the plan's focus on hygiene.
Health and nutrition	National Nutrition Policy	The project aligns with the National Nutrition Policy of Lao PDR, which assigns responsibilities to the Educational Sector to (i) develop and integrate nutrition into existing formal school curricula and the non-formal education system, and (ii) enhance teachers' knowledge on nutrition. The project's activities contribute to both of these. Furthermore, policy's target specific groups include school-going children, in line with the project's focus.
	National Nutrition Strategy (2015 – 2025)	Stakeholders also spoke about how it encouraged and enabled better nutrition among school-going children. As children are encouraged to eat six types of food, it promotes balanced dietary practices. This ties well with the National Nutrition Strategy to 2025. A balanced diet is extremely crucial for school-going children as it results in healthier growth and improved health outcomes through their lifespans. Consequently, the school feeding program also echoes the government's aims related to social protection outlined in the National Social Protection Strategy.
	Nutrition Plan of Action (2016 – 2020)	The project ties seamlessly with the government's vision on improving health outcomes in Lao PDR. For example, stakeholders from Attapue province suggested that the WFP's school feeding activities align well with five-year health plans at the provincial and district level. The project's encouragement for students to adopt better hygiene practices also contributed to dissemination of better hygiene practices in their homes as students carried this new knowledge home to their families.
Agriculture	Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to 2030	Schools at the district level are encouraged to grow their own food, which promotes greater self-sufficiency across different districts in Lao PDR. Trainings were conducted on farming, composting and animal raising to catalyze the production of food at the school and district level. These training activities were found relevant for improving knowledge and understanding of production and feeding activities amongst school staff. It developed their capacity to educate local villagers in turn. However, some stakeholder also noted the need to broaden the focus from teachers and school staff to include other local stakeholders to further improve the alignment of the project with government priorities across different sectors. A stakeholder provided an example from Dakjeung district in Sekong where school-feeding activities had a trickle-down effect on setting up a village-level water management committee for better management of scarce water resources at the community level.
Social protection	National Social Protection Strategy (2018 – 2030)	The project closely aligns with the third goal of the NSPS, which aims to expand and strengthen social welfare schemes to be more systematic and effective. The school feeding program is referenced in the NSPS as part of the social welfare system. Promotion of Education and Health: The NSPS aims to provide one cooked meal per day to all students in state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools in poor districts nationwide. This objective directly aligns with the project, which focuses on promoting student health and indirectly encourages education by providing a school attendance incentive through meals. Support for Vulnerable Groups: The NSPS aims to increase allowances for students at the lower secondary level, with a priority given to students from poor families and vulnerable groups. The program directly supports these groups by

		<p>ensuring they receive at least one nutritious meal per day. For example, one of the key stakeholders highlighted a school serving around 95% of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Incentive for School Attendance: The NSPS states that the Prime Ministerial Decree on School Meals aims to reduce malnutrition, increase school attendance, and improve completion rates. This objective is directly aligned.</p> <p>Stakeholders report positive impacts on school attendance among children.</p> <p>Sustainability and National Ownership: Under the project, schools were transitioned to national government ownership, which aligns with the NSPS' emphasis on sustainable and nationally-owned social protection initiatives.</p>
Disaster Risk Reduction	(draft) National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction	The NSDRR focuses on developing and strengthening the disaster prevention system, disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response. This aligns with SO3 of the project which emphasizes building resilience of vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses. Some of the activities focus on ensuring households can sustain contributions to school feeding during times of disaster.
Gender equality	Fourth national Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021 – 2025)	The project's objective of promoting education and health through the provision of nutritious meals aligns well with the plan's emphasis on ensuring optimal conditions for all students, including girls, to access education at all levels.

Source: Adapted from the Lao PDR Policy Analysis for WFP Regional School Feeding Implementation Plan 2020 - 2030

# Annex 9. Fieldwork Agenda

## Quantitative data collection agenda

Tale 1. Fieldwork Plan in Phongsaly						
Teams	Province	District	Type of school	Date		
				Start	End	
<b>23 February 2023 Survey team travel to Phongsaly Province</b>						
<b>24 February 2023 Survey team meet with Provincial and District coordinators</b>						
Team 1	Phongsaly	Bounnua	intervention	24/02/2023	25/02/2023	
			intervention	25/02/2023	26/02/2023	
			intervention	27/02/2023	28/02/2023	
			intervention	28/02/2023	01/03/2023	
		Phongsaly	intervention	02/03/2023	03/03/2023	
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>Team return to Vientiane Capital</b>			<b>04/03/2023</b>	<b>04/03/2023</b>	

Tale 2. Fieldwork Plan in Louangnumtha						
Teams	Province	District	Type of school	Date		
				Start	End	
<b>23 February 2023 Survey team travel to Louangnumtha Province</b>						
<b>24 February 2023 Survey team meet with Provincial and District coordinators</b>						
Team 2	Louangnumtha	Viengphoukha	intervention	24/02/2023	25/02/2023	
		Sing	intervention	25/02/2023	26/02/2023	
		Long	intervention	27/02/2023	28/02/2023	
			intervention	28/02/2023	01/03/2023	
			<b>Non-intervention</b>	02/03/2023	03/03/2023	
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>Team return to Vientiane Capital</b>			<b>04/03/2023</b>	<b>04/03/2023</b>	

Table 3. Fieldwork Plan in Louangphabang+Oudomxai provinces					
Teams	Province	District	Type of school	Date	
				Start	End
<b>23 February 2023 Survey team travel to Louangphabang Province</b>					
<b>24 February 2023 Survey team meet with Provincial and District coordinators</b>					
Team 3	Louangphabang	Nan	<b>Non-intervention</b>	24/02/2023	25/02/2023
		Phonthong	intervention	26/02/2023	27/02/2023
		Phonthong	intervention	27/02/2023	28/02/2023
	<b>Survey team travel to Oudomxai Province</b>			<b>01/03/2023</b>	<b>02/03/2023</b>
	Oudomxai	Xai	intervention	03/03/2023	04/03/2023
		Xai	intervention	04/03/2023	05/03/2023
		Houn	intervention	06/03/2023	07/03/2023
		Beng	intervention	07/03/2023	08/03/2023
	<b>Total</b>				
	<b>Team return to Vientiane Capital</b>			<b>09/03/2023</b>	<b>09/03/2023</b>

Table 4. Fieldwork Plan in Attapue+Sekong+Saravan+Khammouan provinces					
Teams	Province	District	Type of school	Date	
				Start	End
<b>23 February 2023 Survey team travel to Attapue Province</b>					
<b>24 February 2023 Survey team meet with Provincial and District coordinators</b>					
Team 4	Attapue	sanxay	intervention	25/02/2023	26/02/2023
	Sekong	Dukchueng	intervention	27/02/2023	28/02/2023
		Kaluem	<b>Non-intervention</b>	28/02/2023	01/03/2023
	<b>Survey team travel to Saravan Province</b>			<b>02/03/2023</b>	<b>02/03/2023</b>
	Saravan	Laongarm	intervention	03/03/2023	04/03/2023
		Lakhonepheng	intervention	04/03/2023	05/03/2023
	<b>Team return to Vientiane Capital</b>			<b>06/03/2023</b>	<b>06/03/2023</b>
Team 2+4	Khammouan	Mahaxai	<b>Non-intervention</b>	10/03/2023	10/03/2023
		Nakai	intervention	10/03/2023	11/03/2023
			<b>Non-intervention</b>	11/03/2023	12/03/2023
	<b>Total</b>				
	<b>Team return to Vientiane Capital</b>			<b>12/03/2023</b>	<b>12/03/2023</b>

