



RICE - FISH CULTURE PROJECT
INSTITUTE OF AQUACULTURE

ODA Natural Resources Systems Programme: Aquaculture Research

R6380CB: Addressing technical, social and economic constraints to rice fish culture in Laos, emphasising women's involvement

Project Report Volume 2

Research Methods Workshop 3-14 June 1996

Anna Lawrence**

Graham Haylor*

*** Institute of Aquaculture,
University of Stirling,
Stirling, FK9 4LA
SCOTLAND**

**** AERDD
3 Earley Gate, The University
Whiteknights Road
Reading RG6 6AL
England**

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1 Project background

The project aims to address technical, social and economic constraints to rice-fish culture in LaoPDR, emphasising women's involvement, through efforts to understand and describe existing natural resources management systems and communication systems in upland and lowland Laos and through participatory technology development via on-farm research to maximise profit from rice fish systems where appropriate.

The first phase of the project, leading to output 1, the understanding and describing of existing resource management systems (see project Logical framework) begins with a research methodologies workshop which is described here. The workshop also contributes to output 2 of the project, the individual and institutional capacity building to undertake research. The aim of this first project phase is to describe qualitatively the farming systems in the districts chosen for the project, with a specific focus on rice-fish systems (both traditional and recent innovations). This will provide the context for participatory experimentation in the second phase of the project.

The project is a collaboration with the staff of two organisations in Savannakhet Province, the Lao Women's Union and the Livestock and Fisheries Section [of the Department of Agriculture]. The collaboration is at provincial level, with district staff involved in village level research. Both organisations are characterised by a hierarchical structure and centralised planning / data collection, but district staff are used to considerable independence as many areas are remote and with poor communications to the provincial capital. The educational background of the staff is variable. In Laos the basic level of education is to primary 3 though some staff are secondary school graduates. There are no agriculture degrees programmes available yet in Laos but many of the more senior agriculture officials have studied in the Soviet Union. All district officials have 1.5 - 3 years of training in basic agriculture, and about 20 district officials were trained last year by Oxfam in conjunction with the AIT-Outreach Programme, in basic aquaculture. Other training courses are run at national level including an annual regional seminar run by the Department of Livestock and Fisheries and some training is also provided through job experience.

It is hoped to achieve a gender balance in the research by using mixed teams. Under an agreement with the Provincial LWU and L&F Section, district staff will conduct research into opportunities and constraints for rice-fish culture in two villages in each of three districts. In each district a research team will consist of two officers from the L&F Section, one district LWU official and two village LWU officials (one from each village in the district involved with the project). As all the L&F Section officers in the project are men, each village team will therefore have two women and two men in the research team.

2 Training needs

Data collection is an established task of district staff, usually numerical data which is sent to central government for compiling statistics. Typically the process of district data collection represents an end in itself having no further direct effect on the activities of officers.

Some provincial staff have participated in PRA training for another ODA research project (funded under the RNRRP Fisheries Programme), and a few have used PRA methods in the field for data-collection. The conclusion of senior provincial staff during planning was that district staff would feel comfortable about informal discussions with farmers and about reaching the less obvious people in the community, and would adopt the techniques easily, but would not be used to the following:

- ?? a systematic approach
- ?? planning
- ?? reporting
- ?? analysis.

3 Workshop purpose

The workshop was held to initiate the project in the country, and to capacitate district and provincial staff to conduct the diagnostic stage of the research over the next six months, i.e. to understand the dynamics of the systems and identify opportunities and constraints for fish culture in ricefields in Savannakhet Province. This is the largest and most low-lying province and is responsible for over one fifth of the country's rice production. Its 22,000 km² cuts across different agro-ecosystems which can be broadly split into three categories. The project determined to work in two villages in each of three districts chosen to be representative of the three types of agro-ecosystem.

These are:

- ?? Khantabouly: The Savannakhet plain bordering the Mekong
- ?? Atsaphangtong: Rolling upland
- ?? Sepon: Upland valleys

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- ?? train staff from the three districts and provincial staff in some participatory and qualitative research methods
- ?? develop together with staff a methodology and research plan appropriate to their experience, and to the conditions of the selected research sites
- ?? incorporate gender awareness into the research methods and plan
- ?? establish an active collaborative link between the Lao Women's Union and the Livestock and Fisheries Section at both provincial and district levels, with the capacitation of district staff to work together in a research team.

It was not a general participatory research methods workshop, but specific to the requirements of the project. At the same time, the workshop was seen as an exercise in institutional capacity building, with the aim of developing the abilities of provincial staff both to translate between trainers and non-English speakers, and to facilitate participatory training sessions themselves.

Such a multiplicity of objectives is an ambitious undertaking and it was not anticipated to be possible to maximise all of them. A particular constraint on the training was envisaged with translation and the use of local staff not fluent in both languages, which might necessitate the introduction of additional methods to hold the attention of participants. The priority in this case was placed on training of district staff, with inevitable loss of time for training of provincial staff as trainers themselves. A range of methods for dealing with communication bottlenecks are discussed below.

4 Workshop planning

Much of the detailed planning of the workshop was done in-country in order to tailor it to the requirements of the L&F Section. Furthermore very flexible planning was needed from day-to-day as trainers adjusted activities to the needs and reactions of participants, and to the preferences of farmers especially with regard to the timing of fieldwork.

The final workshop plan precluded a two-day 'Pre-workshop' intended to involve the provincial staff in the training activities which they would then be able to better support district staff learning. For the workshop to involve fieldwork in all three participating districts, classroom time was reduced to only two days to allow time for travel and two days in each district. This increased the experience and planning capabilities of the district staff but had an inevitable loss in that provincial staff were not familiar with the activities before sharing them with the district staff. In order to visit all the districts, provincial staff decided to work through two weeks without a weekend break, which represents a substantial demand on the energy of both trainers and participants.

The basic approach was a PRA style training, using group activities and experiential learning. Emphasis was placed on the importance of regular planning and feedback sessions throughout the workshop, and equal time was given to this and to fieldwork itself. Initially participants did not value planning activities

highly, and the workshop introduced gradually more participatory ways of planning work whilst reducing the expectations of staff that they would be 'told what to do'. The novelty and value of participation was not only in the research and analysis at village level, but importantly in the planning and research co-ordination by district officials. The distinction between the two merges in the Lao situation where many District officers are farmers and residents in the villages selected as research sites.

The working day was short, in line with customary timetables and because district staff are not familiar with classroom activities. 8.30-11.30 and 2-4 was the usual timetable. This was shorter than we had planned in the UK, and meant that the plan had to be revised and reduced, but concentration and energy would not have lasted for longer days. During fieldwork, activities were timed according to villagers' suggestions, and had to take into account the beginning of the rice-planting season and the fact that villagers were not always available during the whole day.

5 The workshop

5.1 Day 1

Date: Monday 3 June

Workplan:

| | |
|-------|---|
| 08.30 | Formal opening ceremony |
| 09.30 | Coffee |
| 10.00 | Introductions in a circle |
| 10.30 | Introduction to project purpose and workshop purpose / program |
| 10.45 | Form teams, arrange tables |
| 10.55 | Paper brainstorm in district teams: 'What information do we need to collect to help farmers experiment with rice in fish?' |
| 11.10 | Start tour of team posters |
| 11.30 | Lunch |
| 14.00 | District staff prepare unified poster: 'Information we need for our fish-in-rice project' (to be updated at various stages during the workshop) |
| 15.30 | Coffee |
| 16.00 | Presentation of poster by district staff. |

Actual activities:

As planned but the teamwork took longer than expected so continued into the afternoon and the participants did not have time to produce a single unified poster.

Comments on the process:

Introductions more formal than planned - because senior staff felt people would be intimidated or confused by having to introduce their neighbours as had been planned.

We wanted the participants from each district to meet and get used to working together, as they will be conducting the diagnostic research together. It was their first experience of team work - working together took longer than planned and in the afternoon facilitators spent time particularly with one team which did not seem to be talking to each other, rather writing down individual lists of ideas. So a single poster was not produced.

It became clear at this stage that translation was going to be a slow process.

Team brainstorming output of information needs

The presentations of information needs helped the trainers to know more about the perspective of the participants, and also provided material for introducing new methods later in the workshop. In particular:

- ?? the teams presented questionnaires, not topics to be asked about
- ?? many of the questions were quantitative
- ?? most of the questions were meant for farmers already stocking fish
- ?? the only team which included questions about constraints to fish production, presented this part only reluctantly to the group

but

- ?? the teams showed awareness of the value of key informants
- ?? one team had thought about the different areas of knowledge of men and women
- ?? there were examples of open questions ('What are the benefits of fish in rice culture?')
- ?? there were examples of comparisons which could be used later in ranking and matrix scoring exercises ('Compared with other enterprises, is fish-in-rice better or not?' and 'What kind of fish, wild or stocked, do you like?') although the question 'Why?' was rarely suggested at this stage
- ?? there were observations about change, which could be used later in trend diagrams ('Price of fish is high now' and 'Now it is very hard to find natural fish')

These areas were developed in discussions.

Outputs:

The following simple introduction was presented.

Why the project ?

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>intensification</i> | More people are in Lao PDR than before. Finding less food. For example, less fish to catch. Needing to produce more food, but land for farming is becoming scarce. |
| <i>efficiency</i> | So needing to use what is there better. |
| <i>integration</i> | Needing to grow things that were once collected. Trying to grow some things together |

People who like fish and grow rice sometimes can produce more from what they have by growing rice and fish together. We have the opportunity to find out if growing rice and fish together might be good in some parts of Lao PDR.

Why a diagnostic phase ?

To describe qualitatively the farming systems in the districts chosen for the project, with a specific focus on rice-fish systems (both traditional and recent innovations). This will provide the context for participatory experimentation in the second phase of the project.

Where ?

Where should we learn about this ? Rice paddies can be on high and low land.

We will look at examples of 3 types

- ?? Mountain valley paddy
- ?? Rolling upland paddy
- ?? lowland paddy

Why participatory?

To find out more than our previous expectations, and to use the information locally

Why have a workshop?

To come together as teams, to work together towards the same objective, to learn about ways of working and to plan our activities

Workshop structure?

