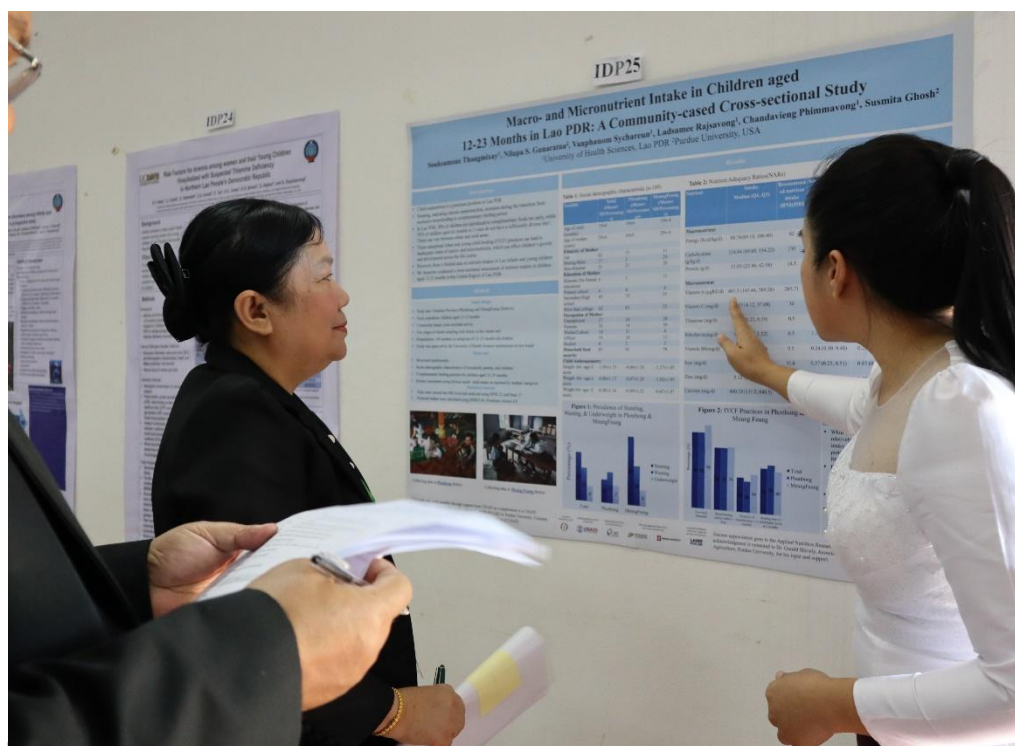


INSIDE

—

Training in scientific research writing

A learning agenda for Growth Monitoring services



Picture of Dr. Souksamone Thongmixay presenting a poster " Macro and Micronutrient Intake and Its Adequacy in Children aged 12-23 months in Lao PDR: A Community Based Cross-sectional Study." to 3rd Lao National Conference on Public Health.

3rd Lao National Conference on Public Health focuses on Nutrition

The Lao Public Health Association successfully held its third national conference on public health with the theme of "Challenges and Achievement of National Nutritional Strategy in Lao PDR" on 9 November 2023, at Souphanouvong University in Luang Prabang. The conference was attended by more than 250 professionals and students of public health; Lao researchers from across the country were joined by researchers from the United States, Thailand, Japan, France and others.

The ANRCB project was proud to sponsor the event and support the conference’s focus on nutrition. Dr. Garald Shively, Associate Dean and Director of International Programs in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University presented on the project’s approach to foster robust national research capacity. Over 34 posters and 32 presentations were featured at the event with panels on adolescent nutrition as well as maternal and child health and needs of vulnerable populations. LINK to abstract book for download: <https://bit.ly/41Dlvep>

ຮ່ວມງານກັບ
Partnering with:



ສະໜັບສະໜູນທຶນໂຄງການໂດຍ
Funded by:



ຈັດຕັ້ງປະຕິບັດໂຄງການໂດຍ
Implemented by:



ໃຫ້ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອທາງດ້ານວິຊາການໂດຍ
Technical Support by:



ຮ່ວມງານກັນເປັນເຄືອຄ້າຍ
Working together
as the consortium:





Workshop empowers Lao researchers to publish globally

In early November, a team of research scientists and professors from Purdue University (PU) and Indiana University (IU) journeyed to Luang Prabang to share their skills for crafting a compelling nutrition research articles and papers. The Lao learners were drawn from the University of Health Sciences: Faculty of Public Health and Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and the Center of Nutrition.

