



Poverty Profile of the Lao PDR

Preliminary Findings from the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey, 2024/2025

September 2025

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Preface

The Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) is pleased to present this *Poverty Profile of the Lao PDR*, which provides preliminary findings from the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey (LECS) 2024/25. This brief is a vital contribution to the understanding of poverty dynamics in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), offering timely and policy-relevant insights into the levels, trends, and characteristics of poverty across regions, population groups, and over time. As the official source of poverty statistics in the country, LECS serves as a critical tool to inform national development policies, poverty reduction strategies, and evidence-based decision-making. The 2024/25 round of LECS (LECS 7) builds on the robust statistical legacy of previous rounds, with refined methodologies and improved data collection tools to reflect the evolving socioeconomic context of the Lao PDR. The findings herein are expected to guide policymakers, development partners, and researchers in the design and implementation of programs that aim to target the needs of poor and vulnerable populations.

The Lao Statistics Bureau would like to express its sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this Poverty Profile. We thank the World Bank especially Ms. Tanida Arayavechkit, Senior Economist and Ms. Phetnidda Ouankhamchan, Consultant for its invaluable technical assistance. Their continued support – through training, data analysis, quality assurance, and methodological development – has played a key role in enhancing the analytical capacity of the LSB team and ensuring the robustness of this report.

Special thanks go to the LSB technical team involved in the LECS 7 implementation, data processing, and poverty analysis. Their dedication, professionalism, and hard work throughout the survey cycle – from field data collection to final analysis – have been instrumental in producing this comprehensive report.

We also acknowledge the cooperation of provincial and district-level officials, field enumerators, and the many households across the country who participated in the survey and generously shared their time and information.

We hope that this Poverty Profile will serve as a useful resource for all stakeholders committed to improving the well-being of the people of the Lao PDR.

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Executive Summary

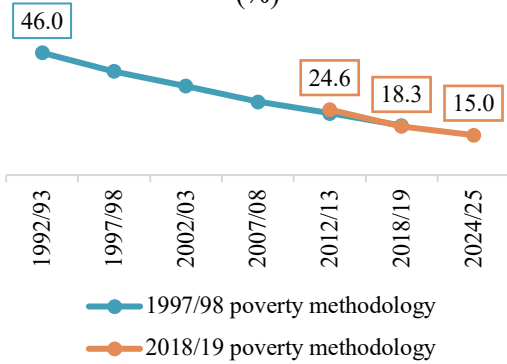
This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the poverty situation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) using the 2024/25 Household Consumption and Expenditure Survey (LECS7), which is the official source of poverty statistics for the Lao PDR and provides important information for monitoring progress in poverty reduction, identifying the poor and disadvantaged, and providing important information for the government's poverty eradication policies. LECS 7 was implemented by the Lao Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Finance, and supported by the World Bank under the Lao PDR Strengthening the National Statistical System Project, Phase II (LAOSTAT II).

Preliminary findings from the LECS 7 show that the poverty rate in the Lao PDR continues to decline, but at a slower pace, from 18.3 percent in 2018/19 to 15.0 percent in 2024/25. In particular, the poverty rate in urban areas increased from 7.0 percent in 2018/19 to 8.9 percent in 2024/25, while the poverty rate in rural areas decreased from 23.8 percent in 2018/19 to 18.0 percent in 2024/25. The number of poor people is concentrated in four provinces: Xayabury, Huaphan, Savannakhet, and Saravan, which together account for almost half of the total number of poor people nationwide. Inequality has declined significantly, as reflected in the Gini index falling from 38.8 in 2018/19 to 34.7 in 2024/25, largely due to reduced consumption among wealthier households and a narrowing urban-rural gap. Educational disparities remain high, with the poverty rate of households headed by uneducated households being ten times higher than that of households headed by university-educated households. In addition, ethnic disparities in poverty rates persist, particularly among the Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Iumien ethnic groups, at 26.0 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively. Multidimensional poverty at the national level has declined from 22.0 percent in 2018/19 to 17.9 percent in 2024/25, particularly in rural and central areas. However, poor households remain disadvantaged in accessing services and infrastructure.

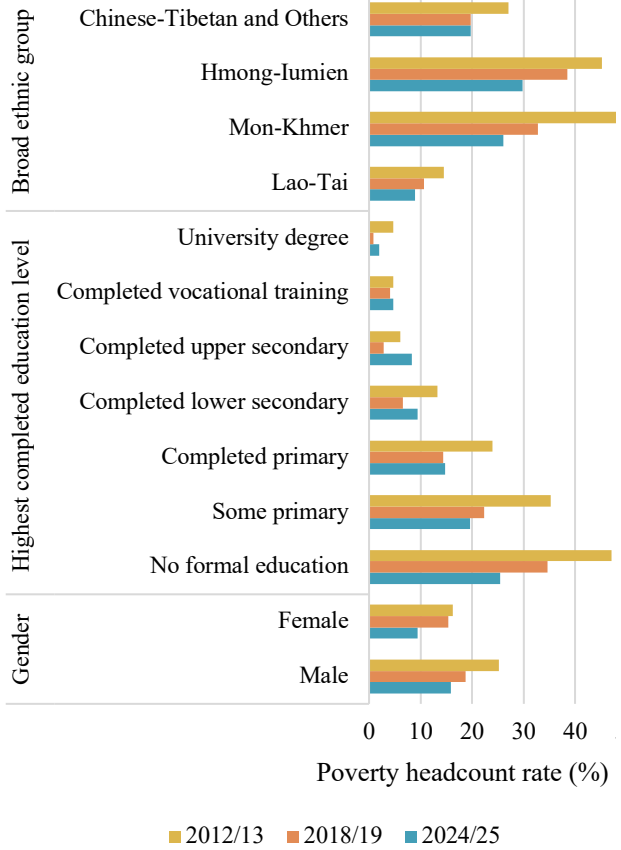
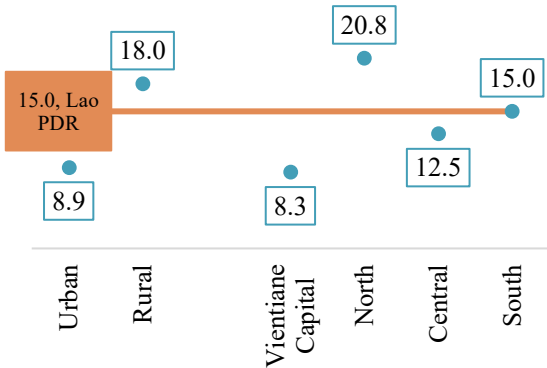
These findings highlight an urgent need to strengthen targeted poverty reduction efforts, particularly in provinces with persistently high poverty rates. As poverty in urban areas continues to rise, expanding social protection systems in these settings is equally critical. At the same time, closing the remaining development gaps will require sustained investment in rural infrastructure, quality education, and essential public services. It is also essential to promote greater ethnic inclusion, ensuring that all population groups, especially those historically disadvantaged, can equitably benefit from economic growth and public investment.

