



# **& Resettlement & Social Characteristics of New Villages**

**Basic needs for resettled communities  
in the Lao PDR  
An ORSTOM Survey**

**Vol. 1**

Edited by  
**Yves GOUDINEAU**

**UNDP - Vientiane**  
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## Preface

Rural development is one of the key national priorities of the Government of Lao PDR. Most of 46% of the population who live below absolute poverty live in the rural areas. Among the major challenges for rural development in the Lao PDR is the inaccessibility of parts of the country, a problem accentuated during the rainy season. In recent years a national response to this situation has been to move some of the more isolated populations nearer to communication lines and towns. As the majority of these people are hilltribe minorities who traditionally practise slash and burn cultivation, helping them to settle in the lowlands has implied switching to wet rice field cultivation and reducing slash and burn agriculture, in line with national policy.

The new villages formed in this way have had to adapt quickly to their new way of life in order to survive. Not only is the surrounding natural environment different, but the economic and cultural context of the lowlands is new to these highlanders. Local authorities have recognised the problems that the relocated villagers have faced and often appealed to international organisations and NGO's for help in the most trying situations.

It was to better identify the difficulties experienced by relocated communities that UNDP and UNESCO, in cooperation with the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, embarked upon a survey on this issue. All parties recognised that this study would provide information on an important aspect of Lao rural development policy and could provide alternative solutions to resettlement.

The survey, undertaken by ORSTOM, covered six provinces and nearly seventy villages, one of the biggest socio-economic studies ever carried out in the Lao PDR. Based on objective information, the survey places the phenomenon of the new villages in a historically and geographically wider perspective. It allows better understanding of the extent of resettlement and the various reasons for it. It also sheds light on the current effects of resettlement and the likely results if the trend develops further.

UNDP is supporting the Government of Lao PDR in formulating the national policy in rural development. In this process, UNDP has been requested by the Government to facilitate dialogue with the donor community to enhance understanding on rural development and resettlement issues, and to seek assistance from the donor community in the implementation of its policy. We believe that the results of this survey are a valuable aid in forming sustainable strategies for implementing national rural development policy and projects. Partially as a result of the findings of the survey, UNDP's own assistance at the grassroots level aims to alleviate rural poverty by assisting vulnerable rural communities wherever possible where they live.

I would like to thank all those involved in initiating and compiling the survey; Dr. Yves Goudineau and his team for their excellent and professional work; the Ministry of Education for their support and understanding; Marc Gilmer and Bjorn Nordveit of UNESCO for their inspiration and concern. The survey would also not have been possible without the former UNDP Resident Representative, Jan Mattsson, who has had strong personal concerns for the resettled communities and has greatly

supported this study. Last but not least, I would like to thank the communities that cooperated in the survey and hope that their experience will lead to deeper understanding of how the donors can assist the Government in supporting their needs and the needs of the other vulnerable communities in the remote areas.



Jeffrey Avina  
Resident Representative a.i.

(Commissioned by UNESCO and financed by UNDP, the report's views are those of the authors and not necessarily of these organisations)

## **Editor's acknowledgements**

The Department of Non Formal Education, Ministry of Education, Lao PDR, deserves special thanks for its full cooperation throughout this survey.

Bjorn Nordveit from UNESCO set up the framework for the study, and was a constant encouragement to the team. Marc Gilmer in UNESCO Paris, Jan Mattsson, UNDP Resident Representative in the Lao PDR and Jeffrey Avina UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, were also very supportive. Mikiko Sasaki, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative, did much towards the diffusion and the publication of the report.

Many other people have been of great help to the ORSTOM team over the course of this study; especially Laurent Mercat, Bastien Laroche, Vat Daokham, Souvanmanichanh Kindavong, and all the assistants and provincial contributors cited in the survey reports.

Thanks are given also to those who have been involved in the production of this report in English : Dominique Goffeau, Marlene Keuleers, Myriam Rahem and Aiden Glendinning who translated it from the French, and last but not least to Geraldine Zwack and Angus Macdonald for revising the translation.

Y.G.  
Vientiane

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# **Vol. 1 Main Report**

# Vol. 1 Main Report

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# **Main Report**

**Y. Goudineau**

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## FOREWORD

### **Objectives of the study**

This study, commissioned by UNESCO and financed by resources available from UNDP New York for sector analysis, was conducted under the auspices of the Department of Non Formal Education of the Ministry of Education. It can be seen as a result of Non Formal Education projects directed towards ethnic minorities and women in several provinces of the country (UNDP Lao/92/10; UNESCO 504/Lao/11). Having witnessed through these projects the specific difficulties of some recently relocated village communities, the Department was interested in gathering information on the specific needs of new villages on a scale of several provinces.

The study's first aim is to identify the primary needs of the villagers so that the assistance required can be seen precisely. It is also intended to serve as a core document for the planning of Non Formal Education programmes which will be more specifically designed to prepare appropriate training for villagers before relocation, helping them face the new conditions. Finally it contributes to the research work within the UNDP on rural development in the Lao PDR.

### **The study called on several experts**

A team from ORSTOM (Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération) was given the task of conducting a survey in six provinces. This team, led by Yves Goudineau, anthropologist (co-ordination, synthesis and report supervision), comprised Olivier Evrard, anthropologist (Luang Namtha and mapping), Guillaume Le Hegarat, lawyer (Xieng Khouang), Pierre Lucas, agronomist (Saravane and Sekong), Stéphanie Lucas, agronomist (Attapeu and statistical treatment of data) and Brice Mounier, economist (Oudomxai).

An independent consultant, Geraldine Zwack, charged with documenting the research, contributed a review of resettlement in the Lao PDR from a national and international perspective.

The Department of Non Formal Education and the provincial Education Services provided personnel to help the experts conduct the survey in the selected villages.

### **Scope of the study**

The survey covered six provinces: Luang Namtha, Oudomxai, and Xieng Khouang in the north; Attapeu, Saravane, and Sekong in the south. It was conducted in twenty-two districts and reached sixty-seven displaced villages. Around a thousand families were interviewed.

A double approach was followed. The first step was a qualitative approach, which consisted of raising the question of relocations in each province through dialogue with all those concerned (provincial and district authorities, village councils, families and so on), to gather as much information as possible. Then a quantitative approach followed in the form of a questionnaire (see appendix),

which provided a statistical database on the displaced families. The provincial reports of the survey are based on these two bodies of data.

### **Limits of the survey**

Some limits of the survey must be stated. The survey was made between July and September 1996 and does not include information from after that time. Population movements have continued since and some relocation programmes, which were then still uncertain, have now come into effect. The work should be seen as a still frame in an ever evolving process.

The statistical data gathered are indicative and are not claimed as scientific evidence. If we do think that they provide sound evidence of some significant patterns, we are also conscious that some of the findings require more detailed research.

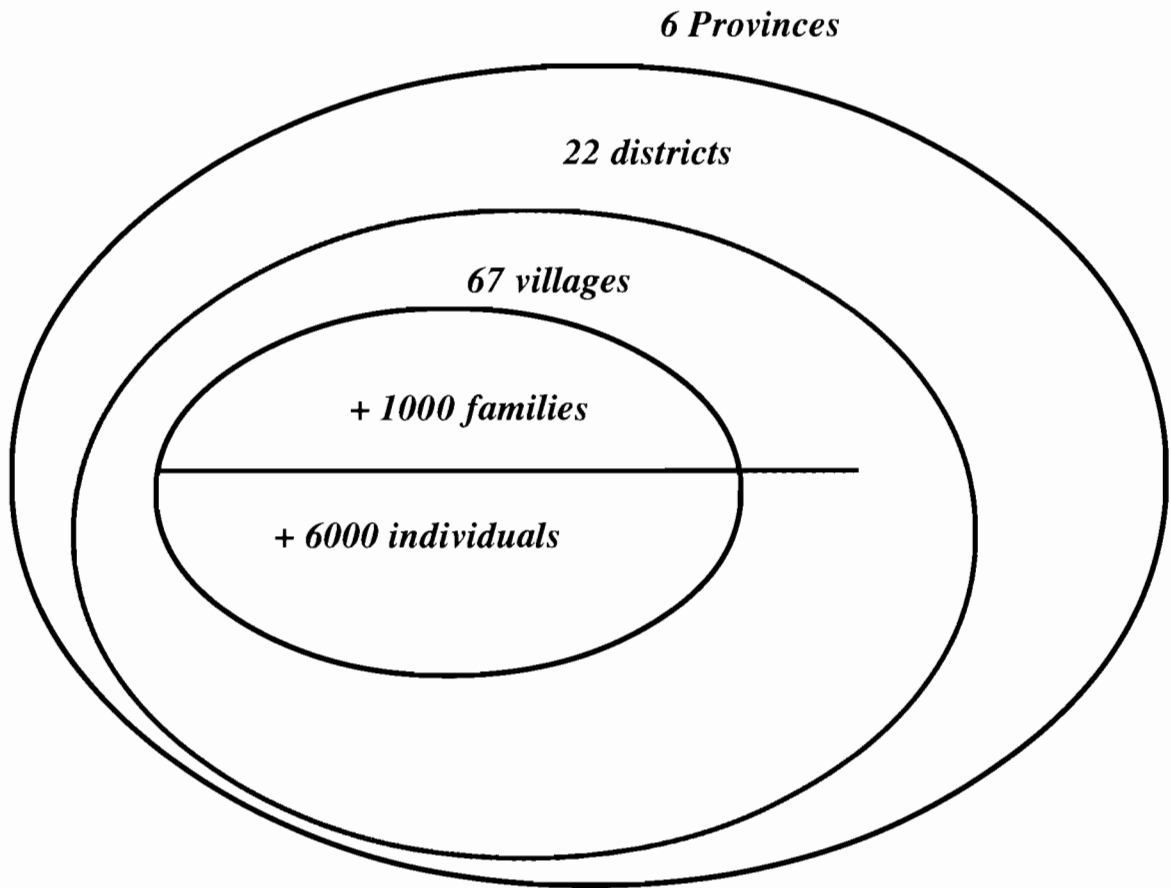
### **The report is presented in two volumes**

**Volume 1. Main report.** Synthesis of the survey results and Statistical database.

Issues and challenges of resettlement planning.

**Volume 2. Provincial Reports.** Survey reports on the six provinces studied.

# SCOPE OF THE SURVEY



## Provinces :

<b>North</b>	Xieng Khouang	<b>South</b>	Saravane
	Oudomxai		Sekong
	Luang Namtha		Attapeu

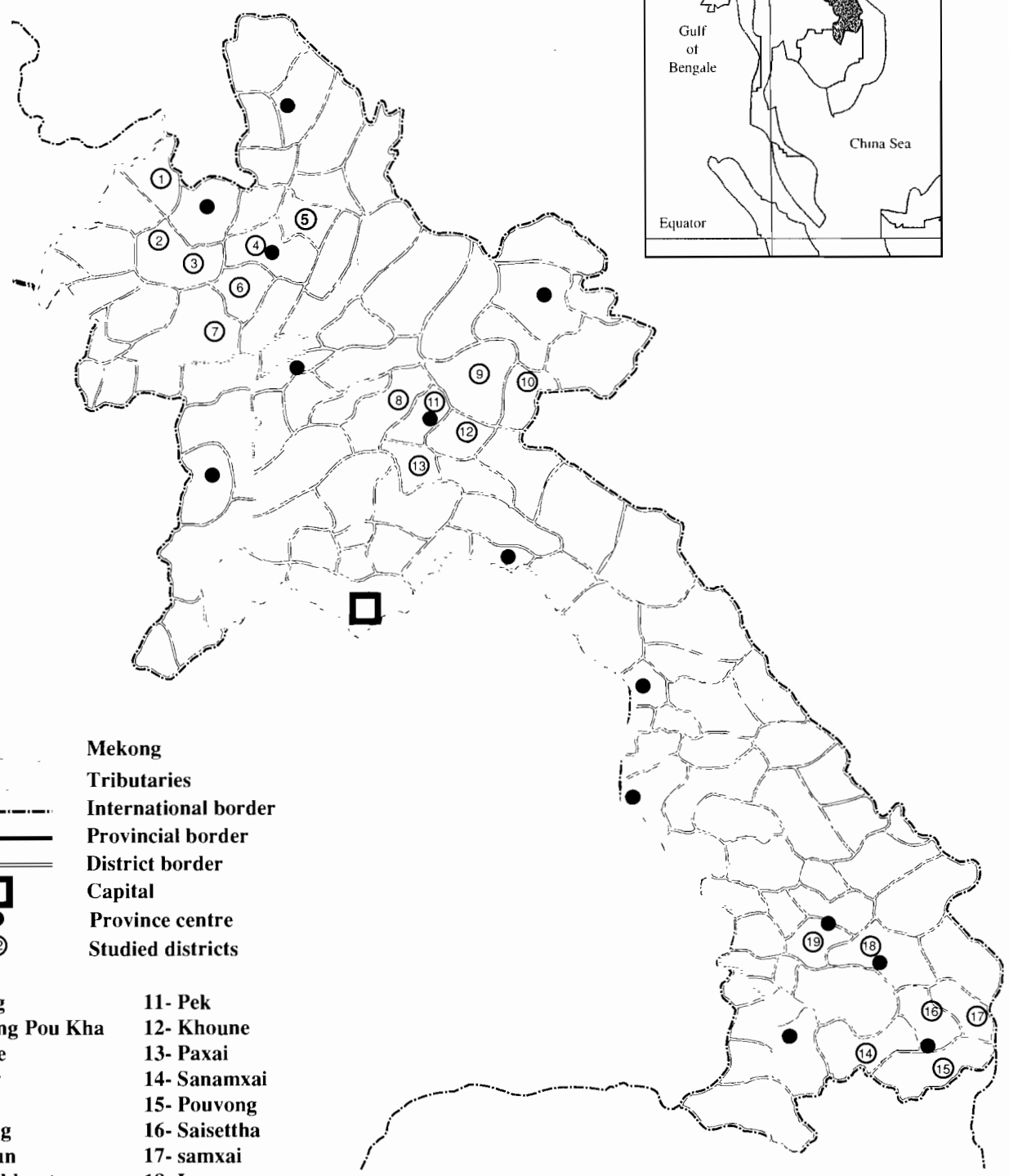
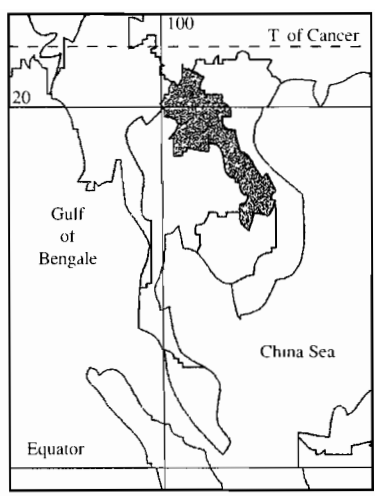
## Methodology :

Quantitative survey with questionnaires at household level

Qualitative survey at district and village level

# LAO P.D.R.

## Geographical repartition of studied districts



- Mekong
- Tributaries
- International border
- Provincial border
- District border
- Capital
- Province centre
- Studied districts

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1- Sing          | 11- Pek       |
| 2- Vieng Pou Kha | 12- Khoune    |
| 3- Nale          | 13- Paxai     |
| 4- Xay           | 14- Sanamxai  |
| 5- La            | 15- Pouvong   |
| 6- Beng          | 16- Saisettha |
| 7- Houn          | 17- samxai    |
| 8- Poukhout      | 18- Lanam     |
| 9- kham          | 19- Longnam   |
| 10- Nonghet      |               |

1:65 000 000

# I. RESETTLEMENTS IN CONTEXT

## A. Village mobility in history : continuity and discontinuity

For as long as it has been recorded, the issue of village displacement appears to constitute a continuous part of Lao history.

A distinction should be made however, between displacement associated with the inner dynamics of the populations and rooted in cultural habits - that which is manifested in continual movement - and the more exceptional phenomena which, in response to strong historical circumstance, have engendered massive population movements.

### 1. Population dynamics

The people generally considered to be indigenous, the Austroasiatics (in Laos from the Môn-Khmer ethno-linguistic family), have for a long time, and until quite recently in the South of the country, periodically removed their villages. Practising slash and burn rice cultivation (swidden) while rotating every 15 to 20 years to allow the forest to regenerate, these tribes (e.g. Ta Oy, Katu, Pacoh, Talieng) regularly moved their homes so as never to be too far away from their swidden plots or hai. These villages, which constitute the fundamental social structure of these people, thus performed a cyclical movement that marked the space limits of their territory. For this reason some observers have named that process seminomadism or circular itinerancy.

The austroasiatics in the north (Khmu, Lamet, for example) show more a sedentary village but move to live at their hai for part of the year. Their homes are on the other side of the territory. Often these groups change their location, resettling in a nearby area on account of epidemics, fires, local fights, or because a place was deemed to be unlucky, etc..

**It appears therefore that it is not so much the permanency of a village site that matters, but the attachment to a territory.** In addition to these usual shifts, others of a different nature appeared during the colonial period with the seasonal migration of some villagers for economic reasons; going for instance, to work on plantations<sup>1</sup>.

In the North, since the 19th century, Miao (Hmong) and Yao populations came from China (sometimes via Vietnam) to clear and settle the highlands. Having adapted an itinerant slash-and-burn agriculture to what is often very steep ground, but without regularly rotating as the Austroasiatics did, their villages appear to be temporary structures (it is rather the lineages which form the focal point). They split up or experience several gradual relocations as the soil's fertility is exhausted following a few years' cultivation (planting successively varied crops such as rice, maize etc.).

**These population shifts followed a logical progression across the land, rather than a circular movement, which led to a regular abandonment not only of village sites but also of cleared regions.** Though their village structure is different, a similar dynamic prevails among the **Tibetan-Burmese groups** (Akha, Lahu, Lolo, Phou Noi...) who arrived in Laos via Yunnan or Burma.

<sup>1</sup> For example on the Bolovens plateau

**The tai language populations**, and among them the Lao, have shown an aptitude for progressively conquering the lowlands for as long as their existence has been noted in South-East Asia. The practice of irrigating rice-fields offered them the possibility of sedentarisation, which, in contrast with the highland populations, can be seen by the stability of their villages. Until now, the expansion towards the as yet unsaturated lowlands has been as much a characteristic of the Lao, as of the other tai groups from China (the Lue) or from Vietnam (the Tai Dam etc)<sup>2</sup>, and the mobility which allows families to leave and rejoin, or to found new villages, remains important. At the beginning of the century colonial administrators complained about the elusive quality of Lao villages, which were always ready to move in search of better lands or to avoid taxes or the corvees (forced labour tasks).

Traditionally, the settling process did not mean permanent settlement, **and if the Lao-Tai populations give the closest representation of permanent settlement sites in Laos, they equally show a great flexibility throughout history.**

It should be added that for all of these peoples migrations were also likely to be motivated by commercial opportunities. Trading between provinces and even across borders provoked the migration of families and the creation of new villages in places favourable to trade.

## **2. Migrations linked to strong external constraints or influences**

In addition to the traditional migrations, other huge population shifts sometimes appeared, caused most often by regional or international conflicts.

### **Nineteenth Century**

Regarding the history from the nineteenth century, one must remember the deportation of Lao populations from the Vientiane area (1828) due to the Lao-Siamese war, the relocation in the 1830's of villages from the Savannakhet valley and the forced migration of the Phuan from Xieng Khouang (1876-1878) because of the rivalries between Annam and Siam. All these movements led to the transportation of thousands of families to the other side of the Mekong river where they contributed to the settlement of the Khorat plateau.

Similarly, during the second half of the century, the turbulence occurring in China (the Taiping rebellion) and the intrusions of the Ho from Yunnan into Vietnam and north Laos provoked, besides the arrival of Miao-Yao, a spontaneous immigration of various Tai groups who crossed the borders of the Sipsong Panna and Sipsong Chau Tai. These new immigrants at times clashed with long-established groups in these regions, resulting in the important migration of whole villages.

**In the 19th century, the picture of Laos was a shifting one, showing a general redistribution of populations in the north, and entire regions left void by the exodus of their inhabitants in the middle and the south of the country.**

### **Twentieth Century**

The twentieth century has not been outdone. In order to check the population and for reasons of fiscal management, the French colonial administration tried to put an end to these migrations by

<sup>2</sup> cf. In Namtha, Tai Dam and Tai Khao groups originating from Luang Prabang arrived in Long district at the beginning of the 1980's to settle the then unoccupied valleys.

“fixing” the villages. It was imperfectly achieved, and only successful among the Lao-Tai populations, traditionally sedentary people, as mentioned previously.

Various messianic or anticolonial expressions sometimes led to village displacements on a local scale. These movements were most usually isolated however, and motivated by the desire of families to escape taxes or forced labour. It can be even thus be said that with the exception of the migrations encouraged by French administrators - that of Vietnamese and Chinese families to the newly-created urban centres- **there had not been, until the second World War, any important population shifts in Laos. Even the conflicts which followed the fighting in 1945-1946 would have a limited impact on the make-up of the countryside. The Indochinese War on the other hand, and above all the American War, brought renewed and considerable disruption to the entire country.**

During the Indochinese War the rallying of numerous hilltribe people to the revolutionary forces created the beginnings of the division of the country into zones of influence. Some villages, especially those in regions bordering Vietnam, moved in order to avoid the fighting. It was after Dien Bien Phu however that movements of real importance occurred in the north of the country. Some of these migrations comprised of groups that having fought on the French side, were trying to reach the west or the midlands, sometimes crossing several provinces with their families before settling. Others consisted of villagers leaving their homelands to join the revolutionary areas. Thus, divisions occurred even within some communities (Hmong, Tai Dam for instance) resulting in territorial redistributions. These splits gradually confirmed the longitudinal division of the country into two parts, a royal zone and a zone controlled by the Pathet Lao; this division was to last throughout the American War.

The shifting border between these two political areas provoked, with the passing confrontations, the migration of thousands of families: 27,000 people were transferred in 1958, 90,000 in 1960, 125,000 in 1962 and up to 730,000 people in 1973 during the cease-fire<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, in the plains and notably along the Ho Chi Minh trail, all the villages under American air fire went to hide in the wooded foothills. In order to escape the bombing entire areas were evacuated, such as Xieng Khouang and Saravane. Finally, if the 300,000 people that crossed the Mekong river<sup>4</sup> after 1975 are added, **it can be seen that most of the areas and people in Laos were affected by the war. More than half of the villages all over the country moved during this period of hostility, and one of the first tasks of the Government of the Lao PDR was to deal with all these displaced villages.**

Nevertheless, despite the population flows heading in various directions, it is surprising to note the relative stability, over the course of a century, of the geographically and culturally different communities that make up the Lao nation. The geographical location of several ethnic groups, such as those recorded by travellers or French administrators at the end of the nineteenth century, verifies that the situation is, on the whole, the same today. However, this statement is only accurate when dealing with areas or territories and not when dealing with specific villages, since these have constantly evolved. In this case, it can be confusing to see that some toponyms have remained unchanged (which sometimes results in a misreading of old maps): villages have been relocated several times in a single area while their name remains unchanged.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Taillard (1989) p. 95

<sup>4</sup> cf. Stuart-Fox (1986) p.52 ff.

### 3. General characterisation of contemporary resettlements

If the migrations of villagers are neither new nor original - they accompany all evolution in the Lao past - the contemporary migrations can not be regarded as simple repetitions of history: They have their own motivations and effects that need to be characterised.

**Since 1975, resettlement has corresponded both to post-war political, social and territorial reorganisation and to the evolution of the development targets of the Lao PDR.**

#### The Post-war Era

The division of the country into two distinct political zones during the war, the emigration waves emptying towns (Pakse went from 370,000 inhabitants to about ten thousand after 1975), the evacuation of some areas and the devastation caused by bombing in others; These factors all made fresh territorial adjustments necessary and led to renewed relocations of people during the reunification period. The new government of the Lao PDR was obliged to repopulate entire regions (Sepone, Saravane and Xieng Khouang for instance), refill the deserted towns, reconcile some communities divided by the war (Hmong or Tai particularly), ensure border security and render the most bombed areas habitable.

