

Service Delivery and Resettlement: Options for Development Planning

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Final Report
Livelihoods Study

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Table Of Contents

LIST OF TABLES AND MAPS	6
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	8
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	10
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	11
CHAPTER 1: PROJECT AND STUDY METHODS	21
Objectives and Scope of the Project	21
Study Team Composition	21
Study Approach	21
Methodological Considerations	21
Details on Project Stages	22
Reconnaissance	22
Projects Contacted	22
Site Selection	23
Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	23
Methods, Tools and Techniques	24
Respondent Selection Process	24
Fieldwork	25
CHAPTER 2: LIVELIHOODS SYSTEMS ANALYSIS	26
Introduction	26
Livelihoods Systems Approach (LSA)	26
Needs Based	27
Food Security	27
Ethnicity and Culture	27
Gender	28
Coping Mechanisms	28
Poverty	28
Livelihoods Systems Performance	29
CHAPTER 3: GOVERNMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE UPLANDS/HIGHLANDS	31
Policy Framework	31
Ethnic Minority Policy	31
Eradication of Shifting Cultivation	32
Opium Poppy Eradication	33
Land and Forest Allocation	33
Village Consolidation	34
Decentralization Policy	34
Aquatic and Wild Life Management Regulations	34

CHAPTER 4: STUDY FINDINGS IN LUANG NAM THA	35
Introduction	35
Demographics	35
Human Resources	36
Rice Self-Sufficiency	38
Land Use	39
Village Cash Income	41
Household Cash Income and Expenditures	42
Migration and Relocation of Villages in Luang Nam Tha	44
Introduction	44
Push-Pull Factors in Migration	45
Old Conditions	45
New Conditions	45
Problems Encountered in Relocation	46
Conflicts	48
Conflicts with Neighboring Villages	48
Conflicts between Early and Later Migrants	49
Conflicts with Outsiders	49
Out-Migration	50
Relocation Costs	51
Relocation Costs (moving)	52
Relocation Costs (arriving)	52
Ethnicity and Culture Change Luang Nam Tha	53
Community	53
Social Organization	54
Traditional Beliefs	54
Marriage and Family	56
Cultural Change	57
Relocated Villages	57
Original Village	59
Summary of Culture Change	59
Gender in Luang Nam Tha	60
Introduction	60
Woman's Involvement	60
Gender Roles in Livelihoods	62
Public Infrastructure and Services in Luang Nam Tha	67
Roads	67
Schools	68
Health Stations	68
Clean Water Systems	68
Irrigation Schemes	68
Government Services	69
Livelihoods Systems Performance	71
CHAPTER 5: STUDY FINDINGS IN SEKONG	74

Introduction	74
Demographics	74
Human Resources	75
Rice Self-Sufficiency	77
Land Use	79
Village Income	79
Household Cash Income and Expenditures	80
Community Forest Management	82
Migration and Relocation of Villages in Sekong	83
Introduction	83
Push-Pull Factors in Migration	83
Old Conditions	83
New Conditions	83
Problems Encountered in Relocation	83
Conflicts	86
Conflicts with Neighboring Villages	86
Conflicts between Early and Later Migrants	86
Conflicts with Outsiders	86
Out-Migration	87
Relocation Costs	89
Relocation Costs (moving)	89
Relocation Costs (arriving)	89
Ethnicity and Cultural Change in Sekong	91
Community	91
Social Organization	92
Traditional Beliefs	92
Marriage and Family	94
Cultural Change	94
Summary of Culture Change	96
Gender in Sekong	97
Introduction	97
Woman' s Involvement	98
Gender Roles in Livelihoods	100
Public Infrastructure and Services in Sekong	104
Roads	104
Schools	105
Health Stations	105
Clean Water Systems	105
Irrigation Schemes	105
Government Services	106
Livelihoods Systems Performance	109

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	112
Livelihoods Systems	112
Rice Self-Sufficiency and Agricultural Land	113
Demographics	114
Human Resources	114
Migration	115
Ethnicity and Culture Change	115
Gender	116
Public Infrastructure and Services	116
 CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPMENT PLANNING USING A LIVELIHOODS SYSTEMS APPROACH	 118
Process Overview	118
Recommendations for Development Planning and Lessons Learned	118
Recommendations for Development Planning	119
Lessons Learned from Livelihoods Study	120
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 124
 ANNEX 1: MEETING REPORT	 128
Workshop Report on the Findings of the Livelihood Study Project	128
Agenda	133
Participants List	134
 ANNEX 2: MAPS	 136
Map 1: Lao PDR	136
Map 2: Sing District, Luang Nam Tha	136
Map 3: Long District, Luang Nam Tha	136
Map 4: Kaleum District, Sekong	136
Map 5: Tha Taeng District, Sekong	136

List of Tables and Maps

Chapter 1: Project and Study Methods

Table 1: Question Guidelines

Chapter 4: Study Findings in Luang Nam Tha

Table 2: Demographics in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 3: Population Dynamics in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha (2003)
Table 4: Lao Language Capability in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 5: Children in School in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 6: Non-Formal Education in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 7: Socio-Economic Levels and Rice Self-Sufficiency in Study Villages Luang Nam Tha
Table 8: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 9: Land Use in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 10: Estimated Village Cash Income in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 11: Household Expenditures Lo Level Early Migrants in Study Villages Luang Nam Tha
Table 12: Household Cash Income Low Level Early Migrants in Study Villages Luang Nam Tha
Table 13: Reasons for Leaving Original Village Luang Nam Tha - Ranked by Importance
Table 14: Relocation Problems in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha – Ranked by Importance
Table 15: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Area in Luang Nam Tha
Table 16: Diseases in Study Villages After Migration
Table 17: Conflicts in Luang Nam Tha
Table 18: Villages Relocated Luang Nam Tha
Table 19: Out-migration in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 20: Household Relocation Costs from Original Villages
Table 21: Costs To Establish Households in New Villages
Table 22: Akha Festival and Ceremony Calendar
Table 23: Akha Livelihoods Calendar
Table 24: Women's Involvement in Lao Woman's Union in Luang Nam Tha
Table 25: Adult Lao Speakers and Literacy in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 26: Schools in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 27: Household Livelihoods Roles in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 28: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Luang Nam Tha (ages 8-14)
Table 29: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Luang Nam Tha (ages 15-49)
Table 30: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Luang Nam Tha (ages > 50)
Table 31: Infrastructure Constructed After Village Establishment in Luang Nam Tha (Years)
Table 32 Schools in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha
Table 33: Government Services in Luang Nam Tha
Table 34: Livelihoods System Performance in Luang Nam Tha

Chapter 5: Study Findings in Sekong

Table 35: Demographics in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 36: Population Dynamics in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 37: Lao Language Capability in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 38: Children in School in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 39: Non-Formal Education in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 40: Socio-Economic Levels and Rice Self-Sufficiency in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 41: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Area in Sekong
Table 42: Land Use in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 43: Estimated Village Cash Income in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 44: Household Expenditures Low Level Early Migrants in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 45: Household Cash Income Low Level Early Migrants in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 46: Logs Removed from Four Villages in Previous Years in Sekong
Table 47: Relocation Problems in Study Villages in Sekong – Ranked by Importance
Table 48: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 49: Diseases in Study Villages After Migration in Sekong
Table 50: Out-migration in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 51: Conflicts in Sekong
Table 52: Villages Relocated in Sekong
Table 53: Household Relocation Costs from Original Villages in Sekong
Table 54: Costs to Establish Households in New Villages in Sekong
Table 55: Katu Festivals and Ceremony Calendar
Table 56: Katu Livelihoods Calendar
Table 57: Women’s Involvement in Lao Woman’s Union in Sekong
Table 58: Adult Lao Speakers, Literacy and Numeracy in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 59: Schools in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 60: Household Livelihoods Roles in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 61: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Sekong (Ages 8-14)
Table 62: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Sekong (Ages 15-49)
Table 63: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Sekong (Ages >50)
Table 64: Infrastructure Constructed After Village Establishment in Sekong (Years)
Table 65: Schools in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 66: Government Services in Study Villages in Sekong
Table 67: Livelihoods System Performance in Sekong

Annex 2: Maps

Map 1: Lao PDR
Map 2: Sing District, Luang Nam Tha
Map 3: Long District, Luang Nam Tha
Map 4: Kaleum District, Sekong
Map 5: Tha Taeng District, Sekong

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CPC	Committee for Planning Coordination/Office of Prime Minister
DAFO	District Agriculture & Forestry Office/PAFO/MAF
DAO	District Administration Office
DCRD	District Committee of Rural Development
DOF	Department of Forestry/MAF
DPHO	District Public Health Office
DPO	District Planning Office/CPC
GOL	Government of the Lao PDR
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit Gmb (German Organization for Technical Assistance & Cooperation)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LARREC	Living Aquatic Resources Center/NAFRI
LCRD	Leading Committee for Rural Development/OPM
LNFC	Lao National Front for Construction
LSFP	Lao-Swedish Forestry Programme
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry
MCT	Ministry of Commerce & Tourism
MCTPC	Ministry of Communications, Transport, Posts and Construction
meuang	District
MIC	Ministry of Information & Culture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MPH	Ministry of Public Health
NAFES	National Agriculture & Forestry Extension Service/MAF (Huay Nyang)
NAFRI	National Agriculture & Forestry Research Institute/MAF (Dong Dok)
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
NERI	National Economic Research Institute/CPC
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NR	National road
NTFPs	Non-timber forest products
NUOL	National University of the Lao PDR (Dong Dok)
NSC	National Statistics Center/CPC
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture & Forestry Office/MAF
PPA	Participatory poverty assessment
PPO	Provincial Planning Office/CPC
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committee
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDP	Village Development Plan
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

Introduction

The project began 19 May 2003 with fieldwork from September through November 2003, followed by data collation and analysis.

The National Economic Research Institute (NERI) under the Committee for Planning and Cooperation (CPC) implemented the project. The team was comprised of Vientiane-based staff from NERI, Institute for Cultural Research (ICR), Lao National Front for Construction (LNFC), National Science Council (NSC) and the Science Technology and Environment Agency (STEa). Staff from the provincial and district planning offices, culture and information offices and the provincial agriculture and forestry offices also took part.

NERI was actively involved in the selection of the international and domestic research advisors and by participating in reconnaissance visits, facilitating training, supervising the fieldwork and analysis and coordinating meetings and workshops while assuring they were documented for dissemination and feedback.

The fieldwork examined the livelihood systems in the study areas from the point of view of the participants in those livelihood systems. This participatory research combined the qualitative methods of anthropology and the quantitative methods of socio-economics.

The objective of the ‘project’ was to collect data on the planning methodology used by the provincial and district levels and further develop the concept of livelihood systems in Lao PDR by adding to the knowledge of those systems. This information was then to be shared with interested parties as a contribution to the development of methods for practical planning systems for rural development.

The objective the ‘study’ was to analyze and describe the existing livelihood systems of eight study villages in the provinces of Luang Nam Tha and Sekong by inquiring into the resources, opportunities, constraints and challenges of their livelihoods system performance and the examination of livelihood activities including the socio-cultural foundations of the particular ethnic group, gender issues, migration, resource use and culture change.

Methods and Approach

Livelihoods have been described as “the means, activities, entitlements and assets by which individuals make a living” (Chambers and Conway 1991). Assessing and analyzing livelihood systems in a geographically and ethnically diverse nation like Lao PDR requires an interdisciplinary and holistic approach. Livelihood systems evolve over time in adaptation to the bio-physical, socio-economic and institutional conditions of their ecosystems.

The actors within these systems have developed complex indigenous knowledge systems. They have elaborate ways to describe weather and seasons, land forms and their respective soils, rice varieties and other cultivated and wild plants, plant re-growth and soil regeneration in fallows and the seasonality of forest plants and animals. These categories are well defined and holistically consistent to the local area. The villagers understand quite well (although not in scientific terms) the conditions under which these plants and animals live and die. Their cultures have integrated such knowledge into well-developed belief systems with their own solutions for encountered problems.

A livelihood systems approach inquires into village and household livelihood systems in a holistic fashion, including crop production, livestock raising, fisheries, forestry, non-timber forest products, handicrafts and off-farm employment. This approach is based on household and community requirements in terms of food security, shelter, clothing, education, health care and energy. It is based on their existing livelihood systems including social organization and cultural behavior (including belief systems), gender relationships and division of labor, economic means of production, consumption and exchange. It uses ‘systems thinking’ that is comprised of elements interacting with each other, and where the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Using this approach we can anticipate unintended consequences, but to reiterate; this is an approach, not a blueprint.

The selected study areas included the Sing and Long districts of Luang Nam Tha Province and Tha Taeng and Kaleum districts of Sekong Province. Two districts were selected because they are designated poverty districts with livelihood systems representative of those in the uplands/highlands and had the usual number of development issues concerning livelihoods. The dominant ethnic group in each province was selected for inquiry (Akha and Katu) in their respective provinces.

Provincial and district selection was made based on the poverty criteria of the LECS98 and the provincial PPA designation (SPC/NSC 2001). The nature of the agro-ecological zones and the upland/highland livelihood systems were important considerations, as was ensuring ethnic group representation. The participation of interested provincial and district offices was also a consideration. The criteria for village selection included ethnic make up, size, livelihood characteristics, whether the village was an original or relocated village and distance from a major road. Households were purposively selected from the village’s own categorization of three socio-economic levels.

Because of the time constraints for fieldwork and the need for analysis, the study emphasized the village level in order to understand better how livelihoods fit into the larger contexts of migration, land allocation and opium eradication programs. The study villages traditionally functioned as unified entities within which the livelihood systems operate and the household data are meant to supplement the village level analysis. It is at the village level that the government targeted its intervention with the construction of infrastructure and public services.

Participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) methods were used to gather data and information.

Study Findings

1. The livelihood systems in both study areas are complex and upland rice-based systems under shifting cultivation¹. In Luang Nam Tha, villagers earned cash income from crops including sugarcane, corn and tea (59.7 percent), livestock (19.9 percent), NTFPs (10.4 percent) and off-farm employment (10.1 percent). In Sekong, villagers earned cash income from crops including corn, coffee, cardamon and cassava (46.1 percent), livestock (4.2 percent), NTFPs (47.9 percent) and off-farm employment (1.8 percent). Any interventions must consider these components, or market driven possibilities, which might fit into their livelihood systems.
2. Households in the study villages of both provinces reported generating a surplus of cash income over expenditures (excluding their rice deficits). In Luang Nam Tha this amounted to about Kip 3.8 million in cash income and Kip 2.5 million in expenditures for a surplus of Kip 1.3 million. In Sekong cash income was about Kip 3.8 million and expenditures of Kip 2.5 million for a surplus of Kip 2.9 million.

¹ All study findings refer to the eight study villages in Luang Nam Tha and the eight study villages in Sekong.

3. Rice self-sufficiency is inadequate in 15 study villages and the situation is reported to be worse than in previous years. This can be attributed both to natural population growth and growth due to in-migration. But plainly there is not enough agricultural land to cultivate sufficient paddy rice, upland rice and other crops.
4. Natural population growth rates are approximately 3.0 percent in Luang Nam Tha study villages and 3.6 percent in Sekong study villages as compared to the national average of 2.8 percent in 2000 NSC. This is almost at the crisis level. Exacerbating this, in many resettled villages, in-migration is threatening the overall population by further increasing land use pressure and increasing demand for public services.
5. The Lao language capacity of the Akha is very low in both Sing and Long districts with an average of less than 10 percent of the adult population being able to speak Lao, with even less than that being literate or numerate. The Akha still mostly communicate in their language and it must be used in training and education. On the other hand, the Lao capacity among the Katu in Sekong is comparatively better, but literacy and numeracy are still deficient.
6. Formal education for adults is quite low in both study areas. When schools are available children attend, but the attendance rates are low compared to the total number of village children. While there are schools in 13 of the study villages, attendance is low and drop out rates are high. The numbers of teachers are inadequate for the number of grades and scarce budgets are predominant. There is no mother tongue instruction in these schools or any subjects on livelihoods in the curriculum.
7. There has been some non-formal education for adults in both study areas, mostly concerning Lao language literacy and numeracy, but this is not enough for all who need training. There has also been training in agriculture, public health and income generating activities. But there is little training in the Akha and Katu languages.
8. Push factors influencing villagers from the study villages to migrate² included the lack of alternatives to opium cultivation (in Luang Nam Tha), insufficient rice, poor roads and communications, concern regarding human and animal health, lack of income generating opportunities and few public services. The pull factors enticing families included hopes for paddy land and land for cash crops, other income generating activities e.g. livestock, NTFPs, handicrafts, cottage industry, off-farm employment and access to markets and public services.
9. The main problem encountered with migration to the lowlands concerned inadequate available agricultural land and this led to conflicts with neighboring villages and earlier migrants. Another major problem was the incidence of human diseases including mosquito borne fevers, gastrointestinal tract diseases, parasites and upper respiratory diseases. Among new migrants, death rates were high in some villages.
10. Because of inadequate paddy land in all 15 relocated villages, households resorted to swidden cultivation of upland rice; however, the fallow periods were shortened because of population pressure or land allocation reducing yields. This is being compensated for by additional NTFP harvesting for consumption and sale (perhaps over harvesting) and attempting to increase other crops or livestock production or seeking off-farm employment.

² The study text (except when quoted) refers to migration of people and relocation of villages instead of resettlement. The study title was established prior to this decision being made.

11. All families who relocated had to bear two types of relocations costs, leaving property behind and establishing themselves in a new village. In Luang Nam Tha, the relocation costs were Kip 14.2 million and in Sekong, Kip 5.9 million. These costs must be accounted for when villagers are encouraged to move.
12. The traditional belief systems and customs of both ethnic groups are deep rooted and still mostly respected. Cultural changes are induced by changes in climate, ecosystems, economy, market exposure and government programs. The villagers are adapting them to the current changing situation whether in original or relocated villages. It is not the role of outsiders to change them. As in all cultures there are innovators who test and introduce changes and early adopters who demonstrate them. Outsiders sometimes perceive the villagers as backward, but the traditional beliefs are the basis for their behavior and any interventions should be built on them.
13. The Akha and Katu cultures are experiencing change through market exposure and induced by government policies. One of the key changes is that of the roles and functions of the traditional council of elders and other village organizations. Although these are quite different for the Akha and the Katu, the decline of their influence in official functions through the formal village administration is a destabilizing factor in the respective societies. These traditional positions and those of the clan leaders are under-used in development.
14. Both cultures practice elaborate rituals during the year in concert with their livelihood activities, especially the annual upland rice cycle. As outside interventions are planned these rituals, ceremonies and livelihood systems must be considered.
15. Small changes in gender roles for woman are starting to happen, but women still bear a disproportionate share of the burden of household work. Men do not appear to understand the implications for their society.
16. The cutting of trees in forest conservation areas (*paa sanguan*) continues in both Kaleum and Tha Taeng districts of Sekong. Village leaders reportedly feel quite helpless in the face of unabated logging and extraction of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and reported they did not to know their rights in relation to the forest and its products. They related that companies presented official-looking documents with signatures and stamps and they did not know how to react.
17. District officials and villagers were troubled by the poor state of the road into Kaleum from Sekong and into the four focal villages out from Tha Taeng. Companies took logs out during the wet season when the roads were saturated. The logging companies did not maintain the roads and individuals could not readily get products to market or conveniently travel to the hospitals.
18. Communities and households are increasingly interested in receiving government-sponsored public infrastructure and services with the hopes of improving their welfare and livelihoods. However, tight budgets and poorly trained staff in its district offices limit local government response.
19. All weather and access roads are important factors in livelihood systems, but they must be maintained if they are to have continuing value.
20. Regular government activities were limited because of budget shortfalls at the district and provincial levels. No emergency funds were available to assist newly relocated migrants in the case of disease epidemics.

21. In Luang Nam Tha the only original village (Sop Iii Kao) has a livelihoods system that is still quite robust and is able to meet the villager's needs while they cope with change. The performance of its swidden sub-system is healthy because of longer fallow periods so the forest remains rich in NTFPs contributing to consumption and income and the cultivation and sale of tea has begun to compensate for lost opium production. The other seven relocated study villages have had mixed success; however, there are positive signs. Chaphoukeun, Phiyu and Huay Na Kang are cultivating and selling field crops, especially sugarcane along with livestock rearing and off-farm employment, which generates a fair amount of cash income, and this helps with food security. In other villages (Phayaluang, Chaleunxay and Sompaa Mai) livelihood systems are not doing well. Inadequate agricultural land has proven to be a major constraint for all cropping sub-systems, e.g. swidden, upland field crops and paddy land. Livestock is still important for consumption, but because of distance to markets it does not really contribute much to household cash income. Relatively little forest land limits their access to NTFPs for both consumption and sale and puts their safety net at risk.
22. In Chavang Mai, a village near the China border, 22 new households overwhelmed the already crowded village in April 2003. Not only was there insufficient land for the new families, but the early settlers had difficulty with their food security and cash income. In addition to this, in October there was a disease outbreak among the later migrants and 8 out of 116 people died and then disease spread throughout the entire village. They can only survive with their swidden sub-systems, reliance on what little forest is nearby and meager cash income from off-farm employment in China.
23. In Sekong the livelihoods system performance has also been mixed. In Kaleum and two Bolovens Plateau villages (Thong Kong and Done Saa) declining productivity in the swidden systems still contribute to the overall performance of the system along with contributions from NTFPs. The two villages on the Bolovens also realize considerable cash income from the cultivation and sale of coffee and cardamon. This opportunity is not afforded to villages on the way up the Bolovens or to those in Kaleum. In all villages paddy rice cultivation contributes to overall livelihoods system performance, but it is still only available to some households. All Tha Taeng villages have off-farm employment opportunities that are not available in Kaleum. Handicrafts are becoming increasingly important in Tha Taeng because of the proximity to markets. Some villagers in Kaleum complained they had better opportunities to sell handicrafts when they were in their original Upper Kaleum villages. Animal husbandry has always been important for Katu livelihood systems, especially for consumption and ceremonial purposes. Now they are beginning to see the value as an economic enterprise. This is an important consideration for households in Tha Taeng because of the proximity to markets.

Development Planning Using a Livelihoods Systems Approach

A livelihoods system approach is useful in describing and analyzing the social systems in the villages and a tool for both strategic and development planning. It is the point of departure from which [we] can make relevant and incorporate the aspirations of the various and in particular, the intended beneficiaries (Nooyens and Meijers 2001).

A major reason for the study was its potential application to the development planning process. In technical terms this study is in fact a trial to begin to develop methods whereby a livelihoods system approach could later be adapted to district and provincial level planning efforts. The following are some of the key lessons from the study relative to planning.

Recommendations for Development Planning

1. Planning in both the uplands/highlands is essential before development activities are implemented. The livelihoods system approach is a comprehensive means to examine existing systems, opportunities and problems of villagers in the uplands/highlands.

A livelihoods approach or perspective is definitely a necessary condition in order for district and provincial planners to fully reflect the community livelihoods system in their plans. Participation of communities and households in priority setting of development activities is imperative to complement the livelihoods approach in planning and implementation.

2. Livelihoods systems have many components and dimensions with complex sets of interactions. Planning teams need to be representational to understand, plan and implement effective development interventions.

In order for livelihood systems to be properly understood and acted upon, multi and inter-disciplinary representation is needed on the planning team. District representatives of the planning offices and the key ministries of agriculture, health, education, culture and communications were represented on this study team. Also representatives of provincial and district Lao Women's Union and Lao National Front for Construction made valuable contributions.

3. Practical planning methods are needed for district and provincial planners.

A special project is needed to use the lessons learned from this study and apply them to the local planning process. This could be in the form of an action research project that would develop and test methods.

4. There are many types of programs assisting households and communities including integrated rural development, regular agricultural extension, poverty alleviation, opium poppy eradication and the reduction of shifting cultivation. Some projects in the two study provinces (e.g. GTZ, ACF, NCA, UNDP and EU) have been very successful in implementing activities. In all cases they have used a livelihoods system perspective in planning and implementing activities.

Therefore it is strongly recommended that such a livelihoods system approach be used before planning and implementing activities.

5. Cultures change naturally according to their environment, which includes markets, agro-ecosystems, technologies and climate. They also change as the result of outside interventions from government programs and projects.

When interventions are planned in rural areas, the cultural consequences of these interventions should be anticipated as much as possible. Local villagers, including respected elders or clan leaders with indigenous knowledge should be consulted.

6. Gender roles are changing with cultural and livelihoods. Programs and projects have already had an impact on this process.

There is an increasing need for gender awareness and skills training in all aspects of livelihoods including agriculture, NTFPs, livestock rearing, fisheries, handicrafts, off-farm employment and public health.

7. Neither provincial or district officials have any experience in research nor does central level staff know how they should support and backstop a research effort at the field level.

Training is required in research methods, livelihood system approaches and socio-cultural-economic concepts for provincial and district staff as well as training for central level staff so they can help to backstop. Larger donors and NGOs have roles in assisting the process.

8. Roads must be constructed with a purpose in mind, that is to say they must lead to market opportunities, hospitals, schools and be a conduit for outreach of better services to villages.

The planning of roads should include considerations of all relevant sectors including agriculture, commerce, public health and education.

9. This study and others have elaborated the push-pull factors influencing villager's decisions to migrate including factors that force them to return to their original villages.

Development planners should be aware of these factors when planning development interventions either in the upland villages or in the lowlands. Push factors are those deemed by villagers as limiting [in the original villages] and are in fact the challenge of developing those villages in situ. Pull factors are those that attract people to the lowlands and usually concern the hopes for access to public infrastructure and government services. Planners should address these in either the case of trying to improve development in the original villages or to better realize the hopes and aspirations of those villagers when they relocate to the lowlands.

10. As people migrate to the lowlands, they usually relocate near existing lowland villages. They invariably experience conflict over resources (especially land) with either neighboring villages or with earlier migrants in the new village.

Conflicts can be anticipated and should be adequately addressed by planners. Then line agencies should assist communities to resolve conflicts that arise.

11. Poverty alleviation is a high priority for both the Lao PDR Government and donor agencies. The very nature of poverty is complex and its alleviation is multi-dimensional. It relates to all aspects of livelihoods, especially the socio-cultural.

Poverty reduction must be demand-driven and clearly linked to market realities. For the government response it requires better cooperation not only of four line ministries (MAF, MPH, MOE and MTCPC) and their roles in poverty reduction but also the inclusion of other agencies, such as LNFC, MIC and LWU

Lessons Learned from Livelihoods Study

1. Human capacity building in the uplands for children in school and adults in non-formal agricultural extension, public health, literacy and numeracy programs is dependent on villager's understanding the subject matter. The choice of language of instruction is of utmost importance.

Mother tongue instruction is crucial for isolated ethnic groups like the Akha and is absolutely essential for adult education, especially for women. It is also necessary for young children who have not been exposed to the Lao language during their primary schooling.

2. Most children in the uplands/highlands will stay there and follow similar livelihoods and lifestyles as those of their parents. Virtually everything they learn comes from their parents and grandparents.

There should be courses in the primary school curriculum on appropriate livelihood activities including enhanced performance of swiddens, improved animal husbandry and aquaculture.

3. Up until now, agriculture extension has failed to look at improving the overall livelihoods system.

This can be rectified by instruction in enhanced performance of swiddens, improved cropping systems, agroforestry systems, improved upland rice varieties and other similar programs. Other subjects that should be put into extension programs are market oriented production, animal nutrition and health, aquaculture, horticulture, sustainable NTFP production and harvesting.

4. The poor implementation of land and forest allocation programs in many places has been identified [including this study, the PPA (SPC/NSC 2001) and several others (e.g. Decourtieux 2004; Evrard 2004)] as being a contributor to poverty. Inadequate agricultural land and shortened fallows of 3-5 years has resulted in reduced soil fertility, weed and pest infestation and reduced biodiversity – all leading to decreased performance of swidden sub-systems. The shortened fallow period is not sufficient for soils to regenerate and is definitely not sustainable. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has stated that the pioneering shifting cultivation needs to be eliminated [at the Sida/MAF Seminar in Luang Prabang in January 2004 (van Gansberghe)].

The implementation of the current land allocation and shifting cultivation programs must be re-evaluated to allow for additional agricultural land and subsequently to lengthen fallow periods to be in line with time tested scientific principles of soil regeneration.

5. Because of inadequate agricultural land in general and increasing vulnerability of worse-off households, many are forced to go into the forest to over harvest NTFPs.

Increased effort should be made to provide agricultural extension to educate villagers concerning sustainable use of NTFPs.

6. Villages have a tremendous responsibility for the management of their forest resources. If they allow tree cutting in some forest categories (e.g. protected or conservation forests), they are severely chastised by officials. Devious logging companies present official looking documents

to village leaders and then cut trees in protected forests. The village development councils (VDCs) are confused over their rights related to community forest management.

The DAFO and PAFO programs on community forest management should better inform the VDCs about their rights and responsibilities. Information should be shared with them on the consequences to the ecosystems and livelihoods of inappropriate cutting.

7. Local economies are rapidly changing with planned liberalization. Villagers, even those in remote villages, are becoming increasingly market responsive. This results in many changes and impacts e.g. the reduction of handicraft production, changes in behavior and culture, trade relationships and road accessibility to both markets and public services. Villager's understanding of the dynamics of markets is still lacking – leading to many unscrupulous dealings with intermediaries, traders and their representatives.

Villagers need to become better educated about market development. This includes the fundamentals of supply and demand, competition, input and output markets, seasonal price fluctuations, backward and forward linkages, the dynamics of group production for agro-industry, quality, timing and contractual agreements.

8. Government officials, especially those in agriculture and commerce lack adequate knowledge and skills to support villages and households in a market economy. For example, many agriculture and forestry officials still promote centrally planned production technologies with little or no awareness of responsiveness to market requirements.

Officials need additional training on how markets function and how they can assist communities and households.

9. While the teams were very accomplished in socio-cultural research, they had less experience in socio-economic research. Their database management computer skills were extremely weak. Because provincial and district government staff have little or no research experience, training team members on the approach, methods and data management is extremely important.

The socio-cultural-economic livelihood concepts and research methods must be carefully presented to team members in order to foster a working understanding of the livelihoods approach. Ample time should be allotted for this. At least three months should be devoted to training.

10. The research team for the study was divided into four groups of about five persons per team. The team had 14 Vientiane-based individuals.

The team was too large making logistics difficult.

11. Data entry and management were immense challenges for the team.

Special efforts and technical assistance are needed for data entry and management in the research process.

12. The timing of the fieldwork did not fit the villager's activity cycle because it was at the end of the wet season when they are beginning to harvest their short duration rice crops.

Research activity in Lao PDR must coincide with village calendars.

13. Since most of the upland/highland villagers are from ethnic groups, Lao language abilities vary considerably, especially for women.

An assessment of Lao language capability in the target areas must be made as part of the planning process. Based on this assessment, translators must be carefully selected and trained to assist. Along with language capability is the prior understanding of the differing worldviews of the translators and the target population from that of the dominant Lao Lum culture. This also must be considered when trying to obtain information and participation. This training takes time.

14. Upland and highland societies are dynamic and undergoing rapid social, cultural and economic changes from their traditional forms of social organization and resulting behaviors, into something new. These transitions are at the same time part of the old and the new.

It must be remembered that ethnic groups have not only existing livelihood systems but also socio-cultural-economic values, attitudes, beliefs and behavioral patterns. Their existing systems are the basis for all proposed intervention changes recommended by the government and projects and are not simply obstacles to be overcome. Their systems have to be built upon and not discarded as being backward.

Chapter 1: Project and Study Methods

Objectives and Scope of the Project

The objective of the ‘project’³ was to collect data on the planning methodology used by the provincial and district levels and further develop the concept of livelihood systems in Lao PDR by adding to the knowledge of those systems. This information was then to be shared with interested parties as a contribution to the development of methods for practical planning systems for rural development through a series of provincial and national workshops whose participants would include Ministries and agencies of the GOL (e.g. central, provincial and district levels) as well as international donors and NGOs.

The objective the ‘study’ was to analyze and describe the existing livelihood systems of eight study villages in the provinces of Luang Nam Tha and Sekong by inquiring into the resources, opportunities, constraints and challenges of their livelihoods system performance and the examination of the socio-cultural foundations of the particular ethnic group, gender issues, migration, resource use and culture change.

Study Team Composition

The National Economic Research Institute (NERI)⁴ under the Committee for Planning and Cooperation (CPC) implemented the project. The team was comprised of Vientiane-based staff from NERI, Institute for Cultural Research (ICR), Lao National Front for Construction (LNFC), National Science Council (NSC) and the Science Technology and Environment Agency (STEA). Staff from the provincial and district planning offices, culture and information offices and the provincial agriculture and forestry offices took part. Mr Houmphanh Rattavong (Domestic Research Advisor) and Dr Charles Alton (International Research Advisor) guided the team.

Study Approach

Provincial and district selection was made based on the poverty criteria, LECS98 or provincial PPA designation (SPC/NSC 2001). The nature of the agro-ecological zones and the upland/highland livelihood systems were important considerations, as was ensuring ethnic group representation. The participation of interested provincial and district offices was also a consideration. The criteria for village selection included ethnic make up, size, livelihood characteristics, whether the village was an original or relocated village and distance from a major road. The project stages included desk study on issues concerning livelihoods, ethnic minorities and gender in Lao PDR and elsewhere; stakeholder discussions with government officials, government technical staff, Lao Women’s Union, Lao National Front for Construction, NGOs and donors; fieldwork including consultative workshops with provincial and district stakeholders; write report on findings and request feedback during a seminar to review findings 27 April 2004. The project started 19 May 2003.

Methodological Considerations

Livelihoods systems are very complex and should be examined over a number of seasons. Given the short duration of this study, the results may be considered preliminary. For comparative purposes, only one ethnic group (even though the predominant group) could be included from each area. To ensure

³ The project is referred to as the study.

⁴ NERI was actively involved in the study from the beginning.

the study could be used as a practical document for stakeholders, it does not include extensive discussion on livelihood systems in general, but focuses on relevant issues arising from the desk study and fieldwork.

The scope of the study was limited to only the eight study villages in each of the two provinces. Because of the limited opportunity for fieldwork from September through November - being at the end of the wet season when many roads are still impassable - it made it difficult to study many original villages. The study looked at only a few of the most pertinent infrastructure and government services.

Neither does the study discuss specific mechanisms for tackling the material poverty of ethnic minorities in Lao PDR. Program interventions are of obvious importance for all groups and include access to land and tenure security, food security, environmental issues, water and sanitation, social services, healthcare, education, housing and infrastructure. It is taken for granted that all poverty alleviation efforts targeted to indigenous populations include some of these elements.

An early draft of the report was presented to a number of CPC departments in March 2004. The feedback was that additional micro level studies are needed and confirmed that the livelihood systems approach is relevant for effective planning at the district and provincial levels and it needs to be adopted for implementation at the local level.

Details on Project Stages

Reconnaissance

Following consultations with NERI, UNDP, ECHO and other organizations, three provinces were visited to conduct a preliminary reconnaissance of possible research sites (Luang Nam Tha, Sekong and Attapeu). Contacts were made through the Provincial Planning Offices and other provincial and district agencies were met including the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices and the Provincial Lao National Front for Construction. Provincial projects with active livelihood components were visited during the reconnaissance.

Projects Contacted

Informal discussions were held with projects implemented by NAFRI and CIAT (SDC) in Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang, SCC Natura (Sida) in Luang Prabang and Oudomxay, ICRAF in the IUARP and IRRI (SDC) in the north. A number of NGOs were contacted including CARE, Concern Worldwide and Consortium. Provincial projects with active livelihood components were contacted several times.

- Food Security Project (ACF) in Long
- Long Alternative Development Project (LADP)
- ADRA and the Food for Work Project (GTZ) in Attapeu
- Sekong Ethnic People's Development (SEP-Dev) Project - UNDP
- Food Security Project for Minorities in Kaleum – Action Against Hunger (ACF)
- Integrated Rural Development Programme for the Mountainous Areas of the Northern Lao PDR (Lao-German Technical Cooperation) - GTZ

Following the selection of Luang Nam Tha and Sekong as study sites, contacts were renewed with the Governor and other key provincial offices including the Provincial and District Planning Offices, Agriculture and Forestry Offices, Information and Culture Offices, Lao National Front for Construction and Lao Women's Union.