Snapshot of Poverty in the Lao PDR

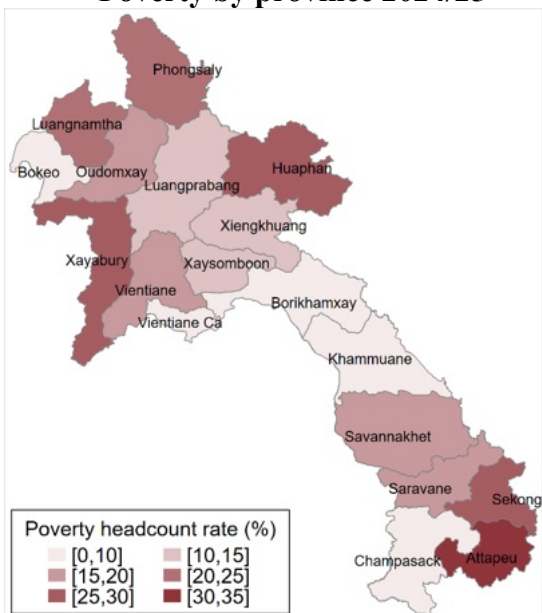
Poverty headcount rate 1992-2005 (%)



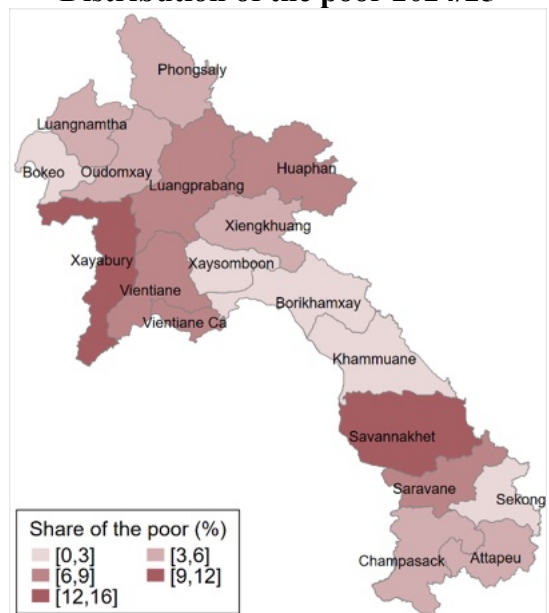
Poverty headcount rate 2024/25 (%)



Poverty by province 2024/25



Distribution of the poor 2024/25



Introduction

The Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey (LECS) has been conducted at five-year intervals since 1992/93. The seventh and most recent round, LECS 7, was implemented between January 2024 and January 2025, following LECS 6, which was conducted from June 2018 to May 2019. The surveys aim to assess the population's living standards and generate essential data for socioeconomic planning. LECS is the primary source of official poverty statistics in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), providing critical information for monitoring poverty reduction, identifying poor and vulnerable groups, and informing government policies aimed at poverty eradication.

This Poverty Profile presents preliminary findings on poverty from the LECS 7, with updated poverty estimates on LECS 7 data and the revised 2018/19 poverty methodology. Detailed findings and further analysis will be available in the forthcoming LECS 7 Poverty Report, which will be jointly developed by the Lao Statistics Bureau and the World Bank.

Key Findings

- Poverty has continued to decline, albeit at a slower pace, accompanied by a rise in urban poverty. The national poverty headcount rate fell from 18.3 percent in 2018/19 to 15.0 percent in 2024/25.
- Inequality has declined, primarily driven by falling real consumption among better-off households and a narrowing consumption gap between urban and rural areas.
- The share of the poor living in urban areas has steadily increased, although rural areas continue to account for the majority of the poor.
- Poverty is concentrated in the provinces of Xayabury, Huaphan, Savannakhet, and Saravan, which together are home to nearly half of the country's poor.
- While poverty has increased among households headed by those with secondary or tertiary education, it remains significantly higher among the less educated.
- The Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Iumien ethno-linguistic groups have experienced the largest reductions in poverty, but poverty rates remain highest among them.
- Poverty incidence remains greater among male-headed households compared to female-headed households, and the gap has widened in recent years.
- Ownership of motorbikes, refrigerators, washing machines, and mobile phones as well as the use of higher-quality housing materials have increased, while access to basic services remains largely unchanged.
- Net enrollment rates have declined, while access to healthcare services is particularly limited among the poor and those living in rural areas without road connectivity.
- Multidimensional poverty declined between 2018/19 and 2024/25, especially in rural areas and the central region, mirroring a decline in monetary poverty.

