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VOICES OF AN UPLAND PEOPLE:

A Look into the Taoy Community and Participatory Development in Southern Laos



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ABBREVIATIONS

ADPC:	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
BEC:	Before Common Era
CBDRM:	Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Upland Community
DAFO:	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DDMC:	District Disaster Management Committee
DLSWO:	District Labour and Social Welfare Office
DLWU:	District Lao Women Union
DPHO:	District Public Health Office
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LDC:	Least-Developed Country
LFNC:	Lao Front for National Construction Office
LUP/LA:	Land Use Planning / Land Allocation
MPI:	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NAFRI:	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute
NPEP:	National Poverty Eradication Program
NRA:	National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR.
NSC:	National Statistics Center
NTFP:	Non-timber forest products
PLSWD:	Provincial Labour and Social Welfare Department
PRA :	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SRI:	System of Rice Intensification
UXO:	Unexploded Ordinance
VDMC:	Village Disaster Management Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research on the voices of an upland people, a look into the Taoy community and participatory development in Southern Laos, was conducted in the fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of International Executive Master in Development Studies (IMAS). The research was carried out in Taoy district, Saravane province, which is classified among the 47 poorest districts out of 142 districts nationwide. Two villages from this district were selected as they are among the target villages of the Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Upland Community (CBDRM) Project that Oxfam Australia and government partners are implementing. The project is ongoing in the third year of implementation, with a project time line of 5 years (2008-2013). The research conducted interviews with 18 head of family, 2 women's and 2 men's focus group discussions (7-9 members per group) and interviews with 9 government officials. The sample of the village individual interviewees was selected according to family wealth ranking. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews and observation. Quality data analysis was applied in this research.

The overall objective of the study is to develop a knowledge base that strengthens the community participation in the decision-making process in CBDRM Project in Southern Laos. Its specific objectives are to understand the Taoy people's perception of participation in village affairs, and specifically in the clean water project and agriculture project components of the CBDRM Project as well as factors influencing community participation in both project activities.

The Taoy community is an ethnic group which has been living in upland areas of southern Laos and central Vietnam for several centuries. Approximately 42,000 Taoy people live in Lao PDR. The majority are concentrated in Taoy district in the eastern part of Saravane province towards the Vietnam border. They speak the Taoy language, which belongs to the Mon Khmer (Austro-Asiatic) language family and has no written script. Actually, Taoy people refer to their language as Bru. Only a few Taoy adult women can speak the official Lao language and almost all of them are illiterate. All Taoy people are animist in belief. Their society is characterized by mutual assistance in the village and among villages. Their livelihoods have been heavily reliant on natural resources in remote upland areas. They practice shifting cultivation, hunting and collection of non-timber forest products for daily consumption. This livelihood strategy is now challenged by the broader development model promoted by the Lao

government, which is mainly based on export-oriented agriculture and commercial exploitation of natural resources.

Inhabitants of both Taoy villages define the concept of participation within their context as an involvement of the villagers in activities of the village that has clear objectives and expected results. The process of participation begins from decision-making of the family and proceeds through planning, implementation, sharing in the benefits and evaluation in the village level. Women and men have different roles engaging in the main livelihoods activities, social welfare and cultural events of the village which build the holistic and cohesive society.

Almost all household representatives of both villages were involved in the clean water facility construction. The four steps of the project cycle, included: (i) survey and design, (ii) planning/mobilizing, (iii) construction/implementation, (iv) operation and maintenance. It is in the construction step that the highest numbers of villagers participated. Based on the Wilcox's definition of the level of community participation in the project, Taoy community participation in the clean water project component has reached the fourth level. However, the level of Taoy women's participation is less than men's.

The essential elements that influenced the community participation in the clean water facility construction are: a response to a concrete need of the people as they are suffering from water resource scarcity and pollution; the community willingness to contribute their local available materials and labour; a strong leadership to organize the community; simple design and appropriate technique of the system; community perceptions which determined whether women or men should participate in which activities or at which level of participation; the project implementation strategy and capacity of the government staff and Oxfam Australia in applying the participatory approach with gender awareness in the project cycle.

This research also studies two project activities of agriculture components: (i) upland rice-based integrated farming systems and (ii) System of Rice Intensification (SRI) trial. Community participation in the decision-making process in both activities had followed every step of participative procedure. The quantity of families who participated in the SRI trial was reduced because only a few families were presenting the appropriate conditions for the trial. But the families who participated have been very active according to their role and responsibility. In this, more people attended for the planning and training, but this number was reduced when they

practiced in their fields and directly benefited. The families who didn't join the activity, at least made the decision in this sense.

Also if we compare with Wilcox's definition on the level of community participation in the project, the community participation level in these agriculture components reached the fourth level – acting together. The community decided together on applying new techniques, monitored and evaluated together and formed a partnership with the project team to carry it out. We also observed that the participation of Taoy women in public meetings or training is less than that of men, as well as there being no women in the position of head of group in both villages.

Research found that the essential elements which both supported and jeopardized community participation in agricultural activities are the government policy to stop shifting cultivation and move farmers to agricultural sedentarisation, coupled with environmental degradation and natural disasters; the criteria for membership of the group which related to the socio-economic ranking of families; the transferring of information and knowledge within the community; the value and belief of the villagers placed on the new technology coupled with risk taking; the women's and men's education level and fluency in Lao language; the dominance of the patriarchal system; and the strategy of project implementation, as well as the capacity of the project staff to facilitate the process of participation.

The main conclusion of this work is that community participation takes place when it demonstrably meets community members' real interests, and participation is lacking when community members consider the activity to carry risks to their livelihood. Also, women's participation was not at the same level as men's, due to traditional practices and women's lower education levels. Finally, participation requires time for people to be prepared and ready to be involved, and that they have access to the right information which will give them the grounds to take the right decision.

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to understand the perception of the Taoy ethnic minority community on their participation in village affairs, and specifically in the different activities of the Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Project in Taoy District, Saravane Province. In partnership with the Lao government at provincial and district levels, Oxfam Australia has implemented this five year Project from 2008 to 2013, using a participatory approach throughout the project implementation to ensure a sense of ownership by the beneficiaries and sustainability of the project as a whole.

The scope of the research is to explore the Taoy ethnic group's participation in their village affairs and in every step of two specific project activities: the clean water project component and the agriculture project component, both of which were structured into the design of the CBDRM project. The research was carried out at community level, in the two villages of Lukdong and Patem, in Taoy District of Saravane Province, Lao PDR.

The findings of this study will identify and analyze the Taoy community's participation in decision-making processes in both project activities and in cooperating with the project's other stakeholders. It is hoped that better definition and analysis of the Taoy communities own concepts and practice of participation will lead to more effective ways of working with this particular ethnic group in future development programs. The outcomes of the study will be useful for people who are interested in the community development area; specifically, in achieving greater ownership of project activities by some ethnic groups, in ways which deliver long-term benefits to them.

The researcher undertook this specific research due to a long-standing interest in the social structures of the Taoy ethnic community in southern Laos, and particularly, how they understood and reacted to development activities which are initiated from outside their community. The Taoy community has many structures and practices which differ sharply from those of the low land Lao Tai peoples of Laos; in some ways they have strong similarities with other upland Mon Khmer people; other aspects of their culture are unique. The researcher had been directly engaged in developing and implementing community-based projects in food security, clean water and micro finance for 15 years. During this time, it became clear to her and

her colleagues that many approaches which were successful in ensuring community participation with other ethnic groups in Laos, did not seem to work particularly well with the Taoy people. In particular, there seemed to be strong barriers to women's participation. For this reason, the researcher was happy to take the opportunity to undertake supervised research as part of the International Executive Master in Development Studies both to develop a better theoretical understanding of the applicability of classic concepts of participation and to discover some immediate practical strategies to enhance participation and ownership in this particularly poor and vulnerable community.

The structure of the thesis report includes two parts.

The first part is the research overview and methodology, which includes two chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the problem statement, stakeholder mapping, definitions of concepts and research objectives and research questions. Chapter 2 reports the sample selection process, research method, limitations of and time schedule for the field study.

The second part sets out the research findings, and comprises three chapters. Chapter 1 explains the research site background and the Taoy community's descriptions of the community participation concept. Chapter 2 reports on Taoy community participation in the clean water project component, and addressed the factors influencing community participation in this intervention. Chapter 3 reports on Taoy community participation in the agricultural project component, which focused on the upland rice-based integrated farming system and System of Rice Intensification trial, and the factors influencing community participation in these project activities. At the end of the research findings and conclusions are stated. References and annexes conclude the document.

Part I: Research Overview and Methodology

Chapter 1

1.1 Problem statement

The government of the Lao PDR has attempted to move the country up from the status of least-developed country (LDC) by 2020 and also to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Exiting the status of LDC requires eradicating poverty in a sustainable manner. Adhering to this conviction, the government presented at the 7th Roundtable Meeting in November 2000 its medium-term strategic approach: “Fighting Poverty through Human Resource Development, Rural Development and **People’s Participation** [my emphasis]”. (GoL, 2000) The National Poverty Eradication Program (NPEP) is fully based on this approach and is trying to reach the goal by 2020. The NPEP gives a comprehensive framework that tries to combine growth and development, and has a particular focus on the improvement of the poverty situation in the poorest districts.

Taoy District in Saravane province is classified as one of the 47 poorest districts out of the total 142 in the country and it has thus become a focus point for different development programs that aim at poverty reduction since 2003. These programs include in general a major component of capacity building and infrastructure investment. Just in Taoy District, there are programs of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, World Food Program, UNICEF, UNDP, Oxfam Australia, French Red Cross, World Concern and Village Focus International.

Even with all the attention given to the poorest districts, in the 9th ordinary session of the sixth Legislature of the Lao National Assembly that opened in Vientiane in June, 2010, an assembly member from Saravane Province said:

“I had visited Taoy and Samouay Districts recently, and discovered that living conditions of people in the two districts had seen only a slight change, despite the government’s confirmation that national GDP had growth 7.6 percent in the last fiscal year.”
(Vientiane Times, 2010).

So it seems that the strategy that focuses at the same time on growth and poverty reduction has not given the expected results. Thus the research will focus on the dynamic of one of the districts and try to understand what the role of the different actors is. We will look more in depth

at one of the projects developed by an INGO and focus on the interaction between the communities and the project.

In order to better formulate the problem statement, we would like to mention some background information on the main actors' intervention:

- Description and perspectives of Taoy communities
- Government policies affecting communities' livelihoods
- Oxfam Australia project perspectives

After this, we will try to formulate the problem that will be analyzed further in the field work and presented in the findings.

1.1.1 Description of Taoy Communities

The Taoy community is an ethnic group living in upland areas of southern Laos and central Vietnam. They are believed to have migrated into mainland South East Asia from either South west China or North east India as early as 2000 BCE. It is commonly believed that the Taoy migrated to Laos around the fifth century. Approximately 42,000 Taoy people live in Lao PDR. The majority are concentrated in Taoy District in the eastern part of Saravane Province towards the Vietnam border.

The Taoy language belongs to the Mon Khmer (Austro-Asiatic) language family¹. They do not have a written script. However, in Laos, the one official language is Lao. Only a few Taoy adult women can speak the official Lao language and almost all of them are illiterate. All Taoy people are animist in belief. Their society is characterized by mutual assistance in the village and among villages.

Taoy community livelihoods have been heavily reliant on natural resources in upland areas. They practice shifting cultivation, hunting and collection of non-timber forest products for daily consumption. Shifting cultivation is known as 'swidden cultivation'. There is significant diversity in its systems depending on soil category, topography, altitude, rainfall, level of integration into the market economy, dietary habits, ethnic beliefs and traditions, local knowledge and other factors. (Van Gansberghe, 2005). This livelihood strategy is now

¹ The Taoy people actually refer to their language as Bru

challenged by the broader development model promoted by the Lao government, which is mainly based on export-oriented agriculture and commercial exploitation of natural resources.

1.1.2 Lao Government Policies and community livelihoods

Since 1985, the Lao government has highlighted the need for reduction of shifting (swidden) cultivation as a key policy objective in the National Socio-Economic Development Plan. This policy has resulted in a government program to re-allocate land and relocate villages and push for agricultural sedentarization to replace shifting cultivation. This has resulted in the regulation of villagers' access to land and shorter fallow periods. As consequence, it has led to food insecurity for upland minorities, including Taoy people because the transition period when they no longer have traditional resources to rely on, and the new system is not yet producing, and the change in the agriculture practice requiring new techniques and inputs are not an easy process.

In January 2004, the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute organized a workshop entitled '*Poverty Reduction and Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation in the Uplands of Lao PDR: Technologies, Approaches and Methods for Improving Upland Livelihoods.*' The workshop summarized both the range of alternatives emerging for more sustainable upland agriculture as well as some of the key bottlenecks created by a number of policies and their implementation, for example:

“...rural communities practicing shifting cultivation are clearly put under pressure in many ways through Government of Laos schemes such as land use planning and land allocation, eradication of shifting cultivation by the year 2010, eradication of opium which reduces the fallow cycle, relocation and village ‘consolidation’; shortened fallow periods have resulted in decreasing productivity of land, including decreasing yields, decreasing soil fertility, increased weeds and labour requirements” (NAFRI, 2005)

In the recent years, more development investment has been oriented to the agribusiness sector, also increasing the pressure on natural resource management. Land concessions for large plantations, mining and hydropower dams are also affecting livelihood strategies in many areas, especially for ethnic groups.