It is difficult to envision the migrations that occurred at that time, since no study exists on the subject, but by examining various issues it is possible to identify recurrent situations in several provinces.

Firstly **a general movement to resettle in former territories can be noted**: From the hilltribe people who took refuge in the forests to the people from the lowlands living far from their homeland, most of them built their new village next to the old one. In contrast, some stayed at their new location, their original area being considered still dangerous (principally due to unexploded ordnance): Thus some people from Sepone stayed near Savannakhet, others from Saravane stayed near Pakse and so on.

Some areas where the traditional inhabitants had been evacuated were, even before 1975 in the territories administrated by the Pathet Lao, to become home to new populations: thus at the end of the 1960's in Luang Namtha, some Akha and Khmu families settled on the plains of Muang Sing or Muang Namtha, on lands abandoned by Tai villagers (to whom they had to relinquish when they returned some years later)<sup>5</sup>

The post-war period also witnessed migrations imposed for reasons of security. If peace had returned across the country in general, some conflict still remained in certain areas. This was especially true in the north where some populations, judged unreliable because they had joined the royal forces or the Americans, were settled near roads where they could be supervised. In Xieng Khouang entire areas of the Nonghet district; then almost exclusively Hmong, were evacuated<sup>6</sup>. Comparable examples can be found in the south, though on a lesser scale; the disturbance there was lower. There is however; the case of Phouvong district in Attapeu which was completely evacuated of 11,000 inhabitants between 1973 and 1980 except for one border village, probably retained to prevent the disturbances of neighbouring Cambodia from reaching Laos<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Luang Namtha report.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Xieng Khouang report.

<sup>7</sup> cf. Attapeu report.

On the other hand, many mountain people (Katu, Khmu, Akha etc.), that had fought for the Pathet Lao, **voluntarily created villages in the lowlands and practised irrigated rice-field cultivation instead of the traditional slash-and-burn methods, thereby answering the call for national reconstruction.** The dilapidated state of much of the land on the high plateaux, a result of the defoliants and napalm dropped on Laos also contributed to this decision; yields from hai plummeted and bridging the gap until the next harvest was becoming harder and harder. Today a lot of these experimental villages, settled after 1975 and led by progressive pioneers, still exist.<sup>8</sup>

Other highland groups joined this trend during the brief **agricultural cooperatives** movement, which was at its peak in 1978-1979 (the cooperatives were officially stopped in 1986). In a general manner, in all the remote districts, ethnic minorities were encouraged to settle near main roads, trails and rivers<sup>9</sup>.

Lastly the issue of **returning refugees**, which constitutes one of the last movements directly linked to the war, must be mentioned. The establishment of special villages by **UNHCR**, which provide a standard of quality in technical, sanitary and social functions, represents a form of relocation which by its methods and organisation is of a rather different nature from those dealt with previously.<sup>10</sup>

**Thus, the immediate post-war period was one of redistribution for populations scattered by the conflicts, with most of them returning to their original land, but others filling the areas abandoned by emigrants, or leaving the highlands to cultivate, either through conviction or necessity, the valleys or the lowlands.**

## B. Development and relocation targets

**Among the development targets announced with the creation of the Lao PDR in 1975, and gradually defined precisely since that time, four main concerns can be identified:**

- to define a nationwide urban and country planning policy;
- to preserve natural resources and make them profitable;
- to integrate the most remote areas into the market economy;
- to integrate ethnic minorities into the national culture.

The relocation issue is linked to each of these concerns. It appears firstly as a necessary consequence of some decisions taken within the context of national development, especially in the case of the establishment of new infrastructure. Secondly, it is seen as a way to solve the various problems of economic, linguistic and cultural integration.

### 1. Infrastructure projects

The most significant of the infrastructure projects to have an effect on village displacement is the construction of **hydroelectric plants**. While three dams were already operating in 1996 (Nam Ngum, Xeset, Selabam), there were some under construction (Houay Ho in Attopeu, Theun Hinboum in Khammouane), and others at an advanced stage of planning (Nam Theun 2, Nam Leuk, etc). In all, over

<sup>8</sup> cf. Saravane and Luang Namtha reports.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Evans (1988), p.38 sq.

<sup>10</sup> cf. UNHCR 1995 Lao Asylum seekers and Refugees; notes on the progress of repatriation to the Lao PDR, Vientiane

twenty hydroelectric projects are being studied. Laos has an estimated potential electricity production capacity of roughly 18,000 MW (which could correspond to around sixty hydroelectric power stations). Electricity is becoming the principal source of revenue for the country and developing hydroelectric projects has become a national priority. Most of these projects imply resettlement of villages, either because areas must be flooded to make a reservoir, or because these villages are located near construction sites which require their land.

Compared to some others, these relocations may seem restricted in terms of time and area, though they are bound to be more numerous in the future as work begins on new plants. They are however of very specific character. On the one hand, **they appear to be of an involuntary nature**: it is a case of absolute necessity, and the villagers have no choice but to accept it. On the other hand the developers, generally foreigners, are the ones to assess and the ones in charge, and therefore **in a way, an international responsibility is involved**<sup>11</sup>. Some backers such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank ask that preliminary social impact studies be included in the feasibility study so as to see how to relocate villagers under good conditions, or how to properly compensate them. The means of the main financial backers, which are based on the scale of overall project costs, can be equally generous, and as in the case of the UNHCR projects this contrasts strongly with the resources at the disposal of the district or provincial authorities. In this respect the Nam Theun 2 project, in which about 20 villages are to be moved, is an emblematic one because of the budget allocated and also because of the debate it has generated in Laos today<sup>12</sup>. Forestry, tourism and mining concession programmes show identical features in terms of non-voluntary population shifts.

Among the other infrastructure projects having a direct impact on the village locations stands **the construction of roads**. It is not so much the routes chosen that cause delocation but the importance given to roads in order to attract villagers. The presence of villages along routes also permits the development of an administrative network. Incentives to settle by roadsides stem from decisions taken within the context of country planning, and also within the context of the general rural development policy, both policies being directly linked. We will see later that if being close to a road is an advantage for a village in terms of communication, improving social and commercial exchange, it does not guarantee so much economic success in the short-term.

## 2. The rural development policy

In a country where more than 85% of the population is involved in agriculture, rural policy has a tendency to be bound up with that of national development. In rural policy the Lao PDR has consistently leaned in two directions:

- Firstly towards the **reduction of slash-and-burn** (and in certain provinces the eradication of opium poppy cultivation).
- Secondly to providing **access to services for everyone** including the most remote populations.

Although these two objectives have been constantly reaffirmed, the methods of attaining them have fluctuated according over time and according to province. Only since the end of the 1980's has a precisely defined rural and environmental policy been announced permitting the establishment of a coherent set of measures and the institution of rural management bodies.

<sup>11</sup> cf. World Bank report (1994)

<sup>12</sup> cf. CARE (1996)

### The slash-and-burn issue

It is estimated that 300,000 families are practising swidden cultivation (hai), a figure that represents more than 40% of rural families. Practically all of these families are from Austroasiatic, Miao-Yao or Tibeto-Burmese hilltribe minorities who remain in districts hard to access<sup>13</sup>. As early as the liberation and even before in the areas of Pathet Lao resistance, the mountain populations were advised to abandon slash-and-burn agriculture (hai), after which they were convinced of the benefits of practising a paddy-field rice cultivation that is more profitable and less destructive to forestry. As access to the plains remained difficult for most of them, they tried to practise lowlands agriculture in the foothills.

However, whether due to the land or the techniques, the results were on the whole disappointing. Despite fluctuations, the area under hai cultivation seems to have considerably increased between 1977 and 1988<sup>14</sup>. Unable to propose satisfactory local alternatives, the district authorities in many cases had no choice but to forbid the cutting of primary forests and to limit the length of time that forestry could lie fallow, in order to prevent the expansion of this agriculture in the areas nearby villages. Despite the repeated instructions from central authority, the measures taken varied significantly from one region to another as the situation was left in the hands of local authorities.

**The Tropical Forestry Action Plan** of 1990 marked a turning point in government policy. Stating the decline of forested surface area (falling from 70 % to around 45 % of the country in 50 years) and taking into account international concern over the subject of natural-resource degradation in south-east Asia, this plan contrasted with the disconnected nature of previous directives. It took a general view of the environmental problems existing in Laos and drew up a list of economic, social and legal measures to be taken. Among other things, it confirmed the importance that the government accords the reduction of slash-and-burn methods, but it also stated the necessity of developing sustainable economic alternatives (husbandry, agro-forestry etc.) in upland districts so that villagers could improve their standard of living.

During its meeting in 1991 the Sixth Party Congress, in accord with the resolutions of the new economic policy introduced in 1986, reaffirmed that one stage of the transition from a subsistence economy to a market economy is to go through the progressive abandoning of slash-and-burn practices. A 1992 decree set a three-year maximum duration for letting forest lie fallow, (a theoretical figure which is looking like becoming reality) and another in 1993 created national forestry reserves. Measures were also taken to make the fight against opium poppy cultivation more effective in the north of the country.

Similarly in 1993, **the Medium Term Socio-Economic Development Plan up to the Year 2000** was to make reforestation and the stopping of slash-and-burn agriculture by the year 2000 its primary objective. In addition to that target the document also recommended a “stabilisation of agriculture” for the hill-peoples, meaning permanent settlement<sup>15</sup> of villages, as well as a rural development programme that includes the protection and management of natural resources and the reduction of poverty among mountain populations.

<sup>13</sup> On this issue, cf Chazee (1993), Dufumier (1996), Van Gansberghe (1994), and Saravane-Sekong report.

<sup>14</sup> According to Dufumier (1996) : +30% between 1977 and 1984. For Chazee (1993), +73% between 1981 and 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Permanent settlement concerning 900,000 people. See below “Institutional arrangements” report

### Settlement and the rural development programme.

A real effort has been made to put into practice the constitutional principle according to which any Lao national, whatever his ethnic group, can benefit from the services provided by the State. Soon after 1975 a great number of schools and dispensaries were built in remote areas, with priority given to ethnic minority villages that had agreed to settle along roadsides or riverbanks. However, in many of these ‘fixed’ villages, just as the attempts to practise irrigated rice agriculture often proved brief, so the educational and medical infrastructures encountered numerous difficulties, mainly due to a lack of skilled staff and/or equipment. Today in many upland districts, traces survive of these post-war investments which could only ever function briefly and rarely.

Once these remote districts opened up, it came to light that the attempts to practise irrigated rice agriculture had not fulfilled expectation and that the supervision of services had not been properly ensured. The resettlement of highland villages in the interior of the same districts was conceived as a key to replacing slash-and-burn agriculture and as being the only way of providing them with access to services. It was a necessary first step but not sufficient in itself to fully protect the forest or to guarantee development.

The need for a stronger rural organisation and a planning strategy for the medium and long-term was answered with a rural development programme that became effective in 1994<sup>16</sup>. This was the creation of the Leading Committee for Rural Development, within the Party Central Committee, and the provincial Committees for Rural Development which are directly linked to the Governor’s Cabinet and have influence at district level. The committees act at each level as district policy formulation bodies to coordinate and plan rural development. Central to this institutional plan is the creation of “**focal zones**” for development.

### The Focal Zones

These zones are planned as integrated rural development sites that are supposed to benefit from important State support, either on the technical and logistical side or on the financial side. New habitation zones will be created along roadsides and in the lowlands to gather together new or displaced villages. Rice fields will be allocated to these villages along with the implementation of various economic activities such as livestock-raising and tree plantations, in order to replace slash-and-burn agriculture and opium-poppy cultivation<sup>17</sup>.

The focal zones are conceived as the embryo of a future Lao rural structure; they serve as models and constitute the preliminary components of a new kind of rural space intended to progressively develop through expansion. As we will see, the efforts of international assistance projects (NGOs etc.) are primarily directed towards these villages. Specialisation efforts in the development zones are similarly supported on a district level: In Oudomxai for example, certain districts are considered essentially as rice producing areas whereas others tend towards animal husbandry, market gardening or even forestry. Thus the focal zones are seen as the spearhead of these specialisation initiatives.

Unlike during previous attempts, when sedentarisation efforts were usually left to the local authorities and were poorly coordinated, the areas for development are selected through a decision-making process stretching right up to central authority. The provincial committees for rural development

<sup>16</sup> cf. “Institutional arrangements” below.

<sup>17</sup> cf. Oudomxai report

identify potential focal zones in their districts and a selection is made by the governor's cabinet. This is sent to the national authorities which set a list of priority zones. Thus in Xieng Khouang, of the thirty-five projects proposed in the 1995-2000 five-year plan, seven were selected by the provincial authorities, and two, judged at central level to be crucial, received national financing (the others remaining the responsibility of the provincial authorities)<sup>18</sup>. To an external observer the organisation of these various areas of development may seem a little confusing, but **the implementation of the five-year plan has been effective in all the provinces studied and clearly demonstrates a political will to coordinate rural development in regions where relocations are a central issue.**

**If there is no specific policy about resettlements in the Lao PDR (neither an official project, nor nationwide State decrees, nor legal texts)<sup>19</sup>, research shows that a constant correspondence currently exists between the creation of development zones and resettlement planning.** Any village or part of village invited to move is directed towards the focal zones. This shows another significant difference from the old resettlement policy; it is no longer a matter of settling villages in upland districts but rather of inducing the villagers to leave their upland territory (what is generally ancient settlement land for the Austroasiatics, and while more recent for the Miao-Yao or Tibetan-Burmese still culturally important in that it links them to a traditional highland lifestyle) to settle in the lowlands or valleys along roadsides.

One factor behind the reasoning of the authorities is that this is an economical option<sup>20</sup>; it is less expensive to lead villagers towards services than to bring services and their supporting infrastructure to people in remote areas. It is also an agricultural necessity since lowland-style arable cultivation proved to be restricted by the lack of space available for irrigated rice agriculture in upland territories: It makes sense for these villages to exploit the larger river valleys.

It follows that displacements should quickly change the demographic pattern of provinces as lowland districts receive a significant influx of new inhabitants while the upland districts are progressively depopulating.

**The principal characteristic of resettlements linked to the current rural development policy is not so much that the population shifts, or that this is designed to be permanent settlement; these are recurrent themes in recent Lao history. It is rather that these villagers have been made to leave their original territory, thereby making their sedentarisation irreversible as part of an increasingly rigorous deterritorialisation process.**

It should also be emphasised that, unlike in the regional context, these relocations effect a movement from the mountains to the lowlands; from less populated to more densely populated areas. This tendency gives population dynamics in Laos a specific characteristic (in sharp contrast to that in Vietnam)<sup>21</sup> and leads to concern that in the future, **there is risk of land pressure**, a problem already in existence in certain areas. The local authorities must evaluate the risk, anticipate it, and be aware of the challenge it can pose to the continuation of the resettlement process.

<sup>18</sup> cf. Xieng Khouang report

<sup>19</sup> cf. "Institutional arrangements" below

<sup>20</sup> This point was made clear in Luang Namtha (see Luang Namtha report).

<sup>21</sup> See for instance Evans (Grant) *Internal Colonialism in the Central Highlands of Vietnam* in *Sojourn* vol.7, 2 (1992)

### 3. Varying situations

Although it is tempting to paint an overall picture, the situation is not everywhere uniform. Just as a number of historical reasons can be found to explain the past population shifts, **there is no one pattern which can account for all contemporary resettlements.** The survey, which was carried out in villages settled at different times, brings to light a great variety of situations. It is certainly possible to identify recurrent situations or to list typologies<sup>22</sup>, but we prefer here to insist on the distinctions which must be taken into account. It is important to;

- distinguish **who is moving**: it can be a whole village that is displaced (as often happens in Sekong or Luang Namtha); or families (or segments of lineage with the Hmong of Xieng Khouang), or even fractions of villages<sup>23</sup>.

- distinguish **reception sites**: it can be the former village simply transplanted or a new village that groups together several displaced hamlets (a village is defined as comprising of at least twenty families and all hamlets of less than twenty houses are added to larger communities), or even an existing village in which newcomers will create their own quarter. The new structure can be mono-ethnic, or can almagamate families belonging to various tribes. Thus in Saravane some villages are made up of Katang, Alac, Katu and Ta Oi. In Xieng Khouang Hmong quarters appear within Lao Tai villages.

- distinguish the **resettlement trajectories** of villagers: Some transfers may cover a long distance, for instance from one province to another, while others are shorter, from inside the same district or from a neighbouring district. Some are direct and remove the whole village at once whereas others are completed in phases. In certain cases, as is shown by the delocation map in Luang Namtha<sup>24</sup>, it is possible to follow complex routes with those of different ethnic groups crossing each other, showing that for twenty years, villagers have been looking for better locations or places they consider more acceptable. It is necessary also to distinguish between the means provided for these transfers; even if the final destination is the same place, walking six days through the jungle and travelling for three hours in a truck are not the same. This affects perceptions of a relocation.

- distinguish between **the reasons and the various influences behind these reasons**: if most of the above-mentioned reasons (eradication of slash-and-burn agriculture, security, opium, provision of services...) are the concerns of sources external to the villages, it should be remarked that the closer these sources are to the local levels, the more informed their policy is likely to be; the district authorities of some provincial services are notable for their knowledge of village life at grass-roots level and are therefore very flexible in their application of various instructions. When this policy is responded to or meets with real concerns in the villages themselves, one must be aware that **some villagers are not always as convinced by these reasons.** It is noted that the issues the questionnaire revealed as central to the villagers are on the whole the same as the motives of the administration (namely the impossibility of practising rice cultivation, the consequences of the war, and isolation). In general, some village representatives will act as leaders in the displacement decision-making process, while others show reluctance or sometimes even clear opposition.

<sup>22</sup> cf. Saravane report, and proposition of a typology in 'Institutional arrangements'<sup>a</sup> below.

<sup>23</sup> cf. Ireson (1995)

<sup>24</sup> cf. Luang Namtha report.

Sometimes predictable generation gaps also appear. **The younger generations are more receptive to the idea of moving closer to urban centers or communication axes and more favourable even to a radical change in their way of life, while older people feel more attached to their traditional values and lifestyle.** In order to convince the most reluctant villagers, a serious attempt at explanation is made by the district representatives who present the advantages (better land at the new location, state support during the move, more guaranteed futures for their children and so on); various pressures, either internal or external to the village, denounce individualistic behaviour that is counter to the general interest but the aim of the discussions is always to reach agreement

In most of the cases studied, the relocation appears to be the result of a **negotiation process** between the provincial or district authorities (now represented by the members of the Rural Development Committees) and the villagers. Obviously in the cases of the post-war security displacements and even some recent displacements (especially in Xieng Khouang <sup>25</sup>), the decision to displace people can seem authoritarian. However the present survey shows that the villagers interviewed consider that on average less than 12% of the displacements were obligatory <sup>26</sup>. On the other hand it also shows that the discussions between the authorities and villagers sometimes lasted several months or even a few years. The frequent schisms within villages, with some families choosing to move others and others preferring to stay on the former site, prove that real debate, leading to varying decisions, is held among those involved.

Unanimous opinion seldom occurs spontaneously, but a collective discipline inspired by influential and powerful village or clan figures usually surfaces to voice a response of either acceptance or refusal. The “khet”, former or current village leaders, are often solicited by the authorities to set an example. In their desire to apply the provincial planning policy local administrators place gradual pressure on villagers, followed eventually by stronger arguments (penalties corresponding to non-respect of certain State decrees) but only after lengthy consideration and discussions involving villagers and families <sup>27</sup>.

It is also important to note that **in many cases it is the villagers themselves who make the initiative to relocate and then begin the negotiation process.** This occurs when people are anxious to settle in lowlands because they are dissatisfied with their remote location, usually on account of the poor yield from the soil (the obligation to limit forestry fallow time for swidden farmers causes a decline in soil fertility) or because they hope to enjoy certain advantages offered to them (roads, plantations), or because their current resettlement site does not satisfy them and they want a transferral <sup>28</sup>. As a consequence they express their desire to move to the district or provincial authorities. As “spontaneous” shifts are no longer authorised, they must coordinate their move with the planning established by the local authorities. **Sometimes, negotiations are held at their request and lead to their desire to move being initially rejected for not corresponding to preplanned objectives. This shows that the government’s aim is not lowland relocation in itself and under any condition, but permanent settlement of the lowlands in the context of a land planning policy, with an effort to plan and coordinate resettlement.**

<sup>25</sup> cf. Oudomxai, Xieng Khouang reports.

<sup>26</sup> In this case we can assume the people interviewed were cautious in their answers; the notion of obligation gave rise to various interpretations. It is not easy to evaluate the room to manoeuvre for the villagers who want to reply in the negative to an insistent official demand. However the negotiation process, often long and held before any decision is made, is present in most of the villages surveyed.

<sup>27</sup> cf. the example of Ban Kandon in Saravane-Sekong report. See also Vientiane Times 23-25 April 1997 p.9.

<sup>28</sup> cf. It is a frequent case mainly in Xieng Khouang.

With the obvious exception of the cases of infrastructure projects or security displacements involving unintentional shifts, the classical distinction made in displacement studies between **voluntary and involuntary** shifts, is difficult to use in complex situations. Opinions can differ even within villages where some families are ready to move and others refuse to leave their territory. As said before, there are in almost every case, villagers, generally those in charge, acting as the “initiators” of moving. Some families support the decision while others are subjected to this shift by the collective agreement.

In fact, any move is a serious decision for a community to take, whatever its traditions. These moves are most often determined by causes that are beyond the will of villages and are either internal (poor crop yields, epidemics,...) or external (government incentives, the attraction of roads, plantations)<sup>29</sup>. The moves are seldom strictly voluntary but are rather conditioned by circumstances. For some villagers however, relocation can be seen as a direct response to their current situation or as an opportunity to be seized. In this sense, we can say that displacements are also intentional. **If the distinction between voluntary and involuntary is significant in special cases, it can be seen as not really relevant at a nationwide level.**

**Therefore it is advisable to take the diversity of these situations into account and to avoid any simplification in the analysis; This is not to say though that an overall analysis is not possible. We will see, on the contrary, that the results of the survey are consistent enough to allow some general perceptions.**

#### 4. Extent of displacements

In the regions studied, the huge number of villages and families that have been displaced in the last twenty years is striking. While the rate for many of these districts is about one third of the villages, which is quite considerable, the percentage reached 50 to 85% in some areas such as Nonghet in Xieng Khouang province, Phouvong in Attapeu, or Long in Luang Namtha.

Altogether the displacements of the last few years may seem rather meagre compared to those of the post-war era. They mark however the beginning of a new displacement wave associated with the rural development policy. Though it is difficult at the moment to accurately evaluate the extent of this new shift, discussions held with the local authorities during the survey let us understand that it could be considerable.

The local forecasts made for the years to come are based on the fact that by the year 2000, slash-and-burn agriculture should no longer exist in Laos, or at least should be reduced ten-fold. From that forecast, the capacity of each district to develop other economic activities is evaluated: Rice fields, animal livestock, market gardening etc.. Also evaluated is the estimated number of families that can be settled in the district and offered a decent living standard through these new activities. **Any district regarded as overpopulated according to these criteria must organise the migration of its extra population towards other districts or areas supposed to have much more space to settle new people.**

<sup>29</sup> cf. Luang Namtha report

## Context of resettlement

The figures so obtained are spectacular, even if rather vague at the national level <sup>30</sup>. Through the provincial reports <sup>31</sup>, we see that in several cases, more than 50% of the upland district populations, mainly in the South, are to be moved over the next five years. Yet the destination of these populations is not clearly defined, so we can imagine that, at the moment, these forecasts are working hypotheses. However, they are considered as the basis of the implementation of provincial planning that the authorities, as said previously, tend to apply with determination.

**Thus, even if the forecasts made are only indicative and often seem unrealistic within the prescribed time, it should be expected, in any case, that a new wave of displacements of great significance all over the country will occur in the short-term.**

### Conclusion on the context of resettlements

If mobility of villages is an old theme in Lao history, the current permanent settlement tendency is clearly differentiated by the demonstrated determination to settle populations once and for all in lowlands, in places where it is possible to replace slash and burn methods (or opium-poppy cultivation) with other production.