Trends in Poverty

Poverty has continued to decline, albeit at a slower pace, accompanied by a rise in urban poverty. The national poverty headcount rate fell from 18.3 percent in 2018/19 to 15.0 percent in 2024/25.

The incidence of poverty declined by 3.3 percentage points, from 18.3 percent in 2018/19 to 15.0 percent in 2024/25. This pace of reduction was slower than in the previous six years, when poverty fell by 6.3 percentage points between 2012/13 and 2018/19 (FIGURE 1). This means that in 2024/25, 15.0 percent of the Lao PDR’s population still lived on less than LAK 24,245 (USD 1.1) per day.

FIGURE 1: TREND IN POVERTY HEADCOUNT AND GDP PER CAPITA 1992/93-2024/25

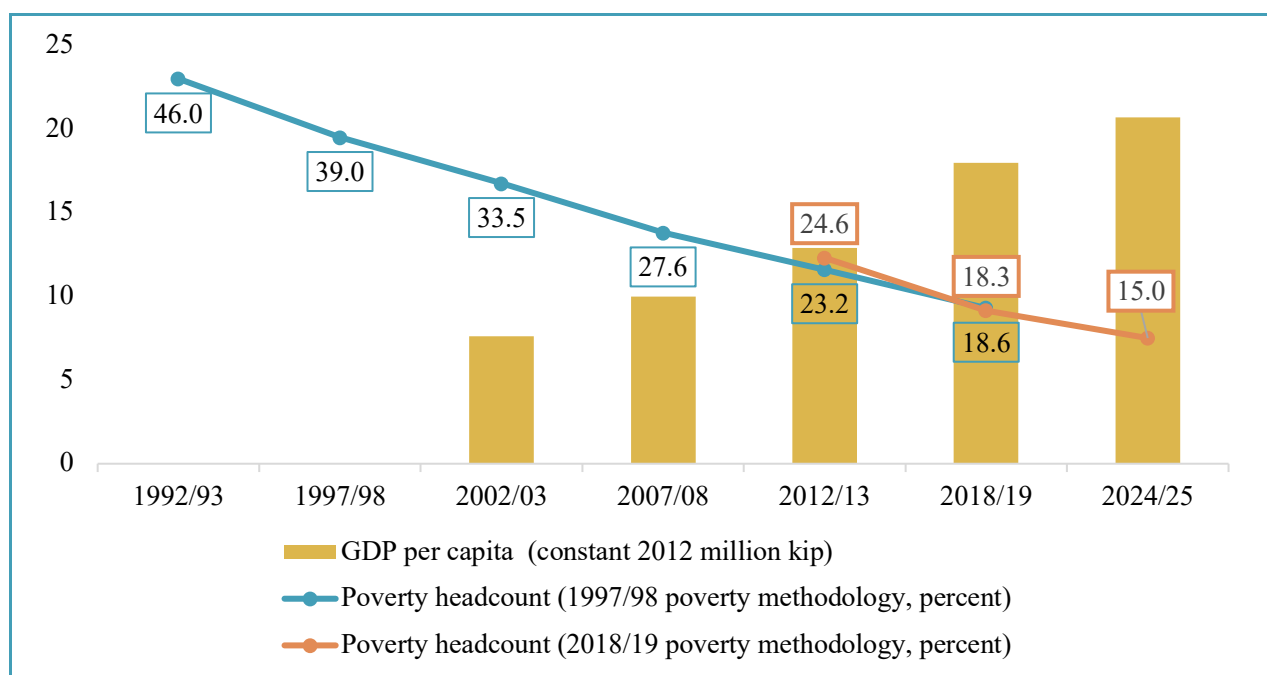


TABLE 1: TRENDS IN POVERTY 2012/13-2024/25 (%)

	Poverty Headcount Rate			Poverty Gap			Squared Poverty Gap		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Urban	7.9	7.0	8.9	1.5	1.3	1.6	0.4	0.4	0.5
Rural	31.4	23.8	18.0	7.7	5.1	4.0	2.7	1.7	1.5
Lao PDR	24.6	18.3	15.0	5.9	3.9	3.3	2.1	1.3	1.2

The overall decline in poverty was driven by reductions in rural areas, while poverty in urban areas increased. Urban poverty rose from 7.0 percent in 2018/19 to 8.9 percent in 2024/25, exceeding the 2012/13 level. In contrast, rural poverty declined by 5.8 percentage points over the same period, from 23.8 percent to 18.0 percent. Despite these changes, the depth of poverty remained significant (TABLE 1). The poverty gap, which measures how far below the poverty line poor individuals fall, declined modestly in rural areas, from 5.1 percent to 4.0 percent, but increased in urban areas from 1.3 percent to 1.6 percent. Poverty severity, as measured by the squared poverty gap giving greater weight to the poorest, rose in urban areas while declining slightly in rural areas.

