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WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME  
LAO PDR

**EVIDENCE  
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# Farmer Nutrition School Household Impact Survey

March 2020

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## PREAMBLE

Despite significant progress in overall poverty reduction, Lao PDR remains one of the countries with the highest under-nutrition rates in the world, particularly for children. Under the Agriculture for Nutrition (AFN) project, WFP addresses this issue through the establishment of Farmer Nutrition Schools (FNS) at village level, targeting pregnant and nursing women and mothers whose children are under 2 years of age. FNS are semi-structured get-togethers, focusing on basic information and interactive discussions about nutrition. FNS encourage social behaviour change and communication in women and communities through practical learning sessions about household nutrition, diet diversity, basic hygiene, food preservation and processing techniques, raising fish, keeping small livestock and menu planning with nutritious foods including food grown in household gardens. After the FNS beneficiaries complete the learning sessions, they are eligible for a garden grant which they can invest in gardens and basic farming inputs and small livestock, such as chicken, ducks or fish.

To measure the impact of the FNS, WFP launched a household survey of 1,200 beneficiaries in 2020 with the aim of measuring change in knowledge and behaviour of the FNS households, and to recommend revisions in the current implementation of FNS.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

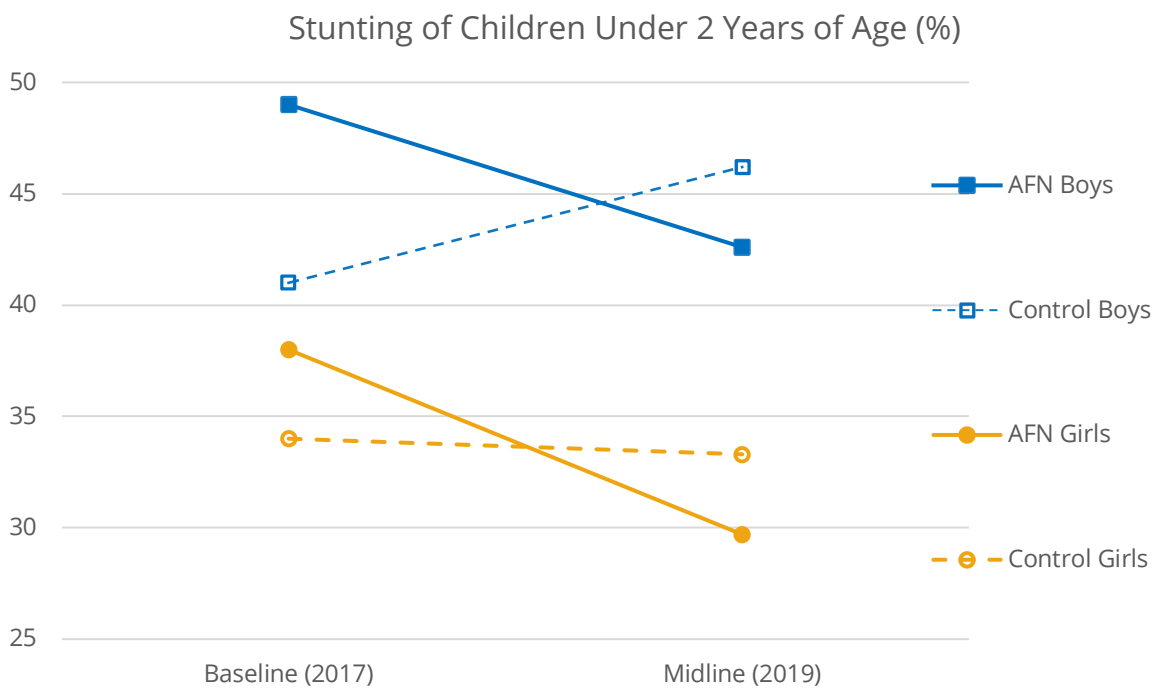
- 76% of the women who participated in FNS sessions perceived that their nutrition status improved
- 96% of the women who participated in the FNS program and received a garden grant stated that their nutritional knowledge improved, while 85% stated that their farming knowledge improved
- 90% of garden grant recipients reported that their own nutrition status improved, and 95% reported their child's nutrition status improved
- The majority of households reported that mothers and their children under 2 years of age were eating a minimum of 4 major food groups
- Two-thirds (67%) of pregnant women were eating more meals per day than before pregnancy
- A majority (85%) of pregnant women worked less during their pregnancy
- FNS had more impact on nutrition in less developed areas (such as upland areas and remote areas)

- Returns from fishponds and greenhouses had a greater impact on household incomes compared to other uses of garden grants (e.g. small animal raising and gardening)

## THE AFN MIDLINE SURVEY SAYS...

During the Agriculture for Nutrition midline survey carried out in December 2019, there was a significant decrease in stunting for children under 2 years of age as compared with the baseline from 2017.