By their association with the rural development policy, the current displacements are better planned and coordinated than they used to be. They are also less reversible in the sense that when leaving their upland district, many families broke for good with their natural environment and cultural habits.

In most cases, displacements are the subject of negotiations between the provincial administration services and the villagers that can take a long time. Without it being unanimous, displacements are often accepted, even sometimes requested by families, because despite the variables they occur in the context of a very hard life in the original territory. **Indeed, the survey shows a generally precarious initial situation, hence explaining that the hope to reach a better life justifies the decision to leave.**

**Beyond the context in which the current displacements occur, and beyond the various reasons the villagers give, it is also important to note the displacement consequences; to understand that is, what the displaced families gain or lose from relocation, to see whether they were given the means to anticipate their new situation, and to evaluate the accompanying measures essential to the success of transplantation.**

<sup>30</sup> The different forecasts that we could gather at the central level vary from 100 000 to 800 000 people to be displaced in the next years for slash and burn cultivation reasons.

<sup>31</sup> cf. Attapeu and Saravane reports.



## II. EFFECTS OF RELOCATIONS: PROBLEMS AND BASIC NEEDS OF THE NEW VILLAGES

### A. Presentation of the survey's main findings

#### 1. Note on the statistical database

What follows is a concise presentation of the results of the quantitative survey conducted in sixty-seven relocated villages, constituting a sample of the six selected provinces. The reader can refer directly to the tables of figures and charts adjoining. For a detailed province by province analysis explaining the substantial amount of general numerical data, refer to the survey reports which form the second part of this document.

**The structure of this presentation follows the rubrics of the questionnaire. The same structure has also been followed in the presentation of the quantitative data and in the reports of the provincial surveys (part two).**

**As the aim of the survey was to identify problems that require attention in the relocated villages, it can sometimes seem that this summary of results places less emphasis on the subsequent advantages of resettlement than on the difficulties encountered. The reports of the provincial enquiry give many examples of encouraging situations in various areas. It can be understood however that it is important here to determine the needs of the villagers before defining appropriate aid for them, rather than portaying a consistently satisfactory situation.**

#### 2. Survey Sample

Around one thousand families / households (the definition used was 'people sharing the same hearth') were surveyed, which amounts to almost 7,000 people. The average size of each family for the six provinces was under seven persons per household, relatively low considering that contraception is rarely practised. Without making a thorough demographic analysis, it can be noted that the average number of children (less than five per household on average) and the meagre percentage of people over the age of forty-five, are **indicative of a situation in which the death rate, particularly infant mortality, is high.**

The families interviewed originated from more than **twenty-five different ethnic groups**, with the ethnic majority known as 'Lao Loum' (Lao-Tai) representing less than 3% of the sample. The distribution of tribes to provinces of the families interviewed does not pretend to mirror the actual proportions of the populations present in each province; for example, in Xieng Khouang only the Hmong group is represented. The cross-section is, however, intended to give an idea of the groups which have been the main subjects of relocation.

### *B. The displacements*

Most of the families surveyed across the provinces have been on their current sites for less than ten years, with the notable exception of the villages visited in Saravane which have been established

longer. This is not to say of the others that their original displacement was recent. It is observed that in three provinces the majority of the villages had moved at least twice ( and even more than four times in the cases of 32% of those in Xieng Khouang and 17% in Saravane) before settling in their current location. **So, the high percentage of resettlements in the last ten years does not contradict the previous high mobility of the populations, particularly in the years immediately following the end of the war** - this is a notion confirmed by all the provincial reports of the survey.

It should again be pointed out that while some villages are removed en bloc at the same time, other displacements are done gradually. This happens when the new site and the old one are separated by a distance that can be realistically covered on foot; either some families first settle the new place and are progressively followed by the rest, or the sites are first prepared before the transplantation of the dwellings. It can be undeniably stated that when it is possible, removal in phases reduces the effects of rupture and eases adaptation to the new environment.

**Relocation during the dry season is preferred everywhere.** While not quite being a slack period of the agricultural year (some groups practice out of season growing), it permits the installation of the new village (house construction) at the same time as the fields are cleared and prepared for wet season cultivation. Aside from this, many relocations are conducted on foot over several days and through difficult terrain, so the reasons for avoiding the monsoon season can be easily understood.

With one of the major objectives of the displacements being the settling of the plains, it is particularly interesting to note the movements from the hills to the valleys. The survey shows that **this descending movement is very clearly attested to in the south of the country (Sekong, Attapeu) where the plain / mountain contrast is striking.** This movement seems more complex in the north, which comprises areas of mountains and narrow valleys where numerous resettled villages remain at altitude (Xieng Khouang, Oudomxai)<sup>32</sup>. There, resettlement has principally served to move villages closer to communication axes. In Luang Namtha there are villages which having previously tended to live on the plains, have chosen after several years to move back towards the mountains. The authorities however tend to oppose these returning movements which are like an admission of non-integration in the valleys. Moreover, if it is noted that the data obtained concerns only the last relocation to take place, and the many stages which characterise the relocations of hilltribes are taken into account, it can also be understood that **numerous displacements indicated as being from plain to plain are only a last step in the journey of the villagers who were originally displaced from the highland districts** (this is notably the case in Saravane).

## 1. The Reasons

**The reasons (causes) for the displacements** such as expressed by the villagers are very diverse and considerably different according to the year of the displacement. Many of the older displacements, in Saravane particularly but also in Attapeu and Xieng Khouang, were directly **linked to the effects of the war (defoliants, unexploded ordnance)**. The more recent displacements in contrast, even if displaying some of the above symptoms, are according to the villagers motivated rather **by economic factors**; the impossibility of growing rice at the previous site, a result of complying with the authorities' request to replace hai with paddy farming; moving to the side of roads or waterways (from being 'in the middle of nowhere') a reason cited notably in the south; lack of land (this

<sup>32</sup> Some northern districts, not studied in this survey, may experience however situations similar to the south (in Phongsaly for instance)

## Effects of relocations

applies also to those villages previously relocated and disappointed by their allotted lands) etc. Without being completely denied, the obligation factor is generally unemphasised, which as stated previously, reflects among other things the dialogue held in most cases. In Attapeu though, the instructions of the state are given as the primary cause of displacement.

It should be noted that **lack of rice** is never indicated as an essential reason for moving out of the original territory. Knowing that most of the people interviewed come from areas usually considered by experts as producing insufficient rice, it can be deduced that bridging the gap in the rice harvest is a well-established practice in the traditional subsistence cycle. Complimentary garden cultivation and a comprehensive knowledge of the forest environment around them provide additional sources of food (roots, fruits, plants, game etc.) and enable even a mediocre rice crop to be stretched out over the year. It is without doubt advisable to be aware of this fact and to bear it in mind in a context where international aid tends to place great emphasis on the urgency of rice distributions.

Neither is **health** given as a primary reason (epidemics are briefly remembered in Attapeu). This is no assurance that the sanitary situation was regarded as satisfactory before, but does show that it was not regarded as sufficient reason for moving or that the advantages relocation would bring in this respect were uncertain.

## 2. Assistance

When discussing **the assistance given to support displacements**, the first statement to make is that it is very variable; firstly it is not systematic, is sometimes completely missing and until now has seemed to be granted case by case according to differing conditions. Secondly, in the rural development context it is exclusively the work of the state (provincial and district authorities) and most often appears in the form of **transport assistance** (lorries provided once the villagers have reached a road for their journey; thus in Xieng Khouang this happened in a third of relocations). **Food aid is sometimes also provided. Even construction materials are at times contributed** (planks, corrugated iron etc.) for the building of the new village. This means, in the south of the country at any rate, a complete departure from the traditional style of dwelling.

It is surprising nonetheless to learn that even when the survey showed effective aid from the public services, the great majority of people interviewed felt that they had not received any support. It may be noted here that the **sentiment among many villagers was that the assistance provided was not proportional to the difficulties they had to encounter**. In addition the assistance is often viewed as a method of making the removal more effective rather than of supporting the families during their time of upheaval. This is particularly true for the medical plan; health service assistance appears to be very limited when it does exist (merely distributing some medicine). If this reflects the lack of facilities at the disposal of dispensaries in isolated districts, the consequences can be especially serious **during the completion of relocation as the survey shows these can have a human cost which can not be ignored** (i.e deaths during the treks of several days accompanying some relocations and epidemics breaking out immediately afterwards; dysentery, malaria, measles, etc).

It is forecast that assistance to the families will become more systematic with the application of planning by the rural Development Committees. It is necessary to insist on the prevention of certain pathological risks (by vaccinations and providing medicines before the departure), and of

medical assistance throughout the whole displacement process until completion, as a priority among the provided assistance.

### 3. The belongings they carry

Families tend to bring as many things they can with them from their village. This first includes **livestock**, particularly cattle, which represent one of the main sources of capital for hilltribes. Driving buffalo and cows to the new site, when it is possible, is also an advantage for some groups in terms of establishing rice cultivation as these animals are used in the fields. It is observed however that families sometimes need to raise capital to finance their move (to rent lorries, buy rice, etc) and to do this they first sell their buffaloes. Others, because it is impossible to transport the animals (as the journey is too long or too difficult) or on religious grounds (buffaloes are the property of forest spirits, notably in Sekong and Attapeu) have to abandon them at the old village. It also happens that a group of cattle are lost on arrival due to disease. The transport of cattle generally seems to be a delicate operation which often entails loss.

The rest of villagers' belongings, other than their houses, generally amount to nothing. These are personal objects or prestige items (jewellery, big jars, gongs, drums etc.), or valuables such as radio-cassette players, domestic items (cooking utensils, baskets), tools, family handicrafts equipment (weaving, basket-weaving etc.) and whenever possible a reserve of rice (and some seeds for the new fields). Some goods however can not be transplanted such as fruit trees or site management facilities (water-supply systems etc.) and these are sorely missed on arrival.

When they arrive at their new homes, where they are supposed to integrate into a monetary economy, **the hilltribes of the south, freshly arrived from their high plateaux, do not generally have any amount of money.** Having practised a subsistence economy for several generations running, they have not often accumulated any form of capital, other than livestock, and have no real source of revenue. Their handicraft production is mostly geared for internal use or is suited to an exchange system which has been destroyed or considerably altered by the relocation. It will be seen later that they thus often find themselves in an economically vulnerable situation, one of the first consequences of which can be rapid debt accumulation. In the north the situation is a little different as the villagers participate more easily in commercial exchange. However, if the majority of them have some amount of capital at the time of the move, neither their funds nor their available revenues should be exaggerated and the survey has also found numerous situations of debt occurring since arrival at a new site.

**It is thus seen that the displacements in themselves, and not only the villages actually undergoing relocation, must be supported, especially by a medical assistance plan. It is true that the habit of past mobility argues for the consideration of the movements as events within the tradition of many hilltribes, which can lead us to suppose they have a great ability to adapt. Considering, however, the amount of difference between current relocations and past movements, and the shift to a new lifestyle, it is conducive to help families during this period of sharp upheaval. This will also influence the success of the establishment of the new village.**

## C. The Integration of New Villages; Characterisation by Sector

### 1. Languages and Education

Among the primary factors by which we can evaluate the integration of villagers is their capacity to express themselves in the national language, Lao, and their progress in education.

The very low percentage of girls and boys under the age of six who understand this language clearly indicates that **the raising of young children is still conducted in the ethnic tongue, which remains the principal language spoken in families**. If we turn to the 6-14 year age group however, it is seen that even if a significant number of young people still do not understand Lao (girls in the north above all - more than 50%!), **the majority claim to speak Lao and a proportion (around a quarter of boys) read and write it**.

It is in this age group that the best evidence can be found of **progress in mastering the Lao language. If this progress is linked to schooling, uncontestably more available than in the former districts, it is evidence also of a wider opening of the village to the outside world, with Lao being the language of communication** that is preferred in commerce or in trade with other villages. These generations differ from the preceding ones in that these people have a need to speak Lao on a daily basis. However they are also forming a continuity, for it is seen that contrary to what one would expect of hilltribe people coming from districts where the vernacular languages are used almost exclusively, their elders (adults over forty-five years) are on the whole equally capable of communicating in Lao. They have learned it sometimes in school, but also often in the army or working with the administration; linked to this is the fact that the progressive families are very prominent in the relocated villages. Still, there is a significant divide between the sexes. Although a large number of men (especially in the north) are said to be able to read and write, women remain, by and large, illiterate. A mild evolution has been noticed however, with the tentative beginnings of literacy programmes for girls in the new villages.

Moving beyond the language issue, when trying to evaluate more precisely the level of schooling it should first be stated that **of the numerous youngsters between six and fourteen saying that they do not attend school** (more than half in Oudomxai), absenteeism is particularly high among girls. In keeping with this, for those who do pursue education, **the level of study is not high, usually being limited to two years at primary school**.

The will to effectively school the children of the relocated villages encounters many different problems which lead to a great disparity of situations. While some villages are provided with schools offering three levels of primary education, others wait several years for the construction of a school itself, preferably a concrete one. During the wait parents are reluctant to send their children to another village where they would have to board. On top of this, once the school is built, still more time passes before a teacher is appointed. The teachers, usually Lao Loum, are reluctant to go and work in a hilltribe village where the job is reputed to be more difficult, Lao not being the first language. Moreover, the benefits of schooling children are not evident to families who have a particular need for their assistance at work during the initial years of the village's establishment. **Also, even when a school exists, very irregular attendance is observed on the part of the children**. The presence of a school is not in itself enough to guarantee successful schooling (achieving literacy is the first step).

It is seen that if relocation undeniably favours communications in the Lao language, often to the detriment of a multilinguism that previously allowed different ethnic groups to communicate with each other, **the progress of education is more slow. Aside from literacy, the benefits of skills learned at school are generally poorly understood and traditional skills retain a prestige and useful application**, except among the Hmong of Xieng Khouang who say they prefer to embrace new knowledge. **Generally speaking, only a very small number of children continue their studies after finishing their time at the village school.**

Without denying that the effort has been made to provide the relocated villages with a school structure on site, it might appear that this effort is uneven and often not well adapted. **During the crucial transitional phase particularly vigorous support should be made available in the field of education, not only for the benefit of the children, but also to help the adults adapt to their new environment. The requests for technical training made by the villagers, primarily to learn agricultural techniques, are indicative of real concerns which should be taken into account when planning non-formal education (as we will discuss later).**

## 2. Health

On health planning the survey provides a consistent enough picture through the six provinces. It shows above all **the great fragility within many villages during the first few years following relocation.**

This is particularly true of those villages which have moved straight from the mountains down to the plains. The change of altitude, the sudden switch of environment and sometimes the difference in water quality all put the displaced people in a new pathological situation to which they must adapt. **It can be noted everywhere that the first three years are often marked by the appearance of epidemics or the aggravation of endemic diseases - malaria, dysentery, measles and so forth.** The villagers are particularly vulnerable; firstly because they are weakened by the displacement itself, as has been seen, followed by the efforts of re-establishment (village construction, preparing fields etc.) and secondly because their diet is often disturbed: They are faced with rice shortages over the initial years until consistent rice production can be implemented and it is more difficult than before to find supplementary food from forest produce. They are unfamiliar with the natural resources surrounding their new area which are often less abundant than in the mountain regions they have left behind. **This fragility is reflected by a death-rate which is particularly high in the first years. Some villages surveyed had literally been decimated (with up to 30% dying, most usually due to malaria.)** The increased consumption of opium (and sometimes alcohol) in some northern villages is also interpreted as a response to the hardship encountered during the initial stages.

Moreover, the survey also shows that some longterm problems exist in the displaced villages beyond the installation period. One symptom that can remain is **an infant mortality rate that everywhere seems to be higher than the national average.** It would require a specific inquiry on this question to obtain reliable results, but the rough data gathered here and confirmed by the local health services indicates a disturbing situation. Without doubt this situation is no worse than it was in the districts left behind, but it does compare badly with the situation on the whole in the lowlands, especially with the Lao Loum villagers whose state of health is generally a lot better. **Indeed, it is observed**

that the casualty rate is such that relocated hilltribe villages require a number of years to regain a certain demographic balance.

Nevertheless some undeniable progress has been registered in the field of health. Advisory information from the health services circulates much more effectively in the new villages and the benefits of this follow. This is firstly true of advice about water, which is generally drawn from streams. **Water is everywhere now boiled more systematically than before**, even if the water is still not boiled for long enough. Some families, previously used to spring water, still refuse to rectify this problem. (It is suggested that the quality of the water available at new sites be systematically checked before the transplantation of a village). Also **mosquito-nets are in use in all the relocated villages**. The innovation which seems to have the most problems gaining acceptance is that of latrines. Although hygiene messages are well received it would appear that more education is required in this area; some messages are applied without being really understood. This is often the case for example, with the mosquito-nets. Even the use of a well or pump requires some education on what is good water. **The villagers are themselves often the first to ask for sound sanitary education.**

A clear evolution is also occurring **in the use of modern medicines in preference to other remedies in nearly all the relocated villages** (with the exception of Sekong). Here also though, it is necessary to qualify the fact and its actual practice. If the healing properties of the medicine are recognised and accepted, notions of selection and posology remain poorly understood. Villagers generally buy medicine from itinerant salesmen or small shops with no real medical advice concerning the prescription being available. Dosage is irrational by our standards. Only a small number of displaced villages possess their own dispensary or a nurse who can help them.

Accessibility to health services remains generally limited for villagers. Their proximity to roads enables some to receive more frequent visits from local health service personnel, notably allowing them to benefit from vaccination programmes - a near impossibility in remote districts. Against this, the use of hospitals is rare and except in provinces like Oudomxai or Xieng Khouang where an effort has been made to develop a dispensary creation plan for villages (financed by the Asian Development Bank), **the survey has established that relocated highlanders will only turn to local health facilities as a last resort**. It ought to be said that this attitude stems from the ineffectiveness of the health services during their village installation period when an inability to act against epidemics was found in most cases. Whenever possible, villagers will look to NGO's to provide emergency assistance. Suspicion of hospitals is an idea held among the hilltribes that the local authorities have not yet really succeeded in allaying. Hospital treatment has the reputation of being expensive and the hospital itself is a place which inspires many fears and to which villagers will only go after trying all the alternatives.

Although they are generally waning in the new villages **traditional medicine techniques retain an important role**. While taking drugs tends to be the first reaction to illness among resettled families, sacrificial or shamanistic practices follow immediately after, especially if recovery occurs too slowly. All the studies show there to be no contradiction in the minds of the villagers between modern medicine and these practices, with both techniques addressing different causes. In many villages there is even a paralleled increase of medicines and sacrifices in comparison to the old village. In contrast the therapeutic knowledge of traditional practitioners based on herbal lore is

more or less waning according to the regions or ethnic groups considered. Although a general knowledge, shared among families, of how to treat the most common complaints is maintained, the finer study of healing roots and plants, preserved by specialists, is in many cases not being passed on. 'The young are not interested' is frequently heard. The encouragements of the authorities towards the revival of traditional medicine practices should be noted.

**In every province analysed, health within the new villages remains a major concern. While it is noticed that hygiene advice provided by the provincial health services is better circulated than in the former villages, and that access to medicines and vaccinations has been facilitated by relocation, the state of sanitation is however far from satisfactory. It would seem absolutely essential that vital assistance is arranged for mountain villages coming down to settle on the plains and that it is made available from their moment of arrival. It is also clear that the displaced villages have a need, as they are more vulnerable than other lowland settlements, for careful, attentive and effective medical follow-up for at least the first three years that follow their move. At the present time it can be stated that it is a number of years after the rupture of the displacement before the relocated families find balanced health and the villages regain demographic stability.**

### 3. Agriculture and Livestock

It has been seen that in the context of rural development the eradication of slash-and-burn is one of the principal reasons behind the relocations. It should first be asked if the transplantation to a new site does effectively curb swidden (slash-and-burn or hai) farming, and what alternatives, i.e. rice or substitute crop production, are available to the villagers to compensate for the loss of their hai.

The percentage of families practising slash-and-burn cultivation has been severely reduced (particularly spectacularly in Attapeu) in four of the six provinces analysed. In two of the northern provinces, Luang Namtha and Oudomxai, the displacements have, on the contrary, maintained or even increased the number of families farming hai and in some districts there has been a decline in the number of families producing rice. These differences, which give rise to some paradoxical situations, can be easily explained when considering the local context. Anyway, their immediate implication is that **relocation does not guarantee everywhere the quick establishment of paddy-fields.**

In the north, as a result of the cultural traditions of the Miao-Yao and Tibetan-Burmese, who regard themselves as 'forest eaters', deforestation can fairly legitimately be attributed to the encroachment of hai. Nevertheless, with the exception of Xieng Khouang, it is in this region that swidden's replacement seems to be most difficult. The valleys are often already saturated and the development of large new areas of paddy-farming is not possible. Even when this is feasible, it is several years before the yield of the new fields is adequate and in the meantime the villagers depend on their swidden plots for their survival. This has to be tolerated. In the south the fight against slash-and-burn often takes a more voluntary approach (Attapeu, Sekong) and can meet with greater efficiency. Nevertheless it would seem that regarding the mountain districts, the hai system was a more stable one. The combination of low population density and the practising of long fallow periods for the woodland provided the necessary conditions for the reproduction of this agro-system which traditionally did not endanger primary forest. **The real paradox of the relocations is that, when**

**judged as a means of curbing slash-and-burn cultivation, its success in the north of the country where it is most necessary has not been very efficient (in every case initially), while in the south where it is less justified the exercise has been more effective.**

However across the whole country the reduction in the authorised fallow time, because it leads to a rapid decline in soil fertility, tends to render the cultivation of swidden plots non-productive in the long run and steadily obliges those farming them to seek alternatives. The cultivation of lowland-style **paddy-fields** is the favourite solution recommended for all new villages. The enquiry shows though that if paddy-fields can theoretically give superior rice yield to swidden-plots, in practice the villagers encounter such difficulties, especially during the first few years, that production is seriously compromised.

Several kinds of difficulty occur. Firstly, as has been seen, the problems caused by land pressure in some valleys has reduced the chances of finding good land for a village. While in the south villagers are on the whole satisfied with the land allocated to them (or chosen by them in conjunction with the agricultural services), the people in the north, notably in Oudomxai and Xieng Khouang, must often manage with soil of mediocre quality. Everywhere to some degree, the shortage of draught animals in the relocated villages hampers the efforts of the hilltribes to adapt their rice farming. For several of the groups, buffaloes are reared with the intention of sacrifice and cannot be used to work the fields. Elsewhere some families had to sell their cattle to pay for their removal or to buy the first year's rice; others lost theirs to disease or had never possessed the means to procure any. Therefore many villagers have to rent draught animals to till their plots. In addition, working the paddys demands more intensive labour. Yet this is often impossible from the start; many people are sick following the displacement - precisely when they are needed to clear and prepare the land. Thus, a bad start is often made which will be difficult to overcome and will frequently lead to borrowing from other families.

**Above all the transition to rice-paddy cultivation is for many of the highlanders akin to entering a new profession without really knowing the rules.** The villagers are the first to recognise their lack of technical competence on many points, i.e. mastering the water supply to the beds, planning irrigation resources, the selection of appropriate seeds and/or the identification of pests and diseases which can affect the harvest.

The most visible consequence of these various problems is **a fairly mediocre rice yield in the new villages.** In all of them production is inferior to the provincial average and in several regions it is inferior to that of the hai. This is particularly true of the initial years, but it has been observed that this situation can become perennial if specialised aid does not arrive to help the villagers overcome the technical obstacles that they cannot surmount themselves. **This aid exists, either from the provincial services or from projects (international organisations, NGO's etc.), but it does not emanate from a co-ordinated source and is irregularly dispatched. With some exceptions moreover, it is usually sporadic, and rarely has the means or the time to instil technical skills.**

Faced with the disappointing results of their rice cultivation, the spontaneous reaction of the highlanders is to revert to swidden farming, a skill they have long possessed and which, when practised in parallel, allows them to recover their rice deficit. On this issue it must be pointed out

that the relocations which are often the most successful in agricultural terms are those where the villagers come to continue their traditional hai at the same time as progressively getting accustomed to irrigated-field techniques at the new site, sometimes with the help of neighbours. That means a relocation within the same district or not too far away. In this way the technical transition is accomplished gradually and food security is assured by the hai until the time when the paddy-fields can be relied upon.