## Qualitative data collection agenda

Table 5. Fieldwork Plan in Luangnamtha				
Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Provincial (PESS, PAFO, PHO)	Group KII	1	3	15/05/2023
Level 3: District (DESB, DAFO, DHO)	Mini FGD	1	3	15/05/2023
Level 4: Teachers and Director	FGD	1	5	15/05/2023
Level 5: Community Level (LWU, VEDC, and Cook)	FGD	1	6	16/05/2023
Level 6: Farmer	Mini FGD	1	3	16/05/2023
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>		

Table 6. Fieldwork Plan in Luang prabang				
Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Level 2: Provincial	Mini FGD	1	3	17/05/2023
Level 3: District	Mini FGD	1	3	18/05/2023
Level 4: Teachers and Director	FGD	1	8	18/05/2023
Level 5: Community Level (LWU, VEDC, and Cook)	FGD	1	6	17/05/2023
Level 6: Farmer	KII	1	1	19/05/2023
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>		

Table 7. Fieldwork Plan in Oudomxay				
Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Level 6: Farmer	KII	1	1	19/05/2023
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>		

Table 8. Fieldwork Plan in Khammuane				
Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Level 2: Provincial	Mini FGD	1	3	15/05/2023
Level 3: District	Mini FGD	1	3	15/05/2023
Level 4: Teachers and Director	FGD	1	5	15/05/2023
Level 5: Community Level (LWU, VEDC, and Cook)	FGD	1	6	16/05/2023
Level 6: Farmer				
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>		

Table 9. Fieldwork Plan in Saravan				
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Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Level 2: Provincial	Mini FGD	1	3	18/05/2023
Level 3: District	Mini FGD	1	3	18/05/2023
Level 4: Teachers and Director	FGD	1	10 (minimum 6)	19/05/2023
Level 5: Community Level (LWU, VEDC, and Cook)	FGD	1	6	19/05/2023
Level 6: Farmer				
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>		

Table 10. Fieldwork Plan in Sekong				
Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Level 2: Provincial	Mini FGD	1	3	15/05/2023
Level 3: District	Mini FGD	1	3	16/05/2023
Level 4: Teachers and Director	FGD	1	6	16/05/2023
Level 5: Community Level (LWU, VEDC, and Cook)	FGD	1	6	16/05/2023
Level 6: Farmer	KII	1	1	
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>		

Table 11. Fieldwork Plan in Attapue				
Respondent	Method	No.	No. of Respondents	Date of Completion
Level 2: Provincial	Mini FGD	1	3	19/05/2023
Level 3: District	Mini FGD	1	3	18/05/2023
Level 4: Teachers and Director	FGD	1	6	18/05/2023
Level 5: Community Level (LWU, VEDC, and Cook)	FGD	1	6	17/05/2023
Level 6: Farmer	Mini FGD	1	3	18/05/2023
	KII	1	1	25/05/2023
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>		

# Annex 10. Regressions

Figure 30. Attentiveness across comparison and intervention schools across baseline and endline surveys.

Dependent variable:	
Attentiveness	
Intervention	-0.027 (0.028)
Time	-0.086 (0.054)
Age	-0.0004 (0.009)
Female	0.001 (0.021)
Grade	0.005 (0.012)
Lao (Ethnicity)	0.0002 (0.029)
Lao (Language)	0.039 (0.046)
Enough food	-0.008 (0.045)
Intervention*Time	0.077 (0.056)
Constant	0.836*** (0.073)
Observations	1,381
R2	0.002
Adjusted R2	-0.004
Residual Std. Error	0.382 (df = 1371)
F Statistic	0.374 (df = 9; 1371)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

**Figure 31. Regression model between the variables of school attendance with the intervention, gender, and intervention effect related with time.**

Dependent variable:	
Attendance	
Intervention	0.082*** (0.024)
Time	0.236*** (0.023)
Female	0.021* (0.012)
Intervention*Time	-0.098*** (0.029)
Constant	0.640*** (0.019)
Observations	582
R2	0.240
Adjusted R2	0.235
Residual Std. Error	0.144 (df = 577)
F Statistic	45.640*** (df = 4; 577)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

**Figure 32. Regression model between learning scores and intervention**

Dependent variable:	
Learning scores (2023)	
Intervention	-0.094*** (0.033)
Lao	0.096*** (0.030)
Grade	0.066** (0.027)
Attentiveness	0.071** (0.033)
Constant	0.301*** (0.044)
Observations	173
R2	0.203
Adjusted R2	0.184
Residual Std. Error	0.171 (df = 168)
F Statistic	10.716*** (df = 4; 168)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

**Figure 33. Learning scores outcomes.**

Dependent variable:	
Learning scores	
Intervention	-0.110*** (0.029)
Time	-0.098* (0.053)
Intervention*Time	-0.040 (0.060)
Constant	0.551*** (0.024)
Observations	633
R2	0.078
Adjusted R2	0.073
Residual Std. Error	0.283 (df = 629)
F Statistic	17.679*** (df = 3; 629)

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

# Annex 11. Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations Mapping

Recommendation	Conclusions	Findings
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Investigating causes of decline in learning scores for future interventions: Despite the increase in enrollment, attendance and attentiveness, which helped narrow the gap between comparison and intervention scores, the learning scores declined across all schools included in this study. This was likely the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however there is still a need for specific investigation and continued monitoring to (dis)confirm this. Therefore, WFP should undertake specific studies to investigate this decline and accordingly revise (or advise) future interventions in Lao PDR.</p> <p>Given the observed patterns and historical presence supporting schools through McGovern-Dole, it is essential for WFP to critically assess its strategic position concerning the delivery of literacy interventions in Lao PDR. Should WFP sustain its commitment to literacy initiatives through USDA McGovern-Dole, there is a pronounced need to reinforce the literacy component in subsequent proposals. Specifically, this should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring timely engagement with the most appropriate partners with technical capacity in this area for informing design and ensuring effective collaboration in its implementation</li> <li>• Refining the intervention framework to be more systematic</li> <li>• Advocating for prolonged intervention durations to achieve sustainable impacts</li> </ul> <p>If literacy outcomes, which are indirectly supported by school feeding, move beyond the primary remit of WFP, a strategic reassessment of WFP's engagement in literacy interventions as a complementary activity to SFP engagement should be undertaken.</p>	Conclusion 2	Finding 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Streamline and improve monitoring mechanisms: The project monitoring framework is robust, though could be streamlined and further targeted to country contexts. While this is outside the scope of WFP work, it is recommended to consider advocating for revisions to have fewer mandatory core- and a selection of project-specific indicators to ensure monitoring and evaluation frameworks and mechanisms are manageable and support targeted and context-specific learning agendas.</p> <p>In the case of Lao PDR, improved mechanisms to effectively track teacher attendance and application of new learning techniques would be beneficial, to better understand the extent of contribution to learning outcomes. Indicators related to agriculture, procurement, and market development activities may also require more extensive monitoring in order to understand market capacity to contribute and sustain a nutrition-sensitive school feeding program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additionally, continue to revise and develop a plan for monitoring the transition and handover. This will also require capacity strengthening at national and local levels with regards to monitoring.</li> <li>• Emphasize the importance of understanding what is happening in the schools and the impact of the program, as well as how demonstrating the positive outcomes and impact of the program can serve as a means for effective resource mobilization.</li> </ul>	Conclusion 2	Finding 2, 4, 5, 7, 8
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Increased community-level assessments and capacity strengthening: Develop a more comprehensive process for community-level assessments that gather localized needs, challenges, and preferences, as well as resource requirements. These assessments can be effectively used to inform the implementation of the school feeding program, ensuring it is context-specific and</p>	Conclusion 1	Finding 1, 13