Although the data still needs more verification, it currently suggests that the FNS support activities are particularly benefitting the youngest children as the activities specifically target pregnant women and mothers with children under 2 years of age. The World Bank supported Health Governance and Nutrition Development project (HGNDP) also covers health services for the same areas as the AFN villages, thereby promoting the convergence approach in addressing malnutrition.



# Background

## AGRICULTURE FOR NUTRITION

The Agriculture for Nutrition (AFN) project was awarded USD 38.8 million through the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme for the period of 2016-2022. The project goal, aligned with the Government's National Nutrition Strategy 2016 -2025 and Plan of Action, is to “**contribute to reduced extreme poverty and malnutrition in the poorest communities**”. The project's development objective is “**improved and diversified agricultural production and household nutrition enhanced life prospects**”.

The project has three components focusing on enhancing agriculture practices for increased nutrition:

- 1) Strengthened public services covering project coordination as well as nutrition-sensitive agriculture services,
- 2) nutrition-sensitive planning which includes multi-sector district nutrition committees, village development plans and establishment of **Farmer Nutrition Schools** and garden grants, and
- 3) Investments for village agriculture infrastructure, farmer production groups and public-private investments.

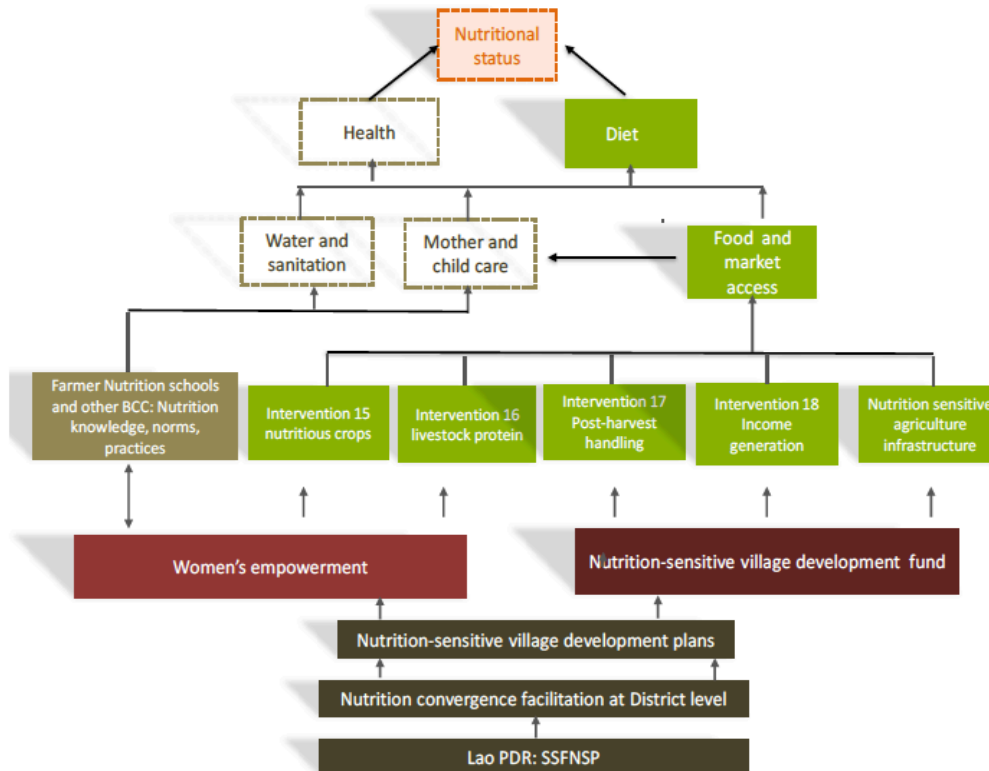
AFN is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, IFAD administers components 1 & 3 with USD 24 million and WFP, with a USD 6 million envelope, supports all planning activities within component 2 (not including the garden grants activity which is administered under component 3). The World Bank financed HGNDP also covers health services in the AFN villages and delivers nutrition/health services, thereby providing convergence at village level from health and agriculture sectors.