However the reduction of hai surface area, even the banning of all slash-and-burn cultivation (except that which is in preparation of paddy-fields) in some districts implies that this complimentary production, which sometimes represents the bulk of the harvest, is on the decline. Added to the mediocre harvest of the paddys, **this leads to the result that, in the majority of the villages studied, the yield of rice is lower than it was in the original village.** Again, while this happens to be principally a characteristic of the first few years of the resettlement, it ought to be recognised that this situation goes on long afterwards in many of the cases studied, where villagers are unable to restore their former production levels.

Another logical consequence is that **everywhere the gap between harvests that must be bridged in the new villages is wider than it was on the old sites.** In some cases it has even approached double (Attapeu, Oudomxai, Xieng Khouang, etc). Now, due to their new ecological environment and deprived of forests as many roadside villages are, it is less likely than it used to be that the hilltribes can find complimentary food from their natural surroundings. It can be said that in general they do not manage the harvest gap as well as they used to.

**The problem of food security is posed in several province** and a rice bank system has been set up, in the north particularly, for some relocated villages (with some initial interest-free loans.) This appears though to be a system which must be established very carefully as it can rapidly lead to inequality between families; in many cases the poorest dare not borrow for fear of being unable to repay the debt later and the loans benefit above all the families who are already the best-off.

Out of season cultivation and the extension of gardens plots (souan) in the villages are encouraged by the authorities. It is noticed that market-gardening is undergoing significant growth in new villages in the north of the country. Also encouraged is the development of other cash-providing crops: fruit trees, sugar-cane etc., and more profitable crops in the highland such as coffee plantations (in Saravane, Sekong), cardamom, teak wood and so on. Although these crops take time to provide a decent yield, some villages are already showing profit (in Namtha, or on the Bolovens Plateau). But others do not know how to accomplish this. Sometimes, because they are growing the same crops as their neighbours, there is a glut on the local market. Elsewhere, having only recently arrived, they are not yet well integrated into the commercial networks which can provide them with wider distribution. Some provinces, like Oudomxai are attempting to solve this problem by creating special zones and supporting the establishment of commercial channels for the villagers' produce. In the north of the country the question of replacing opium production, by far the most lucrative of the hilltribes' crops, is entwined with this general search for profitable alternative crops as part of rural development.

**In the majority of cases it is observed that the alternative crops do not give enough clear revenue to provide the villagers with any significant profits. At best they allow some to buy rice to counter the annual shortfall.**

**Animal husbandry is an absolute necessity for the new villages.** Families have generally well developed the rearing of poultry (chicken and duck) in spite of several diseases. In contrast the number of pigs and cattle is not high (less than two buffaloes per family on average) when compared with the neighbouring Lao Loum villages. As already discussed, villagers are often separated from some of their animals when they move and the rebuilding of cattle at the new site meets many obstacles despite vaccination against various diseases more frequent in the valleys than in the remote areas. In addition to the financial damage that the loss of a buffalo represents, the farmer is also deprived of a working animal. The local veterinary services are making a concerted effort to help the new villages but have insufficient means at their disposal.

Other supplements, hunting and fishing, are practised in almost all the relocated villages. The greatest advantage of access to the valleys is the fishing benefits. This activity is enjoying a renaissance and in addition to family food (providing important protein) it is bringing extra revenue. Hunting on the other hand is declining in the south, though remains the same in the north. This indicates above all however, important changes in the way it is carried out. More restrictions have been placed to protect big game. This, and the scarcity of thick forest around the resettlements in comparison with their former mountain areas, generally limits hunting to small animals which will feed only the hunters. Elsewhere, in correlation with the increasing gap between harvests, gathering is increasing in the new villages.

**The main conclusion to draw from the agricultural aspect is that the passage from hai (slash-and-burn) cultivation to paddy-fields causes great difficulty for the relocated hilltribes. The first consequence for the new villages is lower rice production and an increase in the gap they must bridge between harvests. Despite some success in the search for alternative crops, it is absolutely necessary that technical assistance is more assured in this field and that food security is guaranteed for the villagers until their paddy-fields provide sufficient yield.**

#### 4. Other economic activities

**Handicrafts** are on the whole in decline in relocated villages, with purchased products progressively replacing those domestic products made by the family. However proximity to a road or a market has a beneficial effect for some products, providing new and easily found outlets. This is above all true for pieces of weaving or embroidery: In nearly all provinces the Lao Women's Union plays a decisive role in developing traditional weaving, promoting it and helping distribution. Some products also circulate between provinces through family networks and are even exported abroad (Hmong embroideries in particular). Some villages installed along roads capitalise on the opportunity provided to specialise in basket-weaving, selling articles previously reserved for family use; cooking and carrying baskets, mats etc.

This development can not though be observed in all handicrafts. There is in fact a decline in know-how in all the new villages. Fewer and fewer people, whether they be weaving women or basket-weaving men, display sound mastery of handicraft techniques and it is perceived that the products are less refined from an aesthetic point of view. An effort is being made by the authorities to try and reverse this tendency (providing villagers with weaving training, etc.) and one can think that tourism development will provide impetus for some handicraft activities, even if there is a risk of standardization of the highlanders art.

Some specialisations may seem not very prestigious but they do provide additional revenue for the new villages. In Xieng Khouang and Saravane, provinces greatly affected by the bombing, some villagers specialise in selling ordnances and debris metal. Others supply neighbouring villages with firewood. Smith work or skill in animal breeding selection can also provide income for some families.

The resettlements have also led to an increase in the number of wage earners among the villagers. While plantation work has been practised for a long time, several other possibilities exist these days like working on the construction sites of roads and dams etc. Moving closer to the towns can sometimes open the way to an administrative job which assures steady income to a family. Agricultural piece-work is also fairly common in the new villages : hiring out their labour in neighbouring villages in order to buy rice is a frequent solution amongst villagers whose paddy-fields are not yet productive.

It has been seen that the commercial sale of agricultural produce, like that of handicrafts, requires a knowledge of trading networks. If they are not assisted at the outset the resettled villagers, accustomed to a self-sufficient economy in a small area, suffer from their lack of experience in this realm. The survey shows however an evolution of the highlanders mentality and notably **a rapid familiarisation with the market, indicative of integration into a market economy**. Whereas before the principal economic partners were the neighbouring villages, **today the market is by far the preferred trading place for the new villages**. There they regularly sell gathered produce (roots, herbs, bamboo shoots etc.), fruit, poultry and basket work. At the same time it is also where they buy the majority of things: Proximity to towns has stimulated consumer desire and created needs that were hitherto unknown. More and more manufactured products are replacing homemade goods (clothes, cooking utensils and various domestic objects.) **Domestic goods and equipment are on the increase in the relocated villages**. Although the number remains largely inferior in comparison to the provincial average, there is a significant growth over the former villages.

Obviously the nearer the displaced village is to the market, the closer its relationship. In some regions the survey shows that beyond a distance of 10 km the villagers (especially those distant from roadsides) are reluctant to go and will rather trade with neighbouring villages as before. Still, the presence of a road or waterway near a village is an undeniable asset as far as trade is concerned. It also provides an opportunity for families to develop a shop or stall at the side of the route which can become a rare means of making money.

**The economic data from the new villages shows the existence of new opportunities linked to the roads and markets. Many problems though have to be overcome before these chances can be converted to sources of revenue for the villagers. Assisting the highlanders to join commercial networks is necessary, but they must also be taught how to capitalise possible benefits. The hill families rarely have a strategy for hoarding money. They are liable to spend their capital quickly and find themselves in another precarious situation. Care should also be taken, in what is already a delicate enough phase for the new villages, that access to new trade is not established to the detriment of traditional self-help.**

## **5. Culture**

Noticed among all the populations examined, most clearly with the youth, is a tendency towards acculturation. The relocations have played a major role in this process and are perhaps envisaged as a method of rapid integration into the national culture. **The question posed throughout the survey is whether the relocations do not represent, in many cases, too brutal a cultural rupture which will have a negative effect on the multi-ethnic cultural heritage of Laos rather than consolidating a national identity.**

The most obvious signs of cultural rupture caused **by relocation are given by the development of houses and the evolution of dress.** The adoption of Lao Loum style dwellings (houses on stilts designed to accommodate, on average, one family) is strongly encouraged in the new villages by the local authorities, who provide advisors to explain how to build houses or construct an example house for the village chief. The new habitat, while having some advantages (in terms of hygiene and light) is often at odds with the architectural and social traditions of the hilltribes who are used, for example, to long houses (able to house up to a hundred people) as some southern austro-asiatic groups are (in Sekong, Saravane), or built on the ground houses as are the Miao-Yao of the north. The difference is not merely technical but signifies the loss of an ancient architectural skill or art (in many austroasiatic villages the houses are decorated with carving).

Another consequence of this is a profound change of social relationships in the village. Clan groups formerly gathered under one 'house' or quarter now find themselves spread all over the new site, splintered into small groups. The physical structure of the actual village affects the social structure of some groups: The houses are now aligned on either side of a street when they used to be arranged in a circle (around a communal building among some austroasiatics) or even hierarchically placed on the successive levels of foothills as was seen with some tibetan-burmese groups. Adopting a Lao Loum style plan for everybody means that the orientation and the specific geomantic principles of different cultures cannot now be respected. An essential cultural reference is thus lost all of a sudden. This is not unconnected with the psychological difficulties that some hilltribes experience adapting to a new site.

In the same way, when one is aware of the role played by clothes in many of the groups, marking the identity of each group and displaying their weaving art, the abandoning of traditional garb assumes a significance far beyond fashion. Urban influence and the increase of cross-tribal communication can easily account for dress evolution and attempting to halt this evolution is out of the question. It should be remembered though that the clothes of Lao are an important part of the national heritage, a sign of cultural distinction, and care should be taken that relocation does not accelerate their loss. The work of the Lao Womens Union to safeguard this heritage and maintain traditions of dress must be underlined.

There are other less obvious but just as relevant indicators of the cultural rupture in the new villages. It has been seen that plant lore is waning in areas. The change of natural environment means that some knowledge is never passed on; the intimacy of the hilltribes with the forest has become irrelevant for the young generations raised near markets. The situation is the same with rituals which are, in general, in decline. If sacrifices are still performed during illness, these are individual rather than collective actions; the large, elaborate, communal ceremonies are becoming fewer and

fewer. Funerals and marriages (which are still mainly inside the ethnic group) involve the whole community less than they used to and are being penetrated by buddhism. On this matter it has been observed that displacement makes possible, in both the south and the north of the country, conversion to the majority religion, a conversion which is less likely in remote areas.

Approaching the towns has also modified tastes in song and dance. Hand in hand with their increasing use of the Lao language, the youngsters are often more interested in Lao (or Thai) culture than in their own. Radio-cassette players are used much more in the relocated villages than was the case before and there is a growing unfamiliarity with traditional songs, which the only the old people still know. Here again, an effort is being made in several provinces to preserve the memory of hilltribe songs.

**Resettlement appears to be one of the major causes of cultural rupture in Laos today. It might be said that this is the best way of integrating ethnic groups into the national culture, without which they will remain marginalised. It must be remembered however that the Lao national culture is a multi-ethnic culture, as the government has constantly reaffirmed right up to the last international conference organised by UNESCO on this theme, and that it is necessary to safeguard the cultural heritage of the diverse ethnic groups which form the Lao nation.**

**Integration is occurring naturally across the young generations. Ideally this can be left to happen gradually, without confronting particular traditions or beliefs. What must be avoided is any dramatic damage to the cultural symbolic fabric as this can always engender movements of a protest nature able to endanger integration itself.**

### III. AID AND THE ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

#### A. Aid

**There has been a marked increase in resettlement aid over the past few years but it remains poorly co-ordinated.** The effort of the state has become more systematic but is limited by budget levels. There has also been an increase in the number of NGO's (Non Governmental Organisations) and international institutions who through various development projects are intervening, directly or indirectly, in the displacement situation.

**It should be emphasised that up till now aid to resettlements has mainly been provided after the displacement.** This means once the new village is established, and sometimes only several months after, when it is seen that serious difficulties have arisen. Action generally comes from NGO's who are regularly approached by the provincial services to help deal with urgent cases, particularly medical situations, in villages which have sometimes been relocated several months previously. International aid actions are usually barely planned, never co-ordinated together, seem unequally distributed over the villages in any province, and often arrive too late.

**Yet one of the clear results of the survey is to show that intervention is equally necessary before relocation, working during the preparation time to prevent future problems.** The first step should be appropriate training to prepare the villagers for life in the new village and to provide them with all the information on what awaits them. Next the move itself must be organised and medical cover provided. Finally the land ahead should be prepared before the arrival of the villagers. Many displacements are still occurring now when nothing at the new site is ready on the people's arrival. A relocation should not take place if advance assistance has not already been put in place effectively.

**This entire preparation phase, which according to all the opinion gathered seems essential, should allow the support needs (particularly technical support) of the villagers to be defined. In addition, it is necessary to assess the cost of displacement and essential aid, and to reach an agreement on what is a reasonable schedule for the villagers.**

**Moreover it can be stated that until now aid has been directed almost exclusively towards villages at the sides of roads or waterways.** Taking into account the financial and the human costs of resettlements, the pre-removal intervention of organisations in the native districts of villagers must also allow the idea of programmes within the rural development policy which will permit some communities to remain on their territory. Aid to isolated areas is primarily the work of the state and rarely involves international intervention. Mention however must be made of **the important efforts of the UNDP in several provinces to precisely establish a balanced rural development programme which takes into account the opening up of remote districts.**

**Helping to create the conditions for a durable rural development system in the hills, with supplementary or alternative production activities to hai farming, is possible mainly through**

better management of forest ecosystems and could allow a reduction in the number of relocations and the costs associated. In limited numbers, and better organised, the resettlements would have a greater chance of allowing the highlanders to successfully integrate in the valleys. A rationalisation of international aid is needed if balance is to be achieved in the support provided to relocated villages and those who have stayed in their territory.

## B. The Role of Non-Formal Education

While neither wanting to preempt the project report which follows this study, nor offering to define the precise details of the process, we shall point right here to the fields in which Non Formal Education is viable for the resettlement programme.

The various reports of the survey underline that Non Formal Education (NFE), because it is aimed according to priority at the concrete needs expressed by the villagers, and because it is flexible in its application, is well suited to address predetermined goals. The survey reports can be referred to for the precise expectations expressed by the villagers in each province. **Generally speaking it appears that a strong expectation of specialised training exists everywhere, and the requests are to some degree expressed in the same order : agricultural techniques, sanitary training, trade skills (mechanics, weaving etc.) and adult literacy.**

### Action can be defined at two levels:

#### 1. Prior to displacement

NFE can play a central role in the preparatory phase of relocation discussed above. It should first help the villagers to address the gap that exists between their traditionally learned skills and those they will require to confront their new paddy-farming lives in the valley.

The training that will amend these deficiencies can initially begin with agriculture and sanitation and by preparing adult literacy programmes, for women in particular.

**In order to have a chance of being effective this action should commence around two years before displacement to the new site.**

#### 2. After displacement

As seen in the survey results, the first few years in the new village are crucial. Not only do the inhabitants come across their most serious problems during this time but the future of the village can be compromised in the longterm by the delay in farming success and the accumulation of debts over the corresponding period.

**NFE should follow training begun in the old villages and should apply it to work conditions and to the context of life in the new village. It can also play a significant role in the co-ordination of aid :**

## **Aid and the non-formal education**

The co-ordination of training aid which could be handled by various experts, and also the definition of new, specialised training, aimed for instance at potentially salaried activities (in Xieng Khouang for example, requests have been made for training in mechanics, radio etc.).

The co-ordination of material support and advice on the management of the following supports; rice banks, medicine banks, loans for livestock, etc.

It is also possible to introduce the villagers to commercial networks and to help them find outlets for their produce and handicrafts.

**It seems reasonable to propose that NFE projects should continue for around three years after settlement in the new site.**

**In a general way, because it comes from the wishes of the villagers and because it is to act as a support to, and to evolve with, their traditional knowledge, NFE is well suited to accompany the whole transition process and to help the villages avoid any experience of excessively sharp rupture.**

## IV SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**The survey reveals several problems linked to resettlements:**

- 1. A land pressure problem in some valleys which denies resettlement in a good situation.**
- 2. The great vulnerability of health in the communities during and after displacement (increased mortality rate).**
- 3. The poor rice yield of new villages, which face a harder task than before to bridge the gap until the next harvest.**
- 4. The difficulties encountered integrating into trading networks and developing commercial activities**
- 5. The dramatic cultural rupture associated with settling into the new villages.**

**It recommends:**

- 1. Action well in advance of relocation to prepare the villagers for the new conditions awaiting them.**
- 2. Co-ordination of assistance and assurance that this aid will effectively be in before any removal.**
- 3. Medical back-up for the villages before, during and after the displacement.**
- 4. Technical assistance for some years after to help the villagers master irrigated rice production and to find outlets for their products.**
- 5. A set of measures to preserve the cultural heritage of the displaced ethnic groups.**

**It underlines the potential role of :**

**Non Formal Education, in the possible form of a training plan for two years before and three years after displacement, to guide villagers through the transition process and also to assure the co-ordination of aid.**

**Rural development programmes (UNDP) which can propose alternative development solutions in remote districts, thus helping to reduce the financial, social and human costs of some relocations.**

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# Computerised Survey Data



## Note on the database

The database contains the results of a survey on around 1000 households in the six provinces selected. Nine to thirteen villages were surveyed in each province.

The tables and charts below express, with several obvious exceptions, percentages and not absolute values. It should also be borne in mind that in cases when multiple responses were possible for the same questions, the tables can present a total in excess of (or below) 100%. These values had to be rounded to 100% in the graphs (see for example the “causes of displacement”) which accounts for the substantial differences apparent between the two modes of presentation.

These are the gross results. Comments and explanation of the figures can be found in the **Main Report** above (see especially part II “Effects of relocations”) and in the provincial reports (vol. 2).

While each provincial team was in charge of conducting a quantitative survey with questionnaires, the computerization of the collected data is mainly due to Bastien Laroche, Pierre Lucas and Stéphanie Lucas, the latter being also responsible for the treatment at national level.



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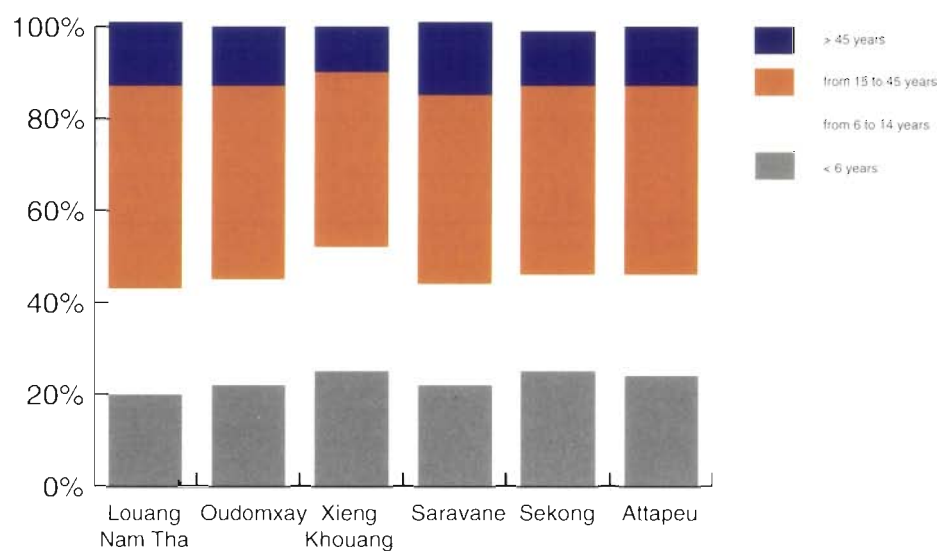
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## Demographic data

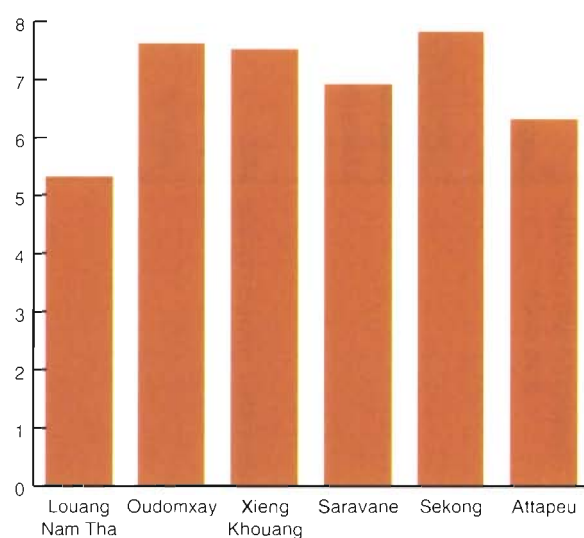
### Surveyed population distribution by age

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
< 6 years	20	22	25	22	25	24
from 6 to 14 years	23	23	27	22	21	22
from 15 to 45 years	44	42	38	41	41	41
> 45 years	14	13	10	16	12	13



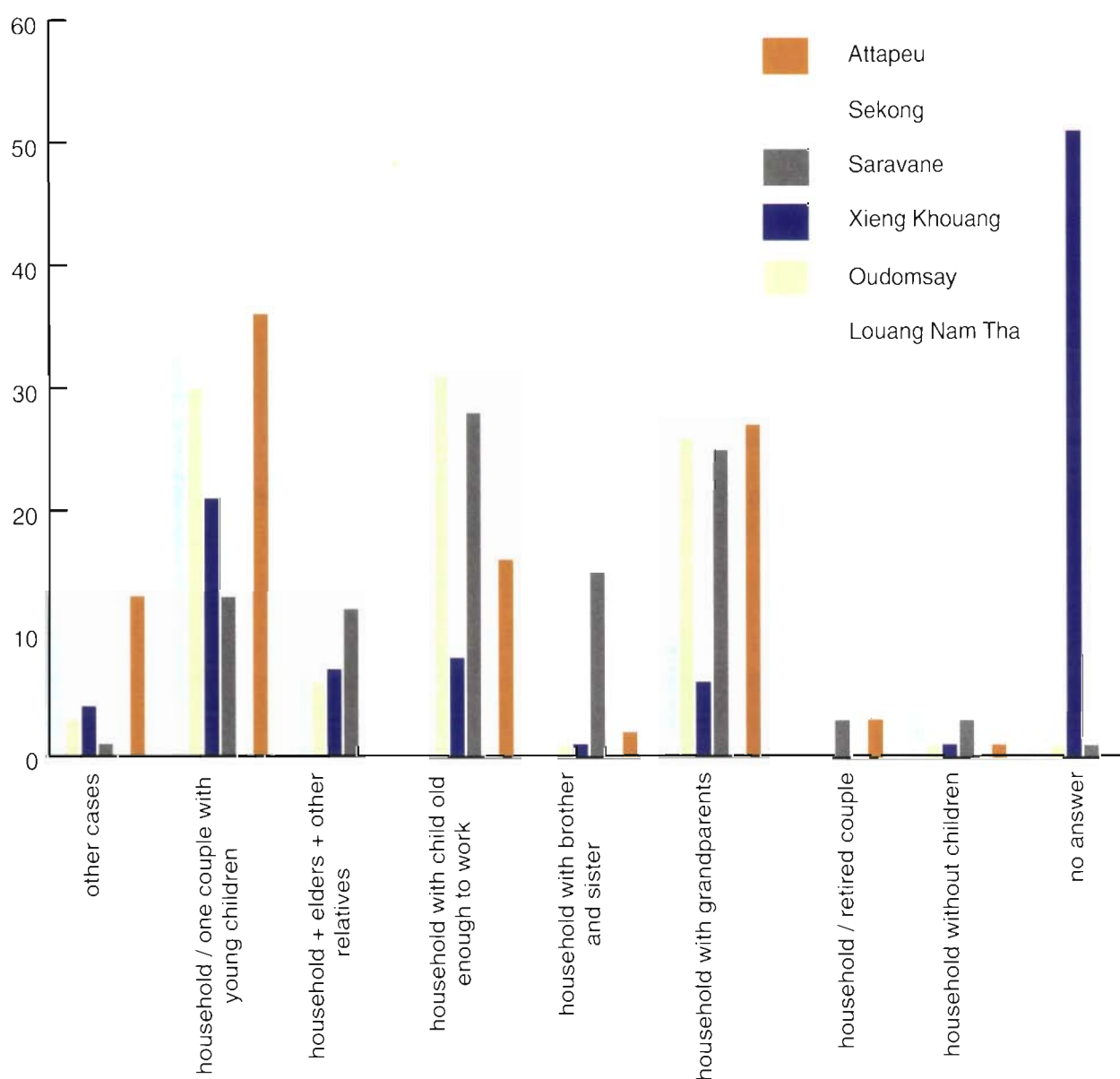
### Average number of inhabitants household