1.1.3 Oxfam Australia Intervention

Since 2008, Oxfam Australia has implemented the Community Based Disaster Risk Management Project in 30 target villages of Taoy District – Saravane Province. It is a five year program under the Lao-Australian Non Governmental Organization Cooperation Agreement funded by AusAID.

“Project goal is to mitigate the negative impacts of disasters on 30 rural communities in Taoy district. Project objectives:

1. To build knowledge, skills and resources to mitigate, prepare for and respond to droughts and other disasters at provincial, district and village (leadership and households) level.
2. To improve food security and the income of selected poor and vulnerable households in targeted villages.
3. To decrease the impact of human diseases and unexploded ordinance (UXO) in targeted villages.” (Oxfam Australia, 2007, p.14)

In order to achieve the objectives identified above, Oxfam Australia’s CBDRM Project, requires contributions from government organizations, project itself and participation of the Taoy community. This involves:

- i. Firstly, building the capacity of Saravane Provincial and Taoy District offices to ensure that they are able to effectively manage the project. Provincial and district staff are in-charge of the facilitation and training required for community involvement in the project.
- ii. Secondly, ensuring the appropriateness of the project design itself. This means that the activities are suitable within the local context, according to the needs and knowledge of the community members and the staff who are involved in the facilitation and coordination of the project.
- iii. Thirdly, and probably the most important factor is community willingness and ability to participate in the project. It can be said that the project will not get any good results if Taoy people do not get actively involved in it, even if the project had very good design and good support from local government.

1.1.4 First elements of the intervention of Oxfam Australia in Taoy community

Since Oxfam Australia's project implementation began in 2008, on the one hand there have been a number of successful project activities. The high level of people's participation has been a key factor to the success in the clean water facility construction and family-scale irrigation system construction for example. In these project activities, Taoy community members have been involved fully from the beginning process such as needs analysis, construction design, water distribution and water scheme maintenance. These projects can be continued by Taoy people and bring benefits to them in the longer-term. From village annual reviews that were conducted, it appears that the project outputs meet the result of what is designed and have helped communities change their lives. For instance, they have increased rice yields, facilitated use of safe clean water, and have benefited from training to get more soft skills. Besides, the number of poor households has been reduced.

On the other hand, some activities in this project seem to be unsuccessful. One of the reasons identified by project team was the lack of community participation. This was evident in some agricultural or livestock activities. Although community members were fully involved in the training courses, and received seeds or inputs, they decided not to follow the activities as planned. When the project staff monitored the activities, they did not see any implementation or outputs of the activities at all. As a result, the project activities could not continue and may fail.

The reasons behind what community members are saying about participation and why they don't want to participate in implementation of the project are not clear, even though they participated in needs analysis from beginning. Therefore, a critical knowledge gap between government partners, project officers and communities still remains, even where both local government staff and project officers have a lot of existing knowledge and quite strong working relationships with the community. We observed that the local government officers are themselves Taoy people, with local cultural knowledge. And Oxfam Australia has been present in Taoy since 2000, but the organisation's staff are all from other ethnic groups. The process to build a better understanding of the dynamic in the community, and the cultural and local beliefs is a long term process. These elements show we are facing a complex situation.

In conclusion, we could define the problem as follows:

In the development process going on in Laos, there are several beliefs and perspectives that are confronted when facing implementation of actions in communities. We have identified at least 3 main actors in the concrete situation we are analyzing: the community, the government and the project. Some confusion or misunderstanding among the different actors could lead to unsuccessful activities or counter producing results. In the participation process that is part of the main strategy of the external actors, we could observe better the interactions among the actors.

We would like to investigate more the concept of community participation in a multi-ethnic environment and in a development program intervention. The assumption is that a deeper understanding of the community dynamic (both in their beliefs and in their survival strategy) could be reached through a real participatory process. But often, the level of participation is reduced because of the design and quality of the intervention. After investigating this, we expect to be able to draw out some lessons learned and conclusions that could be taken into account in further interventions.

1.2 Stakeholder mapping

As mentioned in the previous sections, there are three main actors in this case study. The first actor is the community, who implement the project activities in their villages. The second actor is government partners, at the provincial and district levels, who contribute technical expertise to the implementation of project activities, and the third actor is Oxfam Australia, which provides technical support, funding and management of the project.

In the case study, we focus on the clean water and agriculture project components.

Firstly, the clean water component includes four steps in the project activity cycle as follows: survey and design; planning; construction; and operation/maintenance. The community participation in the clean water component refers to how villagers are involved in each step of the project cycle; while the district public health officials provide technical support in the construction and training on clean water user management; Oxfam Australia staff based in the district work closely with the district officials in the project management from planning until

evaluation. They also join in the trainings or village meetings and as all stages of the whole process.

Secondly, the agriculture component also included four steps of the project cycle: needs assessment; planning/group building; training/implementing; and monitoring/ evaluation. This component was divided into two distinct agricultural activities: Upland-rice based integrated farming systems and Promotion of System of Rice Intensification (SRI) trials

Community participation in agriculture component refers to how villagers involved in each step of the activity in the project cycle. The district agriculture and forestry officials were technical providers and monitored the activities in the village from time to time. Oxfam Australia staff facilitated the project management according to the planning carried out with villagers.

Table 01: Detailed responsibilities of the actors in the case study.

Actors	Main responsibilities
1. Community	
Villagers (women and men) who represent family unit. (Clean water, System of Rice Intensification and upland rice-based integrated farming)	<p>Participate in the project management cycle.</p> <p>Contribute labour and local available materials in construction.</p> <p>Regularly report to head of group on the project activity achievements and problems to find appropriate solutions.</p> <p>Participate in agriculture activity implementation cycle and adopt the new techniques as appropriate to their areas.</p> <p>Promote their activities among other villagers and assist technically in the new setting up of similar group activities (when relevant).</p> <p>Provide critical feedback during the monitoring of project activities.</p> <p>Participate in the annual and final project evaluation processes.</p>
Village volunteers on clean water system and health promotion	<p>Participate in the activity planning and monitoring together with the Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC).</p> <p>Promote community hygiene practice and mobilise villagers to keep village clean.</p> <p>Directly guide villagers to maintain and clean the water system.</p> <p>Collect community health data and report to both VDMC and district health official.</p>
Village Disaster Management Committee (VDMC)	<p>Responsible for the Disaster Management activity planning, implementation and monitoring at the village level by community members and technical volunteers.</p> <p>Mobilises community members' contribution of labour and local materials in project</p>

Members included: Village Headman or Deputy Local Security; Lao Youth Union; Lao Women Union; Heads of the groups	<p>activity implementation and its maintenance.</p> <p>Coordinates and follow up the work of the volunteers and group activities implementing the village activities.</p> <p>Organise village monthly meeting and annual review meeting.</p> <p>Represent the villagers in participating in the District Disaster Management Annual meeting to review and planning.</p>
2. Government Partners	
District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC): Vice-District Governor; Head of the DLSWO ² ; Head of the District Cabinet; Deputy Head of DPHO ³ ; Deputy Head of DAFO ⁴ ; DLWU	<p><u>Project Implementing Committee at district level.</u></p> <p>DLSWO nominated one staff member to act as the secretary for the Committee.</p> <p>Approves annual work plans prepared by the various departments' technical staff with Oxfam Australia support.</p> <p>Monitors the project implementation and ensures that it follows the agreed work plans and that communities are properly consulted and involved.</p> <p>Coordinates project annual planning and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Motivate community members to actively participate in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.</p>
District technical staff from the following offices: DLSWO, DAFO, DPHO, DLWU.	<p>Facilitate PRAs at village level and plan district activities based on these results.</p> <p>Train volunteers and group members on technical subjects and monitor how they implement the activities including promotion of community participation.</p> <p>Collect data and information at village level in order to report on activities and document project outcomes and inform DDMC and Provincial level authorities.</p>
Saravane Provincial Labour and Social Welfare Department	<p>Mobilize DDMC' in promotion of community participation in the project cycle.</p> <p>Coordinates project annual planning and evaluation processes.</p>
3. Oxfam Australia staff	<p>Support the creation and facilitate the work of the DDMC.</p> <p>Support the work of district technical staff and participate in activities at village level to ensure the project is community controlled and managed.</p> <p>Organise the six monthly and annual evaluation processes in participatory approach. And provide technical expertise and training to district technical staff and to communities and participate in activities at village levels.</p>

Source: Adapted from the Oxfam Australia PDD, 2007

² District Labour and Social Welfare Office

³ District Public Health Office

⁴ District Agriculture and Forestry Office

1.3 Theoretical framework and Concept definitions

This section is a review of the literature to establish the definitions of participation in general, participation among ethnic groups in Lao PDR, participation in community works and the level of participation. Then, agriculture sedentarization and disaster risk management were defined.

1.3.1 Participation in general

There are many different institutes, multilateral organizations and donor agencies that define participation according to their own working knowledge of social and cultural development and their own contexts.

The World Bank (1996) defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources which affect them.”

Besides the World Bank’s definition, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in their Rural Institutions and Participation Service of the Rural Development Division, also defines participation in development as “a process of equitable and active involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation of development policies and strategies and in the analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities.” Both definitions recognize that participation is a process of involvement of all stakeholders in the project strategies and design, and project implementation cycle.

The Economic Commission for Latin America (1982) provides another example of the definition of participation as a voluntary contribution by the people in one way or another to public programs that are supposed to contribute to national development. Meanwhile, according to Cohen and Uphoff (1977), participation also includes people’s involvement in the decision-making processes, in implementing programs, their sharing in the benefits of development programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs. This form is often called popular or active participation. In other words, the community and institutions take initiative to formulate their own ideas, goals and methods of achieving those goals. They accomplish this by pooling their efforts and resources.

In contrast to active participation, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination Task Force on Rural Development (1978) defined passive participation. This is based on the idea which only involves the people in actions that have been thought out or designed by others and controlled by others. The community has little voice in the project. Both active and passive participation have an impact on the way different actors are involved in the actions as there is a clear definition about who takes decisions and control over the project.

1.3.1.1 Participation among ethnic groups.

In many conferences, the governments of the countries in Southeast Asia and large multi- and international development agencies have defined the indigenous people as a non-dominant group of people with a shared history, language and culture residing in a common geographical area. (Kampe, 1997). Besides this, Thomas Eriksen (1993) also mentioned in his paper that indigenous people are defined as non-state people not participating in an industrial mode of production and are thus vulnerable in relation to modernization and the state.

In the Lao PDR, the official term for “indigenous people” is “ethnic groups” or in the Lao name is “Xon Phoua”.

Based on the National Assembly decree No 213 (November 24, 2008) on the ethnic group’s name and number, 49 ethnic groups are recognized in the Lao PDR and categorized into four ethno-linguistic group families. There includes Lao-Tai (Tai-Kadai) : 8 ethnic groups; Mon-Khmer(Austro-Asiatic) : 32 ethnic groups; Hmong-Iu Mien : 2 ethnic groups and Chinese-Tibetan : 7 ethnic groups. Members of the Austro-Asiatic family, generally acknowledged to be the original inhabitants of the country, are found throughout the country in both upland and lowland environments. (Pholsena, 2003). The Taoy ethnic group belongs to the Mon Khmer language family.

Since the Lao government has promoted agricultural sedentarization and has applied the Land Use Planning / Land Allocation Program nationwide, it has pushed the Taoy ethnic group to change their traditional culture from shifting cultivation to agriculture sedentarization. It is interesting to see the participation of Taoy ethnic group as they have engaged in a socio-economic development project and what are the factors influencing their level of participation.

1.3.1.2 Participation in community activities.

In this research, participation in community activities refers to the Taoy ethnic group members involved in their traditional livelihood activities, social welfare, cultural events and external intervention activities. Also, the process of participation in decision making within household, group and village level will be assessed through these activities.

In order to determine the types of participation, this case will apply Jules N Pretty's typology of participation (1995).

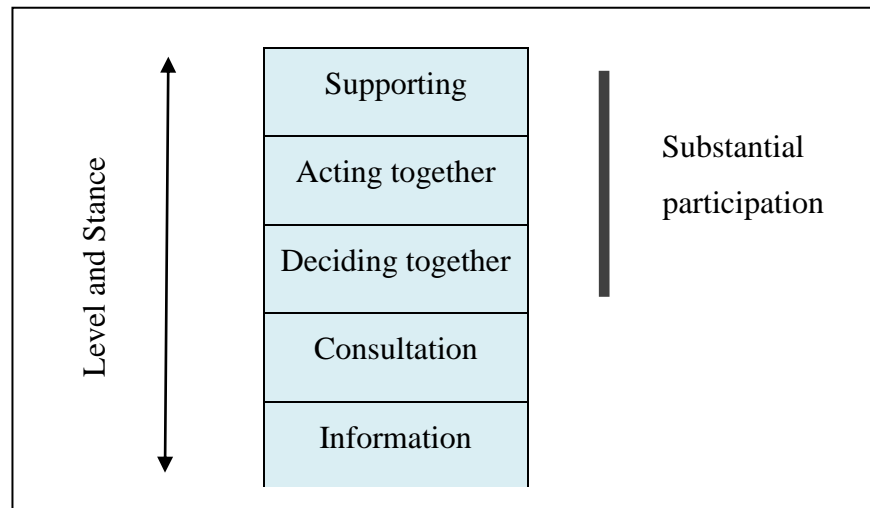
Box 01: Pretty's Typology of Participation (1995)

1. *Passive Participation:* People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened.
2. *Participation in Information giving:* People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches.
3. *Participation by consultation:* People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions.
4. *Participation for material incentive:* People participate by providing resources, e.g. labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives.
5. *Functional Participation:* People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization.
6. *Interactive Participation:* People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7. *Self-Mobilization:* People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

1.3.1.3 Level of participation.

In order to measure the degree of participation from low to high levels, in this research we prefer to use David Wilcox's definition. (Wilcox, 1994).

