

SCHOOL MEAL/FEEDING PROGRAM(S)

School year: 2020–2021

- National School Meals Program (NSMP)
- WFP School Feeding Program (FY17)
- Learning and Engaging All in Primary School (LEAPS II)

Lead Agency: Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)

NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS

- National school feeding policy
- Nutrition
- Food safety
- Health
- Agriculture
- Private sector involvement

Line item in the national budget...

- Yes No No response

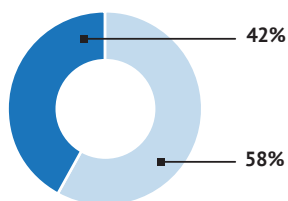
BUDGET

Total: USD 6,755,199

- Government: USD 2,867,458
- International donors*: USD 3,887,741
- Private sector: USD 0
- Other donors: USD 0

Includes funding from the United States Department of Agriculture Yes No No response

*International donations by United Nations agencies or non-governmental organizations often represent funding from multiple donors.



INFRASTRUCTURE

All schools in Laos have kitchens; most have latrines and dedicated eating spaces/cafeterias; some have electricity, piped water, and clean water; and very few have flush toilets. School meals are prepared on-site (on school grounds) in kitchens typically equipped with open and closed cooking areas, on-site water (not piped), storage facilities, electricity, serving utensils, and charcoal or wood stoves.

SPECIAL NOTES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture lists Catholic Relief Services as receiving support from the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program in 2021 for school feeding activities in Laos.

MEALS/SNACKS/MODALITY

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Snacks
- Take-home rations
- Other

- Grains, cereals
- Roots, tubers
- Legumes, pulses, nuts
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Green, leafy vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Fruits
- Oil
- Salt
- Sugar

- Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- Fruit juice
- Tea
- Water
- Other

Prohibited food items: None

FOOD SOURCES

- Purchased (domestic)
- Purchased (foreign)
- In-kind (domestic)
- In-kind (foreign)

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

- Handwashing with soap
- Height measurement
- Weight measurement
- Testing for anemia
- Deworming treatment
- Eye testing/eyeglasses
- Hearing testing/treatment
- Dental cleaning/testing
- Menstrual hygiene
- Drinking water
- Water purification

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Food and nutrition
- Agriculture
- School gardens
- Hygiene
- Health
- Reproductive health
- HIV prevention
- Physical education

The checked items were provided in most or all participating schools.



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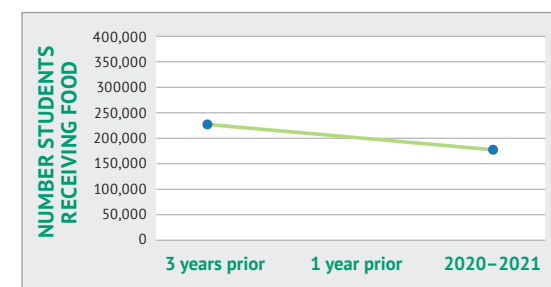
Lao People's Democratic Republic



SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

CHILDREN RECEIVING FOOD, 2020–2021

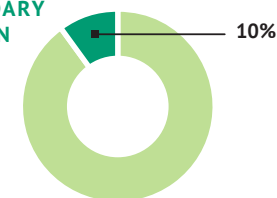
School level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving food
Pre-school	398,253	246,917	26,986
Primary school	718,032	709,288	156,543
Secondary school	895,171	611,089	0
Total	2,011,456	1,567,294	183,529



COVERAGE: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Total number primary and secondary school-age children: 1,613,203

Receiving school food: 156,543



Food was also provided to some students in...

- Pre-schools
- Vocational/trade schools
- Other

NUTRITION

School feeding program(s) included/involved the following:

- Fortified foods**
- Bio-fortified foods
- Micronutrient supplements
- Nutritionists involved
- Special training for cooks/caterers in nutrition**
- Objective to meet nutritional goals**
- Objective to reduce obesity

Food items fortified/biofortified:

Oil

Micronutrients:

Vitamins A and D

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Cooks/caterers receive special training in nutrition, menu planning, portions/measurements, and food safety/hygiene. Produce from school gardens is consumed by students and used for students' learning practices. Obesity is generally not considered a problem in Laos.

STUDIES CONDUCTED

None specified

RESEARCH NEEDED

Research on the impact of school feeding programs on learning indicators, school attendance, access, and nutrition.

CONTACTS: LAOS

Agency: Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)

Website: <http://www.moes.edu.la/>

AGRICULTURE, EMPLOYMENT, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Jobs created by school feeding programs*

2,343	Cooks and food preparers
	Transporters
	Off-site processors
9	Food packagers and handlers
49	Monitoring
42	Food service management
3	Safety and quality inspectors
	Other

**If blank, no response was provided.*

Farmers were involved with the school feeding program(s)...

- Yes No No response

Other private sector (for profit) actors were involved...

- Yes No No response

There was a focus on creating jobs or leadership or income-generating opportunities for...

- Women** **Other groups**
- Youth No response

There was community engagement (by parents or others) in the school feeding program(s)...

- Yes No No response

Were there links between food banks and the school feeding program(s)?