The project is implemented in 400 villages of 12 districts in four northern provinces: Oudomxai, Phongsaly, Xiengkhuang and Houaphan.

The AFN project pathways focus on the implementation of the four nutrition-sensitive agricultural activities within the 22 priority interventions under the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action, namely (i) expanding and intensifying the production of nutritionally-rich plant-based foods; (ii) production and promotion of animal-based protein for household consumption; (iii) improved post-harvest handling and food processing to strengthen year-round food security; and (iv) promotion of income-generating activities, with a focus on women. Farmer Nutrition Schools aim to balance household food availability and utilization from agricultural production, wild food collection and purchase throughout the year, thus enabling villages to increase dietary diversity.



## Project pathways to improved household nutrition



## FARMER NUTRITION SCHOOLS

FNS began implementation in 2017. Since then, over 20,000 villagers, of which 18,025 were women, have participated in the project. FNS has now been rolled out in all the 400 AFN targeted villages. Village-level facilitators carry out the learning modalities accompanied by group cooking sessions. These FNS activities generally take place once a month, but in some villages they are organized more frequently, depending on the interest and number of participants. Typically, there are between 20-35 FNS beneficiaries who are also eligible to apply for a garden grant (which also includes small livestock). This grant assists them in addressing their nutritional needs, both through increased household consumption and income generation.

### Elements of Farmer Nutrition School sessions



The village FNS facilitator delivers four sessions to beneficiaries after explaining the initial basic parameters of the FNS setup. The first session, with videos and interactive puzzle games, covers nutrition basics, impact of malnutrition and its effect on the life cycle. The second session focuses on local food availability, food groups and family food gaps. The third session provides agriculture knowledge on how to address inadequate food availability, through food production, storage and income management. During the fourth session beneficiaries are encouraged to put their knowledge to practice and prepare a household activity plan and fill in a grant

application form and plan for technical support. Once the garden grants are approved, FNS beneficiaries implement their own project activities.

## Household survey

### SURVEY DESIGN

During January 2020, the sample of 1,200 beneficiaries was taken in the 12 AFN-targeted districts in the provinces of Houaphan, Oudomxai, Phongsaly and Xiengkhuang. Respondents were from the beneficiary households that had participated in the FNS sessions: pregnant and nursing women and mothers with children under 2 years of age. There was a purposive sampling of the villages and households where FNS had been rolled out for a longer time, i.e. 2017 and 2018, in order to measure impact of the program activities on the 'older set of beneficiaries.' Physical access was an additional factor considered; half the villages surveyed in each district having easier access to main roads and markets while the other half were more remote and/or difficult to access. The locations of the target villages can be seen in Annex 1. Furthermore, data was collected on ethnicity and agro-ecological environment of the villages.

Overall the sampling was evenly distributed throughout the 12 districts.

	Houaphan	Oudomxai	Phongsaly	Xiengkhuang	Total
AFN districts	4	2	4	2	
Villages per district	10	10	10	10	
Households per village	10	10	10	10	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1200</b>

### PARTICIPANTS

Overall, 1,200 women participated in the survey. The number of pregnant and nursing women and mothers with children under 2 years of age covered in this survey is broken down as follows:

Beneficiary Category Breakdown	Total Numbers	Percentage (%)
Mothers with children 6-24 months of age	850	71%
Mothers with children 0-6 months of age	240	20%
Pregnant	110	9%