Box 02: Five level of participation of David Wilcox (1994).



These five levels are adapted from Sherry Arnstein's original eight-rung ladder of participation. The levels are useful as general guidance on what stance of community involvement is under examination.

There are explained as below:

- **Information:** merely telling people what is planned.
- **Consultation:** offering some options, listening to feedback, but not allowing new ideas.
- **Deciding together:** encouraging additional options and ideas, and providing opportunities for joint decision-making.
- **Acting together:** not only do different interests decide together on what is best, they form a partnership to carry it out.
- **Supporting independent community interests:** local groups or organizations are offered funds, advice or other support to develop their own agendas within guidelines.

Different levels are appropriate at different times to meet the expectations of different interests.

1.3.2 Agriculture sedentarisation

Agriculture sedentarisation can be explained as agriculture consistently using the same land and water resources in the same place, which the Lao Government introduced to communities in upland areas to reduce shifting (swidden) cultivation. It usually implies some wet rice cultivation (irrigated); also that villages remain in the one area, rather than moving on to new territory over time.

Beside this, the Land Use Planning / Land Allocation (LUP/LA) Program has been implemented in the rural areas, including in Taoy district. Since 2004, the district team has carried out the program activities in the villages. However, individual households do not have user titles. There is about 800 m² provided for housing, 3 ha for rice and other crop production per household on average. Also communal land (cemetery, watershed area, forest conservation) has now been zoned. Whereas farmers previously could take whatever fallow they liked, this has now, under this Program, been set to three years only. This has resulted in the regulation of villagers' access to land and resulting in shorter fallow periods from over 8 years to a 3 year rotation pattern. (World Bank, 2007). Making the change from shifting cultivation to sedentarised agriculture has many challenges, especially in an area such as Taoy, where there is very little land suitable for wet rice cultivation, inputs for more intensive agriculture are difficult to obtain, and many of the techniques used for sedentary agriculture are unfamiliar to the community.

1.3.3 Disaster Risk Management

Taoy District is one of the most disaster-prone areas in southern Laos, and it is included in the target districts of Oxfam Australia project. The project document of Oxfam Australia mentioned that “The disasters include drought, pest and animal disease outbreaks which are generating a situation of chronic food insecurity in upland communities but also existing and potential human diseases, the presence of Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) and sudden events such as house fires.” (Oxfam Australia, 2007, p.4)

Disaster risk management can be defined as “the systematic process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. This comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse effects of hazards.” (UN/ISDR, 2004)

According to the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center’s definition Disaster Risk Management “is a systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to identify, analyze, assess, treat, monitor and evaluate risks. This involves decision making based on the examination of those risks, which includes hazard, vulnerability, and capacity of people and institutions.” (ADPC, 2008, p.8). And

Community Based Disaster Risk Management “is a process of disaster risk management in which at-risk communities are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their capacities. This means that the people are at the heart of decision making and implementation of disaster risk management activities. The involvement of the most vulnerable is paramount and the support of the least vulnerable is necessary. In CBDRM, local and national governments are involved and supportive.” (ADPC, 2008, p.8)

1.4 Research objectives and research questions

The overall objective of the study is to develop a knowledge base that strengthens the community participation in the decision-making process in Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Upland Community Project in Southern Laos.

Specific objectives:

Objective 1: To understand the Taoy people's perception of participation in general and in the CBDRM project components.

Research questions:

1.1 How does the Taoy community perceive participation in village affairs?

- Can you describe what community participation means?
- What kind of activities in the village do people participate in?
- How did they participate in decision-making?

1.2 How did the Taoy community participate in the decision-making process in the clean water facility construction component?

- What kind of activities were involved in each step implemented in the clean water component in village?
- How did the community participate in the decision-making in each step?
- To what extent did community members participate in this component?

1.3 How did the Taoy community participate in the decision-making process in the agriculture component?

- What kind of activities and steps were undertaken in the agriculture component implemented in the village?
- How did the community participate in the decision-making in the agriculture component?

- To what extent did community members participate in the decision-making in the agriculture component?

Objective 2: To understand the reasons behind the level of participation in the project components.

Research questions:

2.1 What are the factors that influenced the level of community participation in the clean water component?

- Which elements of the participatory process are essential to build community participation?
- What are the characteristics of project design, community, Oxfam Australia and district which influenced both these elements and overall participation?

2.2 What are the factors that influenced the level of participation in the agriculture component?

- Which elements of the participatory process are essential to build community participation?
- What are the characteristics of the project design, community, Oxfam Australia and district which influenced both these elements and overall participation?

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sampling selection

The research was carried out in Taoy district – Saravane province in the south of Lao PDR. Taoy district is one of the 47 poorest districts identified by the Lao government in 2003. The district is home of several ethnic groups namely Taoy, Katang, Pako and Laotai. People are mainly upland rice growers, as, due to geographical location, there is very limited flat land for opening paddy fields and unexploded ordinance contamination is also a big constraint for opening new agriculture areas. Oxfam Australia, host organization for this research, has been implementing the third year of its Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Upland Community (CBDRM) Project in this district.

Research collected primary data in two villages (Patem and Lukdong). Both villages are target villages of the CBDRM Project. Access to both villages is quite difficult during the rainy season due to the poor roads with steep slopes to access. Distance from the district town and main road is over 15 and 35 km respectively. Almost all of the villages' populations belong to the Taoy ethnic group. Their main livelihood activities are shifting cultivation, raising livestock and collection of non-timber forest products. They still maintain Taoy traditional culture and beliefs with mutual assistance within the village. Since 2008, CBDRM Project activities have been implemented in both villages including clean water facility construction and agriculture activities.

2.2 Research method

The research used a qualitative approach for data collection through three different interview forms that have been used to guide discussion.

1. The first form was used for focus group discussion in the village, of which the purpose was to understand the situation of community participation in the village affairs and in the CBDRM project implementation. This has been applied to 4 groups: 2 women's groups with a total of 16 participants and 2 men's groups with a total of 17 participants
2. The Second form was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with individual villagers to understand their perspectives on community participation, how they are involved in the village affairs and project activities and which are the difficulties and challenges they identify. They included 18 interviewees (6 better off families, 7 middle and 5 worse off families according to the classification of the district and village) with a total of 11 men and 7 women. The interview took place in the household and was directed to the head of family. However in some cases, other members of family added some information too. But we recorded the interview with the name of the head of family.
3. The third form was used for government official interviews to understand their perspectives on community participation, their roles in promoting community participation, as well as the opportunities and challenges in this assignment. This form was used to conduct 9 interviews with government officials from the central, provincial and district levels.

For the interviews at village level (families and groups), the researcher decided to be accompanied by two district officials (one man and one woman), both being from the Taoy ethnic group. Their role during the interview was mainly to assist in the interpretation into Taoy language during the interviews and to take notes. The researcher prepared the interviews with the 2 assistants by reviewing the form and guidelines designed for it. The researcher recorded all the data into a special memo record.

After field trips, the researcher typed all the information into plain text based on each interview and group discussion in Lao version and then summarized into a Matrix. The horizontal columns are the questions and the vertical ones are answers. Then the researcher formulated it into the research objectives and questions, analyzing each concept. These are then expressed in the corresponding chapters.

2.3 Limitations of the research study

There were some limitations encountered during the research study as follow:

- There is a lack of secondary data related to community participation in the different development projects of Taoy district in the province and district offices, which we could access easily. It took a lot of time to arrange to meet the responsible persons and discuss with them in proportion to the relevant information for the research which we could find.
- The research was conducted with small samples with 18 head of Taoy family interviews, 2 women and 2 men focus group discussions (7-9 members per group) in two villages and 9 government officials. They may not represent a broad picture of all Taoy community's and government partners' participation in development projects as a whole.
- The research also had limitations in terms of time and facilities. Due to both villages being remote, with poor roads to access, and no electricity available, coupled with cool weather and rain on some days of the field visit, all the electronic equipment such as tape recorder, camera and computer had difficulties in use. Also, it was time-consuming in traveling to villages, therefore the researcher had to adapt an initial plan more intensively and work harder.
- Due to almost all Taoy women in the villages being unable to speak Lao language, two district officials (one man and one woman) assisted in the interpretation into Taoy language and took notes during the interviews with some women. However, some meanings as discussed by interviewees may have been lost in translation. The researcher had to observe and cross-check with other villagers.

2.4 Time schedule for the field study

The field study carried out from October to December 2010. Please see in annex.

Part II: Research Findings

Chapter 1

THE TAOY COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This chapter describes the research site background and the Taoy community, and describes the concept of participation within their context. It includes the general features of Taoy district, where the majority of Taoy ethnic group has been living for several centuries; and the background of the two villages where the field research was carried out. The Taoy community's description the concept of participation within their context includes how they engage in decision-making in the village affairs, such as the main livelihoods activities, social welfare, cultural events of the village and external interventions. The researcher also compares the Taoy participation pattern with Pretty's typology of participation.

1.1 Taoy community – research site background

This section introduces the research site information which includes Taoy district and Lukdong and Patem villages. Included are geography, population, history, and the socio-economic situation which relate to community participation in the project development.

1.1.1 General features of Taoy district



Map 01: Taoy district location.



Taoy District is located about 84 Km to the North-East of the provincial capital of Saravane Province in the south of Lao PDR. It is accessible through road No 15, which is being up-graded, and expected to be completed by 2011

This road links with Saravane and Samouay Districts and further with Vietnam. The district borders with Phine and Nong Districts of Savannakhet Province to the North, Kaleum of Xekong Province and Saravane to the South, Samouay to the East and Toumlane District to the West. Total area of the district is 293,500 ha and it is a mountainous region, with an average elevation of 500 meters above sea level.

There are a total of 56 villages in Taoy District, with a total population of about 26,183 people (females 13,516). (LFNC, 2010). The population density is approximately 9 persons per square kilometer. This district is home to four ethnic groups, including; Lao Tai 2.51 %, Taoy 26.55 %, Katang 48.30% and Pako 22.77%. The Taoy ethnic group is believed to have settled in this area in the beginning of the 18th century. Due to the impact of Siam war, the country situation was one of upheaval. There was fighting between ethnic groups and ethnic sub-groups for occupancy of the territory. Two families led by Mr. Senlad moved from the east (Kaleum District) to settle the village in this area and in the following year some more families came to join. (Yommalath, 1997, p.11)

According to the Taoy district report, the GDP per capital was only USD 350 in the year 2009-2010, which is much less than the national GDP which was reported at USD 986 per capita (MPI, 2010). The illiteracy rate among adults (15-40 years) is 53 percent (females more than 59 percent). (Taoy, 2010). People are mainly upland rice growers with less lowland rice production.



Picture 01: Recently villagers discovered this bomb in their village, Taoy, Saravane, Lao PDR. (Oxfam Australia, Feb 2011)

Between 1964 and 1973, over 2 million tons of bombs were dropped on Laos. Over 30% of them did not explode. Taoy district is one of 46 districts which have unexploded ordinance (UXO) contamination. It limits agricultural expansion and villagers' ability to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Based on the National survey of UXO victims report, 207 victims in 55 villages of Taoy district were found from 1974 to 2008 (NRA, 2009)

Taoy district was classified by the Lao government in 2003 as a one of the 47 poorest districts out of 142 districts in the country. This classification resulted in the development of projects in the district that were aimed at poverty reduction. Some of these projects include capacity building and infrastructure projects that were supported by the Lao government with bilateral partnerships with other international organizations including Oxfam Australia.

Community participation in the development projects initiated was promoted by the government partners in Taoy district, “A community-driven and access-oriented rural development approach will be at the base of poor-district development”. (NPEP, p.4. 2003). In cooperation with the government partners, some INGOs have attempted to apply participatory development approaches in their project implementation through the project cycle. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)⁵ trainings were organized for government partners and project staff before village data collection. For example: Village Focus International – a US-based NGO - organized PRA training for Taoy district government and its staff in 2003. Oxfam Australia organized PRA training for Taoy district government and its staff in 2008 before carrying out data collection in target villages.