<p>responsive. Additionally, focus on capacity-strengthening activities at the provincial, district and community levels to enhance coordination, budget planning, and relevant skills among stakeholders.</p> <p>Recognizing the findings of the SABER-SF assessment and the limited capacity from 2015/16, WFP should adopt a dual-pronged approach to ensure the sustainability of the school meals program. Firstly, WFP should focus on bolstering the institutional and financial capacities of national and sub-national governments. This can be achieved by advocating for robust management structures, exploring innovative financing models, and enhancing program monitoring mechanisms. Concurrently, it's vital to bolster community-level capacity, guided by thorough assessments that capture localized needs and challenges. Such efforts should be augmented by capacity-building activities across provincial, district, and community levels to ensure efficient coordination, budgeting, and skill enhancement. In the end, the sustainability of the school feeding program hinges on a balanced approach: communities manage the initiative, but the government ensures program consistency, quality, and long-term viability.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Strengthen capacity and collaboration within and between local government entities towards the promotion of ownership: WFP should actively engage and collaborate with local governments to ensure the integration of school feeding programs into national policies and frameworks. This collaboration should include joint planning, resource allocation, and capacity-building efforts to promote long-term sustainability.</p> <p>In addition, prioritize timely and sufficient capacity-building initiatives at the community and local institutional levels. This includes training local staff, teachers, and community members on program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. By building local capacity and promoting ownership, the program can become more sustainable and effectively tailored to the specific needs of the communities.</p>	Conclusion 1	Finding 1, 13
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> HRGE and LNOB: Pay specific attention to addressing disparities among ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and gender inequalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop targeted strategies and interventions to monitor and improve equal access, outcomes, and inclusion for these marginalized groups. This may involve addressing transportation and language barriers, enhancing accessibility infrastructure, and providing adequate support for persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Additionally, it is recommended to promote gender equality and social inclusion by engaging more women in project implementation and seeking collaborations with potential women's empowerment projects.</li> <li>• Develop targeted interventions to increase VEDC/community involvement.</li> </ul>	Conclusion 4	Finding 4, 8
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Diversify funding sources: To mitigate the risks associated with limited budgets and donor dependency, WFP should explore opportunities to diversify funding sources. This could involve engaging with private sector partners, philanthropic organizations, and other potential stakeholders to secure additional financial support for the program.</p>	Conclusion 9	Finding 12, 13, 14
<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Promote sustainable agriculture and local procurement: WFP should support initiatives that promote sustainable agriculture practices and local procurement of food items. This can contribute to local economic development, enhance</p>	Conclusion 8	Finding 9, 10

<p>food security, and reduce dependence on external sources. Investing in agricultural training, supporting farmers' cooperatives, and facilitating access to markets can strengthen the resilience of communities and create long-term benefits.</p>		
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> Foster partnerships and collaboration: Collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as local NGOs, community-based organizations, and agricultural cooperatives, should be encouraged. While it is noted that local organizations may require more capacity strengthening themselves, the partnerships with international organizations have proven fruitful given they have similarly established policies, standards, and project planning tools, templates and resources. These partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of the program by leveraging local resources, expertise, and networks, while also promoting community engagement and ownership.</p>	<p>Conclusion 5</p>	<p>Finding 1, 5, 11</p>



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# Annex 14. Evaluability assessment during the inception

27. Evaluability refers to the extent to which an intervention can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner. Evaluability assessment calls for the early review of a proposed activity to ascertain whether its objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable.<sup>153</sup> The review of progress reports and inception interviews clarified that many elements of the project were evaluable with available data on both output and outcome indicators; however some gaps in data and potential contextual challenges were observed and considered in the development of the evaluation matrix guiding this evaluation's scope and methodology. The evaluation questions were revised, and various factors facilitating or inhibiting the evaluation approach were outlined as below, organized by the evaluation questions.

EVALUABILITY BY CRITERIA AND QUESTION
<b>RELEVANCE: How relevant and influential has the project been with regard the Government of Lao PDR's current and future plans in school feeding?</b>
<p>The relevance criterion guides the assessment of alignment and contribution of the McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding Project to WFP's Country Strategic Plans (2017 – 2021 and 2022 – 2026) as well as with Government of Lao PDR (GoL) policies, plans, strategies and priorities related to school feeding, school health and nutrition, and sector-specific and national development commitments.</p> <p>There are multiple resources which can be drawn from to further elaborate on the project's relevance and adaptive capacity from 2017 to 2019, including notably two baseline studies (From this FY17 iteration of the project, as well as for the new FY20 project) and the FY17 midterm review which all review and demonstrate alignment in terms of strategic outcomes and objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Socio-Economic Development Plans, Education and Sports Sector Development Plans (2016 – 2020 and 2021-25), National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020, National Social Protection Strategy 2030, the Agriculture Development Strategic 2025 and Vision to 2030. In addition, these evaluations, as well as the Centralized Evaluation of Lao People's Democratic Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017 – 2021, assess the contribution of school feeding activities to the WFP CSP 2017 – 2021 and alignment with the new CSP 2022-2026. These studies found that the project was in alignment with, and contributed to, the priorities and policies of the government, elevating the priority of school feeding as a social protection measure.</p> <p>After 16 years of direct assistance, and in line with the national priority on promoting school meals and recommendations from the decentralized evaluation of the CSP 2017 - 2021, WFP signed a School Feeding Handover Plan with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in May 2018 outlining a phased approach to the handover process. Under relevance, the extent to which the handover of the schools was implemented in accordance with plans, coherent strategy and capacity of the national stakeholders will also be assessed.</p> <p>Given the variation in community resources, capacities and needs, WFP developed and implemented a Community Capacity Assessment (CCA) tool to inform WFP and MoES of communities' capacities to manage school meal handover. Presently, the available data to ET on the CCA is relatively limited, including an overview of the assessment framework (based on project elements, such as leadership of Village Education Development Committees, food accessibility, and access to water for school gardens), as well as a high-level analysis of aggregated CCA results.</p> <p>Considering the conclusion from the CSP decentralized evaluation that there was poor community ownership and lack of technical capacity to manage the transfer of resources, it was important for ET to access more detailed CCA analyses in order to assess the alignment of the handover support packages</p>

<sup>153</sup> [OECD-DAC Glossary of Terms](#), 2010, p.21.

with capacity needs at the provincial/district and school levels. To mitigate the possible absence of these more targeted CCA results, participant perceptions on whether the school feeding project and handover plans addresses their needs were assessed.

**EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS:** How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?

**IMPACT:** How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts?

While a large amount of data is available in semi-annual report monitoring databases and the baseline evaluation and mid-term review reports for a set of defined indicators, the main challenge to evaluability in this endline evaluation is the variation in the way some key outcome-level indicators were measured, variation in the reporting on some indicators across reports and indicator tracking (for example, number of students enrolled in schools receiving USDA assistance), and the absence of raw data and data collection tools from both the baseline and mid-term review for FY17 results.

For example, with regards to performance indicator MGD 1.3 'Number of students regularly (80%) attending USDA supported classrooms/schools', the USDA FY17 baseline study indicated that 98.3% of students attend regularly, while by mid-term there was 92.3% attendance in project schools, and in the USDA FY20 baseline the attendance was 95%. The attendance data for the FY17 baseline evaluation was collected in the months of March and April, while data for the mid-term review was collected in the months of October and November; as such, seasonality affected the comparison across the two rounds. It may have also been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which would need to be factored in as well. It also notes that attendance was measured through two different means, through a review of school attendance records of ten students per sampled school and also calculated the average school attendance based on the number of students present on the day of the survey compared to the number enrolled in the school; however, it is not clear which measurement strategy was used to generate the above-mentioned averages. Similarly, most of the monitoring data reports on numbers of beneficiaries by indicator, while baseline and mid-term typically looked at proportions, given these evaluations gathered data from a sample. Poor records at school level remains a risk to gather accurate accounts of attendance in either case, especially given the pandemic and school closures, but there is some scope for triangulation with other sources.

In addition, with regards to literacy levels, the baseline reported that 6.9% of students have demonstrated at least 75% reading comprehensive, compared to 12.4% in control schools using the Early Grade Reading Assessment; and while the mid-term evaluation did not assess literacy, the FY20 baseline evaluation assessment tool for reading and comprehension was adapted from the Save the Children Literacy Boost package. Semi-annual reports also note the methodology as the Save the Children Community Action Framework for Reading Promotion, which was also indicated in the FY17 baseline ToR.

If there is no data from baseline as well as an absence of data collection tools, there will be challenges with comparability and in the assessment of impact. Considering the focus on a longitudinal design which utilizes the differences in differences approach, there may need to construct baseline by using a proxy indicator or respondent recall (e.g., what was the food situation before the project and try to triangulate that independently to avoid recall bias), should data and tools not be available. The above-mentioned limitations are exacerbated by the short amount of time available for the inception phase, and ET seek WFP assistance for getting access to the data at the earliest possible.

Furthermore, some indicators were not regularly monitored or incorporated in the performance management framework, such as indicators for attentiveness and dietary diversity, though efforts were made to measure these within the USDA FY17 baseline evaluation. This extends to the data collected on capacity strengthening, with the methods for measurement in monitoring data primarily focusing on the number and types of trainings completed and numbers trained, but not clear evidence of how the trainings were applied in practice. For example, what types and extent of trainings that were conducted with smallholder farmers and whether practices have been applied in order to increase yields. The baseline evaluation sought to bridge this gap by asking knowledge, attitudes and practices questions in some instances, or by asking for the supervisors perspective on teachers application of skills. This evaluation deepened findings from the baseline through brief, targeted surveys with cooks and storekeepers and semi-structured interviews with smallholder farmers.

In terms of gender-related results, there does not appear to have been a clear and purposeful gender and social inclusion analysis conducted in the design of the intervention activities, nor clear mainstreaming of gender into the activities, expected outcomes or performance indicators. As such, there is not any 'baseline' data from which to compare the extent to which the intervention contributed to gender outcomes. This is largely due to the structure of McGovern-Dole logical frameworks, which are mostly uniform across countries despite contextual variations. However, the targeting of schools does allow for such considerations, including the design of capacity strengthening activities. For example, it was noticed in the monitoring data that many cooks are females, while storekeepers are males, and the mid-term evaluation found that a slightly higher proportion of males (85%) made cash and in-kind contributions than women (79%); it will be important to understand how the capacity-building activities considered the gendered dimensions of these roles in the training content. Sex disaggregated is available on beneficiaries, placing the majority of the results as 'gender-targeted' according to the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.<sup>154</sup> Disaggregated data collected during the quantitative surveys on gender, age, disability status, and/or ethnicity will be used to select the sample for qualitative data collection, further exploring possible gender equality and empowerment outcomes.

Through further data gathering and clarification, the development and refinement of a reconstructed Theory of Change, and engagement of both duty-bearers and rights-holders in the evaluation through a staged evaluation design (quantitative precedes qualitative data collection) and use of a comparison group, ET contextualized results, including both facilitating and hindering factors, despite the above-mentioned limitations.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY: To what extent will the interventions continue past the handover of the school feeding project?**

The main constraint to the analysis on sustainability is the pandemic and resulting changes to the project. While handover plans are integrated into the project design, the plans' continued relevance and the extent to which institutional capacities have been sufficiently developed is less known. The Government of Lao PDR has recently endorsed the "Prime Minister Decree on Promoting the School Lunch Program," which will integrate funding for the NSMP into the national budget. At the same time, the handovers largely occurred during a time of great need in communities, and while supplemental provision of food after the handover took place in 2022, cooks and storekeepers stopped receiving take-home rations as incentive after the handover; as such, the continued buy-in of communities will be important to understand in this resource-constrained context.

Extensive interviews with Project stakeholders engaged in handover planning and processes are planned to fill gaps in information and help put forward lessons and recommendations on any emerging good practices.