Cycles of planning, working, reflection, feedback

5.2 Day 2

Date: Tuesday 4 June

Workplan:

Introduction to research methods:

- ?? who to interview
- ?? balloon debate
- ?? interviewing methods
- ?? acting good and bad interviews
- ?? introducing diagrams and ranking

Actual activities:

- ?? balloon debate - who to interview in the village
- ?? interviewing methods: brainstorming good and bad techniques
- ?? acting good and bad interviews

Comments on the process:

The balloon debate method is described in the box below. The day began slowly, people were still expecting to list questions like yesterday. Producing a list together required considerable prompting so that the final list although agreed by all was very similar to the trainers' list prepared beforehand. Introducing the balloon debate proved more complicated than expected but with repeated individual explanations it worked. Discussing in pairs did not work - like yesterday, people preferred to write alone. But the facilitators were very helpful and we did a lot of individual explaining.

When participants presented their arguments they were confident and acted their parts. We were fortunate to have a strong provincial official leading so he set the tone. The overall message to be gained was that everyone has valuable knowledge. Some participants appeared to be saying 'interview me so you have representative data'. But it was enjoyable and the idea that a wide range of people should be interviewed was accepted.

The exercise showed staff perceptions (e.g. rich farmers are so because they are hardworking) and also some wealth indicators e.g. poor farmers have only upland rice; rice self sufficiency seems to be commonly used to divide the population into three categories (surplus, self-sufficient and in need). We were able to use this information later when introducing wealth ranking.

The discussion of interviewing methods focused on open-ended questions and the need to find the unexpected. Participants had a clear idea of a closed question; open ones were sometimes only moderately open, such as 'how many species of fish do you have in your pond?' Then we focused on ways of making the interview like an informal relaxed discussion. One group chose to act out a good interview which involved an extension agent visiting a group of three senior men, and asking openly their views and experience of rice-fish. Unfortunately the spontaneous discussion which followed on good and bad interview methods was difficult for the translators to marshal. The discussion took much longer than planned mainly because of the translation difficulties, and the introduction to diagrams had to be postponed to the next day. At this stage thought was given to reducing the dependence on simultaneous translation in a large single group. One method which helped, was to write the key words in English and in Lao on a flipchart so that participants speaking in either language could point to the relevant words and focus everyone's attention without translation.

We finished with a review of all the posters we had produced over the last two days, and showing that we had thought about what, who, and how to ask about rice-fish culture. It seemed from comments earlier that some participants expected the research to be a survey to find out who was interested in help from the project, so we clarified also the why of the research: to find out about the farming systems and also what experience and what problems farmers have with fish-in-rice, so that we can help to plan experiments.

Informal feedback after the session reflected some participants' eagerness to start practising the methods in the field.

8.30 'Who should I interview?' Balloon debate

1. Begin by reminding everybody that we produced questionnaires yesterday which we could use to interview farmers about rice-cum-fish culture. We talked about which farmers we might interview. We would like to begin today by thinking about the farmers that we visit most often.
2. Ask the participants to say which types of farmers they visit most often. Write these on a poster. Examples might be: village headman, farmers, farmers with fish.
[One group developed different questions for women and men, so it was pointed out that that is another category].
3. Explain that the project is interested in helping people in the community who do not already have rice-cum-fish, maybe because they have problems. Ask participants to think of a few examples, and write them on a poster.
4. Compare these with the list of farmers they visit often. Make a list of pairs of opposites, based on the items they list. E.g.

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| male | female |
| rich | poor |
| have fish | have no fish |
| irrigated | not irrigated |
| upland | lowland |
| young | old |

5. Make the list as full as possible. Ask the participants to list the types of farmers most likely to have fish-in-rice, and also list their opposites. Remind them we want to find out about all the people in the community and see if we can help them.
6. Write each word in the list on a piece of paper. For example, 'rich' would be on one paper, 'poor' on another.
7. Mix up the papers, and ask each participant to take one.
8. Ask them find their opposite. E.g. 'rich' must find 'poor'.
9. Then ask them to spend ten minutes discussing why each one should be interviewed.
10. Ask each pair to present an argument to the group, showing why his or her characteristic is most important. Each person should explain as strongly as possible why the project should interview her or him. In other words, why his or her experience is important for a rice-cum-fish research project.
11. Ask a facilitator to write up a summary of all the arguments.
12. Ask if there are any more comments from any member of the group, and explaining that what we have just done shows that we should interview a wide range of people in the community.
13. Ask the group to suggest how they would make sure they interviewed these different types of people.

Outputs:**Who we should interview [copy of flipchart produced by whole group]**

Participants felt it is important to have a group discussion when first going to the village, but follow this with individual interviews at household level.

1. Village level

Village head

Village elders

Lao Women's Union

2. Household level

Head of household (man or woman)

Housewife (if head of household is man)

Rich, middle and poor farmers

Family which stocks fish

Family which never stocked fish

Family without irrigation

Family with irrigated land

Old people (more than 50 years)

Young people (30-50 years)

Very young (15-30 years).

Results of balloon debate role plays

1. Head of village

I am very important. You must interview me because every organisation in the village depends on me. I know the economic conditions throughout the whole village. I know who is active and who is lazy.

2. Village elder

I am very important, I am very old. I know the history of the village. Everybody in the village respects me, and everybody should follow my advice. I encourage everyone to be industrious.

3. Male head of household

I am leader of my family. You should interview me because everybody in my family depends on me.

4. Housewife

I can do any work in my family. I look for food for my family. I feed the fish in the pond. I would like to join each meeting in the village; when the project comes I want to join it. I and my husband help each other. *When my husband takes the fish I am cooking.*

5. Rich farmer

I am rich because of my skill and I am a very active man. I want to do this work to make it successful. And also my family is very active. My parents were also very active. I have enough animal labour, and also enough fish ponds. And also I raise enough fish to be able to sell them. I don't buy rice, I get income from selling fish.

6. Middle wealth farmer

My family is in the middle group in this village. I have not enough area for fish culture. Rice production is enough for consumption. Also not enough labour in my family. It's a lazy family. [Bounthien]

7. Poor farmer

I am the poor family in this village. But I want to promote my family, but I don't have enough funds to develop. And my ricefield area is not enough. Also my ricefield is not irrigated, and it is upland area only. I don't have enough animal labour, and no fishpond.

8. Farmer with fish already

My family raises fish. My ricefield is suitable for rice-cum-fish. I am raising common carp, tilapia, *Puntius goniotus*, because my family likes to eat fish. I want to raise more fish for selling.

9. Farmer who has never cultured fish

My family never cultured fish because I don't have the knowledge and I don't have anyone to explain fish culture. And I don't have enough money.

10. Farmer with no irrigation

My ricefield has no irrigation. But I can make rice-cum-fish; my ricefield can hold water during the rainy season, so I can culture fish then. And it is a big area, which doesn't flood.

11. Farmer with irrigated land

My ricefield has irrigation. It is suitable for rice-cum-fish. It is in very good condition because I have an irrigation canal and can grow rice twice a year. And I can also make rice-cum-fish. It is very easy to take water inside. The fish grow up very well. I can have fish outside of the natural harvest season. This year I can get K2 - 30 000. [In response to question] - I don't use pesticide because I am afraid my fish will die. I didn't use pesticides before either.

12. Old farmer

I know well the history of my village. I am a consultant for the village head. I have knowledge about raising fish. And I have experience of raising animals.

(continued)

| |
|--|
| <p>13. Young farmer (25-50) I am young. I am a worker in my family. I am very strong, I am important in my family and I can read and write.</p> <p>14. Very young farmer (15-25) I am the labour in my family. And also the social labour. I follow the recommendations of my father and mother. Each problem in my family I will ask my father to resolve.</p> <p>Finally, the Provincial LWU rep pointed out that we should have included the LWU officials in our sample because: ?? they are a powerful government organisation ?? previously, they were left out of the meetings - only the men were present. Women do many of the activities associated with fish: looking after them, cooking, selling, and feeding; men do the feeding also, and the catching. Also they release the fry. Women want to have the knowledge about culturing fish too.</p> |
|--|

Interviewing methods: summary of group discussion

| Good | Bad |
|---|--|
| Groups for beginning the research (this is the best way to find out who is interested in rice-fish) | Big groups if you ignore the quiet people. |
| Choose a time for the interview which suits the farmers. | Interview at a busy time for the farmers. |
| Talks to individuals for more information, and to know how the project can help them. | |
| Open questions. | |
| Working in pairs so one can discuss the issues with farmers while the other takes notes. | |
| Keep the questions in your head (have a checklist). | |
| Let the second question follow from the first. | |

Explanation of method

The table was not presented but formed the basis of the explanation given at the end of the day.

| Activity | Normal research | Participatory research |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| What we look for: | facts and numbers | explanations, experience, knowledge and problems |
| Where the information goes to: | central HQ | kept locally |
| Who analyses it: | government staff | farmers and district officers |
| Who uses it: | government staff | farmers and district officers plan experiments |
| Problems with accuracy: | unknown: accuracy cannot be checked by those using the data | cannot help farmers if the information is wrong |
| Methods: | quantitative decide questions beforehand | qualitative questions explore farmers' situation and depend on responses |

Date: Wednesday 5 June

Workplan:

Introduction to research methods:

?? Mapping

?? Matrix scoring

?? Making a checklist

Selecting the villages for research sites

Planning fieldwork

Actual activities:

After the timing problems yesterday we kept to a tight timetable and completed all the activities planned. The participants worked in district teams again, each in a different location and using different materials to produce their maps and matrices. Each team made a map of the agriculture compound, and a matrix to compare objects or activities chosen by them.

Comments on the process:

The activities were popular and the teams enjoyed being creative. A brief explanation of the method was given in each case, and teams left to innovate. After each team had produced their map or matrix, the whole group visited each output and discussed it. More time was given to discussing the outputs than to actually producing them. This was very valuable as it helped participants to see different ways of using the same method, and to see that different people have different values. They agreed that no single map was correct. Only one team used pen and paper in each case and the other teams were asked to use any other materials available. Independently, team members thought of using symbols instead of writing, using different coloured stones for each team member or to indicate agreement and disagreement, and having separate columns in the matrix to add explanations. The advantages of having only positive criteria was suggested but this was not accepted.

The process of choosing two villages in each district for the research worked very well. The requirements were discussed in detail beforehand with a Lao facilitator who was then able to lead the session without further support.

Planning tomorrow's fieldwork was a high priority with the participants. Some were anxious about getting it right, but were reassured that it was only the first practice and there would be time to think about the results and improve on the methods afterwards. Shortage of time and the preference of participants meant that the trainers and provincial staff prepared the workplan for the next day, then discussed it with district staff. Questions raised by participants included:

?? what questionnaire are we going to use? (Most participants remembered that it had been agreed to use a checklist, and copied down the example given.)