The three-day workshop, held in conjunction with the 2023 Lao Public Health Conference, aimed to build the capacity of these teams, empowering them to refine their skills in crafting impactful research reports. Participants gained valuable insights from the seasoned mentors, and most are subsequently preparing articles for publication in international journals. The workshop also marked the culmination of a nearly two-year-long small research grant and mentorship program for Lao researchers by the ANRCB project. As the participants (most of whom are also professors themselves) bid farewell to this phase of their professional development, the ANRCB project hopes to their original research will soon be shared to international audiences.



Learning Agenda for Counseling in Growth Monitoring and Promotion

Growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) is used as an entry point for preventive care and essential child health, nutrition, and development services around the world. In Lao PDR, the ANRCB project partnered with the CN to standardize guidance on anthropometry and produced a range of training materials to advance the quality of data collected during GMP and nutrition research in the country. While quality anthropometry ensures accurate data about growth, how to act on individual results to improve nutrition is still an area of debate.

USAID's global *Advancing Nutrition* project recently produced a detailed learning agenda for growth promotion activities, helping summarize what we know and identify research questions that remain. To date, research has shown that when growth monitoring is combined with quality counseling and access to key health services, nutritional outcomes improve but data also shows that monitoring alone or combined with only general messages is not effective. What exactly defines quality in counseling, how to best develop counseling skills, and how and where counseling is best conducted all require further research.

Lao PDR has established a standard protocol for GMP that calls for growth measurement to be combined with key screening questions about child feeding. The protocol emphasizes that counseling requires assessment of the child and listening to the caregivers before offering recommendations. The integrated Well Childcare protocol includes growth monitoring as one of the nine key steps, along with immunization and child development screening, of routine preventative care for young children.

See the nine steps for Well Child Care by MOH Lao PDR: here: <https://bit.ly/3RYCVio>.

The full GMP learning agenda and other supporting documents are available at: <http://bit.ly/anrcb>

Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Evidence-Based Nutrition Policy and Programming in Lao PDR

In a significant stride towards bolstering evidence-based nutrition policy and programming, the National Information Platforms for Nutrition (NIPN) initiative has been actively enhancing coordination and capacity-building among Lao national and sub-national government staff and departments since 2020. This initiative, driven by the collaboration of the Socio-Economic Policy Research Institute (SPRI) at the Lao Academy of Social and Economic Sciences (LASES) and the Development Research Institute (DRI) at the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), in a series of four pivotal trainings yearly, focusing on data and policy analysis.



The last training of 2023 was led by SPRI at the Grand River Hotel in Vang Vieng, Vientiane Province, from 21st to 23rd November 2023. This three-day event, part of the "How to Conduct Policy Analysis" series, delved into establishing evaluation criteria for policy alternatives, addressing key measures such as cost, effectiveness, and equity. The session also explored the genesis of policy alternatives and strategies for identification.

The DRI led the fourth training of 2023 training dedicated to statistical analysis at the Education Training Center, also in Vang Vieng, from November 28th to December 1st, 2023. This training honed in on descriptive and inferential statistical tests, catering to both parametric and non-parametric data. These national-level trainings saw active participation from technical staff across various ministries, including Health, Education and Sports, Agriculture and Forestry, as well as the Lao Statistics Bureau and departments within LASES and MPI.

Expanding its reach, the initiative also targeted sub-national levels with introductory workshops. The DRI organized a session in Kaysone Phomvihane, Savannakhet Province, from December 12th to 14th, 2023, introducing basic statistics and the use of STATA software to provincial officers from Savannakhet and Khamouane Provinces. Concurrently, the SPRI hosted a workshop in Muang Xai, Oudomxai Province, focusing on the fundamentals of policy analysis for officers from Oudomxai and Phongsaly Provinces. These sub-national trainings, emphasizing practical skills and foundational knowledge, engaged technical staff from various provincial departments, reflecting a comprehensive approach to capacity building.



