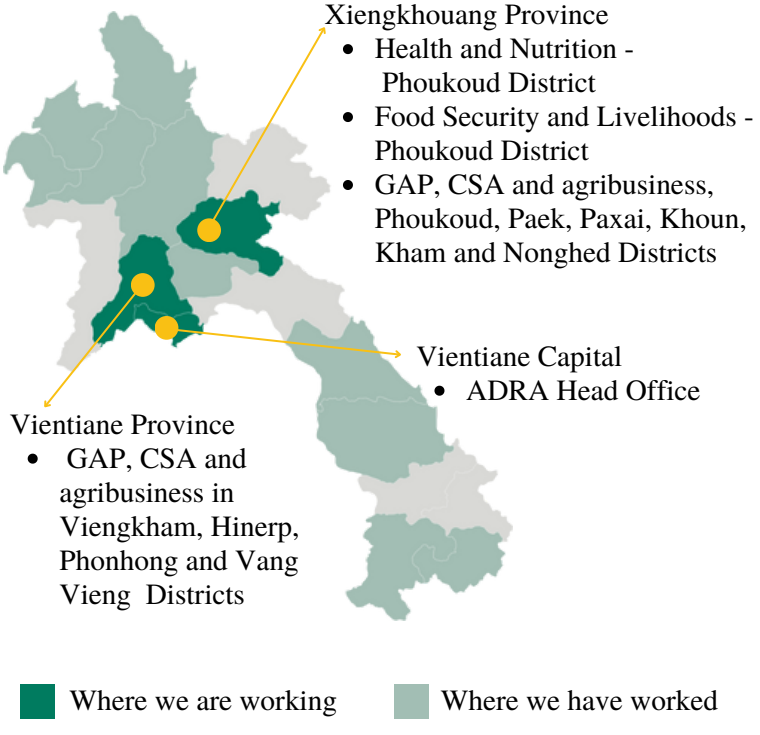
ADRA LAOS 2023-2025 | PROGRAM STRATEGY

Introduction

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a global humanitarian and development organization network with more than 110 country offices. ADRA Laos is an accredited and licensed member of the ADRA Network and is aligned with ADRA's global strategic framework of collective action to transform people's lives. ADRA has core values of justice, compassion and love, and has strategic programs in Laos focusing on health, climate and agriculture, and emergency response which support and enable improved well-being, livelihood opportunities, and resilience in communities.



ADRA Laos applies integrated approaches and understands that human, animal, and environmental health are all interconnected. Throughout our health programming, One Health and Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) approaches are applied. While addressing and mitigating societal challenges and establishing more climate-resilient communities, ADRA applies Nature Based Solutions approaches that aim to prevent, preserve, protect, and restore the environment and ecosystems, and mitigate climate change impacts. Gender and social inclusion principles and capacity development initiatives are threaded through all programming and emphasis is placed on developing and maintaining effective partnerships with government agencies, CSOs, local groups, and donors to ensure the delivery of inclusive, results and evidence-orientated, interventions. As emergencies arise, ADRA responds.

ADRA supports Global Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 13 and 15 and the Government of Lao PDR Ministry, Provincial, District, Village Frameworks, Strategies and Action Plans

Priority Sector: Health

Lao PDR has made steady progress over the past two decades to improve child, adolescent, and mothers' health but mortality remains high, with maternal (185), infant (34) and neo-natal (21) mortality rates per 100,000 live births (2017-2021 World Bank). Malnutrition persists with high rates of stunting, wasting, and underweight due to inadequate care practices, food intake and consumption habits. Diseases such as diarrhea, respiratory and other preventable diseases are high amongst both mother and child with 40% of women of reproductive age having anemia. Age specific fertility rates show high fertility rates amongst adolescents, with almost 1 in 10 adolescents giving birth between the ages 15-19 years. Young mothers and their babies are at highest risk of complications during pregnancy, birth, and early childbearing. At the district level health centers and hospitals are under resourced, have low rates of health service utilization, and conduct limited outreach services. There is a need to improve health services at the frontline health centres and district level so infants, children, adolescents, women and men can access and utilize quality services and information.