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<sup>154</sup> INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE. (n.d.). The Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES): A Methodology Guidance Note. [http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/gender/GRES\\_English.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/gender/GRES_English.pdf)

**Table 20 Summary of evaluability analysis conducted during inception phase by criterion and evaluation question**

Evaluability Criterion and Question	Revised Evaluation Question	Reason for Revision
<p>DESIGN AND RELEVANCE: How relevant and influential has the project been with regard to the Government of Lao PDR's current and future plans in school feeding?</p> <p>To what extent did the design of the McGovern-Dole FY17 school feeding project contribute to realizing the Government of Lao PDRs' policies and strategies related to school feeding and WFP's Country Strategic Plan (2017–2021 and 2022–2026)?</p> <p>To what extent was the design of the project activities aligned to the National School Meals Program (including implementation model and package of capacity strengthening activities provided to schools before handover)?</p> <p>Do capacity strengthening activities align with government plans, strategies and priorities within those for school feeding, school health and nutrition, sector specific [depending on the objectives of the NSMP] and national-level development commitments?</p>	<p>1.1 To what extent did the project design and implementation, including its capacity strengthening activities, align with the Government of Lao PDRs' policies, plans, strategies and priorities related to school feeding, school health and nutrition, sector specific [depending on the objectives of the NSMP] and national-level development commitments?</p>	<p>Contribution pertains to effectiveness, whereas design and relevance are concerned with demonstrable alignment. Broadened and combined 1.1-1.3 to cover all project activities in a concise yet comprehensive evaluation question.</p>
<p>Was appropriate planning done with the government about which schools would be handed over, and when? Was it documented (in a handover plan/strategy with division of labor, roles and responsibilities, targets and expectations of what is a successful handover)?</p> <p>Was the timing of the handover appropriate, based on the capacity of national stakeholders to implement the national school feeding program?</p>	<p>1.2 To what extent was the handover of the schools implemented in accordance with plans, coherent strategy and capacity of the national stakeholders?</p>	<p>Combined 1.4-1.5 for conciseness</p>
<p>EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY: How effective and efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?</p> <p>2.1 How effective was the capacity strengthening work to build national capacity in the National School Meals Program?</p>	<p>2.1 To what extent did the project achieve its outcomes as stated in its results framework, including on capacity strengthening, national meal plans, health and nutrition practices and learning outcomes (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity and other vulnerable groups, as relevant)? Why or why not? What factors contributed to or prevented the achievement of outcomes?</p>	<p>Broadened to cover all project activities in a concise yet comprehensive question</p>
<p>2.2 Were all the project activities carried out as planned and what were the outcomes? To what extent capacity strengthening and handover activities were carried out as planned.</p>	<p>Dropped</p>	<p>The first part is duplicative and covered under 2.1 and the second part is duplicative and covered under revised 1.2</p>
<p>2.3 What was the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the project with specific reference to school children's return to school and the achievement</p>	<p>Now sub-question 2.2</p>	<p>(No change)</p>

Evalability Criterion and Question	Revised Evaluation Question	Reason for Revision
of project outcomes? What alternatives did WFP propose in these circumstances and what impact did they have on program effectiveness?		
2.4 How efficient was WFP's approach to strengthen the national capacities vis-à-vis the National School Meals Program? To what extent was WFP able to timely mobilize the required human and technical resources to provide support to national actors (at technical, project management and advocacy levels)?	Now sub-question 2.3	(No change)
2.5 Is there evidence of girl and boy students who demonstrate the use of good health and nutrition practices in the WFP-supported schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces?	Dropped	Covered under 2.1
2.6 To what extent does the government have a monitoring system to enable themselves to know the effectiveness and impacts of the National School Meals Program?	Now sub-question 2.4	(No change)
2.7	2.5 Has there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative from the project (disaggregated by stakeholder groups, gender, age and ethnicity, as relevant)?	Added by moving 3.3
2.8 What were the key enabling factors and challenges for the handover? What are the lessons learnt and good practices that should be taken into consideration for future school feeding activities?	2.6 What were the key enabling factors and challenges for the handover? What are the lessons learnt and good practices that should be taken into consideration for future school feeding activities?	Moved from impact to effectiveness
IMPACT: How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of outcomes and impacts? 3.1 How do the literacy outcomes of girls and boys compare between the WFP-supported schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces?	3.1 Did the project achieve its SDG impacts (e.g., learning outcomes, health and nutrition of target school children, and social protection, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, and other vulnerable populations) as stated in its result framework? If so, how and to what extent? If not, why not?	Broadened to cover impacts, which may go beyond literacy. Also linked to SDGs such as zero hunger.
3.2 How did the project contribute to the observed impacts? Is there evidence that school gardens are effective at increasing knowledge of nutrition for schoolchildren in WFP-supported schools in these 8 provinces?	Dropped	The first part is covered under 3.1 and the second is an outcome covered under 2.1
3.3 Has there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative from the handover?	Dropped	First part is the outcome question (Moved to 2.4) and the second is the sustainability one (Moved to now 4.3) section
3.5 What are the emerging results from this school feeding project in terms of benefits to the learning outcomes, health and nutrition of	Dropped	Covered in 3.1

Evaluability Criterion and Question	Revised Evaluation Question	Reason for Revision
target schoolchildren, and social protection? What evidence was collected in support of this?		
3.6 To what extent did the program contribute to increased attendance of school-age children (girls and boys) in WFP- supported schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces?	Dropped	Covered in 3.1. duplicative
3.7 Have there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative? How do different groups benefit from the intervention outcomes and how do GEWE outcomes vary by stakeholder group (ethnic groups, gender, etc)?	Dropped	Covered in 2.7 and 3.1
3.8 What internal factors affected the project's ability to deliver impact? Were there any divergences from the project design? If so, what were the drivers of these decisions?	3.2 What internal and external factors affected the project's ability to deliver impact? How did the project respond to these factors and with what effect?	Broadened yet in a concise manner
3.9 What were the external factors (political, economic, social, other) that contributed to the project's observed impacts? Did the relationship with government change over the project's delivery timeline? If so, how? Were any external obstacles identified? How were these obstacles overcome/mitigated?		
SUSTAINABILITY: The extent to which the program interventions continue post handover of school feeding program. 4.1 The extent to which has school feeding been continuously implemented since the programs were handed over by WFP to the Government under the National School Meals Program?	4.1 To what extent are all the handed- over schools continuing to provide high quality school lunch after handover to the Government under the National School Meals Program?	Combined with a question from the effectiveness section
4.2 To what extent are the WASH, hygiene, literacy, school gardening and other activities that WFP supported in line with the Government's guidelines for school feeding programs are continuing in the handed-over schools?	4.2 To what extent are the WASH, hygiene, literacy, school gardening and other activities that WFP supported in line with the Government's guidelines for school feeding programs are continuing in the handed-over schools?	(No change)
4.3 What measures did WFP take to increase financial and human capital contribution of other stakeholders including government? 4.4 To what extent has the government discussed setting up/supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP support? How has WFP supported these activities? 4.5 What interventions are the most effective at securing community, local or national government investment into the school feeding programs? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment? 4.6 How are the community involved in maintaining key school infrastructure to enable the program to continue? How does this involvement differ among men and women?	4.3 To what extent have WFP and the government planned and implemented for supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP support? Are there interventions that are more effective at securing community, local or national government investment into the school feeding programs? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment?	Combined