In addition to these trainings, a series of dissemination workshops took place in Saravanne, Houaphanh, and Savannakhet Provinces. These workshops aimed to share recent research findings with a broader audience, including policymakers, academia, and other nutrition stakeholders. They served as platforms to highlight nutrition deprivations facing children in Laos, propose policy solutions, and underscore NIPN as a reliable source for nutrition data.

Through these collaborative efforts, the NIPN initiative is paving the way for more informed, data-driven decisions in nutrition policy and programming, thereby contributing significantly to the health and well-being of communities across Laos.

Lao Resource Spotlight



Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia (COMMIT)

Lao People's Democratic Republic

COMMIT Synthesis report

COMMIT 1 Comprehensive nutrient gap assessment
COMMIT 2 Consumer survey
COMMIT 3 Legal and policy review
COMMIT 4 Business profile review
COMMIT Synthesis report

COMMIT
Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia



Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia (COMMIT)

A comprehensive nutrient gap assessment in the Lao People's Democratic Republic:

Estimating micronutrient gaps during the complementary feeding period

Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia (COMMIT)

A review of policies and regulations related to commercially produced complementary foods in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

COMMIT ACTIVITY 3

COMMIT 1 Comprehensive nutrient gap assessment
COMMIT 2 Consumer survey
COMMIT 3 Legal and policy review
COMMIT 4 Business profile review
COMMIT Synthesis report

COMMIT
Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia

New series helps better understand the first foods of young Lao children

Parents and caregivers worldwide strive to provide their children with nutritious and safe first foods. However, the decision-making process on how and what to feed when can be challenging especially for those in urban settings. Southeast Asia is currently experiencing a nutrition transition, with factors such as convenience, time, and aspiration increasingly influencing food choices. The food environment is gradually shifting from traditional diets to processed foods, which are typically higher in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.

Commercially produced, packaged foods, marketed as suitable for older infants and young children (also known as commercially produced complementary foods or CPCF), are less popular in Lao PDR compared to much of the region. However, their use is rapidly increasing. Some CPCFs have the potential to be optimized to better meet the needs of young children and their busy families. However, many CPCFs currently exceed the recommended levels of sugar, salt, or fat. They may also be labeled in ways that could mislead consumers into believing they are beneficial for their children. Sales of these packaged and processed foods have increased by 45 per cent over the past five years in the region.

The Consortium for Improving Complementary Foods in Southeast Asia, known as COMMIT, was established to gain a better understanding of the use, quality, and regulation of commercially produced complementary foods in Southeast Asia. For Lao PDR, COMMIT conducted a comprehensive nutrient gap assessment in the diets of children aged 6 to 23 months. They also assessed current national regulations on the labeling and composition of these products and analyzed CPCFs currently on the market. These reports, along with those for neighboring countries, are now published. have been published and are available via [UNICEF](#).

The findings are also shared in the [December 2023 special issue](#) of the Journal of Maternal and Child Nutrition titled "First foods in a packaged world: Results from the COMMIT consortium to protect young child diets in Southeast Asia".

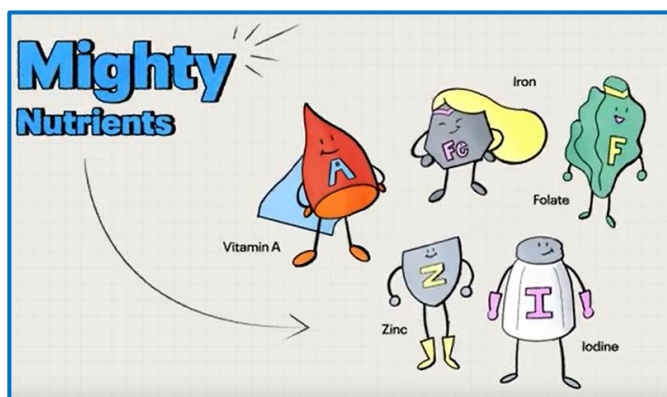
Public Health Conference comes to Luang Prabang in 2024

The 15th conference on public health for the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) will be held in Luang Prabang, Laos on 27-29 June 2024 (tentative), hosted by the Public Health faculty of the Lao University of Health Sciences (UHS). The conference theme and a call for abstracts and presentations will be announced in early 2024.