?? What do we do if the villagers already have a map?

?? What subjects will we use for matrix and mapping?

?? Do we have to make copies of the map to take away with us?

Staff were asked to continue in district teams which would each work with one group in the village, and to prepare a team plan:

Working in teams

1. each team is responsible for taking the materials needed (but remember you don't *need* to use pen and paper);
2. each team decides who will lead the discussion and who will take notes;
3. change roles during the day so that everybody writes and everybody talks at some point;
4. each team produces a report to discuss on Friday;
5. each team member presents a part of the report.

Outputs:

Matrix ranking by Atsaphantong team. They drew in the dust outside, and used stones for the ranking.

| <i>FISH</i> | <i>COMMON CARP</i> | <i>TILAPIA</i> | <i>CATFISH</i> | <i>ABAMAS</i> | <i>PAKADUETH</i> |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| LOW COST | X 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | X 0 0 0 | X X X 0 | 0 0 0 0 |
| GOOD SELLING | X X X X | X 0 X 0 | 0 0 0 0 | X 0 0 0 | X 0 0 0 |
| LIKE TO EAT | X X X X | X X X X | X X X X | 0 0 0 X | 0 0 0 0 |
| RAISING EASY | X X X X | X X X X | 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | X X X 0 |

X = black stone = disagree

0 = white stone = agree

Matrix ranking of fruit by Sepone team. They used chalk on the cement floor.

| | coconut | pomelo | apple | banana | pineapple | mango |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| sweet | | | xx xx | xx xx | | xx xx |
| sour | | xx xx | | | xx xx | |
| like to eat | xx xx | x | xx x | xx | x | x |
| low cost | xx xx | xx xx | | xx xx | xx xx | xx xx |
| expensive | | | xx xx | | | |
| dislike | | xx x | x | xx | xx x | xx x |
| scarce | | | xx xx | | | |
| many | xx xx | xx xx | | xx xx | xx xx | xx xx |

Matrix ranking by Khantabouly team to compare fish culture with crops. They used pen on paper, but ranked using stones.

| Activity | like most | like a little | dislike | reasons to like | reasons to dislike |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|---|-----------------------------------|
| rice cum fish | oo o | | | low cost good benefits little feed needed | |
| fishpond | | oo o | | | high cost - needs more feed |
| fish in reservoir | | | oo o | | difficult to catch |
| cage fish | | | oo o | | high cost no |
| vegetable cultivation | oo | o | | low cost quick production | uses more labour |
| banana plantation | o | oo | | easy to keep quick to produce | |
| rice plantation | oo o | | | low cost main food for Lao people | high labour |

Research site selections:

Selection of villages by District L & F Section

During the initial planning process with the L & F Section it was decided to conduct base-line studies of the farming system in 2 villages in each of 3 Districts:

Sepon characterised by mountain valley paddies,
 Khathabouli characterised by lowland paddy, and
 Atsaphangtong characterised by rolling upland paddy,
 covering the 3 major agro-ecological zones.

Guidelines had been provided to the research teams in English prior to the workshop in the form of factors which might be considered that affect farming systems and the role of fish in those systems. The guidelines also suggested avoiding unique sites and considered the issue of raising expectations at the research sites (see Project report volume 1). The guidelines however had not been passed on to the district staff and 1 village had been selected in each district. The principal concern in the provincial staffs guidance to district officials had been the institutional constraint of ensuring year round access in order to successfully carry out the research.

It was decided to readdress the issue of village selection according to the original guidelines with the additional key issue of year round access by motor cycle and emphasising the usefulness of selecting villages with some contrasting features. The teams discussed and selected villages then each team presented the following description of the villages they had chosen.

Atsphangtong District

?? Nanokien Village

- ?? 200 yrs old
- ?? some places have irrigation
- ?? dosn't flood
- ?? 3 km off main Rd. (which one ?)

?? Liensai village

- ?? 11 yrs old

- ?? built in a cleared section of forest (site for food gathering)
- ?? On road 9
- ?? No irrigation

Sepon District

- ?? **Thakong village**
- ?? On road 9
- ?? has market
- ?? big village (how big ? is it sub-divided like Xok ? should we work in one part ?)
- ?? large area of paddy
- ?? beside Xebang River
- ?? people are interested in fish culture

- ?? **Sepon village**
- ?? beside Sepon River
- ?? 2 km off Road 9
- ?? no market
- ?? interested in fish culture

Khanthabouly District

- ?? **Xokkong village**
- ?? beside big forest (to the North)
- ?? beside rice fields (to the South and West)
- ?? On Road 11
- ?? has spring water (can get two crops of rice each year)
- ?? never floods

- ?? **Yangsuang village**
- ?? surrounded by rice paddy
- ?? near to the Kho River (a small one)
- ?? 1 km off Road 11
- ?? doesn't flood

As the teams are composed of district officials of the LWU and LFS some of whom are residents of the villages in which the research is to take place there was inevitably some discussion and preconception of the function of the visit by the provincial staff and several foreigners. This appeared to influence initially the information provided by villagers (see Day 4 comments on the process).

5.4 Day 4

Date: Thursday 6 June

Workplan:

- Fieldwork in Khantabouly district
- ?? Meeting district and village officials
 - ?? Group discussions
 - ?? Diagrams
 - ?? Reporting back to the community, and analysis

Actual activities:

As planned. Instead of having one large discussion group we moved directly to three smaller discussion groups after a formal meeting with district officials. Each team worked with one of the following: elders' group; women's group; men's group.

Comments on the process:

Participants expected the visit to be more formal and were surprised when we insisted on moving to the village for the group discussions. The introduction was highly formal with participants seated in rows at desks, which was not conducive to relaxed discussion. The move to groups sitting in circles on the verandas of villagers' houses was successful, and the discussion were lively and relaxed, particularly in the women's group.

At this stage it was noticeable that provincial staff tended to lead the activities and in some cases even try to draw maps and matrices for the villagers. It was surprising after yesterday's success with alternative materials, that all groups chose to use pen and paper, but this was partly because they were inside the houses, high above the ground on bamboo platforms. The matrices became more complicated than yesterday, and it seemed that they might be difficult to understand when for example symbols had a different meaning in each row.

One provincial staff member with previous PRA training experience helped his group to produce a seasonal diagram. This was very successful and easily adopted by all the participants in subsequent fieldwork without any classroom time being given to it.

After the discussions and diagrams we asked the villagers to present back to the participants, and explain the diagrams. This was enjoyed by the villagers and started the process of analysis by comparing diagrams and prompting further questions. However workshop participants did not seem to value this stage so highly as they stopped taking notes, and they were often reluctant to ask questions.

At this stage it became clear that participants' and / or villagers' expectations of the project had affected the outcome of discussions about local resources. Only after detailed questions about water resources in the village did it emerge that no group had shown the dry riceland beyond a nearby forest, nor the irrigation reservoirs in the same area. They appeared to think those areas were not important to our research. It appeared that the villagers had understood that we would be coming to the village with fish fry to stock in rice paddies and as the ricelands beyond the forest were dry these could not be stocked immediately and therefore held no relevance. At the same time the maps and discussions showed little focus on the potential for fish in rice, indicating a need for more discussion of the purpose of the research.

One of the most interesting outputs was from the women's group, who produced a matrix of development priorities in the village, with each woman in the group ranking each option. A new primary school was ranked highest, and pond fish-culture more highly than fish in rice, which came lowest of seven options. The main problem with fish in rice was identified as flooding of the rice fields, but the discussion showed that not all villagers experience the same problems. The way was thus opened for more detailed research later.

The feedback from the day was very positive, participants remarking that they had enjoyed it because it was real.

Outputs:

Seasonal diagram, women's group, facilitated by Sepone team; Ban Xok, 6.6.96.

| month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| thatch (cutting grass) | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| dry season rice planting | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| rainy season rice planting | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| broadcast rice seed | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| planting rice | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| look after rice | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| harvesting rice | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| cutting grass for mats | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| vegetable cultivation | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| saw wood | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| planting fruit | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| weaving | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| weaving mat | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| make grass roof | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| sewing | whole year----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| stocking animals | free grazing on ricefield stocking on forest area | | | | | | | | | | | |

Ban Xokkhan: Kantabouli team: preference matrix - fisheries and other crops

| | like much | medium | dislike | good | bad |
|------------|-----------|-----------|---------|--|-------------------------------|
| fish | | xxx xx | | low input | needs fertiliser every day |
| rice | xxx xx | | | low inputs and the most important crop | hard work |
| vegetables | | xxx xx | | quick results profitable | high inputs, hard work |

Facts about Ban Xok kan (summarised from introductory meetings with officials)

In the subdistrict there are:

?? 15 villages

?? 56 fishponds

?? 91 small reservoirs

?? 1925ha agricultural area

The rice growing season is three months, then people grow vegetables. They also produce animals, mainly buffalo and cow, but also poultry and fish - all this is for their own consumption only.

In the village there are:

?? 1250 people (63% women)

?? 236 households

?? 214 ha ricefields of which 16 ha can be cropped in the dry season

?? 14 fish ponds

Information on access to resources in Xok kan (results of discussion of maps)

- ?? ricefields are all individually owned
- ?? some ricefield are owned by people from other villages, and some people here own fields in other villages (because of marriage)
- ?? the only common land is the temple, cemetery and school
- ?? the forest is government land but they lend it to the villagers
- ?? the forest land is divided like the fields, each family having its own piece, and families from other villages also having pieces
- ?? the ponds are all family-owned
- ?? most people have no ponds, but one family can own several, e.g. one has fourteen ponds in Xok kan
- ?? there are small irrigation reservoirs in the land beyond the forest, which are privately owned
- ?? some people are stocking these reservoirs

Reasons given for not growing fish in rice:

- ?? floods
- ?? water only remains in fields for 2-3 months
- ?? lack technical knowledge
- ?? better in ponds
- ?? but could try it in a small area

5.5 Day 5

Date: Friday 7 June

Workplan:

- Feedback session
- ?? Methods and reactions to Khantabouly fieldwork
- ?? Evaluation of first week
- Travel to Sepone district (6 hours)

Actual activities:

As planned but shortened by the need to leave early for Sepone and anxieties about poor weather and road conditions.