## Annex 15. Strategic Objectives MGD

Strategic Objective	Expected outcomes	Activities
MGD SO 1: Improved Literacy of School-Age Children	Better Access to School Supplies and Materials (MGD 1.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Access to Books for Schoolchildren</li> </ul>
	Improved Literacy Instruction Material (MGD 1.1.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Development on Nutrition and School Agriculture</li> <li>Improved Literacy Instruction Materials</li> </ul>
	Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers (MGD 1.1.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Training on Literacy Instruction to Teachers</li> </ul>
	Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators (MGD 1.1.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the Engagement of School Management and Community on Literacy and Importance of Education</li> </ul>
	Reduced Short-Term Hunger (MGD 1.2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide School Meals</li> <li>Support School Agriculture</li> </ul>
	Increased Access to Food (MGD 1.2.1.1/ 1.3.1.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide School Meals</li> <li>Support School Agriculture</li> </ul>
	Increased Economic and Cultural Incentives(MGD 1.3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide School Meals</li> </ul>
	Reduced Health Related Absences(MGD 1.3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide School Meals</li> </ul>
	Improved School Infrastructure (MGD 1.3.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services</li> <li>Improve School Infrastructure</li> </ul>
	Increased Student Enrolment (MGD 1.3.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide School Meals</li> </ul>
	Increased Community Understanding of Benefit of Education (MGD 1.3.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve School Infrastructure</li> </ul>
MGD SO 2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices	Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices (MGD 2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support School Agriculture</li> <li>Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services</li> <li>Provide Incentives and Training to School Cooks and Storekeepers</li> <li>Curriculum Development on Nutrition and School Agriculture</li> </ul>
	Increased Knowledge of Safe Food Preparation and Storage Practices (MGD 2.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Incentives and Training to School Cooks and Storekeepers</li> </ul>
	Increased Knowledge of Nutrition (MGD 2.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support School Agriculture</li> <li>Curriculum Development on Nutrition and School Agriculture</li> </ul>
	Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services (MGD 2.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services</li> </ul>
	Increased Access to Requisite Food Preparation and Storage Tools and Equipment (MGD 2.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Incentives and Training to School Cooks and Storekeepers</li> </ul>
Foundational Results	Increased Capacity of Government Institutions (MGD 2.7.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Development on Nutrition and School Agriculture</li> <li>Capacity Development</li> </ul>
	Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework (MGD 2.7.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Development on Nutrition and School Agriculture</li> </ul>

Strategic Objective	Expected outcomes	Activities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Development</li> </ul>
	Increased Government Support (MGD 2.7.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Development</li> </ul>
	Increased Engagement of Local Organization and Community Group (MGD 2.7.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support School Agriculture</li> <li>• Improve School Infrastructure</li> <li>• Capacity Development</li> </ul>

## Annex 16. Available Budget Data for McGovern-Dole-FY17 Program

Activity	Budget	Implementation Partner	Spending
Provision of school meals to pre-primary and primary school children	\$12,191,760	N/A	\$11,199,436 <sup>155</sup>
Support school agriculture	\$551,990	LWF (provision of livestock support and community livelihood development for rural farmers)	\$316,544 <sup>156</sup>
Increased access to clean water and sanitation	\$1,418,236	Namsaat	N/A <sup>157</sup>
Provide incentives (50 kg rice/semester) and training to school cooks and storekeepers	\$221,000	Education for Development Foundation	N/A <sup>158</sup>
Improve school infrastructure (construction or rehabilitation)	\$720,500	Education for Development Foundation	N/A <sup>159</sup>
Curriculum development on nutrition and school agriculture	\$827,000	N/A <sup>160</sup>	N/A <sup>161</sup>
Increased access to books for schoolchildren and improved literacy instruction materials	\$855,484 <sup>162</sup>	Plan International, Room to Read and Big Brother Mouse	\$377,134 up till March 2021 by Implementing Partner Plan International <sup>163</sup> ; \$11,893 from Jan-March 2021 <sup>164</sup>
Provision of training on literacy instruction to teachers	\$60,000	Room to Read	\$11,893 from Jan-March 2021 <sup>165</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Expenditure figure found in Annual CSP Financial Overview by Strategic Outcome in WFP Laos Annual Country Report 2022

<sup>156</sup> Derived from figure found in LWF Implementing Partner Report November 2019. Figure was in Laotian Kip and was converted using average exchange rate for 2019 accessible at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.FCRF?locations=LA>

<sup>157</sup> Data not available in implementing partner report nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>158</sup> Data not available in implementing partner report nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>159</sup> Data not available in implementing partner report nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>160</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>161</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>162</sup> Sum of budgets for increased access to books for schoolchildren and improved literacy instruction materials

<sup>163</sup> Derived from REAP project progress report (Jan-March 2021) which mentioned that 63% of total budget (USD 598,625) had been spent as of 31 March 2021

<sup>164</sup> Only quarterly figure available in latest quarterly Room to Read implementation report (Jan-March 2021)

<sup>165</sup> Only quarterly figure available in latest quarterly Room to Read implementation report (Jan-March 2021)

Increase engagement of school management and community on literacy and importance of education	\$849,793	N/A <sup>166</sup>	N/A <sup>167</sup>
Capacity Development	\$3,022,500	N/A <sup>168</sup>	\$1,677,132 <sup>169</sup>
Monitoring & Evaluation	\$2,150,000	N/A <sup>170</sup>	N/A <sup>171</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>167</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>168</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>169</sup> Expenditure figure found in Annual CSP Financial Overview by Strategic Outcome in WFP Laos Annual Country Report 2022

<sup>170</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

<sup>171</sup> Information not available in implementing partner reports provided nor available budget and monitoring data

# Annex 17. Performance Indicator Targets for McGovern-Dole-FY17 Program

Activities Indicators			Target	Baseline	Endline
Standard Indicator Number	Activity Number	Performance Indicator			
1	1 & 5	Number of students regularly (80%) attending USDA supported classrooms/schools	116,784	<p>Monitoring 2018: Boys: 66,901 Girls: 62,809 Total: <b>132,559</b></p> <p>Evaluation: Project: 98.3% (98.3% F, 98.3% M) Control: 96.3% (95.8% F, 96.8% M)</p>	<p>Monitoring 2023: Boy: 25,104 Girl: 24,192 Total: 49,296 Overall: 84.2% Boys: 84.3% Girls: 84.1%</p>
2	5	Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	<b>52,570</b>	<b>71,536</b> under MGD FY 14-16	At least <b>320,095</b> in Luang Namtha, Phongsaly, Saravan and Attapeu provinces from September 2019 to March 2022.
3	5	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	10,419	99%	<p>ALL (INCLUDING THOSE WITHOUT TRAINING)</p> <p>Overall: 84.2% (16 out of 19) Females: 85.7% (6 out of 7) Males: 83.3% (10 out of 12)</p>