Site Selection

A total of eight villages were selected in two provinces based on poverty levels and aspects of their rural livelihoods. The rationale for the selection of a single (majority) ethnic group in each study area was that it would provide better comparability across villages. It had been intended to select four original⁵ and four relocated villages in each province because traditional villages were assumed to be more subsistence-oriented and the relocated villages more market-oriented.⁶

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

The concepts of the rapid rural appraisal have existed for some time, having been adapted from field-tested methods in rural sociology and anthropology and modified through interaction with other disciplines including agricultural economics, agronomy, animal science and ecology. The concepts were formalized in the late 1970s, especially in the work of Robert Chambers at the University of Sussex. Although it has been known by a number of different names, RRA is the term most frequently used. Conferences on RRA as a methodology were held in Sussex (1978 and 1979) and then later at Khon Kaen, Thailand (1985). Since then it has been modified into the participatory rural appraisal and become a commonly used tool in development.⁷

The heart of the RRA/PRA is the semi-structured interview SSI, which allows interviewers to guide informants through a series of question guidelines over a range of topics concerning their livelihoods systems. This is followed up by probing for explanations or details, which gives the interviewer the chance to redirect questions if the informant has drifted too far away from the original topic. Ideally the language of the target ethnic group should be used at all times.

The data for this study came from village statistics collected by government departments, village level watershed data, purposive sampling of household data by interviewing selected families and topical focus groups having an interest in livelihoods including women's and men's groups, production groups and hunting and gathering groups.

The Village Development Committee and other key informants were met to discuss the overall performance of village agricultural livelihood systems and subsequent issues including food security, comparisons in food security in 2003 based on WS02 upland rice production, field crop production and paddy rice production (where relevant), to the situation in 2002 and 2001. These meetings also collected limited information on their dependence on the forest for food, fodder and wood products.

Principles

One of the basic assumptions of RRA is that situations should be studied as systems, including all the components and their relational and hierarchical arrangements, built on an iterative process of rapid and progressive learning from respondents and secondary data, using inquiry that is exploratory and interactive. This systematic dialogue makes use of indigenous knowledge of villagers, opinions of officials and others. Information from respondents with differing points of view may be triangulated with the responses of others, existing data and information and allows inquiry at different levels of systems being studied (e.g. household, village and district).

⁵ The fieldwork occurred at the end of the wet season so most original villages were inaccessible.

⁶ This did not turn out to be the case. All the villages were at different places on the subsistence-commercial spectrum – mostly based on their proximity to a weather road and markets.

⁷ RRA, as it is presently practiced, owes much to the "Sondeo Approach" used by Peter Hildebrand in Latin America, by Robert Rhoades (International Potato Center in Peru) and colleagues, by CIMMYT scientists in Africa and Latin America to improve on-farm research and extension. RRA has been used in Asia since the early 1980s when it was used extensively in Ford and Rockefeller funded projects in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. It was later used in USAID. It was used to facilitate better dialogue, needs assessment and participation in the areas of forest or water resource management, irrigation, farming systems research and extension and rural development.

The RRA approach combines indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge from individuals from different disciplines. During the course of the appraisal, new information generates new questions and old hypotheses may be progressively revised.

Compared to the rigidities of surveys with fixed questionnaires and schedules, flexibility and conscious use of judgment are essential to RRA. There should be ample time to pursue questions and new information learned during interviews. Researchers should be continually aware of potential sources of bias in questioning and be innovative in avoiding them. As outsiders, it is important for researchers to 'blend in' with villagers as much as possible in order to understand their situations. Having respect for indigenous local knowledge and listening to local ways of expression are important as well as adjusting approaches, techniques and questions to fit local situations.

Methods, Tools and Techniques

The use of pre-existing information where available in appraisal preparation is desirable (existing reports, maps, aerial photographs and government statistics). Subtopics and checklists were prepared before the study after considering existing secondary data and information and a team brainstorming session. These subtopics and checklists are used as guidelines for team members as they interview, being revised as new information is acquired.

Semi-structured interviews focus on relevant subtopics based on study objectives. From an initial set of guidelines, focused questions are asked followed by probing questions on earlier responses and the types of knowledge revealed by the respondents. Probing questions usually reveal information unanticipated by researchers. Probing is an essential part of semi-structured interviewing.

Following each village field study, raw data were compiled for later analysis. Field analysis each day involved dialogue between team members discussing interpretations of the compiled data, resolving difficult questions, putting relevant data into spreadsheet summaries and generally examining the significance of the material. Initially, five days of fieldwork in each village was followed by five days of initial analysis and write-up at the district town⁸.

Respondent Selection Process

At all levels of the study key informants were those with special knowledge and expertise in livelihood systems activities, village history and administration, trading and transportation. Both formal and non-formal village leaders were included. In all cases the current village head was interviewed along with other members of the Village Development Council (or equivalent).

Village households were categorized as better-off, middle and worse-off.⁹ Having enough rice to eat and a surplus for sale (in most years), sufficient available labor usually characterizes better-off households. Worse-off households are those who experience a rice deficit for at least eight months per year, have no paddy land, (perhaps have some garden land available and livestock) and insufficient family labor for crop cultivation. The mid-level families are characterized as having sufficient rice for family consumption for at least 8-12 months in better years and 4-8 months in bad years.

⁸ The average ratio for fieldwork interviews is approximately three days data and information compilation for every one day in the field.

⁹ The categorizations within each village are relative and according to the village's own classification. The worse-off socio-economic group in one village may have a higher level of well-being than the better-off in another village.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork in Luang Nam Tha was conducted from 9 September through 3 October and in Sekong from 27 October through 26 November. In both provinces, the first week was spent training the local team and orientation for Vientiane-based team members. The draft question guidelines were revised to fit the local situation. Final logistics for the first set of four villages were completed including official notification of villages by district government authorities, preparation of food and other essentials for the stay. Fieldwork was conducted in the first set of villages for five days in the second week. Six sets of semi-structured in the form of question guidelines were administered (Table 1).

After five days in the village, the four teams returned to the district town or provincial capital to begin the write-up of field notes and the collation and entry of data. The question guidelines were revised according to the experiences and lessons of the first set of villages.

At the end of the fieldwork in each province, a report on preliminary findings was given at small seminar to the Governor's representatives' of key district and provincial offices and other stakeholders. The Luang Nam Tha seminar was held in Sing and the Sekong seminar in the provincial capital.¹⁰

Table 1: Question Guidelines

Question Guidelines	Informants	Comments
Overall village	Village head and Village Development Committee	Infrastructure and government services, innovation and change management
Socio-cultural	Village elders	Also looking at changes
Original village	Village elders and others	Conditions in original village(s)
Migration	Informal leaders at the time of migration representing earlier and later migrations	Emphasizing the process migrations by earlier and later groups
Gender	Women's and men's group	Emphasis on activity roles and time allocation
Household	Two households each from three socio-economic groups both earlier and later migrants for a total of 12 households plus possible additional interesting households	Stratify villages into early and later migrant households into three socio-economic groups

¹⁰ This workshop was accordingly larger.

Chapter 2: Livelihoods Systems Analysis

Introduction

Livelihoods have been described as "the means, activities, entitlements and assets by which individuals make a living." (Chambers and Conway 1991). The major premise is that livelihoods must be studied as systems, that is, all of the components with their relational and hierarchical ordering, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The livelihoods approach is needs based and focuses on what households have to do to satisfy their basic needs, which center on the four classic basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and medicine.

The livelihood systems concept is a construct of social scientists and technicians, external to those systems, describing and analyzing those systems in order to intervene or to assist in their improvement. Livelihoods systems have certain characteristics:

- they are holistic and comprised of many elements that interact with each other and where the whole is greater than the sum of its components;
- the comprised elements include the bio-physical, socio-cultural, economic and institutional, which in turn interact with each other;
- households within these livelihood systems use many strategies in their enterprises e.g. cropping, livestock and fish rearing, handicrafts, off-farm employment and petty trading;
- the actors within livelihood systems integrate the elements;
- the core of a livelihoods system are production systems, technologies and enterprise activities;
- the underlying rationale of these systems is that they are needs based¹¹, in response to the food security and income requirements of communities and families; and
- each livelihoods system has an innate set of coping mechanisms by which households and communities recover from stresses and shocks to their livelihoods system.

Within the development community, a concern is increasingly being expressed (including by the UNDP¹²) about sustainable development, which defines sustainable livelihoods as "the capability of individuals to make a living and improve their quality of life without jeopardizing the livelihood options of others, either now or in the future."

Livelihoods System Approach (LSA)

The livelihoods system approach has to consider all the livelihoods system characteristics mentioned above. A minimum understanding of any potential target population's livelihoods system by government agencies, NGOs and donor agencies is absolutely necessary before assistance interventions are planned and implemented. The potential impact of interventions should be anticipated and might include 1) classic agricultural extension activities including the improved performance of any of the components of the livelihoods system 2) the construction of infrastructure like roads, hydropower dams or irrigation schemes 3) the relocation of old villages to new locations for whatever reasons 4) implementation of an opium poppy elimination program 5) implementation of a land allocation program and 6) poverty alleviation program.

¹¹ The livelihoods system activities have to produce and gather food for subsistence and generate income from activities e.g. cropping, vegetable cultivation, fruit tree cultivation, livestock rearing, fisheries, hunting and gathering of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), handicrafts, small shops and trading and off-farm employment.

¹² UNDP Sustainable Livelihood website.

Before interventions are contemplated, the planners must be aware that any livelihoods system has an existing system that must be understood before trying to change it to something else and there are certain issues that need to be addressed including control, access and distribution issues, decision-making issues and equitability among the various actors (Nooyens and Meijers 2001). Within Lao PDR the livelihoods system approach has focused on food security, gender and coping mechanisms (NAFRI 2003a and b). This study further examined coping mechanisms and added the dimensions of ethnicity and culture change.

Needs Based

Any social system has certain needs that it must fulfill in order to satisfy the actors in the system. This study considers the basic needs of livelihood systems as the four fundamentals of food, clothing, shelter and medicine (health care) to which we can also add energy, education and savings to meet future needs. Meeting these needs allows households and communities maximize the performance of its livelihoods system (UNDP, NHDR Report 2001).

Food Security

Food first is one of the principles of rural livelihood systems in Lao PDR. This may mean the production for subsistence or income from which food can be purchased. Initially, for many upland groups, there is a preference for rice and other starchy staples including roots and tubers. For lowlanders rice is preferred, but for many ethnic groups, especially the Mon-Khmer, have preferred wild roots and tubers as their starchy staples.

As groups become more agricultural they began to cultivate other crops (e.g. cassava, taro and yams) for their own consumption. It has only been recently that rice has become a status staple among some ethnic minorities as they are exposed to the dominant Lao Lum culture.

For many, it means consuming rice until supplies are nearly depleted, then they start to mix rice with corn or even cassava to extend their supplies. Once the rice is depleted, families substitute corn, cassava or taro porridge and perhaps supplement it with wild roots and tubers, the primary one being koi. They then produce commodities or seek off-farm employment to generate cash in order to purchase rice and other food. The commodities for sale could be crops, livestock, NTFPs and handicrafts.

The forest contributes significantly to the food security of virtually all villagers. It has been estimated (Alton 1997) that 60-70 percent of most rural household's food comes from the forest. Johnson (2003) in a Luang Nam Tha study reasserts the importance of wildlife as a protein source in village diets. Jutta Krahn (2003) in her nutritional studies in Sekong verifies the necessity of traditional foods as a part of villager's diets, providing carbohydrates, protein, niacin, calcium, iron, copper, zinc, beta-carotene and other vitamins.

Ethnicity and Culture

The dictionary¹³ defines culture as the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought. Obviously, it permeates all dimensions of any society, including ethnic groups with their common social structures, cultures, belief systems and languages.

Ethnicity and culture are the glue that keeps livelihood systems together. For all practical purposes, individuals interact with their bio-physical environment and they adapt their cultures and belief systems to fit into these ecosystems. All ethnic groups in Lao PDR have evolved technologies from their indigenous knowledge systems to support them in practicing their livelihoods. Families and households maximize their functions as they have been influenced both as members of groups and as individuals by their values and belief systems. On this basis they make decisions concerning what to

13 American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition, WordStar Corporation, 1993.

produce and consume, how to maximize their production based on perceived family and household benefits, benefits to the community and a feasting system, which increases ritual power to certain individuals (usually those who are better-off).¹⁴

Gender

Gender relations are crucial to any livelihoods system since it is the basis for a division of labor among family and household members. This has quite serious implications for women in ethnic groups who practice patrilocal marriage patterns and patrilineal inheritance patterns.

Women play an essential role in livelihood systems. In addition to household work, they are involved in the annual swidden cycles of agriculture along with home gardening, the gathering of wild fruits, vegetables, roots and tubers, fishing, feeding small livestock and making handicrafts. Women's workload is considerable and their opportunities are fewer than for men.

Coping Mechanisms

Lao farm families have well-defined coping mechanisms when their livelihoods system fails to meet household or community needs. Concern Worldwide (2003) has studied indigenous coping mechanisms in disaster management. In addition to natural disasters there are stresses and shocks caused by population pressure, human diseases and parasites and market variability. Any stresses and shocks affecting human labor in these societies makes them even more vulnerable because it affects their capability to hunt, fish, carry out agricultural activities, engage in off-farm activities, produce handicrafts or be involved in small trading. When illness debilitates human capital, subsistence levels cannot be sustained.

According to a Concern Worldwide study on coping mechanisms in disaster management (Brahimi and Keophet 2002), "long term trends are rendering indigenous coping strategies less and less effective and thus are increasing the vulnerability of the poor." Changes brought about by population growth, expansion of a market economy and relocation to new environments have placed tremendous strains on communities and household's ability to adapt and cope. They must increasingly rely on elements in their livelihoods system that they can either trade or sell to buy consumer goods, medicines and schooling for their children. As they become exposed to markets, price instability and uncertain agreements with strangers, they are subsequently more vulnerable to shocks.

Parts of these coping mechanisms are what are commonly called safety nets. To typical farmers the predominant safety net when their economic survival is threatened is that of resorting to forest resources for food and traditional medicines, that is non-timber forest products (NTFPs). In fact, most upland farm families rely on the forest for 60-70 percent of their regular food supplies, let alone in times of crises. These foods include wild roots and tubers, wild fruits and vegetables, herbs for food and medicines and wildlife (e.g. mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and fish), which are all important for the protein portion of diets. Thus, it is essential that the robustness of villager's safety nets, especially the viability of forest resources be protected for times of crises.

Poverty

From a PPA approach (SPC/NSC 2001), subjective responses from the poor are different from those of government, other organizations or academics. In general, indigenous categories describe almost a state of destitution. The PPA points out that linguistically there is difficulty with the English word 'poverty' in both the Lao language and of other ethnic groups.

In the Lao language, poor (*thuk*) is the condition of suffering arising from the human condition as opposed to a physically defined condition as in English, where the etymology of poverty derives from two Indo-European roots 'to produce' and 'little'. In Khmou, the term means 'unfortunate', an attribute associated with fate rather than economic status. We may assume that each ethnic group has

14 This follows on the seminal work of Dr Thomas Kirsch, *Feasting and Social Oscillation*.

similarly independent associations with the word. In other words, qualitatively, we want to understand, to the extent possible, how each group understands and experiences poverty. In the Katu language, the word for poor is (*boyit*). It suggests that a family has no paddy land, little upland (*hai*), no large animals, a small house, tattered clothes, being sick without medicine and having little cash.

The PPA found the main causes of poverty to be linked to household rice consumption and livestock. The root causes were related to natural disasters that periodically affect the agro-ecosystems and economic shocks caused by market volatility and program implementation like land and forest allocation. The PPA reports increasing rice shortages due to shortened fallow cycles and subsequent soil degeneration, declining biodiversity, excessive hunting and gathering of forest products and increasing epidemics of crop pests and diseases leading to decreased rice yields. Livestock rearing is important both as a food source and as assets for periods of need (e.g. illnesses, weddings, festivals and ceremonies). Villagers are increasingly vulnerable to livestock pests and diseases.

The PPA states that “the combination of low rice yields plus livestock disease places a double strain on villagers leaving them with no recourse other than the increased exploitation of natural resources or performing labor for others in exchange for rice or cash with which to purchase rice.” Then the PPA concludes that:

From the point of view of the villagers in the assessment it is clear that poverty in Laos is ‘new poverty,’ not an endemic condition. Poverty is the result of events external to the villager over which he or she has no control, especially, weather, war, resettlement, poorly implemented development programs and livestock disease. And, because of the externality of causality, poverty is thus associated with calamity, misfortune, fate and karma; hence, its substance is both physical and spiritual. Also, poverty in Laos is not synonymous with hunger. Abundant natural resources have provided sustenance for poor villagers but resources are showing signs of dwindling through over-exploitation in search of food or cash with which to purchase food and to meet the new expenses associated with health, education and the market. Some poor villagers have become depressed, despondent or have turned to opium, but the overwhelming majority of the poor are trying to make the most of a bad situation and still live in hope of finding solutions to their livelihood problems.

This study did not look at poverty directly but examined issues identified in the PPA.

Livelihoods Systems Performance

Systems contain elements, which are functionally related to each other and have weaker relationships with elements of other systems. Systems have boundaries, within which elements interact, exhibiting a distinct behavior, responding to stimuli as a whole even though only one component is stimulated. Systems have certain properties and have definite hierarchies, which are nested within each other (Checkland 1981). Agro-ecosystems link two hierarchies, the ecology of natural ecosystems to human social systems.

As humans practiced agriculture, they linked natural ecosystems with human social systems into what is referred to as agro-ecosystems. A number of profound changes are involved in the transformation of a natural ecosystem into an agro-ecosystem through human modification and management. Agricultural system boundaries, especially bio-physical, become clearly defined and the relationships with elements and other systems become more focused. While the system experiences the loss of natural flora and fauna, it becomes more complex with the introduction of human intervention and becomes an agro-socio-economic-ecological system or agro-ecosystem (Conway 1985).

The performance of an agro-ecosystem or one of its livelihood systems can be viewed in terms of the four agro-ecosystem properties of productivity, stability, sustainability and equitability (Conway 1983, 1985a). These are adapted after Conway (1986) and defined below.

Productivity refers to the incremental product or output as the result of an additional unit of a resource or input (e.g. land, labor, capital or energy). The actors of the system can then use this increment to the system. It can be measured in terms of physical outputs per unit of input including agricultural yields, biomass, reproductive potential, social, financial or economic returns.

Stability refers to the degree to which productivity of a system adapts (e.g. resists or recovers) to disturbing factors from outside the system. Such factors may be environmental (e.g. climate or pests), it may be the economic conditions of the market or it may have be the result of government policies. Many times these are referred to as stresses and perturbations. Physical variations in yield can be by area, year or season. Economic variations in returns can be caused by output or input price fluctuations, changes in the terms of trade, changes in technology or changes in factor input availability. Stability can be measured by the reciprocal of the coefficient of variation of productivity.

Sustainability refers to the ability of the system to maintain its productivity when subject to stresses¹⁵ (regular and sometimes continuous small predictable disturbances) and shocks¹⁶ (irregular, infrequent, relatively large and unpredictable disturbance).

Equitability refers to how evenly the productivity of an agro-ecosystem is distributed among its human beneficiaries. This includes how the distribution of products (food, fiber, resources or income), are shared among the population of an area. It can be measured by statistical distributions or by such tools as the Gini coefficient (Conway 1986).

¹⁵ Examples of stresses may be reduced soil fertility because of shorter fallows, increased erosion, fewer pest predators, less wildlife, depredation of forest habitat, increased population pressures and increased demand for forest products.

¹⁶ Examples of perturbations are the effects of flash floods or rare droughts, new pests, a sharp decrease in world prices for a commodity and disease epidemics among human populations.

Chapter 3: Government Policies Related to the Uplands/Highlands

Policy Framework

There is a number of interrelated government policies that affect upland/highland livelihood systems gathered under the umbrella of poverty eradication, which is the government's top priority.

The policy framework for the war on poverty is the National Poverty Eradication Programme or NPEP. The NPEP was presented to the Eighth Roundtable Meeting between donors and the government in Vientiane held on 4-5 September 2003. The plan defines poverty provinces, districts and villages. It lays out a strategy to promote access to agriculture and forest technology, markets through roads and information improvement, social services, human resource development and financial resources. The GOL emphasizes bottom-up initiatives. At present there are a number of initiatives to assess poverty in rural areas.

The NPEP fits into the current National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) or five-year plan running from 2001-2005. The NSED has several objectives related to development in the uplands/highlands and thus related to poverty reduction. Among them are support for food security, commercial agriculture production, rural development, infrastructure development, external economic relations and access to services. In 2000, the Government prepared a plan for decentralization (PM01) that calls for establishment of the province as the strategic unit, the district as the planning unit and the village as the implementation unit. This is the grass-roots basis from which initiatives should be made.

The policies enunciated below are nested in a package that addresses the challenges, problems and development of the uplands/highlands. The national ethnic minority policy sets the stage for development in the uplands/highlands, which are predominantly populated with ethnic minority groups. The foremost policies affecting them are the eradication of shifting cultivation and opium poppy cultivation, usually within swidden systems. In concert with the Government's interest in establishing of sedentary¹⁷ livelihood systems in the uplands, land and forest allocation as well as village consolidation programs affect the villagers. Two other programs affecting these villages are the decentralization policy and the regulations on aquatic and wildlife management.

Ethnic Minority Policy

The concept of a multi-ethnic society has been an integral part of this Government's policies since 1975, where it has exhibited two themes 1) modernization, which many times implies acculturation¹⁸ and 2) national security. This has been stated a number of times and formalized in 1981 in what was referred to as Resolution 8 of the Political Bureau of the Party and then the subsequent *The Resolution of the Political Bureau Concerning the Affairs of Various Minorities, Especially the Hmong Minority*.

This has set the stage for the institutionalizing of full rights for ethnic minorities in the Constitution of 1991 in which Article 8 of the Constitution expressly states:

The State will carry out a policy of unity and equality between the various ethnic groups. All ethnic groups have the right to preserve and improve their own traditions and culture and those of the nation. Discrimination between ethnic groups is forbidden. The State will carry out every means in order to continue to improve and raise the economic and social level of all ethnic groups.

¹⁷ These proposed systems are envisioned as similar to those practiced in lowlands agro-ecosystems on well-defined land plots for individual households, usually based on burned paddy rice fields and orchards with distinct boundaries.

¹⁸ This has actually been an emphasis of a number of individuals within the GOL rather than overt policy (Chamberlain and Panh 1999).

In the Constitution ethnic minorities are referred to a number of times (Chamberlain and Panh 1999):

- Lao PDR is a unified nation with indivisible ethnic groups.
- All power is of the people, by the people and for the use of the multi-ethnic population.
- The right to be owners of the nation is exercised by multi-ethnic people and is guaranteed by the political system.
- The mass organizations are the gathering point for solidarity and mobilization for citizens of all backgrounds and all ethnicities.
- The state will provide a policy of unity and equality between different ethnic groups. All ethnic groups have the right to maintain their traditions and improve their culture and that of the nation. The state will use all means in order to improve the economic and social levels of all groups.
- The economic system is for the purpose of improving the living standard and spirituality of the multi-ethnic peoples.
- All Lao citizens, regardless of their sex, social position, education, beliefs or ethnicity are equal before the law.

Then subsequently a policy was developed in 1992 called the, *Resolution of the Party Central Organization Concerning Ethnic Minority Affairs in the New Era* and signed by President Kaysone. This is not only the basis for GOL policy concerning ethnic minorities, but also for many other upland policies relating to the uplands/highlands. It states that the GOL's role is, "to push strongly for increased production and open channels for distribution in order to change the 'natural' or 'semi-natural' economic system towards one of production of goods, promote and expand the strengths of uplands area and improve the quality of life of the citizens". From this resolution it is effortless to see the other policies, which dove tail, e.g. policy on eradication of shifting cultivation, agriculture and forestry policies, agriculture and forestry allocation, taxation and credit. It also was a work plan for the Lao National Front for Construction (LNFC).

Eradication of Shifting Cultivation

Shifting cultivation¹⁹ has long been a concern of the Government since the time of liberation. In 1979 there was a national decree on forestry protection, which among other provisions banned shifting cultivation in watershed areas. Later when the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) was introduced at the 3rd Party Congress and then enabled in the 2nd National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP) that the reduction of shifting cultivation became its second priority. It was emphasized that shifting cultivation should not be reduced by order or force, but rather by providing alternative crops or livelihoods to replace shifting cultivation practices (Thomas 2003). The 6th Party Congress in 1996 considered it a severe problem to be addressed in order to give individuals an opportunity to earn a better living by moving them to the lowlands where they could obtain paddy land. Shifting cultivation was perceived by the Congress to be a major cause of deforestation, soil degradation and erosion.

The 7th Party Congress (2001) set the targets for the complete elimination of pioneering shifting cultivation and overall reduction of all shifting cultivation by 50 percent (to 29 400 ha) by 2005 and complete eradication of all shifting cultivation by 2010. This containment of agricultural lands areas is considered necessary to enable reforestation targets to be met, which supposedly will ensure that high forest cover increases from 45 to 60-70 percent by 2020. The MAF Master Plan notes that, "while statistics illustrate a significant reduction in shifting cultivation, the general experience is that upland communities are not effecting commensurate changes in farming systems to maintain productivity and living standards, with short rotations and shortened fallows." The implication is the availability of potential paddy land and other potential land for sedentary cultivation either in the original villages of the upland/highlands or in potential relocation sites on valley floors.

¹⁹ In the Lao language it clearly states the intent of the policy is the elimination of shifting cultivation not merely stabilizing it as in the confusing English translation.

Opium Poppy Eradication

Opium poppy eradication is a part of the international war on drugs. With the hopes of being recognized as a cooperating member of the respected international community and at the behest of the United Nations Office for Drugs²⁰ and Crime (UNODC) and a number of bilateral donors²¹ the GOL has been supplied with funds to combat drugs. However, most of this effort has been focused on the eradication of opium poppy cultivation. The original target was to eradicate opium cultivation by 2006 and later revised to 2005. What is now in place is the balanced approach for drug control, which includes as its mainstay alternative development [to opium sales], along with detoxification of addicts and law enforcement.

Due to the significance of opium poppy in upland/highland livelihood systems the availability of land for paddy rice cultivation is of extreme importance, but this type of land is problematic. Some limited new paddy land has been opened but it is insufficient because of the time and effort needed in testing viable high value alternatives. Coupled with this are the difficulties in marketing these alternatives including quality, pricing, timing and transportation. Its main successes have only been in areas of intensive donor support. It can readily be seen that opium poppy eradication is really a sub-set of the eradication of shifting cultivation.

Land and Forest Allocation

Land and forest allocation has been an issue in the forestry sub-sector from the early days of this regime. It started to become focused [on this issue] with the National Forestry Conference (1989). The first land and forest allocation took place in 1993 in Sayaboury Province. In 1993 a national decree provided the legal framework and paved the way for the National Forestry Law of 1996. This was followed by a MAF decree as a legal framework and guidelines for land and forest allocation.

The expressed objectives of the program are to promote the cultivation of crops in order to replace shifting cultivation through land allocation and titling of production land and to protect forest land through classification and eradication of shifting cultivation. The program has two parts.

- The allocation of degraded land to households with a temporary land use certificate for crop cultivation, tree plantation and livestock grazing. Titles would be issued after a period of satisfactory performance.
- Following the allocation, forest types would be classified (e.g. protected, community use, rehabilitated, conservation and production) and agreements would be signed with each village

A detailed eight-stage participatory land use planning process with guidelines has been developed by the Department of Forestry. These have been implemented in several projects, but are not yet widely used throughout the nation because of the length of time (about 3 years) needed to implement them nor the budget required to do this. From 1966-2002 the District Agriculture and Forestry Offices have made vigorous efforts to allocate village lands for agriculture and to restore forests. Land and forest allocation reportedly has been completed in 6 200 villages (50 percent of the area and 60 percent of agricultural households) amounting to about 8 million hectares throughout the nation.

Criticisms have been made about the program including that it is too prescriptive, not participatory enough, implemented by untrained staff and that the last two steps of the process, land use management extension and monitoring and evaluation are seldom considered (Thomas 2003). The PPA even mentions land allocation as one of the main causes of new poverty throughout the nation because it is the cause of inadequate arable land being allocated to households.

20 Formerly called United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

21 Including UNODC, GTZ, NCA and the US Embassy/Narcotics Affairs Office.

The National Statistics Center (NSC) conducted the participatory poverty assessment (PPA) of 84 villages in 43 districts in 2000-2001. It was done to obtain information directly from the villagers about their experiences and concerns as regards to poverty and to identify possible means of poverty reduction. It also attempted to pinpoint an institutional process whereby their views could be built-in to the formulation and implementation of public policies.

Village Consolidation

The GOL has pursued policies of stabilizing and resettling minority communities since 1975²². The government justification for these policies is based on a development ideology of modernization and cultural evolution, nation building and a perceived security risk. Therefore, poverty reduction, rural development, eradication of shifting cultivation, land allocation and ethnic minority issues are all overlapping concerns.

The Focal Site Strategy for 1998-2000 (elaborated in 1998) was core to the government's rural development policy, whose main objective was to "alleviate poverty among rural populations in remote areas". Focal sites were defined as rural areas in which the government concentrates its development efforts to alleviate poverty.

Village consolidation was seen as the most cost-effective way of making development services available to scattered and remote communities that would otherwise not be reached with the limited resources available in Lao PDR.

Village consolidation is also officially phrased as a necessary means of reducing the adverse environmental impacts of shifting cultivation in remote areas. Therefore, the Focal Site Strategy term "rural development policy" came to be associated with the government's intention to develop rural growth areas, based on sedentary agriculture and better government services.

Decentralization Policy

In 2000, the GOL promulgated a policy of decentralization²³ and it is highly regarded as a key step in involving the grassroots level. The policy designates provinces as strategic units, districts as planning and budgeting units and villages as implementation units. It gives provinces the responsibility of preparing their own socio-economic annual and five-year plans and to manage their own budgets with part of the revenue coming from provincial sources. Districts are responsible for formulating, implementing and evaluating their planning and budgeting processes. Villages are responsible for devising revenue collection plans and gathering data on how to categorize the socio-economic status of families e.g. well-off, self-sufficient and worse-off. District officials are required to provide support to the villages in this planning and budgeting process.

Aquatic and Wild Life Management Regulations

An important policy, which is significant for upland village livelihood systems and their food security (of which much is derived from the forest) is MAF Regulation 0360/AF 2003. It defines how, what and when villagers can legally harvest wildlife and fish for food from National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCA)

²² There are no official documents that refer to village consolidation, but rather it seems to have attained the status of an "implicit" policy. This is similar to the lack of information on a "resettlement" policy.

²³ Instruction No.01/PM-11/03/2000, Recommendation No. 128/SPC- 11/03/2000 and Recommendation No. 475/MF-22/03/2000.

Chapter 4: Study Findings in Luang Nam Tha

Introduction

The study was conducted in two districts of Luang Nam Tha Province²⁴ (Sing and Long). Chaphoukeun was the northern most village (21° 22.437' north and 101° 08.863' east) at 681 meters above sea level (masl) and the southern most was Sompaa Mai (20° 55.704' north and 100° 43.595' east) at 657 masl. The original village Sop Iii Kao was at the higher elevation of 1 059 masl.

The Akha livelihoods system remains upland rice-based under shifting cultivation, however, in some relocated villages paddy rice cultivation has become increasingly important. Villagers cultivate cassava, corn, taro, vegetables, chili peppers, garlic and onions around their swidden fields. The better-off and mid-level socio-economic households raise larger animals (e.g. cattle and water buffaloes) while mid-level and worse-off households raised small pigs, goats and poultry. Villagers traditionally made handicrafts for their own use, but in many of the relocated villages this is no longer the case. They now sell the handicrafts in the market and villagers increasingly work off-farm for cash income.

The Akha are ethnolinguistically Tibeto-Burman and belong to the southern branch of the Lolo (Akhoid sub-branch) and comprise the Akha, Akheu and Sila ethnic groups.²⁵ The Akha are originally from southern China and are now dispersed throughout northwestern Viet Nam, northern Laos, Thailand and Myanmar (LeBar, Hickey and Musgrave 1964). They are believed to have arrived in northern Laos in the early part of the nineteenth century and this migration continued into the twentieth century. They moved across the Mekong River during a civil war in the Shan States of colonial Burma (circa WWI). The Akha in Sing and Long districts comprise about 60 percent of the population and is one of the highest concentrations for Akha anywhere.

Demographics

Sop Iii Kao, an original village, is considerably smaller than the relocated villages having 33 households, 42 families and a population of 197. The average for the seven relocated villages is 58 households, 64 families and a population of 290 (Table 2).²⁶ The average population growth rate for the relocated villages is 3.0 percent (2.1 percent for Sop Iii Kao), ranging from a negative 0.2 percent in Phiyau (preliminary data) to 6.6 percent in Chaphoukeun (Table 3).

Children under 15 make up almost 50 percent of the population and this has implications for food self-sufficiency and land use. These concerns are exacerbated by in-migration and the results are demonstrated by the severe livelihood problems experienced in Chavang Mai and Chaleunxay including disease brought by the newcomers that spread to the entire village. Females head few Akha households with the highest recorded levels in Huay Na Kang (12). Most villages have full-time work.

24 All study findings in this chapter refer to the eight study villages in Luang Nam Tha, five in Sing and three in Long.

25 The Akha are sometimes mistakenly associated with Lolo, Lahu, Lisu and Hanyii who are actually part of the Lolo Central Branch. Mutual intelligibility is probably a result of their close proximity in certain localities rather than strong linguistic similarities.

26 Village heads have varying levels of literacy and many villages do not have detailed records so in some cases the data must be viewed as preliminary. The demographic data for deaths is quite poor and that on maternal and infant mortality almost non-existent.

Table 2: Demographics in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	HHs	Families	Population	Female Head	Age Group						Sub-group [#]	Full-time Labor	Part-time Labor	
					<1	1-5	6-14	0-14	15-49	>50				>15
Sing														
Chaphoukeun	42	43	162	1	6	21	27	54	107	1	108	Puli	106	28
Chavang Mai	50	52	200	2	11	42	66	119	125	6	131	Sapho	124	126
Sop Iii Kao	33	42	197	0	11	22	19	52	134	11	145	Puli	81	53
Phiyeu	84	102	482	3	21	59	120	200	225	57	282	Puli, Ji	225	45
Huay Na Kang	86	92	461	12	20	102	116	238	128	95	223	Puli	256	105
Long														
Phaya Luang	42	50	220	2	9	36	52	97	103	30	133	Puli	103	41
Chaleunxay	59	63	275	2	5	46	50	101	152	22	174	Puli	152	72
Sompaan Mai	43	47	214	1	10	25	37	72	127	15	142	Puli	127	7
Average	54.9	61.4	276.4											
Average (Relocated villages)	58.0	64.1	287.7											

Table 3: Population Dynamics in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha (2003)

	Births	Deaths	In-migration	Out-migration	Number	Growth Rate (%)
Sing						
Chaphoukeun	13	3	0	0	10	6.6
Chavang Mai	3	0	116	0	3	1.5
Sop Iii Kao	4	0	0	0	4	2.1
Phiyau	0	1	31	5	-1	-0.2
Huay Na Kang	22	2	0	0	20	4.5
Long						
Phaya Luang	-	-	-	-	0	-
Chaleunxay	9	5	20	0	4	1.5
Sompaan Mai	10	1	6	0	9	4.4
Average						2.9
Average (Relocated villages)						3.0

Human Resources

The Akha competency in speaking Lao was low with only two village heads functionally able to communicate in the Lao language²⁷ (Table 4). The study team examined several proxies deemed relevant (e.g. language ability, non-formal education and training).

The five Sing villages averaged nine adults²⁸ per village who spoke Lao compared to the Long villages of Sompaan Mai (3 adult speakers), Chaleunxay (20 speakers) and Phayalung (103 speakers including 3 women). The competency in Phayalung is likely because they arrived in the early 1970s. About 10 adults from Sing and 5 adults from Long were numerate. Their inability to do simple arithmetic calculations is a disadvantage in their dealings with traders. These data should be viewed alongside the Lao National Literacy Survey (2002) in which Luang Nam Tha Province showed a functional literacy of 29 percent for males and 17 percent for females.

²⁷ The field team took this in account during data collection and ten translators accompanied the team to assist with the collection. A difference in worldview may also have contributed to the difficulties in communication.

²⁸ The study considered adults only as the data for children was incomplete.

Table 4: Lao Language Capability in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	Speakers						Literacy						Numeracy					
	Adults			Children			Adults			Children			Adults			Children		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Sing																		
Chaphoukeun	7	0	7			7	6	0	6	3	3	6	6	0	6			6
Chavang Mai	1	1	4	2	0	2	0	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sop Iii Kao	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2
Phiyeu	3	0	17	32	6	38	2	0	2	26	5	33	3	0	17	29	2	31
Huay Na Kang	12	2	14	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	2	14	-	-	14
Average	5.0	0.6	8.8	8.5	1.5	9.4	2.5	0.0	3.0	9.7	2.7	13.7	5.8	0.5	9.8	15.5	1.0	13.3
Long																		
Phaya Luang	100	3	103	9	43	52	22	0	22	5	1	28	6	0	6	5	0	5
Chaleunxay	20	0	20			0	4	0	4	-	-	4	1	0	1	-	-	1
Sompaan Mai	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	5	5	0	5	0	0	0
Average	32.5	0.9	34.2	5.8	14.8	15.4	8.4	0.0	8.5	4.9	1.2	12.7	4.4	0.1	5.4	6.8	0.3	4.8

M= Male, F=Female

There are few records on adult primary and secondary education as well as for children not in school; however, there are reliable data on children currently attending school. In the five Sing study villages four have schools. Most of the students attend the first year of primary school and as the table shows, the numbers attending grades 2 and 3 tail off rapidly (Table 5).