Distributional Pattern of Consumption Growth

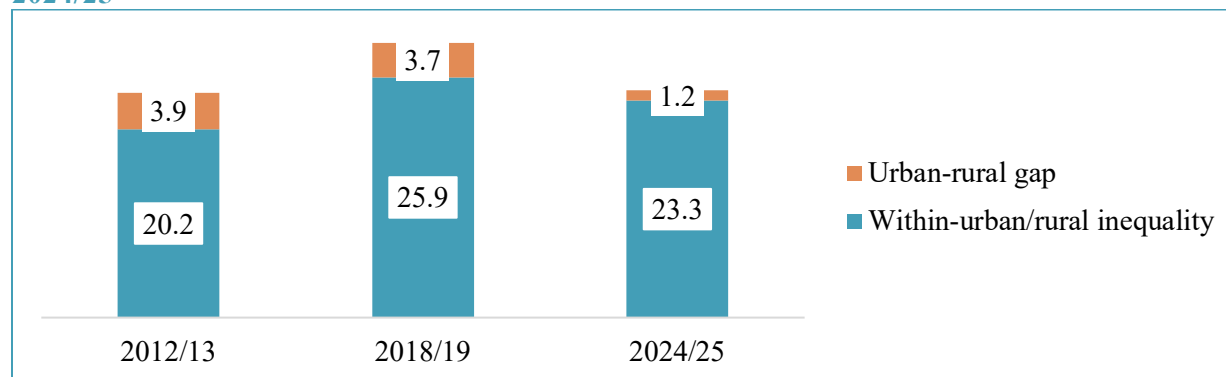
Inequality has declined, primarily driven by falling real consumption among better-off households and a narrowing consumption gap between urban and rural areas.

Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, real consumption among the poorest quintile grew by 5.5 percent, while the richest quintile experienced a significant decline of 13.2 percent, particularly in urban areas (TABLE 2). Consumption among middle-income groups also stagnated or declined. As a result, inequality declined, with the Gini index falling from 38.8 to 34.7 and the Theil index from 29.5 to 24.2 (FIGURE 2)¹. The Theil index allows for overall inequality to be broken down into inequality *within* areas and inequality *between* urban and rural areas. Both within-area and between-area inequality decreased, reversing the trend from 2012/13–2018/19, when inequality rose as consumption gains were concentrated among better-off households.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE CONSUMPTION BY CONSUMPTION QUINTILE 2024/25

Quintile	Average nominal monthly consumption per capita (kip): 2024/25			Annualized growth in real per capita consumption (%): 2018/19–2024/25		
	Lao PDR	Urban	Rural	Lao PDR	Urban	Rural
1	618,450	642,447	612,378	5.5	5.8	5.0
2	931,690	930,320	932,213	3.8	2.8	4.1
3	1,225,892	1,225,565	1,226,032	-0.2	-1.2	0.3
4	1,656,515	1,679,109	1,644,722	-5.3	-5.5	-5.0
5	3,357,275	3,471,459	3,237,367	-13.2	-14.8	-9.0

FIGURE 2: THEIL INDEX ABSOLUTE DECOMPOSITION OF INEQUALITY 2012/13 - 2024/25



¹ There is a methodological change in constructing the consumption aggregate for LECS 7 compared to LECS 6. In LECS 7, expenditures on life events such as weddings and funerals as well as on hospitalization, are excluded. In total, 315 transactions are omitted. If these expenses were included, the Gini index would be 36.0, suggesting that the Gini index was inflated by a few large and irregular expenditures. This was not the case in LECS 6. The methodological change does not affect the poverty estimates. See the methodological note for more details.

Geographical Pattern of Poverty

The share of the poor living in urban areas has steadily increased, although rural areas continue to account for the majority of the poor.

Despite a narrowing urban–rural poverty gap, rural poverty remains twice as high as urban poverty. Although rural areas account for 67 percent of the population, they are home to over 80 percent of the poor (TABLE 3). However, the share of the poor residing in urban areas has steadily increased—from 9.2 percent in 2012/13 to 19.3 percent in 2024/25. Between 2012/13 and 2018/19, this shift was primarily driven by urbanization and faster poverty reduction in rural areas. In contrast, between 2018/19 and 2024/25, with urbanization stagnating, the rising share of the urban poor was driven by an increase in urban poverty. Meanwhile, the northern region—despite comprising only 29.6 percent of the population in 2024/25, accounted for 41.0 percent of the poor, up from 35.5 percent in 2018/19.

TABLE 3: POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE POOR BY GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS 2012/13–2024/25 (%)

	Poverty Headcount Rate			Distribution of the Poor			Distribution of Population		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	24.6	18.3	15.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban	7.9	7.0	8.9	9.2	12.4	19.3	28.8	32.5	32.7
Rural	31.4	23.8	18.0	90.8	87.6	80.7	71.2	67.5	67.3
Region									
Vientiane Capital	2.5	5.0	8.3	1.2	3.6	6.5	12.0	13.2	11.7
North	31.0	20.7	20.8	38.6	35.5	41.0	30.6	31.4	29.6
Central	23.5	21.5	12.5	34.0	41.9	31.4	35.8	35.7	37.7
South	29.9	17.7	15.0	26.2	19.0	21.1	21.6	19.7	21.1
Urban									
Vientiane Capital	1.8	4.4	7.1	0.7	2.5	4.4	9.7	10.5	9.3
North	9.9	4.6	12.1	2.4	2.2	6.6	6.0	8.8	8.1
Central	11.5	10.6	8.1	4.3	5.1	5.8	9.2	8.8	10.9
South	11.4	10.4	8.4	1.8	2.5	2.5	4.0	4.5	4.5
Rural									
Vientiane Capital	5.3	7.3	13.0	0.5	1.1	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.4
North	36.1	27.0	24.1	36.2	33.3	34.5	24.6	22.6	21.5
Central	27.6	25.0	14.3	29.7	36.8	25.5	26.6	26.9	26.8
South	34.1	19.9	16.8	24.4	16.5	18.6	17.6	15.2	16.7

Poverty is concentrated in the provinces of Xayabury, Huaphan, Savannakhet, and Saravan, which together are home to nearly half of the country's poor.

