

INSIDE

Anthropometry training
available nationally

Bilingual Seminars
Online

What's a Food
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Lao Research Expands with International Mentorship

From November 14 to 18, 2022, a nine-member team from Purdue and Indiana Universities in the United States of America arrived in Laos to work with the Center of Nutrition, the Lao Tropical and Public Health Institute, and the University of Health Science. The visit was devoted to mentoring the six Small Research Grants teams currently conducting nutrition investigations with the support of the USAID-funded *Applied Nutrition Research Capacity Building* project as well as providing guest lectures and conducting field visits.

The team had the opportunity to meet the Director of Cabinet, Ministry of Health, the Director General of the Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, the Director of Public Health of the University of Health Sciences and the Director of the Lao Tropical and Public Health Institute. The group also met with the USAID Mission in Lao PDR.

The team visited local schools where research is taking place, including Pak Ton High School in Sangthong District, Nong Bon High School and Vientiane High School in Vientiane Capital. Members of research teams, faculty, and master's degree students in public health also had the opportunity to attend lectures on the food environment and methods for food consumption assessment. The visit was a wonderful success, and there was ample opportunity to share many lessons to ensure the project research activities remain on track and project partners continue improving the quality of nutrition research in Lao PDR.

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National Network of Anthropometry Trainers Launched

The Lao Government has committed to bold action to improve the nutritional status of children nationwide. However, efforts are stymied by limited access to quality data to understand and address malnutrition in the country. With the assistance of the USAID-support ANRCB project, the Lao Center of Nutrition is addressing that gap by creating high quality and practical training resources for anthropometry. In September 2022, the Center held Training of Trainers courses for staff from each Lao Provincial Hospital, creating a network of high-quality training providers, easily and locally accessible for subnational research. The training includes taught course materials, a trainer guide, supporting resources, and a series of professionally produced training videos that learners can download to refresh and share skills. In total, 40 staff from 17 provincial hospitals and 6 staff of the Center of Nutrition are now recognized trainers who are able to teach best practices in anthropometric measurement of children. The revised national training package and the creation of a nationwide anthropometry training cadre will help Lao PDR continue to build its own workforce to address malnutrition and contribute to increasing the quality of research on key nutrition issues. Organizations and researchers planning on collecting anthropometric data can contact the Center to request training and support and the Center plans to provide training to civil society and early educators in December 2022.



What is a Food Environment?

Nutrition research often focuses on diets without a broader understanding of what drives how people eat. During her recent visit, Dr Ramya Ambikapathi of Department of Global Development, Cornell University (USA) conducted a guest lecture for Lao faculty on how using a food environment lens can help us better understand the key drivers of nutrition in Laos. Some key takeaways:



- Food systems change as countries develop. Laos is undergoing a 'nutrition transition', as global trade reshapes traditional diets.
- Food environments are driven by urbanization and (changing) gender roles.
- Food environments are important to measure, characterize, and guide nutrition policies - there are social, economic, cultural, and physical aspects to food environments that need to be characterized.
- Try to learn from findings in neighboring countries first and use multidisciplinary perspectives--a health lens can be too limiting to understand our food environment.
- Target both household level and social or community food environments for synergistic change to protect and promote healthy diets.

To learn more, see the lecture slides at:

<http://shorturl.at/jwJZ1>





2nd National Conference of Academic Public Health

On 10 November 2022, the University of Health Science (UHS) Faculty of Public Health hosted its second annual conference with the theme: "Multisectoral Collaboration and Community Engagement to be prepared to respond to disease prevention and to promote Health in Lao PDR". The conference was an opportunity for Lao and International partners to share research on nutrition, health promotion, disease prevention, environmental health and the development of the Lao public health sector.

The one-day conference, held at the Dongphousy campus of UHS, featured 72 presentations and posters. Nutrition was a key theme and research presented on the panel dedicated to nutrition theme was wide ranging:

- Research into Thiamine Deficiency Disorder amongst infants and young children in Luang Prabang led by Dr Taryn J Smith of UC Davis described efforts to develop a case definition for Thiamine Responsive Disorders and the merits of administering thiamine supplements in high-risk contexts.
- Dr Onanong Setthavanxay of UHS presented work about demographic dimensions to chronic kidney disease patients' compliance with dietary guidance, which found women are far more likely to practice appropriate dietary behaviors.
- Dr Nanthaphone Manilath of UHS described an investigation of minimum meal frequency, minimum acceptable diet and appropriate complementary feeding amongst young children in Vientiane Capital that found mother's occupation was correlated to adherence to optimal feeding guidance.
- Dr Meuytim Tan of the Naxaythong Public Health Department presented research that sought to determine the factors associated with weight gain during pregnancy; they found a very high proportion of mothers seeking care in central hospitals have weight gain out of normal range (both high and low).
- Dr Thippasone Phommachan of UHS shared about an investigation into the nutritional status of HIV-positive adults currently taking antiretrovirals that found many patients, especially those older than 50 were overweight.