Table 5: Children in School in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	P1			P2			P3			P4			P5			>M1		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Sing																		
Chaphoukeun	2	6	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	6	8	1	0	1	0	0	0
Chavang Mai	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sop Iii Kao	15	3	18	4	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phiyeu	42	28	70	9	5	14	3	1	4	3	2	5	4	3	7	19	0	19
Huay Na Kang	29	3	31	2	1	3	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5.8	0	0	0
Average	17.6	8.0	25.4	3.2	1.4	4.6	1.0	0.2	1.2	1.0	1.6	2.6	1.0	0.6	2.8	3.8	0.0	3.8
Long																		
Phaya Luang	11	14	25	6	1	7	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	3
Chaleunxay	28	15	43	6	2	8	2	1	3	28	15	43	6	2	8	2	1	3
Sompaan Mai	12	11	23	5	4	9	3	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Average	17.0	13.3	30.3	5.7	2.3	8.0	2.0	1.7	3.7	10.0	5.0	15.0	2.0	0.7	2.7	2.0	0.3	2.3

M= Male, F=Female

Non-formal education classes were confirmed in six of the eight villages and suspected in the other two. Most of the courses were directed at improving the villager's Lao language competency and numeracy. The training was most active in Sing with an average of 19 villagers studying spoken Lao, 11 studying reading and writing and five studying numeracy. Chaleunxay was the only village in Long conducting courses and there were only three villagers involved in the training. Additional training conducted by district offices is covered elsewhere in this report (Table 6).

Table 6: Non-Formal Education in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	Speaking Lao	Year Taught	Reading Lao	Year Taught	Numeracy	Year Taught
	Number Attending		Number Attending		Number Attending	
Sing						
Chaphoukeun	20	2001	20	2001		
Chavang Mai	2	2000	2	2000		
Sop Iii Kao	7	2001	7	2001	7	2001
Phiyau	32	2003	8	2003		
Huay Na Kang	35	2000	20	2001	8	2001
Average	19.2		11.4		5	
Long						
Phaya Luang	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chaleunxay	3	2001	3	2001	3	2001
Sompaan Mai	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average	3		3		3	

Rice Self-Sufficiency

Only Phiyau was self-sufficient in rice; however, in the original village, Sop Iii Kao, it was reported that about 93 percent of the households had at least six months or more of rice (Table 7). This was verified against rice production data and a deficit of at 4.6 months was calculated for 2003 (Table 8). This deficit undoubtedly comes from inadequacies in the two worse-off households and some of the mid-level households.

In the seven relocated villages, about 70 percent of the households reported six months or more of rice and a calculated deficit of 1.6 months. However, if the almost five month surplus (a statistical outlier compared to the deficits in other villages) is excluded, then the average deficit for the six villages is 2.7 months. This may or may not balance the difference between 94 percent in Sop Iii Kao or 70 percent in relocated villages in reported self-sufficiency.

Sop Iii Kao reported their rice self-sufficiency is better than five years ago but worse than it was 10 years ago. This probably reflects the shortening of the fallow periods as a result of the shifting cultivation eradication program. Most of the other villages said their rice situation was better than five years ago; however, their response was mixed when asked about the comparison to 10 years ago.

Table 7: Socio-Economic Levels and Rice Self-Sufficiency in Study Villages Luang Nam Tha

	Total HHs	Well Off HHs	Mid Level HHs	Less Well-off HHs	Worse Off HHs	Household					5 yrs Ago	10 yrs Ago	20 yrs Ago
						Rice Sufficient [months]							
						<3	3-5	6-8	9-12	>12			
Sing													
Chaphoukeun (Established 1996)	42	2	7	33	7	10 23.8%	13 31.0%	7 16.7%	6 14.3%	6 14.3%	Better	Better	Worse
Chavang Mai (Established 1996)	50	3	4	20	23	6 12.0%	17 34.0%	20 40.0%	4 8.0%	3 6.0%	Better	Same	Worse
Sop Iii Kao (Established 1836)	33	4	27	2	1	0 0.0%	2 6.1%	20 60.6%	7 21.2%	4 12.1%	Better	Worse	N/s
Phiyeu (Established 1982)	84	10	34	40	3	0 0.0%	32 38.1%	3 3.6%	4 4.8%	54 53.6%	Better	Better	Better
Huay Na Kang (Established 1996)	86	14	32	36	14	9 10.5%	11 12.8%	20 23.3%	32 37.2%	14 16.3%	Better	Same	Worse
Long													
Phaya Luang (Established 1993)	42	5	20	17	5	0 0.0%	4 9.5%	0 0.0%	35 83.3%	3 7.1%	Better	Better	Better
Chaleunxay (Established 1997)	59	4	21	12	22	2 3.4%	9 15.3%	38 64.4%	7 11.9%	3 5.1%	Worse	Worse	Worse
Sompaan Mai (Established 1992)	43	7	36	3	2	0 0.0%	11 25.6%	29 67.4%	3 7.0%	3 7.0%	Better	Worse	N/s
Average	54.9	6.1	22.6	20.4	9.6	6.2%	21.5%	34.5%	23.5%	15.2%			
Average (Relocated villages)						7.1%	23.7%	30.8%	23.8%	15.6%			

Table 8: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	# Village HHs	Rice Paddy Land			Upland Rice Land		Total	2003 Rice Sufficiency
		Area (ha)	# HHs	Avg Area (ha/HH)	Area (ha)	# HHs	Area (ha)	Months
Sing								
Chaphoukeun	42	27	40	0.7	2	2	29	(0.02)
Chavang Mai	50	12	10	1.2	16	40	28	(4.20)
Sop Iii Kao	33	1.8	3	0.6	40	33	42	(4.60)
Phiyeu	84	65	52	1.3	20	32	85	4.93
Huay Na Kang	86	48	47	1.0	8	39	56	(0.11)
Long								
Phaya Luang	42	27	26	1.0	3	16	30	(4.29)
Chaleunxay	59	15	36	0.4	46	22	61	(4.64)
Sompaan Mai	43	9	16	0.6	40	43	49	(2.71)

Land Use

These data provide some insight into village land use (Table 9). The original village, Sop Iii Kao, has a limited amount of flat land for paddy rice cultivation (1.8 ha per 3 households). They reported 33 households cultivating upland rice on about 40 hectares of land that is under a 5-7 year fallow period. In addition they cultivate corn, cassava, vegetables and tea.

Calculating a six-year rotation of the swidden fields, Sop Iii Kao had a total of about 240 hectares in its bush fallow system. Their agricultural land totals about 367 hectares. They say that they have sufficient agricultural land, but could not estimate the size of the forest in the village territory. In the

past they cultivated opium poppy averaging about 0.5 hectares per household. At that time opium cultivation was their main source of income, for which they reported an annual cash income of about US\$220 per household. They now earn the bulk of their income from other crops including tea, which has been promoted as a substitution crop by the GTZ and the DAFO (Table 10). Other significant income generators include livestock (Kip 7.3 million), forest hunting and gathering (Kip 45.7 million) and handicrafts for home consumption. The NTFPs they gather from the forest and sell are bamboo and rattan shoots, mushrooms, roots and tubers, cardamon and wildlife. Total estimated village cash income was about Kip 66 million.

Sop Iii Kao has a different structure to their livelihoods system than in the relocated villages. The relocated villages had paddy land averaging 29 hectares, ranging from 9 ha in Sompaan Mai to 65 ha in Phiyau. These villages averaged 97 hectares of land for swidden cultivation of upland rice, which is an important supplement to rice production for consumption.

Only two villages cultivated sugarcane, Chaphoukeun (26 ha/Kip 62 million) and Phiyau (84 ha/Kip 450 million) but the area cultivated and income was considerable. The total crop income in these relocated villages averaged Kip 121 million.

Three relocated villages (Chaphoukeun, Phiyau and Sompaan Mai) reported sufficient agricultural land for the present size of their village. Four villages (Chavang Mai, Huay Na Kang, Phaya Luang and Chaleunxay) reported insufficient agricultural land. The ratio of agricultural land to total land provides insight on the agricultural land shortage.²⁹ The average amount of agricultural land of the six relocated villages was 32 percent, ranging from 15 percent in Chavang Mai to 78 percent in Chaleunxay.

While the status of this forest land (e.g. slope and cover) is unknown, perhaps additional land could be found for agricultural use. Four of the six Sing villages underwent land allocation: Chavang Mai (2002), Phiyau (1995), Huay Na Kang (2002) and only Phaya Luang (1997) in Long. This land allocation has clearly limited the agricultural land available and has not considered future population growth.

Six of the Luang Nam Tha villages averaged 32 percent of their land as agricultural and only two reported they had enough agricultural land for the current population. This balance will be jeopardized by natural population growth and by additional in-migration. Three of four villages (Chavang Mai, Huay Na Kang and Phayaluang) have about 16 percent of their total land as agriculture and could probably expand this; however, Chaleunxay already has 78 percent of its land in agriculture and could not further expand. Livestock rearing was important to their livelihoods system with an average village income of Kip 40 million, ranging from Kip 1.5 million in Chavang Mai to Kip 70.3 million in Chaleunxay (Table 10).

While NTFPs are also important in their livelihoods system, they do not have sufficient forest land available. The average relocated village estimated forest land to be about 364 hectares, ranging from 68 hectares in Chaleunxay to 534 hectares in Phiyau. The average income from NTFPs was Kip 14.9 million, ranging from no reported income in four villages to Kip 63 million in Sompaan Mai. It is certain these villages utilized NTFPs for household consumption. The high income from Sompaan Mai can be attributed to their foraging in their old village territory, where they earned Kip 62.5 million from *mak tao*.

²⁹ No data was collected on forest land for Sop Iii Kao and Sompaan Mai.

Table 9: Land Use in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	Paddy Rice (ha)	Upland Rice (ha)	Sugarcane (ha)	Corn (ha)	Cassava (ha)	Other Crops (ha)	Total Land (ha)	Conservation Forest (ha)	Protected Forest (ha)	Community Use (ha)	Regenerated Forest (ha)	Degraded Forest (ha)	Existing Planted (ha)	Forest Planted (ha)	Total Forest	Total Forest and Agricultural	Ratio of Agricultural Land to Forest (%)	Enough Agricultural Land
Sing																		
Chaphoukeun	27	10	26				63	64	32	28	-	-	-	-	124	187	34	Yes
Chavang Mai	12	64		3	1	9	89	112	175	206	-	-	-	-	493	582	15	No
Sop Iii Kao	2	240	0	10	33	83	367	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	367		Yes
Phiyueu	65	80	84			22	251	82	71	69	97		126	80	524	775	32	Yes
Huay Na Kang	48	40		20		3	111	234	244	113	-	-	-	-	591	702	16	No
Long																		
Phaya Luang	27	15		19		16	77	146	90	88			49	16	388	465	17	No
Chaleunxay	15	230		2			247	-	-	68	-	-	-	-	68	315	78	No
Sompaan Mai	9	240	0	0	0		249	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	249		Yes
Average (Relocated villages)	29.0	97.0	36.7	8.8	0.5	12.4	155.2	127.5	122.3	95.4	96.8	0.0	87.3	47.8	364.7	467.8	32.0	

Village Cash Income

The major difference in the livelihood systems between the relocated villages and Sop Iii Kao is that of off-farm employment (Table 10). The hope of attaining off-farm employment is one of the key attractions to moving to the lowlands. These villages averaged an estimated Kip 20.9 million from off-farm employment, ranging from Kip 2.7 million in Sompaan Mai to Kip 75.2 million in Chaphoukeun. Excluding the two high-income earners (Chaphoukeun and Chaleunxay), the average off-farm income of the remaining villages was Kip 4.3 million. Chaphoukeun earns most of its off-farm income from agricultural labor for others in Laos (about Kip 15 000/day) and in China (about Kip 22 000/day). Chaleunxay earned its income from working on other farms and in town (Long). Sompaan Mai earned very little income due to its distance from town.

Total estimated village cash income averaged about Kip 197.5 million, ranging from Kip 11.7 million in Chavang Mai to Kip 673.1 million in Phiyueu. Again, if Phiyueu is excluded (as an outlier) from the other villages, remaining villages have a total average cash income of Kip 118.3 million. This can be compared to the total cash income of Kip 66.2 million for the original village of Sop Iii Kao.

Table 10: Estimated Village Cash Income in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha (Kip 000)

	Total Crops [Kip]	Ratio Crops/ Total %	Total Animals [Kip]	Ratio Anima/l Total %	Total NTFPs [Kip]	Ratio NTFPs/ Total %	Total Off-Farm [Kip]	Ratio Off-Farm/ Total %	Total Income [Kip]
Sing									
Chaphoukeun	63 910	36.6	26 450	15.2	9 000	5.2	75 200	43.1	174 560
Chavang Mai	6 600	56.3	1 500	12.8	0	0.0	3 626	30.9	11 726
Sop Iii Kao	13 200	19.9	7 275	11.0	45 695	69.1	0	0.0	66 170
Phiyau	606 000	90.0	64 000	9.5	0	0.0	3 120	0.5	673 120
Huay Na Kang	32 200	35.4	54 900	60.3	0	0.0	3 978	4.4	91 078
Long									
Phaya Luang	50 650	66.3	17 800	23.3	0	0.0	7 980	10.4	76 430
Chaleunxay	28 350	15.7	70 310	38.9	32 000	17.7	50 000	27.7	180 660
Sompaan Mai	63 500	36.2	45 550	26.0	63 500	36.2	2 700	1.5	175 250
Average Relocated	121 601		40 073		14 929		20 943		197 546
Total Relocated	851 210	61.6	280 510	20.3	104 500	7.6	146 604	10.6	1 382 824
Total	864 410	62.5	287 785	20.8	150 195	10.9	146 604	10.6	1 448 994

Household Cash Income and Expenditures

The household income³⁰ and expenditure levels reveal more about the livelihood systems. For example, using the expenditures of lower level households, total annual household expenditures averaged about Kip 2.3 million in the relocated villages and Kip 600 000 in Sop Iii Kao. For both the original village and the relocated villages more than half of the expenditures are on food. Of course, in Sop Iii Kao they spend much less on food as they have the forest nearby. Also, they spend nothing on housing, as do the relocated villages. These villagers spent on average 59.7 percent on food, 10.8 percent on clothing, 4.1 percent on housing, 9.5 percent on health care, 3.8 percent on education and 16.4 percent on others (Table 11).

Cash income for some households is quite low. In Sop Iii Kao it is only Kip 400 000 per year from the sale of livestock. This was not adequate to cover the household's total expenses of Kip 600 000 for a deficit of Kip 200 000 or 30 percent. As for the average of the lower level households in the relocated villages, their total annual expenditures amounted to Kip 2.4 million and their income was Kip 2.1 million for a small deficit. In the case of Sop Iii Kao the family undoubtedly would have made up for this by eating and perhaps selling NTFPs (unreported) from the forest. By their nature the households in the relocated village would have tried to do the same, but probably with less success (Table 12).

³⁰ Village and household cash incomes may not agree because of sampling problems. Village data were supplied as estimates by village heads and committees. Purposively selected households supplied household data and the two collections may not necessarily be in agreement.

Table 11: Household Expenditures Low-Level Early Migrants in Study Villages Luang Nam Tha

		Food [Kip 000]*	Clothing [Kip 000]*	Housing [Kip 000]*	Health [Kip 000]*	Education [Kip ,000]*	Other [Kip 000]*	Total [Kip 000]*
Sing								
Chapukeun	HH1	2 960	400	500	500	100	1 000	5 460
	HH2	2 000	300	500	500	100	1 280	4 680
Phiyau	HH1	300	200	-	200	400	300	140
	HH2	500	400	-	500	200	800	2 400
Chavangmai	HH1	2 500	100	-	350	-	120	3 070
	HH2	850	40	-	20	-	130	1 040
Sop Iii Kao	HH1	370	100	-	50	50	30	600
Phayalaung	HH1	500	300	-	200	-	400	1 400
	HH2	500	300	-	100	100	400	1 400
Long								
Chalernxay	HH1	2 000	300	100	100	50	100	2 650
	HH2	2 700	500	100	100	50	200	3 650
Sompaanmai	HH1	730	120	50	100	100	50	1 150
Huaynakang	HH1	1 200	10	-	100	-	120	1 430
	HH2	1 600	350	-	150	-	130	2 230
Total		18 710	3 420	1 250	2 970	1 150	5 060	31 300
		59.8%	10.9%	4.0%	9.5%	3.7%	16.2%	100.0%
Average		1 871	342	125	297	115	506	3 130
Relocated		18 340	3 320	1 250	2 920	1 100	5 030	30 700
		59.7%	10.8%	4.1%	9.5%	3.6%	16.4%	100.0%
Average		1 410 769	255 385	96 154	224 615	84 615	386 923	2 361 538

* Note: All amounts are estimated

Table 12: Household Cash Income Low-Level Early Migrants in Study Villages Luang Nam Tha*

		Livestock	NTFPs	Off-Farm	Total Income
Sing					
Chapukeun	HH1	4 290 000	180 000	816 000	5 286 000
	HH2	-	-	400 000	400 000
Phiyau	HH1	600 000	-	800 000	800 000
	HH2	-	-	2 000 000	2 000 000
Chavangmai	HH1	-	1 200 000	1 000 000	2 200 000
Sop Iii Kao	HH1	400 000	-	-	400 000
Huay Na Kang	HH1	-	-	700 000	700 000
Long					
Phayaluang	HH1	-	-	80 000	80 000
	HH2	-	-	80 000	80 000
Chaleunxay	HH1	2 360 000	1 620 000	4 000 000	8 140 000
	HH2	-	-	-	-
Sompan Mai	HH1	-	250 000	900 000	1 150 000
Total		7 650 000	3 250 000	10 776 000	21 236 000
		36.0%	15.3%	50.7%	100.0%
Average		1 092 857	464 286	1 539 429	3 033 714
Relocated		7 250 000	3 250 000	10 776 000	20 836 000
Average		725 000	325 000	1 077 600	2 083 600

* Note: No reported income for crops, handicrafts, small shop, trader, rice alcohol or other

Migration and Relocation of Villages in Luang Nam Tha

Introduction

There are differences of opinion within government, donor and NGO communities concerning out-migration of villagers from mountainous to lowland areas³¹. Many government officials, particularly at the central level, contend the relocation is voluntary because most out-migration is about individuals believing a better life is available in the lowlands where they can access government services and markets. Some donors and NGOs believe that villagers are forced to migrate³² and have criticized the ambitious relocation targets and the speed with which villagers are moved. Neither opinion describes the situation completely.

Families do migrate semi-spontaneously with the hopes of a better livelihood and lifestyle, but most of them are caught in what has been referred to as a policy-induced Malthusian squeeze. The implementation of GOL programs and foreign donor projects stemming from these policies serve as a series of push-pull factors. In other words, because of the enforcement of policies (e.g. the reduction of shifting cultivation, opium eradication, land and forest allocation and village consolidation), upland and highland families are unable to practice their livelihoods in their original villages. GOL policies do induce villagers to migrate in order to better access government services and theoretically offers the chance for improved livelihoods. In reality, the migration exacerbates already tenuous livelihood situations in the original upland or highland villages.

Goudineau (1997) in a major work on the migration of people and relocation of villages found that “the strategy lacks clear policy and guidelines on resettlement”. This lack of clarity is characterized by “incoherence in the process of designating sites and lack of budgetary planning”. There has been a great deal of skepticism about local governments capacity to implement activities and criticisms concerning the “lack of transparency and formalization of rights and obligations between the state and the villagers resettling ... the rights to adequate land to pursue alternate livelihoods and the future deterioration in the quality of land because of over-population in the new sites, are critical issues.” Many are concerned that the rapid movement of population causes social and livelihood disruption, resulting in hardships to the relocating groups.

This study uses the terms ‘migration of villagers’ and ‘relocation of villages’ to better describe the phenomena rather than the often-used word resettlement. The above-mentioned policies implemented alone or in concert with others influence migration and relocation.

The circumstances in Luang Nam Tha exhibited both push and pull factors in the relocation of Akha families from their original villages. The study distinguishes between earlier and later settlers (as their situation is at times different) and examines the push factors that made leaving the original village necessary and the expectations (pull factors) that attracted them to relocate to new places.

The study explored problems encountered in relocation including conflicts arising after the move, follow-on migration (from new villages to elsewhere or to return to former villages) and costs incurred by the villagers.

31 The study text (except when quoted) refers to migration of people and relocation of villages instead of resettlement. The study title was established prior to this decision being made. These terms better depict the processes that have occurred historically.

32 There have been stories of varying levels coercion but confirming them was outside the scope of this study.

Push-Pull Factors in Migration

Old Conditions

It is clear that the opium eradication program was the key contributing factor (followed by the lack of alternatives to opium poppy cultivation) for villagers from Chaphoukeun and Chaleunxay leaving their original villages. This was verified by affirmative answers from Phiyue and Phaya Luang respondents.

The third most frequent response was that of poor roads followed by a concern about human and animal diseases, implying a concern about the lack of human and animal health care in the original villages of Chaphoukeun, Chaleunxay and Sompaa Mai. It was interesting to note that with the exception of Sompaa Mai, insufficient rice or low upland rice yields in the original village was not a key issue in the decision to move (Table 13).

New Conditions

The availability of paddy land for reliable rice production and other land for cash crops were predominant pull factors (Chaphoukeun, Chaleunxay and Sompaa Mai) followed by the hope for income generating activities (e.g. livestock, NTFPs, handicrafts, off-farm employment and access to services like health services, schools and markets (Table 13).

Table 13: Reasons for Leaving Original Village³³ Luang Nam Tha - Ranked by Importance

	Early Migrants			Later Migrants		
	Chaphoukeun	Chaleunxay	Sompaa Mai	Chaphoukeun	Chaleunxay	Sompaa Mai
Conditions of Old Situation						
Opium eradication	1	1		1	1	
Not enough rice to eat	9	3		9	10	
Poor upland rice harvest	7	4	2	8	9	2
No alternative to opium	2	2		2	2	
Direction of Luang Nam Tha province and districts	8	8	3	7	3	3
Poor condition of roads	3	5	4	3	8	4
Human diseases	4	6	5	4	4	5
Livestock diseases	5	7		5	5	
No school	6	9	1	6	6	1
No hospital					7	
Conditions of New Situation						
Availability of paddy land	1	1		1	1	1
Availability of land for upland cash crops	2	2		2	2	
Availability of land for cash crops	3		6	3	3	6
Possibility of livestock sales	4	3		4	4	
Possibility of NTFP sales	5	4	7	5	5	7
Possibility of handicrafts sales	6	5		6	6	
Possibility of cottage industry sales	7	6		7	7	
Possibility of off-farm employment	8	7	3	8	8	3
Access to services near roads	9	8	5	9	9	5
Access to health services	10	9	4	10	10	4
Access to schools	11	10	2	11	11	2
Others [market]	12	11		12	12	

³³ The data are incomplete because not all respondents could rank their responses.

Problems Encountered in Relocation

When families and households migrated to Sing and Long they encountered certain key problems related to the move. The most frequent response was that of inadequate available land to establish rice paddies. As previously mentioned, receiving paddy land was one of the villager's main expectations following migration. In some cases the early settlers acquired enough land for all households – even though it may not have been of adequate size for them to become self-sufficient in rice for household consumption (Table 14).

Later migrants reported other livelihoods concerns including poor paddy soils, problems with irrigation water, pests in rice paddy, inadequate upland for either rice or for field crops, poor upland soils, pests in upland crops, inadequate land for gardens and orchards, no appropriate land for fish ponds and irregular rainfall.

Every village has households that are yet to receive paddy land. All villages are resorting to the swidden cultivation of upland rice. Even with upland rice production all new villages (except Phiyau) had rice deficits of a few days to four and one-half months. Phiyau had a surplus of almost five months, but it was one of the first villages relocated and land was more plentiful (Table 15).

The second most reported problem was that of diseases contracted after the move, some which appeared as long as a year or so of the move. The upland/highland ecosystems with elevations over 1 000 meters above sea level have different diseases and parasites and subsequently the individuals have different immunities. After migration to the lowlands areas, the incidence of the three major disease types increased dramatically 1) hemorrhagic fevers, especially malaria and dengue 2) upper respiratory diseases and 3) gastro-intestinal diseases like diarrhea (Table 16).

In Phiyau, as early as 1982, the respected elder and village founder lost 5 of 14 from his own family in the first year – most of them probably to malaria or GI tract diseases. Chaphoukeun was most seriously affected in 1985 when 188 villagers died out of a total of 260 (73 percent), mostly from malaria, diarrhea and to a lesser extent upper respiratory diseases. Phaya Luang also reported a period of high mortality rates, at one point reaching 3-4 deaths per day.

More recent migrations have also experienced disease outbreaks. In Huay Na Kang, 18 villagers died (mostly from dysentery) in 2000. This past year in Chavang Mai a second group of migrants arrived in April 2003 and from that time until September when the study fieldwork was conducted in Sing, 8 villagers out of 116 migrants died – reportedly of malaria.³⁴ Another died in November bringing the mortality rate to 7.8 percent in a period of less than one year; what ACF refers to as 'an alarming' mortality rate, that is, greater than 7 percent.

³⁴ The assessment team itself experienced the illnesses of not only the new migrants but also those spread to the older settlers with the onset of the cool season. Team members agreed that it was one of the sickest villages any of them had ever seen. Because there were neither regular agency funds nor special project funds to deal with this emergency, UNDP authorized the project's spending of US\$500 to assist the GTZ sub-district nurse to provide emergency health care for the village.

Table 14: Relocation Problems in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha – Ranked by Importance

Problems	Early Migrants					Later Migrants				
	Chaphoukeun	Phiyeu	Phaya Luang	Chaleunxay	Sompaan Mai	Chaphoukeun	Phiyeu	Phaya Luang	Chaleunxay	Sompaan Mai
Livelihoods										
No/inadequate paddy land	2			1	1	3	Yes		1	
Poor paddy soils	6			2		7			2	
Inadequate irrigation water	3			3		4			3	
Pests in rice paddy	4			4		5	Yes		4	
No/inadequate upland	8			5		9			5	
Poor upland soils	9			6		10			6	
Inadequate rainfall	4			7		6			7	
Pests in upland	7			8		8			8	
No/inadequate garden land	10			9		11			9	
No/inadequate land for orchards	11			10		12			10	
No/inadequate land for fish ponds	12			11		13			11	
Land conflict within village	13			12		14			12	
Land conflict outsiders	14	Yes		13		15			13	
Housing										
Improper place for house	15					16			15	
No/inadequate materials for house	16					17			14	
Health and Sanitation										
Inadequate drinking water	17				2	18	Yes		16	
Inadequate HH use water	18				3	19	Yes		17	
Poor sanitation	5	Yes			5	5			18	
Diseases (malaria, GI track)	1	Yes			4	1		1	19	
Others specify						2				
Marketing arrangements w/ brokers	19					20			20	
Marketing arrangements w/ traders	20					21			21	
Marketing arrangements w/ others	21					22			22	
War			1							

Table 15: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Area in Luang Nam Tha

	Village # HHs	Rice Paddy land				Upland Rice Land		Total Area (ha)	2003 Rice Sufficiency Months
		Area (ha)	# HHs	HHs (%)	Avg Area (ha/HH)	Area (ha)	# HHs		
Sing									
Chaphoukeun	42	27	40	95	0.7	2	2	29	(0.02)
Chavang Mai	50	12	10	20	1.2	16	40	28	(4.20)
Sop Iii Kao	33	1.8	3	9	0.6	40	33	42	(4.60)
Phiyeu	84	65	52	62	1.3	20	32	85	4.93
Huay Na Kang	86	48	47	55	1.0	8	39	56	(0.11)
Long									
Phaya Luang	42	27	26	62	1.0	3	16	30	(4.29)
Chaleunxay	59	15	36	61	0.4	46	22	61	(4.64)
Sompaan Mai	43	9	16	37	0.6	40	43	49	(2.71)
Average				56	0.9				

Table 16: Diseases in Study Villages After Migration

	Chaphoukeun			Chavang Mai			Phiyau			Huay Na Kang			Chaleunxay		
Diseases	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year
Early Migrants															
Mosquito Borne	148	85	1985	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	2003
GI Tract	45	17	1985	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	2003
Upper Respiratory	11	6	1985	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	2003
Other Diseases				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	2003
Total		108	1985					5	1982						
Later Migrants															
Mosquito Borne	109	63	1985	82	8	2003	-	-	-	16	2	2000	Yes	0	2002/3
GI Tract	33	13	1985	54	0	2003	-	-	-	15	14	2000	Yes	0	2002/3
Upper Respiratory	8	4	1985	61	0	2003	-	-	-	12	2	2000	Yes	0	2002/3
Other Diseases							-	-	-				Yes	0	2002/3
Total		80	1985		8	2003					18	2000		0	2002/3

Conflicts

Three types of conflicts were examined – most concerned resource use, especially land. The first included disagreements and tensions between migrants and those in established neighboring villages. The second were between early and later migrants and the third between villagers with outsiders including intermediaries, traders and officials.

Conflicts with Neighboring Villages

Early migrants were confronted with the limited availability of potential agricultural land on the Sing Plain or in the hills around it, as there were already established villages in the area. It was perhaps inevitable that conflicts would arise regarding land. In five of the seven new villages the early settlers experience problems concerning paddy land with the existing neighboring villages. In most cases it was over the availability of potential paddy land because existing villages had already targeted that land for expansion. It was only resolved with the intervention of the district officials, sometimes with the undertaking of land use planning. Only in Chaphoukeun was there conflict with adjacent villages over irrigation water, which was deemed inadequate, but this was eventually resolved (Table 17).

Land conflicts were usually over bush fallow³⁵ either for upland crop cultivation or for grazing. Early settlers experienced conflicts with other villages over adequate upland in Phiyau and Chaleunxay. There were conflicts over livestock grazing land in Chavang Mai and Huay Na Kang. In most new villages there was less forest land for hunting and gathering of NTFPs than in the original villages.

³⁵ Reportedly there was very little forest land remaining to be cleared.

In Chaleunxay, early and later migrants had conflicts with neighboring villages – with whom they shared a common water source – to ensure enough clean water for drinking and other domestic uses. Apparently the stream did not have sufficient flow for three villages experiencing burgeoning population growths.

Conflicts between Early and Later Migrants

There was conflict between the later and earlier settlers over paddy land in Chaphoukeun, Chavang Mai, Phiyue, Huay Na Kang and Chaleunxay. The early settlers acquired most of the potentially best paddy land although the later migrants were apparently aware of this when they made their decision to come to these villages. In three villages (Chaphoukeun, Chavang Mai and Phayaluang) there were conflicts between new and older settlers over irrigation water, usually because of inadequate water from the source and/or households at the head of the ditches using more than their share.

Four villages (Chavang Mai, Phiyue, Huay Na Kang and Chaleunxay) reported conflicts concerning upland land (in all likelihood bush fallow for rice or other crops). Only one village reported conflicts concerning inadequate grazing land for the late migrants. Chaleunxay did not have an adequate number of water taps for its newcomers leading to internal village conflicts over use (Table 17).

Conflicts with Outsiders

The only reported conflicts with outsiders occurred in Chaphoukeun and Chavang Mai near the border with China. In the case of Chavang Mai, 16 households cultivated sugarcane in 2003 and in April the traders picked up the cane and gave each of the households ¥100 with the promise of returning to pay the remainder. No receipts were given (or asked for) and the traders never returned. Each household recorded the number of truckloads removed and DAFO intervened, but to date they have not been able to track down the culprits (Table 17).

Most of these types of conflicts were resolved through traditional community mechanisms with the most revered elders (*dzeuma* or *chao baan*) acting as intermediaries. At times clan elders became involved. Increasingly the village head is consulted and assists when the district office needs to intervene in disputes involving neighboring villages or with outsiders. Domestic disputes were resolved fairly quickly, but over time those between villages, usually about land, have resulted in compromise, with the new village receiving some rather marginal land.

Table 17: Conflicts in Luang Nam Tha

Conflicts	Chaphoukeun		Chavang Mai		Phiyau		Huay Na Kang		Phaya Luang		Chaleunxay		Sompaa Mai	
Migrants	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later
Between Villages														
Paddy land	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes			
Irrigation water	Yes	Yes												
Upland suan/hai					Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes			
Grazing and fodder land			Yes			Yes	Yes			Yes				
Forest use	Yes	Yes									Yes			
Clean water						Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes		
New and Old Settlers														
Paddy land		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes		
Irrigation water		Yes		Yes						Yes	Yes			
Upland hai				Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes		
Grazing and fodder land							Yes	Yes						
Clean water												Yes		
Outsiders														
Unscrupulous traders	Yes	Yes	Yes											

Out-Migration

Two types of out-migration occurred from the new lowland villages. The first when households returned to their original village and the second when migrants moved to other lowland villages. In 1983, four of the original seven Phiyau families returned to their original village following a disease epidemic and in 1993 two families left to join relatives elsewhere because of inadequate agricultural land. In Phayalung, 6 families (31 persons) moved in 1999 and 2000 to join relatives in other villages where there was available agricultural land. In Chaleunxay the situation was more serious because 14 households returned to their original village [Chakamsao] in 2000 because of disappointment over inadequate paddy land and disputes over use of upland for rice, orchards and other crops³⁶ (Table 18 and Table 19).

³⁶ Several households still use paddy land located within the boundaries of Chaleunxay even though they officially returned to their original village. This has caused continuing conflicts between Chaleunxay and Chakamsao.

Table 18: Villages Relocated in Luang Nam Tha

Present Village	Original Village Name	1st Village	2nd Village	3rd Village
Sing				
Chaphoukeun Migration years	Old Chaphoukeun 5-generations	Phabathnoy 1984-90	Chaphoukeun 2 1990-97	Chaphoukeun 3 1997-2003
Chavang Mai Migration years	Old Chavang <1985	Phabad 1985-88	Phoudalong 1988-96	
Phiyeu Migration years	Chakheun <1982			
Huay Na Kang Migration years	Old Huay Na Kang <1992			
Long				
Phayaluang Migration years	Old Phayaluang <1973			
Chaleunxay Migration years	Chakhamtan <1968 Chala <2002/3	Chakhamsao 1968-97		
Sompaan Mai Migration years	Old Sompaan <1992			

Table 19: Out-migration in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

		Migrants			Reasons			
		Destination						
Village	Year	Village	HHs	Persons	Livelihoods	Housing	Health and Sanitation	Others
Sing								
Sop Iii Kao	1973	Sop Iii Mai	50	-	Insufficient upland			Insufficient rice
	1980	Sop Iii Mai	22	-				Livestock dispute
Phiyeu	1984	Chakeun	4				Diseases =>deaths	
	1993	Haudeng	1					Relatives recommend
	1993	Euala	1					Relatives recommend
Long								
Phaya Luang	1999	Donen	6	31	Not enough paddy and upland			
	2000	Donen	-	-	Not enough paddy and upland			
Chaleunxay	2000	Chakhamsao	14		Not enough paddy and upland irrigation	Materials	Clean water	Lack of irrigation

Relocation Costs

Two types of household relocation costs³⁷ were identified. Few mention these costs except for ACF (Romagny and Daviau 2003) and they include the cost to households when leaving their land, houses, other buildings, livestock, furniture and heirlooms. The second were the costs they incurred to establish themselves in a new village.

³⁷ The study team made no attempt to examine benefits of the move since that was beyond the scope of the study. The costs recorded are only those for households to re-establish themselves in a single village – when in fact, two villages relocated three times and one other village relocated twice; making these recorded costs conservative.

Relocation Costs (moving)

Selected households were asked to estimate their relocation costs.³⁸ The estimated average value of land was about Kip 10 million for 33 hectares that included fruit trees. They left two buildings, usually a house and a rice barn valued at about Kip 2.4 million. Most households brought their livestock with them. The total value of their land and property averaged about Kip 12.7 million (Table 20).