In 2024/25, Savannakhet alone accounted for 15.7 percent of the country's poor, reflecting both its large population and high poverty rate (TABLE 4). Xayabury and Huaphan also contributed notably, 11.2 and 8.7 percent, respectively, with both provinces exhibiting poverty rates above 30 percent. Attapeu, despite a similarly high poverty rate of 34.6 percent, accounted for only 5.1 percent of the poor due to its smaller population. Conversely, provinces with larger populations but lower poverty incidence, such as Vientiane Capital and Champasack, made up just 11.6 percent of the poor, despite accounting for 22.4 percent of the total population.

TABLE 4: POVERTY AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE POOR BY PROVINCE 2012/13–2024/25 (%)²

	Poverty Headcount Rate			Distribution of the Poor			Distribution of Population		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	24.6	18.3	15.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
01 Vientiane Capital	2.5	5.0	8.3	1.2	3.6	6.5	12.0	13.2	11.7
North									
02 Phongsaly	19.9	8.1	22.3	2.4	1.2	3.8	2.9	2.8	2.6
03 Luangnamtha	25.0	10.5	25.0	3.0	1.8	4.4	3.0	3.0	2.6
04 Oudomxay	36.6	29.2	15.4	6.5	8.7	4.9	4.4	5.5	4.8
05 Bokeo	51.8	19.4	9.1	5.8	3.2	1.7	2.7	3.0	2.8
06 Luangprabang	30.0	20.4	14.4	8.7	7.8	6.2	7.1	7.0	6.5
07 Huaphan	45.4	26.6	29.8	8.5	6.0	8.7	4.6	4.1	4.4
08 Xayabury	15.7	21.1	28.8	3.8	6.9	11.2	5.9	6.0	5.8
Central									
09 Xiengkhuang	34.3	26.0	12.3	6.1	5.7	3.2	4.4	4.0	3.9
10 Vientiane	10.9	5.3	15.1	3.6	1.8	6.6	8.2	6.3	6.6
11 Borikhamxay	14.7	20.6	6.1	2.3	4.8	1.8	3.8	4.2	4.4
12 Khammuane	25.2	25.5	6.8	5.1	8.3	2.9	5.0	6.0	6.4
13 Savannakhet	29.1	27.5	15.8	16.9	20.6	15.7	14.3	13.7	15.0
18 Xaysomboon		8.2	12.2		0.6	1.1		1.4	1.4
South									
14 Saravan	52.1	24.9	18.7	12.4	8.0	7.9	5.9	5.9	6.3
15 Sekong	44.4	30.6	25.2	4.2	3.2	3.0	2.3	1.9	1.8
16 Champasack	19.6	8.7	7.1	8.8	4.7	5.1	11.0	9.8	10.7
17 Attapeu	9.1	27.8	34.1	0.9	3.1	5.1	2.4	2.0	2.3

² Provisional estimates based on the 2024/25 Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey. Figures are subject to revision once final data are confirmed.

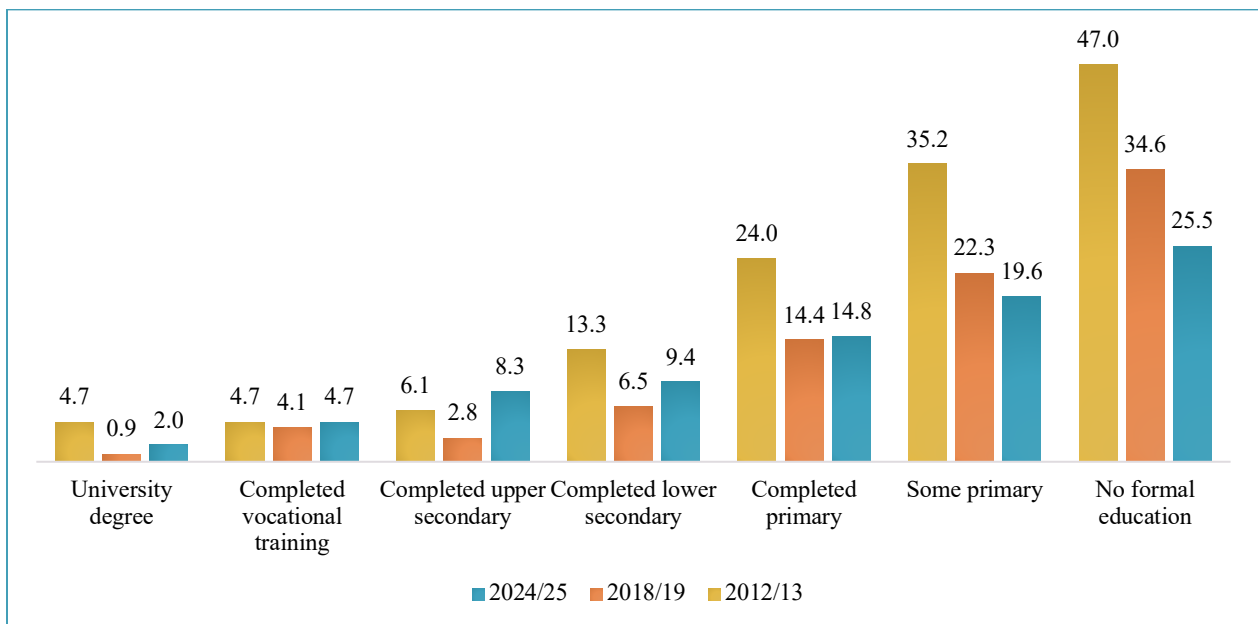
Characteristics of the Poor

While poverty has increased among households headed by those with secondary or tertiary education, it remains significantly higher among the less educated.

Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, poverty declined most notably among households headed by individuals with no formal education, falling from 34.6 percent to 25.5 percent (FIGURE 3). In contrast, poverty increased among households headed by those with secondary or tertiary education, particularly for those with completed upper secondary education, where the rate more than tripled from 2.8 percent to 8.3 percent.

Despite this progress, poverty remains highly concentrated among the least educated. The poverty rate among households headed by someone with no formal education stood more than ten times higher than the 2.0 percent rate among those headed by someone with a university degree. Households whose head completed only some primary schooling had a poverty rate of 19.6 percent, compared to 14.8 percent for those who completed primary education, and 9.4 percent for those who completed lower secondary education. People living in households headed by a person who did not finish primary education constitute half of the poor, despite making up only one-third of the population.

FIGURE 3: POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE BY HOUSEHOLD HEAD'S HIGHEST LEVEL OF COMPLETED EDUCATION 2012/13–2024/25 (%)



The Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Iumien ethno-linguistic groups have experienced the largest reductions in poverty, but poverty rates remain highest among them.

Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, poverty among the Mon-Khmer group fell from 32.7 percent to 26.0 percent, and among the Hmong-Iumien from 38.4 percent to 29.8 percent (TABLE 5). Despite these gains, both groups continue to experience substantially higher poverty rates than other ethno-linguistic groups. In 2024/25, the Lao-Tai group recorded the lowest poverty rate at 8.9 percent, while the Chinese-Tibet group saw a stagnation in poverty reduction.

**TABLE 5: POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE BY ETHNICITY OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD
2012/13–2024/25 (%)**

	Poverty Headcount Rate			Distribution of the Poor			Distribution of Population		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	24.6	18.3	15.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Lao-Tai	14.5	10.6	8.9	39.4	37.7	38.8	66.7	65.2	65.3
Mon-Khmer	48.1	32.7	26.0	43.1	38.7	36.6	22.1	21.7	21.2
Hmong-Iumien	45.2	38.4	29.8	13.0	19.5	20.4	7.1	9.3	10.3
Chinese-Tibet and Others	27.1	19.7	19.7	4.5	4.0	4.2	4.1	3.7	3.2

Poverty incidence remains greater among male-headed households compared to female-headed households, and the gap has widened in recent years.

In 2024/25, the poverty headcount rate among male-headed households stood at 15.9 percent, compared to 9.4 percent among female-headed households (TABLE 6). Although female-headed households represent a smaller share of the population, 13.7 percent in 2024/25, their share has steadily increased from 6.4 percent in 2012/13. As a result, their contribution to the total poor population also rose, from 4.2 percent to 8.6 percent, underscoring the growing importance of addressing poverty among this group.

**TABLE 6: POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE BY GENDER OF THE HOUSEHOLD HEAD
2012/13–2024/25 (%)**

	Poverty Headcount Rate			Distribution of the Poor			Distribution of Population		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	24.6	18.3	15.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female	16.3	15.4	9.4	4.2	9.2	8.6	6.4	11.0	13.7
Male	25.2	18.7	15.9	95.8	90.8	91.4	93.6	89.0	86.3

Multidimensional Poverty and Access to Services

Ownership of motorbikes, refrigerators, washing machines, and mobile phones as well as the use of higher-quality housing materials have increased, particularly among poor households.

Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, poor households experienced significant gains in asset ownership, particularly of motorbikes, refrigerators, washing machines, and mobile phones (TABLE 7). For example, more than half of poor households owned a refrigerator in 2024/25, up from one-third in 2018/19 and just one-fifth in 2012/13. Mobile phone ownership also rose markedly, reaching 83.8 percent among poor households in 2024/25. Despite these improvements, asset ownership remains substantially higher among better-off households. Poor households are still less likely to own high-value items such as cars and air conditioners, with 5 percent or less reporting ownership, compared to one-fifth of non-poor households.

TABLE 7: CHANGES IN HOUSEHOLD DURABLES POSSESSION 2012/13–2024/25 (% OF HOUSEHOLDS)

	Lao PDR			Poor			Non-poor		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Car	16.3	20.2	20.3	2.2	3.3	5.2	19.7	22.8	22.3
Motorbike	79.4	85.8	88.0	59.6	71.2	77.1	84.2	88.1	89.4
Bicycle	29.8	21.2	7.0	18.5	12.0	6.9	32.4	22.6	7.0
Electric bike			6.8			4.1			7.1
Refrigerator	56.3	71.3	78.9	20.3	35.6	50.9	64.9	76.9	82.5
Washing machine	14.7	26.4	37.4	0.6	3.9	13.6	18.1	29.9	40.4
Television	75.0	81.3	57.7	46.2	54.7	38.4	81.9	85.5	60.1
Radio	19.6	21.3	3.6	17.2	12.0	3.0	20.1	22.8	3.6
Mobile phone	76.0	85.6	92.4	52.7	67.5	83.8	81.5	88.4	93.6
Computer	7.5	8.1	6.6	0.2	0.5	1.7	9.3	9.3	7.3
Air conditioner	5.1	9.6	17.1	0.1	0.5	2.1	6.3	11.1	19.0

Improvements in housing quality were also observed, particularly among poor households (TABLE 8). Among poor households, the share of homes with brick or concrete exterior walls increased by 16.6 percentage points, from 21.5 percent in 2018/19 to 38.1 percent in 2024/25. The proportion of those with tiled roofs rose by 8.9 percentage points to 36.8 percent, while homes with cement or tiled flooring increased by 17.8 percentage points to 43.3 percent. These improvements were less pronounced among non-poor households.

Significant improvements in asset ownership and housing quality among poor households may reflect increased investments in better-quality and more durable materials and assets. Alternatively, these changes may be driven by transitory poverty dynamics during 2018/19–2024/25, with some non-poor households—who previously owned assets and lived in better housing—falling into poverty, and some poor households escaping from poverty.