Micronutrient & Food Fortification online glossary

The Lao Center of Nutrition's new Lao-English Nutrition Glossary provides clear explanations of key terms in both languages (see Newsletter #7 for details). Another resource to understand the sometimes confusing words in this sector is available at it is focused particularly on technical terms related to micronutrients and food fortification and provides clear explanations that reflect global consensus on the terms: <https://dinalexicon.micronutrientforum.org/>

Data needed to fight Hidden Hunger



The Mighty Nutrients Coalition is an evidence-based campaign advocating for the power of vitamins and minerals — mighty nutrients — to improve health and unlock human potential. The campaign recently produced this short video to explain the importance of micronutrients and help explain why more research is urgently needed:

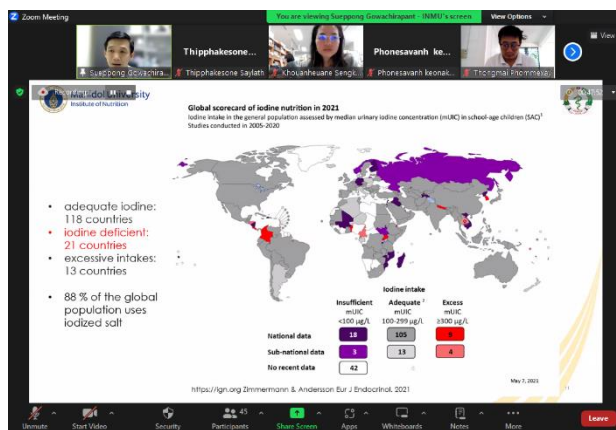
<https://youtu.be/WQ-YqwMRu9E?feature=shared>

Nutrition Webinars

The Center of Nutrition continues to host monthly webinars about many different areas of research. You can catch any you missed on the ANRCB Youtube page in both English and Lao languages. *Webinar playlist Link:* <https://bit.ly/3Zs2ryU>

4 October 2023

“Implementation and Evaluation of Nutrition Intervention at School Setting: Experiences of SEAMEO RECFON” by Dr. Ade Luh Wiradyani, Community Development and Partnership Unit Manager.



8 November 2023

“Iodine deficiency among school children from Phou Kut city, Xieng Khouang province, Lao PDR” by Dr. Sueppong Gowachirapant Senior Researcher from the Community Nutrition Unit, Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University

8 December 2023

“Adherence and Feasibility Study on Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation for Pregnant Women in Cambodia” by Mr. Hou Kroeun, Country Director of Helen Keller International in Cambodia.

Upcoming Webinar on January 10, 2024

“Thai school lunch program” by Associate Professor Dr Kitti Sranacharoenpong. The Asean Institute for Health Development (AIHD), Mahidol University Thailand. The seminar will be in Thai with simultaneous interpretation in English language start: 9:00 to 10:30 am (Vientiane local time)

Register here: <https://bit.ly/3S4B8bH>



ສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ກັບໂຄງການພວກເຮົາໄດ້ທີ່ ສູນໂພຊະນາການ, ຊັ້ນ 2, ບ້ານຊຽງດາ ເມືອງໄຊເສດຖາ, ນະຄອນຫຼວງວຽງຈັນ. ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່: ANRCB@crs.org
ພາກສ່ວນທີ່ກ່ຽວຂ້ອງກັບວຽກງານໂພຊະນາການ ສາມາດນໍາໃຊ້ບັນດາຫ້ອງອົບຮົມ, ຫ້ອງປະຊຸມ ແລະ ຫ້ອງສະໝຸດ ທີ່ຕັ້ງຢູ່ສູນໂພຊະນາການ ໂດຍການປະສານງານກັບສູນໂພຊະນາການ
ANRCB is located at the 2nd Floor of Center of Nutrition, Xiangda Village, Saysettha District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.
Nutrition sector stakeholders are welcome to conduct activities in training and meeting rooms and dormitory.
Bookings can be made directly via with the Center of Nutrition at: nutritioncenterlaopdr@gmail.com or via ANRCB at: anrcb@crs.org