Table 20: Household Relocation Costs from Original Villages

Early Low Level Migrants		Land and Trees		Buildings		Animals	
Village/Household		Area (ha)	Value [Kip]	#	Value [Kip]	#	Value [Kip]
Chaphoukuen	HH1	8.8	10 552 000	2	1 100 000	0	-
	HH2	10.6	8 220 000	2	1 600 000	0	-
Phiyeu	HH1	11.0	40 000 000	1	5 000 000	6	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chavang Mai	HH1	40.2	2 100 000	1	700 000	0	-
	HH2	35.3	1 600 000	1	600 000	0	-
Phayaluang	HH1	40.0	3 000 000	1	800 000	0	-
	HH2	30.0	3 000 000	1	700 000	0	-
Chaleunxay	HH1	30.8	7 230 000	2	2 100 000	0	-
	HH2	50.6	9 450 000	2	1 600 000	0	-
Sompaan Mai	HH1	35.0	35 000 000	7	13 000 000	30	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Huay Na Kang	HH1	50.2	2 100 000	1	600 000	0	-
	HH2	35.0	1 500 000	1	800 000	0	-
Average		31.4	10 312 000	2	2 383 000	3.6	-

Relocation Costs (arriving)

Villagers incurred costs to establish themselves in new villages (Table 21). The average time to construct a new house was about 16 days costing Kip 1.7 million. Villagers constructed farm buildings costing about Kip 125 000 for a rice barn, Kip 200 000 for miscellaneous buildings and Kip 200 000 on corrals. Additional expenditures were made to establish orchards (Kip 100 000), build paddy fields (Kip 1 500 000) and dig fish ponds (Kip 100 000). Three of the seven villages relocated more than once so their establishment costs were higher. The average cost for relocation included Kip 12.7 million for property left behind and establishment costs of Kip 2.5 million for a total of Kip 14.2 million.

38 A note of caution should be exercised when considering these land and property values because the imputed values may be overestimated. The land and property market in the upland/highland areas is not very robust so the estimated values are based on their lowland experience where markets function more actively.

Table 21: Costs To Establish Households in New Villages (Kip 000)

Early Migrants			Build house	Barn	Other	Corrals	Orchards	Paddies	Ponds		
			Estimated								
Low-Level		Latest Village	Establish (days)	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Total Expenses [Kip]
Sing											
Chaphoukeun	HH1	Chaphoukeun 3	10	2 000	100	100	200	100	2 000	1 000	5 500
	HH2	Chaphoukeun 3	8	1 800	100	100	200	100	1 000	1 000	4 300
Phiyeu	HH1	Phiyeu	20	4 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 000
Chavangmai	HH1	Chavangmai	10	1 200	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 200
	HH2	Chavangmai	10	900	-	-	-	-	-	-	900
Sop Iii Kao	HH1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Phayalaung	HH1	Phayalaung	30	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	600
	HH2	Phayalaung	30	1 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 000
Long											
Chaleunxay	HH1	Chalernxay	5	2 000	200	500	200	100	2 000	-	5 000
	HH2	Chalernxay	5	2 500	100	100	200	100	1 000	-	4 000
Sompan Mai	HH1	Sompan Mai	12	2 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 000
Huaynakang	HH1	Huaynakang	15	900	-	-	-	-	-	-	900 000
	HH2	Huaynakang	15	1 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 000
Average			15.6	1 658	125	200	200	100	1 500	1 000	2 533

Ethnicity and Culture Change Luang Nam Tha

Community

Traditional Akha villages are located in the mountains at about 1 000 plus meters above sea level. The villages have a front and rear gate³⁹ where individuals officially pass or are used to conduct significant ceremonies. Villages are characterized by open spaces (*dehaw*) used for cultural events and range in size from about 15-30 households, depending upon the carrying capacity of the land.

Houses are scattered throughout the village according to the local terrain and are constructed from bamboo or wood. All usually have a front porch and a door front and back. The house is divided into a main room for guests, a kitchen area and a sleeping area with raised beds separated for men, women and children. Households are usually composed of a single family and cooperation is along clan lines. Inter and intra-family conflicts are resolved in consultation with clan heads and the most respected elder (the *dzeuma*).

The village head's house is near the center of the village. Other important persons in the village include the blacksmith and the one or more *piya* (men who have memorized the 10 000 line didactic poem which is an important repository of Akha culture and traditions), shamans (perhaps more than one) and fortunetellers. Most shamans are male, but there was reportedly a woman shaman in Chaleunxay. Goodman (1996) reports a major role for a white-skirted woman in rituals in northern Thailand connected with the rice cycle. We suspect that there are more female shamans than reported, but for some reason villagers were reluctant to mention them.⁴⁰

³⁹ There are also other paths in and out of the village besides the two gates.

⁴⁰ The reluctance to reveal shamans probably relates to both genders and may be related to mistrust of outsiders and their intentions.

Social Organization

Traditionally the Akha ruled themselves by a council of clan elders and this council of elders is still a force in the village (some members may be part of the official administrative unit). An important person in the village is the ‘most respected elder’⁴¹ and is the direct lineal descendent of the village founder. They are responsible for all major village ceremonies and rituals and are the chief arbitrator for disputes. The clan heads are usually a senior person⁴² in the clan who has the most knowledge about traditional values, beliefs, customs and in whom those in the clan have the most confidence and respect. The major Akha sub-groups are, in their order of predominance, Pouly (*puli*), Chichaw (*jijaw*), Yasa, Liya, Chepu and Sapho (*saphaw*). Clans in the study area number well over thirty.

The administration units of a village include the village development council comprised of the village head and two deputies, the village elders (*naeo hom*), an economic committee, a village women’s union, a youth league, militia, village police, possibly a Party cell and perhaps other production groups.⁴³ In virtually all the above-mentioned formal organizations there was little women’s representation outside of the Lao Women’s Union and the youth league.

Traditional Beliefs

The Akha religion is a variant of animism. It views the world as having good and evil spirits that influence every aspect of life. The ancestral spirits are good in that they protect families and children. Villagers pray to them to ask for help in solving problems and curing illnesses. Every household has a spirit altar to their own ancestors and spirit house for their house land spirits.

The nature spirits are potentially harmful causing illness or death if not appropriately respected. Rituals and ceremonies (*yoo kam*) are practiced in concert with traditional beliefs and sanctions in order to avoid retribution. There are village spirit houses located in each village and there may be altars to a number of nature spirits scattered throughout the village territory.

Before families begin livelihood activities they practice suitable rites concerning the surveying for and then later selection of proper bush fallows for potential upland (*hai*) fields, cutting trees and brush in the fallows, land preparation, dibbling rice seed and when housing rice in the barn. The failure to do any of these could result in a poor harvest and/or sickness. In a similar manner, they refrain from undertaking any livelihood activities on any days of cultural taboos (*yoo kam*).

The Akha year is based on an annual cycle for swidden cultivation of rice and other crops and is divided into a dry and wet seasons with certain proscribed activities. Many of their traditional festivals and ceremonies coincide with the stages of the annual swidden cycle (Table 22).

The Akha year begins with the new moon in November, as do the neighboring Tai Leu.⁴⁴ In the study area there was no conventional names for the months of this calendar. The livelihood activities are quite regular, changing according to the lunar calendar but essentially taking place at the same time every year. The Akha week has 12 days with animals associated with each day and work in 12-year cycles. Two days out of this week are rest days with limited sets of behaviors (Table 23).

41 (*dzeuma* in the Akha language or *chao kok chao lao* in Lao or sometimes referred to as *chao baan* in Lao).

42 The clan heads are not necessarily the oldest person in the clan, but certainly the most esteemed.

43 The individuals elected are usually considered as familiar with the government system. In the case of the Akha the village head is usually one of the best Lao speakers among the adults in the village.

44 It is reported that the Akha in northern Thailand begin their year in December as do many other ethnic groups in both northern Thailand and Laos (Goodman 1996).

Table 22: Akha Festival and Ceremony Calendar

Julian Calendar	Lao Month	Leu/Akha Month	Festival and Ceremonies	Other
January	2	3	Bunkinchen (bun mesa (ktangpha))	buun khao mai
February	3	4	bunpekhai	
March	4	5	Lenghallban (misorlor)	
April	5	6	Lengpinambo (Longkhong)	Lengpimone, mu, kammeu, saat chonepone, bunkheaun, ban longkhong
May	6	7	pihai	Pukkhao sayhoheek
June	7	8	pihai	
July	8	9	pihai	
August	9	10	pihai	
September	10	11	pihai	Laipiokban (khongyee), buntaktan, lengkhane, khaothodHong, hedhallban, (mixoloa), Oall sa (lase yekheu)
October	11	12		songkhaoBan kin khao, mai
November	12	1	Bring rice to barn	
December	1	2	bunkincheng	

Table 23: Akha Livelihoods Calendar

Julian Calendar	Lao Month	Leu/Akha Month	Livelihoods Activities			
January	2	3	Cutting hai	Previously opium harvest		
February	3	4	Cutting hai			
March	4	5	Burning hai			
April	5	6	Re-burning dibble plant	Rice (short duration)	Plant corn and cassava	
May	6	7	Land Preparation	Dibble	Plant rice (medium/long)	
June	7	8	Weeding hai land		Paddy seed bed	Planting
July	8	9	Weeding harvest		Cucurbits	Transplant paddy rice
August	9	10	Harvest Rice (short duration)		Corn cucurbits	
September	10	11	Harvest Rice (medium duration)		Squash cutting	Suan fin
October	11	12	Harvest (medium duration)			Previously plant poppies
November	12	1	Harvest (long duration)		Taro	
December	1	2	Meeting hai selection	Survey fields	Sassava	

Marriage and Family

Akha society is characterized as following patrilocal marriage practices (the bride moves in with the groom and his family) and patrilineal inheritance patterns (land and property passes through the male side the family). Headed by a male, households value male children because they can supply labor while female children leave the household to join their husbands. Husbands can have more than one wife, usually only sanctioned if the first wife is barren; however, there are other times when husbands will acquire a second wife and if so, it requires the approval of the first wife and the second wife if the husband takes a third.

Marriage cannot be made with in the same clan and individuals are free to marry across sub-groups. Young villagers traditionally are given freedom to practice premarital sexual after puberty, but it is characterized by responsibility. This stage of reaching adulthood is when boys and girls seek life mates and it is institutionalized by elaborate and public courtship with singing and the reciting of poetry in the evenings at prescribed locations, including the big open place or *dehaw*. Parents build small huts as symbolic secret places adjacent to their homes for their teenaged sons so they can have liaisons with their young women and later first live with their new wives.⁴⁵ This whole process is what the Akha see as the basis of a harmonious and civilized social structure for the making of future families.

The study team received conflicting information on bride prices. Sop Iii Kao and over half of the villages, said that bride prices are not a part of Akha culture. However, two of the relocated villages reported that the price is set according to the socio-economic status of the bride and groom and according to Tai Leu custom. Two relocated villages reported a price of two large pigs or a cow, three large male chickens, two eggs from a black chicken, 100 bottles of alcohol and enough rice for the wedding party. Bride prices are something the relocated Akha villages picked up from neighboring lowland villages. Much of what they responded to as bride price was the cost of the wedding ceremony and reception, which is borne by the groom's parents.

Village elders from both clans and the most respected elder play important roles in adjudicating the divorce. If the husband wants a divorce to marry another woman, he must repay the bride price plus an agreed upon amount. In Chaphoukeun and Chaleunxay, Kip 175 000 (7 x Kip 25 000) is paid to the wife and Kip 100 000 (4 x Kip 25 000) to the wife's mother. The children usually stay with the father. In Sompaan Mai and Sop Iii Kao, if they have daughters the husband pays nine pieces of silver to the wife's parents and if they have sons, he pays 10 pieces of silver and all non-real estate property is divided in half. If they have no children the wife repays three pieces of silver. In some villages if the woman is deemed the guilty party (adultery), she must leave the village.

In cases of divorce the following were reported to be common practices:

- If the husband wants the divorce and he has sons, he pays 15 piasters and provides a mid-sized pig (30 kg), gives about 10 bottles of whiskey to the elders and pays 10 piasters to his wife.
- In another instance the man pays 9 silver bars to his wife's grand parents and if they have children they divide properties acquired during marriage.
- In the case where they have daughters, he pays seven piasters (three piasters to the elders and 4 piasters to his wife).
- If the wife wants a divorce, she pays seven piasters to the husband and if there are no children, she pays three silver bars to the husband's grand parents and one pig's head for the ancestral spirit.

Divorce cases are adjudicated by the *dzeuma* or *chao baan* along with the head of the respective clans.

⁴⁵ Some have referred to this as free sex, but in fact there are prescribed sets of behaviors for such unions. The teenaged girls still have a great deal of choice with whom they have sexual intercourse. There is a custom whereby male guests in the village can request from the head of the youth league for the company of a young woman for an evening. While she is coerced into going with him, she does not have to consummate the union unless she chooses to. While there is sexual experimentation among all teenagers, it is reported that some young girls are still virgins at marriage.

Sometimes the village head and the VDC may be brought in to assist. This process usually requires two to three days. In virtually all cases the husband retains the children. The woman, except for other acquired property, keeps no land or buildings. It's not difficult for a woman to remarry and the terms are usually similar to a first marriage. If she returns to live with her parents or grandparents her assets will go to them.

Cultural Change

There are many causes for culture change. Cultures evolve over time by adapting to changes in the bio-physical, economic, political and institutional environments e.g. shifting weather patterns alter ecosystems, improved communications (especially roads) offer the hope for public services in addition to market access and all the implications. Improved communications (including media) are conduits for new opportunities, introduction of new ideas, innovative ways of looking at the world and subsequently new sets of challenges. New technologies including hand tractors and small trucks, motorcycles, rice mills and small-scale hydropower change the work patterns and workloads of both women and men. The opening of market opportunities to families and the concomitant ramifications concerning information about inputs and outputs has a significant impact on how people organize their livelihoods, wants and needs. In addition government rural development policies and programs induce culture changes e.g. reduction of shifting cultivation (resulting in shorter fallow periods) paddy establishment, opium eradication (from 1999-2003), land allocation, village consolidation and regular government services.

Relocated Villages

Culture change would be most evident in the relocated villages in the lowlands because of the change in livelihoods and lifestyles when confronted by vastly different ecosystems and other environments. A number of early migrants relocated to intermediary villages before arriving at their present village and so they gradually became acculturated, at least as we view them at this point in time.⁴⁶ For example, in Chavang Mai, the early migrants first arrived in the lowlands at Phoudarong in 1988 and stayed until 1996 when they moved to the present site of Chavang Mai. They had approximately eight or so years to begin to adjust to lowland life. Of the 17 households who moved to Chavang Mai only 12 households had paddy land and the other five households had to return to the paddy land they had established in Phoudarong.

They cultivated opium poppy both in Phoudarong and in Chavang Mai until the opium eradication program. This obviously created a hardship on their livelihoods system, but they were able to adjust because of their close proximity to the China border (about 5 km) and associated markets. They were encouraged by the local government to cultivate and sell alternatives to opium and motivated by Chinese merchants to cultivate sugarcane. Six households first cultivated it and in 2003 intermediaries or truckers cheated 17 households. So now they are not sure of expansion potential.⁴⁷ They also were attracted to sell NTFPs, especially bamboo shoots and wild vegetables. This brought them much needed cash income to replace opium sales. With the full force of the 2003 opium eradication program being felt in the mountains, 22 more households migrated from their original village in Chavang Kao. It was reported later migrants without paddy or inadequate upland for their livelihoods may have to return to their original village.⁴⁸

A few of the cultural changes noted by the team in Chavang Mai include:

- early migrants spoke some Lao – later migrants spoke no Lao;

⁴⁶ In fact this process was not gradual at all because they were also new migrants with no prior experience in the lowlands.

⁴⁷ The Chinese merchants have to guarantee fair practices and prices and the district will issue guidelines and oversee the process.

⁴⁸ It is uncertain whether there are any alternative sites for potential relocation.

- the production of handicrafts decreased because clothing and other items could be purchased cheaper in the markets;
- clothing styles began to change, especially for women who began to wear Lao skirts and blouses and no longer wore hats – men began to wear shoes;
- early migrants remain uninterested in education for their children and still exhibit high illiteracy rates – later migrants are totally illiterate in Lao; and
- there are no small huts for young men to entertain their girlfriends.

There are important issues related to livelihoods and cultural integration that must soon be solved. The clean water problems confronting the villages are related to long standing Akha cultural interdictions concerning the use of water from low lying places. There are still no toilets (and they continue to be refused) because of cultural interdictions preventing women and men using same toilet.⁴⁹ Outsiders have to consider cultural interdictions when proposing interventions.

Another example is that of Huay Na Kang located approximately 11 kilometers southeast of Sing off the all weather Sing-Xieng Kok road [NR17B]. It is considered one of the showpiece villages for relocation. In 1986, after 96 years of living in Huay Na Neua, which is located about a 30-minute walk up the mountain from the present village, about 40-plus households decided to look for paddy land near the present site of Huay Na Kang and asked permission to clear land for paddy establishment, but as time went on it was too far to carry rice back up to Huay Na Neua and by 1996 they asked permission to relocate to a site near their paddy fields and established Huay Na Kang. And two years later in 1998 the remaining 10-plus households also migrated from Huay Na Neua, leaving only opium poppy gardens and livestock to range.

At first they built traditional Akha houses, but sometime later began to build houses like Tai Leu. The villagers, with government and GTZ assistance, began to build access roads and a school was constructed in 1996 and improved in 2000. It has three teachers and five grades. Later a small-scale irrigation scheme was constructed with neighboring Euala, but it is only marginally useful. Before 2003 they sold opium for cash income but that has now stopped.⁵⁰ There have been numerous cultural changes related to new livelihoods and lifestyles:

- families now find it easier to practice personal hygiene habits;
- higher houses like Tai Leu with toilets and large animals are kept underneath houses;
- the village lower gate similar to traditional gates, but the upper gate is not maintained;
- they do not kill twins born in the village and ostracize the parents, nor are they as likely to kill the offspring of animals which are born in the wrong place;
- festivals now attract outsiders to whom they sell goods and operate games of chance (Chinese style gambling many times lasts all night long);
- traders [Chinese, Tai Leu] come to buy corn, soy beans, rice, onions and garlic;
- many students are interested in studying, but they are not yet proficient in the Lao language;
- clothing almost all like Tai Leu; however, older women still wear hats and some young women wear jeans;
- at festivals and ceremonies married women wear Tai Leu clothing and many young women wear Lao Lum clothing;
- many houses have corrugated zinc roofs and 2-3 households have TVs with video and/or CD players and satellite dishes⁵¹; and
- the livelihoods technology introduced into the village included four rice mills, several hand tractors and several electricity generators.

⁴⁹ Husband and wife apparently cannot even pass each other on way to the toilet.

⁵⁰ In 2003, thirty-three villagers were involved in a detoxification program sponsored by the GTZ project.

⁵¹ These are also sources of extra cash income because the family can charge others for watching.

Original Village

Sop Iii Kao was the only original village studied and the respect for traditional Akha customs, rituals and way of life are stronger than the relocated lowland villages.⁵² Like many remote villages in Luang Nam Tha, government programs have reached the village under the auspices of the GTZ project operating since the late 1990s. The project includes agricultural advice (e.g. tea cultivation and NTFP domestication), health services (vaccinations and health education), clean water and non-formal education. Except for times of peak labor demand for livelihood activities, villagers regularly travel to the district town (about a 4 hour walk) to sell or barter their products in the market. They regularly see the outside world and hear about it from other Akha who migrated to the lowlands.

Villagers in Sop Iii Kao have cultivated opium for more than a century and families also have had experience cultivating 'Imperial Tea' since their ancestors came from Burma almost a century ago. The GTZ project tried to revive the cultivation and sale of tea as an alternative to the sale of opium⁵³ and virtually all households now have their own tea garden. The GTZ and the DAFO have also introduced improved livestock rearing practices including vaccinations and confinement in corrals (adopted by few households). A few households were able to establish paddy land in the small valley floor below the village near the stream. The total paddy land area was only 1.7 hectares divided among three households so it has a very low impact on the total of 33 households. Reportedly they have increased cultivation of cassava and corn as starchy staple supplements for rice.

One of the key factors for change was the introduction of a clean water system sourced from a mountain spring. The GTZ assisted the clean water agency (*nam saat*) in putting this in about 2001. This has made water collection convenient as it was previously necessary to go to a stream to collect water. This allowed individuals to bath regularly and likely reduces incidence of skin ailments.

Most adult men and women still wear traditional clothing most of the time. Clothing styles have changed mostly for younger men and to a lesser extent younger woman. Younger men wore the clothing of lowlanders when the team was in the village. Many of the younger women wore the Tai Leu skirts and blouses. However, on ceremonial occasions they all wore traditional clothing.

They stopped practicing customs related to killing twins born in the village and ostracizing the parents, nor are they as likely to kill the offspring of animals, which are deemed economic and born under certain circumstances.

There were reportedly no changes in gender roles in the village and no evidence of inter-generational dissension between adults and young villagers other than what might be considered within the normal range.

Summary of Culture Change

The original and relocated study villages both underwent culture change. It is difficult in a short study time to identify all the processes of culture change; however, we know that when most of the Akha lived in remote villages they had virtually no government services. In the mid 1990s, projects (e.g. the GTZ project in Sing and ACF/NCA in Long) began to extend public services into the hinterlands. So the stage was being set for rapid culture change induced from outside. Of course, with the disruption of the lowland relocation it became easier to modify traditional adaptation mechanisms. The village heads and respected elders of some villages appeared to be progressive, undoubtedly emanating from their experiences in their original villages. This clearly was the case in Chaphoukeun, Phiyau, Huay Na Kang, Phayaluang and Sompaa Mai.

⁵² The collection team was in Sop Iii Kao during the annual Swing Festival and also in several other relocated villages for comparison.

⁵³ Tea is now sold in the market and is of very good quality.

Much of the innovation by leaders was a process of trial and error. After introducing changes in customs they observed there seemingly were no negative consequences from the violation of previous interdictions (taboos) so they proceeded further. For example, almost independently there was a re-evaluation of cultural interdictions against the killing of animals⁵⁴ born under unusual circumstances in several villages. After they migrated, they noticed different weather patterns - that is there was less wind and cold - therefore the traditional low set houses were not deemed necessary. The lowland Tai Leu style of houses set on taller posts was better for ventilation during the hot season. Then in the relocated villages with increased exposure to the markets in the district towns, it was convenient for people to purchase ready made clothing (Lao style) from the market. This resulted in women reducing the making of their own clothing.

Gender in Luang Nam Tha

Introduction

The concept of gender and gender equality in relation to international standards is particularly tested when applied to ethnic minority groups. Within the Lao PDR there has been relatively little substantive research done related on the importance of the issue, the most recent being SODECO (2004) of the Khmu Leu in Oudomxay. It very ably describes the status of many minority women in the Lao PDR.

Many minority or indigenous women find themselves living within traditional and largely patriarchal societies, which dictate that the woman is subordinate to the man. From birth, females are considered inferior to males. An indigenous woman is viewed as being there to bear children, to serve her father, her brother and later her husband and her family, including her in-laws. In most cases, women do not have any property rights, or if they do, they cannot inherit these rights. Indigenous women are often excluded from roles of political leadership both in indigenous socio-political structures and in structures imposed by the state. Seldom are they consulted on political matters concerning the community, much less are they involved in actual decision-making which is usually done in structures or institutions dominated by men as in the traditional village council. Women very rarely hold positions of leadership at the community level and even more rarely at any political/administrative level.

All who have worked in mountainous and remote areas among ethnic minority groups well realize the importance of women's roles' in the livelihoods system in their communities. They are involved in subsistence activities related to the annual swidden cycle of agriculture supplemented by other essential productive activities including the gathering of wild fruits, vegetables, roots and tubers in the forest, fishing in local streams and ponds as well as handicrafts like basket making, spinning and weaving, knitting and embroidery.

Woman's Involvement

Women's participation in official village organizations was extremely limited and none of the eight study villages in Luang Nam Tha had any women represented on the village development council. Their participation was mostly confined to the local chapter of the Lao Women's Union and that appears superficial in most villages except for Phiyu and Sompaa Mai (Table 24), there being no LWU-sponsored activities reported for the year. Their main role is to support regular community activities relating to ceremonies and festivals. There was no formation of informal production groups in any of the villages. This probably indicates the relative early stages of market development.

⁵⁴ They stopped killing both the mothers and the offspring of single or twin litters.

Table 24: Women's Involvement in Lao Woman's Union in Luang Nam Tha

	Members	Committee
	[#]	[#]
Sing		
Chaphoukeun	0	3
Chavang Mai	1	1
Sop Iii Kao	4	2
Phiyau	15	2
Huay Na Kang	4	2
Long		
Phaya Luang	5	2
Chaleunxay	0	1
Sompaan Mai	12	3

As was discussed previously in more detail, marriage is open to any man coming from a different clan than her father's; however, she can marry within the clan if there has been seven generations separating the couple. In the relocated villages men are beginning to offer bride prices according to Tai Leu custom. The cost of the wedding ceremony itself is borne by the groom's parents.

Divorce cases are adjudicated by the *dzeuma* or *chao baan* along with the head of the respective clan. Sometimes the village head is brought in to assist adjudication. This process usually requires two to three days. In virtually all cases the husband retains the children. The woman keeps no land or buildings, but she can receive other acquired property.

A few women in all villages can now speak Lao (Table 25) and opportunities for education, while still not ideal, are beginning to become available for Akha women. Young girls are receiving education whereas previously they did not, although sometimes they have to go outside the village to receive it, and of course this is opening new horizons for them. The fact that more than half the students in the study villages are female is already a revolution. Clearly all children have a propensity to drop out after the first grade (Table 26).

Table 25: Adult Lao Speakers and Literacy in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	Adult Lao Speakers			Adults Lao Literacy		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Sing						
Chaphoukeun	7	0	7	6	0	6
Chavang Mai	1	1	2	0	0	0
Sop Iii Kao	2	0	2	2	0	2
Phiyau	3	0	3	2	0	2
Huay Na Kang	12	2	14	?	?	?
Long						
Phaya Luang	100	3	103	22	0	22
Chaleunxay	20	0	20	4	0	4
Sompaan Mai	5	0	5	5	0	5
Total	125	3	128	31	0	31

Table 26: Schools in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	School Established	Grades	Teachers	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5		Total	
				M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Sing															
Chaphoukeun	1997	3	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	2	6	1	0	6	12
Chavang Mai	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sop Iii Kao	2001	2	1	15	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	4
Phiyeu	2001	3	1	42	28	9	5	3	1	3	2	4	3	61	39
Huay Na Kang	2003	3	2	29	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	33	4
Long															
Phaya Luang	1994	5	3	11	14	6	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	20	15
Chaleunxay	1999	5	2	28	15	6	2	2	1	28	15	6	2	70	35
Sompaan Mai	2002	3	2	12	11	5	4	3	4	0	0	0	0	20	19
Total			12	139	80	33	14	11	6	35	23	11	5	229	128

Women in relocated villages are exposed to clothing in the markets and with increased cash incomes, they are purchasing Lao Lum style clothing and Tai Leu style blouses and skirts are becoming prevalent. Ancillary to this is that they now produce less clothing and handicrafts for use and sale.

Women still bear more than their share of the work burden in productive activities. While they have been released from tedious opium poppy cultivation they now have to do paddy rice cultivation. Fortunately, the number of women addicts is declining. The introduction of rice mills in some villages has reduced the burden of daily rice pounding by women and young girls. Women are becoming gradually exposed to off-farm employment. Sanitation and clean water are available in both Sop Iii Kao and the seven relocated villages reducing the burden on young girls and women for water collection.

Gender Roles in Livelihoods

The productive roles of household members in livelihood activities are presented in Table 27. Of course, rice production (both paddy rice [if relevant to a household] and upland rice) is given greater emphasis. It is interesting to see the mutual responsibility of both men and women for most of rice cycle activities. Women cleaning and soaking rice seed probably is related to fertility rituals; however, selection for next years' planting relies on the indigenous knowledge of both men and woman.

Both women and men provide input into the discussion of initial field selection based on their knowledge of past performance and the status of forest and soil regeneration. Men are involved in the actual surveying (appraisal) of potential swidden fields to return to and the later divination for foretelling good or bad fortune. Both contribute to the cutting and burning of the bush fallows as well as to most of the activities in the swidden cycle. It is men's work to complete the heavier tasks like repairing rice paddy dykes and rice housing. Fencing and rice milling are women's work.

Table 27: Household Livelihoods Roles in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

Productive Roles	Wife	Husband	Both	Grandfather	Grandmother	Teenage Daughters	Teenage Sons	Child
Activities								
Paddy rice cultivation								
Cleaning seed	Yes							
Soaking seed	Yes							
Seed bed preparation			Yes					
Fertilization/manuring			Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
Sowing seed beds		Yes	Yes					
Repairing dykes		Yes						
Fencing	Yes							
Plowing	Yes	Yes						
Harrowing			Yes					
Transplanting			Yes					
Fertilization/manuring			Yes					
Weeding								
Harvesting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rice binding								
Threshing			Yes			Yes	Yes	
Transporting			Yes			Yes	Yes	
Housing		Yes						
Milling	Yes							
Seed selection			Yes					
Upland (hai) fields								
Meeting hai selection		Yes	Yes					
Survey fields		Yes						
Divination		Yes						
Cutting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Burning			Yes	Yes	Yes			
Collecting			Yes					
Re-burning			Yes					
Fencing			Yes				Yes	
Ritual			Yes					
Land preparation			Yes					
Dibble planting			Yes					
Weeding [1st]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [2nd]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [3rd]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [4th]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harvesting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Threshing			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transporting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Housing		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Seed selection			Yes					
Livestock								
Feeding fish		Yes		Yes			Yes	
Feeding poultry			Yes					
Feeding cattle and buffalo		Yes					Yes	
Feeding pigs	Yes				Yes	Yes		

Productive Roles	Wife	Husband	Both	Grandfather	Grandmother	Teenage Daughters	Teenage Sons	Child
Activities								
Handicraft/cottage industry								
Sewing	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Spinning cotton	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Dying yarn or cloth	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Weaving	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Basket making		Yes		Yes				
House construction		Yes		Yes			Yes	
Roof making		Yes		Yes			Yes	
Fish net making		Yes		Yes				
Blacksmithing		Yes		Yes				

The divisions of labor in all three age groups in the study areas reveal startling differences between males and females. The age groups include those between 8-14 (usually considered children), 15-49 (adults) and 50 and above (elderly). The time schedules recorded are composites from all the villages.

From an early age young girls have much more responsibility, beginning in the morning when they get up an hour before the boys to pound rice (Table 28). They have 17 tasks to complete during their day while the boys have only three chores outside of attending school. The workload for young girls often excludes the possibility of attending school. This workload inequity continues when they become adults (Table 29). Here again women get up an hour earlier than do men to prepare breakfast. They have 18 tasks to perform while men do nine. Women retire for the evening later than the men.

As in most cultures, when individuals age their duties change (Table 30). Women in this age group still rise earlier than do the men to help with food preparation. They have eight major tasks to perform, but they no longer have to forage for food in the forest or do handicrafts. At this age, men's tasks are mostly limited to working in their fields, livestock rearing and handicrafts. More than likely they still do some hunting, gathering and fishing since it is so deeply woven into the culture. Noticeably both older men and women (health permitting) are still required to assist in livelihood activities like cultivating upland rice and gardening during peak labor demand periods.

Introduction of new technologies (e.g. rice mills, clean water systems, communications and small tractor trailers) all contribute to reducing the workload of woman and young girls.

Table 28: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Luang Nam Tha (ages 8-14)

Daily Time Use Women	Girls 8-14 years old																							
Activity (time of day)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up		Yes	Yes																					
Mill [pound] rice		Yes	Yes																					
Steam rice			Yes	Yes									Yes	Yes										
Prepare food and cook			Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes								
Eat			Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes								
Care for children					Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes											
Go to school				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
House work		Yes	Yes												Yes	Yes								
Cut fire wood [HH use/sale]											Yes	Yes												
Fetch water [daughter]			Yes	Yes									Yes	Yes										
Wash clothes					Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes													
Field work in [WS / DS]				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Field work in hai				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Gardening				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Gather food from forest				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Fishing				Yes	Yes																			
Feed poultry				Yes	Yes										Yes	Yes								
Feed pigs /or goats				Yes	Yes										Yes	Yes								
Feed large animals				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Bathing															Yes	Yes								
Sleep																		Yes	Yes					
Daily time use men	Boys 8-14 years old																							
Wake-up			Yes																					
Eat				Yes	Yes			Yes							Yes	Yes								
Go to school				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Cut fire wood [HH use/sale]			Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes								
Feed poultry				Yes	Yes										Yes									
Feed large animals					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Bathing												Yes	Yes	Yes										
Sleep																		Yes	Yes	Yes				

Table 29: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Luang Nam Tha (ages 15-49)

Daily Time Use Women	Women 15-49 years old																							
Activity (time of day)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up	Yes	Yes																						
Mill [pound] rice																								
Steam rice		Yes	Yes										Yes	Yes										
Prepare food and cook			Yes	Yes																				
Eat				Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes							
Care for children			Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes								
House work			Yes	Yes										Yes	Yes									
Cut fire wood [HH use/ sale]													Yes	Yes										
Fetch water [daughter]			Yes	Yes									Yes	Yes										
Wash clothes						Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes										
Field work in [WS or DS]				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Field work in <i>hai</i>				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Gardening												Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes									
Gather food from forest					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Feed poultry			Yes	Yes										Yes	Yes									
Feed pigs /or goats			Yes	Yes										Yes	Yes									
Feed large animals					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Bathing														Yes	Yes									
Prepare and cook supper														Yes	Yes	Yes								
Spinning, weaving, etc			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes								
Others														Yes	Yes	Yes								
Sew clothing												Yes	Yes	Yes										
Sleep																		Yes	Yes	Yes				
Daily time use men	Men 15-49 years old																							
Wake-up		Yes	Yes																					
Eat			Yes	Yes					Yes							Yes	Yes							
Care for children			Yes	Yes											Yes	Yes								
Cut fire wood [HH use/ sale]														Yes	Yes									
Field work in [WS /DS]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Field work in <i>hai</i>			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Gardening											Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes									
Gather food from forest				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Fishing					Yes							Yes												
Feed large animals					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Bathing														Yes	Yes									
Handicrafts						Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes												
Sleep																	Yes	Yes	Yes					

Table 30: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Luang Nam Tha (ages > 50)

Daily Time Use Women	Women >50 years old																							
Activity (time of day)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up	Yes																							
Steam rice		Yes	Yes																					
Prepare food and cook			Yes	Yes	Yes																			
Eat					Yes	Yes			Yes							Yes								
Care for children																								
Corn peeling and drying					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Cut fire wood [HH use/sale]				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																
Field work in [WS / DS]					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Field work in <i>hai</i>					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Gardening					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Feed poultry			Yes	Yes												Yes	Yes							
Bathing													Yes											
Sleep																	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Daily time use men	Men >50 years old																							
Activity (time of day)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up		Yes																						
Eat				Yes	Yes				Yes							Yes	Yes							
Field work in [WS / DS]					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Feed large animals					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Handicrafts						Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes												
Bathing													Yes	Yes										
Sleep																	Yes	Yes	Yes					

Public Infrastructure and Services in Luang Nam Tha

Improved communications alerted the population to the availability of government-sponsored public infrastructure and services⁵⁵ that can help villagers improve their livelihoods system. The government is trying to respond to requests with both their own budget and donor assistance. The hope of attaining infrastructure and services is among the chief incentives for both the GOL in inducing villagers to relocate and with a household's decision to migrate.

The delays in delivering government infrastructure and public services have negatively affected livelihoods. Delayed infrastructure like roads slows market development and access to government services including public health, agriculture extension and veterinary services.

Roads

Relocating near an all weather road increases the opportunities to access to GOL services, development activities and other infrastructure.

The World Food Programme in their District Vulnerability Analysis (2001) defined road access as being 6 km from an all weather road. Being on the road insures only that individuals can travel easily and not their access to better health care, education and marketing opportunities for their livelihoods.

The Sing – Xiengkong road, built as a World Bank project in the late 1990s, is an all weather road; however, it is not yet paved and is in need of maintenance. Clearly this road is a key factor in the opening up of the area in southern Sing and most of Long. Only three of the Luang Nam Tha villages in Long were immediately next to this road.

Two study villages (Phiyeu and Huay Na Kang) in the southern part of Sing are 3-4 km from the all

⁵⁵ There is virtually no family that does not have at least some expectation of what services they think they are entitled to and they are increasingly demanding them.

weather Sing-Xieng Kok road [NR 17B]. Both villages have access roads that are marginally passable during dry periods of the wet season and have good infrastructure, services and market opportunities with a great deal of contact with the district town and traders compared to the other villages.

Two study villages in Khet Mom (Chavang Mai and Chaphoukuen) are next to the China border, but only on an improved road that is passable during the wet season if necessary. These two villages have the best market opportunities because of their proximity to the China markets, but not necessarily due to the current road.

Virtually all infrastructure was built by villagers who provided labor and local materials (e.g. sand, gravel and wood). District offices provided technical assistance – with donor projects supplying technical guidance when needed (Table 31). On average, these villages received access roads about 6.3 years after the founding of the village. Only three of villages are adjacent to the all weather road and the other five are from 3-36 kilometers from the main road.