TABLE 8: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BY POVERTY STATUS 2018/19–2024/25 (% OF HOUSEHOLDS)

	2018/19			2024/25		
	Lao PDR	Poor	Non-poor	Lao PDR	Poor	Non-poor
Exterior wall major material						
Brick or concrete	57.8	21.5	63.4	58.0	38.1	60.5
Unbaked brick, wood or bamboo	37.6	71.9	32.2	40.8	61.0	38.3
Other materials	4.7	6.7	4.4	1.2	0.9	1.3
Roof material						
Wood	1.2	2.7	1.0	2.5	2.6	2.5
Metal sheets	46.3	62.2	43.9	42.4	59.2	40.2
Roofing tiles	49.1	27.9	52.4	54.5	36.8	56.7
Grass, leaves or other materials	3.4	7.1	2.8	0.7	1.4	0.6
Floor material						
Marble or ceramic tiles	1.3	0.9	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.9
Floor tiles or cement	57.2	25.5	62.1	62.0	43.3	64.3
Wood or bamboo	34.2	55.3	30.9	31.2	42.1	29.8
Earth, clay or other materials	7.3	18.3	5.6	6.0	14.3	5.0

TABLE 9: HOUSEHOLD ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES 2012/13–2024/25 (% OF HOUSEHOLDS)

	Safe water			Improved sanitation facilities		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	83.8	92.9	92.6		82.1	81.2
Poor	73.8	82.5	81.8		52.8	57.5
Non-poor	86.2	94.5	94.0		86.7	84.3
Urban	93.9	98.6	97.4		97.0	97.3
Rural	79.4	89.9	90.1		74.3	72.9

Note: Safe water includes piped water sources, protected sources, rainwater, and bottled water, in both the dry and rainy seasons. Improved sanitation facilities include flush toilets, pit latrines, and composting toilets. Data on improved sanitation facilities are not comparable between LECS 5 and LECS 6.

Access to basic services remained largely unchanged between 2018/19 and 2024/25 (TABLE 9). Significant disparities persist between poor and non-poor households, particularly in access to improved sanitation facilities. In 2024/25, only 57.5 percent of poor households had access to improved sanitation, compared to 84.3 percent among the non-poor. Similarly, while 96.6 percent

of non-poor households had access to grid electricity, access among poor households was lower, at 85.9 percent (TABLE 10).

TABLE 10: HOUSEHOLD ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY 2012/13–2024/25 (% OF HOUSEHOLDS)

	Electricity for lighting			Gas and electricity for cooking		
	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25	2012/13	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	79.6	92.9	95.4	6.0	11.9	11.3
Poor	54.4	78.7	85.9	2.0	4.6	4.8
Non-poor	85.6	95.1	96.6	6.9	13.0	12.1
Urban	98.8	99.5	99.4	12.6	21.3	23.3
Rural	71.2	89.5	93.2	3.1	6.9	5.1

Note: Electricity for lighting refers to grid electricity.

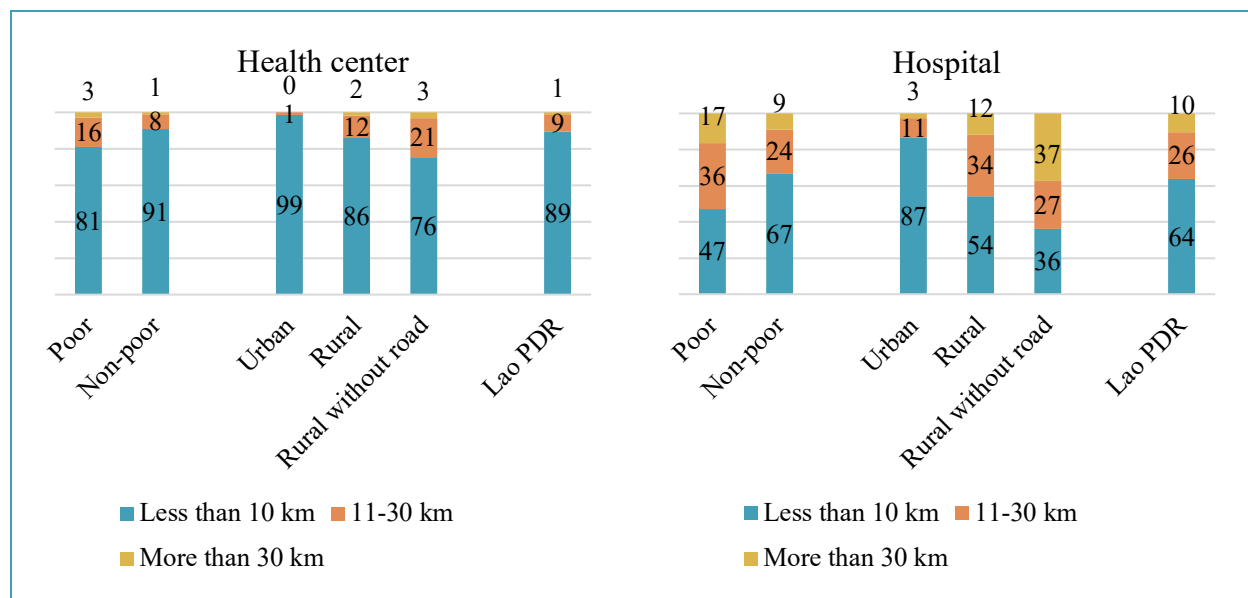
TABLE 11: NET ENROLMENT RATE AND AVERAGE YEARS OF SCHOOLING BY POVERTY STATUS, 2018/19–2024/25

	Net enrollment rate (%) (Age 6-10)		Net enrollment rate (%) (Age 11-14)		Average years of schooling (Age 15+)	
	2018/19	2024/25	2018/19	2024/25	2018/19	2024/25
Lao PDR	83.4	80.4	58.6	55.6	6.1	6.7
Poor	72.9	71.2	32.5	35.8	3.7	4.9
Non-poor	86.7	82.5	66.2	59.3	6.5	6.9

Note: Net enrollment rate is the number of boys and girls of the age of a particular level of education that are enrolled in that level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.