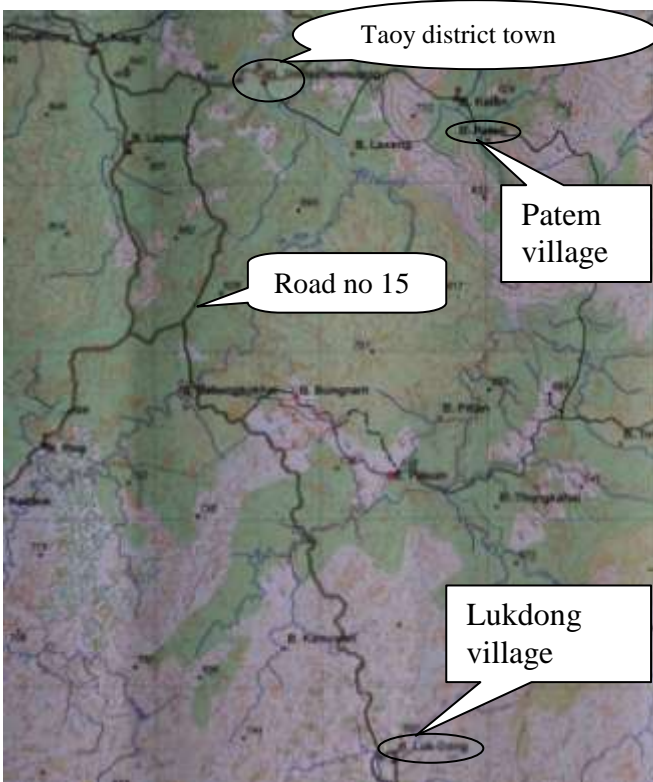
The government of Lao PDR defines the function and responsibilities of the provincial, district and village administration in development planning, budgeting and implementation through Prime Minister’s Instruction No 01. It provided the guidelines to build the province to become the strategic unit, the district as budget-planning unit and the village as the implementation unit. (Prime Minister Office. 2000). It expected to provide the policy framework for greater decentralization and participation in the development process through strengthening local capacities, introducing bottom-up planning approaches, and promoting sustainable socio-economic growth. At Taoy district level, the majority of the officials have awareness of community participation as an essential component in development projects. As one district officer said, “participation is important for development and investment. If the community

⁵ PRA has been described as a set of approaches, behaviors and methods for enabling people to do their own appraisal, analysis and planning, take their own actions and do their own visuals, such as diagrams and maps. (Field Practitioners’ Handbook Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, 2008)

participates, they will enhance their capacity and reduce dependency on the outside and they will be empowered.”⁶

Although the national government had opened the green light for community participation in the development process, Taoy district officials faced many challenges to promote it in the village rural development projects. From the semi-structured interviews with district officials, they mentioned that the government had limited budget for organizing the training for village leaders and monitoring in the village level, as the access to the villages is difficult, especially in the rainy season. The education level of village leaders, especially women is very low or illiterate, which lead to low level of understanding on the new participatory approach in the development.

Besides, information and data collected from the district officials who were involved in the project implementation, the data collection was also carried out in two villages – Lukdong and Patem villages.



Two villages were selected for conducting this research. Lukdong village is located 35 Km to the south-east of Taoy district town and far from the main road No 15 is about 27 km. Patem village is located about 15 Km to the east of Taoy district town and far from the road No 15 is about 11 km. Access to both villages is quite difficult during the rainy season due to the poor road with steep slopes and many rivers requiring fording without bridges.

Map 02 : Village Location.

⁶ From the semi-structured interview with Taoy district officer, October, 2010.

1.1.2 General information on Lukdong and Patem villages

The table below provides the basic information on the target villages, which the researcher summarized from the village consultation meetings, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and secondary data from the village PRA reports.

	Lukdong village	Patem village
Geography	The area of the village is about 20% flat land and 80% is mountainous, with an average elevation of 682 meters above sea level.	The area of the village is about 40% flat land and 60% is mountainous, with an average elevation of 624 meters above sea level.
Climate	The climate is tropical monsoon with two distinct seasons: The dry season from runs from December to April of the next year. And the rainy season starts at the end of May and lasts until October. It is cool and humid. This area has abundant natural resources and green forest.	
Population and history	They belong to the Taoy ethnic minority and all are animist in belief. In every village has their shaman, who plays an important role in leading religious ceremonies and observance. They still maintained the cultural practices with community solidarity	
	Lukdong village was established in 1974 by three families, after finding a suitable small piece of flat land with dense forest surrounding. Thus, they gave the name to their village “isolated and dense forest” (Luk Dong in Lao language) ⁷ . In 1976, more related families moved into the village and set up permanent houses. Nowadays, Lukdong village has a population of 34 families, comprising 247 persons (132 female, 115 male).	Patem village was established in 1976, after the inhabitants had migrated from place to place during the Indochina war ⁸ . In 1980 to 1994, the villagers had moved two times (one because of cholera outbreaks and one - houses fires) which forced them to move to the others areas. In 2001 up to now, they moved back to the 1976 location and built permanent houses. It has a population of 345 persons (175 female) living in 47 households.
The main livelihood	The main livelihood activities of villagers are upland rice farming (mainly glutinous rice, tobacco, maize, chili and vegetables). It is shifting (swidden) cultivation technique. Villagers usually joined in the group and selected sites	

⁷ From discussion with elder group in Lukdong village, November 2010.

⁸ Indochina war (1946 – 1973)

of village	<p>close together, as they have to protect the crops from wildlife. They cut the natural vegetation, left it to dry and then burned it. After that men cleared and fenced surround the areas, while women scraped and weeded. Then, women sowed paddy with other seeds (maize, pumpkin, bean, cucumber). The others crops like tobacco, chili and vegetables also were planted beside the paddy in the same plot. Villagers harvested difference crops in difference times and provided family food needs for the whole year round. In the past the fallow cycle exceeded 10 years and rotation to new plots was annual. Currently, the fallow cycle has reduced to 2 to 3 years only and average annual swidden farming per family is 1 ha. However, the rice yields of shifting cultivation were very low 0.5 – 1 ton / ha, due to poor soil quality, a lot of weeds, dried soil, pest infestation, rodent infestation, small birds and wild pigs destroying their rice fields. Only few families in both villages could practice wet rice cultivation due to limited availability arable land with irrigation system. Their rice yields were approximately 1 – 1,5 tons / ha. Some families in Lukdong grew coffee and sold it to earn more income. A few families also practiced home gardening near the river for family food supply.</p> <p>Villagers also raised livestock for ritual ceremonies, family food, or exchange. Buffaloes and cows were released freely to pasture in the forest or fallow areas. Only during rice planting are they brought to the village. Also villagers raise pigs and poultry in their village. However, animal disease outbreaks occurred every year, and villagers still did not have the means to cope with this problem.</p> <p>Besides, villagers also hunt or trap wildlife for daily food and if they found a big animal like a wild pig, they would share it with all the families in the village. They also collect non-timber forest products (NTFP) for their consumption and also mainly sell these products (honey, bong [persea kurzii kosterm], malva nuts) generating some income. Some villagers weave bamboo sticky rice boxes and rattan baskets for daily use and sell the surplus. They still have limited knowledge of the market and prices. The traders come to buy and set the prices, which are often lower than the district town market by 50%.</p>		
	<table> <tr> <td data-bbox="358 1501 906 1799"> <p>NTFP are rattan, bong, bamboo shoot, mushroom, tubers, wild vegetables and other products. Some families grow coffee and sell it to earn more income.</p> <p>In 2007, due to the drought during planting rice and heavy rain during harvest, 30 families⁹ among the</p> </td><td data-bbox="906 1501 1421 1799"> <p>NTFP are honey, bong, malva nuts, tubers, bamboo shoot, rattan and other products.</p> <p>In 2006, due to drought and heavy rain before harvest, all the 47 families¹⁰ suffered from rice shortage but in different ways. The 9 better-off</p> </td></tr> </table>	<p>NTFP are rattan, bong, bamboo shoot, mushroom, tubers, wild vegetables and other products. Some families grow coffee and sell it to earn more income.</p> <p>In 2007, due to the drought during planting rice and heavy rain during harvest, 30 families⁹ among the</p>	<p>NTFP are honey, bong, malva nuts, tubers, bamboo shoot, rattan and other products.</p> <p>In 2006, due to drought and heavy rain before harvest, all the 47 families¹⁰ suffered from rice shortage but in different ways. The 9 better-off</p>
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⁹ Report – PRA Lukdong village, Taoy district , Saravane province, 2008, p.8

	villagers suffered from rice shortage, the 20 worse-off families had enough rice for 4 months, 12 middle families had enough rice for 6 months, and only 2 better off families had enough rice all year round. (please see table below)	families had enough rice for 9 months, and the 21 worse-off families had enough for only 4-6 months, while the 17 middle families had enough for 6-8 months.
Health and UXO issues	<p>1993 – 10 people died from diarrhea.</p> <p>2007 – 2 children died after birth delivery. No midwife was in the village.</p> <p>Since 2009, project set up clean water system in village with 3 taps.</p> <p>In 2009, the project trained a village midwife who can provide consultation to pregnant women and provide assistant during giving birth.</p> <p>UXO still remains in the mountainous and forest areas.</p>	<p>1980 – 36 people died from diarrhea. After this, every year approx. 10 people became sick from diarrhea.</p> <p>1981 – One mother and one child died after birth delivery. 2004 – One mother died after birth delivery. No midwife was in their village.</p> <p>Malaria occurred every year. On average 20 people per year were sick.</p> <p>Since 2009, the project set up clean water system in village with 4 taps.</p> <p>1977 and 1978 – two villagers died from UXO explosions during clearing of the new land for cultivation.</p>
Education	<p>Few adults are literate and speak Lao language. Most of those who do are men.</p> <p>47 students (25 girls)¹¹ attended school in the village, from first to fifth grade of primary school (P1 to P5) with only 1 teacher (he is ethnic Taoy from a neighboring village). Thus, teacher teaches multiple classes: P1-P3 and P4-P5 (each 2.5 days per week).</p>	<p>83 students (34 girls)¹² attended school in village, P1 and P2 with only 1 teacher. He is a Patem villager, graduated from P4 and was trained in multiple class teaching. He teaches both P1 and P2. Only few students continued their study in district town from P3-P5, due to their families being unable to cover their expenses.</p>
Natural disaster	<p>In the previous several years, the villagers had been affected by natural disasters</p> <p>September – October 2009, Typhoon Ketsana hit all villages of Taoy district, including both villages. There were heavy rains and flash floods. The village houses and half of agricultural land were flooded. It destroyed all village</p>	

¹⁰ Report – PRA Patem village, Taoy district, Saravane province, 2008, p.8

¹¹ Report – PRA Lukdong village, Taoy district, Saravane province, 2008, p.12

¹² Report – PRA Patem village, Taoy district, Saravane province, 2008, p.13

	agricultural production which had nearly reached harvest time. The emergency response project assisted these villages in terms of emergency relief (rice, sugar, salt and canned fish), clothes and kitchen items.
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Based on the group discussion, both villages had identified the family wealth ranking as follows:

Family wealth ranking	Criteria identified by villagers
Better off	Rice sufficient for year round; has more than 1 hectare (ha) ¹³ of upland rice area and 1 ha of low land rice; main labor 4 to 6 persons; cattle more than 4; permanent house (wood piles, corrugated iron roofs, wood walls and floor).
Middle	Rice sufficient for 6 to 8 months; has more than 0.5 ha to 1 ha of upland rice area and no lowland rice; main labor 2 to 4 persons; cattle 2-4; semi-permanent house (wood piles, thatch roof, wood and bamboo walls and floor).
Worse-off	Rice sufficient for 4 to 6 months; less than 0.5 ha of upland rice area; main labor 1 to 2 persons; no cattle; poor house condition.



Picture 02 : Road to Lukdong village
Taoy district, Saravane, Lao PDR



Picture 03 : Children in front of their
house, Patem village, Saravane

¹³ 1 hectare equals approximately 2.5 acres.

1.2 Taoy community descriptions of the community participation concept

This section aims to analyze the Taoy community model of participation in village affairs. The information below will identify the space for community participation, the process of participation in decision-making within households, and at group and village levels.

Inhabitants of both villages described community participation as an involvement of the villagers to carry out some activities of the village that have clear objectives and expected results. The process of community participation begins from decision-making, and proceeds through planning, implementation, sharing in the benefits and evaluation. The unit of participation could change from family level, a group of families, and the whole village.

From observation, the Taoy community still maintains a patriarchal society, which dictates that the woman is subordinate to the man. From birth, Taoy women are considered inferior to men. She is there to bear children, to serve her father, her brothers and later her husband and her family, including her parents-in-law. Thus, Taoy women's views on participation focus on their family only. One woman said that

“participation in decision-making is that when husband and wife discussed together on any issue and agreed on the next action”.¹⁴

By contrast, many men said that participation in decision-making is a discussion together and reaching agreement on particular family or village affairs, including traditional events, and other activities that required village to act together.¹⁵

Based on both village calendars, the main activities in the year round of the villagers include:

- Shifting cultivation practice; or a few families practice wet rice cultivation and gardening.
- Non-timber forest product collection (rattan, bong, bamboo shoot, mushroom, wild vegetables, honey, malva nuts and other products), wildlife hunting and trapping.
- Village house repair or building.
- Cultural and Traditional ceremonies: “Kin Nga”- rice festival, communal house repair, marriage, new birth, funeral ceremony and others.
- Daily household chores: fire wood carry, rice milling, raising poultry, water fetching.

¹⁴ From women's focus group discussion, Patem village, October 2010.

¹⁵ From men's focus group discussion in Patem village, October, 2010.

From the focus group discussions, villagers stated the importance of community participation in the main livelihood issues, social welfare, cultural events, and project interventions.