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
	5,3	7,6	7,5	6,9	7,8	6,3



## Household Composition

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
other cases	13	3	4	1	2	13
household / one couple with young children	33	30	21	13	19	36
household + elders + other relatives	11	6	7	12	16	0
household with child old enough to work	17	31	8	28	26	16
household with brother and sister	1	1	1	15	10	2
household with grandparents	16	26	6	25	24	27
household / retired couple	0	0	0	3	2	3
household without children	7	1	1	3	1	1
no answer	2	1	51	1	1	0



## Ethnic distribution

Luang Nam Tha

hmong	6
khouene	2
kor	10
koui	2
lao loum	3
leu	5
phu tai	1
sam tao	2
khmou	70

Saravane

katang	42
katang / lao	1
lao loum	1
laven	22
laven / souay	1
souay	22
taoy	1
tong	11

Attapeu

Alak	7%
Lao	0%
Lave	69%
Lave / Cambodgian (Loune)	0%
Lave / Lao	1%
Lave / Sou	1%
Lave / Oi	0%
Sou	7%
Sou / Lao	0%
Sou / Lave	0%
Talieng	12%
Tchieng / Lave	0%

Sekong

Alak	9%
Katou	33%
Katou / Lao	1%
Katou / Nghe	1%
Lao Loum	2%
Nghe	10%
Nghe / Souay	1%
Nghe / Alak	2%
Nghe / Talieng	1%
Souay	7%
Souay / Alak	1%
Talieng	22%
Taoy	10%
Taoy / Alak	1%
Taoy / Lao	1%

Oudomxay

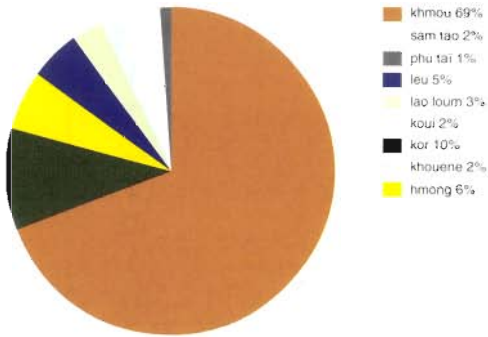
hmong	49
lao loum	7
khmou	44

Xieng Khouang

Hmong	100
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Ethnic population distribution

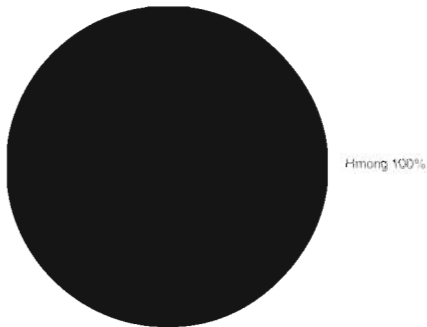
Luang Nam Tha



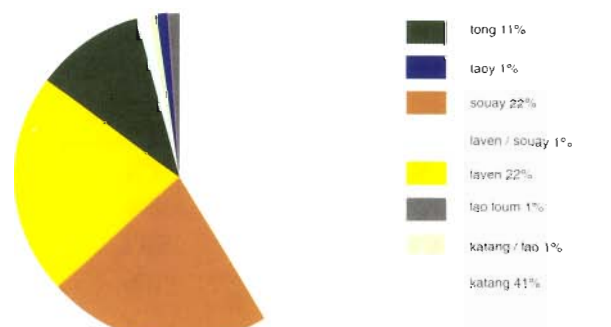
Oudomxay



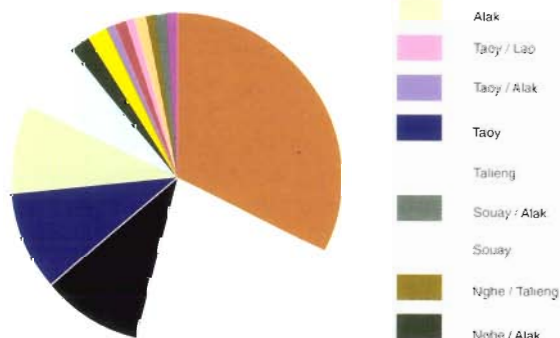
Xieng Khouang



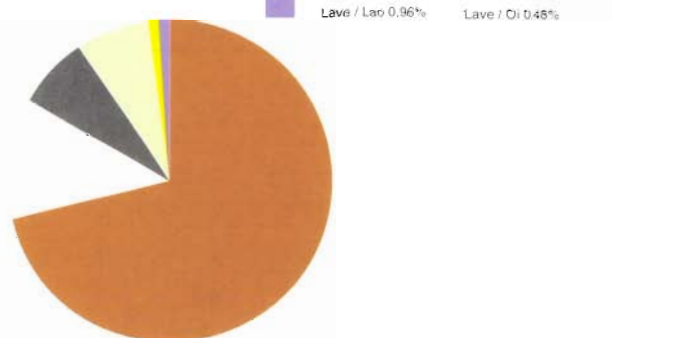
Saravane



Sekong

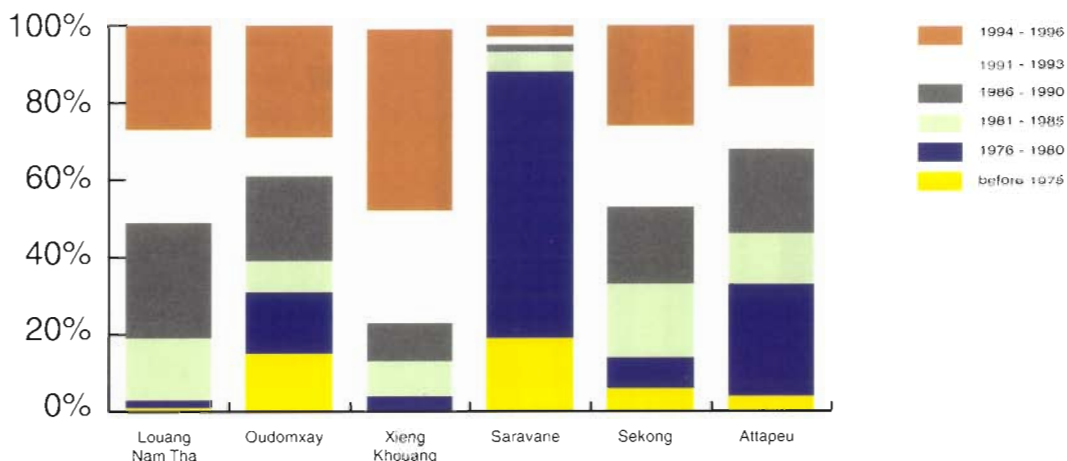


Attapeu



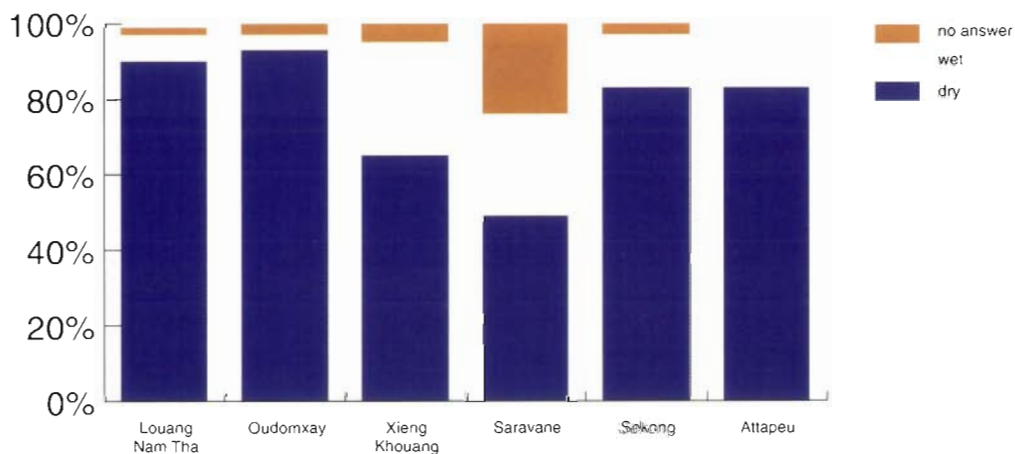
**Arrival year**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
before 1975	1	15	0	19	6	4
1976-1980	2	16	4	69	8	29
1981-1985	16	8	9	5	19	13
1986-1990	30	22	10	2	20	22
1991-1993	24	10	29	2	21	16
1994-1996	27	29	47	3	26	16



**Arrival season**

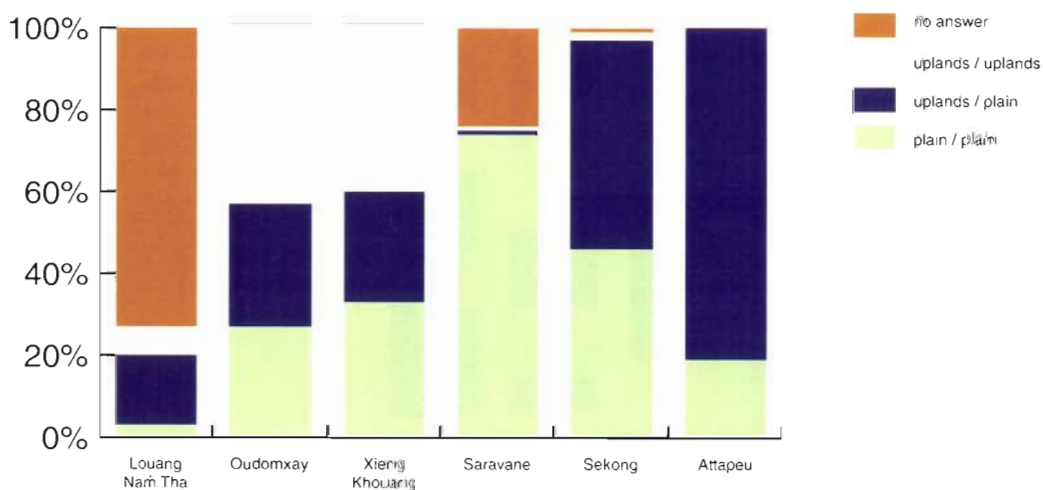
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
dry	90	93	65	49	83	83
wet	7	4	30	27	14	17
no answer	2	3	5	24	3	0



## Displacements: general characteristics

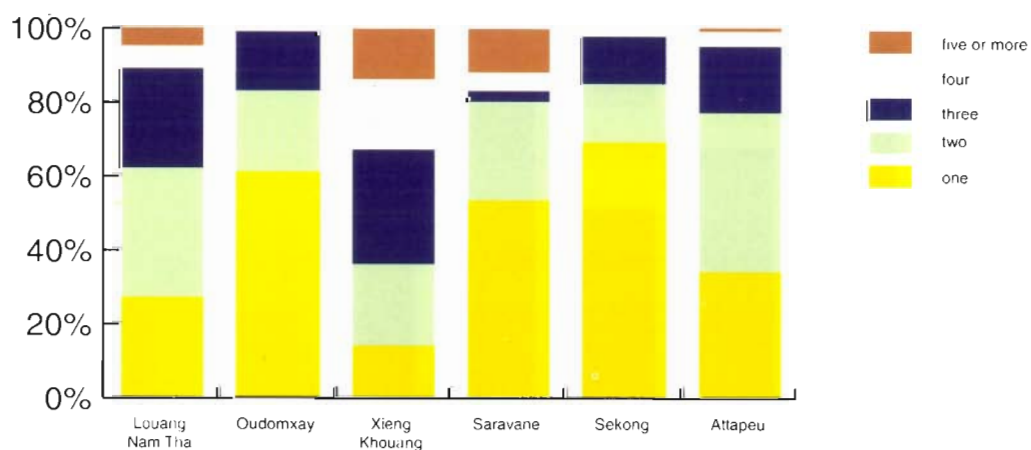
### Change of Environment

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
plain / plain	3	27	33	74	46	19
uplands / plain	17	30	27	1	51	81
uplands / uplands	7	44	41	1	2	0
no answer	73	0	0	24	1	0



### Number of stages of move

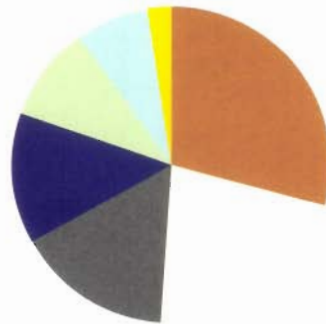
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
one	27	61	14	54	70	34
two	35	22	22	27	16	43
three	27	16	31	3	13	18
four	6	1	19	5	2	4
five or more	5	0	13	12	0	1



## Reasons for displacements

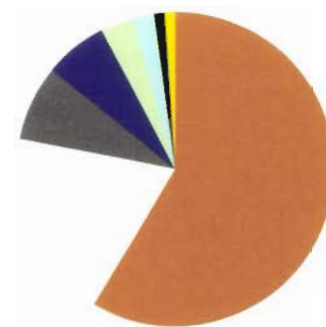
### Luang Nam Tha

shelling, land mines, exfoliants, war	11%
forcible displacements	2%
remote location	8%
far from public services	13%
rice shortage	6%
land shortage	24%
paddy farming impossible	18%



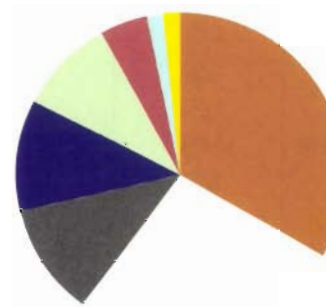
### Oudomxay

shelling, land mines, exfoliants, war	1%
forcible displacements	18%
remote location	7%
far from public services	2%
far from market place	3%
rice shortage	1%
land shortage	6%
paddy farming impossible	54%



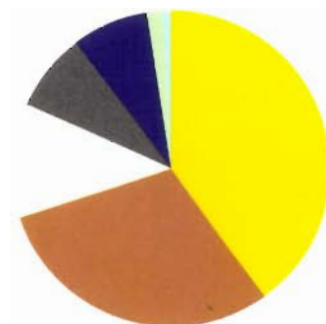
### Xieng Khouang

shelling, land mines, exfoliants, war	17%
infrastructure improvements	1%
forcible displacements	7%
remote location	1%
far from public services	6%
rice shortage	3%
land shortage	7%
paddy farming impossible	21%



### Saravane

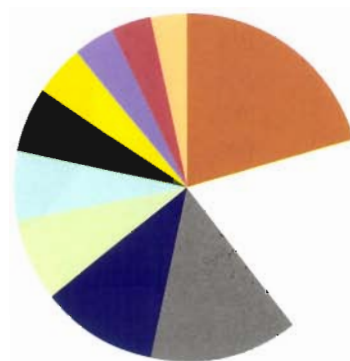
<b>shelling, land mines, exfoliants, war</b>	<b>38%</b>
forcible displacement	15%
remote location	1%
land shortage	10%
paddy farming impossible	2%
poverty	10%
<b>live closer to a road</b>	<b>51%</b>



### Reasons for displacements

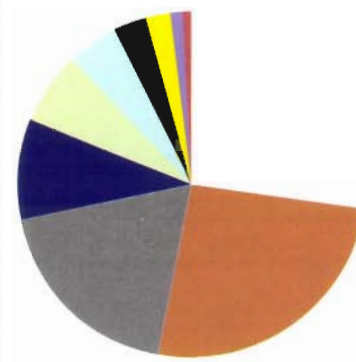
#### Sekong

professional posting	9%
shelling, land mines, exfoliants, war	12%
forcible displacements	15%
<b>remote location</b>	<b>37%</b>
far from public services	12%
far from market place	7%
rice shortage	6%
land shortage	8%
paddy farming impossible	27%
poverty	21%
<b>live closer to a road</b>	<b>40%</b>



#### Attapeu

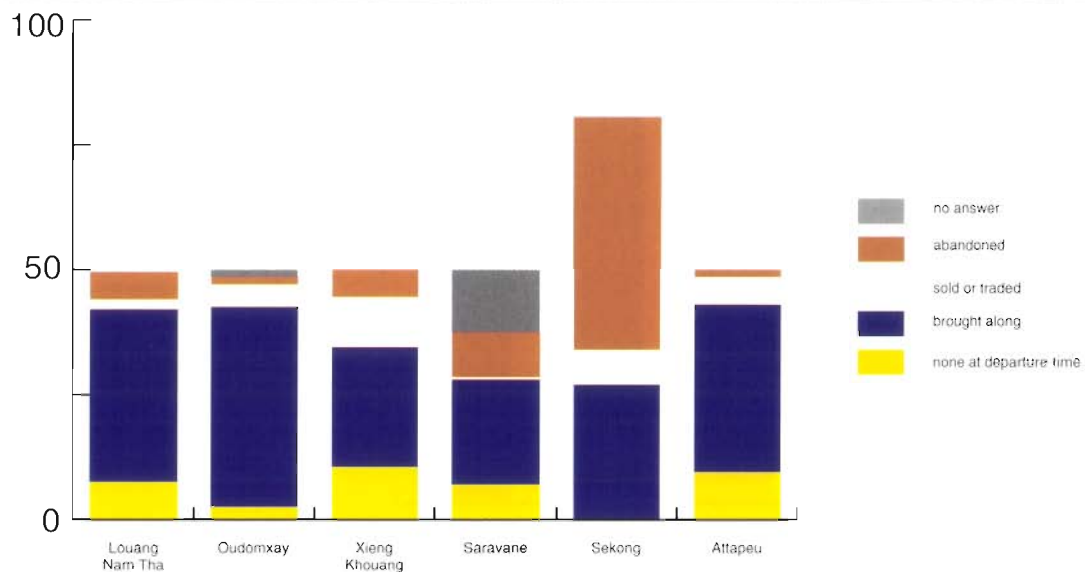
professional posting	4%
received assistance	2%
shelling, land mines, exfoliants, war	16%
<b>Government urged displacements</b>	<b>47%</b>
epidemics	4%
remote location	8%
far from public services	0%
rice shortage	1%
land shortage	12%
<b>paddy farming impossible</b>	<b>44%</b>
poverty	5%
<b>tojoin family</b>	<b>32%</b>



### Accompanying property

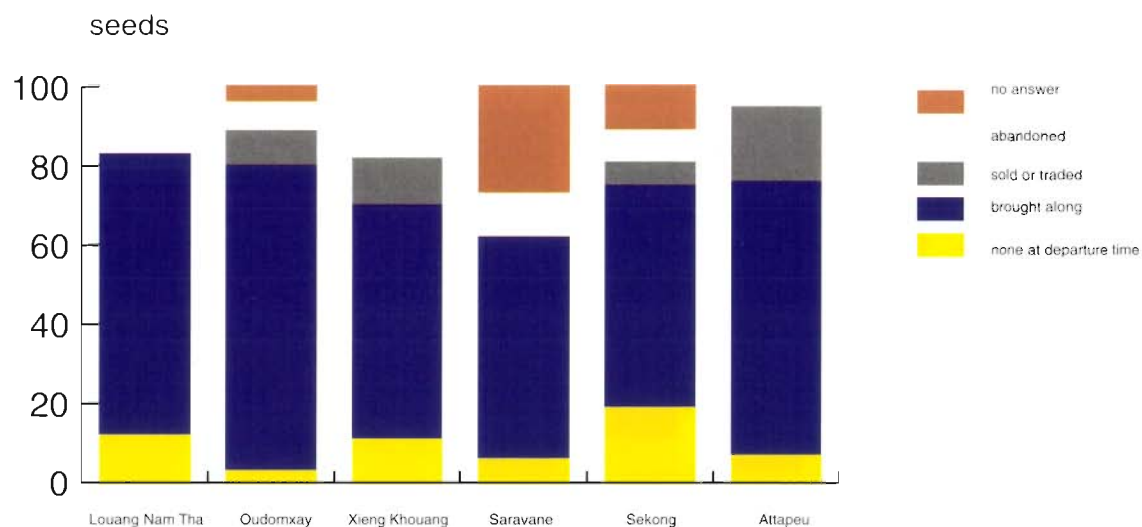
#### Cattle

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none at departure time	15	5	21	14	0	19
brought along	69	80	48	42	54	67
sold or traded	4	9	20	1	14	11
abandoned	11	3	11	18	93	3
no answer	0	3	0	25	0	0



#### Seeds

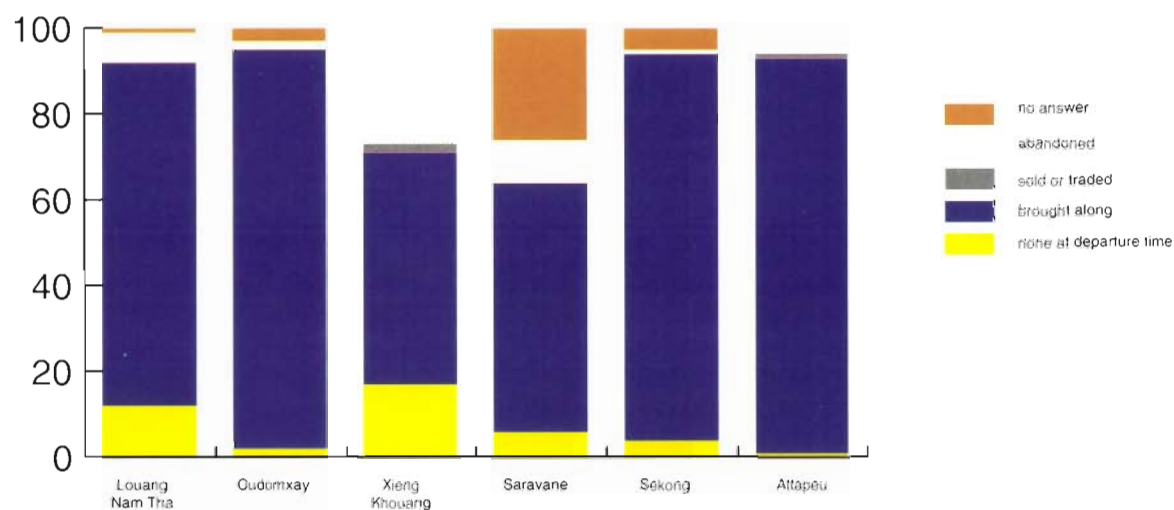
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none at departure time	12	3	11	6	19	7
brought along	71	77	59	56	55	68
sold or traded	0	9	12	0	6	19
abandoned	17	7	18	11	8	6
no answer	0	3	0	26	12	0