Despite a modest increase in average years of schooling, from 6.1 to 6.7 years, overall net enrollment at both the primary and lower secondary levels declined between 2018/19 and 2024/25 (TABLE 11). The enrollment gap between poor and non-poor households narrowed somewhat, possibly reflecting transitory poverty dynamics during this period, with some non-poor households falling into poverty and some poor households moving out of it, rather than largest investment in education among poor households. Access to health care improved overall, yet significant rural–urban disparities remain. Access is particularly limited among the poor and those living in rural areas without road connectivity. In 2024/25, more than one-third of the population in rural villages without road access and 17 percent of the poor lived more than 30 kilometers from the nearest hospital (FIGURE 4).

FIGURE 4: DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST HEALTH FACILITY 2024/25 (% OF POPULATION)



Multidimensional poverty declined between 2018/19 and 2024/25, especially in rural areas and the central region, mirroring a decline in monetary poverty.

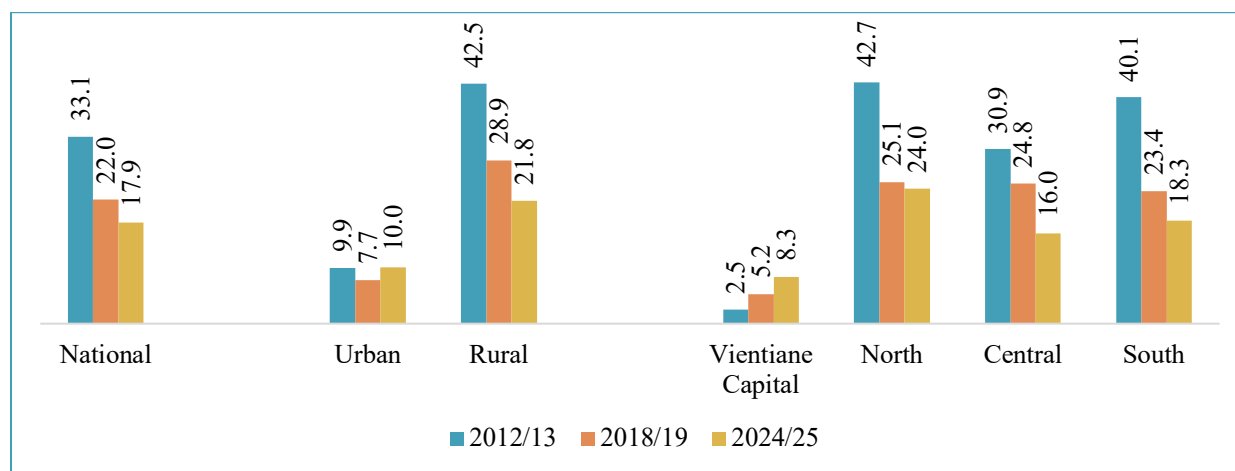
To capture household deprivation across multiple dimensions, a multidimensional poverty measure for the Lao PDR is constructed. Multidimensional poverty encompasses various deprivations experienced by the poor in their daily lives by capturing the non-monetary dimensions of well-being (consumption, education, and living standards) alongside the monetary measure. The intensity of deprivation is the weighted average of indicators in which a household is deprived. If an individual household is not deprived in any dimension, the intensity is considered to be 0, rising to 1 if an individual household is deprived in every dimension. A household is considered multidimensionally poor if it is deprived in a third or more of eight weighted indicators, that is if the total intensity of deprivation is larger than 0.33 (TABLE 12).

In 2024/25, 17.9 percent of the population was classified as multidimensionally poor, down from 22.0 percent in 2018/19 (FIGURE 5). Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, consistent with trends in consumption-based poverty, multidimensional poverty declined in rural areas and in the central and southern regions. In contrast, the incidence of multidimensional poverty increased in urban areas and in Vientiane Capital and the central region. While the multidimensional poverty headcount rate in rural areas has steadily declined from 42.5 percent in 2012/13 to 21.8 percent in 2024/25, the rate in urban areas has remained largely stagnant over the same period.

TABLE 12: DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY

Dimension	Indicator	Deprived if...	Weight
Consumption	Household's consumption per capita	Household's consumption per capita is below the poverty line (calculated using the cost of basic needs approach)	1/3
Education	Years of schooling	No household member aged 10 years or older has completed five years of schooling	1/6
	School attendance	School-aged children (6-14) are not attending school	1/6
Living standards	Cooking fuel	The household cooks with paraffin, wood, coal, charcoal, or sawdust	1/15
	Drinking water	The household does not have access to improved drinking water, or if safe drinking water is at least a 30-minute walk from home	1/15
	Electricity	The household has no access to grid electricity	1/15
	Housing	The household floor is made of earth or clay, the roof is made of grass or leaves, or walls are made of natural or rudimentary materials (unbaked bricks, bamboo, tin, or mud)	1/15
	Assets	The household does not own more than one of these assets: radio, TV, computer, bicycle, motorbike, refrigerator, and does not own a car or truck	1/15

FIGURE 5: MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE 2012/13 – 2024/25 (%)



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