Comments on the process:

Each team was asked to present a short report answering the following questions:

Feedback questions:

1. What did we do? Why?
2. What was our team plan? Was it possible to follow it? Why (not)?
3. What was difficult? Why?
4. What was easy? Why?
5. What did we find out that was new?
6. How did we find this out?
7. What could we do next?

Sepon:

Yesterday we talked with the Womens' Union, many topics.
Asked about rice-fish more than other categories.
We learnt a lot of lessons.
Villagers talked about other areas not just our questions.

We learnt from a matrix ranking about priorities.(We did not write rice-fish as the first category - if we explain about rice-fish purpose that will interest only about rice-fish culture).

We collected compound information.

We found out about fish culture but not much about rice-fish. Villagers believed that they didn't have enough suitable area.

The benefits from fish are said to be good.

Went quite well, we followed the project advice.

Some participants did not contribute.

Some times it was difficult to keep the focus on the questions.

Khanthabouli:

I want to tell you what we did yesterday:

We asked questions of village elders.

We asked questions like we learnt in theory at the section HQ about fish culture and other work.

We followed by the plan and split into groups.

We discussed.

We asked to make a village map.

A matrix of good/bad work between fish culture and other work.

Good: we found some good points.

villagers were very interested.

Bad: villages did not good understand about our work.

Some places were flood areas others were not.

We didn't say what the project was for.

The villagers thought we would have fish to stock and so concentrated on telling us about lowland not upland paddy because it was already planted and could have been stocked with fish. Though they knew it is not good for fish as it floods and they escape.

When we ask open questions the villagers talk about other things.

Atsphanotong:

We spoke with villagers

We asked open questions

We drew a matrix

We drew a map

We corrected the information with the villagers

We had some problems

We made a list of fish ponds areas that flood

Some aspects of the map and matrix came from the team not the villagers

The matrix got very confused

We should select a village with better conditions for rice fish

This was an extremely valuable session for the workshop co-ordinators to find out how participants expected to do research and how they felt about the first fieldwork. As before, we found the process slower than planned, and had to leave out self-analytical questions about who was dominating the fieldwork, why it was useful to have flexible plans, and how we could improve the checklist. These issues were dealt with later in the workshop.

Participants seemed rather discouraged by the discovery that villagers did not particularly want fish in rice at this stage, and it still seemed that the exercise was treated as a census of who wanted fish fry. The feedback session helped to clarify this and in subsequent fieldwork participants were anxious to make it clear they had no inputs to offer at this stage. There was evidently much more interest in identifying opportunities than constraints at this stage, and it was valuable to have another explanation from the head of section, about the purpose of the diagnostic research. The concept of identifying problems in order to plan experiments to overcome them, continued to prove difficult throughout the workshop.

In evaluating the participants generally said the workshop matched their expectations, all days were useful, no day was not enjoyable, and all the activities were useful. This probably reflects an unwillingness to criticise. The analysis was not generally rated highly in the fieldwork.

Outputs:

Atsaphantong team, report from Xok khan fieldwork,

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| history | very old village, about 200 years, they first moved from China, only ethnic group was Lao Theung when they arrived, so now mixture with Lao Lum. 236 houses; 1260 people; 800 women; 247 ...; 200.83ha paddy; 15.8ha dry season rice. |
| Most important activity | ricefield planting 80%, veg and weaving next; income from veg and from selling thatch about K400 000 / yr (one family); for mats, about K100 000 / yr, but this is not enough for them because they only sell to buy medicine and clothes, also some food. |
| Animals | 98 buffalo; 76 cattle; 3220 poultry; little area for stocking big animals but good for poultry but some seasons have big problem because they get infections |
| water and rivers | take water from wells and spring, also from rainwater - to drink and wash; from stream - water from a small reservoir for veg, from cleared forest area; fields dry in dry season |
| wild fish | catch more wild fish in November, many species, now less than before; because now they have enough fishing gear and more people, and less water. |
| Insecticide | they used before in some seasons but not always against crab and worms; now they don't use |
| stocking fish | stocking only in the fishpond, not in the ricefields because the ricefields are not suitable - they flood and have little rainwater; no technical knowledge, don't have extension workers, no funds |
| marketing | no market in Xokkhan, they take produce to Savannakhet for selling, e.g. bamboos, coconuts, bamboo poles, mats, veg, mushrooms |
| problem | 1. Veg: don't have enough water and floods in the rainy season 2. Stocking fish: no area, no extension worker; 3. People: stomach ache, malaria; have many drugstores in the village, and have many doctors (enough) |
| experiment | some people stocking ponds by themselves, some get information from other villages, studying the environment |

Summary of comments on the fieldwork:

1. It was difficult to control the discussions;
2. the topics on the checklist are fine but the villagers wanted to talk about other things as well;
3. villagers didn't know what we wanted;
4. they thought we would give them fry for the low fields which are already planted, so they didn't mention the upper fields because they are not ready;

Evaluation of the first week: questionnaire

1. Is this training the same as you expected? Why (not)?
2. Which day did you enjoy most? Why?
3. Which day did you enjoy least? Why?
4. Which activity was most useful in the theoretical part? Why?
5. When we went to Kantabouly, which part of the day was most useful:
 - ?? open discussion with checklist
 - ?? map
 - ?? matrix
 - ?? analysis?
6. Why?

5.6 Day 6

Date: Saturday 8 June

Workplan:

left fairly open until reaching Sepone

Actual activities:

Fieldwork in Sepone district

?? planning

?? more research methods (seasonal diagrams, ranking)

?? role playing: acting out introductory meetings to explain the project to villagers

?? village visits - introductions

Comments on the process:

The number of English-speaking staff was reduced further on the field trip and we had to review ways of coping with the translation difficulties. These are summarised below, with comments on their effectiveness.

The fieldwork in Kanthabouly showed that matrix ranking had quickly become complicated to the extent that both farmers and researchers found the outputs difficult to understand. Some more simple ranking methods were reviewed taking plenty of time to talk about potential uses in the project and preferences among the participants. We formed two groups by line ranking the participants based on height and then age, which proved entertaining. Each group had one trainer and one translator / facilitator in each group; we sat under trees at the Forestry College, and concentration levels rose in the relaxed environment. Methods covered were pair-wise ranking, and card sorting. Participants reported that these methods were better than matrix ranking because they were easier to explain to farmers, but in subsequent fieldwork they continued to use matrix ranking. It may be that they preferred to have a written output which they could take away at the end of the exercise.

One provincial facilitator had previous PRA experience and had helped his group to produce a seasonal diagram in Kanthabouly. The other participants had seen this in the feedback session and we discussed the potential uses in the project. This method was learnt very quickly and used by all teams in subsequent fieldwork.

Following the feedback from the Kantabouly fieldwork we all felt it was important to be clear about how we would introduce the project, so we asked participants to act out meetings with villagers. These were variably successful; participants were clear that they could not offer inputs at this stage, but still tended to say they wanted to get information from the villagers and to exhort them to give good information, without clarifying what the purpose was, or how villagers would continue to be involved in the future. It became clear that provincial staff had not fully linked the diagnostic research with the plans for experimenting in January, so an explanation had not been passed on to the district staff; the discussion at this stage helped to make that link. It was only gradually through the whole workshop that participants came to recognise the series of events which were beginning with this workshop; this difficulty in understanding was largely because it was very different from the ways in which they usually work, and perhaps because the words available to translators were not totally adequate.

The whole group then visited each village to meet elders and ask to conduct preliminary research over the next two days. The meeting in Ban Thakong was very formal, with participants again sitting in rows facing the (all-male) local representatives, and local staff reluctant to introduce the project themselves. The second meeting, in Ban Sepone, was more relaxed as participants felt more comfortable explaining the project, and because the meeting was held in the temple, seated on the floor with large numbers of men and women present.

After three days of working in district teams, some hierarchical relationships seemed to be established so we mixed and divided the participants into two new teams. This led to one team which had no 'seniors' in it, initially causing a confidence problem, but later showing that all the participants could

discuss and facilitate diagrams producing useful information. Each team worked for the next two days in one village selected for the project. We asked the teams to prepare their own work plans based on their experience and reactions to work in Kantabouly, and a review of all the methods available to them now. They reviewed the checklist, and one team learnt a new method for exploring change over time, using bar diagrams. We also discussed the importance of notes, and recording diagrams.

We were joined for the Sepone stage of our fieldwork, by a teacher from the Forestry College (recently changed to the College of Agricultural and Forestry Extension) who had previous training in PRA and participated enthusiastically.

Fieldwork was timed to fit in with the preferences of local farmers (as perceived by the district officials). As the rains had begun farmers were involved in ploughing ricefields in the early morning but tended to return to their homes for breakfast around 8 a.m. Mr Samlan therefore recommended that we work from 8-11. We decided not to do fieldwork on the first day as we had done no planning and would not be ready to visit the villages by 8 a.m. We did however make short afternoon visits to introduce the project to village elders and seek their co-operation for the next two days.

Working with translation problems

Small groups - as far as possible, work in small groups and explain methods individually to a facilitator (who may then need to move between groups); this removes the boredom of delays due to translation in large groups. This significantly improved motivation and understanding.

Rotate translators - to avoid overworking, and to vary ways in which explanations are interpreted, since some facilitators understand better than others. This was very important.

Remix groups - for the same reasons, because some participants understand better than others and can explain to their colleagues. This helped to involve all participants by bringing them into contact with different colleagues.

Use activities with creative non-verbal outputs - this helps trainers to see if the message is getting through.

Agree on keywords and their translation into Lao - it helps if the trainers learn a few key Lao words, and if key words are written up in a prominent place so that participants can link them throughout the workshop. This was useful in a few sessions in the classroom, and learning the Lao words helped the trainers to follow the accuracy of the translations.

Prepare workplans in advance, write them down and discuss with facilitators - this was less successful than expected, mainly because it was not easy to cross check what facilitators had understood from the written explanations. Success depended on the time which facilitators were able to spend discussing plans in advance with the trainers.

Act out incidents that had taken place whilst working with the group that demonstrate good or bad points - This is fun and tends to be much enjoyed by the participants. It avoids the need for translation and can help to overcome inhibitions about criticising others verbally.

Outputs:

To increase the number of options available to participants to facilitate participatory grouping and ranking in villages, the concept of card sorting was introduced and practised. First all the fish species that participants could think of were written onto individual pieces of card (the pile of cards bearing the names of different fish became very large). Participants were then asked to group the fish cards according to some criterion of their own choosing. One group of participants chose size and divided fish into 3 piles according to size categories. Another group chose to divide fish into those that were good to eat and those not. The method was discussed and it was agreed that cards are a useful way to record the breadth of informants knowledge and that card sorting allows informants to define their own categories and selection criterion.