## Accompanying property (figures stand for percentage)

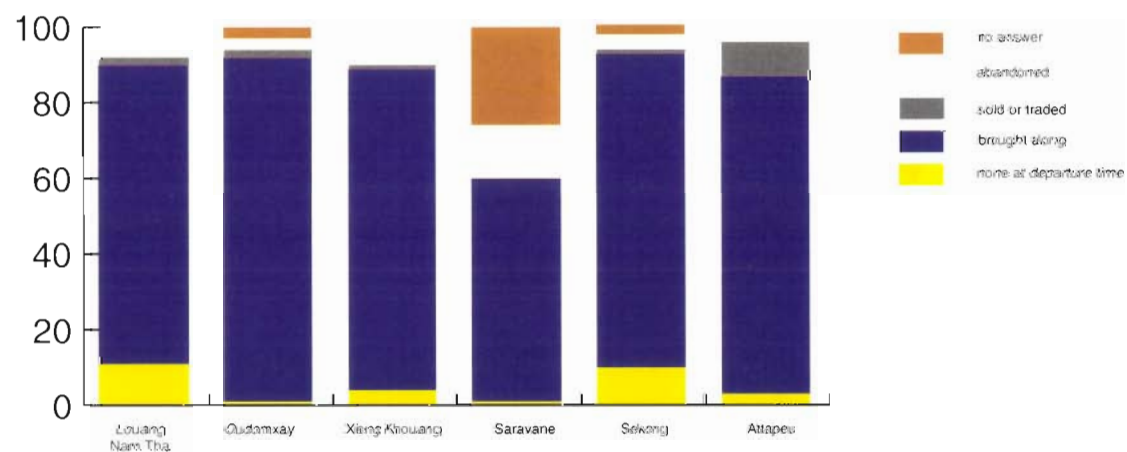
### Tools

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none at departure time	12	2	17	6	4	1
brought along	80	93	54	58	90	92
sold or traded	0	0	2	0	0	1
abandoned	7	2	26	10	1	6
no answer	1	3	0	26	5	0



### Household articles

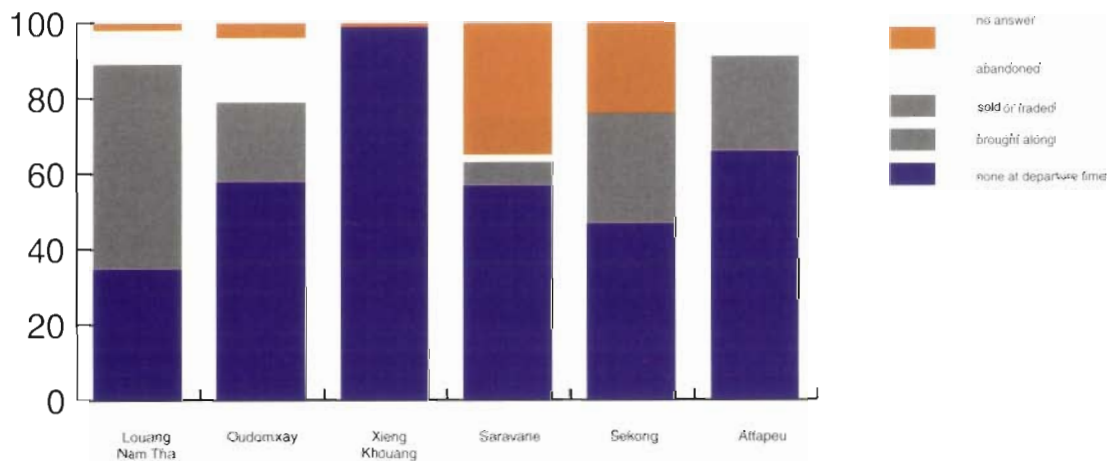
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none at departure time	11	1	4	1	10	3
brought along	79	91	85	59	83	84
sold or traded	2	2	1	0	1	9
abandoned	8	3	9	14	4	5
no answer	0	3	0	26	2	0



### Accompanying property (figures stand for percentage)

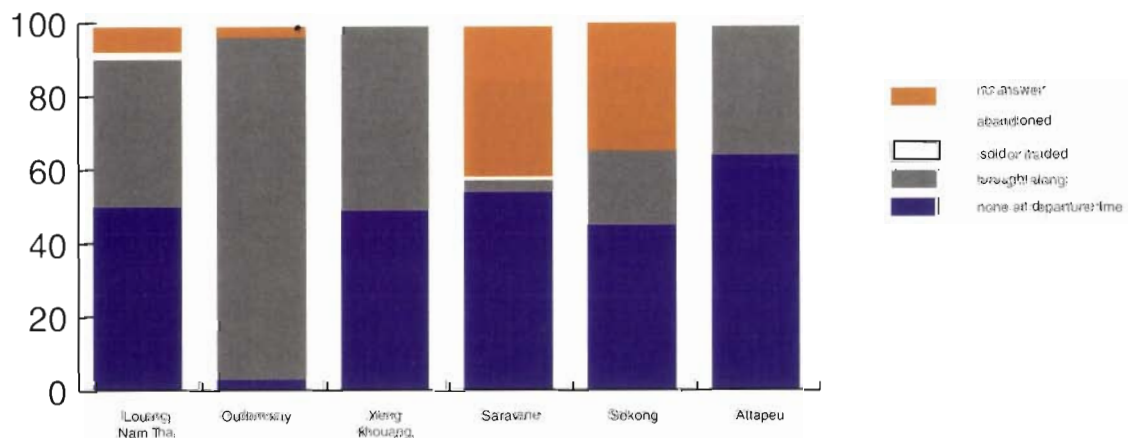
#### Sacred artefacts and rituals

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none at departure time	35	58	99	57	47	66
brought along	54	21	0	6	29	25
sold or traded	0	0	0	0	0	0
abandoned	9	17	0	2	0	10
no answer	2	4	1	35	24	0



#### Jewellery

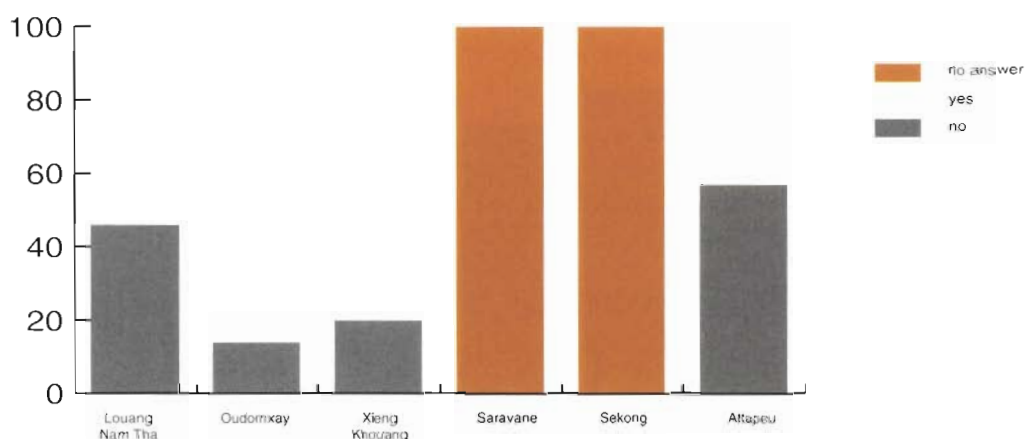
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none at departure time	50	3	49	54	45	64
brought along	40	93	49	3	20	34
sold or traded	0	0	1	0	0	1
abandoned	2	0	1	1	0	1
no answer	7	3	0	41	35	0



## Cash, assistance, departure time, diseases and epidemics related to displacement

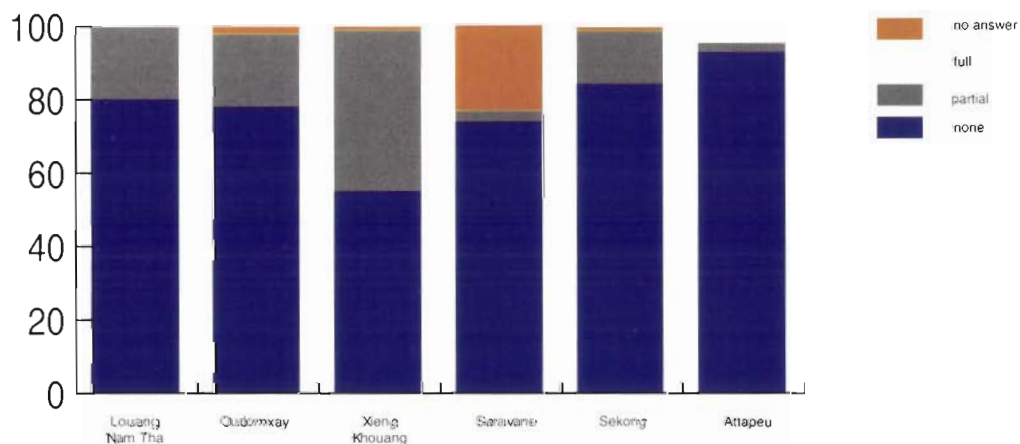
### Cash brought along

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	46	14	20	0	0	57
yes	54	86	80	0	0	43
no answer	0	0	0	100	100	0



### Received assistance

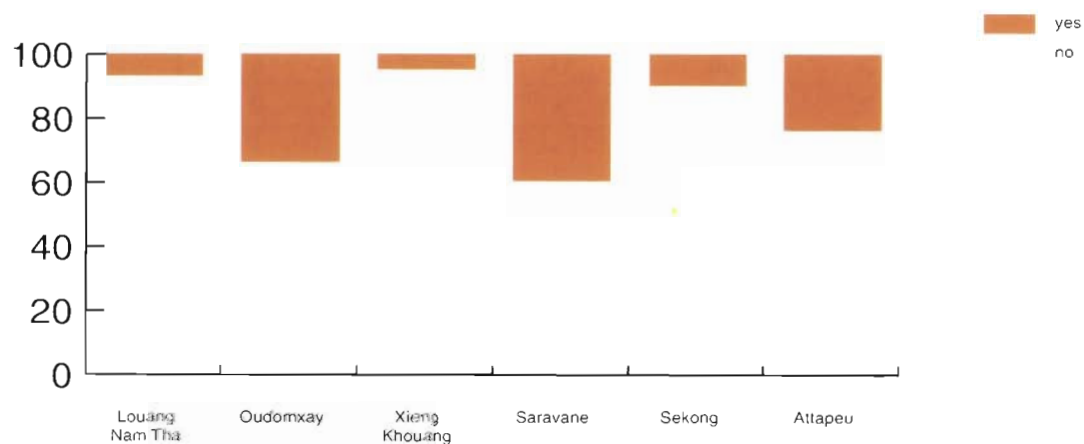
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none	80	78	55	74	83	93
partial	20	20	44	3	12	2
full	0	0	0	0	0	4
no answer	0	2	1	24	1	0



SURVEY DATABASE

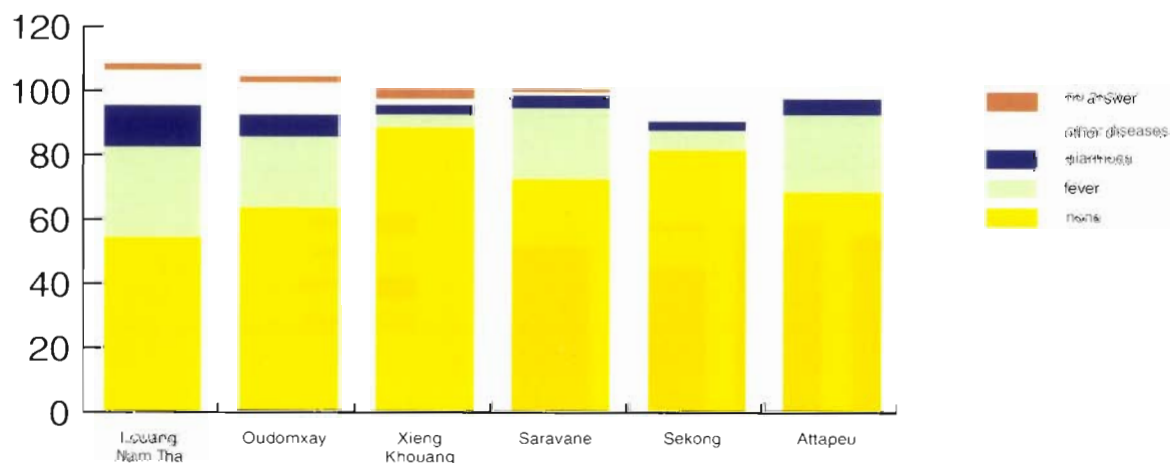
**Death toll in the family related to the displacement**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	93	66	95	60	90	76
yes	7	44	5	40	10	24



**Epidemics that broke out during the two years following displacement**

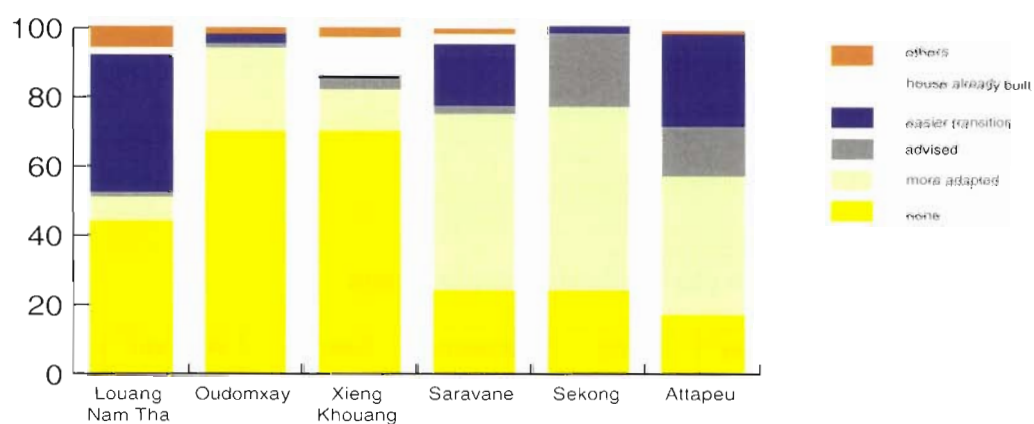
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none	54	63	88	72	81	68
fever	28	22	4	22	6	24
diarrhoea	13	7	3	4	3	5
other diseases	11	10	2	1	8	6
no answer	2	2	3	1	0	0



## Changes in living conditions

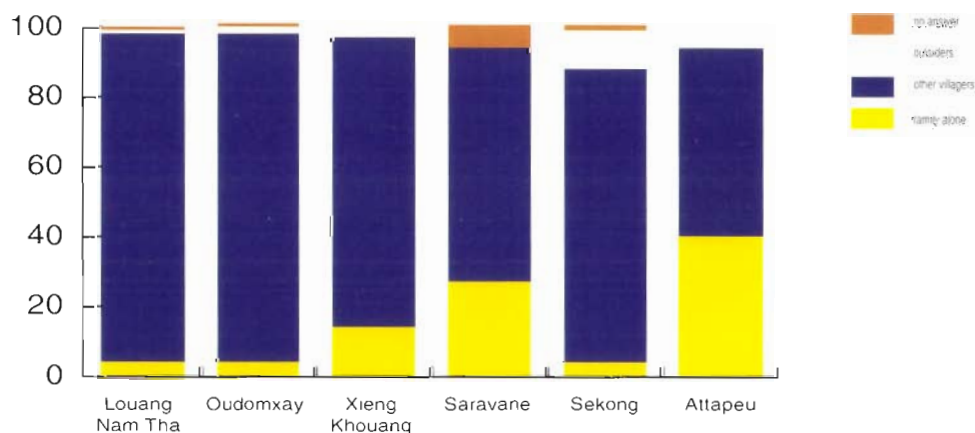
### Changes in living conditions and their causes

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none	44	70	70	24	24	17
more adapted	7	24	12	51	53	40
advised	1	1	3	2	21	14
easier transition	40	3	1	18	3	27
house already built	2	0	11	3	0	0
others	7	2	3	1	0	1



### Assistance in building houses

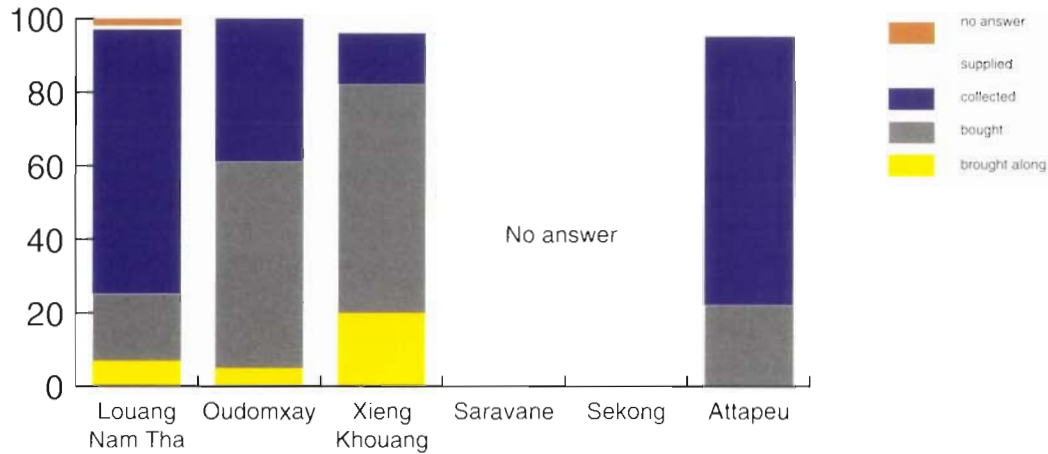
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
family alone	4	4	14	27	4	40
other villagers	94	94	83	67	84	54
outsiders	1	2	3	0	11	6
no answer	1	1	0	6	1	0



## Survey data

### Building material used

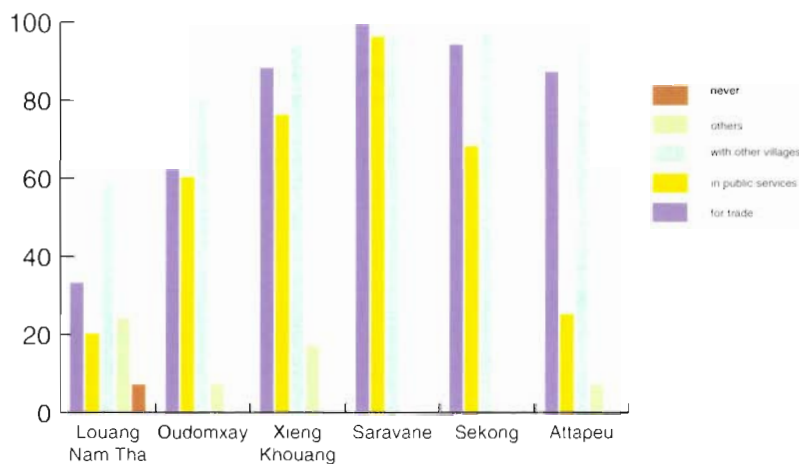
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
brought along	7	5	20	-	-	0
bought	18	56	62	-	-	22
collected	72	39	14	-	-	73
supplied	1	1	4	-	-	5
no answer	2	0	0	-	-	0



## Lao language (1)

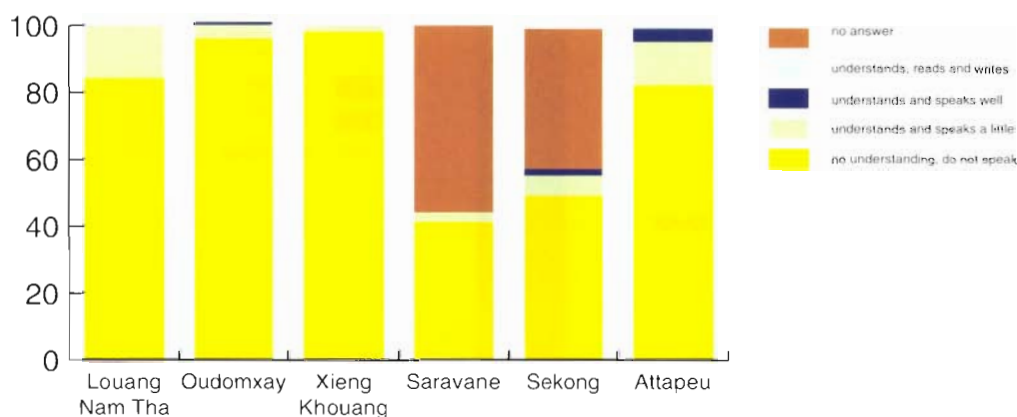
### Use of Lao language

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
for trade	33	62	88	99	94	87
in public services	20	60	76	96	68	25
with other villages	59	80	95	97	99	97
others	24	7	17	0	0	7
never	7	0	0	0	0	0



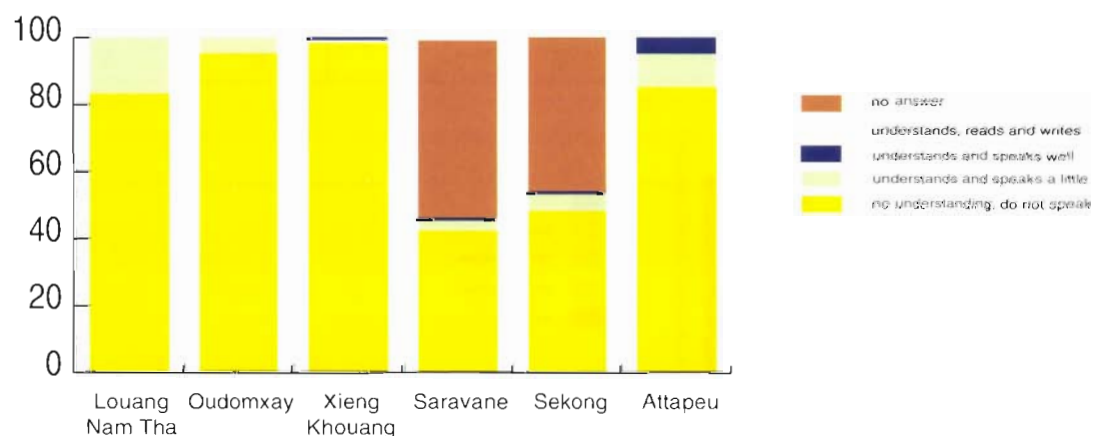
**Lao level : girls under 6 years old**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	84	96	98	41	49	82
understands and speaks a little	16	4	2	3	6	13
understands and speaks well	0	1	0	0	2	4
understands, reads and writes	0	0	0	0	0	1
no answer	0	0	0	56	42	0



**Lao level : Boys under 6 years old**

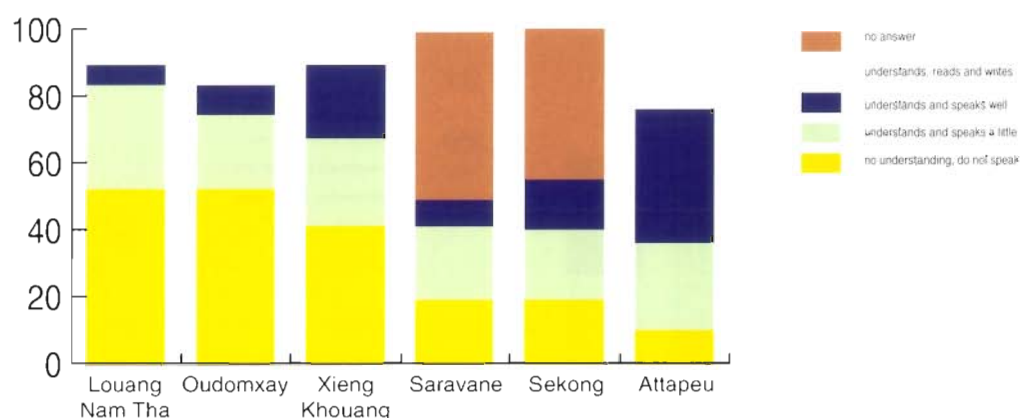
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	83	95	98	42	48	85
understands and speaks a little	17	5	1	3	5	10
understands and speaks well	0	0	1	1	1	5
understands, reads and writes	0	0	0	0	0	0
no answer	0	0	0	53	46	0



