

# LAOS

## OPERATIONS, FACTS AND FIGURES



### OVERVIEW

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) is one of the least developed countries in the world. Despite overall economic growth, the rural economy is based almost entirely on subsistence agriculture. Drought is recurrent in the north and east. Flash floods regularly occur in the rainy season. Large parts of the east and south are still contaminated by unexploded ordnance from the Second Indochina War.

WFP began providing emergency assistance to the Lao PDR in 1976 in response to natural disasters. Since opening a Country Office in 2000, WFP has increasingly focused on recovery and development programmes aimed at relieving seasonal rice shortfalls. WFP's goals are to help communities achieve food security, and to improve access to primary education in remote areas.

In 2008, WFP operated in 87 districts in all 17 provinces and in almost 1,900 villages across the country. WFP distributed 11,319 tons of food to almost 480 thousand food insecure men, women and children. The School Feeding programme supported about 90,000 children in 1,100 schools – about 90 percent of total students in WFP-assisted provinces.

The high chronic malnutrition rate of children below 5 is alarming and poses a challenge to WFP for the years to come: in rural Laos every second child is chronically malnourished.

### PROGRAMMES

#### **Development Project 10078.1: "Primary Education for Girls and Boys in Remote Areas"**

*June 2005 – May 2010*

This project, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education, aims to increase school enrolment and attendance rates and improve students' concentration by providing nutritious mid-morning snacks and take-home rations for girls, boys and informal boarders. A joint Access to Basic Education Programme in Laos (ABEL) is being implemented with UNICEF since 2006.

#### **Development Project 10306.0: "Assistance to Food-Insecure Households in Transition"**

*August 2004 – July 2009*

This project, implemented in collaboration with NGOs and development agencies provides households with food rations in exchange for building productive assets such as access roads, paddy land and irrigations channels. It focuses on ethnic minority communities in transition from shifting cultivation and opium production to alternative means of living.

WFP COUNTRY OFFICE  
Vientiane

SUB-OFFICES  
Phongsaly, Luangnamtha,  
Oudomxay, Xiengkhuang,  
Khammouane, Saravane,  
Attapeu

FIELD POSTS  
Luangprabang, Huaphanh,  
Savannakhet, Sekong

WFP Presence since 1976

#### WFP OPERATIONS IN 2008

WFP beneficiaries:  
*School Feeding: 291,854*  
*Livelihoods Support: 73,608*  
*PRRO: 181,852*

Total value of WFP operations:  
US\$12.6 million

#### FACTS AND FIGURES\*

Population: 5.9 million  
*Children Under 5: 13%*  
Human Development Index Rank:  
130  
Per Capita GDP (PPP\$): \$500  
Adult Literacy:  
*Men – 83%*  
*Women – 63%*

Children Under 5 Suffering From:  
*Underweight >30%*  
*Stunting 47.7%*  
*Wasting 7%*

In rural areas:  
*Underweight 38%*  
*Stunting 45%*  
*Wasting 7%*

\*Sources: 2005 Population and Housing Census, Lao PDR; Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis, Lao PDR, WFP 2007; 2007/2008 Human Development Index, UNDP; MICS Survey 2006, Unicef Lao PDR.

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World Food  
Programme

### PROGRAMMES, continued

#### **Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 10566.0: "Assistance to Food Insecure Households Affected by Multiple Livelihood Stocks"**

*April 2007 – December 2009*

The PRRO targets households affected by multiple shocks such as opium eradication, relocation to villages closer to roads, and the ban on shifting cultivation, localized natural disasters (floods, drought and pests), unexploded ordnance contamination and HIV/AIDS.

Last Updated: March 2009