5.7 Day 7

Date: Sunday 9 June

Workplan:

Fieldwork in Sepone district, Village visits, Feedback

Actual activities:

as planned. The working day was shortened as energy levels were low and participants keen to visit the market on the Vietnamese border.

Comments on the process:

In Ban Thakong the meetings began with 68 villagers in 2 small classrooms (one with women and one with men) with villagers sat in rows being “addressed” by facilitators the levels of feedback from the villagers were low to non-existent. After 30 minutes the facilitator negotiated locations outside in the shade and encouraged people to split into six small groups sitting in circles. Two adjacent groups of women regrouped into one circle of 17, facilitated successfully by Mrs Naunong. The smaller groups worked well with lively debate in each. Ban Thakong is located on a main road and many villagers are traders rather than farmers and this was reflected in their knowledge of paddies and ponds. All groups began to work on a diagram no one began by mapping the village. The outside locations gave access to the floor and use was made of stones for matrices and drawing in the sand. One of the facilitators handed over the pen to the villagers and refused politely to take it back. In Ban Sepone the meetings went well. The team divided into two, one discussing with the men’s group and one with the women’s group. Discussions seemed lively and there was a large turnout from the village (about fifty people). Problems which arose during the morning were related to the artificial introduction of creating diagrams being introduced LFS staff into the conversation; participants continued to find it difficult to begin the process of drawing a map, or to relate it naturally to a topic being discussed such as irrigation facilities in the village. They tended instead to keep to a fixed agenda, using matrices first and then finishing with a map. Observers often noticed long silences while district staff drew out a matrix framework on the ground, or copied diagrams into their notebooks. Participants did seem more comfortable than before, using stones and drawing on the ground, although there was still a tendency to draw diagrams for the villagers rather than ask them to do it. These problems were discussed in the feedback session and seemed to improve in later fieldwork.

There still seemed to be a lack of focus in the discussions, and many teams produced matrices which did not include rice-fish culture so that we were unable to see what problems villagers perceived with it. There was also more of a focus on cultured fish than wild fish, and we encouraged participants to find out about wild fish management as well as pond culture.

Producing diagrams still seemed to be the end of the process, and the feedback session was focused on encouraging participants to ask more questions about the maps and diagrams. They suggested some good questions and they are listed under ‘outputs’. However the next step of analysis was not quite so clear, and when asked to summarise the most important new information they had discovered during the morning’s work, many focused on the fact that villagers grow rice, and are interested in fish culture. This prompted a discussion on the need for more explanatory information, and an interest in finding out new rather than established information about the village.

Comments from participants reflected the problems the younger team had had in managing discussions with the large number of villagers who came to the meetings, again finding it difficult to control the discussion and keep to the topics of interest. They also felt they would prefer to separate groups into different age or class categories.

Outputs:

Questions which we could ask about the maps:

1. Where is the well?
2. Which ricefields are irrigated?
3. How many fishponds are there?
4. Which place does not flood?
5. Do you have any ponds in ricefields?
6. Did you mark the important places?
7. Where do you catch your wild fish?
8. Do you have ricefields beyond the forest?
9. Which area does not flood and is it possible to do rice-fish there?
10. Where do you catch wild fish?
11. How do you feel about the numbers of wild fish now?
12. Where is the river?
13. Which ricefield is best for rice-fish and why?

New information we found out today (from group feedback):

1. people mainly grow rice here
2. people want fish
3. there are some ricefields which don't flood which would be good for rice-fish
4. there is a lake where people catch wild fish
5. women like fish in the paddy fields because when it is raining they are easier to catch than river fish

Information about Ban Sepone (from a discussion of the map):

?? most of the paddy fields flood

?? there are some which don't flood and would be good for fish

?? there are no ponds - the villagers don't dig ponds because of the expense and because they are afraid of unexploded bombs

?? there are fields just below the mountain which could be irrigated but they don't have the resources

?? the upland rice is grown under shifting cultivation - those fields are not shown on the map because they are far away

?? there are many streams in the village

Information about Ban Thakong (from discussion of the map):

?? previous days map incorrect (and corrected)

?? some paddies hold water all year

?? good rice production from paddies in flooding valleys

?? poor production in rolling upland paddy sometimes fails if rains poor

?? some bomb craters are permanently flooded

Sepone men's group; 9.6.96.

| | rice plantation | slash and burn | raising goat | raising buffalo | raising fish |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| good | xxxx xxxx xxxx | xx | xxx | xxxx xxxx | xxxx xxxx xxxx |
| good for selling | xxx xxxx | | | | xxxx xxxx xxxx |
| like | | | xx | xx | xxxx xxxx xxxx |
| low labour | xxxx xxx | xxxx xxx | | | xxx |
| low cost | | | xxxx xxx | | xxxx xxxx xxxx |
| high cost | xxxx | | | xxxx | |

| | | | | | |
|--|------------|--|--|-----|--|
| | XXXX XX | | | XXX | |
|--|------------|--|--|-----|--|

Sepone men's group: seasonal calendar 9.6.96.

| | thatch | knife production | slash and burn | rice sowing | rice trans-plantation | crop | weaving cloth | livestock | house construction | fish culture | handicraft | festival |
|----|--------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|------------|----------|
| 1 | x | | | | | x | x | | | | x | x |
| 2 | | x | | | | x | x | | | | x | x |
| 3 | | | x | | | x | x | | | | x | x |
| 4 | x | | x | | | x | x | | x | | x | x |
| 5 | | | | | | x | | | x | | x | x |
| 6 | | x | | x | x | x | | x | | | x | |
| 7 | | | | x | x | x | | x | | | x | |
| 8 | | | | x | x | x | | x | | x | x | x |
| 9 | | | | x | x | x | | x | | x | x | |
| 10 | | | | x | x | x | | x | | x | x | |
| 11 | | | | x | x | x | | x | | x | x | x |
| 12 | | | | x | x | x | | x | | x | x | |

Sepone women's group: 9.6.96.

| month | slash and burn | rice cultivation | veg | livestock | weaving cloth | catching fish | cutting firewood | festival | thatch | selling veg |
|-------|----------------|------------------|-----|-----------|---------------|---------------|------------------|----------|--------|-------------|
| 1 | | | x | | x | x | x | | x | x |
| 2 | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x | x |
| 3 | | | x | | x | x | x | | | x |
| 4 | | | x | | x | x | x | x | | x |
| 5 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x |
| 6 | x | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x |
| 7 | x | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x |
| 8 | x | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x |
| 9 | x | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x |
| 10 | x | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x |
| 11 | x | x | | x | | x | x | x | | x |
| 12 | | | x | | | x | x | x | | x |

Sepone women's group: 9.6.96.

| | rice | shifting rice | chicken | fish culture | veg |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| good production | xxxxxxx xxxxx xxxx xxxxx | xxx xxx | xxx xxx | xxxxxx xxx xxxxx xxxxx | xxxxx xxxx xxxx |
| high labour | xxxx xxxx xxxx xx | xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx | xxx xx | xxxxxx xxxx xxxx xxxxxx | xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx |
| long growing period | xxx xx | xxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxx | xxxx xx | xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx | xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx |

Seasonal calendar, mixed group, Thakong. 9.6.96.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|--------------|------------|----|----|----|
| ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| vegetable plantation | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ----- | burn | weeding | ----- | weeding | ----- | store rice | | | |
| | | prepare for slash and burn | plant rice seeds | | transplant rice | | harvest rice | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| trade | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ----- | | | | | | |
| | | | | | keep animals and buffalo | | | | | | |

mixed group, Thakong. 9.6.96. : priority matrix

| activity | priority 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------|------------|------|----------|----------|-------|
| pond fish | XXXXXXXX | XXX | X | | |
| rice fish | XXX | XXXX | XX | | XX |
| poultry | | X | XXXXXXXX | XX | |
| veg | X | XX | | XXXXXXXX | X |
| buffalo / cow | | XXX | X | XX | XXXXX |
| trade | X | | XXX | XX | XXXXX |

Thakong men's group, 9.6.96.

| | rice | buffalo / cow | chicken | fishpond | fish / rice | pig | vegetable |
|-----------------|------|---------------|---------|----------|-------------|-----|-----------|
| like | 10 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| problem | 4 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 10 | 5 | 2 |
| technical | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| want to do | 10 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Priority number | I | IV | III | I | IV | V | II |
| | | | | | | | |

Thakong women's group, 9.6.96.

| | like | neutral | dislike |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------|
| rice | 1111111111111111 1 | | |
| veg | | 111111 | 1111111111 |
| pond fish | 1111111111111111 1 | | |
| raising buffalo / cow | 1111111111 | | 1111 |
| rice / fish | 11111111111111 | | 111 |
| poultry | 1111111111111111 1 | | |
| banana | 1111111111111111 | | 1 |
| weaving | | 1111 | 111111111111 |

5.8 Day 8

Date: Monday 10 June

Workplan:

Fieldwork in Sepone district

?? Village visits

Travel to Atsaphangtong district (3 hours)

Village introductory visits

Actual activities:

As planned. The remaining fieldwork in Sepone was centred on a transect walk and the necessary planning and analysis related to it. Departure for Atsaphangtong was delayed with the result that the introductory visits in Lian Xai and Nanokhien were held in the evening.

Comments on the process:

This day was important for showing the value of direct observation and encouraging staff to ask more questions about the information they already had. Staff were initially reluctant to visit fields because they felt there would not be enough time, but all found it interesting and that the maps did not show everything of relevance to the research. In Ban Thakong it became obvious that the map produced the previous day in consultation with villagers (many of whom were not farmers) was not very accurate.

The day began by asking the teams to organise the morning's work themselves, taking into account the need to:

?? compare and discuss yesterday's diagrams

?? plan a walk to see important areas

?? go on the walk

?? discuss what you saw on the walk.

In practise the provincial staff did much of the organisation.