1.2.1 Taoy community participation in several village affairs.

Firstly, Taoy community participation is related to the main livelihood activities. Villagers help each other using labor rotation in some steps of the shifting cultivation process where there is need for more labor than that which can be provided by one family. For example: the families of one village help each other for sowing the rice and other plants in the field. It takes about 1-2 days for each family's land, and then they move to the next parcel and so on until all of the fields are covered. Four months later, they will join in the same way for the harvest. When they finish harvesting, they will share the rice from their harvest among the persons who help them. "we agree the right share is that each person who has helped us can carry one big bamboo basket¹⁶ back their home"¹⁷

Secondly, community participation is related to the social welfare and cultural events of the village, such as when a woman gives birth, when a villager falls sick or someone dies. For this kind of event, they will require the villagers to take care. Village leaders will delegate tasks to the appropriate person or group to be responsible as a common village duty. In the cultural events which are usually organized annually or occasionally, the whole population of the village participates. These include: wedding ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, rice festivals, and communal house festivals.

A good example for the participation process is the construction of a family house. The decision-making will begin first at family level when husband and wife want to build a new house in order to leave their parents' house or to replace an old house. The husband will propose the house building plan to the village headman 6 months or one year ahead. Then the village headman will discuss with the advisory team including informal leaders such as shamans¹⁸ to set

¹⁶ One basket weighs approximately 20 Kg of paddy

¹⁷ From group discussion in Patem village. October, 2010

¹⁸ Shaman is an informal leader of ethnic group, who performs a variety of function depending upon their respective cultures: healing; leading a sacrifice, preserving the traditional by storytelling and songs; fortune-telling; acting as a guide of souls.

up the time frame as a village activity in the year. All villagers (both women and men) will participate in this activity. They will form groups to find the local materials like wood, bamboo, and grass for the roof thatch from the nearby forest. Then they work together for the construction under the supervision of the village foreman. When the house has been completed, the family will organize a party to celebrate a housewarming. Villagers eat pig, chicken or buffalo, depending on the family's wealth.

During the group discussion with villagers, one shaman was interested in sharing the Taoy traditional beliefs and the related events that villagers are actively involved in and maintain up until now. A good example is the rice festival, which is organized every year after villagers have finished the harvest. This event is organized in order to evaluate the village rice production and planning for the next planting season. It helps also to build a strong solidarity in the community.

Interesting information is the evolution of the events or ceremony linked with the beliefs, especially when villagers have difficulty to participate as it requires high expenses and too much time. After evaluating this, in Lukdong village, they decided together to change the rhythm. As in the middle of village houses is located Communal house, which community use for meeting and performing rituals. According to the tradition belief, the community has to organize a maintenance ceremony every 3 years. If they did not do, some people will become sick or die. To organize the ceremony, villagers have to kill at least 5 buffalos and invite all neighbor villagers to join in eating continuously for three days. The shaman will collect the worship objects (many made from bronze) to put in the communal house and organize the worship. "we cannot drink alcohol in this house if no guest comes and also cannot take the worship objects out of the house during the celebration"¹⁹. Now they have changed to organize it in on cycle of more than 5 years and with only a small ceremony. A shaman of Lukdong village said that they had decided to change with consultation of their villagers' and collective agreement, as the situation now is changed, and the community doesn't have much time for preparation and buffalos are costly.²⁰

¹⁹ From the group discussion, Lukdong village, November 2010.

²⁰ From elder group discussion in Lukdong village, Taoy district, November 2010.

A third kind of participatory activities is related to external interventions in their village. Villagers have been involved in the school construction project, the clean water facility construction project, hygienic education program, agricultural promotion activities, among others with facilitation by the project staff. Some of the villagers had participated in several trainings organized in their village and in the district e.g.: agriculture technique trainings, midwife training, HIV/AIDS training, UXO volunteer training, village health volunteer training, village committee meeting, Youth Union meeting, LWU meeting. The process of participation in decision-making for these activities has built on the community existing system. During the time the internal decision making process in the village began from family unit to village level. The village formal and informal leaders were the key unit to determine the community participation. In the women focus group discussion, one woman said that

“We participated in the village meeting if we were informed; sometimes they just called the head of family, so we understood that only our husbands should join in it”²¹

In general, if we compared the Taoy community participation pattern with Jules Pretty’s Typology of participation. Taoy community participation in village affairs is more relevant in the functional, interactive and self mobilization types. They form their own groups and with their own leaders (almost always men), decide on the objective and goal and how to implement the activities to reach the goal. They participate in implementation and evaluation together. Because all villagers are involved in decision-making process of each step of the activity, solidarity within the community is promoted and all can share in the benefits from participating in these activities. However, if we look through the community members, Taoy women seem to have active participation in decision-making within family and women’s groups only, while men exercise their participation in decisions at wider levels namely family, activity group and village levels.

²¹ From Patem village focus group discussion, October 2010.

Chapter 2:

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE CLEAN WATER PROJECT COMPONENT

This chapter explains how the Taoy community participated in decision making in each step of the clean water facility construction from survey/design, planning, construction and operation/maintenance. Also, the researcher compared the level of community participation in this project activity with Wilcox's definition. The end of chapter explores the essential elements that have been influencing the community participation in the clean water facility construction. There is a clear presentation of the project design, the district and Oxfam Australia's working approach that contributed to these elements and to the overall participation.

2.1 Describing Taoy community participation in each step of the clean water project component

This section intends to answer the questions: How did the Taoy community participate in decision-making process in the clean water supply component and to what extent did community members participate in this component?.

The clean water system component is a one project activity included in the CBDRM Project. It is designed to contribute to achieving the third objective of the project "To decrease the impact of human diseases...". There are four steps in the project cycle, which include: (i) survey and design, (ii) planning/mobilizing, (iii) construction/implementation, (iv) operation and maintenance.

The first step was a survey and design. This step was carried out after the village data collection using the PRA approach by Oxfam Australia and the district team. From the village reporting, in 1983 and 1993 diarrhea outbreaks had occurred, during which 10 and 36 people died in Lukdong and Patem villages respectively. Thus, villagers have identified as a priority need with a clean water supply system as first solution for solving the health problem. The technical team carried out the technical survey with village volunteers guiding them to the proposed sites. Then, they prepared the technical design and it was approved by the Clean Water Section of DPHO.

The second step was the planning/mobilizing one. In this step, family representatives participated in the planning meeting and decided together with the district and Oxfam staff. The pre-construction agreement between the project and community was signed. It identified the tasks, location for setting up the system, water taps and the contribution of the community in terms of the local available materials, labor and time for construction. The villagers also nominated the clean water committee members for construction management includes head of the activity, stock keeping, and technical volunteers. The project's contribution (Oxfam Australia and district) was also identified in the meeting as the external construction materials, technical advice during construction, maintenance and managerial training to villagers. Also the meeting had identified the timeframe for the construction, tasks and responsible persons.



In the focus group discussion, Lukdong women said that “we had decided where to set up the water taps in our village, we had done this because we needed clear water for our family members and knew where appropriate places for us to fetch water back home are”.

Picture 04 : Women group discussion in the village, Taoy district, October 2010.

The third step was the construction one. All families contributed their resources in terms of labour and local materials to this step. From the interviews said that

“our family members (at least one or two persons) participated in the construction: we collected gravel and sand from the river and carried it to the construction site and we dug the canal to lay the water pipe from the water source up on the mountain to our village”²².

²² Semi-structured interview, Lukdong village, November 2010.

In both villages, the length of canal is approximately 2 km (deep 50 cm and wide 20 cm). It was common work of the village in which they shared responsibility by dividing the length of the canal to each family. However, some families did not have main labour (only disable, pregnant woman or elders people which cannot work) , but they also help each other.



Picture 05: Villagers digging canal for water pipe. Saravane, Lao PDR, 2009.

The technical staff from the district had coached the village volunteers in the beginning on the construction technique and followed up time to time. Village volunteers continued to work with villagers in construction until completion.

Picture 06 : Taoy district staff advised the villagers in water tank construction, 2010

From the semi-structured interviews, the most of the families actively participated in the planning and construction steps. Many villagers said that the villagers did not only contribute local materials, labour and their skills to construct the clean water system, but they also provided warm hospitality to technical staff who joined in the construction time. One family head said during interview that “as our culture dictates for when guests come into our village, we collected the food from each family as we had for sharing to the district technical staff who advised us in the construction technique.”²³

²³ From household interview, Lukdong village, November 2010.

The fourth step was the operation and maintenance one. After completing the construction, the provincial and district clean water staff organized the water user group training in the village. A representative from each family (the ratio of men: women in Lukdong: 4:1, Patem: 7:1) participated in the training. They learnt about water source protection, operational system, and its maintenance and set up the village regulations on the clean water system management. The villagers also nominated the heads (both are males) of the clean water groups to look after the general management, includes system maintenance.



Picture07-08 : Children enjoying in using clean water system in their village. Taoy, 2010.

In the focus group discussion, the deputy village head reported that the heads of the clean water groups had taken care of the clean water system (water taps, main tanks, drainage system) and kept it in a good condition. Women are responsible for cleaning around the tap areas and drainage system, while men are responsible for cleaning the main tanks and water source which is located up the mountain and is about 2 km from the village. In the monthly village meeting, heads of the clean water groups have reported on the clean water system maintenance in the month and planned for the next month's activities. The village leaders delegated clear responsibility to the villagers:

“Cleaning the main tank is responsibility of three people (head of the clean water groups), the women's group continues to clean the water tap areas, drainage canal system, and each family representative has to rebuild the fence around the water tap.”²⁴

²⁴ From the Lukdong village meeting , 18th November 2010.

Based on Wilcox's definition, the level of community participation in a project includes (i) information, (ii) consultation, (iii) deciding together, (iv) acting together, and (v) supporting local initiatives. Community participation in the clean water system component reached the fourth level of this. It began from the community providing the information to the project team during PRA in the village and then the consultation with all actors was organized. The project team and community had decided together on the planning and contributing the resources. They implemented together and operational and maintenance systems were set up for the long term use. However, from the observation and village records, nearly all men were nominated in the water management group. Thus, if we look into community members, women and men are at different levels of participation. Village women's participation only reached only the third level. They did not participate in the water management group as men did. Their roles were delegated by village authority and they also accepted this automatically.

2.2 The factors influencing community participation in the clean water project component

This section intends to answer two questions: Which elements of the participatory process were essential to build community participation? And what were the project design, community, Oxfam Australia and District government characteristics that influenced both these elements and overall participation?

From the focus group discussion both women and men groups expressed the opinion that community health was a first priority issue because they had experienced diarrhea outbreaks in the past. They recognized that the causes of the problem were unhygienic practices and using unclean water from the river. Therefore, all villagers agreed on the proposed plan - the clean water construction as the first priority for the village plan in 2008. In the women's focus group discussion, one woman said on behalf of all

“we need a clean water system, because the water in the river near our village now is dirty and it is at a very low level.”²⁵

²⁵ Women's group discussion, Lukdong village, November 2010, Taoy district, Saravane province.

From informal discussions with village elders, they mentioned that they had drunk water from the river in the past years and it was not dirty like now, due to only few people living in this areas and that there had been very dense forest around. Thus the health issue and water scarcity as consequence of environmental degradation in this area pushed them to find other alternatives for their living. When the project came to their village, they identified their basic needs and proposed it and they were willing to participate.

Research found that community in both villages can contribute their local materials such as sand, gravel, and wood for the clean water system construction as well as labour. As we see in the record of the planning meeting, the agreement made between project team and village head man was clear and allocated responsibilities of community, district and Oxfam Australia.

For example: in the Lukdong clean water construction agreement, August 2008, it was written that “community will contribute gravel 12 m³, sand 10 m³ and wood ...on date...; while the project will deliver cement, pipes, steel to village date...; village stock keeping Mr..... villagers will dig the canal...”. This paper is a guideline for village authorities, district government and Oxfam Australia to implement and follow up the activity systematically in the village. The district official also mentioned that Lukdong and Patem villagers were able to keep their promise and did it as they had said. Due to community still being able access to common natural resources such as sand, gravel and wood for construction, this was implemented to plan.

From the interviews and group discussions, villagers reported that in the preparation and construction, village leaders were very active in mobilizing villagers to participate and clearly delegated the tasks and set out timelines for villagers. They organized the responsible persons to guide and monitor and evaluate each task. When the district technical staff monitored the construction progress, the tasks were completed according to what had been planned. The district clean water technical officer said that he enjoyed monitoring the clean water system construction in Patem and Lukdong villages, because of high commitment of both village leaders²⁶. From the semi-structured interviews, it was revealed that a majority of village leaders were soldiers or local government officers in the past. They are literate people and can speak Lao language. They had gained management and leadership skills from their past employment,

²⁶ From the semi-structured interview with district staff, Taoy district, Saravane province, November, 2010.

as well as having had the opportunity to travel to many provinces in Laos or in Vietnam during their service. From this, we see the strong leadership of village leaders to mobilize the villagers in participation to project implementation is the key element to achieving its objective.

Based on the agreement with the community, district and Oxfam Australia, the clean water system construction is carried out by community with technical supervision of technical staff from the district or province. Thus, the project made a simple design and technique for construction as well as including the use of local materials (gravel, sand, wood) and village labor. We found that the community was able to follow the advice of the district technical staff and do it by themselves, and after the project was finished they could carry out the maintenance.

