



WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

December 2024

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



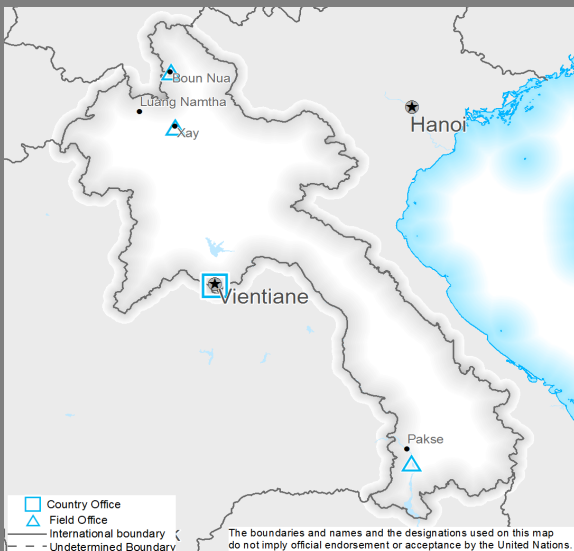
American Ambassador Heather Variava helps serving lunch to students in Hatkor School in Luang Prabang province.
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Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, with one of the lowest population densities in Asia. Eighteen percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (US\$1.25/day), with a GDP per capita of US\$2,088.40 (World Bank 2022). The country is ranked 116 out of 166 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2022. While the poverty rate in Lao PDR more than halved in the past two decades, the 2022 Global Hunger Index rates hunger levels as “moderate”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing the rural population, and the country is vulnerable due to its low adaptability and high dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. Changing climate patterns, combined with poor access to both markets and diverse livelihoods, further worsen the situation in remote upland areas, where over 20 percent of households are food insecure.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1975.



Population: **7.5 million**

2022 Human Development Index: **139 out of 193 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

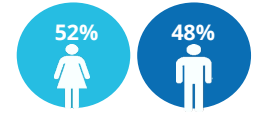
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

191 mt of food dispatched, **US\$248,660** cash distributed

US\$36,557 six-month (January 2025– June 2025) net funding requirements

87,817 people assisted in December



Operational Updates

- Under a new initiative supported by the Government of Switzerland to improve water access and cooking facilities in schools, WFP conducted assessments and verifications for water system and kitchen construction or renovation in 40 target schools across Phongsaly and Oudomxay provinces. This was carried out in collaboration with district officials from the Education and Sports Bureau and Nam Saat, the national organization responsible for rural water supply under the Ministry of Health.
- With funding from the Government of Germany to support home-grown school meals programme:
 - WFP completed the baseline report, which sets a benchmark to measure the project's performance over time in Salavan, Sekong and Attapeu provinces.
 - The Government of Lao PDR endorsed the agreement to support the programme. The programme will provide LAK 20,000 (US\$0.90) per cook per day as incentives to school cooks and increase the current government cash support from LAK 1,000 (US\$0.05) to LAK 3,000 (US\$0.14) per child per meal per day.
- WFP organized quarterly reflection meetings with Village Education Development Committees in Luang Prabang province to review the school meals programme. In addition, storage management training was provided to ensure storekeepers understand the correct procedures for storage maintenance and the distribution of commodities to schools.
- WFP and Catholic Relief Services accompanied government officials from the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Health to the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Japan to explore methods for enhancing child nutrition programmes in Lao PDR.
- The Ambassador of the United States of America to Lao PDR visited Hatkor School in Luang Prabang province to learn about the implementation of the school meals programme, understand the challenges faced by schools, with the aim to advocate for continued support for the programme.
- WFP started village orientation and planning sessions in 168 communities across 15 districts in Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Xieng Khouang, Salavan, Xekong, and Attapeu provinces, as part of the Agriculture for Nutrition Phase II project. These

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Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
100.72 m	111.44 m	0.037 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

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

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

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

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

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

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

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

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

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

Donors

Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australia, European Union, France, Germany, Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, Ireland, Japan, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Russia, United States of America, Switzerland and private donors

Operational Updates *(continued)*

sessions aimed to introduce the project's goals, activities, and benefits, while helping communities develop village development plans that address their nutrition and food security needs. WFP also organized community meetings with diverse groups, including women, youth, and marginalized people, using tools like video storytelling to raise awareness about malnutrition.

- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, distributed US\$248,660 in cash to 3,124 households in Oudomxay and Phongsaly provinces. The cash assistance was made in exchange for labour to help build or renovate 40 community projects (such as water infrastructure and roads) aimed at improving community resilience and reducing disaster risks.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, conducted a beneficiary data validation exercise in 19 flood-affected communities in Luang Namtha province. The goal was to use the government's social registry to better target vulnerable households, helping them meet their food, nutrition, and other basic needs during emergencies.

Story from the field



Lotax receives a grant to invest in his farm. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Lotax Vongvilay, a 25-year-old smallholder farmer from Paklay village in Xayabuly province, like many of his neighbours, received a grant of LAK 6.6 million (US\$300).

For years, farming in Paklay was held back by outdated agricultural practices and limited resources.

"The support from the farm-input grant has helped me turn my land into a more productive and sustainable farm," Lotax says with a smile. "This is just the beginning of a stronger future for my family."

Lotax and his family can use this money to buy seeds, fertilizers and other essential tools. Before receiving the grant, the farmers participated in training on nutrition, social and behaviour change, and developed their own investment plans. They also learned to grow home gardens and raise small livestock, all to help them make better decisions and to increase their income for the future.

This initiative is part of the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project, funded by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program and the Asian Development Bank.