The feedback discussions with villagers were (as always) lively, and the women argued good-naturedly with the men over who did the most work. The workshop participants still seemed reluctant or not interested in asking many questions about the diagrams or maps. The villagers themselves planned the routes and chose important sites to visit: the communal lake, fields which don't flood and those which do, bomb crater ponds. When we visited the fields we found that there are in fact many ponds but the villagers had not included them because they thought we were referring only to ponds which they had dug. The ponds in Sepone are all formed from old bomb craters. There was still a lack of questions from participants but when each was asked to ask a question they all resulted in useful information. Discussing locations and field sites and activities close to relevant sites in the field (often under a tree, in shade) proved very useful indeed compared to village based meetings, stimulating many relevant questions and animated question and answer sessions. Participants were encouraged to annotate and adapt the maps made the previous day.

Outputs:

Information from the transect walk in Ban Sepone:

?? the lake is only used by the community, they catch wild fish when the headman permits it, and share them amongst the community; they don't sell the fish

?? the lake is full only during the rainy season, and is nearly dry now

?? the bomb craters hold water longer than the lake, and many hold water all year

?? they are 3-4m deep

?? the bomb craters have wild fish all year if there is water

?? there are many species of wild fish in the bomb craters

?? everybody catches wild fish from the bomb craters but they are owned by individuals

?? the owners would protect the bomb crater ponds from thieves if they stocked fish

?? the fish go out into the paddy when it is flooded

?? the fields which don't flood are in a valley where upland rice is grown in close association
?? the other fields don't flood every year
?? women, men and children catch fish

Information from the transect walk in Ban Thakong:
?? a fish pond has been developed from a borrow pit close to the village
?? much of the paddy locally is rainfed upland and often water deficient
?? some paddies down small valleys have water year round
?? about 60 kg/ha of wild fish are currently caught in inundated paddies
?? wild fish are caught in flooded bomb craters (not a communal resource)
?? more paddies owned by the village are located 5 miles away

5.9 Day 9

Date: Tuesday 11 June

Workplan:

Feedback session from Sepone fieldwork

Fieldwork in Atsaphangtong district

?? Planning

?? Village visits

Actual activities:

A courtesy meeting with the head of district government was held before work began in the morning, which revealed useful background information about the district (summarised below). A discussion about wealth-ranking was added to the feedback session, as this was the only method which had not yet been covered from the classroom sessions.

Comments on the process:

The feedback session was based on open questions asking participants to compare the maps before and after the transect walk and comment on the reasons why they found more useful information after going to the field. Thus a favourable view of field visits was obtained by consensus. A similar method was used to introduce wealth-ranking; by asking participants whether their respondents were rich or poor, how they might know, and whether others might have different information, participants recognised the need to include respondents from different wealth classes. They then decided that it was difficult to ask people directly about their wealth and a variation of the card ranking exercise was explained. There was not an opportunity to conduct a wealth ranking during the workshop because it is quite a sensitive activity and not appropriate to the first meetings with villagers. The trainers discussed the method in detail with provincial staff who will take responsibility for facilitating this activity during later fieldwork.

New teams were formed again for the fieldwork. The planning for village visits was carried out by the teams themselves although with considerable guidance from provincial staff. As we were starting again in a new district we reviewed the methods we had learnt about and incorporated them into the plan. There was a strong tendency to repeat the plan of the previous two districts, but to include a field visit on the second day.

The fieldwork went well, but appeared to suffer from becoming routine. Some diagrams were produced at high speed without it being clear that villagers understood the purpose. However plenty of time was given to drawing maps and both teams in Lian Xai left all the drawing to the villagers - although there was still a concern that some staff were drawing diagrams. The main lesson from the morning was that there is no need to hurry; and no need to produce a fixed number of diagrams by the end of the day. One team lost useful information because they drew the framework for their seasonal diagram in advance, with a fixed number of columns; when these were full they stopped, so they did not record information about seasonality of wild food gathering.

Again comparing diagrams between groups at the end of the session was useful and popular with the villagers. In Nanokien 2 teachers (one woman and one man) acted informally as spokes persons and used pens to record findings and discussions. At the end of the day they wished to retain the diagrams to continue the process in the evening.

Outputs:

Seasonal diagram, Nanokhien village, women's group; 12.6.96.

| | Livestock | | | | | | Crop and handicrafts | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|------------------|-----|---------|---------------|----------------|------|----------------------|----------|-------|--------|-----|-------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|
| | buffalo / cow | pig | chicken | pond- fish | rice / fish | duck | rice cultivation | cucumber | maize | pepper | veg | beans | saw wood | build house | slash and burn |
| 1 | | | | x | | | | x | | | x | x | x | | |
| 2 | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | x | x | |
| 3 | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | x | | x |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | x | x | x | | x | x | | |
| 6 | x | x | x | x | | x | x | | | | | | | x | |
| 7 | x | x | x | x | | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | x | x | | x | | | x | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | x | x | | x | | | x | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | x | x | | x | | | x | | | | | | x | | |
| 11 | x | x | x | x | | | x | | | | | | x | | |
| 12 | x | x | x | x | | | x | | x | | | | | | |

Nanokhien, men's group, 12.6.96.

| | livestock | | | | crops | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----|---------|--------------|------------|-------|----------|--------|---------|
| | buffalo | cow | chicken | fish in rice | rice cult. | maize | cucumber | pepper | lettuce |
| hard work | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| selling | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| eating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| area | 6 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| like | 6 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

| month | number of activities | crop | | livestock | | | fish in rice | pond fish | handicrafts | |
|-------|----------------------|------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | | rice | veg | buffalo | pig | poultry | | | weaving | spirit production |
| 1 | 7 | | x | x | x | x | we have not done this | x | x | x |
| 2 | 6 | | x | x | x | x | | | x | x |
| 3 | 6 | | x | x | x | x | | pond is dry | x | x |
| 4 | 6 | | x | x | x | x | | | x | x |
| 5 | 7 | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | x |
| 6 | 7 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | x |
| 7 | 7 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | x |
| 8 | 8 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x |
| 9 | 8 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x |
| 10 | 8 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x |
| 11 | 8 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x |
| 12 | 8 | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | x |

Nanokhien women's group, 12.6.96.

| | crop | | livestock | | | fish culture | | weaving | Lao lao production |
|-----------|-------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|--------------|-------|---------|-----------------------|
| | rice | veg | cow / buffalo | pig | poultry | rice / fish | pond | | |
| need | XXXXX | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | XXXXX | XXXXX | xxxxx | XXXXXX | XXXXXX |
| problem | XXXXX | xxxxx | XXXXXX | xxxxx | xxxxx | | xxxxx | XXXXXX | XXXXXX |
| technical | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx | xxxxx |

X = STRONG; x = medium; x = weak

Lianxai, women's group, 11.6.96. seasonal calendar

| month | crop | rice cultivation | weaving cloth | weaving mat | collecting thatch | sawing wood | making new ricefields | festival |
|-------|------|------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1 | x | | | | x | x | | |
| 2 | x | | x | x | x | x | | |
| 3 | x | | x | x | x | x | | |
| 4 | x | | x | x | | x | | |
| 5 | x | | x | | | x | | x |
| 6 | x | x | | | | | x | |
| 7 | x | x | | | | | x | |
| 8 | x | x | | | | | x | x |
| 9 | x | x | | | | | x | x |
| 10 | x | x | | | | | x | x |
| 11 | x | x | | | | | x | x |
| 12 | x | x | | | | | | |

Lianxai, 11.6.96. Women's group - preference matrix

| activity | raising pigs | raising chickens | fish culture | vegetable | cucumber | beans | maize | pepper |
|----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-------|-------|--------|
| good | 8 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | | 5 |
| like | 8 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | | 5 |
| capital | 10 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| labour | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| price | 7 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 |

Lianxai men's group, 11.6.96.

| | bamboo shoot | wild vegetable | frog | wild fish | wild animal | crab / snail |
|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| before | xxxx | xxx | xxx | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx |
| | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx |
| | xxx | xxxx | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxxx |
| | xxxx | xxxx | xxxxx | xxxx | xxx | xx |
| after | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xxxx |
| | xx | xx | xx | xx | x | xxxx xxxx xx |
| why | now more people are cutting bamboo shoots, and also the bamboo is less than before; but before there were fewer people | before it was abundant because there were few people but now it is very difficult to find because the people have increased. People now collect it for consumption and for sale. | Before, abundant because there were few people, but now there is less because the people have increased. | Before, abundant because there were few people, but now there is less because the people have increased. | Before, abundant because there were few people, but now there is less because the people have increased. | No decrease because nobody likes to eat crab or snail. |

Lianxai men's group, 11.6.96.

| | rice cultivation | vegetables | catching fish | festival | saw wood | construct houses | handicraft | thatch | fish culture |
|----|------------------|------------|---------------|----------|----------|------------------|------------|--------|--------------|
| 1 | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | |
| 2 | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | |
| 3 | | x | x | | x | x | x | | |
| 4 | | | x | x | x | x | x | | |
| 5 | x | | x | x | x | x | x | | x |
| 6 | x | | x | | | | x | | x |
| 7 | x | | x | x | | | x | | x |
| 8 | x | | x | x | | | x | | x |
| 9 | x | | x | x | | | x | | x |
| 10 | x | | x | x | | | x | | x |
| 11 | x | | x | x | | | x | | x |
| 12 | x | | x | x | | | x | x | |

5.10 Day 10

Date: Wednesday 12 June

Workplan:

Fieldwork in Atsaphangtong district

?? Village visits

?? Feedback session

Informal evaluation of workshop

Actual activities:

As planned. The village visits consisted of planning, walking, and discussing a transect to visit a range of sites relevant to the project.

Comments on the process:

Again teams were asked to plan their own work, and to ask the villagers to plan the transect route.

In Ban Lian Xai very few people turned up for the second day; it is a new village with problems of water scarcity, and it seems that most people considered the project could not offer them anything useful. Three villagers accompanied the team for the walk, but the only woman present did not contribute as she had not been at yesterday's meeting, and the village head did most of the talking. Little was found on the ground that had not been marked on the map, compared to Sepone - the participants had learnt to ask about the relevant features. There was not much discussion as the villagers felt that only one field had potential for rice-fish, as the soil held water better than the other (sandy) areas.

The feedback in the afternoon was focused on asking participants to summarise the important findings from their fieldwork in Atsaphangtong. The results are shown under 'outputs'. They do not reflect the full findings of the group, but only the points which the teams chose to bring out as important. Information became more varied and useful as the session progressed, and in response to questions from the facilitators and trainers. It was clear that summarising the findings is an aspect of the research which will continue to need encouragement. In particular participants did not tend to value information which did not relate to fish, and sometimes only that relating to cultured fish. The discussion attempted to show the value of information about the whole system.