					ONLY AMONG THOSE WITH TRAINING) Overall: 94.1% (16 out of 17) Females: 100% (6 out of 6) Males: 90.9% (10 out of 11)
4	5	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	13,014	Evaluation: 48.1% (55% female, 42% male)	SINCE 2019 Overall: 89.5% (17 out of 19) Females: 85.7% (6 out of 7) Males: 91.7% (11 out of 12)  IN THE LAST YEAR Overall: 47.4% (9 out of 19) Females: 57.1% (4 out of 7) Males: 41.7% (5 out of 12)
5	5	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	1,080	Overall: 129 Male: 76 Female: 53	Overall: 89.4% (17 out of 19) Females: 91.6% (11 out of 12) Males: 85.7% (6 out of 7)
6	5	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	1,350	Overall: 130 Male: 76 Female: 54	Overall: 100% (19 out of 19) Females: 100% (12 out of 12) Males: 100% (7 out of 7)
7	4	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	<b>2,510</b>	<b>98</b>	Kitchen built or rehabilitated: 1,357 Dining & storage: 1,247 Latrines: 156 2021 did not specify by type, but total in semi-annual reports was: 2,230  Total: <b>4,990</b>
8	1 & 5	Number of students enrolled in schools receiving USDA assistance	<b>145,980</b>	Monitoring: 138,790 (49% female)	Monitoring: 2018: 131,954 (48% female) <b>2019: 135,420 (48% female)</b>

				Baseline Evaluation: 2,914 (48% female)	2020: 103,384 (48% female) 2021: 88,670 (49% female)  Endline Evaluation: 1,768 (46% female)
9	5	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar "school" governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	5,784 <i>(It is not clear why the performance indicator here is higher than the total schools served under MGD FY17; it is assumed that measurement was based on number of persons trained)</i>	77.6% (45 of 58 schools visited)	78.9% (15 out of 19 schools)  Monitoring data ( <i>assuming data reported number of persons trained</i> ): 6,939
10	6	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance	1,156	406	<i>Reporting on this indicator is not clear. In most cases, monitoring reports indicate that the public-private partnerships are community contributions to schools. It is assumed the target of 1,156 is the number of schools. Semi-annual monitoring reports from March 2019 indicate the highest number of schools receiving inputs from private sector and community contribution at <b>1,468</b> (which is over the number intervened, suggesting multiple partnerships/infrastructure projects in some schools)</i>
11	6	Value of new public and private sector investments leveraged as a result of USDA assistance	8,349,750	0	Total estimated private (community) contributions from September 2018 to

					March 2022 in semi-annual reports: USD <b>\$3,776,986.55</b>
12	6	Number of educational policies, regulations and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance: Stage 1: Analyzed Stage 2: Drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation Stage 3: Presented for legislation/deGREE Stage 4: Passed/Approved Stage 5: Passed for which implementation has begun	6	0	September 2018 to March 2022 monitoring data reports: In 2018, 7 legislations were developed and have started to move through phases. By 2022, <b>12 overall</b> had started to or completed progression through the 5 stages. 1 7 (3 on stage 5, 4 on stage 4) (Sept 2018) 2 9 (5 on stage 5, 4 on stage 3)(Mar 2019) 3 6 (5 on stage 5, 1 on stage 4)(Sept 2019) 4 3 (1 each on stage 3,4,5) (Mar 2020) 5 -3 (1 on stage 2, 2 on stage 5) (Sept 2020) 6 1 (stage 3) (Sept 2021) 7 1 (stage 3) (Mar 2022)
13	1	Number of take-home rations provided as a result of USDA assistance	<b>2,192,990</b>	<b>345,281</b>	<b>137,873</b> reported in semi-annual report monitoring data from 2018 to 2021.
14	1	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	19,933	Monitoring: 70	2018: 8,344 (50% female) 2019: 21,759 (49% female) <b>2020: 88,703 (47% female)</b> 2021: 3,049
15	1	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	50,765,400	14,323,128	<b>38,651,175</b> (from 2018 to 2021 semi-annual report monitoring data)

16	1	Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	145,980	138,790 (43% female)	2018: 113,480 (48% female) <b>2019: 131,227 (49% female)</b> 2020: 72,399 (50% female) 2021: 83,787 (49% female)
17	1	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance	154,527	138,790 (49% female)	<i>Social assistance beneficiaries only cover a number of students enjoying on-site feeding.</i>  2018: 131,954 (49% female) <b>2019: 135,420 (48% female)</b> 2020: 103,884 (48% female) 2021: 83,788 (49% female)
18	3	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	17,240	Monitoring: 12,578 (FY14-16)  Evaluation: 120 (of 290 sample (56 F))	Survey: Overall: 15 Men: 1 Female: 14
19	3	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	13,792	Monitoring: 11,200	15 out of 87 teachers (but all of those receiving training)
20	4	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	16,292	156  Evaluation: 38 store-keepers, 32 cooks, 86 teachers	Survey: SK: 11 Male: 7 Female: 11  Cook: 2 Male: 0 Female: 2  Teachers: 19 Male: 4 Female: 14

21	4	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	13,034	Monitoring: 86 Evaluation: 87.9% (75% F, 92.8% M)	Survey: Overall: 31 Male: 14 Female: 17  Teachers: 19 Male: 7 Female: 12  Cook: 1 Male: 0 Female: 1  SK: 11 Male: 7 Female: 4
22	3	Number of schools using an improved water source	740	20	Monitoring: Handwashing stations: 815  Improved water connection: 206 schools  Evaluation: Schools with wells and water stations/systems have been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/support; 3  Schools with toilets have been rehabilitated / constructed with WFP/support: 2 (with 7 toilets)
23	3	Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	740	53	Monitoring:

					<p>WASH support was reported to be extended to 901 schools in monitoring data.</p> <p>Evaluation:  Overall: 9 (out of 24)  Project: 8 (out of 19)  Control: 1 (out of 5)  <i>*Only considering if there was functioning toilets for both girls and boys</i></p>
25	6	<p>Number of child health and nutrition policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stage 1: Analyzed</li> <li>- Stage 2: Drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation</li> <li>- Stage 3: Presented for legislation/decreed</li> <li>- Stage 4: Passed/Approved</li> <li>- Stage 5: Passed for which implementation has begun</li> </ul>	5	0	<p>By 2021, WFP contributed to the Draft National Nutrition Strategy Plan of Action (2021 - 2025).</p>
26	5	<p>Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text</p>	12	<p>Baseline Evaluation:  <b>Project: 6.9%</b> (Female 4.8, Male 8.7)  <b>Comparison: 12.4%</b> (Female 14.1, Male 10.7)</p> <p>Similar methodology as Endline</p> <p>Evaluation:  <b>Project: 35.9%</b> (Female 26.6%, Male 44.4%)  <b>Comparison: 45.8%</b></p>	<p><b>Endline Evaluation:</b>  <b>Project</b>  Overall: 83.3%  Boys: 66.7%  Girls: 100%</p> <p><b>Comparison</b>  Overall: 77.8%  Boys: 50%  Girls: 91.7%</p>

				(Female 34.1, Male 55.6)	
27	1 & 5	Number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA-funded interventions	201,238	138,790 (49% Female)	2018: 131,954 (48% female) <b>2019: 137,111 (48% female)</b> 2020: 103,884 (48% female) 2021: 83,788 (49% female) + 794 VEDC Members (March 2021) 50 PESS (March 2021) 3477 others (March 2022)  Total estimated from semi-annual monitoring reports: <b>141,432.</b>
28	2, 3, 4, 5	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	280,332	433,827	<i>The indirect beneficiaries of WFP's interventions are family members of students who directly benefitted from the take-home rations, school lunches and other assistance during this period. This number is estimated using the national average size of households (5.5 people / household). Based on indicator 17 on social assistance beneficiaries (135,420), the total estimate is 744,810</i>