Schools

Seven of eight study villages have schools that were constructed on average 6.7 years after the village was established (between 1 and 19 years). All schools have fewer teachers than the number of grades being taught. In all cases they report an insufficient budget to have a full complement of teachers. In addition they have few textbooks and teaching aids (Table 32).

Health Stations

In Sing there was only one study village with a health station (Chaphoukeun) built under the auspices of a GTZ project. All three of the study villages in Long had health stations. They were constructed over a period of six years.

Clean Water Systems

Potable water systems were constructed in seven of the study villages (excluding Chavang Mai). The water systems were constructed on average 8.5 years after village establishment.

Irrigation Schemes

There have been four irrigation schemes constructed in eight of the study villages. In Chaphoukeun a scheme was constructed with the community's own funds and three villages used project funds. These schemes were constructed within 3-4 years of village establishment. The scheme in Huang Na Kang was poorly designed (i.e. water cannot flow up hill) so cannot be effectively used.

Table 31: Infrastructure Constructed After Village Establishment in Luang Nam Tha (Years)

	Village Established	Road		School	Health Station	Water System	Irrigation Scheme
		Yrs	Km**				
Sing							
Chaphoukeun	1996	7	36	1	1	7	
Chavang Mai	1996	4	32	None	None	None	
Sop Iii Kao*	1836	163 (1999)	20	165 (2001)	None	165 (2001)	
Phiyau	1982	19	4	19	None	18	
Huay Na Kang	1996	2	3	7	None	4	4
District Average		8	18.75	13.0	0	11.0	
Long							
Phaya Luang	1993	5	0	1	None	6	
Chaleunxay	1997	2	0	2	6	8	2-5
Sompaan Mai	1992	5	0	10	6	8	
District Average		4	0	4.3	6	7.3	
Overall Average		6.3		7.8	6.0	8.8	

* Only original village in the study, ** Kilometers from all weather road

Table 32: Schools in Study Villages in Luang Nam Tha

	School Established	Grades	Teachers	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
Chaphoukeun	1997	3	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	2	6	1	0
Chavang Mai	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sop Iii Kao	2001	2	1	15	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phiyau	2001	3	1	42	28	9	5	3	1	3	2	4	3
Huay Na Kang	2003	3	2	29	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Phaya Luang	1994	5	3	11	14	6	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
Chaleunxay	1999	5	2	28	15	6	2	2	1	28	15	6	2
Sompaan Mai	2002	3	2	12	11	5	4	3	4	0	0	0	0

Government Services

Government services have in general been available but they come considerably after a village is established (Table 33). Most services in this table are related to the implementation of special projects, like the GTZ in Sing and the NCA and ACF projects in Long

Agricultural services focused mostly on large animal vaccinations along with training on paddy establishment, paddy rice and other crop production. The training topics related to livelihood systems, but it is not known if the training was effective. There was little or no use of the Akha language in training.

Public health services mostly focused on inoculations for pregnant women, infants, young children and training on sanitation including boiled drinking water and use of mosquito nets. Emergencies services, especially health services, are urgently required to meet the needs of the new migrants, but they come too late to make a significant contribution. While these services appear numerous they are inadequate compared to the villager's expressed needs.

Table 33: Government Services in Luang Nam Tha

Village and (year established)	Livelihoods					
	Crops		Livestock		Public Health	
	Year	Topic	Year	Topic	Year	Topic
Sing						
Chaphoukeun 1996	1999 2000	Training: paddy rice production, Chinese company extension: sugarcane production, marketing	1999	Training: native chickens Animal vaccinations	2000 2002	Training: sanitation, mosquito nets, clean water Mother and child vaccinations
Chavang Mai 1996	2002	Training: paddy rice production	2002	Animal husbandry	2002	Training: sanitation, mosquito nets Mother and child vaccinations
Sop Iii Kao 1836	2001	Training: paddy rice production and pest control	2001	Training: native chickens Animal vaccinations	1998 2000 2001	Training: toilets, sanitation, clean water, mosquito nets Mother and child vaccinations
Phiyau 1982	2000 2002	Training: paddy rice production Chinese company extension sugarcane production, marketing	2000	Animal vaccinations	2000 2000	Training: clean water Mother and child vaccinations
Huay Na Kang 1996	1997	Training: coffee production, paddy establishment, paddy rice production	2000	Animal vaccinations	2001	Training: sanitation, mosquito nets Vaccinations
Long						
Phaya Luang 1993					2000 2001 2002	Training: clean water, toilets Mother and child vaccinations
Chaleunxay 1997	1999 2000	Training: paddy rice production, pest control, other crop production, diversified crop cultivation (pine tree, sunflower, sesame), irrigation	1999	Training: animal husbandry, fish ponds Animal vaccinations	2000 2001	Training: boiled drinking water, mosquito nets, clean water Mother and child vaccinations
Sompaan Mai 1992	1992	Training: Paddy rice production	1992	Animal vaccinations	1998 2000	Training: boiled drinking, water, clean water mosquito nets, toilets [2 houses] Mother and child vaccinations

Livelihoods System Performance

In summary, the livelihoods system of the Akha is highly diverse – each component contributing to the overall system performance. As villagers migrate, they experience new diversity. In the original highland villages, the diversity was both in their swidden systems (with longer fallows) and the greater dependency on the forest for timber and non-timber forest products. With their arrival in the lowlands (with land constraints and shorter fallows), they were unable to practice swidden in a sustainable manner. Other than sugarcane and limited vegetable production, they still do not have many viable alternatives to upland rice swidden.

An approximate assessment of livelihood systems can be calculated according to their agro-ecosystem properties. This can be done for each of the components or for the entire system. The dimensions are all interrelated and nested. The first and most important dimension of assessment is that of human intervention because the actors within the system (e.g. individuals, groups or institutions), strongly influence the performance characteristics of the rest of the agro-ecosystem.

The human capacity of the Akha, both in the one original village and the relocated villages, is increasing. Their Lao language literacy and numeracy is improving. They are acquiring new skills in the areas of sedentary agriculture including paddy rice cultivation; sugarcane, fruit and vegetable production as well as learning more about market behavior. They are also acquiring new skills and attitudes about health and sanitation. The question is if this is enough for them to adapt themselves to their environments in order to survive and compete more effectively. In general, if these capacities are relevant, they have a positive impact on performance. The demographic dynamics of rapid natural population growth in the face of little family planning will place increasing pressures on land and resources.

The overall performance of the system must not only be viewed in terms of the four agro-ecosystems properties, but also in terms of the socio-cultural setting. In both the original and relocated villages, productivity is still fairly high if measured as a unit of labor, which is how villagers perceive it, rather than with our notion of production per unit of land. The system is stable (even though less so with longer fallows than was previously the case) and it is still marginally sustainable. Obviously it is highly equitable since any level of household can practice it. Swidden cultivation continues to persist in the livelihoods system even though there is inadequate agricultural land and declining soil fertility because it is essential to their survival (Table 34).

Related to this is the cultivation of upland crops including sugarcane, corn and cassava. At the current productivity it is still positive, but as soil fertility declines with the failure to practice soil conservation, it is not sustainable. Because of the necessity to use purchased inputs for crops, the equity of these enterprises is in question; however, these upland crops contribute positively to overall livelihoods system performance. Paddy rice cultivation definitely increases overall livelihoods system performance for households having enough paddy land. Productivity, stability and sustainability are all positive. Thus, it is only the equity property that is questionable since this land is not available to all of the households.

Livestock rearing is positive in all four agro-ecosystems properties, contingent on households receiving animal health services from the DAFO. Any growth in this component will depend on the availability of quality feed and fodder. Equity can only be assured for mid-level and worse-off households with small and medium sized animals. Fish culture is starting to become popular and it contributes to overall system performance, but again, mid-level and worse-off households need assistance in digging ponds in order to obtain benefits.

Because of local tourism in Sing, handicrafts are increasingly contributing to cash income. The overall effect is positive in most of the properties. As long as villagers receive timely advice about quality

standards and other market considerations, it should be sustainable. Again special attention may be necessary for worse-off households.

When off-farm employment is available it has a positive overall affect on the livelihoods system. Of course, the demand now is for unskilled labor, mostly as agricultural labor for others or in work in town. This is not sustainable because new migrants are competing for the few available jobs. It is uncertain whether and how labor demand will increase unless there is further investment in local industry.

The overall performance of the system is affected by the cultural changes in Akha society. The institution of the family is undergoing changes as are gender roles, inter-generational tensions and family and household cash income is increasingly becoming important, monetizing their livelihoods system.

Table 34: Livelihoods Systems Performance in Luang Nam Tha

Agro-ecosystem Properties	Positive	Negative	Comments
Productivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swidden cultivation high - productivity per unit of labor 2. Paddy establishment and cultivation 3. Healthy livestock live longer and are larger 4. Crop intensification 5. Off-farm employment 6. Emerging market for crops; sugarcane, tea, vegetables, fruits, NTFPs: cardamon, dama resin 7. Livestock sales opportunities 8. Irrigation available to some 9. Handicraft opportunities 10. Increased technical assistance from DAFO and companies 11. Improved human health 12. Improved formal and non-formal education 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate agricultural land 2. Swidden cultivation – low productivity per unit of land 3. Declining rice yields of upland rice (<i>hai</i>) because of soil infertility, weed infestation, all due to shorter fallows 4. Little or no technologies disseminated to improve performance of swidden systems 5. High population growth rates 6. Reliance disproportionately on female labor restricts productivity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adequate family labor essential for all activities in livelihood systems 2. Some forest land can still be converted to agricultural land 3. Can increase productivity with water control if have irrigation 4. If extension education includes women, will lead to increase gains in productivity 5. Paddy rice cultivation extension could be more effective if it met the needs of farmers without previous paddy rice experience 6. Off-farm employment in town is more likely if villagers have Lao language ability
Stability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can increase stability of production with water control 2. Improved animal health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family planning deficient 2. Diversification of agricultural production declining 3. Pests: insects, diseases, rodents increasing 4. Droughts and erratic rainfall reportedly increasing 5. Declining biodiversity in bush fallows and forest 6. Declining quantities of NTFPs without regeneration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agricultural and biological diversity issue relevant 2. Reduced population relieves stresses 3. Increase in rodents partially due to decline in predators

Agro-ecosystem Properties	Positive	Negative	Comments
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing awareness of human population roles, responsibilities and impact on agro-ecosystems 2. Improved animal health 3. Land tenure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population growth 2. Decreasing flora and fauna in forest jeopardizes traditional safety nets 3. Inadequate agricultural land 4. Reduction of fallow periods leads to declining soil fertility, weed infestation 5. Increased use of purchased inputs 6. Increasing pest infestations 7. Over exploitation of NTFPs 8. Declining stream flows 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swidden agriculture is sustainable with proper fallow periods (7-10 years) 2. Increased livestock production will be dependent on adequate feed and fodder 3. Transition to sedentary agriculture can only be sustainable if nature's processes are replicated 4. Increased extension should help individuals to respond to opportunities and solve problems 5. Land tenure increases sustainability since households are more committed 6. Increased roles for women in decision-making will contribute to increased sustainability
Equitability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subsistence production 2. Agricultural diversification 3. Small livestock rearing 4. Land tenure 5. Woman's participation 6. Formal and non-formal education 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paddy land only available to limited households 2. Many times only the better-off families have enough 'risk capital' to take advantage of market opportunities 3. Worse-off households forced make increased incursions into forest 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formal and non-formal education can increase equitability if it recognizes the world views, learning and decision-making processes of the community, households, individuals and is extended to all equally 2. Land tenure can increase equitability if households have adequate land

Chapter 5: Study Findings in Sekong

Introduction

The study sites in Kaleum ranged from the northern most village of Tham Deng, which lies at 15° 47.272' north and 106° 39.407' east at 361 meters above sea level (masl) along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to Tong Treuk, which lies at 15° 44.201' north and 106° 45.386' east at 210 masl. The sites in Tha Taeng ranged from just off road NR16 on the way to the Bolovens Plateau at Yeup, which lies at 15° 27.108' north and 106° 34.483' east at 464 masl to Thong Kong about four kilometers from Tha Taeng on the way to Paksong, which lies at 15° 20.740' north and 106° 29.787' east at 847 masl⁵⁶.

The present agricultural livelihood systems of the Katu are upland rice-based and are primarily supplemented by the cultivation of cassava and taro. They also cultivate sugarcane, corn and fruit trees. Livestock rearing is very important to their livelihoods systems since large animal exchange and sacrifice is key to their culture. They gather a wide variety of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) including fruits and vegetables, wild roots, tubers and wildlife. In the recent past roots and tubers was their starchy staple.⁵⁷ They like to tap the sugar palm tree [*mak thaen*] to make a sweet beverage. Both men and women are involved in the making of handicrafts for use and supplementary income. For many households in Tha Taeng, off-farm employment is becoming increasingly important for supplementary family income.

The Katu are an ethnic group in the Katuic Branch of the Mon-Khmer (Austro-Asiatic) ethnolinguistic superstock. While it is not the largest ethnic group in this branch it numbers about 25 000 individuals in the country, mostly located in Sekong (17 000), Saravan (2 500) and Champasak (6 400). There are also about 30 000 Katu in Viet Nam.⁵⁸ There are a number of different groups of Katu in Kaleum (e.g. Pravael, Asang, Ra Ngop, Ra Ngè and Arna). Kaleum has the highest concentration of Katu anywhere. It also has other ethnic groups including the Ngè, Chatong and Ta-Oy. The ethnicities of the district by *khet* is approximately:

- Khet 1 – Ngè, Katu, Ta-Oy and others (around the district town)
- Khet 2 – Ngè 100 percent (mostly along the Sekong River)
- Khet 3 – Ngè, Katu, Chatong
- Khet 4-8 – Katu 100 percent (Upper Kaleum)

Demographics

This study compares the livelihood systems of the relocated villages in the two districts of Tha Taeng and Kaleum. The villages in Kaleum are smaller than those in Tha Taeng averaging 17 households (21 families) per village and an average population of 133, whereas the villages in Tha Taeng average 49 households (95 families) and a population of 564 (Table 35). The population growth rates average about the same (3.6 and 3.7 percent, respectively) for the two districts (Table 36). This is too high for most of the villages except for Koke Mai in Kaleum and Done Saa in Tha Taeng⁵⁹. This compares to the national rate of 2.8 percent in 2000.

⁵⁶ All study findings in this chapter refer to the eight study villages in Sekong, four in Kaleum and four in Tha Taeng.

⁵⁷ In contrast, the Alak and Ngè collect and eat a specific tuber called *koi* and not many other roots and tubers.

⁵⁸ In February and March 1975 more than 20 000 Katu along the Lao-Viet Nam border were forcefully resettled to their present locations inside Viet Nam. However, some Lao Katu have returned to their homeland and reportedly more in Viet Nam want to return.

⁵⁹ There still is some migration into Pak Xay and Kan Done and out-migration from Thong Kong.

Children under 15 make up less than 50 percent of the population in both districts except for Pak Xay. If the population growth rate continues unabated, it will have impact on food self-sufficiency and land use. About half the village labor force (mainly in the 15-49 age group), have full-time work. Tha Taeng has twice as many female household heads than Kaleum.

Table 35: Demographics in Study Villages in Sekong

	HHs	Families	Population	Female Head	Age Group							Full-time Labor	Part-time Labor
					<1	1-5	6-14	<15	15-49	>50	>15		
Tha Taeng													
Kan Done	79	154	739	4	33	92	136	261	431	47	478	182	129
Yeup	29	53	254	7	28	51	59	138	73	43	116	73	38
Done Saa	46	110	830	7	25	110	154	289	456	85	541	456	293
Thong Kong	40	62	433	8	53	74	79	206	185	42	227	208	47
Average	48.5	94.8	564	6.5	34.8	81.8	107	224	286	54.3	341	230	127
Kaleum													
Tong Treuk	5	12	53	2	1	8	14	23	23	7	30	12	20
Koke Mai	22	27	170	7	12	28	38	78	81	6	87	81	44
Pak Xay	15	20	142	1	6	24	55	85	56	8	64	49	
Tham Deng	25	28	166	3	15	31	17	63	69	34	103	69	34
Average	16.8	21.8	133	3.25	8.5	22.8	31	62.3	57.3	13.8	71	52.8	32.7

Table 36: Population Dynamics in Study Villages in Sekong

	Births	Deaths	In-migration	Out-migration	Number	Growth Rate (%)
Tha Taeng						
Kan Done	30	5	6	0	25	3.5
Yeup	12	1	-	-	11	4.5
Done Saa	24	9	0	0	15	1.8
Thong Kong	26	6	0	8	20	4.8
Average						3.7
Kaleum						
Tong Treuk	2	-	-	-	2	3.9
Koke Mai	4	1	0	0	3	1.8
Pak Xay	5	1	12	0	4	2.9
Tham Deng	10	1	0	0	9	5.7
Average						3.6

Human Resources

Lao language competency among the Katu was greater than in Luang Nam Tha (Table 37). In Tha Taeng an average of 283 (out of 340) adults per village speak Lao, almost half of them women. About 163 villagers were literate in the Lao language (108 men and 55 women) and 86 were numerate (92 men and 46 women); however, in Kaleum the situation is quite different. On average only 34 out of 70 per village could speak Lao (22 men and 12 women), 14 could write in Lao (11 men and 3 women) and 14 were numerate (12 men and 2 women).

The Sekong provincial data in the Lao National Literacy Survey (2002) showed a functional literacy rate of 20.4 percent (male 30.8 percent and female 9.5 percent). The study villages in both districts had lower rates than the literacy survey indicated. All four villages in Tha Taeng had schools although children from Tong Treuk attended school in the district town, as did children of two of the four villages of Kaleum. Pak Xay did not have a school (Table 38).

Non-formal education classes were conducted in six of the eight villages. Classes were most active in Tha Taeng with an average of 495 villagers studying spoken Lao, 191 studying Lao reading and writing and 258 studying numeracy. In Kaleum an average of 35 villagers studied spoken Lao, 21 studied Lao reading and writing and 19 studied numeracy (Table 39).

Table 37: Lao Language Capability in Study Villages in Sekong

	Speakers						Literacy						Numeracy					
	Adults			Children			Adults			Children			Adults			Children		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Tha Taeng																		
Kan Done	280	128	408	80	66	146	248	130	378	86	48	134	210	108	318	65	55	120
Yeup	60	40	100	34	25	59	50	34	84	27	20	47	25	17	42	27	20	47
Done Saa	356	236	592	89	87	176	116	42	158	89	87	176	116	42	158	89	87	176
Thong Kong	16	15	31	15	7	22	16	15	31	15	7	22	16	15	31	0	0	0
Average	178	105	283	55	46	101	108	55	163	54	41	95	92	46	137	45	41	86
Kaleum																		
Tong Treuk	14	9	23	10	9	52	8	7	15	8	7	15	2	3	5	6	4	10
Koke Mai	35	29	64	0	0	64	15	0	15	0	0	0	15	0	15	0	0	0
Pak Xay	26	11	37	35	15		14	4	18	35	15	50	14	4	18	35	15	50
Tham Deng	13	0	13	5	0	18	8	0	8	5	0	5	8	0	8	5	0	5
Average	22	12	34	13	6	45	11	3	14	12	6	18	10	2	12	12	5	16

The Katu parents and children in Tha Taeng perceive a greater need for education with attendance being much higher than in Kaleum. However, drop out rates after the first grade remains a problem, especially with young girls.

Table 38: Children in School in Study Villages in Sekong

	P1			P2			P3			P4			P5			>M1		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Tha Taeng																		
Kan Done	24	27	51	9	9	18	9	7	16	13	9	22	5	9	14	0	0	0
Yeup	3	5	8	1	6	7	6	5	11	5	6	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Done Saa	24	36	60	16	15	31	16	11	27	22	10	32	11	15	26	-	-	20
Thong Kong	34	26	78	5	4	9	10	3	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	1
Average	21.3	23.5	49.3	7.75	8.5	16.3	10.3	6.5	16.8	10	6.25	16.3	4.0	6.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	5.25
Kaleum																		
Tong Treuk	2	5	7	2	2	4	3	3	6	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1
Koke [Mai]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pak Xay	7	9	16	3	3	6	15	1	16	3	1	4	2	1	3	0	0	0
Tham Deng	4	6	10	2	3	5	2	9	11	7	2	9	5	0	6	0	0	0
Average	3.3	5.0	8.3	1.8	2.0	3.8	5.0	3.3	8.3	2.5	0.8	3.3	2.0	0.5	2.8	0.0	0.3	0.3

Table 39: Non-Formal Education in Study Villages in Sekong

	Speaking Lao	Year Taught	Reading Lao	Year Taught	Numeracy	Year Taught
	Number Attending		Number Attending		Number Attending	
Tha Taeng						
Kan Done	408		378		350	
Yeup	-	-	-	-	-	-
Done Saa	581	1974	166	1974	166	1974
Thong Kong	-	2002	30	2002	-	2002
Average*	494.5	-	191.3	-	258	
Kaleum						
Tong Treuk	-	-	-	-	-	-
Koke Mai	68	1973	20	1973	20	1973
Pak Xay	7	2000	14	2000	7	2000
Tham Deng	30	2000	30	2000	30	2000
Average*	35		21.3		19	

* Participating villages

Rice Self-Sufficiency

Tha Taeng reported 71 percent of households with 6-12 months of rice self-sufficiency. Seven of the eight villages report rice deficiencies for 2003 with four villages reporting an average 3.4 months deficit. Only Kan Done in Tha Taeng and Koke Mai reported that their rice self-sufficiency was worse off than 5, 10 and 15 years ago. Yeup related that their rice self-sufficiency is better than the last 15 years, which reflects the situation in their original village. Tham Deng and Thong Kong reported that their situation is better than five years ago, which reflects the improving conditions in their relocated village, but worse than 20 or 15 years ago, implying that their food security in their original villages was better than it is currently (Table 40)

In Kaleum, the villages averaged about 67 percent of households with 6-12 months of rice and Tong Treuk reported a surplus for two and a half months. Three other villages in Kaleum averaged a 3.8 months deficit. Tong Treuk had 1.3 hectares of paddy land per each of the five households, whereas the other three villages had 0.3 hectares for the households with paddy land. Obviously paddy land is insufficient to assure rice self-sufficiency in the villages.

In Tham Deng, Pak Xay and Koke Mai (Kaleum) and Done Saa and Thong Kong (Tha Taeng) they still have the safety net of their forests to cope with rice shortages, but resources are under threat. Yeup and Kan Done have very little forest to rely on for their safety nets.

In Kaleum the four villages averaged about ten households (62 percent) with paddy land of a total of five hectares or about 0.7 hectares per household with paddy land. Then in Tha Taeng 89 percent of the households had paddy land with about 1.1 hectares per household (Table 41).

Table 40: Socio-Economic Levels and Rice Self-Sufficiency in Study Villages in Sekong

	Total HHs	Well Off HHs	Mid Level HHs	Less Well-off HHs	Worse Off HHs	Households					5 yrs Ago	10 yrs Ago	20 yrs Ago
						Rice Sufficient [months]							
						<3	3-5	6-8	9-12	>12			
Tha Taeng													
Kan Done (Established 1998)	79	16	20	23	20	20 25.3%	23 29.1%	10 12.7%	10 12.7%	16 20.3%	Better	Worse	Worse
Yeup (Established 1996)	29	3	12	12	2	- 0.0%	- 0.0%	1 3.4%	25 86.2%	3 10.3%	Better	Better	Better
Done Saa (Established 1980)	110	4	47	42	17	12 10.9%	18 16.4%	38 34.5%	40 36.4%	2 1.8%	Worse	Worse	Worse
Thong Kong (Established 1984)	40	8	7	13	12	3 7.5%	10 25.0%	10 25.0%	11 27.5%	6 15.0%	Better	Worse	N/s
District Average						10.9%	17.6%	18.9%	40.7%	11.9%			
Kaleum													
Tong Treuk (Established 1978)	5	1	2	2	-	0.0%	0.0%	5 100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	Same	Same	Worse
Koke Mai (Established 1974)	22	4	15	5	3	12 54.5%	8 36.4%	6 27.3%	1 4.5%	0 0.0%	Worse	Worse	Worse
Pak Xay (Established 1976)	15	3	6	4	2	7 46.7%	2 13.3%	6 40.0%	3 20.0%	2 13.3%	Better	Same	Same
Tham Deng (Established 1998)	25	3	3	9	1	5 20.0%	4 16.0%	3 12.0%	10 40.0%	3 12.0%	Better	Worse	N/s
District Average						30.3%	16.4%	44.8%	16.1%	6.3%			
Average*	40.6	5.3	14.0	13.8	8.1	23.6%	19.5%	81.9%	32.5%	10.4%			

*All villages

Table 41: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Area in Sekong

		Rice Paddy Land				Upland Rice Land			Total	2003 Rice Sufficiency
	# Village HHs	Area (ha)	# HHs	Ratio HHs to w/Paddy	Areas (ha)	Area (ha)	# HHs	Ratio HHs to w/upland	Area (ha)	Months
Tha Taeng										
Kan Done	79	60	74	93.7%	0.8	70	79	100.0%	130	(2.2)
Yeup	29	42	26	89.7%	1.6	5	7	24.1%	47	(4.6)
Done Saa	46	48	46	100.0%	1.0	50	46	100.0%	98	(4.3)
Thong Kong	40	25.5	30	75.0%	0.9	28	10	25.0%	54	(4.1)
Average	48.5	43.9	44	89.6%	1.1					(3.8)
Kaleum										
Tong Treuk	5	8.6	5	100.0%	1.7	6	5	100.0%	14	2.4
Koke Mai	22	0.6	2	9.1%	0.3	24	22	100.0%	25	(2.0)
Pak Xay	15	2	6	40.0%	0.3	43	15	100.0%	45	(3.2)
Tham Deng	25	8	25	100.0%	0.3	27	25	100.0%	35	(5.0)
Average		4.8	9.5	62.3%	0.7					(3.4)

Land Use

Because all of the villages in Sekong have had land allocation, the land use data are more accurate than other regions, however, there remain inconsistencies. There is very little paddy land in any of the four Kaleum villages, about 5-ha/village. Three of the inner villages still complain about the lack of land and villagers feel they are there temporarily because of this. All four Kaleum villages are forced to cultivate upland rice, an average of 111 hectares. In Tha Taeng the villages have about 44 hectares of paddy land, but still cultivate upland rice in swiddens averaging 146 hectares per village (Table 42). All villages cultivate corn and cassava to supplement their starchy staples and for animal feed. Most villages have home and riverbank gardens.

In Kaleum the total agricultural land averages 282 hectares and in Tha Taeng about 522 hectares. Forest land averages 1 462 hectares per village in Kaleum with 1 111 hectares per village in Tha Taeng. The ratio of agricultural land to total agricultural (plus forestry land) averages 36.1 percent for Kaleum, ranging from 8.0 percent in Koke Mai to 69.3 percent in Tong Treuk. Tha Taeng averages 53.5 percent, ranging from 11.6 percent in Thong Kong to 81.7 percent in Done Saa. All villages except Tong Treuk complain of not having enough agricultural land.

Table 42: Land Use in Study Villages in Sekong

	Paddy Rice (ha)	Upland Rice (ha)	Coffee Cardamon (ha)	Corn (ha)	Cassava (ha)	Hone Garden (ha)	River Garden (ha)	Total Agriculture (ha)	Conservatory Forest (ha)	Protected Forest (ha)	Community Use (ha)	Regenerated Forest (ha)	Degraded Forest (ha)	Existing Planted (ha)	Planted Areas (ha)	Total Forest land (ha)	Total Agricultural and Forest Land (ha)	Ratio of Agricultural to Total Land (%)	Total Village Area	Enough agricultural land
Tha Taeng																				
Kan Done	60	210	0	3	3	1		277	8	31			130			169	446	62.2	811	No
Yeup	42	15	-	42	3	21	42	165	-	-	94	-	23.7	-	-	118	283	58.4	246	No
Done Saa	48	247.5	305.2	55	55	305	402	1 418	0	194	83	40	0	0	0	317	1 735	81.7	1740	No
Thong Kong	25.5	112.8	90.3	-	-		0.3	229	876	307	251	318	-	-	-	1752	1 981	11.6	3045	No
Average	44	146	132	33	20	109	148	522	295	177	143	179	51	0	0	589	1 111	53.5	1 461	
Kaleum																				
Tong Treuk	8.6	27.5	-	-	1	1	16.1	54	?	?	?	?	24	?	?	24	78	69.3	2 160	Yes
Koke Mai	0.6	135	2	6	10	1	125	280	563	333	1859	238	207	0	0	3200	3 480	8.0	3 330	No
Pak Xay	2	172		2	1		77	254	280	358		118				756	1 010	25.1	2 181	No
Tham Deng	8	108	-	-	-	1	421	538	275	280	35	94	-	-	58	742	1 280	42.0	1 250	No
Average	5	111	2	4	4	1	160	282	373	324	947	150	116	0	29	1 181	1 462	36.1	2 230	

Village Cash Income

In Tha Taeng, selling crops is the largest income earner, generating about Kip 160 million or about 52 percent of their total income. Yeup earns about Kip 21 million (mostly peanuts) and Done Sea earns about Kip 487 million (mostly coffee and cardamon). NTFPs are also a significant income earner, averaging about Kip 132 million. Crops and NTFPs provide about 95 percent of the villager's total income. The total average income in Tha Taeng is almost six times that of Kaleum (Table 43).

With an average of Kip 37 million, the collection of NTFPs generates the most income for the villagers in Kaleum. This is about 76 percent of the total income. Raising livestock is also important, generating about 16 percent of the villager's income. There is little off-farm income earned in these villages.

Villagers in Kaleum spend more on every category of expenditure, except health, than villagers from Tha Taeng. Villagers in both districts spend the largest the largest amount on food, 35 percent of total expenditures in Tha Taeng and 73 percent in Kaleum 73 percent (Table 44).

Household Cash Income and Expenditures

The average total household incomes⁶⁰ of the two districts are comparable. Income from crops is the most significant generator. Only one Kan Done respondent reported off-farm employment (Table 45).

Table 43: Estimated Village Cash Income in Study Villages in Sekong (Kip 000)

	Crops [Kip]	Ratio Crops/ Total %	Animals [Kip]	Ratio Animals/ Total %	NTFPs [Kip]	Ratio NTFPs/ Total %	Total Off-Farm [Kip]	Ratio Off-Farm/ Total %	Total Income [Kip]
Tha Taeng									
Kan Done	80 000	77.0	12 340	11.9	0	0.0	11 600	11.2	103 940
Yeup	21 200	74.4	6 600	23.2	700	2.5	0	0.0	28 500
Done Saa	487 100	62.0	0	0.0	293 800	37.4	5 000	0.6	785 900
Thong Kong	54 000	17.6	7 600	2.5	236 200	77.0	9 000	2.9	306 800
District Total	642 300	52.4	26 540	2.2	530 700	43.3	25 600	2.1	1 225 140
	160 575		6 635		132 675		6 400		306 285
Kaleum									
Tong Treuk	4 000	24.5	7 300	44.8	5 000	30.7	0	0.0	16 300
Koke Mai	500	0.4	14 990	11.8	111 450	87.8	0	0.0	126 940
Pak Xay	0	0.0	8 590	26.4	24 000	73.6	0	0.0	32 590
Tham Deng	10 000	44.7	2 250	10.1	10 000	44.7	100	0.4	22 350
District Total	14 500	7.3	33 130	16.7	150 450	75.9	100	0.1	198 180
	3 625		8 283		37 613		25		49 545
Average	82 100		9 234		151 481		4 963		177 915
Total	656 800	46.1	73 870	5.2	1 211 850	85.1	39 700	2.8	1 423 320

Household expenditures in Tha Taeng and Kaleum were considerably different. Households in Tha Taeng spent 48 percent of their total expenditures on food, whereas in Kaleum they spent 62 percent. This probably reflects the cheaper food available around Tha Taeng; however, households in Kaleum spent less on clothing, housing and health than did those in Tha Taeng. The average total expenditures in Kaleum were Kip 2.6 million and in Tha Taeng Kip 1.2 million. Undoubtedly the lower expenditures in Tha Taeng can be attributed to cheaper costs of goods because of their proximity [to markets]. In Kaleum the higher transportation costs increased the costs for all purchased items.

Household incomes in Kaleum were earned from crops (70 percent), livestock (28.1 percent) and NTFPs (2.3 percent) – totaling about Kip 2.7 million. This was enough to cover their expenditures of Kip 2.6 million.

Household incomes in Tha Taeng were from crops (88.3 percent), livestock (2.4 percent), NTFPs (2.9 percent), off-farm employment (2.2 percent) and rice whiskey (1.8 percent) – totaling about Kip 2.1 million. Again, this was more than adequate to cover their expenditures of Kip 1.2 million.

In both districts, households, at least theoretically, had a surplus for savings and investment.

⁶⁰ Village and household cash incomes may not agree because of sampling problems. Village data were supplied as estimates by village heads and committees. Purposively selected households supplied household data and the two collections may not necessarily be in agreement.

Table 44: Household Expenditures Low-Level Early Migrants in Study Villages in Sekong *

		Food	Clothing	Housing	Health	Education	Other	Total
Tha Taeng								
Done Saa	HH1	1 900 000	200 000	-	300 000	200 000	260 000	2 860 000
	HH2	1 500 000	100 000	-	100 000	50 000	37 500	1 787 500
Kandone	HH1	100 000	300 000	150 000	100 000	0	40 000	690 000
	HH2	20 000	0	-	30 000	20 000	30 000	100 000
Thongkong	HH1	20 000	20 000	-	10 000	5 000	275 000	330 000
Yeub	HH1	95 000	200 000	0	500 000	200 000	860 000	1 855 000
	HH2	250 000	50 000	0	100 000	40 000	40 000	480 000
Kaleum								
Paksay	HH1	654 000	300 000	220 000	300 000	160 000	2 220 000	3 854 000
	HH2	711 000	0	0	20 000	350 000	225 000	1 306 000
Thongkai	HH1	2 500 000	500 000		20 000	11	248 000	3 268 011
	HH2	5 100 000	100 000		50 000	248 000	340 000	5 838 000
Thamdeng	HH1		100 000				100 000	200 000
Tongtreuk	HH1	550 000	50 000	50 000	100 000	-	150 000	900 000
Total Tha Taeng		3 885 000 47.9%	870 000 10.7%	150 000 1.9%	1 140 000 14.1%	515 000 6.4%	1 542 500 19.0%	8 102 500 100.0%
Average Tha Taeng		555 000	124 286	21 429	162 857	73 571	220 357	1 157 500
Total Kaleum		9 515 000 61.9%	1 050 000 6.8%	270 000 1.8%	490 000 3.2%	758 011 4.9%	3 283 000 21.4%	15 366 011 100.0%
Average Kaleum		1 585 833	175 000	45 000	81 667	126 335	547 167	2 561 002
Overall Total		13 400 000 57.1%	1 920 000 8.2%	420 000 1.8%	1 630 000 6.9%	1 273 011 5.4%	4 825 500 20.6%	23 468 511 100.0%
Average		1 488 889	213 333	46 667	181 111	141 446	536 167	2 607 612

* Note: All amounts are estimated

Table 45: Household Cash Income Low-Level Early Migrants in Sekong *

		Crops	Livestock	NTFPs	Off-farm	Rice Alcohol	Total Income
Tha Taeng							
Done Saa	HH1	13 220 000	-	50 000	-	-	13 270 000
	HH2	1 700 000	-	50 000	-	-	1 750 000
Kandone	HH1		-	-	370 000	300 000	670 000
	HH2	20 000	-	100 000	-	-	120 000
Thongkong	HH1	-	-	300 000	-	-	300 000
	HH2	-	-	-	-	-	420 000
Yeub	HH1	30 000	-	-	-	-	30 000
	HH2	-	400 000	-	-	-	400 000
Kaleum							
Paksay	HH1	1 730 000	700 000	-	-	-	2 430 000
	HH2	40 000	1 070 000	-	-	-	1 110 000
Thongkai	HH1	5 000 000	-	300 000	-	-	5 300 000
	HH2	2 500 000	75 000	-	-	-	2 575 000
Thamdeng	HH1	-	1 900 000	-	-	-	1 900 000
Total Tha Taeng		14 970 000 88.3%	400 000 2.4%	500 000 2.9%	370 000 2.2%	300 000 1.8%	16 960 000 100.0%
Average Tha Taeng		1 871 250	50 000	62 500	46 250	37 500	2 120 000
Total Kaleum		9 270 000 69.6%	3 745 000 28.1%	300 000 2.3%	0 0.0%	0	13 315 000 100.0%
Average Kaleum		1 854 000	749 000	60 000	0	0	2 663 000
Overall Total		24 240 000 80%	4 145 000 14%	800 000 3%	370 000 1%	300 000 1%	30 275 000 100%
Average		2 693 333	460 556	88 889	41 111	33 333	3 363 889

* Note: No income was reported for handicrafts, small shop, trader or other

Community Forest Management

In Sekong there are concerns about forest management within village areas. In Kaleum there had been massive logging along the road leading in from Sekong and the study team counted 4 574 logs along the roadside⁶¹. Logging trucks had noticeably damaged the road. District officials were very frustrated about the lack of responsibility shown by the logging companies to repair and maintain the roads.