Abstracts and the full details of all those who participated in the conference can be accessed at: <http://shorturl.at/djCJP>



Open Learning

Many Lao professionals in government, academia, civil society, and the private sector would like an opportunity to continue learning about nutrition and research but lack access. The new nutrition webinar series presented by the Center of Nutrition is helping to increase access to higher-level learning.

Seminars are led by American faculty of Purdue and Indiana Universities on the first Wednesday of each month on Zoom with simultaneous Lao translation. There is an opportunity to pose questions and discuss. Past topics include assessment of anemia, social determinants of nutrition, and the experience of Nepalese household diet surveys.

The next seminar will be on 4 January at 9am when Ms. Susmita Ghosh of Purdue University will present *Understanding the Determinants and Measures of Early Childhood Development*, with a special focus on data in the Lao context. Contact anrcb@crs.org to join!

Seminars are recorded and posted on the ANRCB YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/@anrcblaopdr36>

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

Social Determinants of Nutrition Outcomes

Social determinants including access to food especially nutritious food, health care, safe environment, reliable transportation, and community supports that has a direct impact on a person's well-being and nutrition. In this seminar, Dr. Kate Eddens, Associate Research Scientist, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Indiana University School of Public Health (USA) will explain best practices and challenges in social factors that related to outcomes on nutrition.

DATE: Wednesday, 7 December 2022
TIME: 9am-10:30 am
WHERE: Zoom – link provided on registration

REGISTRATION: <https://forms.office.com/r/mi3sn0udmy>
More information: anrcb@crs.org or +85620 2929 6624

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

Partnering with:



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

Assessment and Impact of Iron Deficiency and Anemia

The accurate assessment of iron deficiency is needed to guide resource allocations yet, most national surveys rely on anemia as a proxy for iron deficiency. In this seminar, Dr. Laura Murray-Kolb of Purdue University (USA) will explain best practices and challenges in the assessment of iron status as well as the functional consequences of the deficiency.

DATE: Wednesday, 2 November 2022
TIME: 9am-10:30 am
WHERE: Zoom – link provided on registration

REGISTRATION: <https://forms.office.com/r/ExkUjYrkn>
More information: anrcb@crs.org or +8562029296624

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

Partnering with:

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.

SUN CSA is currently launching a collaborative research project on **Impacts of Inflation and Food Insecurity in Laos**. A desk review is currently underway and civil society groups will collect data in their target communities in early 2023 in order to document and better understand the realities faced by Lao communities nationwide.

CALL FOR DATA: If you have new research, reports, survey data or any other new data that would be valuable to this upcoming research project, SUNCSA would greatly appreciate if you can share with the Secretariat at info@suncsalaos.org.

Adolescent Research Day

The Lao Tropical and Public Health Institute (LaoTPHI) and UNFPA recently held the seventh Annual Adolescent Research Day with the theme “Promoting Adolescent Health and Development in the post-COVID-19 context”. This event highlighted recent research evidence on adolescent health and development in Lao and the region. Research findings help to adapt existing work and measure the success of health programs in Lao PDR. Research is key to accelerate the implementation of national priorities, ICPD25 and SDGs”, remarked Dr. Bounfeng Phoummalaysith, Minister of Ministry of Health. Dr. Kethmany of LaoTHPI presented preliminary findings from her work on the diets of adolescents in central Laos, conducted with the support of USAID via the ANRCB project.



ສອບຖາມຂໍ້ມູນເພີ່ມເຕີມ ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ / For more information please contact:

ສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ກັບໂຄງການພວກເຮົາໄດ້ທີ່ ສູນໂພຊະນາການ, ຊັ້ນ 2, ບ້ານຊຽງດາ ເມືອງໄຊເສດຖາ ນະຄອນຫລວງວຽງຈັນ
ພາກສ່ວນທີ່ກ່ຽວຂ້ອງກັບວຽກງານໂພຊະນາການ ແມ່ນສາມາດນຳໃຊ້ສະຖານທີ່ອົບຮົມ LANI ໄດ້. ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ທີ່ 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.