### FINDINGS

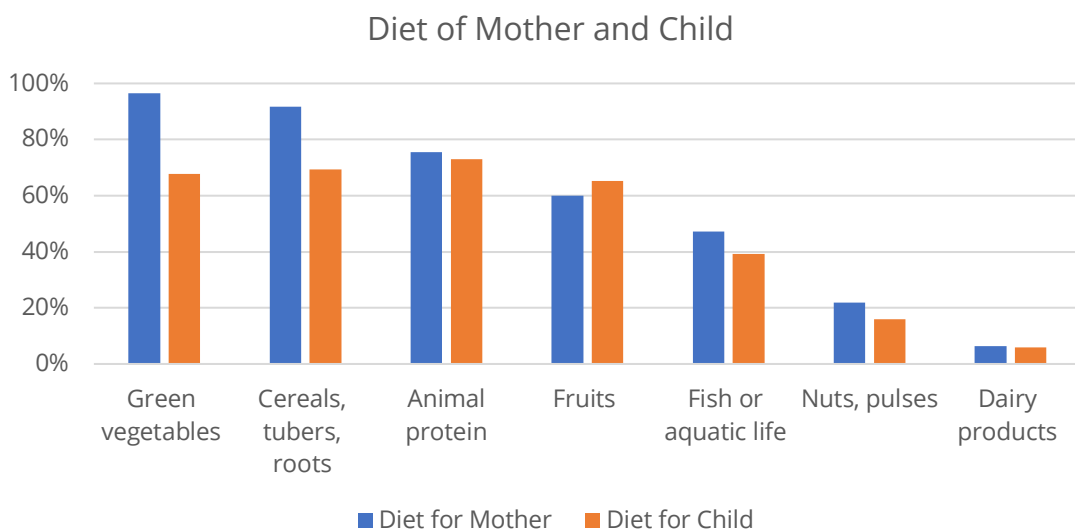
The findings of the household survey will be presented below in four main sections. The first section will focus on self-reported nutrition status and practices around nutrition of the beneficiaries. The second section will look at the usage of garden grants. The third section will focus on the impact of FNS and garden grants on the beneficiaries and include a statistical model that adds additional demographic and geographic dimensions to the survey. The final section will discuss gender and ethnicity as represented in the survey.

# Nutrition status

## FOOD CONSUMPTION OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS OF AGE

A key part of the FNS sessions focus on providing education awareness regarding nutritious feeding and increasing dietary diversity, both for the mothers and for their children under 2 years of age. Overall, most mothers themselves consumed and fed their children from at least 4 of the major food groups. The mothers had a better dietary diversity than the children, with a little over 60% of mothers consuming at least 4 major food groups, whereas only 50% of the children ate from 4 major food groups.

### Dietary diversity of mothers and children



There is, however, a considerable difference between the green vegetable consumption of mothers and of children. Close to 96% of the mothers were consuming green vegetables, whereas 68% of the surveyed children had consumed green vegetables in the 24-hr recall data (a dietary assessment tool where participants are asked to recall all food and drinks they have consumed in the previous 24 hours).

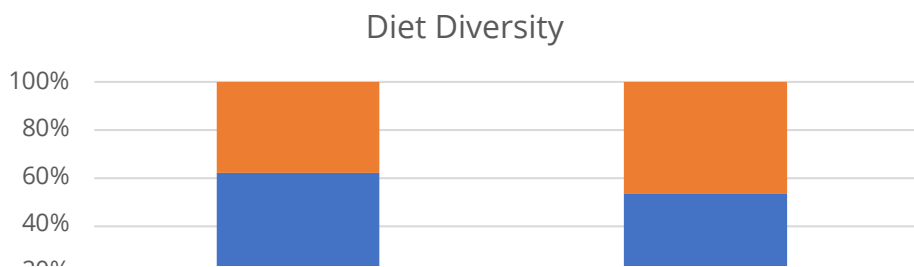
This shows that there is still room for improvement in the green vegetable intake of children under 2 years of age.



Photo: WFP Lao PDR/Jake Herrle

"I didn't understand the connection between food and health. I just did what everybody does here - follow what our grandparents taught us", Chan, from Naphan Village in Xieng Khouang Province says. "But now I have new knowledge, and I understand that changes are needed to protect the future of my family. I am willing to break with tradition." In WFP-supported Farmer Nutrition Schools, women learn about importance of eating from different food groups and how to vary their diets to include all of them in their family's daily meals. "Earlier, when my husband and I went to work in the fields, we would leave our children with my parents and leave some food for them. The health of my first child suffered and she was often sick. I wasn't breastfeeding because I was in the fields all day. Now, with my second child, I know the importance of exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age and how to prevent stunting with healthy food. I decided to stay home so I could feed my baby throughout the day and my husband manages the farm alone. I am also eating more and better foods, and I have more milk for the baby," Chan says with satisfaction.

### Number of food groups consumed per group



预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_3844](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_3844)



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