Survey data

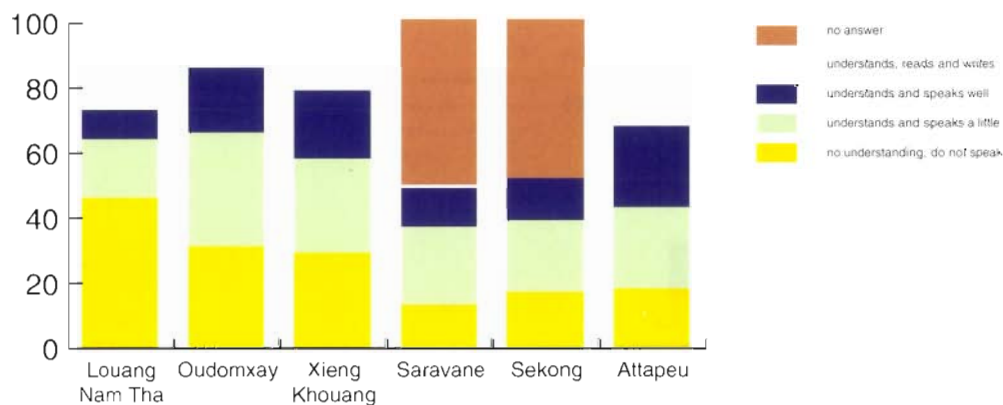
Lao level : Girls, 6-14 years old

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	52	52	41	19	19	10
understands and speaks a little	31	22	26	22	21	26
understands and speaks well	6	9	22	8	15	40
understands, reads and writes	12	18	11	0	0	24
no answer	0	0	0	50	45	0



Lao level : Boys, 6-14 years old

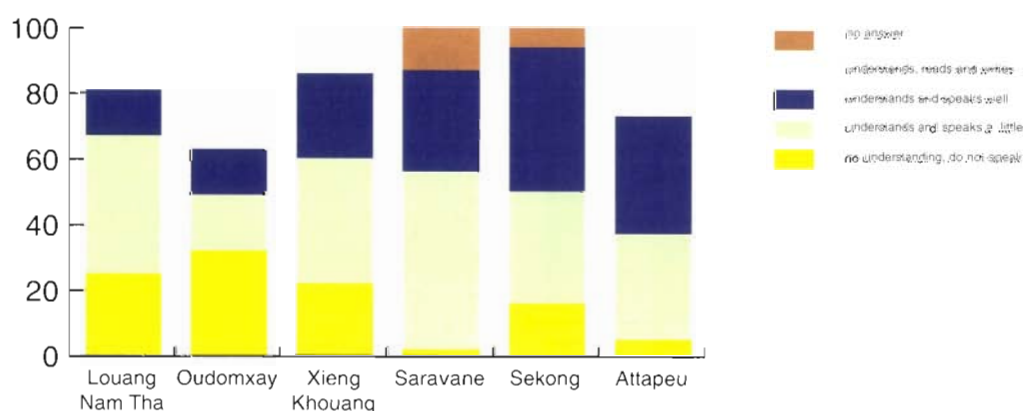
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	46	31	29	13	17	18
understands and speaks a little	18	35	29	24	22	25
understands and speaks well	9	20	21	12	13	25
understands, reads and writes	28	14	21	1	0	31
no answer	0	0	0	51	49	0



## Lao language (2)

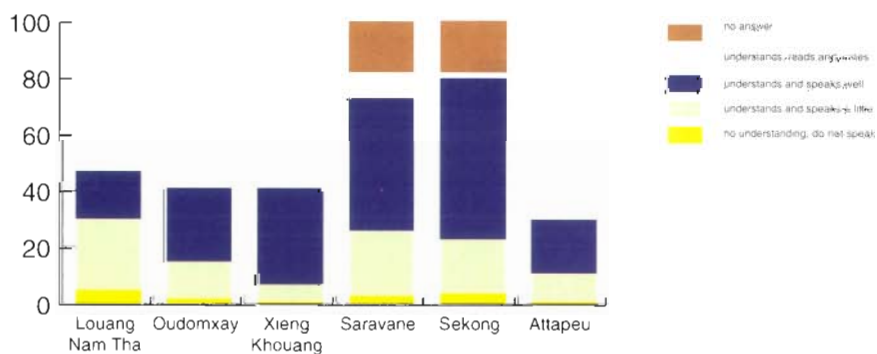
### Lao level : Adult women

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	25	32	22	2	16	5
understands and speaks a little	42	17	38	54	34	32
understands and speaks well	14	14	26	31	44	36
understands, reads and writes	20	37	14	0	0	27
no answer	0	0	0	13	6	0



### Lao level : Adult men

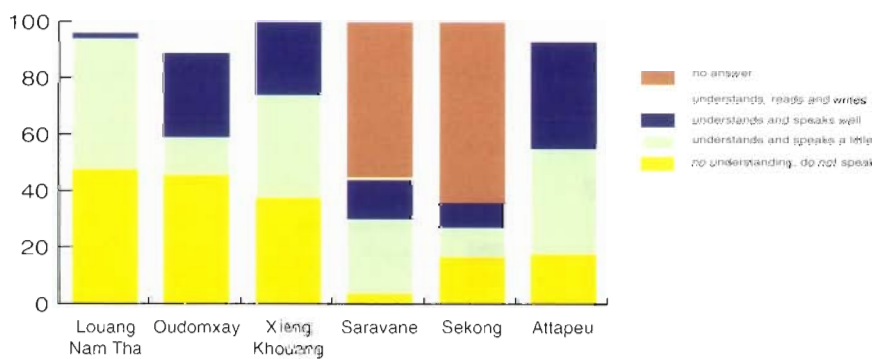
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	5	2	1	3	4	1
understands and speaks a little	25	13	6	23	19	10
understands and speaks well	17	26	34	47	57	19
understands, reads and writes	54	58	59	9	2	69
no answer	0	0	0	18	17	0



## Survey data

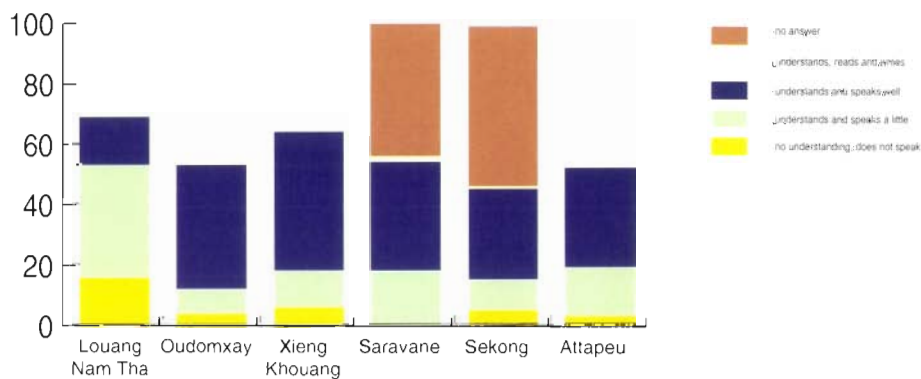
### Lao level : Women over 45 years

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, do not speak	48	46	38	4	17	18
understands and speaks a little	46	13	36	26	10	37
understands and speaks well	2	30	26	14	9	38
understands, reads and writes	4	11	0	1	0	6
no answer	0	0	0	55	64	0



### Men over 45 years

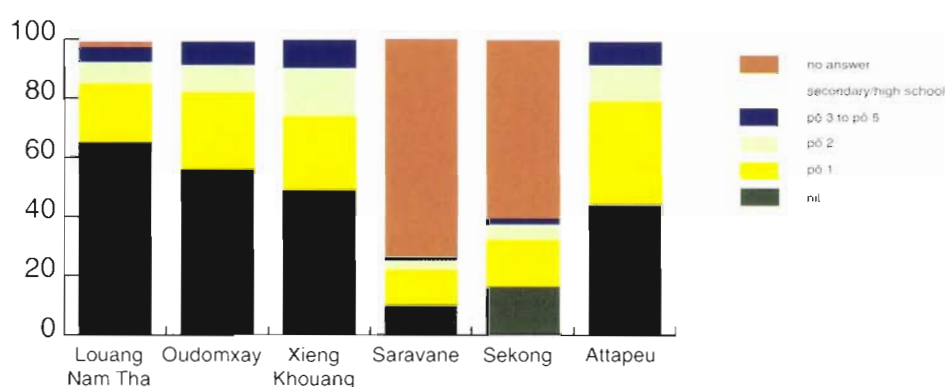
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no understanding, does not speak	16	4	6	0	5	3
understands and speaks a little	37	8	12	18	10	16
understands and speaks well	16	41	46	36	30	33
understands, reads and writes	32	47	36	2	1	48
no answer	0	0	0	44	53	0



## High school level attained (sometimes without grade)

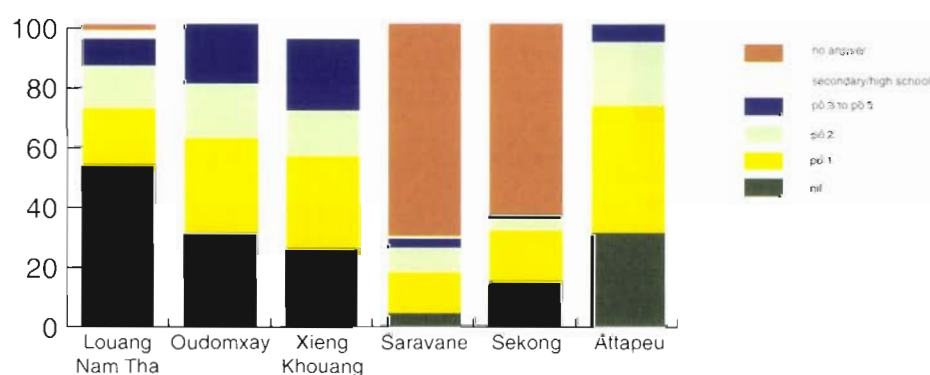
### Girls 6 to 14 years old

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nil	65	56	49	10	16	44
pô (grade) 1	20	26	25	12	16	35
pô 2	7	9	16	3	5	12
pô 3 to pô 5	5	8	11	1	2	8
secondary/high school	0	0	0	0	0	0
no answer	2	0	0	74	62	0



### Boys 6 to 14 years old

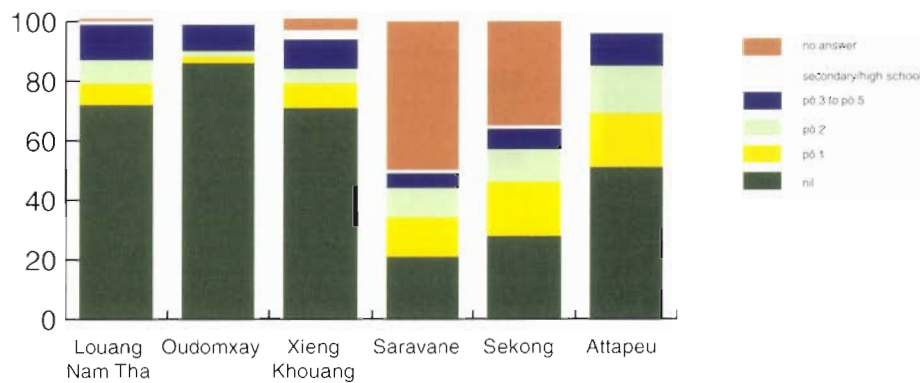
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nil	54	31	26	4	15	31
pô (grade) 1	19	32	31	14	17	43
pô 2	14	18	15	8	4	21
pô 3 to pô 5	9	18	24	3	1	6
secondary/high school	3	0	3	1	0	0
no answer	2	0	0	70	63	0



## Survey data

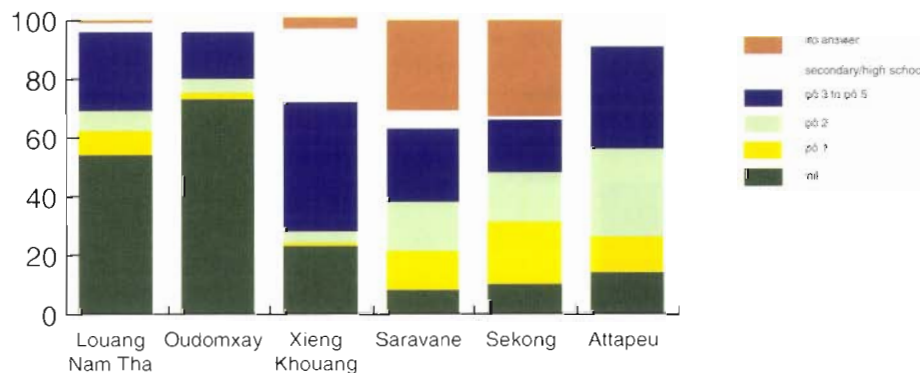
### Adult women

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nil	72	86	71	21	28	51
pô (grade) 1	7	2	8	13	18	18
pô 2	8	2	5	10	11	16
pô 3 to pô 5	12	9	10	5	7	11
secondary/high school	1	1	3	1	1	2
no answer	1	0	4	50	35	0



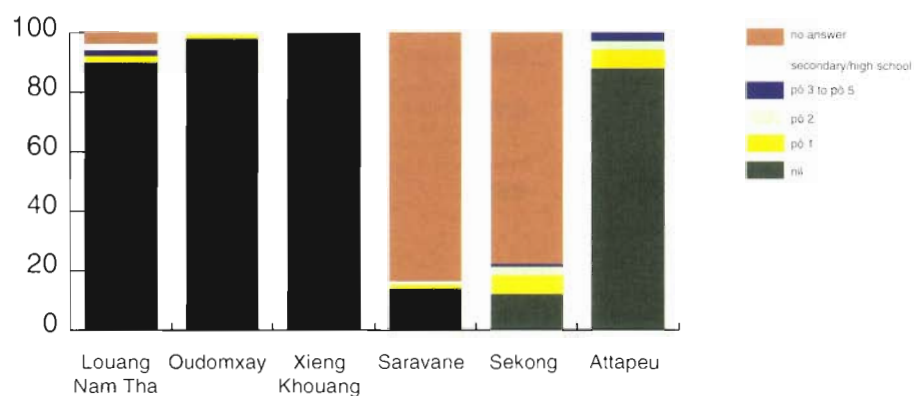
### Adult men

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nil	54	73	23	8	10	14
pô (grade) 1	8	2	1	13	21	12
pô 2	7	5	4	17	17	30
pô 3 to pô 5	27	16	44	25	18	35
secondary/high school	3	4	25	6	1	8
no answer	1	0	4	31	33	0

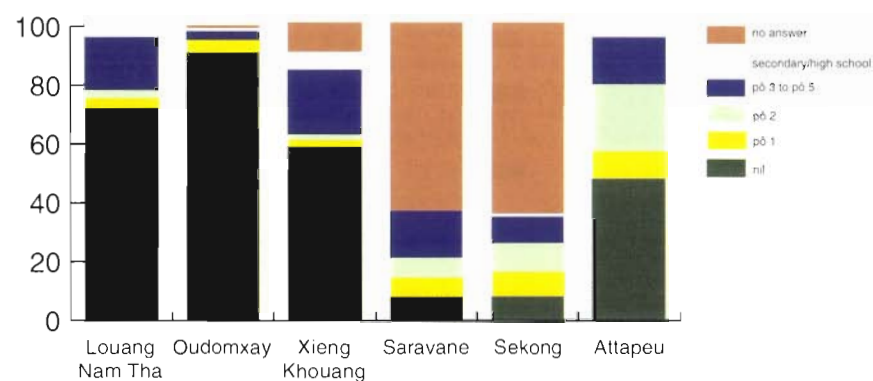


**Women more than 45 years old**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nil	90	98	100	14	12	88
pô (grade) 1	2	1	0	1	6	6
pô 2	0	1	0	0	3	3
pô 3 to pô 5	2	0	0	0	1	3
secondary/high school	2	0	0	1	0	0
no answer	4	0	0	84	78	0

**Men more than 45 years old**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nil	72	91	59	8	8	48
pô (grade) 1	3	4	2	6	8	9
pô 2	3	0	2	7	10	23
pô 3 to pô 5	18	3	22	16	9	16
secondary/high school	6	1	6	0	1	3
no answer	0	1	10	64	65	0

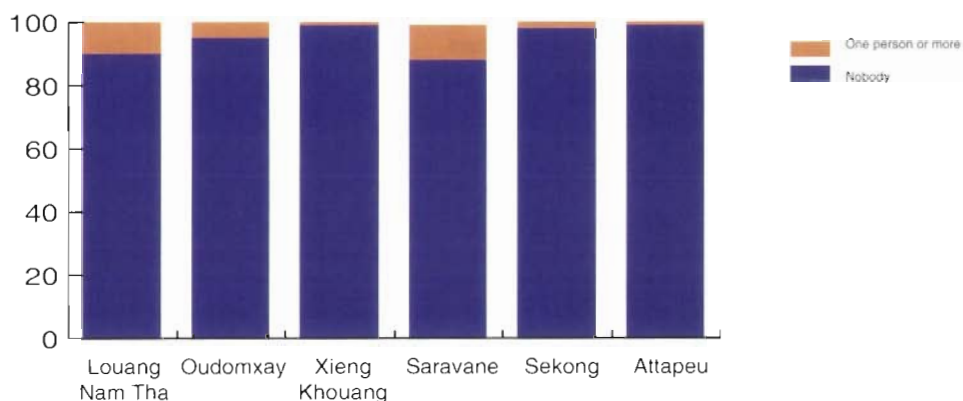


Survey data

## Further education, satisfaction with acquired knowledge

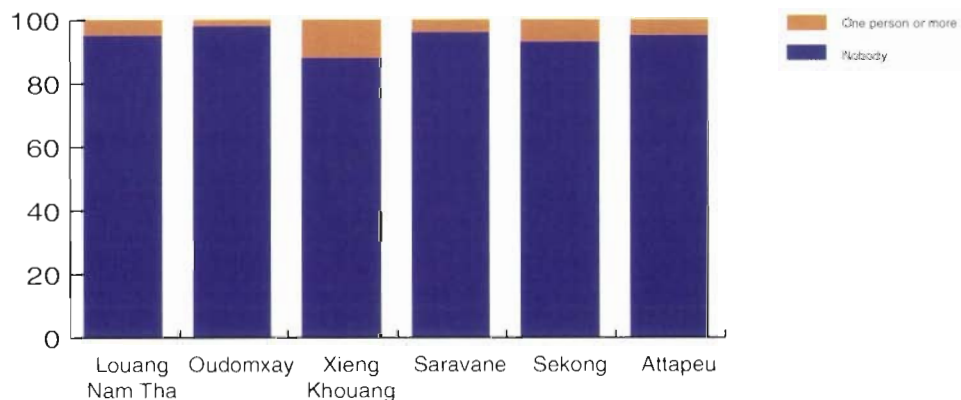
### Studies outside the village

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nobody	90	95	99	88	98	99
one person or more	10	5	1	11	2	1



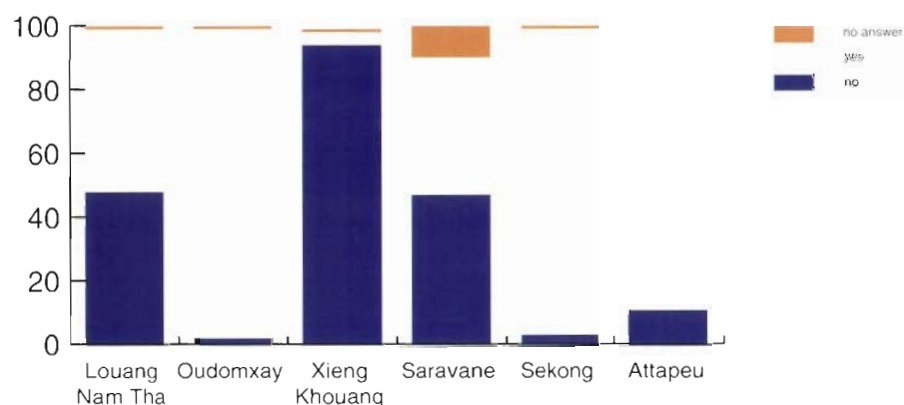
### Out of school further training

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
nobody	95	98	88	96	93	95
one person or more	5	2	12	4	7	5



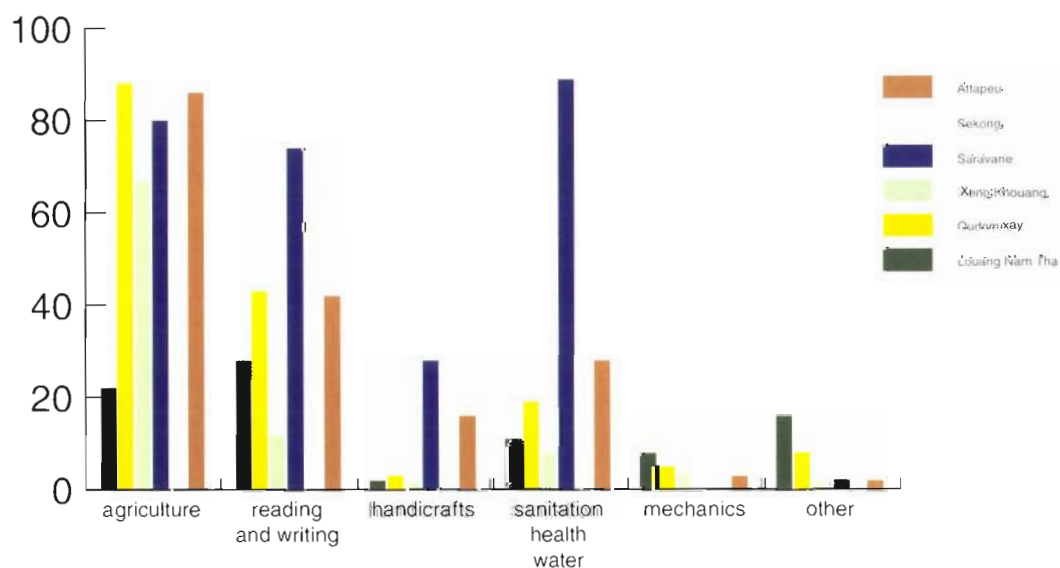
**Families satisfied with knowledge parents have passed on**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	48	2	94	47	3	11
yes	51	97	4	43	96	89
no answer	1	1	1	10	1	0



**Fields of knowledge people would like to improve**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
agriculture	22	88	67	80	85	86
reading and writing	28	43	12	74	48	42
handicrafts	2	3	2	28	17	16
sanitation/health/water	11	19	8	89	22	28
mechanics	8	5	4	0	14	3
other	16	8	2	2	6	2