In Kaleum, loggers were active in three of the study village areas. In 2002 they came into Tham Deng, without notice and started cutting pine trees (*mai paek*). The logging company removed 300 of 380 logs before the villagers asked Kip 15 000 per log, but the company never agreed and paid nothing. The village did not allow them to remove the remaining 80 logs. Then about 200 loggers came in to cut eagle wood trees (*mai heuang*) and they took out almost 200 rice bags of chips for which they paid the villagers nothing. In the period 1999-2000, rattan in the village was cut almost to the point of complete destruction and again the villagers received nothing.

In Tha Taeng, four of the study villages are still being heavily logged (Done Saa, Thongwai, Thongyao and Thong Kong). In a seven year period it is estimated that about 52 550 m³ of logs were removed of these four villages. Reportedly the villages received a fee [or tax] of about Kip 387.3 million (US\$38 725) at Kip 5 000/m³ for fallen logs and Kip 10 000/m³ for standing timber (Table 46).

The provincial and local governments reportedly received Kip 2.1 billion or about US\$210 200 at Kip 20 000 or US\$2 each per cubic meter. If the timber value were US\$175/m³, then the total estimated worth would be about US\$9.2 million. (At first, village leaders reported they thought the market price of this timber was US\$350/m³, but later, upon consulting others, they said that a more reasonable price was about half that or US\$175/m³.) At this rate the village received 0.42 percent of the total value of the wood and the combined provincial and district governments was 2.3 percent. During the fieldwork in November 2003, trucks were hauling out the residual logs. It was estimated that 564 logs (493 m³ – worth US\$83 351) lay along the road near Nong Kan and Done Saa⁶² and in two yards near Nong Kan. The logs had been probably cut in 2003 but not removed at that time for unspecified reasons.

Table 46: Logs Removed from Four Villages in Previous Years in Sekong

Distance NR 16 Km		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total					Market Value
Village		Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Logs m ³	Village tax Kip Millions	Village tax US\$	Government tax		US\$ Millions
												Kip Millions	US\$	
Done Sa			500	800	850	900	1 000	1 000	5 050	39.8	3 980	202	20 200	0.884
Thong Wai	16	1 500	1 500	2 000	3 000	5 000	3 000	2 000	16 500	125.0	12 500	720	72 000	3.150
Thong Kong	19	3 000	3 000	3 000	3 000	3 000	3 000	3 000	18 000	150.0	15 000	840	84 000	3.675
Thong Yao	19.6			1 000	1 500	2 000	2 000	2 000	8 500	72.5	7 250	340	34 000	1.488
									52 550	387.3	38 730	2 102	210 200	9.196
Ratio to Total											0.42%		2.29%	

Village leaders in both districts complained that they did not know their rights when the loggers arrived. They related that the companies presented official-looking documents with signatures and stamps and they did not know how to respond. They reported being perturbed by the fact loggers wanted to cut in the conservation forest (*paa sanguan*), which the villages themselves were supposed to protect. They related that they felt helpless.

61 On 10 November.

62 As a postscript, in February one of the team members was again in the area of Done Saa and reported that the loggers were back in full force cutting more timber. The roads past Nong Kan and Done Saa were lined with new logs so the logging continues unabated.

Migration and Relocation of Villages in Sekong

Introduction

The livelihoods situation in Sekong is different geographically [than in Luang Nam Tha], socially and culturally and of course has dissimilar ecosystems. The predominant ethnic group in Sekong is the Katu. They practice shifting cultivation, which is upland rice-based, but did not practice opium poppy cultivation and it is more forest dependent than in Sing and Long in Luang Nam Tha.

The Indochina II War precipitated the first population movements. Since Kaleum district was liberated in 1963, many of its early government officials and soldiers were from an area called ‘Upper Kaleum’, close to the Viet Nam border. With the district administration in the present district town on the Sekong River, men and women were separated from their families. Many of their families and relatives chose to join them in the district town. The four villages studied in Kaleum were a part of this phenomenon.

When opportunities near the district town did not materialize, the government encouraged villagers to relocate to Tha Taeng. In 1996, eight large military trucks arrived in old Kan Done Kao during the dry season to pick-up the villagers and transport them to the present location of Kan Done.

Push-Pull Factors in Migration

Old Conditions

The push factors for later migrants in Kaleum and Tha Taeng focused on human and animal diseases in the original villages and about poor upland rice harvests leading to insufficient rice for household consumption. All households of early migrants expressed the opinion that the local government policy to resettle them was a factor in their decision to leave their original villages.

New Conditions

The expectations of early and later migrants focused on hopes for improved livelihoods by obtaining paddy land and upland for cash crops, livestock, NTFP sales and handicraft sales. They also had expectations for better schools, health care services and markets. Access to roads and other services were not rated very highly.

Problems Encountered in Relocation

The most serious problems encountered by early migrants involved the incidences human diseases, inadequate drinking water and poor sanitation. Livelihoods related problems emphasized insufficient land with proper soils to establish rice paddies (dashing one of their key expectations), little opportunity for irrigation, deficient upland for rice and other crops and pests in both upland and paddy rice. They also reported difficulties in obtaining building materials for house construction. Later migrants reported similar problems⁶³ (Table 47).

In Done Saa, Tong Treuk and Tham Deng, all households obtained some paddy land; however, Tong Treuk was the only study village with a rice surplus.⁶⁴ All study villages practiced shifting cultivation to produce upland rice to contribute to their food security. Both districts experienced similar rice deficits (Table 48).

⁶³ Some village heads could not rank problems so they replied “yes” if the item was a problem.

⁶⁴ Even with a surplus and the fact that the village lies across the Sekong River from the district town, all five households felt compelled to practice the swidden cultivation of rice.

Table 47: Relocation Problems in Study Villages in Sekong – Ranked by Importance

Problems	Early Migrants						Later Migrants						
	Done Saa	Kandone	Thong Kong	Yeup	Koke Mai	Tham Deng	Done Saa	Kandone	Thong Kong	Yeup	Koke Mai	Tham Deng	
No/inadequate paddy land	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	1	7	10	4	Yes		4	10	
Poor paddy soils	Yes	Yes	No	2	2	8		5					
Inadequate irrigation water			Yes	6		9		6	Yes		5		
Pests in rice paddy	Yes	Yes		5		10	8	7		4		6	8
No/inadequate upland	Yes	Yes			3	11	7	8		6		7	7
Poor upland soils	Yes	Yes	No	10		12		9				8	
Inadequate rainfall		Yes	Yes	7		13	9	10		7		9	9
Pests in upland	Yes	Yes		4		14	1	11		5		10	6
No/inadequate garden land	Yes	Yes		8	4	15	10	12		8		11	11
No/inadequate land for orchards	Yes	Yes		9	5	16	11	13		9		12	
No/inadequate land for fish ponds	Yes	Yes	Yes			17		14	Yes		13		
Land conflict within village			No			18		15				14	
Land conflict outsiders			Yes			19		16				15	
Grazing land						2		2				16	1
Crop destruction by livestock						3		3				2	
Housing												3	
Improper place for house						20		17	Yes				
No/inadequate house materials			Yes			6	5	18		11		17	5
Health and sanitation												18	
Inadequate drinking water	Yes	Yes	Yes		1	4	6	19	Yes				
Inadequate HH use water			Yes		2	5		20				19	
Poor sanitation	Yes	Yes	Yes			21		21	Yes		20		
Diseases (malaria, GI track)				3	3	1	2	1	Yes		21	2	
Others specify							3					1	3
Others specify							4						4
Marketing arrangements w/ brokers			Yes			22		22	Yes			22	

Table 48: Rice Paddy Land and Distribution in Study Villages in Sekong

	# Village HHs	Rice Paddy Land				Upland Rice Land			Total Area (ha)	2003 Rice Sufficiency
		Area (ha)	# HHs	Ratio HHs to w/paddy	Avg Area (ha/HH)	Area (ha)	# HHs	Ratio HHs w/upland		Months
Tha Taeng										
Kan Done	79	60	74	93.7%	0.8	70	79	100.0%	130	(2.2)
Yeup	29	42	26	89.7%	1.6	5	7	24.1%	47	(4.6)
Done Saa	46	48	46	100.0%	1.0	50	46	100.0%	98	(4.3)
Thong Kong	40	25.5	30	75.0%	0.9	28	10	25.0%	54	(4.1)
Kaleum										
Tong Treuk	5	8.6	5	100.0%	1.7	6	5	100.0%	14	2.4
Koke Mai	22	0.6	2	9.1%	0.3	24	22	100.0%	25	(2.0)
Pak Xay	15	2	6	40.0%	0.3	43	15	100.0%	45	(3.2)
Tham Deng	25	8	25	100.0%	0.3	27	25	100.0%	35	(5.0)

The incidence of three serious diseases increased subsequent to migration. The most complete data are from Koke Mai and it shows 15 out of 40 villagers died of malaria in 1975 and in 1976, 5 out of 10 villagers died of GI tract diseases, undoubtedly caused by poor sanitation. (Table 49)

During the late 1990s many villages reported disease outbreaks. Tham Deng reported specifics for 1998 when 4 died of 97 who contracted malaria, 6 out of 44 died of GI tract diseases and 1 out of 71 died of upper respiratory disease. They reported chronic skin ailments to about 15 individuals, perhaps impetigo and probably related to unsanitary conditions.

The higher elevation in Kaleum and Tha Taeng prevented more serious outbreaks because the environment was similar to their original environment in Upper Kaleum. Yeup and Kan Done suffered the most from outbreaks. In Kan Done 8 of 98 villagers died of malaria in 1996 and 7 died of diarrhea, probably related to poor sanitation. In 1998 Yeup reported 4 deaths out of 20 incidences of malaria, 15 severe cases of diarrhea and 100-200 cases of pink eye out of which later two reportedly died.

Done Saa and Thong Kong did not report any specific diseases or deaths, but they did report problems with all diseases. In 2003, Thong Kong reported 10 deaths out of 65 incidences of malaria, 32 incidences of GI tract ailments and 120 incidences of upper respiratory disease.

Table 49: Diseases in Study Villages After Migration in Sekong

	Yeup			Kan Done			Done Saa			Thong Kong			Koke Mai			Tham Deng		
Diseases	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year	Incidence	Deaths	Year
Early Migrants																		
Mosquito Borne	20	4	3/98	98	8	1996	Yes	-	-				40	15	1975	97	4	1998
GI Tract	2	2	2001		7	1996	Yes	-	-				10	5	1976	44	6	1998
Upper Respiratory	15	-	8/98				Yes	-	-							70	1	9/98
Other Diseases					25	1996	Yes	-	-									
Total		6			40									20			11	
Later Migrants							Yes	0	2000	65	5	2003						
Mosquito Borne	-	-	-	Yes	-	Each yr	Yes	0	2001	32	-	2003	Yes	0		30	2	1999
GI Tract	-	-	-	Yes	-		Yes	0	2002	102	-	2003	7	3	2002	25	2	5/99
Upper Respiratory	-	-	-	Yes	-		Yes	0	2003				5	2	2003			
Other Diseases	100+	2	6/03													15	0	All Yrs
Total		2									5			5			4	

Conflicts

Three types of conflicts were examined – most concerned resource use, especially land. The first included disagreements and tensions between migrants and those in established neighboring villages. The second were between early and later migrants and the third between villagers with outsiders including intermediaries, traders and officials.

Conflicts with Neighboring Villages

Early migrants in the three Kaleum study villages⁶⁵ did not have to confront existing villages since there were none in the area.⁶⁶ A few conflicts were reported concerning misunderstandings about customs, but negotiation and propitiatory rituals solved these.

Migrants moving into Tha Taeng experienced more conflicts. There were a number of neighboring villages around Yeup and Kan Doneo and conflicts arose concerning the availability of potential paddy and other land. In Kan Done there were problems with land allocation. In 1998, it was reported that 2 222 hectares were at first given to the village but reallocated in 1999 with only 811 hectares. The rest was given to neighboring villages. As a result, 81 individuals returned to their original village of Kan Done Kao.

Conflicts between Early and Later Migrants

In Kaleum (Koke Mai), it was reported there was conflict between the later and earlier settlers over paddy land and upland, but all conflicts were settled. In Tha Taeng (Done Saa) conflicts concerned the expansion of new paddy land because the paddy land and upland boundaries were not well defined.

Conflicts with Outsiders

In Kaleum, a conflict with outsiders occurred in 2003 with the village taxman responsible for village development and remains unresolved. Conflicts [with traders] concerning the extraction of rattan and eaglewood (*mai heuang*) were also reported. The only reported conflicts in Tha Taeng were with traders. In Thong Kong it concerned a villager from Thong Wai over the price of cardamon. A trader from Viet Nam cut wood, moved a coffee and cardamon orchard and did not pay the owner Kip 10 million as promised and remains unresolved. Several villages complained about their dealings with logging companies concerning the removal of timber from Done Saa and Thong Kong (Table 50).

⁶⁵ Tham Deng, Pak Xay and Koke Mai are located along the Ho Chi Minh Trail coming from Ta-oy in Saravanh. Because this area was heavily bombed during the Indochina II War, there were no villages in the area.

⁶⁶ The only reported incidents were with neighboring villages over animals eating another village's crops.

Table 50: Conflicts in Sekong

Conflicts	Done Saa		Kan Done		Thong Kong		Yeup		Koke Mai		Tham Deng	
Migrants	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later	Early	Later
Between Villages												
Paddy land			Yes				Yes					
Irrigation water			Yes									
Upland suan/hai			Yes				Yes					
Grazing and fodder land			Yes				Yes			Yes		
New and Old Settlers												
Paddy land		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Irrigation water		Yes										
Upland hai		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Grazing and fodder land					Yes	Yes	Yes					
Outsiders												
Traders					Yes						Yes	
Tax collectors											Yes	

Out-Migration

In Kaleum, Pak Xay and Tham Deng had no out-migration while Tong Treuk and Koke Mai served as intermediary villages for later migration to other locations. In 1998/99 most Tong Treuk households moved to Tha Taeng and helped establish Sathua. The reasons given included insufficient rice paddy land, lack of irrigation, little land for cultivating upland crops, gardens or establishing fish ponds. They also reported difficulties in sourcing building materials, disease incidence, and lack of clean water and sanitation issues. Rice shortages were also reported (Table 51).

In 1984, Koke Mai reported that 70 percent of households migrated to Thong Kong. Thirteen households moved to Yone (about two kilometers away⁶⁷) listing similar reasons for leaving as given by Tong Treuk villagers with additional complaints about the lack of roads and access to a health station or a school.

Some Tha Taeng villagers returned to their original villages. Following the founding of Yeup (1998-9) villagers returned to Yeup Kao in 1999 and 2001. The primary reason reported was insufficient rice paddy land. In Kan Done (2001) five households returned to Kan Done Kao after five years. They returned at their own expense and the reported reasons included insufficient rice paddy land, lack of irrigation, little opportunity for crop cultivation or to receive grazing land.

⁶⁷ These two villages have been consolidated as Thongkai and is an area of contention for these villages and government authorities.

They also reported land conflicts with neighboring villages, problems with disease incidence and their disappointment with the lack of roads and access to a school or health station. In 2001, five Thong Kong households decided to return to Arooh Kao in Upper Kaleum about 18 years after migrating.

All villagers in Kaleum remained after migrating. Done Saa and Thong Kong (Tha Taeng) moved at least twice in search of better livelihoods. In 1970, the inhabitants of Done Saa moved from Chichaar in Upper Kaleum to Cheng Hung where they stayed until 1982. From there, some households moved to Done Saa while others moved to Xae and stayed until 1997 when some households also moved to Done Saa. Villagers from Thong Kong migrated to Koke Mai in 1972 and stayed until 1984 when they moved to Thong Kong (Table 52).

Table 51: Villages Relocated in Sekong

Present Village	Original Village Name	1st Village	2nd Village	3rd Village
Kaleum				
Tong Treuk Migration years	Ano <1978			
Koke Mai Migration years	Kachaen <1974			
Pak Xay Migration years	Bung, Alom <1974-78			
Tham Deng Migration years	Tang Prill <1998			
Tha Taeng				
Yeup Migration years	Yeup Kao <1998			
Kan Done Migration years	Kan Done <1996			
Done Saa Migration years	Chichaar <1970	Chung Hung 1970-82	Xae 1982-97	Maireng 1998
Thong Kong Migration years	Chung Hung <1972	Koke Mai <1972-84	Kachaen 1971-74	

As mentioned in Chapter 4, two types of out-migration were identified, households returning to their original villages and moving to another lowland village. All four of the study villages in Tha Taeng experienced return migration to original villages while none from Kaleum returned. They all gave reasons of insufficient agricultural land, especially paddy land. In addition some mentioned insufficient building materials for houses, health and sanitation issues. In Done Saa the migrants mentioned their disappointment over the lack of a school. On the other hand, two of the villages in Kaleum (Tong Treuk and Koke Mai) experienced out-migration to Tha Taeng. In both instances it was a very large portion of the population. Again, they were disappointed by the lack of agricultural land, especially paddy land, insufficient rice, disease outbreaks after they migrated, lack of clean water and building materials for houses.

Table 52: Out-migration in Study Villages in Sekong

Migrants							
	Destination			Reasons			
(Year)	Village	HHs	Population	Livelihoods	Housing	Health and Sanitation	Others
Kaleum							
Tong Treuk (1998)	Sathua	13	160	Insufficient land	Materials	Diseases, water	Insufficient rice
(1999)	Liek	3		Insufficient land	Materials	Diseases, water	Insufficient rice
(1999)	Baeng	1		Insufficient land	Materials	Diseases, water	Insufficient rice
(1999)	Nong Lau	2		Insufficient land	Materials	Diseases, water	Insufficient rice
Koke Mai (1984)	Thong Kong	70%	70%	Insufficient land	Materials	Diseases, water	Insufficient rice
After 1884	Yone	13	180	Insufficient Land	Materials	Diseases, water	Insufficient rice
Pak Xay (None)							
Tham Deng (None)							
Tha Taeng							
Yeup (1998)	Yeup Kao	5	47	Insufficient paddy land			
(2001)	Yeup Kao	4	26	Insufficient paddy land			
Kan Done (2001)	Kan Done Kao	5	81	Insufficient land, irrigation	Materials	Diseases, water	
Done Saa (1970)	Chichaar	-	-	Insufficient land, irrigation	Materials	Diseases, water	School, road
Thong Kong (2001-02)	Aroohkao	5	37	Insufficient land			Insufficient rice

Relocation Costs

As in Luang Nam Tha, two types of household relocation costs⁶⁸ were identified. First was the cost to households when leaving their land, houses, other buildings, livestock, furniture and heirlooms. The second were costs they incurred to establish themselves in a new village.

Relocation Costs (moving)

Selected households were asked to estimate their relocation costs⁶⁹. In Kaleum, villagers left behind an average of 15.3 hectares of agricultural land with an estimated value of Kip 383 333. They also left buildings with an average estimated value of Kip 1 033 333. Only one household reported leaving large numbers of livestock valued at Kip 8 800 000 (Table 53).

In Tha Taeng, villagers left behind an average of 24.3 hectares of agricultural land with an estimated value of Kip 2 321 667. They also left buildings with an average estimated value of Kip 3 040 000.

Relocation Costs (arriving)

Villagers incurred costs to establish themselves in new villages. The average time to construct a new house was about 9 days costing about Kip 1.9 million. Villagers constructed farm buildings costing about Kip 550 000 for a rice barn and Kip 100 000 for miscellaneous farm buildings. Additional

⁶⁸ As in Luang Nam Tha, the study team made no attempt to examine benefits of the move since that was beyond the scope of the study. The costs recorded here are only those for households to re-establish themselves in a single village.

⁶⁹ A note of caution should be exercised when considering these land and property values because the imputed values may be overestimated. The land and property market in the upland/highland areas is not very robust so the estimated values are based on their lowland experience where markets function more actively.

expenditures were made to establish orchards (Kip 200 000), build paddy fields (Kip 100 000) and Kip 100 000 for corrals (Table 54).

In Tha Taeng, the average time to build a house was 15 days at the cost of Kip 1.6 million. They spent Kip 150 000 to construct a rice barn and miscellaneous farm buildings costing Kip 300 000. The cost of building corrals was Kip 200 000. Other costs included building rice paddies (Kip 425 000) and Kip 100 000 for orchards.

The cost to each villager was almost Kip 3.4 million for property left behind and Kip 2.5 million to establish a household in the new village, totaling Kip 5.9 million that had to be covered by savings from livelihoods activity in their original village. Obviously there was an opportunity cost to this.

Table 53: Household Relocation Costs from Original Villages in Sekong (Kip 000)

Early Low Level Migrants		Land and Trees		Buildings		Animals	
Village/Household		Area (ha)	Value (Kip 000)	#	Value (Kip 000)	#	Value (Kip 000)
Kaleum							
Pak Xay	HH1	16	100	1	1 500		
	HH2	21	400	1	2		
Koke Mai	HH1	11	500	1	100		
	HH2	11	100	1	100		
Tham Deng	HH1	11	500	1	1		
Tong Treuk	HH1	22	700	1	1 500	10	8 800
Average		15.3	383	1	1 033	10	8 800
Tha Taeng							
Done Saa	HH1	40.6	4 300	2	5 500		
	HH2	57.6	7 930	2	6 050		
Kan Done	HH1	16.2	?	1	?		
	HH2	21.4	?	1	?		
Thong Kong	HH1	11.0	500	1	150		
	HH2						
Yeup	HH1	11.5	300	1	1 500		
	HH2	11.6	900	1	2		
Average		24.3	2 321	1.3	3 040		
Overall Average			1 475		1 945		

Table 54: Costs to Establish Households in New Villages in Sekong (Kip 000)

Early Migrants			Build House	Barn	Other	Corral	Orchards	Paddies		
			Estimated							
Low-level		Latest Village	Establish (Days)	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Expenses [Kip]	Total Expenses (Kip)
Kaleum										
Pak Xay	HH1	Alam	6	2 500	-	-	-	-	-	2 500
	HH2	Alam	7	2 500	-	-	-	-	-	2 500
Koke Mai	HH1	Thongkai	3	1 800	600	100	100	200	100	3 900
	HH2	Thongkai	3	1 900	500	100	100	200	100	3 900
Tham Deng	HH1	Thamdeng	7	600	-	-	-	-	-	600
	HH2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Tong Treuk	HH1	Thongtreuk	30	2 500	-	-	-	-	-	2 500
	HH2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Average			9.3	1 966	550	100	100	200	100	2 650
Tha Taeng										
Done Saa	HH1	Done Saa	5	2	200	500	200	100	-	5
	HH2	Done Saa	5	2 500	100	100	200	100	-	4
Kan Done	HH1	Kandone mai	-	500	-	-	-	-	200	700
	HH2	Kandone mai	-	700	-	-	-	-	300	1
Koke Mai	HH1	Thongkong	-		-	-	-	-	-	600
Yeup	HH1	Yeub Mai	30	2	-	-	-	-	600	2 600
	HH2	Yeub Mai	30	2	-	-	-	-	600	2 900
Average			15.2	1 616	150	300	200	100	425	2 400
Overall Average				1 791	350	200	150	150	316	2 515

Ethnicity and Cultural Change in Sekong

Community

In Kaleum the Katu have traditionally lived around 1 000 meters above sea level in sub-districts called 13 *tasseng* and now 6 consolidated *khet*. They traditionally sited their villages on the mountain slopes to avoid the humid valley floors. Their settlement patterns have organized houses in a centrally located field around the men's communal house, referred to as *roong* or *sala khouan* (spirit house) in the Lao. The communal house is a well-constructed building with elaborately carved pillars and other significant artwork.

The *roong* is where community meetings are held and near to where most ceremonial rites are carried out on a carved pole for the ritual sacrifices of buffaloes. Traditional long houses are substantive structures with a central pillar and other carved poles supporting a massive roof, however not as elaborate as the *roong*. Individual houses of worse-off families were simple bamboo and wood structures with thatched walls and roofs.

None of the four of the resettled study villages in Kaleum had a *roong* nor did Done Saa and Thong Kong. This is a serious matter when the village leaves such an important building out of its settlement. A *roong* reportedly costs as much as Kip 500 million to construct so many of the village elders were reluctant to reconstruct them since they had lost most of the heirlooms and other items needed for rituals. There have been discussions in some villages (especially in Done Saa and Thong Kong) to consider construction, but younger families did not feel that the financial sacrifice was worth it.

Important individuals in a Katu village are the village head, the most respected elder, clan elders and shamans. The village head is elected by the villagers and is usually favorably approved by the district government officials. The respected elders are responsible for all major religious and livelihood ceremonies and rituals is the chief arbitrator for any communal or family disputes. It is usually a hereditary position passed down within the clan according to achievement and respect, but not necessarily from father to son. The clan heads are usually senior persons from their clans and have the most knowledge about traditional values, beliefs, customs and in whom clan members have the most confidence and respect. There are reportedly 128 different Katu clans; however, the exact number was not determined.

Social Organization

The traditional means of governance for the Katu was through a council of elders with a chief elder as the head, usually referred to as *arias*. There may be more than one *arias* in larger villages. This has evolved into the present village administrative system promoted by the government with the village head (*nai baan*) as head of the village development council and two deputies. This official administrative unit also includes the village elders (*naeo hom*), an economic committee, a village women's union, a youth league, militia, village police, a Party cell and production groups. These official structures were uniform across the eight study villages. The only women's participation in formal organizations was limited the LWU, the Party and the youth league who had women members.

Traditional Beliefs

The traditional religion of the Katu is animism. While it has some of the same features as Akha animism, its expression is much different. It has both good and evil spirits that touch almost every aspect of life. Nature spirits control land, mountains, water and trees while family (ancestors) spirits affect the community. Even though individuals have both good and evil souls, the Katu believe that only good souls survive after death. They have what many consider a cult of the dead as an important part of their religion. The communal house serves as a pantheon for both good and evil spirits and the sacred dwelling place for the ancestors who died a good death as opposed to a violent (or bad) death from murder, war or a tiger attack (LeBar, Hickey and Musgrave 1964). Village spirits who watch over families and communities are believed to be able to cure illnesses and to solve problems.

The Katu perform elaborate rituals during the year in concert with their livelihood activities, especially the annual upland rice cycle. Rites are performed before surveying for promising forest bush fallows as potential upland (*hai*) fields, cutting trees and brush in the fallows, burning trees and brush, land preparation, dibbling rice seed, the time when rice flowers, before harvest, when housing rice in the barn and the customary thanksgiving ceremony. Neglect to perform any of them could result in a poor harvest but also afflictions to the families. The Katu have more cultural taboos than do the Akha and they must abstain from undertaking any livelihood activities on certain days (Table 55).

The Katu year is also based on an annual cycle for swidden cultivation of rice and other crops. The Katu traditional festivals and ceremonies coincide with the stages and processes of the annual swidden cycle. At times, rituals and ceremonies are supplemented with rites for ancestral and village spirits. However, there are rituals connected to other events in the village like the annual sacrifice of water buffaloes and cattle, which are important to the community (Table 56)

The Katu year begins with the new moon in February but this is its third month. There are no conventional names for the months of this calendar in different villages. The livelihood activities are quite regular mostly changing with the lunar calendar and only varies by a few days over years. The Katu week has 10 days in it with one day as a rest day with limited prescribed sets of behaviors. The Katu month has approximately 30 days in it reflecting the perceived image of the moon on those days.

There are certain times when livelihood activities are forbidden.

Table 55: Katu Festivals and Ceremony Calendar

Julian Calendar	Lao Month	Katu Month (Kaxee)	Festival and Ceremonies	Other
January	2	12	Kinnga	Ayaa, cho aria
February	3	1	Chennong	Cho aria, chi che
March	4	2	Chennong	Takhai or apeak, chi cheu
April	5	3	Afoir treukulam	Aphl, paa dong aria
May	6	4	Chadroi	Paa dong aria
June	7	5	Bas apol	
July	8	6		
August	9	7		
September	10	8	Pengtang	
October	11	9	Tha ria	
November	12	10	Ayaa	
December	1	11	Kin nga ayaa	

Table 56: Katu Livelihoods Calendar

Julian Calendar	Lao Month	Katu Month (Kaxee)	Livelihoods Activities			
January	2	12	Plowing DS rice	Plant DS rice	Survey hai	Harvest cassava
February	3	1	Invoke spirit of hai	Pray for a good dream	Cutting hai	Burning plots blacksmith Plant corn Harvest sugarcane
March	4	2	Cutting hai	Burning same plat	Plant corn, taro, cassava	Repair dykes, harvest sugarcane
April	5	3	Weed corn, taro, cassava	Burning, fencing, cultivation,	Prepare upland rice, harvest DS rice, plow WS rice	Intercrop/vegetables, corn, others, planting roots and tubers
May	6	4	Prepare upland rice, dibble upland rice	Weed corn, taro, cassava,	Plow WS rice	Harrowing WS rice
June	7	5	Weed upland rice dibble upland rice	Transplanting WS rice		
July	8	6	Harvest beans	Cultivate hai		
August	9	7	Cultivate hai	Harvest corn		
September	10	8	Handicrafts	Repair rice barn	Harvest ignn beans	Cultivate hai, harvest squash, khao do andintercrop vegetables
October	11	9	Harvest WS rice	Harvest upland rice	Invoke rice spirit to come to village	
November	12	10	Harvest WS rice	Harvest upland rice		
December	1	11				

Marriage and Family

Katu society is characterized as following patrilocal marriage practices (the bride moves in with the groom and his family) and patrilineal inheritance patterns (land and property passes through the male side the family). Traditionally they lived in long-house households in extended families with multiple families – reportedly with up to one hundred-fifty persons under one roof. Today only a few of the long houses have survived with up to only about five or six families. A household usually has a male head. Husbands seldom have than one wife, but it does occur.

Traditionally, a marriage partner comes from the same clan as one's mother. Now there are few restrictions. Young villagers are given a fair amount of freedom to court, but if they are caught in compromising situations or the girl gets pregnant there are heavy sanctions – usually to the point of the boy having to give one or more water buffaloes to the father of the girl. Bride prices are not traditional in Katu society, but after relocation they started to include the practice. They are negotiated based on the socio-economic status of the bride and groom and involve combinations of money, gold, silver and animals. For a well-off family in Tham Deng the man pays the bride price to the woman's parents of 15 water buffaloes or other assets valued to that amount, cash up to Kip 10 million and gold or silver equal in value to 15 buffaloes. If a potential groom does not have enough for the bride price, he would probably have to work it off for the father-in-law. A less-well off groom pays at least one water buffalo.

Records are not kept so data on divorce is limited. Village elders, the village head or someone both parties trust adjudicates divorces. Their roles are crucial in determining the terms of the divorce. This person(s) will sometimes be paid for assisting.

If the man wants the divorce:

- the bride price is repaid to the wife and the man get nothing
- children usually stay with father, but there are instances they stay with the mother
- property acquired during the marriage is divided in half and sometimes all goes to the woman

If the woman wants the divorce:

- all property goes to the man
- children may live with the mother or father, but usually the father
- the woman pays back the bride price to the man's parents and in some cases this may be twice the original price

If both parties want the divorce:

- there is an agreement between the husband and wife on the division of property (usually half to wife) and children – sometimes children make decision with whom they will live

Cultural Change

There are many causes for culture change. Cultures evolve over time by adapting to changes in the bio-physical, economic, political and institutional environments e.g. shifting weather patterns alter ecosystems, improved communications (especially roads) offer the hope for public services in addition to market access and all the implications. Improved communications (including media) are conduits for new opportunities, introduction of new ideas, innovative ways of looking at the world and subsequently new sets of challenges. New technologies including hand tractors and small trucks, motorcycles, rice mills and small-scale hydropower change the work patterns and workloads of both women and men. The opening of market opportunities to families and the concomitant ramifications concerning information about inputs and outputs has a significant impact on how people organize their livelihoods, wants and needs.

In addition government rural development policies and programs induce culture changes e.g. reduction of shifting cultivation (resulting in shorter fallow periods) paddy establishment, village consolidation and regular government services.

Katu culture changed very little over the centuries because villages were isolated. It was the French administration period that began sometime after 1893 and effectively extended until about 1950 during the height of Indochina I War. During this time, the Katu and other ethnic groups lived separately in their own distinct areas, referred to as Meuang Katu and the Ngè lived in areas referred to as Meuang Kriang [Ngè]. There were few interactions among these groups.

The French introduced new technologies and mechanisms to govern this seemingly hostile environment. The main innovation was that of building dirt roads (about 4-6 meters wide) to reportedly all villages through the *corvée*⁷⁰ system, opening up the world to the Katu and other ethnic groups.

It was also at this time that highlanders began to be relocated by the French colonial government for unknown reasons.⁷¹ Some Katu were relocated from Kaleum sometime after 1945 to Km 11 and Km 21 in Batchiang (up from Pakse) and to Saravan, where there are presently approximately 13 villages.

Induced changes brought by the opening of the area by roads were considerable and perhaps documented somewhere in the colonial record. The following are few of the cultural changes that Khamleuan⁷² could enumerate:

- women for the first time could enter the communal house
- many beliefs and customs deemed inconvenient to their administration were weakened
- one could obtain a wife from other villages because the French believed the villages were already too inter-married
- the village gate was banned since the skulls and bones that decorated it implied outsiders were in danger if they entered the village⁷³

The Katu culture changed dramatically since the Indochina II War. The bombing was heavier than in north and subsequent fighting disrupted many lives and livelihoods. Villages became empty with only the elderly remaining. Many young men were drafted and were so busy surviving in the jungle that they had no time for practicing traditional customs and no communal house was available. The urgencies of war brought different ethnic groups together for the first time.

The Indochina Communist Party became stronger and in some areas villagers were drafted (1954-57). From 1957-59, campaigns were launched to change Katu customs, for example, simple marriages were promoted that did not follow traditional customs, changing many traditional beliefs about spirits, men were discouraged from wearing the traditional loin cloth (*katiao*) and women were discouraged from baring their breasts.

70 Labor exacted by a local authority for little or no pay or instead of taxes and used especially in the maintenance of roads.

71 The French administration did this through the assistance of two Katu Nai Kong: Thao Nging and Thao Laam.

72 Khamleuan Sunavan, a native Katu from Kaleum was a member of the collection team and is a long time student of the Katu.

73 Apparently the French were opposed to this gate because it supposedly condoned cannibalism, which they were trying to eliminate.

Livelihoods were seriously interrupted both during the war and immediately after it because villagers could not practice their traditional swidden cultivation of rice, due in part to unexploded ordinance⁷⁴. Southern areas inherited better roads, especially in high plateaus like the Bolovens and these areas became attractive to settlers from Kaleum. From 1960-64 collectives were mandated, but never fully implemented because of the war. Reportedly these were not well accepted by the Katu at the time.

In Kaleum, cultural changes were subtler than in Tha Taeng. A few of the changes include:

- previously a wife had to come from the mother's clan – now she could come from other clans or from other ethnic groups;
- traditions and customs are not as strongly held as they were in the original villages and customs are increasingly mixed;
- livelihoods appear to be practiced as temporary activities, almost with little hope;
- both Pak Xay and Tham Deng have communal houses but they are temporary;
- women mix Lao and Katu clothing because they have less time to make their own;
- men wear the katiao only during ceremonies; and
- don't want to build roong or sala khouan - because it is taboo to talk about it these days

Since the end of fighting in the early 1970s, communities and villagers have tried to return to some sort of normalcy. The provincial government encouraged the Katu to move to Lower Kaleum in 1970-72. In 1973-74, many new villages were established in Tha Taeng or Lamam (Kafee, Nong Bong, Sathua, Xieng Hung among others).

Some of these were Katu only villages and others were mixed (e.g. the Alak) and this resulted in intermarriage. There were many resulting conflicts concerning cross-cultural relations including land conflicts and customs (especially misunderstandings about personal and sexual behavior⁷⁵). This resulted in either villages being broken up and consolidated or ethnic sections (neighborhoods) formed within villages.

Cultural changes noted in Tha Taeng include:

- no sala khouan;
- long houses are seldom built and if so are much smaller;
- clothing – predominantly Lao style with very little Katu for either men or women;
- marriage is completely different – at first there was no bride price, but now it is practiced;
- beliefs – almost all family spirit altars are gone, sacred places in village are no longer revered;
- settlement patterns are different – previously the village was laid out in a circular fashion around the communal house roong; and
- livelihoods have changed – swiddens are still cultivated but coffee and cardamon are now the main stays of livelihood systems, off-farm employment is sought and many men are truck drivers.

Summary of Culture Change

As mentioned previously, the Indochina II War influenced culture change. Many Katu in both Upper and Lower Kaleum were affected by it as soldiers and later a number became civil servants with most of the present village heads and VDCs being former soldiers. All were exposed to outside ways and influenced by the dominant Lao Lum culture and gained at least a cursory familiarity with the ways of the Party and emerging local government.