Feedback at the end of the day turned into reflections on the whole workshop. The two main points were:

?? participants would have liked to have a full timetable so they would know what was happening when; (this was not available because the fieldwork timing depended on local circumstances);

?? participants were concerned about villagers' reactions when they had turned up late for meetings, and felt it would be important to try harder to be punctual in future in order to keep the confidence of villagers.

In Nanokien the process of discussion and the production of diagrams and maps continued and a only a short field visit took place to a location where wild fish are customarily trapped in rice paddies. The heat and intensive workload had taken its toll on the participants.

Outputs:

Key findings from four villages: group summary, 12.6.96.

THAKONG

?? rice culture

?? fish culture

LIANXAI

?? pig raising
 ?? fish culture
 ?? interest in rice-cum-fish
 ?? reservoir
 ?? successful fish pond culture
 ?? natural food sources have decreased since three years ago except crab and snail because people don't like to eat them

SEPONE

?? fish culture
 ?? interest in rice-cum-fish
 ?? the paddy does not flood in the Houina stream area
 ?? they are using fish ponds

NANOKHIEN

?? no flooding in the Bomhai rice fields
 ?? interest in rice-cum-fish because the wild fish have decreased
 ?? natural reservoir
 ?? successful fishpond culture
 ?? reported annual wild fish catches of 20kg / ha (women's group); 12kg / ha (men's group)

5.11 Day 11

Date: Thursday 13 June

Workplan:

Research planning
 ?? Preparation of district team plan
 ?? Preparation of six-month work schedule
 ?? Definition of a mechanism for reporting and storing data
 ?? Presentation back to other teams and Head of Section
 Farewell dinner
 ?? Departure of participants
 Travel to Savannakhet (2 hours)

Actual activities:

The group found it difficult to prepare a teamwork plan before preparing the six-month work schedule, so the two were merged. All plenary discussions were abandoned due to the lack of translators, and participants worked in district teams preparing their plans. A plenary session discussed the importance of recording information and storing in tubes to remain in the villages where the information had been collected. The work took longer than planned and the day finished at 5 p.m. leaving time for the dinner at 6 p.m.

Comments on the process:

Asking the teams to form their own team plan was initially unsuccessful. This was because the facilitators did not understand the written guidelines, and participants had not understood that they would be working together to carry out a work plan over the next six months; also they had expected that the provincial head would supply them with the work plan. The process turned out to be the most difficult activity carried out in the workshop, mainly because both provincial and district staff have little experience of planning, and in fact did not value it as a process. The procedure required very intensive work in small groups, and the full time involvement of the one bilingual facilitator.

It was decided to disaggregate the plan into:

?? people to interview

?? topics to cover

?? methods to use

and the facilitator was supplied with a table of topics to use as a checklist (see appendix C). He then used this with each district team to ask them to fit a range of people and topics into their 30 field visits in the next six months.

Some participatory aspects of the process were sacrificed at this stage, not only because of the lack of time but also because the participants were already moving into new territory in making the six-month plan, so they found the request to decide everything else overwhelming.

The following was the outline for the team plan, which was fulfilled in the process of making the six-month work schedule.

8.00-8.30: team planning

Work in district teams.

Make a plan to work together over the next six months. Decide how you will organise the following:

1. communication between the LFS and LWU at district level;
2. who will work together (remember each team will be 2 officers from the District LFS, 1 woman from the District LWU office, and one woman from the village LWU);
3. how you will share the use of the motorcycle;
4. how you will record the results of your fieldwork (including discussions, not just diagrams)
5. where you will keep the results of your fieldwork;
6. communication with provincial LWU and LFS staff including reports of fieldwork - and claims for perdiems.

Although hard work, the process was ultimately successful and rewarding. Each team presented its plan to the whole group, and to the Head of Section who arrived for the final session. This was important in giving legitimacy to the plan and confidence to the planners.

Outputs:

See appendix V for 6 month plan. Field visit report form: this was translated into Lao and agreed with the district teams, but will be finalised by provincial staff who preferred to modify an existing form. See appendix III.

5.12 Day 12

Date: Friday 14 June

Workplan:

Finalise plans with provincial staff

Actual activities:

Prepare guidelines for Lao workshop proceedings

Document workshop outputs

Plan support for district staff

Comments on the process:

The provincial staff made a large wall chart of the 6 month plan. Another workshop involving members of the section proved distracting on the final

Outputs:

Guidelines for workshop proceedings in Lao

1. Collect all the workshop outputs in Lao.
2. Put them in order:
 - workshop purpose
 - workshop timetable
 - day 1
 - day 2
 - day 3
3. Remove all English words.
4. Add an introduction for each day - explain what we did, where we went.
5. Add one sentence explaining each diagram, who made it and where.
6. Add photographs of maps (I will send these from England).
7. Print and bind.
8. Send to all district and village staff (including the village LWU researchers); provincial staff; and to the U.K. staff.

Conclusions

- ?? The workshop introduced some of the provincial and district LFS staff, as well as collaborating staff of the Lao Womens' Union (LWU) to some aspects of participatory rural appraisal techniques. In particular the concept of a participation approach to understanding issues within, and characteristics of, local communities.
- ?? The workshop reinforced the concept of forward planning and work breakdown structures. In particular the workshop was successful in enabling district teams to produce a detailed six-month plan to conduct participatory research in two villages in each of three districts.
- ?? The workshop reinforced team working. In particular the district teams developed modes of working together as a team through this exercise.
- ?? The process could be viewed as an experiment in institutionalising PRA. It is unusual to disaggregate the PRA process and plan the components in such detail, but appeared to be the only way to introduce it to district staff used to target-oriented plans.
- ?? The gender focus of the research should be ensured because the plan incorporates research by equal numbers of female and male researchers, with equal numbers of men and women respondents; however institutional problems with the involvement of the LWU at district level had not been fully resolved by the end of the workshop so this will need continued support.
- ?? The method of 'learning from experience' will continue - district teams have the opportunity to use different methods with a range of farmers, and to reflect on their findings in the next workshop in January.
- ?? The workshop contributed to a process within the Livestock and Fisheries Section of empowerment and decentralisation. Planning and feedback were not valued as highly as fieldwork during the workshop, by either provincial or district staff, because the processes of analysis are much more difficult to integrate into a system where data is usually collected for use elsewhere.
- ?? The selection of 2 villages in each of 3 districts was finalised.
- ?? A procedure for documenting and reporting the process was established; it remains to be seen whether this will be used to full benefit including reflection on the value of findings, but it is based on the structure of feedback sessions throughout the workshop and participants are familiar with the sort of basic analysis it requires.
- ?? Flexibility in planning has not yet been integrated at district level, yet is essential to a truly participatory mode of research, but this may follow from the work in January.
- ?? Participants understand that they will use the results together with farmers to plan experiments - this is a departure from their usual extractive mode of data collection and, it is to be hoped, provides a stronger incentive for valid representative information.
- ?? There is still a tendency for researchers to seek out ideal rice-fish farmers or those with ponds; everybody was more enthusiastic about identifying opportunities than constraints. This perhaps reflects the fact that district officers still expect the project to provide a 'transferable technology'.
- ?? A farmer participatory approach to research is entirely new and it would be unrealistic to expect immediate acceptance of the concept. The importance of experimenting locally to overcome constraints can only be fully conveyed when trials are planned and implemented in 1997.
- ?? The workshop was ambitious and demanding - language problems meant that we had to reduce our goals and participants lost opportunities to test their innovativeness and flexibility. However they finished the workshop with a clear understanding of where they were going for the next six months, and the learning process will continue with further project inputs.

Appendix I: List of participants

| Organisation | Provincial Office | Sepone District | Atsaphangtong District | Khantabouly District |
|--|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Lao Women's Union | Mr Tingkham | | Mrs Khanthamala | Mrs Noukan |
| Livestock and Fisheries Section | Mr Bounthiane Mr Khamchanh Mr Bounthong [for classroom work only:] Mr Bounthanom Mr Thonglay | Mr Samlan Mr Baula | Mr Somphit Mr Phonphet | Mr Somboun Mr Bounthavy |

Appendix II: Timetable

Timetable

The outline for the workshop was as follows. More detailed plans for each day are given in the text, and the need for changes and flexibility is discussed further below.

| Date | Activities |
|-------------------|--|
| Monday 3 June | Formal opening ceremony Introduction of participants Team formation Brainstorming questions for rice-fish diagnostic research Workshop planning with provincial staff |
| Tuesday 4 June | Introduction to research methods: ?? Balloon debate - who to interview in the village ?? Interviewing methods: brainstorming good and bad techniques ?? Acting good and bad interview s |
| Wednesday 5 June | Introduction to research methods: ?? Mapping ?? Matrix scoring ?? Selecting the villages for research sites ?? Making a checklist ?? Planning fieldwork |
| Thursday 6 June | Fieldwork in Khantabouly district ?? Meeting district and village officials ?? Group discussions ?? Diagrams ?? Reporting back to the community, and analysis |
| Friday 7 June | Feedback session: ?? Methods and reactions to Khantabouly fieldwork ?? Evaluation of first week Travel to Sepone district (6 hours) |
| Saturday 8 June | Fieldwork in Sepone district ?? Planning ?? More research methods (seasonal diagrams, ranking) ?? Village visits |
| Sunday 9 June | Fieldwork in Sepone district ?? Village visits ?? Feedback |
| Monday 10 June | Fieldwork in Sepone district ?? Village visits Travel to Atsaphangtong district (3 hours) ?? Village introductory visits |
| Tuesday 11 June | Feedback session ?? from Sepone fieldwork Fieldwork in Atsaphangtong district ?? Planning ?? Village visits |
| Wednesday 12 June | Fieldwork in Atsaphangtong district ?? Village visits ?? Feedback session Informal evaluation of workshop |
| Thursday 13 June | Research planning ?? Preparation of district team plan ?? Preparation of six-month work schedule ?? Presentation back to other teams and Head of Section Farewell dinner ?? Departure of participants ?? Travel to Savannakhet (2 hours) |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Friday 14 June | Conclusion of workshop with provincial staff: ?? Planning back-up for district teams and reporting structure ?? Translating and documenting workshop outputs ?? Planning Lao workshop proceedings |
|----------------|---|