From the group discussion, villagers said that “after technical staff had introduced the technique of construction, then we could do it ourselves and the technical staff came for follow-up from time to time”²⁷. Also village volunteer said that “I had attended maintenance technique training and now I could do maintenance of the system and clean the main tank regularly”²⁸.

Thus, we can say community can participate due to the project using an appropriate technique and simple design for construction and setting up the system, which they could follow by themselves, using local available materials and carrying out maintenance after completion.

We observed that only a few women had participated in the trainings of clean water operation and maintenance. The ratio of men to women (in Lukdong: 4:1, Patem: 7:1) who participated in the training were very different. And also, no women were represented in the clean water group management committee in either village. From the women’s group discussions, we found that almost all women were illiterate and could not speak Lao language. They were shy to be in the village meeting, coupled with the fact that they were busy with the household chores and child-rearing, therefore they gave the opportunities to men to attend. Also, women believed that men could understand the content of the meeting better than women. After the training, usually a man would share the information from the training to family members at home and if they have any comments they could report back to village head in the next day. Therefore a decision-making process did occur internally to the family, but those who participated in the decision-making at the village level were usually men. Thus, we see village

²⁷ From Lukdong village group discussion, November 2010.

²⁸ From the group discussion, Patem village, October 2010.

women were excluded from this level, due to women's illiteracy, labour division and community perceptions which give the leading role to men and a subordinate role to women.

From the semi-structured interview of district staff, they mentioned that the pre-construction agreement with target villages by consultation with village formal and informal leaders had been very important to guarantee the participation of all villagers. As a strong cohesive community, when their leaders agreed on the conditions which will bring benefit to their community, the villagers would follow them. As the district public health officer said :

“We organized the village consultation with village formal and informal leaders and discussed our participatory approach for the project implementation. When the village leaders understood, they agreed to contribute the village resources to the project implementation and we did agreement and signed together. Then they managed all the project activities.”

By contrast, in some cases the village leaders did not cooperate with the district or project staff, due to misunderstanding or bad communication. In consequence, they did not mobilize their villagers including women to participate in any activities. Some district or project staff are familiar with the top-down approach in working with community, and didn't want to spend time to understand the community situation and mobilize community participation. It is related with the project implementation strategy and staff capacity itself in applying participatory approach in the local context. For example, in the training on clean water management in both villages, only a few women participated. And no women were elected to be on the clean water management committee; although they were the main labour during construction and after the system had been completed they were delegated to clean the water tap areas one day per week. In the group discussion, woman who had attended the clean water management training said

“I did not understand well what the trainers said during the clean water training, that there were too many topics and they did not have time to discuss in small groups”²⁹.

The trainers mainly spoke in Lao language. In this case, it seems to be the project included inadequate training design to encourage women's participation, coupled with the low capacity of

²⁹ From group discussion, Patem village, October 2010.

their staff to facilitate the process. To sum up, a project implementation strategy with proper consideration of the gender issue will positively influence the level of community (women and men) participation.

In conclusion, the clean water system construction was a new item of hardware to be introduced to the village and needed proper maintenance to keep it working in the long term. The main factors contributing to community participation in this intervention were:

- Firstly, the clean water component is answering a real need of the people in the community. The community health issue which had arisen, natural resource depletion and water pollution pushed them to find the alternative for survival.
- Secondly, the legal framework is important for promoting community participation and enabling factors for implementing it. As communities accessed to common property in the form of natural resources, as the local materials are available in their village areas, and they can use it without paying. Thus, community was willing to contribute their local materials, labour and responsible persons for each task which had been agreed upon for implementation.
- Thirdly, there was strong leadership of village leaders to mobilize and organize people for clean water system construction and its management.
- Fourth, it was simple design and appropriate technique for clean water facility construction, which used local materials and labor to enable the community to participate during the implementation period and in maintenance after project completion.
- Fifth, community perceptions and attitudes determined whether women or men should participate in which activities, or at which level of participation. In addition, women had less participation at higher levels of discussion and decision-making due to their literacy level, the male dominated culture and family work obligations.
- Sixth, the project implementation strategy, the legal frame work (agreement made with village) and capacity of the provincial, district and project staff in applying the participatory approach with gender awareness in the project cycle was a key factor in encouraging community (women's and men's) participation.

Chapter 3:

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE AGRICULTURE PROJECT COMPONENT

This chapter explains how the Taoy community participated in decision-making in two agriculture activities: (i) upland rice-based integrated farming system and (ii) System of Rice Intensification (SRI) trial. Also, the researcher compared the level of community participation in these project activities with Wilcox's definitions. At the end of the chapter, the researcher intends to explore and analyze the essential elements which both supported and jeopardized community participation in the upland rice-based integrated farming system and in the SRI trials. There is a clear focus on the project stakeholders' (district, Oxfam Australia, village) characteristics which influenced these elements and the overall participation.

3.1 Describing Taoy community participation in the upland rice-based integrated farming system

This section intends to answer the questions: How did Taoy communities participate in the decision-making process in the upland rice based integrated farming system and to what extent did community members participate in this activity?

The upland rice based integrated farming system activity was implemented through four steps which included: (i) needs assessment, (ii) planning/group building, (iii) training/ implementing, and (iv) monitoring/evaluation.

The first step was a needs assessment one. Oxfam Australia and the district team carried out the village data collection using a PRA approach. Villagers participated in the consultation meeting, drawing the natural resource map, and prioritized the problems and proposed the solutions. The second problem of the villages after diarrhea was drought, which occurred in 2006 and 2007 in Patem and Lukdong respectively. It affected the whole community by causing serious food insecurity in the years 2007 and 2008.

One solution proposed by the community was to find the ways to increase the agricultural productivity, for which they still rely on the local knowledge on upland cultivation. Thus the technical team surveyed the arable land and existing cultivation methods that community practiced and designed the project activity proposal. After it had been approved by Oxfam Australia, the planning step was carried out in the village.

The second step was the planning/group building one. In this step, villagers participated in the planning meeting and decided together on the agricultural activity with district project team (Oxfam Australia and the DAFO staff). The project team drafted the criteria for members of production groups and discussed these with participants. The group members represented the family units. Therefore, the main criteria included having land available, the family's interest to apply the new techniques which need time and labour to build the fence around the garden, improve soil quality using animal manure and plant according the technical advice given. Family decision-making occurred when the homework was given to participants, and they would give the answer on the next day after they had discussed with their wife or husband at home on their willingness to be the member of production group.

From the village records, only one third of families of both villages applied to be members of the activity groups which would practice the new techniques that year. Almost of them were from the middle and better off families and held some position in the village authority structure. Project staff facilitated setting up the production groups, for which the members elected their head and deputy head of the group, and set up the group regulations. In both villages, only men were elected as heads and deputies of the production group.

The third step was training/implementation. For this step, the project staff organized open session training (theory) for all villagers. Almost all family representatives attended the training (the ratio of men to women in Lukdong: 5:1; Patem: 7:1). The project staff mainly spoke in Lao language and used some words in Taoy language. After the theory session, the staff coached the members of the production group in practicing in inter cropping one pilot garden in the village, for which all of them participated in soil preparing and planting.

After completing the training in theory and coaching in the beginning of planting crops according to the new technique, production groups built their action plan to apply in their individual family arable land and set up the timeframe for monitoring by heads of the group and timetable for follow-up by the project team. The project also provided some seeds (peanut, corn, sweet potato) for trial to the members of the production groups. These seeds were of local varieties, purchased from farmers who had grown them in the Boloven Plateau. According to the Oxfam Australia staff based in Taoy district, his organization always promotes use of the local

variety of seeds, so farmers could continue to collect seeds by themselves and in the following year they can grow and share with other families.³⁰



Picture 09: Project staff explains growing technique to villagers. (Oxfam Australia, 2009)



Picture 10: Villagers practice in the pilot garden with coaching from technical staff. (Oxfam Australia, 2009)

The fourth step was the monitoring/evaluation one. For this step, the heads of the production groups had responsibility to monitor, to record in the written format and report to the village committee in their monthly meeting. The project team monitored the activity according to the timeframe that was agreed with the village, especially on a monthly basis. At the same time they also joined in the village monthly meeting. Based on the report of two villages, half of the total members of the integrated farming system group had some progress in their implementation from one stage to another. They harvested with good yields and it provided supplementary food for their families to reduce food deficit.

According to the semi-structured interviews, some of them were able to collect the seeds for the next year and were also able to be a resource person for the new group members. Some families declared that now they know the integrated farming system techniques and grow many crops in their garden, which provide food for family consumption every day for the year round, and that they would not practice shifting cultivation any more. Some families said that they need some funds to hire the tractors to open the new land for the integrated farming system.

³⁰ From the semi-structured interview with Oxfam Australia staff, November, 2010.

On the other hand half of the total member of the group had not practiced in their garden. From the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews, they explained that they already had planted their crops using shifting cultivation technique. Due to the training being organized too late, they did not have time to make fence and prepare land for planting the new seeds provided. They will apply in the next year and also want to see the other members harvest first.



Picture 11: Sweet potatoes, banana and cassava are planted in the upland farming. Saravane, Lao PDR. (November, 2010)



Picture 12: Villager collected corn seeds for next planting season. Saravane, Lao PDR. (November, 2010).

In summary, community participation in the decision-making process in the integrated farming system had followed every step of the activity. In terms of quantity, only a one third of the total number of families in the villages participated in the project activity, of which only half gained benefit. Also if we compare with Wilcox's definition of the level of community participation in the project (information, consultation, deciding together, acting together and supporting local initiatives), the community participation level in upland rice based integrated farming system reached the fourth level - acting together. It means that community decided together on applying new techniques and monitored and evaluated together. They also formed the new group to extend the lesson by themselves into the next year and plan to have some more advice from the project staff, so that means they formed a partnership to carry it out.

However, if we look in depth on the women's and men's participation in decision making of the project activity, it shows differences. Women's participation level reaches only to the third level (deciding together). Women gave their ideas when her husband discussed at home, after he had attended the meeting, so they decided together whether or not to join in the activity, based on their available labour and land as well as the family safety net, and took the decision

together. Men represented the family unit and participated in the village meetings. This is confirmed by the small number of women present in the training compared to men and no women in the position of head or deputy head of group in both villages. However, from observation, although women were absent from the training or village meeting, it does not mean that they did not have any information from the training. In many interviews it was mentioned that even if the wife did not join in the training, her husband could guide and their family could apply in their field correctly and they could have a good result.

3.2 The factors influencing community participation in upland-rice based integrated farming

This topic intends to answer two questions: Which elements of the participatory process were essential to build community participation in upland-rice based integrated farming systems and what were the project design, community, Oxfam Australia and District government characteristics that influenced both these elements and overall participation?

The previous section showed that almost all family representatives participated in the consultation meeting, planning and group building. However, only one third of families applied to be members of production groups, of which almost all were from the middle and better-off families and held some position in the village authority structure.

Research showed that villagers were aware of the government policy to stop shifting cultivation and promote agricultural sedentarisation, but they lacked technical and financial supports from the government. Based on the Taoy District Agriculture and Forestry Office' report³¹, it mentioned that due to the limitation of human and financial resources, the agriculture extension promotion were not access to every village and intermittently. There are only 34 staff (3 women) including administrative staff in this office, which agriculture extension unit is one out of 6 units in this office and it has to provide services to 56 villages of the whole district. Lukdong village is very far from the district town and has no access during the rainy season. Therefore, the government staff had not often visited the village.

³¹ Taoy District Agriculture and Forestry Office Six Monthly Report, December 2010, Saravane, Lao PDR.

At the same time villagers have also been affected from the environmental degradation, which pushes them to adapt into a new model of agriculture. The land for shifting cultivation was limited due to the land allocation and land use programs. Villagers cannot move freely to open the new place year by year as in the past. In the elder group discussion, one man said that “we cannot move to practice shifting cultivation as in the past, due to there now being less forest, and the land has owners”³². According to Participatory Poverty Assessment (2006) mentioned:

“While the Land Law provides for the adequate allocation of farming land to families, the land and forest allocation and focal area development programmes have caused a reduction in the amount of upland agricultural land available to families for rotational cultivation.” (NSC-ADB 2007).

Some families reported that currently, shifting cultivation gave low yields, and they have to spend a lot of time to prepare land before planting every year, weeding and fighting with wild animals. From the household interview in Patem village, Mrs. Kayang said that

“my husband, sons, daughters and their children are working in the upland rice field; we have to harvest very quickly, due to a lot of wild pigs destroying our rice by more than two thirds already.”

Thus, some families had opened the new land for cultivation the wet rice in small pieces year by year by their labour, and also grew some other crops, including vegetables, to have more food for their families. And they have a high willingness to be involved in the integrated farming system to gain more knowledge to apply in their fields.

Apart from that, we observed that the worse-off families were excluded from this activity. This was due to the fact that the criteria for being a member of production group are appropriate for families who have land available, and time and labor to implement according to technical advice. Whereas almost all worse-off families have less than 0.5 ha of upland rice area, rice sufficient for 4 to 6 months and main labor only 1 to 2 persons. At the same time, these families faced food shortages, and they have to work for other families in order to have food or to hunt and gather non-timber forest products. Some families grow coffee and sell it to

³² Group discussion in Lukdong village, November 2010.

earn more income. They have no time to participate in this activity. Thus, they decided not to participate. One widow woman with nine children of Lukdong village said that

“I did not join in any agriculture groups in the village, due to I have no time to participate in the village meetings, I have to work in my coffee garden, I hope in the next year it will give fruit and I can harvest and sell it”.³³

According to the training record, almost all families’ representatives participated in the open session training on integrated farming systems (the ratio of men to women in Lukdong: 5:1; Patem: 7:1). From the group discussions in both villages, villagers said that

“the training topic looked interesting to us because it was related to our agricultural culture of upland farming.”