**Additional indicators measured at baseline FY17**

Activities Indicators			Target	Baseline	Endline
Standard Indicator Number	Activity Number	Performance Indicator			

A	MGD 1.1.1	Average teacher attendance rate	N/A	Evaluation: Project: 96.9% (Female 94.6, Male 94.9) Control: 97.5% (Female 100, Male 94)	Evaluation: Project: 95.9% (Female 96.4%, Male 94.1%) Control: 93.6% (Female 97.7%, Male 90.9%)
B		Percent of schools with at least one teacher trained	N/A	Evaluation: 100%	Evaluation: 89.5%
C	MGD 1.2	Percent of students in classrooms identified as inattentive by their teachers	N/A	Evaluation: Project: 19.8% <sup>172</sup> (22.9% F, 16.9% M)  Comparison: 17.1% (21.2% F, 13.5% M)	Evaluation: Project: 18.4% (10.6% F, 26.2% M) Control: 22.2% (17.1% F, 26.5% M)
D		Student attendance on day of survey	N/A	Evaluation: Project: 91% (92.8% F, 90% M) Control: 80% (82.4% F, 77.7% M)	<b>"This was not conducted at endline."</b>
E	MGD 1.3.4	Annual percent change in students enrolled in WFP supported school	N/A	Evaluation: Project: 1% (-1% F, 3% M) Comparison: 14% (13% F, 15% M)	Evaluation: Project: 1.0% (2.6% F, 1.2% M) Comparison: 3.9% (3.6% F, 4.4% M)
F		Average enrolment ratio of girls to boys at target schools	N/A	Project: .95 Control: 1.04	Project: .959 Control: .744
G		Average dropout rate	N/A	Project: .02% Control: .02% Same for male and female	Project: 0.5% (0.2% F, 0.7% M) Control: 0% (same for male and female)

<sup>172</sup> The baseline values presented in this table for inattentiveness differ from those in the baseline report. This is because, in reviewing the analysis notes from the baseline, it was determined that the method was not precise and therefore the ET recalculated the indicator at both points in time (baseline and endline) to ensure comparability and accuracy.

H		<b>Repetition rate</b>	N/A	Project: 8% (5% F, 11% M) Control: 5.5% (6% F, 5% M)	Project: 0% (0% F, 0% M) Control: 1.3% (0% F, 2.8% M)
I	MGD 1.3.5	<b>Percent of parents in program schools who can name at least three benefits of primary education</b>	N/A	Project: 96% (95.5% F, 96.2% M) Comparison: 98.1% (100% F, 96.7% M)	Project: 67.5% (68.6% F, 66.2% M) Comparison: 65.9% (64.3% F, 69.25 M)
J	MGD SO2	<b>Average dietary diversity score (DDS) of school-aged children</b>	N/A	Project: 6.1 (6 F, 6.2 M) Comparison: 4.7 (4.7 F, 4.6M)	Project: 7.7 (7.7 F, 7.7 M) Comparison: 7.5 (7.2 F, 7.6 M)
Project-specific	2	<b>Number of school garden able to contribute with food for lunch at least 2 times harvest to school lunch in a month</b>	N/A	Semester 1 – 64% (37 of 58 schools) Semester 2 – 36% (21 of 58 schools)	Semester 1: 1% (1 out of 19 schools, or out of 12 with a garden) Semester 2: 50% (6 out of 19, or out of 12 with a garden)
Project-specific	5	<b>Percentages of schools with access to water for school gardens, cooking and wash purposes</b>	N/A	Evaluation: Garden – 66% Cooking – 76% Washing – 67%	Options <b>not</b> indicating that <u>always</u> a 'barrier or a challenge to get water' Garden: 83.3% Cooking: 78.9% Washing: 68.4%
Project-specific	6	<b>Number of Community Volunteers supporting SFP.</b>	N/A	93% (54 of 58 schools)	95% (18 of 19 schools)
Project-specific	7	<b>Number of schools have well-functioning and clean dining facility</b>	N/A	55% (32 of 58 schools)	95% (18 of 19 schools)
Project-specific	14	<b>Number of exchange visits between communities (peer to peer)</b>	N/A	3	N/A
Project-specific	19	<b>Number of schools providing school lunch every day for the past 2 weeks</b>	N/A	48% (28 of 58 schools)	68% (13 of 19 schools)

## Annex 18. Acronyms

<b>BCM</b>	Beneficiary Contact Monitoring
<b>BEQUAL</b>	Basic Education Quality and Access in Laos
<b>CA</b>	Contribution Analysis
<b>CCA</b>	Community Capacity Assessment
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>CP</b>	Cooperating Partners
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>DAFO</b>	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
<b>DE</b>	Decentralized Evaluation
<b>DEQAS</b>	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
<b>DEQS</b>	Quality Support Service
<b>DESB</b>	District Education and Sports Bureau
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
<b>DHO</b>	District Health Office
<b>DLFD</b>	District Lao Front for Development
<b>EC</b>	Evaluation Committee
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>EM</b>	Evaluation Manager
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ERG</b>	Evaluation Reference Group
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
<b>GoL</b>	Government of Laos
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>HO</b>	Hand-Over
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>IR</b>	Inception Report
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre
<b>JAWFP</b>	Japan Association for World Food Program
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KOBO</b>	Data collection and management platform
<b>LAK</b>	Lao Kip
<b>Lao PDR</b>	Lao People's Democratic Republic
<b>LWU</b>	Lao Women's Union
<b>LDC</b>	Least Developed Country
<b>LTA</b>	Long Term Agreement
<b>MAF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>MDD-W</b>	Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women
<b>MGD</b>	McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program
<b>MGD17</b>	Millennium Development Goal 17
<b>MGDSO</b>	McGovern-Dole Strategic Objective
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Sports

<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MTR</b>	Mid-term Review
<b>mVAM</b>	mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NNSPA</b>	National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan
<b>NSEDP</b>	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
<b>NSMP</b>	National School Meal Program
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OEV</b>	Office of Evaluation
<b>PAFO</b>	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
<b>PDR</b>	People's Democratic Republic
<b>PEES</b>	Provincial Education and Sports Service
<b>PHO</b>	Provincial Health Office
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QC</b>	Quality Control
<b>QS</b>	Quality Support
<b>RBB</b>	Regional Bureau Bangkok
<b>REO</b>	Regional Evaluation Officer
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEA-PLM</b>	Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics
<b>SF</b>	School Feeding
<b>SFP</b>	School Feeding Program
<b>SMP</b>	School Meal Program
<b>SNV</b>	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Netherlands Development Organization)
<b>SO</b>	Strategic Objectives
<b>STATA</b>	Statistical Analysis Software
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UN-HABITAT</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Program
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>VEDC</b>	Village Education Development Committee
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Program
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

**WFP LAO PDR**

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