Appendix III: Field visit report form

| | |
|---|----------------|
| <p>RICE-FISH PROJECT</p> <p>Field visit report</p> | |
| 1. Visit number: | |
| 2. District: | |
| 3. Village: | |
| 4. Names of research team: | |
| 5. Date of visit: | |
| 6. Names of villager(s) (if a group, list names on separate sheet) | |
| 7. Why did you meet those people? | |
| 8. Activities: | |
| 9. Diagrams produced: | |
| 10. Main results: | |

Appendix IV: Checklists for final planning**1. People to talk to**

[Based on an initial wealth ranking]

| | women | men |
|---|--------------|------------|
| rich | | |
| middle | | |
| poor | | |
| cultivates irrigated rice | | |
| cultivates rainfed rice | | |
| cultivates fishpond | | |
| has experience with fish culture | | |
| has no experience with fish culture | | |
| cultivates rice which floods | | |
| cultivates rice which does not flood | | |
| old (over 50) | | |
| young (25-50) | | |
| very young (under 25) | | |

2. Topics to find out about

| Topic | Method | Guide questions |
|---|--|--|
| 1. general farming systems | 1. map, matrix, field visit, seasonal calendar, quantitative data if possible (yields) | 1. what kind of farming do you do? |
| 2. villagers' opinion about most important features in the village in relation to experiments with fish-in-rice | 1. map, field visit | 2. where is the best place for rice-fish culture in your village? Why? |
| 3. irrigation / flooding / rivers | 2. map, field visit, seasonal calendar | 1. what sources of water do you have? What problems do you have with water? Why? |
| 4. history of village | 3. history diagram | 1. how has your village changed during your life? |
| 5. sources of food | 4. seasonal calendar, map | 2. where do you get your food from? How does this change during the year? What problems do you have with food? Why? How have food sources changed over your life, or over the last ten years? |
| 6. use of chemicals (for rice, for other crops; expected effect on fish) | 5. history diagram quantitative data if available | 1. what chemicals do you use? Why? How does this affect fish (wild or stocked)? |
| 7. use of wild fish | 1. map, history diagram, seasonal calendar quantitative data if available (yields) | 1. what wild fish do you catch? Where? When? How? Who catches them? |
| 8. experience with stocking fish | 1. map, history diagram, seasonal calendar quantitative data if available | 1. do you stock fish? Does anybody else in the village stock fish? What is your experience with this? (What problems did you have, why?) |
| 9. problems with fish | 1. open discussion with experienced individuals map matrix ranking | 1. do you have any problems with fish sources? Do you have any problems with fish culture? What and why? |
| 10. areas of different types of ricefield: | 1. map, field visit | 1. Individuals: what are the different kinds of |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| upland / lowland irrigated / not flooded / not | | ricefields you have? Where are they? Who uses these ricefields? Where do you catch fish? Why? Groups: what are the different kinds of ricefield in your village? Where are they on the map? Who uses them? Who catches fish in them? |
| 1. differences between farming activities of women and men especially relating to fish | 2. compare all diagrams between women and men group discussion | 1. what are the different needs of men and women in this village? What are the different activities of men and women in this village? why? |
| 2. ownership and use of resources: land and water | 1. map, ranking group discussion and with owners / users | 1. who owns the ricefields? Who uses the ricefields? Who catches fish in the ricefields? Who owns the ponds, lakes and reservoirs? Who uses them? What for? Who owns the rivers? Who catches fish in the rivers? |
| 3. Rice farming calendar (activity, time of rains, time of flooding, time of catching wild fish,etc.) | 1. seasonal calendar; group discussion | 1. when do you sow and harvest the rice? When are the ricefields flooded? When do you catch fish in the ricefields? What other activities change during the year? |
| 4. areas of different soils (holding water or sandy) | 2. map, field visit group discussion | 1. what are the different soils in your village? Where are they? What are they good for? |

Appendix V: A plan for the next 6 months

Six month plan:

| Khanthabouly | Village | July | | August | | September | | October | | November | | December | |
|--|--------------------|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|
| | | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Mr Somboun Mr Bounthavy Mrs Nouna Mrs Khambay | Ban Nyang Soung | 2 days -old man | 2 days -old woman -housewife | 3 days -man teacher -young man -middle age man | 3 days -woman teacher -young woman -middle age woman | 2 days -middle wealth family -poor family | 2 days -middle wealth family -poor family | 3 days -rich family -rice-farming family -dry area family | 3 days -rich family -rice-farming family -dry area family | 2 days -fish stocking family -no-fish family | 2 days -fish stocking family -no-fish family | 3 days men farmers | 3 days women farmers |
| Mr Somboun Mr Bounthavy Mrs Nouna Mrs Syronphan | Ban Xok Kang | 3 days -old man -head of village -middle-age man | 3 days -old woman -housewife -middle-age woman | 2 days -man teacher -young man | 2 days -woman teacher -young woman | 3 days -middle wealth family -poor family -flooding family | 3 days -middle wealth family -poor family -flooding family | 2 days -rich family -dry area family | 2 days -rich family -dry area family | 3 days -trader (man) -fish-stocking family -no fish family | 3 days -trader (man) -fish-stocking family -no fish family | 2 days men farmers | 2 days women farmers |
| Topics | | -history of village -irrigation -general farming systems | | -use of chemicals -sources of food | | -different activities with fish culture -experience with stocking fish -problems with fish | | -rice-farming calendar -wild fishes | | <i>-differences between farming activities of women and men with fishes</i> -ownership and use of resources (land and water) | | -areas of difference types of ricefield -areas of different soils | |
| Methods | | -map -seasonal calendar -field visit | | -history diagram -map | | -matrix -group discussion | | -seasonal calendar -group discussion -yields | | -group discussion -map | | -field visit -map group discussion | |

| Atsaphangthong District | Village | July | | August | | September | | October | | November | | December | |
|--|----------------|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Mr Somphit Mr Phonephet Mrs Khanthamala Mrs Khanthong | Ban Nano-khien | 3 days -elders (men) -boy -young men | 3 days -elders (women) -girl -young women | 2 days -poor man -rich man | 2 days -poor woman - rich woman | 2 days -middle wealth man -fish- stocking man | 2 days -middle wealth woman -fish- stocking woman | 3 days <i>-no fish man -old man -boy</i> | 3 days <i>- experience with fish- stocking (woman) -old woman -girl</i> | 2 days <i>-dry ricefield (man) -irrigated (man)</i> | 2 days <i>-good ricefield (woman) -no irrigation (woman)</i> | 3 days -fish pond men -rice/fish men -flooding men | 3 days -fish pond women -rice/fish women -flooding women |
| Mr Somphit Mr Phonephet Mrs Khanthamala Mrs Leoudone | Ban Lian-xai | 2 days <i>-elders -head of village</i> | 2 days <i>-old women -girl -middle- aged women</i> | 3 days -poor men -rich men -young men | 3 days -poor women -rich women -young women | 3 days -middle- wealth men -fish ponds men -men with flooding paddy | 3 days -middle- wealth women -fish ponds women -women with flooding paddy | 2 days <i>-old men -men under 50 years</i> | 2 days <i>-old women - experience with stocking- fish (woman)</i> | 3 days <i>-dry area family -irrigated area family -stocking fish family in flooding area</i> | 3 days <i>-dry area family -no irrigation -no fish ponds and no flooding</i> | 2 days farmer men | 2 days farmer women |
| topics | | -history of village -irrigation -general farming systems | | -use of chemicals (for rice and for other crops) -villagers' opinions about important features for fish-in-rice | | -experience with stocking fish -problems with fish | | -areas of different types of ricefield -food availability | | -wild fish -ownership and use of resources (land and water) | | -areas of different soil -seasonal calendar | |
| methods | | -map -history diagram -seasonal calendar | | -history diagram -field visit -map | | -map -history diagram -seasonal calendar -group discussion | | -seasonal calendar -map -field visit -group discussion | | -map -history diagram -yield (harvesting) -seasonal calendar | | -map -group discussion -seasonal calendar | |

no topic: 'differences between men's and women's farming activities' - suggest you add this to December.

| Sepone District | Village | July | | August | | September | | October | | November | | December | |
|---|--------------|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Mr Samlan Mr Boula Mrs Okham Mrs Home | Ban Thakhong | 3 days -old man -young man -middle-age man | 3 days -old woman -young woman -middle-age woman -middle-age woman | <i>2 days</i> - <i>head of village</i> - <i>elders</i> | <i>2 days</i> - <i>house wife</i> - <i>girl</i> | 2 days -rich family -middle family | 2 days -rich family -middle family | 3 days -men stocking fish -men not stocking fish -stocking wild fish | 3 days -women stocking fish -women not stocking fish -stocking wild fish | 2 days -teacher (male) -monks | 2 days -teacher (woman) -nun | 3 days -men with flooding paddy -men with irrigated rice -men with no irrigation | 3 days -women with flooding paddy -women with irrigated rice -women with no irrigation |
| Mr Samlan Mr Boula Mrs Okham Mrs Khounsy | Ban Sepone | 2 days -old men -middle-age men | 2 days -old women -young women | <i>3 days</i> - <i>head of village</i> - <i>elders</i> - <i>young men</i> | <i>3 days</i> - <i>housewife</i> - <i>young woman</i> - <i>woman teacher</i> | 3 days -rich family -middle-age family -poor family | 3 days -rich family -middle-age family -poor family | 2 days -men stocking fish -men not stocking fish | 2 days -women stocking fish -women not stocking fish | 3 days -man teacher -monks -flooding area | 3 days -woman teacher -nuns -flooding area | 2 days -men with non-irrigated rice -men with non-flooding rice | 2 days -men with non-irrigated rice -men with non-flooding rice |
| topics | | -history of village -general farming systems -insecticide -wild fish -areas of different types of ricefield | | - <i>insecticide</i> - wild fish -problems with fish | | -sources of food -areas of different soils -rice-farming calendar | | -experience with fish ponds -villagers' opinion about important features for fish/ rice -experiments with fish-in-rice | | -different types of ricefield -differences between farming activities of men and women especially relating to fish | | -harvesting -seasonal calendar | |
| methods | | -map -field visit -seasonal calendar | | -history diagram -matrix | | - <i>seasonal calendar</i> | | -field visit -discussion | | -map -field visit | | -map -seasonal diagram -discussion -field visit | |

| Provincial staff | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|--|-------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Install document pipe data storage systems in villages | X | | | | | |
| PLWU and PLFS staff visit district teams | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Reporting to Savannakhet and Stirling | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Send translated summary of field reports to Stirling | | | X | | | X |
| Prepare for workshop | | | | | | X |