⁷⁴ At the time of the study [in Sekong], a UXO program had surveyed and cleaned paddy and other sedentary areas in the study area. None of these study villages reported UXO as a problem.

⁷⁵ The Katu have stricter codes of behavior for courtship and personal behavior than do the Alak.

The villages in the two district study areas experienced culture change in different ways. The early migrants to Lower Kaleum, just prior or after the war had tremendous expectations⁷⁶; however, the ecosystems are different in Lower Kaleum and livelihood activities had to be adjusted. At first, swidden agriculture and hunting and gathering continued much as it had in Upper Kaleum, but increasingly as local government tried to influence villager's lives and livelihoods with programs like the reduction of shifting cultivation and land and forest allocation; land, especially agricultural land, was limited to them. Katu district government officials and village heads (having been exposed to outside ways) gradually introduced limited cultural changes by a process of trial and error. As they observed there were seemingly no negative consequences from the violation of previous interdictions (taboos), the pace of change quickened, and began to affect other practices like sacrificing buffaloes and cattle. Subsequently three of the four study villages in Kaleum did not build a communal house (*roong* or *sala khouan*).

The migration and relocation into Tha Taeng produced different experiences. Two of the villages on the way to the Bolovens Plateau (Kan Done and Yeup) came directly from Upper Kaleum so their adjustment was probably more traumatic than the migrants to Done Saa and Thong Kong. Both groups had to adjust to new types of ecosystems and to their close proximity to rapidly emerging markets in Tha Taeng and in Sekong. They were exposed immediately to a more monetized economy. Most of their leaders were progressive and helped guide their respective villages through the changes. In the case of Kan Done and Yeup, which are closer to the provincial capital, a certain portion of the adult population is now employed as either civil servants or soldiers. This also provides impetus to change.

Kan Done and Yeup have kept their communal house and Yeup still maintains its traditional settlement pattern around it. Apparently there are continuing discussions in Done Saa and Thong Kong whether to construct a communal house, but this is usually put on hold because of the cost. The inhabitants in all these villages have virtually abandoned their traditional clothing except for ceremonial purposes and have readily changed customs and ceremonies than have their counterparts in Kaleum. Their numerous cultural interdictions (taboos) have been radically altered or reduced through a process of trial and error. While handicrafts are still made, not all households continue this as an economic activity for cash income. The majority of clothing is bought ready-made in the markets of Tha Taeng or Sekong.

Gender in Sekong

Introduction

[Note to reader: This short introduction is repeated from the gender section in Chapter 4 and is included here to emphasize the importance placed on gender issues in Sekong.]

The concept of gender and gender equality in relation to international standards is particularly tested when applied to ethnic minority groups. Within the Lao PDR there has been relatively little substantive research done related on the importance of the issue, the most recent being SODECO (2004) of the Khmu Leu in Oudomxay. It very ably describes the status of many minority women in the Lao PDR.

Many minority or indigenous women find themselves living within traditional and largely patriarchal societies, which dictate that the woman is subordinate to the man. From birth, females are considered inferior to males. An indigenous woman is viewed as being there to bear children, to serve her father, her brother and later her husband and her family, including her in-laws. In most cases, women do not have any property rights, or if they do, they cannot inherit these rights. Indigenous women are often

⁷⁶ These expectations may have been unrealistic, especially in the early years when the newly established government was confronted with the realities of implementing even the simplest of activities let alone full-scale programs.

excluded from roles of political leadership both in indigenous socio-political structures and in structures imposed by the state. Seldom are they consulted on political matters concerning the community, much less are they involved in actual decision-making which is usually done in structures or institutions dominated by men as in the traditional village council. Women very rarely hold positions of leadership at the community level and even more rarely at any political/administrative level.

All who have worked in mountainous and remote areas among ethnic minority groups well realize the importance of women's role in the livelihoods system in their communities. They are involved in mostly subsistence activities related to the annual swidden cycle of agriculture supplemented by other essential productive activities including the gathering of wild fruits, vegetables, roots and tubers in the forest, fishing in local streams and ponds and handicrafts like basket making, spinning and weaving, knitting and embroidery. Their workload is extremely heavy (as will be shown in daily activities below).

Woman's Involvement

Women's participation in official village organizations was mostly confined to LWU activities, but Katu women were much more active than their counterparts in Luang Nam Tha.

Five villages had active chapters the LWU but these data are not complete to determine their overall effectiveness (Table 57). Thong Kong and Tham Deng both reported LWU-sponsored activities. The main role of the LWU was to support regular community activities related to ceremonies and festivals. Woman established informal entrepreneurial groups in Tha Taeng, but not in Kaleum.

Table 57: Women's Involvement in Lao Woman's Union in Sekong

	Members	Committees	LWU			Other
	[#]	[#]	Activities	Dates	Sponsor	Groups
Tha Taeng						
Kan Done	?	3				Weaving
Yeup Yok Thong	26	3				Peanuts
Done Saa	20	3				Weaving
Thong Kong	33	3	Garments, cooking, rice stores management	1/02	AusAID/LWU	Weaving, garments, cooking
Kaleum						
Tong Treuk	?	2				
Koke Mai	5	2				
Pak Xay	?	1				
Tham Deng	15	3	Birth control	1999	PPHO	
			Weeding, blanket making, cooking	2001	PLWUO	

Marriage is open to young women and men as long as they come from a different clan than his father. Couples can be from different ethnic groups even though this is frowned upon. Bride prices are not traditional, but after the war and relocation they have become popular, similar to Lao Lum culture, but with a Katu flavor. Marriage has become prohibitively expensive.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ The team got the distinct impression from some male informants that because of the expensive bride prices of several buffaloes, some men might feel that wives are almost indentured servants and that she will have to work off the expensive bride price.

Divorces are rare but do occur and are mostly adjudicated by the *arias* along with respective clan leaders. Nowadays the village head may be brought in to assist adjudication. This may require several days. The husband or wife may retain the children. Assets other than land acquired during the union are equally divided. Generally it's not difficult for a woman to remarry. The terms are usually less than the first marriage, reduced from 15 buffaloes to five. Still, only men receive inheritance in this patrilineal system. In cases where a daughter lives with her husband in her parent's home, she can receive an inheritance through her husband if he changes his surname to her clan's name.

In the relocated villages in Kaleum, women's traditional roles changed little – now they feel more equal to men than when they were in their original villages. They feel that they work harder than men and are not necessarily rewarded for it. A major change for women in Kaleum is their adoption of Lao Lum style of clothing.

Women in Tha Taeng feel they have a higher status than they did in their original villages in Kaleum. Women in general feel that they have more rights to make decisions at home and in the community. They have more opportunity for education and have greater contact to the outside world.⁷⁸

It was rumored that when they lived in Upper Kaleum, many of the Katu could not speak Lao, especially women. Clearly both men and women in Kaleum villages could not speak nor read Lao as well as could those in Tha Taeng (Table 58).

Table 58: Adult Lao Speakers, Literacy and Numeracy in Study Villages in Sekong

	Adult Lao Speakers			Adult Lao Literacy			Adult Numeracy		
	.	.	Total	.	.	Total	.	.	Total
Tha Taeng									
Kan Done	280	128	508	248	130	462	210	108	360
Yeup	60	40	100	50	34	84	25	17	42
Done Saa	356	236	592	116	42	158	116	42	158
Thong Kong	16	15	31	16	15	31	16	15	31
Kaleum									
Tong Treuk	14	9	23	8	7	15	2	3	5
Koke Mai	35	29	64	15	0	15	15	0	15
Pak Xay	26	11	37	14	4	18	14	4	18
Tham Deng	13	0	13	8	0	8	8	0	8
Total	800	468	1 368	475	232	791	406	189	637

Women in Tha Taeng and to a lesser extent Kaleum, have been introduced to Lao Lum style clothing, especially skirts and blouses in district towns and blue jeans and western style clothing in the provincial capital. As elsewhere in the country, as they begin to purchase clothes they produce less of their traditional clothing for themselves. Along with this more consumer goods are purchased and less handicrafts are produced for use and sale.

Young girls are now attending school when they did not before. The number of boys and girls in school are about equal; however, the drop out after the first year remains high. The challenge is how to keep more boys and girls in school as clearly education is still lacking for both (Table 59).

⁷⁸ Relative in terms of an outsider.

Table 59: Schools in Study Villages in Sekong

	School Established	Grades	Teachers	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5		Total	
				M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Tha Taeng															
Yeup	1999	5	5	24	27	9	9	9	7	13	9	5	9	60	61
Kan Done	2001	3	1	3	5	1	6	6	5	5	6	0	0	15	22
Done Saa	1986	5	3	24	36	16	15	16	11	22	11	11	15	89	88
Thong Kong	2003	3	1	34	26	5	4	10	3	0	0	0	0	49	33
Kaleum															
Tong Treuk	N/A	0	0	2	5	2	2	3	3	0	0	1	1	8	11
Koke Mai	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pak Xay	2002	5	2	7	9	3	3	15	1	3	1	1	3	29	17
Tham Deng	2001	5	2	4	6	2	3	2	9	7	2	5	0	20	20
Total			14	98	114	38	42	61	39	50	29	23	28	270	252

Gender Roles in Livelihoods

The household's members' productive roles in livelihood activities are shown in Table 60. As to be expected from most upland/highland agrarian societies, both men and women share responsibilities to varying degrees for most of the rice cycle activities in both paddy and upland rice cultivation. In paddy rice cultivation, men repair paddy bunds, plow and harrow while women's duties include cleaning seed, rice binding and milling. All other activities are shared with the young and the elderly assisting in peak labor demand periods.

With upland rice cultivation there is even more shared responsibility. Except for men's surveying and evaluating potential swidden fields and the later divination, all other activities are done together. Again, women and men use their knowledge and experience of past production performance and knowledge of forest re-growth and soil regeneration. Both contribute to the activities in the swidden cycle no matter how heavy the tasks. The women are exclusively involved in rice milling by pounding. Men feed fish and large livestock while woman, both old and young, feed poultry and other small or medium-sized animals. Women exclusively do the spinning, dying, weaving and sewing. Men are exclusively involved in housing construction, blacksmithing, fishnet making and basketry.

Table 60: Household Livelihoods Roles in Study Villages in Sekong

Productive Roles Activities	Wife	Husband	Both	Grandfather	Grandmother	Teenage Daughters	Teenage Sons	Child
Paddy rice cultivation								
Cleaning seed	Yes							
Soaking seed			Yes	Yes	Yes			
Seed bed preparation			Yes	Yes				
Fertilization/manuring			Yes	Yes	Yes			
Sowing seed beds			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Repairing dykes		Yes					Yes	
Fencing			Yes				Yes	
Plowing		Yes						
Harrowing		Yes						
Transplanting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Fertilization/manuring			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Weeding			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harvesting		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rice binding	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Threshing			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transporting			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Housing			Yes	Yes				
Milling	Yes				Yes			
Seed selection			Yes		Yes			
Hai fields								
Meeting hai selection			Yes					
Survey fields		Yes						
Divination		Yes						
Cutting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Burning			Yes					
Collecting			Yes					
Re-burning			Yes					
Fencing		Yes					Yes	
Ritual			Yes					
Land preparation			Yes					
Dibble planting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [1st]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [2nd]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [3rd]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weeding [4th]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harvesting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Threshing			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transporting			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Housing								
Seed selection			Yes					
Livestock								
Feeding fish		Yes						
Feeding poultry	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Feeding cattle and buffalo		Yes					Yes	
Feeding pigs	Yes				Yes	Yes		

Productive Roles								
Activities	Wife	Husband	Both	Grandfather	Grandmother	Teenage Daughters	Teenage Sons	Child
Handicraft/cottage industry								
Sewing	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Spinning cotton	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Dying yarn or cloth	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Weaving	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Basket making		Yes		Yes				
House construction		Yes					Yes	
Roof making		Yes					Yes	
Fish net making		Yes			Yes		Yes	
Blacksmithing		Yes						

The lives of Katu men are easier than women's because they have fewer tasks. This can perhaps be attributed to their declining role as hunters in traditional Katu society. From an early age young girls are given much more responsibility than young boys. They get up an hour before the boys to pound rice and help the mothers prepare the breakfast. The young girls have 14 different daily tasks to perform and the boys have only five. The younger generations of Katu females are more likely to attend school than were their mothers (Table 61).

Table 61: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Sekong (Ages 8-14)

Daily Time Use Women	Girls 8-14 years old																							
Activity	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up	Yes	Yes																						
Mill [pound] rice		Yes	Yes																					
Steam rice		Yes																						
Prepare food and cook			Yes																					
Eat				Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes								
Care for children			Yes	Yes					Yes							Yes	Yes							
Go to School					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
House work			Yes	Yes					Yes					Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes						
Cut fire wood [HH use/sale]							Yes	Yes																
Fetch water		Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes				Yes										
Wash clothes														Yes	Yes									
Field work in [WS / DS]					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Field work in <i>hai</i>					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Gardening														Yes	Yes									
Feed poultry			Yes											Yes	Yes									
Feed pigs /or goats			Yes											Yes	Yes									
Feed large animals														Yes	Yes									
Bathing																Yes								
Sleep																		Yes	Yes	Yes				
Daily time use men	Boys 8-14 years old																							
Wake-up			Yes																					
Eat				Yes					Yes							Yes	Yes							
Go to School					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Wash clothes					Yes	Yes																		
Field work in [WS / DS]					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Field work in <i>hai</i>					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Feed large animals					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes											
Bathing														Yes	Yes									
Sleep																	Yes	Yes	Yes					

Looking at the workloads of productive adults in the 15-49 age group indicates some inequity. Women get up two hours before men to prepare breakfast. They have 18 different tasks to perform while men perform six. They both retire at about eight o'clock in the evening (Table 62)

Table 62: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Sekong (Ages 15-49)

Daily Time Use Women	Women 15-49 years old																							
Activity	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up	Yes	Yes																						
Mill [pound] rice	Yes	Yes																						
Steam rice		Yes	Yes																					
Prepare food and cook		Yes	Yes																					
Eat				Yes	Yes				Yes							Yes	Yes							
Care for children			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes								
House work			Yes	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes									
Cut fire wood [HH use/sale]			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Fetch water		Yes	Yes	Yes									Yes	Yes	Yes									
Wash clothes			Yes										Yes											
Field work in [WS / DS]		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes									
Field work in hai		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes									
Gardening				Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes											
Gather food from forest			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																	
Feed poultry			Yes												Yes									
Feed pigs /or goats			Yes												Yes									
Bathing									Yes					Yes	Yes									
Prepare and cook supper															Yes									
Spinning, weaving, etc				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes												
Sew clothing				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																	
Others																	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Sleep									Yes	Yes														
Daily time use men	Men 15-49 years old																							
Wake-up			Yes																					
Eat				Yes					Yes							Yes	Yes							
Care for children			Yes	Yes																				
Field work in [WS / DS]				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Field work in hai				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Fishing					Yes								Yes											
Feed large animals					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes										
Gather food from forest				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes																
Bathing													Yes	Yes										
Handicrafts							Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes											
Sleep									Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes	Yes					

Both man and women in the > 50 age group reportedly get up at four o'clock in the morning. Apparently some men in this age group help the women to steam the glutinous rice and assist with the housework. Women have nine major tasks to perform while men's tasks are limited to working seasonally in upland fields, livestock rearing and handicraft making. Both men and women still forage for food and do some limited hunting and fishing. Both are required, health permitting, to assist in livelihood activities in peak labor demand periods in upland rice cultivation (Table 63)

Table 63: Gender Division of Labor by Age Group in Study Area Sekong (Ages >50)

Daily Time Use Women	Women >50 years old																							
Activity	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Wake-up	Yes	Yes																						
Steam rice			Yes										Yes											
Eat						Yes			Yes						Yes	Yes								
Care for children				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes									
House work				Yes	Yes	Yes																		
Fetch water					Yes																			
Wash clothes						Yes																		
Field work in [WS / DS]						Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Field work in hai						Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Feed poultry					Yes								Yes	Yes										
Feed pigs /or goats					Yes								Yes	Yes										
Bathing						Yes			Yes				Yes											
Sleep									Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes						
Daily time use men	Men >50 years old																							
Wake-up	Yes	Yes																						
Steam rice			Yes										Yes											
Eat						Yes			Yes						Yes	Yes								
House work				Yes	Yes	Yes																		
Field work in [WS / DS]						Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Field work in hai						Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Handicrafts						Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes											
Sleep									Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes						

Public Infrastructure and Services in Sekong

Roads

The main all weather road in Sekong runs from Pakse to Attapeu. All roads in the study villages are access roads off NR16. Yeup and Kan Done are located about 22.5 and 29.8 kilometers respectively from Sekong off of NR16. These access roads are 2.5 km and 4.1 km from the main road and were constructed either shortly before or shortly after village establishment and are more or less passable year around except in extreme wet conditions (Table 64).

The road into Done Saa and Thong Kong is about 4 kilometers from Tha Taeng. Previously there was a primitive winding single track but improved under the auspices of a Provincial Rural Development Committee project by a Thai logging company, 12 kilometers to Done Saa and the remaining road improved to Thong Kong by another four kilometers past Done Saa.⁷⁹ At the time of the study, logging trucks had torn up the road and in some places the ruts were almost chest deep. Villagers complained about the lack of road maintenance and their not being able to carry their livelihood products to market or transport their sick to the district hospital.

⁷⁹ This was an old Indochina II War road built by the Vietnamese and later repaired by them during the mid 1980s.

The road to Kaleum begins about 12 kilometers from Sekong town at Phoon and extends for about 66 kilometers. It is the main land artery into Kaleum town⁸⁰. This road was based on an old Indochina II War road constructed by the Vietnamese and Lao around 1967 and improved by the provincial government in 1985 and upgraded again in 1992. Due to excessive logging in the area and little routine maintenance the road is many times impassable⁸¹. Both villagers and district officials complained about the lack of access and irresponsibility of the logging companies.

Schools

Schools have been constructed in six of eight study villages. Three are primary schools with five grades. The schools were built on average 12 years after the founding of the village (ranging from 3-26 years). In virtually all instances the community provided labor and local materials for construction. Tong Treuk sends their children across the river to the district and only the children of the Koke Mai village head of sends his children to the district town to school. (Table 65)

The schools in Done Saa and Thong Kong were built with proceeds from the sale of timber. Only the school in Yeup had a full complement of teachers for all grades. In all other villages they report budgetary shortfalls for the lack of teachers.

Health Stations

There were no health stations in any of the study villages in either district. In Tha Taeng the only village with a health station is Thongwai where most of the villages in the area go to obtain treatment. In Kaleum, individuals from the four study villages go to the district hospital for treatment.

Clean Water Systems

Clean water systems were constructed in six of the study villages with only Tong Treuk and Pak Xay not having water systems. On average it was 11.5 years (ranging from 1-26 years) after village establishment before a clean water system was constructed.

Irrigation Schemes

There were only two small-scale irrigation schemes constructed in the eight study villages. In Kan Done, a small-scale weir was built 2 years after the founding of the village to irrigate 30 hectares of wet season land with 8 households benefiting and 11 hectares of dry season paddy land benefiting households with labor.

The DAFO built a small-scale irrigation scheme in Tong Treuk to irrigate 14 hectares of paddy land. Households in Done Saa have basically dug small inlet gates and farm ditches along the local stream. There have been too few irrigation schemes built to provide a consistent water source for irrigated agricultural production, which up until now has been limited to irrigated paddy rice production.

⁸⁰ The Sekong River is in fact the main artery into the district during the wet season.

⁸¹ During the study in November 2003, it took the collection team 6 hours to drive into the district town and 9½ to drive out. The return trip included 10 tows from the UXO truck out of chest deep ruts.

Table 64: Infrastructure Constructed After Village Establishment in Sekong (Years)

	Road		School	Health Station	Water System	Others
(Year Established)	Year	Km				
Yeup-Yok Thong* (1998)	1998	2.5	2001	–	1998	2001 small-scale irrigation
Kan Done* (1996)	1996	4.1	1999	–	2000	1998 small-scale irrigation
Done Saa* (1980)	2000	12	1998	–	2001	Family irrigation
Thong Kong* (1984)	2000	18	2003	–	2001	
Tong Treuk** (1978)	–	–	–	–	–	
Koke Mai- Thong** (1974)	1967	3	–	–	–	
Pak Xay** (1976)	2000	4.1	2002	–	2002	
Tham Deng** (1998)	1999	10	2001	–	1999	

*Kilometers from NR16, **Kilometers from road near Kaeng Luang stretching 66 km to Kaleum

Table 65: Schools in Study Villages in Sekong

	School Established	Grades	Teachers	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
				M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Yeup-	1999	5	5	24	27	9	9	9	7	13	9	5	9
Kan Done	2001	3	1	3	5	1	6	6	5	5	6	0	0
Done Saa	1986	5	3	24	36	16	15	16	11	22	11	11	15
Thong Kong	2003	3	1	34	26	5	4	10	3	0	0	0	0
Tong Treuk	N/A	0	0	2	5	2	2	3	3	0	0	1	1
Koke Mai	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pak Xay	2002	5	2	7	9	3	3	15	1	3	1	1	3
Tham Deng	2001	5	2	4	6	2	3	2	9	7	2	5	0

Government Services

In Sekong, government services have generally been available, but as in Luang Nam Tha, they have been slow in arriving. Many of these services are implemented by special projects including the ACF and SEP-Dev (UNDP) in Kaleum and AusAID in Tha Taeng (Table 66⁸²).

⁸² The village heads reported that most of the services noted in Table 66 were funded by a number of donor projects and implemented by district and provincial agencies.

Agricultural services were mostly of an extension variety, focusing on large animal vaccinations, training on paddy rice and other crop production. The training topics were pertinent to related problems, but it is not known how effective the training was, except for preliminary feedback on paddy field establishment and rice cultivation.⁸³ Also, as in most training, there was little or no use of the Katu language and acknowledgment of indigenous knowledge.

Public health services focused on inoculations for pregnant women, infants and young children, training on sanitation including boiling drinking water and use of mosquito nets. Emergency health care services were slow in arriving after village establishment with budget shortfalls cited as reasons.

Limited training was provided on handicrafts and carpentry, both being meaningful for livelihoods improvement.

Villagers were dissatisfied that schools had too few teachers for the number of grades established and also complained about teachers not being in the classroom for the whole day. They were also concerned about the cost of health care in the district hospitals.

⁸³ The paddy rice cultivation training was undertaken with the assumption that upland villagers had some background in paddy rice cultivation – when in fact most of them had never been exposed to it. Many issues appeared to have been overlooked, such as the eventual creating of a hard pan to better hold water in paddy fields, improvement of soil fertility and weed and pest control.

Table 66: Government Services in Study Villages in Sekong

Village and (year established)	Crops		Livestock		Public health		Other	
	Year	Topic	Year	Topic	Year	Topic	Year	Topic
Tha Taeng								
Yeup 1998	2002	Training: paddy rice production, upland rice cultivation, pest control	1998 2002	Training: native chickens Animal vaccinations	1998 2003	Training: sanitation, mosquito nets toilets, clean water Mother and child vaccinations	2001	Training: carpentry, construction of small-scale irrigation scheme
Kan Done 1996	1997	Training: paddy rice production, upland rice cultivation, pest control			1996 1997	Training: sanitation, mosquito nets Mother and child vaccinations	1998	Training:
Done Sea 1980	1990	Training: paddy rice production, upland rice cultivation, pest control	1990 2000	Training: native chickens and other crops Animal vaccinations	2000 2001	Training: -sanitation, mosquito nets, clean water Mother and child vaccinations	2000	Training: handicrafts, tailoring, cooking
Thong Kong 1984	1997 1998 2002	Training: paddy rice production, pest control, other crop production	1998 2001	Training: native chickens Animal vaccinations	1997 2001 2002	Training: clean water, toilets Mother and child vaccinations		
Kaleum								
Tong Treuk	2001 2003	Training: paddy establishment, paddy rice production alternative crop production	2003	Animal vaccinations	2000	Training: clean water, sanitation, mosquito nets Vaccinations	2002	Training: alternative marketing advice
Koke Mai	2000 2000	Training: paddy establishment, paddy rice production alternative crop production and marketing advice			2000 2000	Training: clean water Mother and child vaccinations		
Pak Xay	2001	Training: paddy rice production, pest control, other crop production	1999	Animal vaccinations	2001	Training: clean water, boiled drinking water, mosquito nets		
Tham Deng	2001	Training: paddy rice production	1999	Animal vaccinations	2000 2000 2000	Training: clean water, boiled drinking water, mosquito nets, toilets Mother and child vaccinations	2000 2002	Training: cottage industry, handicrafts

Livelihoods Systems Performance

The Katu traditional livelihood systems are highly diverse with each component contributing to the overall system performance. The original villages had longer fallows for their swiddens and more abundant forest so their agro-ecosystems were considerably different than in Lower Kaleum— let alone in later relocated villages in Tha Taeng. A very large portion of their livelihoods was derived from hunting and gathering timber and non-timber products from the forest. Most of their food, fiber, herbal medicines, household utensils and building materials also came from the forest.

The first change in their livelihood systems occurred when they arrived in Lower Kaleum. At first the forests were abundant and the fallows long enough to encourage regeneration. But then as additional migrants arrived, the pressure on land began and forest allocation further limited available agricultural land. Villages in Kaleum still have to practice swidden cultivation but land constraints mean they rotate with shorter fallows and this is unsustainable. In Kaleum they do not have many viable alternatives to upland rice swiddens.

The livelihoods system changes were greater than for villagers in Tha Taeng. Of course, for those who stopped off in Lower Kaleum, they adapted in stages. Because of the elevation, soils, weather and proximity to markets and government services around Tha Taeng, their livelihood systems were different. They became more dependent on coffee, cardamon cultivation and livestock sales.

Assessing the Katu livelihoods system according to their agro-ecosystem properties - productivity, stability, sustainability and equitability - starts with the Katu exposure to the outside world. The major change in their capacity was the acquisition of Lao language speaking and literacy along with a limited capacity for numeracy. Many have learned about paddy establishment and paddy rice cultivation and dimensions of sedentary agriculture including fruit and vegetable production, coffee and cardamon cultivation. In Tha Taeng they are learning more about market behavior (Table 67).

In both Kaleum and Tha Taeng, villagers are learning new skills and attitudes toward health and sanitation. But the same question posed in Luang Nam Tha is relevant to Sekong, “Are these new attitudes and skills enough for them to adapt to their environments in order to survive and compete?” The increased human capacity has a positive impact on performance.

Households have inadequate agricultural land and their swidden land is usually highly degraded soils, a result of being deforested through logging or years of shifting cultivation (some has been overgrown by scrub brush). Three to four year fallows only further degrade already low soil fertility, concomitant weed infestation and almost endemic pest problems, which all contribute to a downward spiraling syndrome of declining rice and other crop yields. Productivity is still positive and fairly high by production per unit of labor expended, even though fairly low if measured as per unit of land.

The stability and sustainability of the swidden system is decreasing with the short fallows, but it is still positive. And of course swidden cultivation is highly equitable since it is open to any socio-economic household level. Of course, swidden cultivation is absolutely necessary for households and communities survival. With proper soil amelioration through a combination of cropping and other agroforestry methods, the performance of swidden systems could be enhanced considerably.

Since upland crops are cultivated on the same types of upland soils they face similar performance issues as with corn, cassava and peanuts. Current productivity and stability are positive, but sustainability is tenuous. With little or no purchased inputs, equitability is good, but then as more purchased inputs are required households on the low end of the socio-economic scale have difficulty without credit schemes. These other upland crops contribute positively both food and cash income to the overall livelihoods system performance.

It almost goes without saying that paddy rice cultivation increases overall livelihoods system performance for households with paddy land. Productivity, stability and sustainability are all positive. Equitability is the only property that is an issue since this land is not available to all households.

With increased availability of animal health services from DAFO, animal husbandry is positive in all four of the agro-ecosystems properties. Livestock enterprises should be able to expand with market demand as long as farm families can provide quality feed for their animals. Equitability can only be assured for mid-level and worse-off households with small and medium sized animals. Fish pond culture contributes positively to overall systems performance, but again mid-level and worse-off households may need assistance in digging ponds in order to realize benefits.

With the growth of tourism, handicrafts are becoming popular and some families are taking advantage of the opportunity to earn additional cash income. However, younger villagers are getting away from the making of handicrafts, as they desire clothes and utensils from the market. Performance is positive for all of the four properties.

The Katu households in Tha Taeng are beginning to obtain off-farm employment from nearby agricultural work or in towns Except for a few individuals in villages near Sekong (Yeup and Kan Done) who are government civil servants; most villagers are working as unskilled laborers and truck drivers. This employment contributes to household cash income that in turn contributes to livelihoods system performance. Sustainability is the only questionable factor due to the uncertainties of future labor demand and future general economic growth in the area.

Table 67: Livelihoods Systems Performance in Sekong

Agro-ecosystem Properties	Positive	Negative	Comments
Productivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swidden cultivation high productivity per unit of labor (low productivity per unit of land) 2. Paddy rice cultivation 3. Healthy livestock live and are larger 4. Crop intensification in Tha Taeng 5. Off-farm employment beginning in Tha Taeng 6. Emerging market for crops e.g. Corn, cassava, coffee, vegetables, fruits 7. NTFPs: cardamon, dama resin, eaglewood, shoots, herbs 8. Livestock sales opportunities 9. Handicrafts opportunities 10. Increased technical assistance from DAFO 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate agricultural land 2. Declining rice yields of upland rice (<i>hai</i>) because of: soil infertility, weed infestation, all due to shorter fallows 3. Little or no technologies disseminated to improve performance of swidden systems 4. High population growth rates 5. Reliance disproportionately on female labor restricts productivity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adequate family labor essential for all activities in livelihood systems 2. Some forest land can still be converted to agricultural land 3. Can increased productivity with water control if have irrigation 4. If extension education includes women, will lead to increase gains in productivity 5. Paddy rice cultivation extension could be more effective if it met the needs of farmers without previous paddy rice experience 6. Off-farm employment in town is more likely if individuals have Lao language ability
Stability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water control through irrigation 2. Improved animal health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family planning deficient 2. Diversification of agricultural production declining 3. Pests: insects, diseases, rodents increasing 4. Droughts and erratic rainfall reportedly increasing 5. Declining biodiversity in bush fallows and forest 6. Declining quantities of NTFPs without regeneration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agricultural and biological diversity issue relevant 2. Reduced population relieves stresses 3. Increase in rodents partially due to decline in predators

Agro-ecosystem Properties	Positive	Negative	Comments
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing awareness of human population roles, responsibilities and impact on agro-ecosystems 2. Improved animal health 3. Land tenure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population growth 2. Decreasing flora and fauna in forest jeopardizes traditional safety nets 3. Inadequate agricultural land 4. Reduction of fallow periods leads to declining soil fertility, weed infestation 5. Increased use of purchased inputs 6. Increasing pest infestations 7. Over exploitation of NTFPs 8. Declining stream flows 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swidden agriculture is sustainable with proper fallow periods (7-10 years) 2. Increased livestock production will be dependent on adequate feed and fodder 3. Transition to sedentary agriculture can only be sustainable if nature's processes are replicated 4. Increased extension should help individuals to respond to opportunities and solve problems 5. Land tenure increases sustainability since households are more committed 6. Increased roles for women in decision-making will contribute to increased sustainability 7. Rampant logging ruins flora and fauna in protected forests
Equitability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subsistence production 2. Agricultural diversification 3. Small livestock rearing 4. Land tenure 5. Woman's participation 6. Formal and non-formal education 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paddy land only available to limited households 2. Many times only the better-off families have enough 'risk capital' to take advantage of market opportunities 3. Worse-off households forced to make increased incursions into forest 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formal and non-formal education can increase equitability if it recognizes the world views, learning and decision-making processes of the community, households, individuals and is extended to all equally 2. Land tenure can increase equitability if households have adequate land

The overall performance of the system is affected by the Katu society and culture and the changes it has experienced. The culture is changing rapidly beginning with the family and throughout the community. Gender roles, the lack of acceptance of the traditional ways by the younger generation, the changing of livelihood systems, the monetization of the local economy all contribute to rapid social and cultural change.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

The following are a summary of the main findings of the study.

Livelihood Systems

The livelihood systems in study villages of both provinces are complex and diverse. The villagers have undergone considerable cultural change and their livelihood systems have been altered. These changes have been caused by emerging market influences, climate change, changes in the ecosystems, and the delivery of government programs and services.

In Luang Nam Tha, villages earned cash income from crops including sugarcane, corn and tea (59.7 percent), livestock (19.9 percent), NTFPs (10.4 percent) and off-farm employment (10.1 percent). However, when examining household data, which was previously mentioned as coming from different respondents, these data seemingly disagrees. The largest household expense was for food (about 60 percent) followed by 10.8 percent on clothing, 4.1 percent on housing, 9.5 percent on health care, 3.8 percent on education and 16.4 percent on others. Total expenditures of Kip 2.4 million were less than the Kip 2.1 million in income resulting in a deficit.

Sop Iii Kao, the one original village in the study, still has a viable livelihoods system. Using all the available components they are beginning to compensate for the eradication of opium poppies. The swidden sub-component remains very strong and they are gathering NTFPs and hunting for consumption and sale. The combined productivity, stability, sustainability and equitability of all sub-systems contribute to the positive performance of Sop Iii Kao's livelihood system. This is the only village that has adequate agricultural land, although additional paddy land is desired. Handicrafts are still made and are beginning to contribute to household cash income. The sale of 'Imperial Tea', which they have cultivated for years, is beginning to compensate for the loss of opium production income, and livestock is playing an increasing role in generating cash income. This performance appears only to be threatened by population pressure, which has been alleviated on two occasions (1973 and 1980) when there was out-migration. This is likely how people have historically responded to increased pressure on land in these villages. This village is both socially and economically viable and there is no need to relocate it to the lowlands.

In the seven relocated villages of Luang Nam Tha, livelihoods system performance is mixed. While the overall performance of their livelihood systems are generally positive, it is the performance of the upland field crops, increased livestock rearing and off-farm employment that have carried the overall system. Their swidden component does not perform as well as it did in their original villages, while productivity, stability and sustainability remain low, it is highly equitable and contributes to overall performance and it is still necessary for them to practice swidden cultivation. Livestock are becoming more important in generating cash income – as is the increasingly popular fish culture from small farm ponds, which is a new feature in Akha livelihood systems. Off-farm employment is beginning to pick up for many, but as additional people migrate to seek employment, competition for jobs is likely to increase. So far this employment is virtually all for unskilled labor. Unless there is investment in such areas as agro-industry, off-farm employment opportunities are unlikely to increase. Handicraft production is declining because of the availability of ready-made goods in markets; however, some households are taking advantage of the small tourist trade to sell handicrafts. All relocated villages except Phiyau suffer from rice deficits.

The livelihoods system performances are also mixed in Sekong. In the four Kaleum study villages and in the two villages on the Bolovens Plateau (Thong Kong and Done Saa), the overall performance is positive because their upland rice-based swidden still functions reasonably well and forests contain enough NTFPs to contribute to overall performance. Conversely, the two villages of Kan Done and Yeup cannot rely upon these two sub-systems for much contribution. In all villages paddy rice cultivation contributes to overall performance, but it is available to only a few households. Thong Kong and Done Saa have considerable cash generating opportunities from the cultivation and sale of coffee and cardamon. All four of the Tha Taeng villages have off-farm employment opportunities that are not available in Kaleum. Many of the jobs are for unskilled labor, but others are for truck drivers and semi-skilled work. Animal husbandry has always been important for Katu livelihood systems, especially for consumption and ceremonial purposes. Now they are beginning to see the value as an economic enterprise. This is more important for households in Tha Taeng because of its proximity to markets. Again, all eight study villages have to overcome a rice deficit with cash income from other sources to have food security.

In Sekong, villages earned cash income from crops including corn, coffee, cardamon and cassava (46.1 percent), livestock (4.2 percent), NTFPs (47.9 percent) and off-farm employment (1.8 percent). Sampled households spent 57.1 percent on food, 8.2 percent on clothing, 2.8 percent on housing, 6.9 percent on education and 20.6 percent on others. Expenditures amounted to Kip 2.6 million, but with incomes of Kip 3.4 million, they enjoyed a small surplus.

The following summary reviews the key dimensions discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 including rice self-sufficiency and agricultural land, demographics, human resource capacity, migration, ethnicity and culture change, gender and public infrastructure.

Rice Self-Sufficiency and Agricultural Land

Rice self-sufficiency is inadequate in 15 study villages and the situation is reported to be worse than in previous years. This can be attributed to both natural population growth and to in-migration. There is not enough agricultural land to cultivate paddy rice, upland rice and other crops. In all 15 relocated villages, households resorted to swidden cultivation of upland rice; however, the fallow periods were shortened because of population pressure or land allocation, reducing yields.

