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*A young volunteer helps medical staff practice their anthropometry skills at the recent TOT training by the Center of Nutrition and ANRCB*

## Anthropometry Upgrade

Following the finalization of the new national training package on anthropometry and the completion of training videos for nutritional assessment of infants and young children, anthropometry training upgrading has begun.

The Center of Nutrition is the recognized national lead on anthropometry standards and has now created a cadre of ready master trainers in Vientiane drawn from their own staff and clinical providers from Central Hospitals. It is expected that these trainers will be called on by sub-national health departments and facilities as well as by research teams to ensure measurement is conducted correctly and results in high quality data. On 18-19 July, the ANRCB project supported the CN to train 20 master trainers and provide them with a complete teaching toolkit including presentations, guides, tests, and videos. Training was further provided to relevant faculty and students of University of Health Sciences (UHS) and Lao Tropical and Public Health Institute (LaoTPHI) on 21 July who plan to conduct research involving anthropometry in coming months. In coming months, the ANRCB project will work with UHS faculty to also ensure the standards and techniques are fully included in pre-service education. The videos will be hosted for the public on the ANRCB YouTube channel at: <https://bit.ly/3P6dV4V>.

Anyone seeking anthropometry training can contact Training Unit of the Center of Nutrition to request technical support with the new expanded toolkit.

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# Awardee Profiles

Research teams from LaoTPHI, UHS, and Center of Nutrition were recently awarded \$5000 each, from the United States Agency for International Development, through the ANRCB project, as part of a year-long mentorship program to foster quality nutrition research. Each team designed their own inquiry and are independently implement their projects in close consultation with project-affiliated faculty as part of the goal of increasing the quality and use of nutrition research in Laos. Here are profiles of two successful awardees.

### ***Dr. Kethmany Ratsavong, Lao Tropical and Public Health Institute***

Dr. Kethmany and her team of master's students from LaoTPHI were selected to conduct a cross-sectional study that will document adolescent food preferences, especially whether they are likely to make healthy choices or prefer high sodium or sugar foods. She plans to first validate her questionnaire in person in schools before moving data collection online via social media. Dr. Kethmany chose her innovative research design because she wanted to leverage Lao adolescents' love of social media to better understand their behaviors and health risks. "Social media platforms are resources we already have, and all people are in there. This research will provide good information on how and what foods they eat and identify negative or positive preferences." She hopes her findings will be used to tailor health messaging on these same platforms in the near future, greatly increasing coverage and relevance of nutrition education for adolescents. "Understanding adolescent food preferences will help predict future health outcomes and allow us to inform policy makers so they can develop strategies to prevent or reduce malnutrition, especially the double burden of over and under nutrition which already exists in Laos." Dr. Kethmany is also hoping to pursue additional research on food choice. "In the future I would like to research local nutrient dense foods," with the hope that this knowledge will enable us to help improve diets in rural communities while also preserving Lao's uniquely diverse traditional diet, she explained.



### ***Dr. Souksamone Thongmixay, Vice head of Health Promotion and Nutrition Department, Faculty of Public Health, UHS***

Assuring adequate intake of both micro and macro nutrients in toddlers remains a challenge across the Lao PDR but reliable and detailed data on intake is largely unavailable for children under two. Dr. Souksamone's proposal of a community-based, cross-sectional survey of intake by healthy children aged 12–23 months was selected to help address the data gap. She plans to use a structured interview questionnaire to assess the dietary intake and complementary feeding of these very young children and then calculate estimated nutritional intake via INMUCAL software package. Dr. Souksamone said she is excited to use her small grant to expand her skills and experience. "Nutritional status assessment and using INMUCAL software to estimate the usual nutrient intake are the new things that I can learn, and I plan to transfer my new knowledge to my university students. I also appreciate support to practice my scientific writing skills as they are very important for my job." Speaking about her experience partnering with American universities like Purdue and Indiana, she remarked, "working with foreign mentors will enable us to recognize more scientific and technical ideas. In addition, the mentors also provide technical assistance, language, feedback and recommendation to encourage us to adopt international scientific working standards." As part of the small grant program, each team is completing a series of self-study modules prepared by the ANRCB team. Asked to reflect on her own learning, Dr. Souksamone said "actually all modules that we studied were good and useful, but I liked the Nutrition Research module best because it explains scientific research design extensively." Dr. Souksamone is already thinking about her next projects and has high hopes for her study. "In the future I hope my research can help "design an intervention packet to help child caregivers follow appropriate feeding practices."