- Yes No There are no food banks in this country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students' families contribute to the program through in-kind contributions (e.g., condiments, firewood, salt/sugar). WFP supports the establishment of farmer groups (5-10 groups/village in model school areas) to grow vegetables, sell to community markets, and share some with the school feeding program. Civil society is involved through local non-profit associations (NPAs), such as Education for Development Foundation (EDF) and Big Brother Mouse (BBM), which has partnered with WFP to implement various activities (e.g. school agriculture, reading promotion) in WFP's target areas. The private sector is also engaged in transport.

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Recent successes related to school feeding in Laos include the growth of the NSMP as schools transitioned from donor-funded projects to the national system under MoES; the dedicated budget line and allocated budget to school feeding; the Prime Minister's Decree on Promoting School Lunch (which establishes a daily amount of funding per student); the focus on nutrition standards for school meals; and increased collaboration amongst the relevant sectors. Challenges include a decrease in the overall MoES budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prompted some discussion of reducing school meals funding; regular turnover of government personnel, which impacts institutional knowledge and overall management of school meals from the national to school level; a lack of dietary diversity for a nutritionally well-balanced meal; and a lack of MoES funding to hire dedicated school meals staff. Some concerns related to corruption/mismanagement include the possibility of misuse of cash at the school level and incorrect reporting of use and spending.

EMERGENCIES/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In Laos, schools were open throughout the September 2020 to April 2021 school year. There was a decrease in the frequency of school feeding and a change in feeding modality (e.g., switching from in-school meals to take-home rations) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government issued various preventative measures to reduce the spread of the virus, which included school closures in the early months of the pandemic, and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) worked closely with WFP and target communities to implement take-home rations. For the Learning and Engaging All in Primary School (LEAPS) II program, it would have been helpful to provide additional hygiene materials (for school cooks); to work with other development partners and the MoES to develop guidance for school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic; and to consider alternative ways to sustain the provision of daily lunches when schools were closed. To better support getting food to children during a pandemic, the government could provide quick, clear guidance on the continuation of school meal programs during school closures. In addition to the pandemic, Laos was affected by natural disasters (droughts and flooding) in the 2020–2021 school year.

NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM (NSMP)

Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)

OBJECTIVES:

- To meet educational goals
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To meet agricultural goals

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

- 5 times per week during the school year

TARGETING:

Geographic (with districts prioritized based on need, levels of malnutrition, levels of education, and gender imbalance in educational attainment, among other criteria)

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	13,246	49%	51%
Primary school	55,908	48%	52%
Secondary school	0	–	–
Total	69,154	48%	52%

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:

Grains, cereals	Poultry	Oil
Roots, tubers	Fish	Salt
Legumes, pulses, nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	Sugar
Eggs	Other vegetables	Water
Meat	Fruits	

* fortified

FOOD SOURCES:

0% Purchased (domestic)	100% In-kind (domestic)
0% Purchased (foreign)	0% In-kind (foreign)

If blank, no response was provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The National School Meals Program began operating in 2010 after WFP formally handed over the program to the national government. The program reached 821 public schools in the 2020–2021 school year, and for the upcoming school year, there are plans to serve 189,179 students.

WFP SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM (FY17)



Lead implementer(s): World Food Programme (WFP)

OBJECTIVES:

- To meet educational goals
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To meet agricultural goals

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals
- Take-home rations

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

- 5 times per week during the school year

TARGETING:

Geographic (targeted to the MoES' 40 priority districts and to the most disadvantaged schools with low education indicators and high levels of malnutrition)

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	7,005	50%	50%
Primary school	71,095	48%	52%
Secondary school	0	–	–
Total	78,100	48%	52%

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:

Grains, cereals	Poultry	Oil*
Roots, tubers	Fish	Salt
Legumes, pulses, nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	Sugar
Eggs	Other vegetables	Water
Meat	Fruits	

* fortified

FOOD SOURCES:

0% Purchased (domestic)	20% In-kind (domestic)
0% Purchased (foreign)	80% In-kind (foreign)

If blank, no response was provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The WFP School Feeding Program began operating in 2017 and reached 915 public schools in the 2020–2021 school year. WFP earlier handed over 515 schools to the national government and communities to manage themselves, and then an additional 915 schools were also handed over in mid-2021. The program includes improved water systems (e.g. boreholes and gravity-fed water), with water tanks installed in schools.

LEARNING AND ENGAGING ALL IN PRIMARY SCHOOL (LEAPS) II

Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)

OBJECTIVES:

- To meet educational goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:

- 5 times per week during the school year

TARGETING:

Geographic (All schools chosen based on their location in a “disadvantaged district” by the MoES)

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	6,735	50%	50%
Primary school	29,540	49%	51%
Secondary school	0	–	–
Total	36,275	49%	51%

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:

Grains, cereals	Poultry	Oil*
Roots, tubers	Fish	Salt
Legumes, pulses, nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	Water
Eggs	Other vegetables	
Meat	Fruits	

* fortified

FOOD SOURCES:

0% Purchased (domestic) **10% In-kind (domestic)**
 0% Purchased (foreign) **90% In-kind (foreign)**

If blank, no response was provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Learning and Engaging All in Primary School (LEAPS) II program began in 2016 and reached 349 public schools in the 2020–2021 school year. Take-home rations were not distributed to children, but were used as payment for school cooks, storekeepers, and teachers (approximately 2,734 rations were distributed to these individuals who work in support of the program). Efforts to limit food waste include fumigation/pest control within sealed food storage areas, use of nearly-expired food, and processes for using usable but “imperfect” commodities or produce. To limit packaging waste, bags/containers are re-used and compostable materials are used.