In Luang Nam Tha, 56 percent of relocated households in villages had paddy rice land averaging 0.9 ha/household. The only village in the study that reported sufficient agricultural land was Sop Iii Kao, the only original village. In Sekong 75.9 percent of households also had paddy rice land averaging 0.9ha/household. In both cases, households without paddy land and inadequate upland became dissatisfied with their situation.

Both the Akha and Katu livelihood systems are highly diverse and complex and the society, culture and activities are holistically integrated. If interventions are made in one dimension, repercussions reverberate throughout the system. Examining their agro-ecosystems properties can assess the livelihood system measures of productivity, stability, sustainability and equitability.

Contrary to popular belief, the new livelihood systems of both the Akha and Katu in relocated areas remain highly dependent on swidden cultivation of upland rice and other crops, which contribute positively to the performance of the overall system, but sustainability is in jeopardy because of the shortened fallow periods. Households of both groups are behaving rationally by continuing shifting cultivation, a highly equitable enterprise since all socio-economic levels can practice it easily.

Other upland crop cultivation contributes positively to overall system performance. Along with declining soil fertility and too little crop diversification, the reduction in farm family options makes them more vulnerable to market vagaries and volatility. Villagers from both ethnic groups have very little understanding of business agreements and how markets work. With little Lao language capacity and problems with numeracy they are extremely vulnerable to agreements that put them at a disadvantage.

Livestock contributes to overall livelihoods system performance. It rates well on all four of the agro-ecosystems properties. Small and medium sized animals are even better for villagers in the lower end of the socio-economic scale.

Handicrafts provide newfound supplementary cash income for some households, which contribute to overall system performance. The stability and sustainability of this is doubtful unless assistance is given to households concerning market requirements.

Off-farm employment presently contributes to household cash income and overall systems performance. But its stability, sustainability and equitability could be problematic in the future. At present it is mostly focused on unskilled labor, which is low paying and highly vulnerable. In the case of the Akha, their weak language ability puts them at a disadvantage in both finding and keeping employment.

The cutting of trees in forest conservation areas (*paa sanguan*) continues in both Kaleum and Tha Taeng districts of Sekong. The villagers receive an estimated 0.42 percent of the total value of the timber, while the district and provincial governments receive 2.3 percent in taxes. Village leaders reportedly feel quite helpless in the nearly unabated logging and extraction of non-timber forest products. Village leadership does not really know what their rights are in relation to the forest and its products. There is little responsibility on the part of logging companies to repair and maintain roads that they tear-up in this extraction.

Demographics

Natural population growth rates are approximately 3.0 percent in study villages in Luang Nam Tha and 3.6 percent in study villages in Sekong. This is almost at the crisis level. With increased outreach in health care by district public health officials and better village sanitation, the populations are expanding rapidly. Exacerbating this, in many resettled villages, in-migration is threatening the overall population by further increasing land use pressure and demand for public services. Children under 15 make up almost 50 percent of the population (49.8 percent in Luang Nam Tha and 43 percent in Sekong) and this has implications for food self-sufficiency and land use.

Human Resources

The Lao language capacity of the Akha is very low in both Sing and Long districts with an average of less than 10 percent of the adult population being able to speak Lao, with even less than that being literate or numerate. The Akha still mostly communicate in their own language and it must be used in training and education. On the other hand, the Lao language capacity among the Katu in Sekong is comparatively better, but literacy and numeracy are still deficient with 69 percent of adults speaking Lao (34 percent literate and 28 percent numerate), but in Kaleum only 7.2 percent of adults can speak Lao (2.9 percent literate and 2.4 percent numerate).

In both study areas, few adults received formal education. When schools are available children attend, but the attendance rates are low compared to the total number of village children. While there are schools in 13 of the study villages (seven in Luang Nam Tha and six in Sekong), attendance is low and drop out rates are high after the first couple of years. Females comprise about one-third of the student body, but Akha and Katu parents are not convinced of the usefulness of their daughters attending school and this may apply to their sons because education has little perceived use for their children's futures as farmers. The numbers of teachers are inadequate for the number of grades and scarce budgets are predominant.

There has been some non-formal education for adults in both study areas, mostly concerning Lao language literacy and numeracy, but this is not enough for all who need training. There has also been training in agriculture, public health and income generating activities. There is little training in the Akha and Katu languages except by a GTZ project in Sing.

Migration

Push factors influencing villagers to migrate from original villages included the lack of alternatives to opium cultivation, insufficient rice, poor roads and communications, concern for human and animal health, lack of income generating opportunities and few public services. The pull factors enticing families to the lowlands included hopes for paddy land and land for cash crops, other income generating activities (e.g. livestock, NTFPs, handicrafts, cottage industry, off-farm employment and access to markets and public services).

The main problem encountered with migration concerned inadequate available agricultural land and this led to conflicts with neighboring villages and earlier migrants. These conflicts were eventually solved but usually with remaining tensions. The main conflicts with outsiders were with merchants over trade terms and commodity prices. Another major problem was the incidence of human diseases including mosquito borne fevers, gastrointestinal tract diseases, parasites and upper respiratory diseases, resulting in high death rates in some villages.

Out-migration was not a serious issue for most villages; however, in several villages, a number of households became dissatisfied with the initial move and returned to their original villages (two villages in Luang Nam Tha and three villages in Sekong).

All families who relocated had to bear two types of relocations costs - leaving property behind and establishing themselves in a new village and must be considered when individuals are encouraged to move. In Luang Nam Tha, seven of the relocated villages moved at least twice so their costs were compounded. The average cost of property left behind was Kip 12.7 million; establishment costs of Kip 2.5 million for a total relocation cost of Kip 15.2 million. In Sekong the average cost of property abandonment was Kip 3.4 million, establishment costs of Kip 2.5 million for a total relocation cost of Kip 5.9 million.

Ethnicity and Culture Change

Cultures evolve over time, reacting to changes in the bio-physical environment, economic, political and institutional environments. Government policies on rural development (e.g. reduction of shifting cultivation and opium eradication [1999-2003]) created conditions for change and these have become more manifest with the changes in livelihoods, food preferences, clothing and housing styles.

The Akha and Katu cultures are experiencing change through market exposure and induced by government policies. One of the key changes is that of the roles and functions of the traditional council of elders and other village organizations. Although these are quite different for the Akha and the Katu, the decline of their influence in official functions through the formal village administration is a destabilizing factor in the respective societies.

Traditional positions, including the clan leaders, are under-used in development. The traditional belief systems and customs are deep rooted and still mostly respected. The villagers are adapting them to the current situation and it is not the role of outsiders to change them. Outsiders sometimes perceive the villagers as backward, but the traditional beliefs are the basis for their behavior.

Gender roles for woman are starting to change, but they still bear a disproportionate share of the burden of household work. Evidence of inter-generational dissension between adults and young villagers, mostly of over the adoption of lowland Lao culture and the abandonment of traditional customs, is beginning to be documented.

There are important issues related to livelihoods and cultural integration that must soon be addressed. The clean water problems confronting the villages are related to long standing Akha cultural interdictions concerning the use of water from low lying places. There are still no toilets (and they continue to be refused) because there are cultural interdictions preventing women and men using same toilet. Outsiders have to consider these cultural interdictions when proposing interventions.

Gender

Women's participation in official village organizations was extremely limited with none of the eight study villages in Luang Nam Tha having woman represented on the village development council. Their participation was mostly confined to the local chapter of the Lao Women's Union and that appeared superficial in most villages except for Phiyu and Sompaa Mai as no LWU-sponsored activities were reported during the year. Their main role is to support regular community activities related to ceremonies and festivals. There was no formation of any other informal production groups in any of the villages.

All villages contained a few women who can now speak Lao. Young girls are receiving education whereas they had none before and sometimes they are going outside the village to receive it. Of course this is opening new horizons for them. Opportunities for education, while still not ideal, are beginning to open up for Akha women. The fact that more than half the students in the study villages are female is already a revolution. Clearly all children have a propensity to drop out after the first grade.

In study villages of both provinces, woman still bear more than their share of the work burden in productive activities. This is true for all age groups surveyed. While they have been released from tedious opium poppy cultivation they now have to do paddy rice cultivation. The introduction of rice mills in some villages has reduced the burden of daily rice pounding by women and young girls. Women are also becoming gradually more exposed to off-farm employment. Sanitation and clean water are now available in both Sop Iii Kao and the seven relocated villages, reducing the burden on young girls and women for water collection.

Women's roles' are slowly changing and in both provinces they reported that they believed their conditions were improving because of gender awareness promoted by the local Lao Woman's Union and donor projects where implemented.

Public Infrastructure and Services

Communities and households are increasingly interested in receiving government-sponsored public infrastructure and services with the hopes of improving their welfare and livelihoods. However, tight budgets and poorly trained staff in its district offices limit local government response.

All weather and access roads are important factors in livelihood systems, but they must be maintained if they are to have continuing value. Roads offer access to better health care, education, agriculture services and marketing opportunities for their livelihoods. Of course, many times these services are available (or available after a delay), but families may not have the money to afford them.

In study villages of both provinces, roads are essential and the villagers named them as one of the primary incentives to move to the lowlands. However of the 16 villages, only four villages in Luang Nam Tha and two villages in Sekong were within five kilometers of an all weather road. The access roads to reach these were usually constructed several years after village establishment.

In Luang Nam Tha, seven of eight study villages have schools that were constructed on average 6.7 years after village establishment. All schools have fewer teachers than the number of grades being taught. In all cases they report an insufficient budget to have a full complement of teachers. In addition they have few textbooks and teaching aids. In Sekong, schools have been constructed in six of eight study villages three are primary schools with five grades. The schools were built on average 12 years after the founding of the village. In virtually all instances the community provided labor and local materials for construction.

In Luang Nam Tha, potable water systems constructed in seven of the study villages were built an average of 8.5 years after the villages were established. On Sekong, clean water systems were constructed in six of the eight study villages. On average it was 11½ years after village establishment before the clean water systems were constructed.

Regular government activities were limited because of budget shortfalls at the district and provincial levels. No emergency funds were available to assist newly relocated migrants during disease epidemics.

Government services have in general been available but they come considerably after a village is established. Most services are related to the implementation of special projects. Agricultural services focused mostly on large animal vaccinations along with training on paddy establishment, paddy rice and other crop production. The training topics are related to livelihood systems, but it is not known if the training was effective.

Public health services mostly focused on inoculations for pregnant women, infants, young children and training on sanitation, including boiled drinking water and use of mosquito nets. Emergency services, especially health services, are urgently required to meet the needs of the new migrants, but they come too late to make a significant contribution.

Chapter 7: Development Planning Using a Livelihoods Systems Approach

A livelihoods system approach is useful in describing and analyzing the social systems in the villages and a tool for both strategic and development planning. It is the point of departure from which we can make relevant and incorporate the aspirations of the various and in particular the intended farm family beneficiaries (Nooyens and Meijers 2001).

Process Overview

The project began on 19 May 2003. Soon after start-up a literature review on livelihoods was conducted and issues addressed that were raised in both the Lao and international literature.

The search for a team began in early June. Notices were placed with the National Economic Research Institute, Institute for Cultural Research, National Science Council and the Lao National Front for Construction. Interviews with potential Vientiane-based candidates were held in July. These interviews were for the positions of four study team leaders and three senior researchers. The study team leaders and senior researchers were available in the third week of July in time for the second trip to the provinces and participated in the selection process to choose the study provinces. The junior researchers began work in mid-August. Potential provincial team members were first interviewed during the second visit. Most team members were from the province and from the relevant districts.

The final selection of the four target districts was made in late July and early August following the reconnaissance visits. The selection criteria included recognized poverty districts, a major ethnic group in each of the respective districts and typical livelihoods system features.

Project training included both formal and non-formal. Formal training on research methods was given in August to the Vientiane-based team members (study team leaders, senior researchers and junior researchers). This was continued informally during the month as question guidelines were drafted and revised. Gender training was completed in August. Formal training was given to the two respective provincial team members (senior and junior local researchers) as a part of fieldwork orientation. In Luang Nam Tha the project also provided training for the 10 Akha translators.

Fieldwork in Luang Nam Tha was conducted from 9 September through 3 October and from 27 October through 26 November in Sekong. In both provinces the first week was spent orientating the Vientiane-based team to local conditions as well as training the local team in study methods, including the translators to better understand the study methods. The question guidelines were revised to fit the local situation. Final logistics for the first set of four villages were completed, including official notification of villages by district government authorities, preparation of food and other essentials for the stay.

Recommendations for Development Planning and Lessons Learned

There were two types of lessons learned during the project. One set was related to development planning in general and the other related to conducting this type of livelihoods study. The learnings are presented below.

Recommendations for Development Planning

1. Planning in both the uplands/highlands is essential before development activities are implemented. The livelihoods system approach is a comprehensive means to examine existing systems, opportunities and problems of villagers in the uplands/highlands.

A livelihoods approach or perspective is definitely a necessary condition in order for district and provincial planners to fully reflect the community livelihoods system in their plans. Participation of communities and households in priority setting of development activities is imperative to complement the livelihoods approach in planning and implementation.

2. Livelihoods systems have many components and dimensions with complex sets of interactions. Planning teams need to be representational to understand, plan and implement effective development interventions.

In order for livelihood systems to be properly understood and acted upon, multi and inter-disciplinary representation is needed on the planning team. District representatives of the planning offices and the key ministries of agriculture, health, education, culture and communications were represented on this study team. Also representatives of provincial and district Lao Women's Union and Lao National Front for Construction made valuable contributions.

3. Practical planning methods are needed for district and provincial planners.

A special project is needed to use the lessons learned from this study and apply them to the local planning process. This could be in the form of an action research project that would develop and test methods.

4. There are many types of programs assisting households and communities including integrated rural development, regular agricultural extension, poverty alleviation, opium poppy eradication and the reduction of shifting cultivation. Some projects in the two study provinces (e.g. GTZ, ACF, NCA, UNDP and EU) have been very successful in implementing activities. In all cases they have used a livelihoods system perspective in planning and implementing activities.

Therefore it is strongly recommended that such a livelihoods system approach be used before planning and implementing activities.

5. Cultures change naturally according to their environment, which includes markets, agro-ecosystems, technologies and climate. They also change as the result of outside interventions from government programs and projects.

When interventions are planned in rural areas, the cultural consequences of these interventions should be anticipated as much as possible. Local villagers including respected elders or clan leaders with indigenous knowledge should be consulted.

6. Gender roles are changing with cultural and livelihoods. Programs and projects have already had an impact on this process.

There is an increasing need for gender awareness and skills training in all aspects of livelihoods including agriculture, NTFPs, livestock rearing, fisheries, handicrafts, off-farm employment and public health.

7. Neither provincial or district officials have any experience in research nor does central level staff know how they should support and backstop a research effort at the field level.

Training is required in research methods, livelihood system approaches and socio-cultural-economic concepts for provincial and district staff as well as training for central level staff so they can help to backstop. Larger donors and NGOs have roles in assisting the process.

8. Roads must be constructed with a purpose in mind, that is to say they must lead to market opportunities, hospitals, schools and be a conduit for outreach of better services to villages.

The planning of roads should include considerations of all relevant sectors including agriculture, commerce, public health and education.

9. This study and others have elaborated the push-pull factors influencing villager's decisions' to migrate including factors that force them to return to their original villages.

Development planners should be aware of these factors when planning development interventions either in the upland villages or in the lowlands. Push factors are those deemed by villagers as limiting [in the original villages] and are in fact the challenge of developing those villages in situ. Pull factors are those that attract people to the lowlands and usually concern the hopes for access to public infrastructure and government services. Planners should address these in either the case of trying to improve development in the original villages or to better realize the hopes and aspirations of those villagers when they relocate to the lowlands.

10. As people migrate to the lowlands, they usually relocate near existing lowland villages. They invariably experience conflict over resources (especially land) with either neighboring villages or with earlier migrants in the new village.

Conflicts can be anticipated and should be adequately addressed by planners. Then line agencies should assist communities to resolve conflicts that arise.

11. Poverty alleviation is a high priority for both the Lao PDR Government and donor agencies. The very nature of poverty is complex and its alleviation is multi-dimensional. It relates to all aspects of livelihoods, especially the socio-cultural.

Poverty reduction must be demand-driven and clearly linked to market realities. For the government response it requires better cooperation not only of four line ministries (MAF, MPH, MOE and MTCPC) and their roles in poverty reduction but also the inclusion of other agencies, such as LNFC, MIC and LWU

Lessons Learned from the Livelihoods Study

1. Human capacity building in the uplands for children in school and adults in non-formal agricultural extension, public health, literacy and numeracy programs is dependent on villager's understanding the subject matter. The choice of language of instruction is of utmost importance.

Mother tongue instruction is crucial for isolated ethnic groups like the Akha and is absolutely essential for adult education, especially for women. It is also necessary for young children who have not been exposed to the Lao language during their primary schooling.

2. Most children in the uplands/highlands will stay there and follow similar livelihoods and lifestyles as those of their parents. Virtually everything they learn comes from their parents and grandparents.

There should be courses in the primary school curriculum on appropriate livelihood activities including enhanced performance of swiddens, improved animal husbandry and aquaculture.

3. Up until now, agriculture extension has failed to look at improving the overall livelihoods systems.

This can be rectified by instruction in enhanced performance of swiddens, improved cropping systems, agroforestry systems, improved upland rice varieties and other similar programs. Other subjects that should be put into extension programs are market oriented production, animal nutrition and health, aquaculture, horticulture, sustainable NTFP production and harvesting.

4. The poor implementation of land and forest allocation programs in many places has been identified [including this study, the PPA (SPC/NSC 2001) and several others (e.g. Decourtieux 2004; Evrard 2004)] as being a contributor to poverty. Inadequate agricultural land and shortened fallows of 3-5 years has resulted in reduced soil fertility, weed and pest infestation and reduced biodiversity – all leading to decreased performance of swidden sub-systems. The shortened fallow period is not sufficient for soils to regenerate and is definitely not sustainable. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has stated that the pioneering shifting cultivation needs to be eliminated [at the Sida/MAF Seminar in Luang Prabang in January 2004 (van Gansberghe)].

The implementation of the current land allocation and shifting cultivation programs must be re-evaluated to allow for additional agricultural land and subsequently to lengthen fallow periods to be more in line with time tested scientific principles of soil regeneration.

5. Because of inadequate agricultural land in general and increasing vulnerability of worse-off households, many are forced to go into the forest to over harvest NTFPs.

Increased effort should be made to provide agricultural extension to educate villagers concerning sustainable use of NTFPs.

6. Villages have a tremendous responsibility for the management of their forest resources. If they allow tree cutting in some forest categories (e.g. protected or conservation forests), they are severely chastised by officials. Devious logging companies present official looking documents to village leaders and then cut trees in protected forests. The village development councils (VDCs) are confused over their rights related to community forest management.

The DAFO and PAFO programs on community forest management should better inform the VDCs about their rights and responsibilities. Information should be shared with them on the consequences to the ecosystems and livelihoods of inappropriate cutting.

7. Local economies are rapidly changing with planned liberalization. Villagers, even those in remote villages, are becoming increasingly market responsive. This results in many changes and impacts e.g. the reduction of handicraft production, changes in behavior and culture, trade relationships and road accessibility to both markets and public services. Villager's

understanding of the dynamics of markets is still lacking – leading to many unscrupulous dealings with intermediaries, traders and their representatives.

Villagers need to become better educated about market development. This includes the fundamentals of supply and demand, competition, input and output markets, seasonal price fluctuations, backward and forward linkages, the dynamics of group production for agro-industry, quality, timing and contractual agreements.

8. Government officials, especially those in agriculture and commerce lack adequate knowledge and skills to support villages and households in a market economy. For example, many agriculture and forestry officials still promote centrally planned production technologies with little or no awareness of responsiveness to market requirements.

Officials need training on how markets function and how they can assist communities and households.

9. While the teams were very accomplished in socio-cultural research, they had less experience in socio-economic research. Their database management computer skills were extremely weak. Because provincial and district government staff have little or no research experience, training team members on the approach, methods and data management is extremely important.

The socio-cultural-economic livelihoods concepts and research methods must be carefully presented to team members in order to foster a working understanding of the livelihoods approach. Ample time should be allotted for this. At least three months should be devoted to training.

10. The research team for the study was divided into four groups of about five persons per team. The team had 14 Vientiane-based individuals.

The team was too large making logistics difficult.

11. Data entry and management were immense challenges for the team.

Special efforts and technical assistance are needed for data entry and management in the research process.

12. The timing of the fieldwork did not fit the villager's livelihood cycle because it was at the end of the wet season when they are beginning to harvest their short duration rice crops.

Research activity in Lao PDR must coincide with village calendars.

13. Since most of the upland/highland villagers are from ethnic groups, Lao language abilities vary considerably, especially for women.

An assessment of Lao language capability in the target areas must be made as part of the planning process. Based on this assessment, translators must be carefully selected and trained to assist. Along with language capability is the prior understanding of the differing worldviews of the translators and the target population from that of the dominant Lao Lum culture. This must be considered when trying to obtain information and participation. This training takes time.

14. Upland and highland societies are dynamic and undergoing rapid social, cultural and economic changes, from their traditional forms of social organization and resulting behaviors, into something new. These transitions are at the same time part of the old and the new.

It must be remembered that ethnic groups have not only existing livelihoods systems but also the existing socio-cultural-economic values, attitudes, beliefs and behavioral patterns. These existing systems are the basis for all proposed intervention changes recommended by the government and projects and are not simply obstacles to be overcome. These systems have to be built upon and not discarded as being backward.

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LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

Annex 1: Meeting Report

Workshop Report on the Findings of the Livelihoods Study Project Service Delivery and Resettlement: Options for Development Planning

Lao Plaza Hotel, Vientiane Lao PDR, 27 April 2004

Introduction

The livelihoods study commenced on 19 May 2003 under the auspices of the National Economic Research Institute (NERI), Committee for Planning and Cooperation. The initial three-province survey to pre-select study sites took place from June to July in Luang Nam Tha, Attapeu and Sekong. Following the first reconnaissance, the team selected two provinces, Luang Nam Tha and Sekong, as study areas and undertook field visits in August to select districts. Two districts (Muang Sing and Muang Long) in Luang Nam Tha Province and two districts (Muang Kaleum and Muang Tha Taeng) in Sekong Province were selected for study.

In August, the project interviewed, recruited and trained team members on working skills, methodologies, procedures and outputs. The team established a coordination network with the provinces, districts and villages to facilitate a field survey in Luang Nam Tha (September-October) and Sekong (October-November). Following the fieldwork, provincial workshops were held to present the initial survey findings. The team returned to Vientiane to analyze data and to finalize the report.

Workshop Participants

The workshop participants were a multidisciplinary group comprised of government officials from line Ministries, provincial authorities, representatives from domestic and international organizations and other development practitioners. See participants list at the end of this meeting report.

Organization	Number of Participants
Line Ministries	19
Provinces	17
Sekong	8
Luang Nam Tha	8
Oudomsay	1
International Organizations	45
Total	81

Objectives of the Workshop

- To report the findings of the study.
- To gather comments and feedback from workshop participants on the application of a livelihoods systems approach for development planning in Lao PDR and the methodology and findings of the study.
- To include comments, recommendations and other feedback in the final report.

Summary of Presentation Sessions

Livelihoods Approach and Methods

(Presented by Dr. Charles Alton, International Research Advisor)

The highlights of the presentation are summarized as follows:

The organizing team began the research process by integrating quantitative and qualitative methods and applying the PRA/RRA (Participatory/Rural Rapid Appraisal) techniques to data collecting together with purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews (SSI) with key informants and groups. To select the study sites, the team used six question guidelines on socio-economic conditions, gender issues, migration experiences, original village considerations, household specific questions and the socio-culture conditions.

In Luang Nam Tha Province, the team selected one original village and seven relocated villages in Muang Sing and Muang Long. The team focused the study on the Akha who are the dominant ethnic group in the province.

In Sekong Province, the team selected four relocated villages in Muang Kaleum and four relocated villages in Muang Tha Taeng. The dominant ethnic group in this province was the Katu.

With respect to household selection in the villages, the team defined three socio-economic levels of better-off, mid-level and worse-off.

Summary of Key Findings

(Presenter: Mr. Sosonphit and Mr. Khonesavanh, Study Team Leaders)

The speakers addressed the key findings related to livelihoods systems and said they included structural and behavioral dimensions and that gender was an important consideration. They went on to explain that ethnic characteristics include worldview, social organization, language, institutional issues, gender and traditional culture. Emphasis was placed on the fact that traditional culture should not be judged as backwardness when compared to the dominant culture. It was noted Lao PDR has 49 ethnic groups.

Causes for culture change included ecosystem changes, road construction and other forms of communication, market exposure, technology, government policy and programs (e.g. the opium eradication policy among others). The response to the above influences include changes in traditional leadership (e.g. the declining influence of Chao Kok Chao Lao), new forms of livelihoods (e.g. the introduction of commercial production and off-farm employment), changes to traditional values and beliefs, traditional clothing, housing and settlement systems, inter-generational tension and gender roles arising from awareness [of outside conditions], domestic responsibility issues despite unequal labor division.

Demographics [in surveyed provinces] were reviewed including impacts of voluntarily and government-encouraged migration. Migration problems included conflicts with established villages, illness and inadequate provision for infrastructure. The financial cost to villagers was discussed in detail.

Human resource capacity [of the Akha and Katu] was not being fully realized because of their limited abilities in the Lao language. The speakers reviewed the difficulties, needs and coping mechanisms including the use of traditional knowledge.

The speakers analyzed livelihoods system performance in the four dimensions of productivity, stability, sustainability and equity. In each dimension, strengths and weakness were pointed out. Village and household income/expenditures were discussed. The speakers closed their presentation by discussing public infrastructure in the study villages and then spoke to the lessons learned and recommendations for development planning.

Participants Response to Presentations

The main issue raised on methodology concerned the complexity of combining qualitative and quantitative methods and its impact on analysis. Another issue concerned the criteria used to classify rural household socio-economic status. The quantitative data presentation was confusing (Topic 2 and 4 of the Report). A data problem was pointed out on Page 73 (Table 44) and the percentage calculation. National population growth rates in the report should be for the study villages and not for the provinces in general. Moreover, the use of the term 'three main ethnic groups' should be replaced with '49 groups'.

Planning should not be undertaken using averages, but be set according to specific needs of people. It is important to understand the development perspectives and belief systems of the target population and be sure the intervention is appropriate.

Group Discussion

During the workshop, participants divided into four groups (technical, provincial, district, donor and international organizations) to carry the discussion forward. Each group discussed the set questions to determine the usefulness of the livelihoods system approach in socio-economic development planning for poverty eradication and give feedback on the relevance, implementation challenges and process in using this approach. The set questions were:

- Is a livelihoods systems approach useful for socio-economic development planning for poverty alleviation and other issues? Explain relevance for your organization. If not useful, why?
- If useful, what prerequisites (conditions) are needed to implement this approach as a practical planning mechanism for your organization? List 3-5 most significant factors.
 - What training should be given in what fields?
 - Coordination with other agencies – what organizations should be involved? What organization should take the lead in using the livelihoods systems approach in development planning?
 - Do you need any assistance in your organization in institutionalizing the livelihoods system approach? Who should provide this assistance?
- What is your opinion of the livelihoods study? If we were to do another study, how could it be improved?

The results of the group discussion are integrated and summarized as follows:

- In general, all groups agreed on the usefulness of the findings of livelihoods study.
 - It provides realistic information on the livelihoods of people, representing strengths, potentials and weakness of selected ethnic groups.
 - It coincides with government policy in that development should start from looking at the real socio-economic situation of people.
 - The findings of the study provide basic information for future analysis and determining development plans for suitable programs and projects that contribute to poverty eradication.
- The prerequisite for successful implementation of this approach are:
 - Training on how to apply the approach is needed for practitioners at all levels, particularly provincial, district and village levels.
 - Coordination among concerned parties is needed for implementation of the livelihoods systems approach. With this in mind, the Committee for Planning and Cooperation should be the leading organization and coordinate with the provincial and district planning division and line Ministries in formulating development plans using this approach.
 - There should be coordination among domestic and international organizations and consensus on similar approaches used by these organizations in order to exchange lessons learned from their development experience.
 - There should be adequate budgets established for implementation.
- To improve future livelihoods studies, the following points were made.

Methodology

1. These data should be carefully checked before analysis and inclusion into the report.
2. There should be more analysis of qualitative data.
3. Survey and study plans should be consistent with seasonal production periods in targeted sites and not interrupt the lives of the villagers.
4. Village selection should be in accordance with the research objectives and the focus should be on remote villages.
5. In order to get clear and precise information there needs to be sufficient time in the field.
6. Study teams should be comprised of multi-sectoral and multi-disciplined representatives.

Other

1. Coordination among concerned sectors [from central to local levels] should be strengthened in order to encourage participation at all levels and
2. Gender issues should be integrated into all analysis and not dealt with separately.
3. Understanding the needs, problems, beliefs and impacts on village life is a very important consideration for future studies and the planning process.
4. Future studies should consider the dynamic aspects of livelihoods, draw on lessons learned from the migration of people and relocation of villages (starting from 1997) and provide recommendations on poverty eradication approaches for rural people

Conclusion

Noted by Vice Governors of Luang Nam Tha and Sekong Provinces

- The Governors stressed the importance of this type of study and how they assist in preparing development plans for their provinces.
- Although the migration of people and relocation of villages has both positive and negative impacts, it is necessary if livelihoods are to be improved, particularly for those living in remote areas.
- The migration of people and village relocation issues need to be re-evaluated and future studies of this type should make that issue the focus.
- Coordination between government and international organizations should be improved and centralized through one government agency for easier coordination and management.
- Training at the district and village levels is ineffective and improvements need to be built into the system.

Noted by participants

- What is important is the follow up [to this study] and next steps.

Workshop Evaluation

In general the participants found the workshop useful; however, there were several comments suggesting the time allocated for group discussion was too short and the room too full of noise [for group discussion] because all four groups were too close to each other.

The study team believed they gathered useful comments, concerns and feedback on how to improve their final report.

Group discussions provided consensus comments on further study and how to implement approaches to improve rural livelihoods.

Agenda

Workshop on the Findings of the Livelihoods Study Project - Service Delivery and Resettlement: Options for Development Planning

Venue **Lao Plaza Hotel, Vientiane Lao PDR**
Date **27 April 2004**

Time	Topic	Responsible Person
08:00-08:30	Registration	
08:30-08:40	Opening of Workshop/Seminar	Mr Phoukhong Bannavong – MC
08:40-09:00	Opening Statements	Mr Finn Riske-Nielson Resident Representative, UNDP
09:00-09:10	Introduction to Study	Ms Sirivanh Khonthapane NERI/NPD
09:10-09:30	Livelihoods Approach, Methods and Planning Process	Dr Charles Alton International Research Advisor
09:30-09:45	Coffee Break	
09:45-12:00	Summary of Study Findings	Mr Sosonphit and Mr Khonesavanh Study Team Leaders
12:00-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-14:45	Parallel Discussion of Study Findings - District group - Provincial group - Central government group - Large donor group - NGO group - Technician group	Each group appoints a chairman and rapporteur
14:45-16:15	Individual Groups Report to Plenary Session	Mr Phoukhong Bannavong – MC
16:15-16:30	Small Break	
16:30-16:45	Summary of Plenary Session Report	Ms Sirivanh Khonthapane NPD/NERI
16:45-17:00	Closing	Dr Lien Thikeo Vice President, CPC

Participants List

Workshop on the Findings of the Livelihoods Study Project

Sekong Province

Mr Phonephet Khuylavong	Deputy Governor, Sekong Province
Mr Soulapphon	Cabinet of Sekong Province
Mr Boun Daomanichanh	Thateng District Governor
Mr Vannavong Phonsalath	Deputy Director, Planning and Cooperation Division
Mr Viphone Choarsan	Vice President of Lao Front for National Construction
Mr Sivilay Chanthavong	Information and Cultural Division
Mr Loth Keo	Director, Tha Taeng District Planning Office
Mr Bounka Choulamany	Director, Kaluem District Planning Office

Luang Nam Tha Province

Mr Singkham Phanthavong	Deputy Governor, Luang Nam Tha Province
Mr Thamdy Thammavong	Governor, Sing District
Mr Khamsai Vipphonphouthai	Governor, Long District
Mr Bounkhop Phommachanh	Director of Planning and Cooperation Division
Mr Sengthong Phothiboupha	Representative, Information and Cultural Division
Mr Somchanh Midouangchanh	Representative from Agriculture and Forestry Division
Mr Sengno Panmany	Director of Cabinet, Sing District
Mr Maikongkham Sisengpheth	Director of Cabinet, Long District

Oudomxay Province

Mr Thongvanh Bounsavath	Deputy Director, Planning and Cooperation Division
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Central Government

Mr Sompathai Liengson	Planning Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Mr Boualy Phamuang	Agriculture and Forestry Promotion Unit, NUOL (Na Bong)
Mr Phithounnaveth Laspho	Representative from Ministry of Information and Culture
Dr Outhaky Khamphoui	Representative from Data and Information Center LWU
Ms Vienxay Nola	Representative from Vientiane Women's Union
Mr Somlith	Representative from Lao Front for National Construction
Ms SomMai Phommounivong	Ministry of Industry and Handicraft
Mr Phonesavanh Inthalangsy	Prime Minister's Office
Ms Somvath Keokhasmphoui	National Science Council
Mr Bonthavy Sisouphanthong	Director General of Cabinet, CPC
Mr Yavang Vasoima	National Statistic Center, CPC
Mr Daopheng Panyasith	Deputy Director General, Planning Department, CPC
Mr Lamphan Phanphomsana	Monitoring and Evaluation Department, CPC
Mr Methtachith	Foreign Investment Department
Mr Sengphet Vannavong	Representative from Reduction Poverty Fund
	RFMC, Bank of Laos
Ms	Ministry of Commerce
Mr Soumountha Somchanmavong	Planning Department, MCTPC
Mrs Keomanivanh Phimmahaxay	Ministry of Education

International Organizations

Mr Finn Reske-Nielsen	Resident Representative, UNDP
Mr Pierrick Le Jeune	President, NOSPA
Mr Souksavanh Visathap	Country Director, ADB
Mr Malcolm Duthie	Representative, World Food Program (WHO)
Dr Giovanani Deodato	Representative, World Health Organization (WHO)
Ms Nobuko Horibe	Representative, UNFPA
Ms Penny Bond	First Secretary, AusAID
Ms Fiona Howell	Chief Technical Advisor, International Labour Organization (ILO)
Mr Hidetaka Nishiwaki	Representative, JICA
Mr Karl Goepfert	Representative, International Rice Research Institute
Ms Annlis Aberg	Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Sweden
Mr Sandro Cerrato	Charge d'Affaires, Delegation of the European Commission (EU)
Mr Laurent Romagny	Head of Mission, Action Contre la Faim Laos
Mr Trine Johanson	Representative, Norwegian Church Aid
Mr Rod Lefroy	Representative, CIAT Asia
Mr Christiane Oermann	Country Director, DED (German Development Services)
Dr Damian Benoit	Representative, Institute de Recherche Pour le Developement (IRD)
Mr Jack Cortenraad	SNV Country Director
Mr Shariq Ban Zara	Resident Representative, Office-in-Charge UNODC
Ms Olivia Yumbi	Representative, UNICEF
Mr Olivier	Independent Researcher
Dr Jacques Lemione	Independent Researcher
Ms Helle Buchave	Program Use Analyst, UNDP
Mr Bernard Delpuech	Head of Office, European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)
Mr James Chamberlain	Researcher Linguist-Anthropologist, ADB
Mr Barnarn Moizo	IRD
Mr Jemxay	Program Manager, Concern
Mr Saychamphone	Program Manager, Concern
Mr Kenri Hauam	OM, World Vision
Mr Kham Mounen	VAM, WFP
Mr PhoThong Siliphoy	Adviser, GRID
Mr Jen Seven	DED
Mr Lek Boonwat	WNODC
Mr Thiphaving Boupba	Economist, Lao-ERRI
Mr Mel Jones	EC Delegate
Mr John Raintree	NAFRI
Ms Setsuto Yamasaki	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP
Ms Maliphone V	Acting Resident Representative, UNFPA
Ms Kotsayphone	Planning Department, MPH
Ms Emily Hick	Program Officer, WFP
Mr Gnech Rup	Adviser, UNDP
Mr Kudo Yasunobu	JICA Expert, FOMCOM/JICA
Dr Arlyne Jonson	Director, WCS
Ms Catherine Geisen-Kisch	UNDP
Mr Jens Killabinski	Representative Integrated Rural Development of Mountainous Areas in Northern Laos (RDMA), German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Annex 2: Maps

Map 1: Lao PDR

Map 2: Sing District, Luang Nam Tha

Map 3: Long District, Luang Nam Tha

Map 4: Kaleum District, Sekong

Map 5: Tha Taeng District, Sekong