Maternal mortality
185 per 100,000 live births

Malnutrition CU5
33% Stunted
21% Underweight
9% Wasted

15-19 years
83 births per 1,000 women

ADRA Laos' One Health and RMNCAH Approach

Lao PDR's health challenges impose a devastating human, social, and economic burden on people predominantly amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Thus, ADRA is applying a holistic One Health (human, animal, environment) approach which incorporates Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) approaches to our health programming in rural and remote areas to address various health challenges.

ADRA Lao's programs include a comprehensive and integrated nutrition program that focuses on nutrition-specific interventions such as rehabilitating malnourished mothers and children under 5 years, outreach home visits, community wide nutrition and disease prevention awareness sessions; and nutrition-sensitive interventions to educate adolescents in reproductive health, improve access to safe

water, sanitation (applying CLTS and gaining open-defecation-free status for communities) and waste management, animal health management, reducing infectious animal-to-human disease transmission, and training and supporting village health and veterinarian volunteers to improve community health for both humans and animals. ADRA Laos also provides prevention and infection control, risk communication, and community mobilization activities for zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19.

Outcomes:

- Improved maternal, adolescent, and child health.
- Reduced vector and water borne diseases affecting human and animal health.
- Improved hygiene and food safety practices.
- Reduced malnutrition amongst mothers and children under 5 years.

Priority Sector: Climate and Agriculture

Laos is an agrarian economy with two thirds of the population being subsistence farmers. Subsistence farmers are vulnerable and exposed to non-climatic stressors which makes them even more prone to climate change effects. As the climate emergency deepens, nature and farmers livelihoods are increasingly vulnerable to greater frequency of weather and climate extremes and changing precipitation patterns which affect food security. In the past five years alone, Laos has experienced an increase in floods, droughts, animal diseases claiming livestock, and rodent/pest outbreaks. It is anticipated that in future Laos will suffer even more profound climate change effects such as water scarcity, more severe droughts, frequent extreme weather patterns, floods, and poor crop yields affecting the most vulnerable farming households.

Laos vulnerable rural and remote farmers primarily rely on weather dependent rain fed agriculture. Thus, unpredictable weather trends are testing farmers traditional seasonal cultivation practices. Climate change is directly impacting farmer's crop yields and livelihoods with the likelihood of increased risks of frequent crop failures of uninsured crops. Loss of tree cover is also affecting local biodiversity and forest food sources which is contributing to CO_2 emissions, which the Global Forest Watch estimates a loss of 318,000 hectares of natural forest is equivalent to 167Mt of CO_2 emissions in 2021. Poor soil management and protection measures have led to poor soil quality, soil erosion, and soil nutrient leaching. Thus, adequate mitigation and adaptation measures are essential to prevent negative effects on the land, forests, water resources, food and agricultural system, and reduce the risks to livelihoods and natural resources.

ADRA Laos' Nature Based Solutions Approach

ADRA Laos has recently adopted the IUCN Nature Based Solutions as our foundational approach as it addresses local societal and community challenges that aim to improve both human and environmental wellbeing, as well as contributing to the global effort on tackling climate challenges and preventing climate effects. It will build on our existing climate and agriculture programming approaches of climate smart agriculture, sustainable agriculture, climate farmer field schools, nutrition sensitive agriculture for safe, clean, and diverse food production, natural resource management, and improving institutional and community level governance,

ADRA Laos will increase its focus on climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation in our agricultural work, and restoration and rehabilitation of forests, overgrazed and agriculture land. ADRA will also explore private sector engagement and partnerships to facilitate NBS offsets as part of its pathway to reduce carbon, in accordance with social and environmental safeguards. ADRA Laos will support local specific natural and cultural context of traditional, local and scientific knowledge, maintain biological and cultural diversity and promote sustainable smart and safe integrated agriculture production. In addition, ADRA will promote and support crop, livestock and aqua diversity integration and management; reduce harmful chemical overuse, promote integrated pest management and natural weed management; improve soil quality and organic matter; increase the number of certified GAP and OA farmers and farmer groups; promote safe and diverse food consumption practices and habits; improve water access and availability; promote and support community Forest Stewardship programs; restore forest coverage, increase biodiversity, and restore overgrazed agricultural land.

Outcomes:

- Improved soil, land, forests, water and biodiversity.
- Increased food security.
- Sustainable agriculture and livelihood opportunities.
- Climate resilient communities.

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