## Interested in research design & methods?

The National Institutes of Health (USA) hosts extensive free to the public learning materials for researchers. One resource is the Office of Disease Prevention's long-running **Mind the Gap Webinar** series. Completely free, these mostly one-hour lecture presentations explore research design, measurement, intervention, data analysis, and other methods of interest in prevention science. The lectures are recorded for watching on YouTube plus you can download the PowerPoint slides, references, questions and answers on the HIH website. Some examples of past seminars include:

*When is Stepped Wedge Study a Good Study Design Choice?*

<https://www.prevention.nih.gov/education-training/methods-mind-gap/when-stepped-wedge-study-good-study-design-choice>

*Dissemination and Implementation Research: Challenges and Opportunities*

<https://www.prevention.nih.gov/education-training/methods-mind-gap/design-and-analysis-studies-evaluate-multilevel-interventions-public-health-and-medicine>

*Engaging in Qualitative Research Methods: Opportunities for Prevention and Health Promotion*

<https://www.prevention.nih.gov/education-training/methods-mind-gap/engaging-qualitative-research-methods-opportunities-prevention-and-health-promotion>

<https://www.prevention.nih.gov/education-training/methods-mind-gap>

### APPLIED NUTRITION RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING (ANRCB) PROJECT NUTRITION SEMINAR SERIES

## Understanding Patterns of Dietary Diversity in Nepal

9am-10am on Wednesday, 5 October 2022

Diet diversity is crucial to nutrition outcomes. In this seminar, Dr Gerald Shively of Purdue University (USA) will explain what was learned about household diets in Nepal from three rounds of the Nepal Annual Household Survey of over 11,820 urban and rural households.

The seminar will be in English with Lao interpretation  
There will be an opportunity to ask questions as well.



REGISTER HERE:



<https://forms.office.com/r/LLxZxyAgE5>

Questions? [anrcb@crs.org](mailto:anrcb@crs.org)

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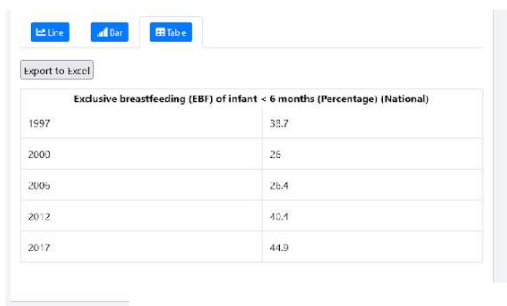
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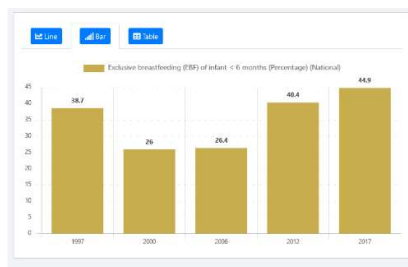
# National Information Platform for Nutrition

Have you seen NIPN? <https://nipn.lsb.gov.la/>

At the NIPN Repository, you can search for the most recent official data on key Lao nutrition indicators across sectors, time, and geography right on the site. You can also generate data tables to export to excel as well as quickly create simple bar charts or line graphs.



Year	Percentage (%)
1997	33.7
2000	26
2005	26.4
2012	40.4
2017	44.9



The NIPN project is much more than just a data repository however. It aims to build institutional capacity to manage and analyze nutrition data from multiple sectors to track progress and nutrition investments in the country.

NIPN brings together the Center of Nutrition with the Lao Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Planning and Investment's Lao Development Research Institute, the Lao Academy of Social and Economic Sciences' Socio Economic and Policy Research Institute and statistics centers from the Ministries of Health, Education and Sport, and Agriculture and Forestry.

# Practitioner News

The Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance (SUN CSA) is a network of INGOs and NPAs that work together to improve nutrition in Laos.

The bilingual SUN CSA Website hosts a nutrition library of reports, policies, and training materials. The video section includes profiles of nutrition projects across the country and straightforward teaching videos in Lao and minority languages. You can see the full library at: <https://suncsalaos.org> or go straight to their YouTube channel to see all the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7ZT8js2X1Z2RtmpAC5HzTw/videos>



Another great way to hear about new project initiatives or hot topics for the Lao nutrition community is SUNCSA's **Hangout Series**! These informal one-hour sessions are held in Lao language on Friday mornings and available to watch later on the SUNCSA website. Recent presentations include:

- Introducing appropriate technology adaptations in rice farming for improved food security
- Development of the first cadre of Lao Breastfeeding Advisors
- Joint Accountability between Health Center and Community in providing healthcare services

📍 **ສອບຖາມຂໍ້ມູນເພີ່ມເຕີມ ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ / For more information please contact:**

ສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ກັບໂຄງການພວກເຮົາໄດ້ທີ່ ສູນໂພຊະນາການ, ຊັ້ນ 2, ບ້ານຊຽງຕາ ເມືອງໄຊເສດຖາ ນະຄອນຫລວງວຽງຈັນ  
ພາກສ່ວນທີ່ກ່ຽວຂ້ອງກັບວຽກງານໂພຊະນາການ ແມ່ນສາມາດນໍາໃຊ້ສະຖານທີ່ອົບຮົມ LANI ໄດ້. ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ທີ່ [ANRCB@crs.org](mailto:ANRCB@crs.org)

Location: Center of Nutrition, 2nd floor, Xiengda Village, Saysettha District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.  
The LANI training space is available for use by nutrition stakeholders. Please contact [ANRCB@crs.org](mailto:ANRCB@crs.org).