They assumed that they would get benefit from this training. However, the number of women who participated in the training was much less than the number of men. From the women’s group discussion, many women said that

“We were busy with our household chores, and our husbands would be more suitable to attend the training because they would understand more of the technical words rather than us who cannot read, write and speak Lao language”.³⁴

From this observation, almost all women in these villages are illiterate; they feel a lack of confidence to be in a meeting with men, and they are also shy to speak in the meeting, unless they belong to the elder group.

Although all members of the production groups attended the training and practiced in one pilot garden in their village and received some seeds, only half of the group members applied the new technique in their own fields. From observation, the ones who did use the techniques implemented according to their group’s plan, as they had started to do integrated farming already on their own, and now they had gained more knowledge from the training and new seeds receiving.

³³ From semi-structured interview, Lukdong village, November 2010.

³⁴ Lukdong women’s group discussion, November 2010.

On the other hand, half of the group did not follow their group's plan. From the semi-structured interviews it appeared that they did not believe that the new technique would improve their yields and it required labour / time, resources to practice according to the technical advice. In the Lukdong village focus group discussion, some villagers said that

“this year it was too late for our families to apply the new method; that we would love to see the results of other families, and if the new approach had improved their yields, then in the next year our family would do it.”³⁵

This shows also the family decision-making process on activity implementation, through which they determined their further plan according to the tangible outputs, not just from the theory. If we look through the risk management concept, these families were involved decision-making based on the examination of the risk through observation other families practicing. They didn't want to take the risk by themselves.

The research also found that the capacity of the technical staff to transfer knowledge to the farmers is an important factor in encouraging community participation in implementation. In the focus group discussion, one man said that

“the upland rice based integrated farming system training was organized in the village and we did this in practice together with technical staff in one pilot garden. So, we understand better how to do it, and can apply in our family field”³⁶.

From the several explanations above, we can summarize the main factors influencing community participation in upland rice-based integrated farming system as follows:

Firstly, the government policy to stop shifting cultivation coupled with environmental degradation pushed villagers to find an alternative for cultivation, and to move from shifting cultivation to agricultural sedentarisation. Thus, when the project came to their village, they were willing to participate with the hope that this would help them improve their living conditions.

³⁵ Patem focus group discussion, October 2010.

³⁶ From group discussion in Lukdong village, November 2010.

Secondly, the criteria for production group membership determined which families at which socio-economic ranking could participate in the project and at which levels. For example, the better-off and middle families were able to participate in all the steps of the project. From the explanation above, almost all family representatives participated in the open session training in the villages, which means they were at the consultation level of participation. However, when they formed the group for implementation, the numbers of the group were reduced by one third and of these, only half practiced in their fields, which means only one sixth of them participated in deciding and acting together. And we observed that the worse-off families were excluded from this activity, due to their not having the same conditions as the better off and middle families like available land, labour and time to implement.

Thirdly, the value of the villagers placed on the new technology, related with risk management, is one element for community participation. The better-off and middle families who held some position in the village authority structure participated in the project at a high level, due to their access to information from the project staff coupled with having a family safety net, like reserve food, fish ponds, and livestock. If the activity failed they would still have something for their families to eat. The other families did not have access to information, and had less family safety net resources, thus they didn't want to take risk in case droughts occurred or activity failed. In this case, they would suffer more, so they decided not to participate and showed their resistance to this new intervention.

Fourth, research showed that the women's representation in the meetings and training sessions were very low compared with men's. It can be explain as in section 2.2 above, that almost all the women in these villages are illiterate, can't speak Lao language; and the patriarchal system is dominant. Under this system the community (both women and men) have a tendency to give priority to men to attend village meetings or training sessions, and women will be lower priority and less likely to be present in these forums.

Fifth, the strategy of project implementation and the capacity of the technical staff to apply this in the local context is an important factor in encouraging community (women's and men's) participation in implementation. Also, participation requires time for people to prepare and ready to be involved, and also that they have access to the right information which will give them the grounds to take the right decision.

3.3 Describing Taoy community participation in the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) trials

This section intends to answer the questions: How did Taoy community participate in the decision-making process in the SRI trial; and to what extent did community members participate in this activity?

Based on the paper of Oxfam Australia (2009)³⁷, the SRI method was originally developed in Madagascar during the early 1980s by Henri de Laulanie and advanced with the support of Cornell International Institute of Food, Agriculture and Development, New York. Its principles are: use of single and young seedling transplant at a younger age (8 to 15 days); plant one seedling per hill at larger spacing (between 25 cm x 25 cm); paddy needs to be wet enough while transplanting. It needs intermittent water control, not constant submersion as with standard wet rice cultivation, and weeding every 15 days after transplanting. It is sufficient to use only organic fertilizer like animal dung, compost, green manure to reach high yield. Its harvest approximately rates between 4 to 5 tons per hectare.

Since 2001, in cooperation with District Agriculture and Forestry Offices, Oxfam Australia has promoted the SRI in Feuang and Met districts of Vientiane province and saw its success. It enhanced family food security, especially for small-land holders, and is implemented at low cost; is environmentally sound; and it can increase rice productivity by double or triple. Today, has is expanded to more 20 villages in 4 target districts including Ta Oy district.

There were four steps of the SRI trial cycle, which included: (i) needs assessment, (ii) planning/group building, (iii) training/ implementing, (iv) monitoring/evaluation.

For the first step, in the village data collection using a PRA approach, the project team and villagers discussed the alternatives for increasing rice productivity. Based on the transect walk³⁸, the project team surveyed the production areas and found that the existing paddy lands of some families in both Lukdong and Patem villages are appropriate for the SRI trial (have water sources and flat paddy land), therefore they proposed this activity in the village plan.

³⁷ Oxfam Australia. (2009), Presentation on SRI, INGOs-Ministry Foreign Affair Conference Feb. 2009. Lao PDR.

³⁸ A transect walk is a tool for describing and showing the location and distribution of resources, features, landscape, main land uses along a given transect

The second step was planning/group building. In this step, villagers participated in the planning meeting and decided together on the SRI trial with the project staff. They discussed on the criteria for members of the SRI trial group. The main criteria included the family having paddy fields supplied by an irrigation system; having sufficient labour and time to practice according to the technical advice. Then, the participants in the meeting (almost all men) discussed with the family members (wife or husband) in their homes and they decided together as family units. Next day, they reported to the village meeting. From the village record, one third and one tenth of the total number of families applied to become SRI trial group members in Lukdong and Patem villages respectively. Almost of them held some position in the village authority structure and were from the better off and middle families. The other families did not apply, due to their not having enough resources according to the criteria.

The third step was training/implementation. For this step, the project staff organized SRI theory training and guided members in practice in one pilot paddy field in each village. Alls member of the groups (almost all were male) attended the training. After completing the training, the production groups developed their action plan to apply SRI in their arable land and set up the timeframe for monitoring by heads of the group and follow-up by the project team.



Picture 13: SRI after transplanting, May 2010. Lukdong village, Saravane.



Picture 14: SRI Monitoring, August 2010. Patem village, Saravane.

The fourth step was the monitoring/evaluation. For this step the head of the SRI group monitored the growing of the rice plants, made records and reported to the village committee in their monthly meeting. The project team had monitored the activity according to the timetable

that had been agreed with the villages. From the group discussions in Lukdong village, all members of the group had been able to apply according to the technical advice given, but in Patem village only one fourth did. Almost families did not apply the instructions, due to the drought occurring and their rice plants dying. Those who could, apply according to the technique had their harvest increased by double compared with the traditional model, and some of them were able to become a resource people for others. One man said that “my SRI trial was successful this year, all members of SRI group visit my field and see it before harvest, I expected to receive the yield in double comparing last year”³⁹. After the evaluation meeting with villagers, the second round of groups were formed for implementation in the coming year.

In conclusion, community participation in decision making process in SRI trial followed every step of the project activity. Despite the quantity of the families participated in the SRI trial being much less than the upland rice based integrated farming systems group, it did not mean that the members of the group did not participate in decision-making in the project activity cycle.

When we compare with Wilcox’s definition on the level of community participation in the project (information, consultation, deciding together, acting together and supporting independent community interests), the community participation level in the SRI trial project reached the fourth level. They participated in project evaluation in their villages and decided together for the next year’s plan to extend more members and areas and keep coordination with the project team which they formed as a partnership to carry out the plan.

Despite the fact that community participation in SRI trial project was quite strong, we observed that almost no women participated in the SRI training and meeting in either village. However, this does not mean that women did not take any decision in the SRI trial project. Women said that they decided together with their husbands at home whether they would join or not join in the SRI trial group. One woman said

“ I did not join in the training on SRI, but I knew how to practice the technique, as my husband had explained to me and we worked together in the paddy fields; thus our harvest increased by double.”⁴⁰

³⁹ Patem village focus group discussion, October 2010.

⁴⁰ Lukdong village interview, November 2010.

3.4 The factors influencing community participation in the SRI trials

This topic intends to answer two questions: Which elements of the participatory process were essential to build community participation in the SRI trial project, and what were the project design, community, Oxfam Australia and District government characteristics that influenced both these elements and overall participation?

From the previous section, we have seen that the SRI principles required suitable paddy land with intermittent water control and intensive labour for weeding every 15 days after transplanting, as well as making organic fertilizer from animal dung or compost. Thus, access to land and water source by the family, and having sufficient human resources, are the factors which support community participation in SRI trial. By consequence, only better off and middle families were involved in the activity. During the group discussion in the village, one villager said that

“I did not join in the SRI trial, because my family did not have lowland rice field, we practice shifting cultivation and grew coffee in small piece of upland area their”⁴¹

If the families were poor, they would not be able to practice it. The poorest families usually practice shifting cultivation, have only one or two main labour-aged people, and other family members are dependent people. In a semi-structured interview with worse off family, one woman head of household said that

“my husband was not healthy, although we had both upland and lowland fields with water source available, but we could not do SRI in our paddy field.”⁴²

Research found that only in Lukdong village all the members of the group could follow the SRI techniques through to harvest and they all got benefit. By contrast, in Patem village, only one fourth of the group members could follow the SRI technique, due to their paddy fields being affected by drought. In the group discussion, one man said that

“my family did SRI trial, however we could not harvest due to all rice plants dying.”⁴³ Therefore, it is clear that natural disaster is also one factor which can reduce the level of community participation in the project.

⁴¹ Lukdong village focus group discussion, November 2010.

⁴² Household Interviews, Lukdong village, November 2010.

We observed that, despite the fact that almost only men participated in SRI training and meetings, it does not mean that women did not participate in decision-making on the planning, as they discussed with their husbands at home and agreed on the plan together, then the man would give voice in the village meeting on behalf of his family. Following this, when men attended the SRI training, they also lead their wives and family members to practice in the family paddy field; otherwise they would not have had any results from the activity.

In the semi-structured interviews, some women said that they had not joined in the training on SRI, but her husband had joined in and was trained.

“My husband told me all the steps of the technique and we followed these in practice together in our paddy field. Otherwise, I would not have done this, because in the first step of transplanting, I would not have believed that it would grow and extend more seedlings”⁴⁴.

Thus, the good transferring of information and knowledge of the participants within their families and leading in practicing together is the one element which facilitated community participation in the SRI trial.

The SRI trials were a new technique for the Taoy people in aiming to increase rice productivity with required time, labour and natural resources. Thus, some families still did not believe in the output expected and explained by the trainers. They think about the risk management in the further. When they evaluated this activity and they had seen the results, a new group was formed for the coming year. Therefore, we can say that community participation in SRI needs time and tangible results which will lead to increase the quantity of people who participate.

Research also found that the design of the training module and capacity of the technical staff to transfer knowledge and coach farmers is an important factor in encouraging community participation in implementation. One member of SRI trial group said that

⁴³ Patem village focus group discussion, October 2010.

⁴⁴ Semi-structured interview, Lukdong village, November 2010.

“we had good understanding of the SRI technique because we had seen the posters coupled with project staff’s explanation, and the project staff had followed up regularly in our village”⁴⁵.

In conclusion, the main factors contributing to community participation in the SRI trial can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, the socio-economic status of the family (in this context including access to land and water sources, and human resources available in the family) is a determining factor for the quantity of community participation in the project activity cycle. The better-off and middle families have more opportunities to participate in this activity rather than worse-off families.

Secondly, natural disaster was also one factor influencing community participation in the SRI trial. When the drought occurred, all activities of the SRI trial in the family were stuck. They could not continue to practice and did not see any results.

Thirdly, information and knowledge transferring by participants within their families and working together of both women and men were the key factors influencing the level of community participation in the SRI trial.

Fourth, the value / belief of the community in new techniques such as SRI also were one element to determine the level of community participation in the project activity. Some families didn’t want to take risk if this activity was failed. Thus, they love to see the other families did first. It required time and tangible outputs to show those who had not participated at first, and then these would increase the quantity and level of their participation.

Fifth, the training design and capacity of the technical staff to transfer knowledge and coach farmers as well as to follow up the project activity in the village level were essential factors to encourage the level of community participation in the SRI trial implementation.

⁴⁵ Patem village focus group discussion, October 2010.

To sum up, the community participation in decision-making in two agricultural activities, namely (i) upland rice based integrated farming system and (ii) SRI trials had both differences and similarities. The community participated in every step of the project activity cycle which included (i) needs assessment, (ii) planning/group building, (iii) training/ implementing and (iv) monitoring/evaluation. In terms of quantity, a larger number of families participated in the upland rice based integrated farming system than the SRI trials. In this, more people attended for the planning and training, but this number was reduced when they practiced in their fields and directly benefited. At the same time, when we compare with Wilcox's definition of the level of participation, those families' participation in both projects reached the same level, which is the fourth level - acting together. The community decided together on applying new techniques, monitored and evaluated together and formed a partnership with the project team to carry it out.

Research found that the essential elements which both supported and jeopardized community participation in both activities are the government policy to stop shifting cultivation and move farmers to agricultural sedentarisation, coupled with environmental degradation and natural disasters; the criteria for membership of the group which related to the wealth ranking of families; the transferring of information and knowledge within the community; the value and belief of the villagers placed on the new technology coupled with risk taking; the women's and men's education level and fluency in the Lao language; the dominance of the patriarchal system; and the strategy of project implementation, as well as the capacity of the project staff to facilitate the process of participation. Also, participation requires time for people to be prepared and to be ready to be involved, and that they have access to the right information which will give them the grounds to take the right decision.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the research have provided some significant and useful new material.

First, the theoretical framework used has demonstrated that concepts of participation developed by Wilcox and others can be of practical use in a context considerably different from those in which they were originally explored and expressed. The researcher found this framework quite useful in analyzing the responses and practice of the members of the Taoy ethnic community who were studied. Framing the different approaches and responses of the communities studied according to paradigms of participation was a useful way of clarifying community and family dynamics.

Secondly, the research clearly showed the underlying reasons for some of the limitations to participation which had been encountered previously by both district government officials and by INGO staff trying to implement community-based projects among the Taoy people. The research has demonstrated that these limitations and barriers all arise from quite readily observable and logical causes, and that it is within the capability of outside actors to modify their approaches in ways that will ensure better participation in future.

Importantly, within these reasons, there were clear factors that specifically affected sub-groups within the communities studied. As we have seen in this study, all families from three family wealth rankings participated in the clean water project component, while only one third of them (mostly in the middle and better off families) joined in the upland-rice based integrated farming systems in the group building and training, whereas, only half of them practiced. Also, only a few families (no worse-off families) participated in SRI trials in the group building and training through to evaluation. Some families registered in the agriculture group, but they didn't participate in the implementation. They didn't want to take risks in agricultural activity, unless they saw the outputs of their neighbors.

Besides, the worse-off families clearly have quite specific extra constraints to participation in some activities. They do not have the same conditions as the better-off and middle families like access to food for daily consumption, available land, family human resources and time to implement as well as information and techniques.

Furthermore, women's participation follows quite different patterns to men's. Some of these seriously constrain women and prevent their equal ownership of projects, or expressing their voice in community decisions. Participation needs time and preparation of people who will participate, which required their capacity to express their view in public. It is a difficult situation due to the Taoy people's tradition as a patriarchal society; and only men are literate and speak Lao language, while women cannot. Women may be present in a meeting, but have no voice or understanding. In other ways, it can be seen that Taoy women have had some voice in decisions in their families, even when they are not included in public discussions.

It is hoped that these research findings can assist government and INGO actors in development of upland ethnic communities to develop better participatory practice in their projects, so these can lead to more real improvements in the lives of the communities. Although the findings here are specific to the Taoy community, some of the method and the analysis could also be applied to other ethnic minority communities in Lao PDR and in neighboring countries.



Picture 15: Patem village, Taoy, Saravane, Lao PDR. October, 2010



Picture 16: Patem girls carry the fire wood back home. Taoy, Saravane, October, 2010

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ANNEXES

Time schedule for the field study

The field study carried out from October to December 2010.

Activity	October 2010			November 2010				December 2010				Feb	March 2011		
	11-17	18-24	25-31	1-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	29-5	6-12	13-26	27-2	7-28	7-11	14-17	18
1. Collect secondary data	xx														
2. Develop interview guideline		xx													
3. Pre-test interview guideline in village			xx												
4. Type interview transcripts, report field trip				xx											
5. Summarize data and rev. interview guideline					xx										
6. Data gathering in village						xx									
7. Type interview transcripts, report field trip							xx								
8. Summarize data in matrix								xx							
9. Submit interviewed persons/method used									xx						
10. Writing primary findings / submit										xx					
11. Develop Intermediary thesis report/ submit											xx				
12. Writing draft thesis report												xx			
13. Submit first draft report to supervisor												x			
14. Revise / update the draft thesis report													xx	xx	
15. Submit final draft thesis to Institute															x

Interview Guidelines # 01: Focus Group Discussion

1. General

- Two focus group discussion in a village for (i) Women's focus group and (ii) Men's focus group.
- Who: a group of 5 to 8 (maximum 10): Ordinary village women / men, different ages, village head and activity group leaders.
- Time: about 2 hours (maximum 2 ½ hours) for each meeting.

2. Purpose:

- To define the situation of community participation in the village affairs and in the Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Upland Community (CBDRM) project implementation.

3. Approach:

- Focus on 4 main questions which give overall structure to the meeting. Within each question area, introduce the topic, start general and focus on more specific questions towards the end with a brief summary.
- Ask first if notes/recording can be taken, the notes with who said will not be given to any other person or organization. It is requested a volunteer from the group to take notes during the discussion if possible, otherwise the recorder will be used instead.

4. Steps for the meeting:

- Briefly introduce myself and explain what I am doing (IMAS student, interview to get some information on community participation in village activities and in the current project activities) and structure of the meeting

Main topics and questions:

1. Taoy community's perception on participation in the village affairs.
 - Can you describe what means of community participation?
 - What kind of activities in the village do people participate in?
 - How did they participate in decision-making?

2. Taoy community participation in the decision-making process in the clean water facility construction component and its reason behind.
 - What kind of activities in each step implemented in the clean water project component in village?
 - How did community participate in the decision-making in each step? And why?
 3. Taoy community participation in the decision making process in the upland rice based integrated farming system and its reason behind.
 - What kind of activities and step implemented in the upland rice based integrated farming system?
 - How did community participate in the decision-making in each step? And why?
 4. Taoy community participation in the decision-making process in the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) trial and its reason behind.
 - What kind of activities and step implemented in SRI trial in the village?
 - How did community participate in the decision making in each step? And why?
- Summarize the main discussion and ask if they have any questions or comments.
 - Thank you for your participation.

Interview Guidelines # 02: For Villagers

1. Self Introduction

- Introduce myself and explain what I am doing (IMAS student, interview to get some information on community participation in village activities)

2. Target :

- Who: women or men represent their household from difference wealth ranking.
- Time: about 30 min.

3. Purpose:

To understand their perspective on community participation, how they involve in the village affairs and project activities and any challenges.

4. Basic Information

- Name, age, education level, family members, shifting cultivation or wet rice cultivation, family economic status.

5. Interview

- Can you describe what means of community participation?
- What kind of activities in the village you and your family members do participate in?
- How did you participate in decision-making in these activities?
- How did you / your family members participate in the clean water project component?
And why?
- How did you/your family member participate in the upland rice based integrated farming system? And why?
- How did you/your family members participate in the System of Rice Intensification trial?
And why?
- Any other comments Many Thanks.

Interview Guidelines # 03: For Government Officials

1. Self Introduction

Introduce myself and explain what I am doing (IMAS student, interview to get some information on community participation in the development project implementation in the village)

2. Purpose:

To understand their perspective on community participation, their roles in promoting community participation. And the opportunities and challenges in these assignment.

3. Basic Information

- Ask who are you and what are your position in the government office?
- Ask your organization's roles and responsibilities in village development project?
- What are your roles in facilitating community in participatory development?

4. Interview

- Can you describe what means of community participation? And what benefit they will have?
- What opportunities did you face in the promotion community participation in the project implementation?
- What challenges did you see in the promotion of community participation in the project implementation?
- How can participation of the villagers in project be improved?
- Any other comments

Thanks you for your sharing.

List of Interviewees

1. Government officers and Oxfam staff

No	Date	Name	Position	Organization	Technique used
1	18/10 2010	Mr. Thiphasone Soukkhatham-mavong	Director of Planning and Cooperation Division	Prime Minister's Office, National Leading Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.	Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) includes an interview guideline (IG) #03
2	20/10 2010	Mr. Sengphet Vannavong	Head Community Development Section	Prime Minister's Office, National Leading Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, Poverty Reduction Fund.	SSI includes an IG #03
3	16/11 2010	Mr. Bouala Khounphitak	Deputy of Social welfare Department	Saravane Province	SSI includes an IG #03
4	26/10 2010	Mr. Saikham Likkhasith	Vice of District Head	Taoy District	SSI includes an IG #03
5	26/10 2010	Mr. Sisouvanh Saixedone	Head of the District Cabinet	Taoy District	SSI includes an IG #03
6	26/10 2010	Mr. Pheumtavi Sibounyeung	Health Education Officer	Public Health Office, Taoy District	SSI includes an IG #03
7	19/11 2010	Mr. Phenvilay Orlavieng	International relation officer	District Cabinet, Taoy District	SSI includes an IG #03
8	17/11 2010	Mrs. Inthavong Yommalath	Deputy of Lao Women's Union	Taoy District	SSI includes an IG #03
9	19/11 2010	Mr. Boutsas	Project Coordinator	Taoy District - Labour Social Welfare Office	SSI includes an IG #03
10	29/10 2010	Mr. Souchai Khamibout	District Team Leader	Oxfam Australia	SSI includes an IG #03

2. Villagers

No	Date	Name	Position	Village	Technique used
1	27/10	Mrs. Kayang	Elder	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
2	28/10	Mrs. Idd	Better off family	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
3	28/10	Mr. Bounhieng	Better off family	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
4	28/10	Mr. Bounyen	Middle family	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
5	28/10	Mr. Amvee	Middle family	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
6	28/10	Mrs. Ngak	Worse-off family	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
7	28/10	Mrs. Men	Worse-off family	Patem	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
8	18/11	Mrs. Meo	Worse-off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
9	18/11	Mrs. Vai	Worse-off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
10	18/11	Mr. Khansing	Better off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
11	18/11	Mrs. Dee	Middle family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
12	18/11	Mr. Maisone	Worse-off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
13	18/11	Mr. Ouan	Middle family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
14	18/11	Mr. Khamloun	Middle family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
15	18/11	Mr. Bouasai	Middle family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
16	18/11	Mr. Khamphan	Better off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
17	18/11	Mr. Saiphone	Better off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02
18	18/11	Mr. Bounkan	Better off family	Lukdong	Semi-structured interview includes an interview guideline #02

3. Focus group discussion

No	Date	Name	Position	Village	Technique used
Group # 01:					
1	27/10	Mrs. Meepha	Head of LWU	Patem	Women’s Focus Group Discussion includes interview guideline # 01
2		Mrs. Meeliup	Member of LWU	Patem	
3		Mrs. Ngak	Village midwife	Patem	
4		Mrs. Keo	Member of LWU	Patem	
5		Mrs. Cheo	Member of LWU	Patem	
6		Mrs. Thi	Member of LWU	Patem	
7		Mrs. Manh	Member of LWU	Patem	
Group # 02:					
8	28/10	Mr. Bounyen	Deputy of Party	Patem	Men’s Focus Group Discussion includes interview guideline # 01
9		Mr. Bountan	Elder	Patem	
10		Mr. Thongphai	Elder	Patem	
11		Mr. Vixai	Health volunteer	Patem	
12		Mr. Aeun	Village defense	Patem	
13		Mr. Amvit	Village Head	Patem	
14		Mr. Bounhieng	Village finance	Patem	
15		Mr. Bounmai	Head of Party	Patem	
Group # 03:					
16	17/11	Mrs. Meo	Head of Lao Women’s Union	Lukdong	Women’s Focus Group Discussion includes interview guideline # 01
17		Mrs. Dee	Member of LWU	Lukdong	
18		Mrs. Neu	Member of LWU	Lukdong	
19		Mrs. Kayep	Elder	Lukdong	
20		Mrs. Soum	Elder	Lukdong	
21		Mrs. Ard	Member of LWU	Lukdong	
22		Mrs. Dam	Member of LWU	Lukdong	
23		Mrs. Cheu	Member of LWU	Lukdong	
24		Mrs. Palea	Member of LWU	Lukdong	
Group # 04:					
25	18/11	Mr. Khamtay	Elder	Lukdong	Men’s Focus Group Discussion includes interview guideline # 01
26		Mr. Ouan	Elder	Lukdong	
27		Mr. Khansing	Elder	Lukdong	
28		Mr. Bouasai	Head of Youth Union	Lukdong	
29		Mr. Khamphan	Deputy Village head	Lukdong	
30		Mr. Khamhoung	Village defense	Lukdong	
31		Mr. Saiphone	Deputy Village head	Lukdong	
32		Mr. Bounkan	Village head	Lukdong	
33		Mr. Khamsai	Head of Party	Lukdong	