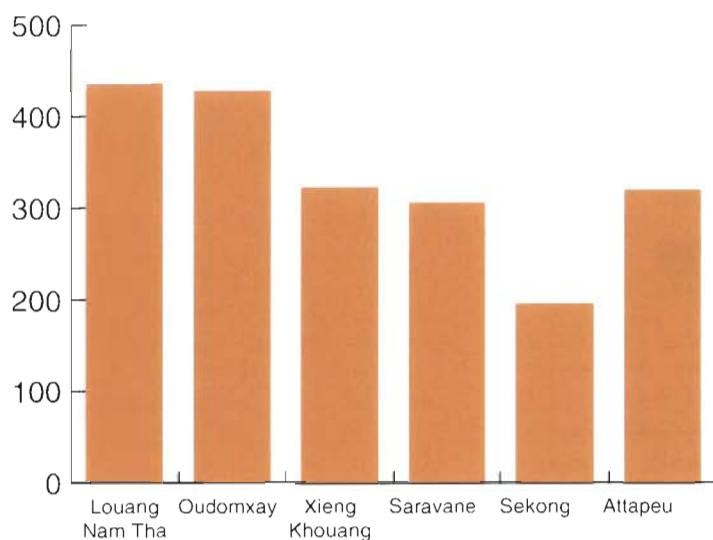


Survey data

## Birth rate and infant mortality

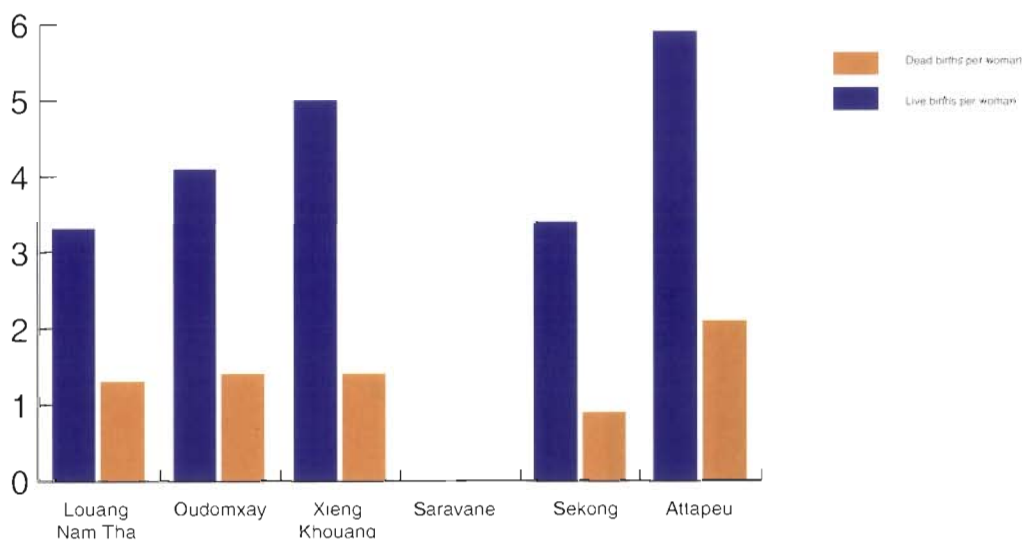
### Infant mortality rate

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
in ‰	436	428	323	306	196	320



### Number of live and dead births per women

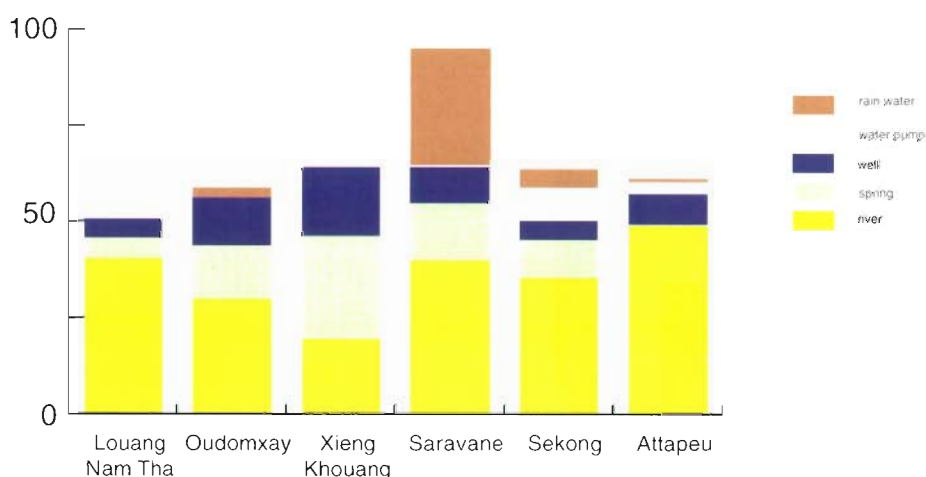
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
Live births per woman	3,3	4,1	5	-	3,4	5,9
Dead births per woman	1,3	1,4	1,4	-	0,9	2,1



## Origin of water

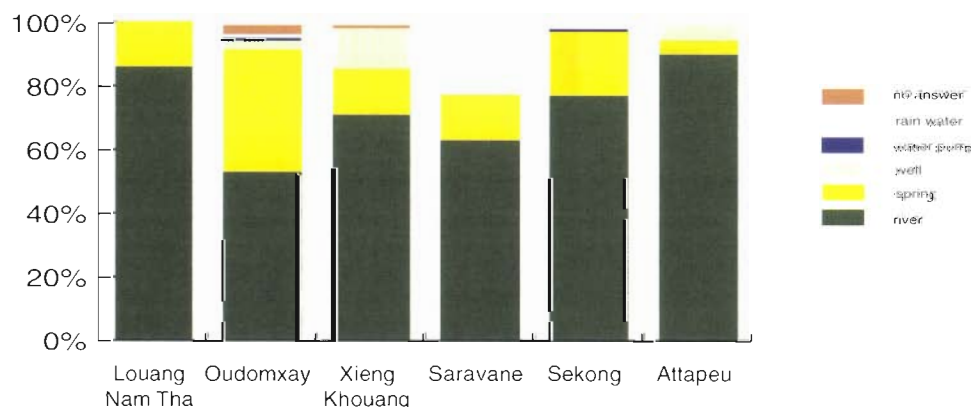
### Origin of drinking water (presently)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
river	80	59	38	79	70	97
spring	11	28	54	30	20	1
well	10	25	36	19	10	16
water pump	0	0	0	1	17	6
rain water	0	5	0	60	10	2



### Origin of drinking water (in the previous village)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
river	86	53	71	63	77	90
spring	14	38	14	14	20	4
well	0	3	13	0	0	6
water pump	0	1	0	0	1	0
rain water	0	1	0	0	1	0
no answer	0	3	1	0	0	0

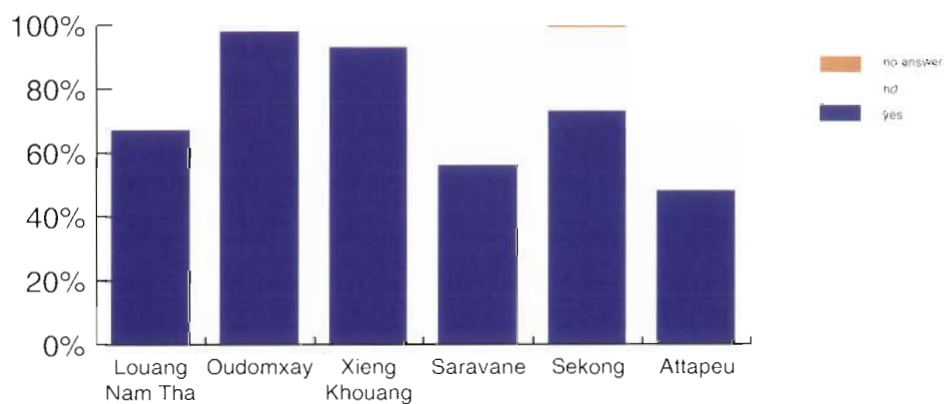


Survey data

Basic health care

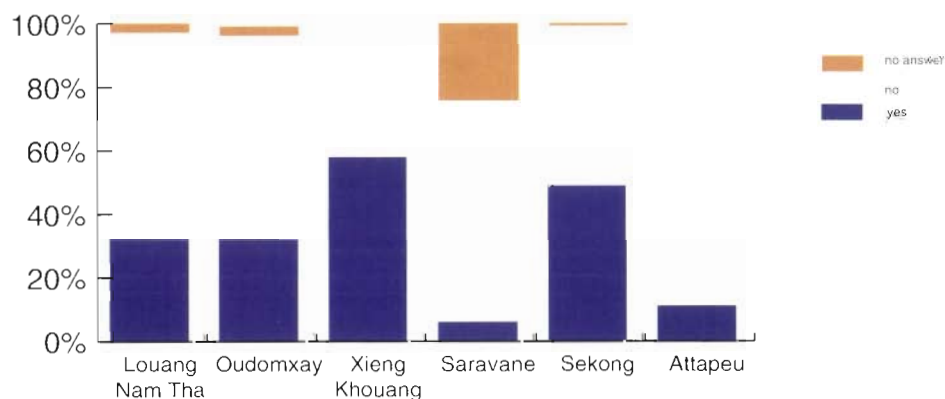
Use of boiled water (presently)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	67	98	93	56	73	48
no	33	2	7	44	26	52
no answer	0	0	0	0	1	0



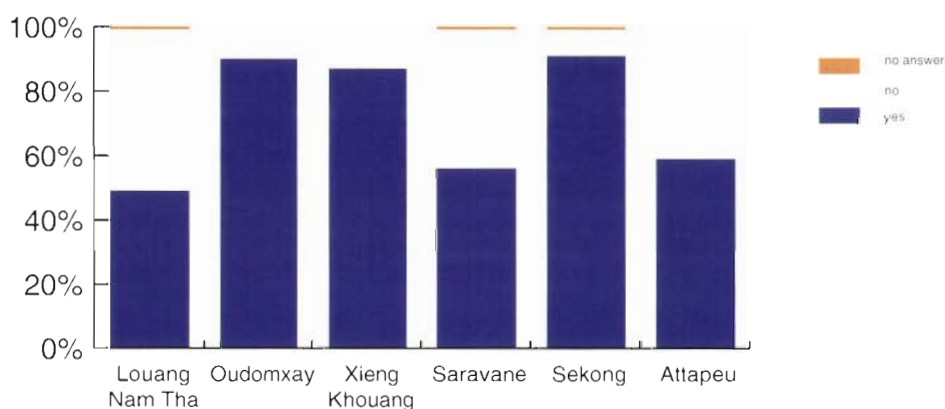
Use of boiled water ( in the previous village)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	32	32	58	6	49	11
no	65	64	42	70	50	89
no answer	3	3	0	24	1	0



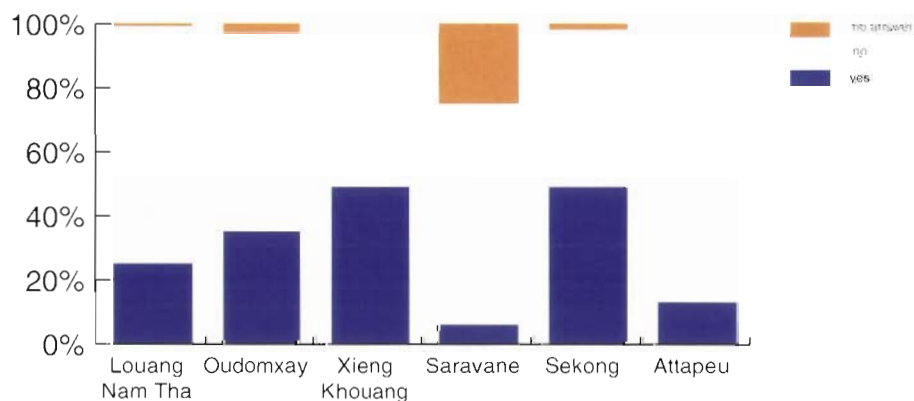
Use of mosquito nets (presently)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	49	90	87	56	91	59
no	50	10	13	43	8	41
no answer	1	0	0	1	1	0



Use of mosquito nets (in the previous village)

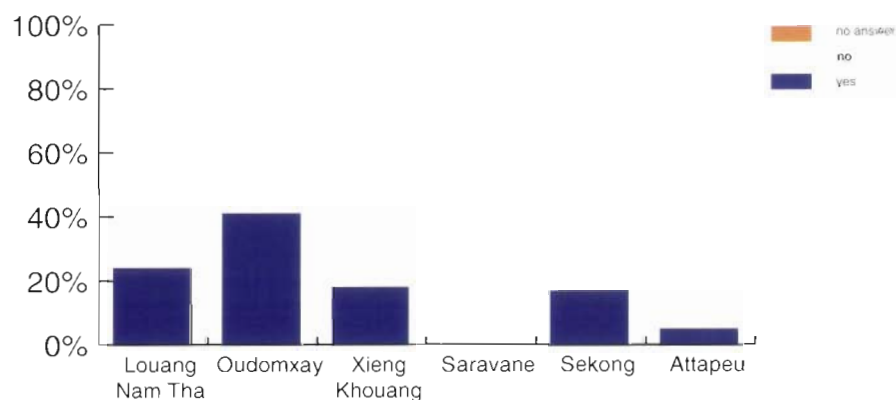
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	25	35	49	6	49	13
no	74	62	51	69	49	87
no answer	1	3	0	25	2	0



## Survey data

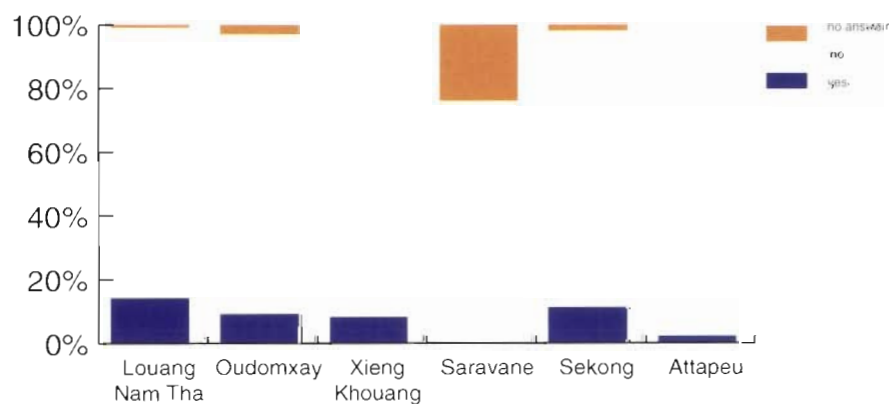
### Use of latrines (presently)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	24	41	18	0	17	5
no	76	59	82	100	83	95
no answer	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Use of latrines (in the previous village)

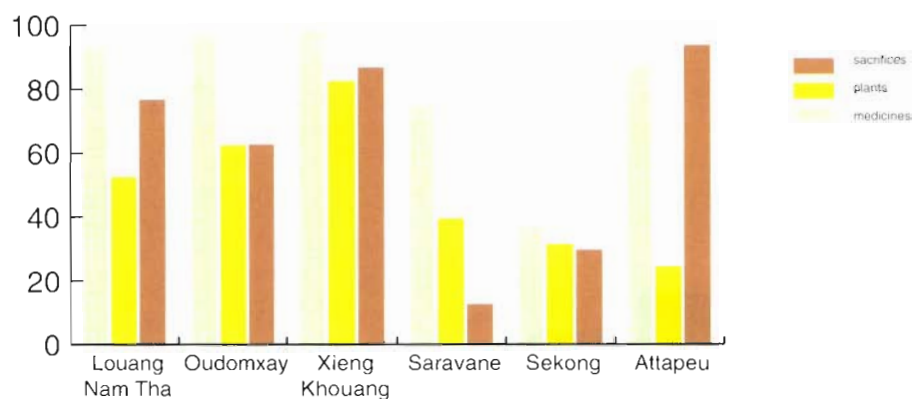
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	14	9	8	0	11	2
no	85	88	92	76	87	98
no answer	1	3	0	24	2	0



## Medical care, hospital use

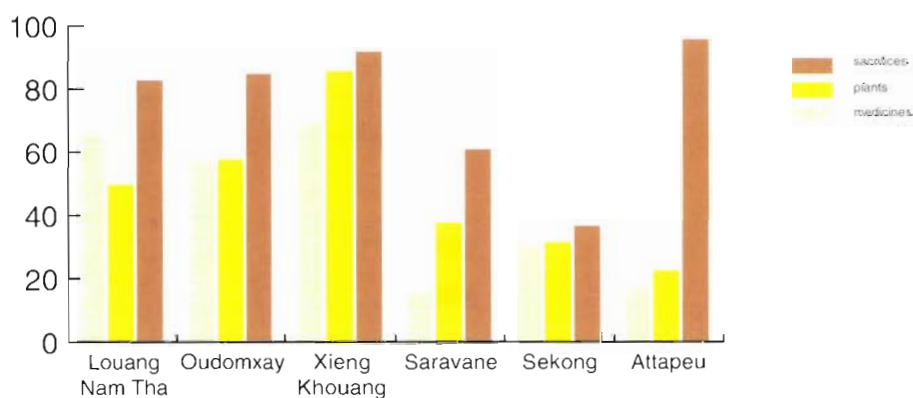
### Medical techniques presently used

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
medicines	94	98	99	76	38	88
plants	53	63	83	40	32	25
sacrifices	77	63	87	13	30	94



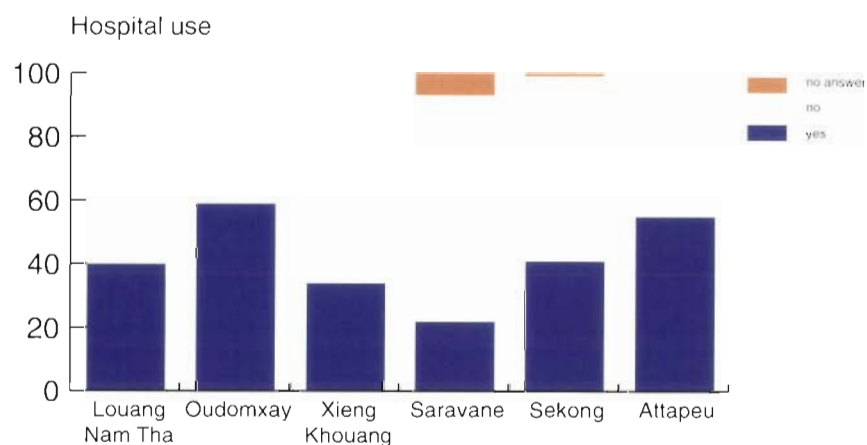
### Medical techniques used in the previous village

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
medicines	67	58	70	17	31	18
plants	50	58	86	38	32	23
sacrifices	83	85	92	61	37	96



## Hospital use

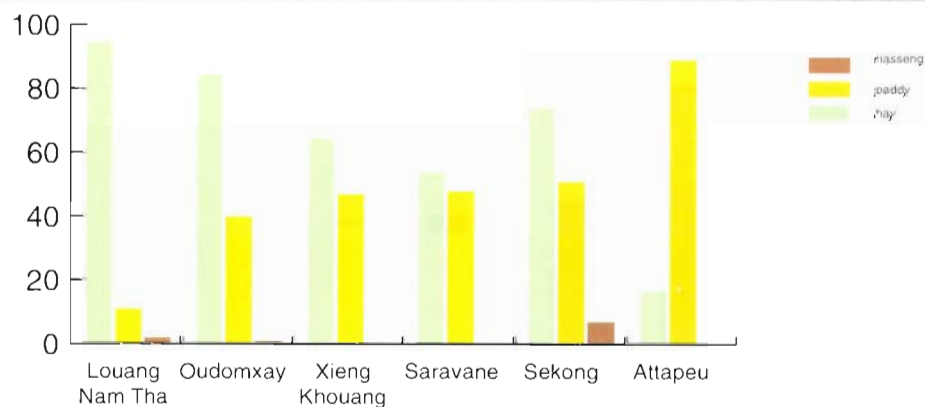
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	40	59	34	22	41	55
no	60	41	66	71	58	45
no answer	0	0	0	7	1	0



## Types of cropping systems

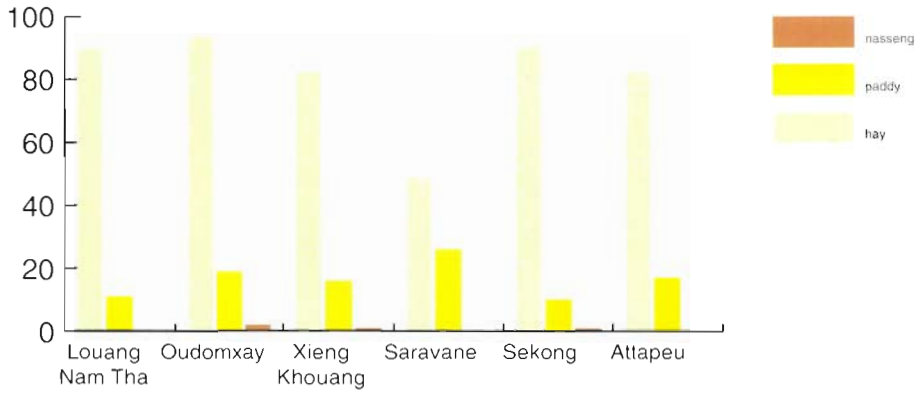
### New village

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
hay	95	85	65	54	74	17
paddy	11	40	47	48	51	89
nasseng	2	1	-	-	7	-



**Previous village**

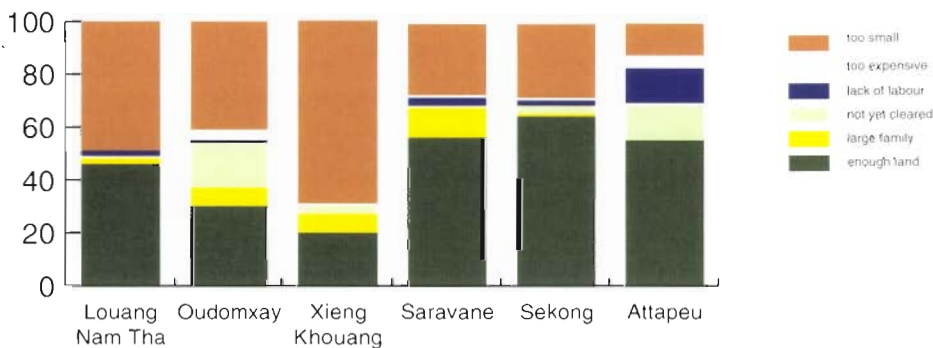
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
hay	90	94	83	49	91	83
paddy	11	19	16	26	10	17
nasseng	-	2	1	-	1	-



**Land titling**

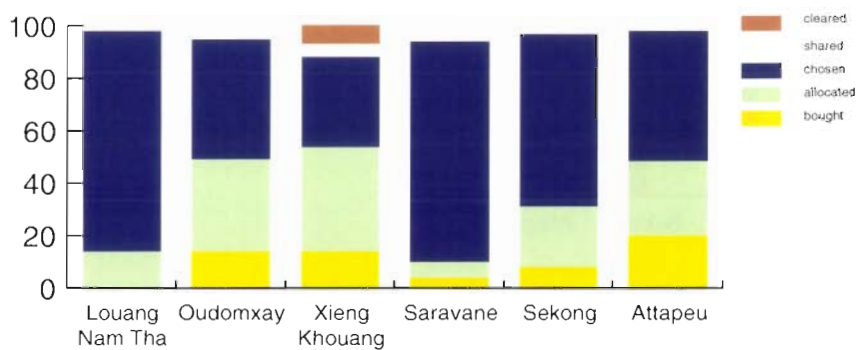
**Land accessibility**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
enough land	46	30	20	56	64	55
large family	2	7	7	11	1	0
not yet cleared	1	17	3	1	3	14
lack of labour	2	1	0	3	2	14
too expensive	0	4	1	1	1	4
too small	49	45	75	27	28	21



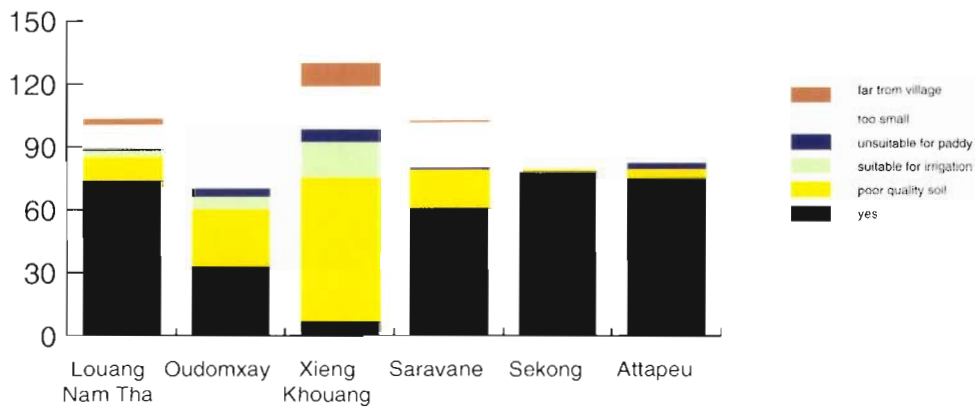
## Distribution

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
bought	0	14	14	4	8	20
allocated	14	40	43	6	23	30
chosen	84	53	36	84	69	52
shared	2	10	9	6	2	3
cleared	0	0	8	0	0	0



## Satisfaction

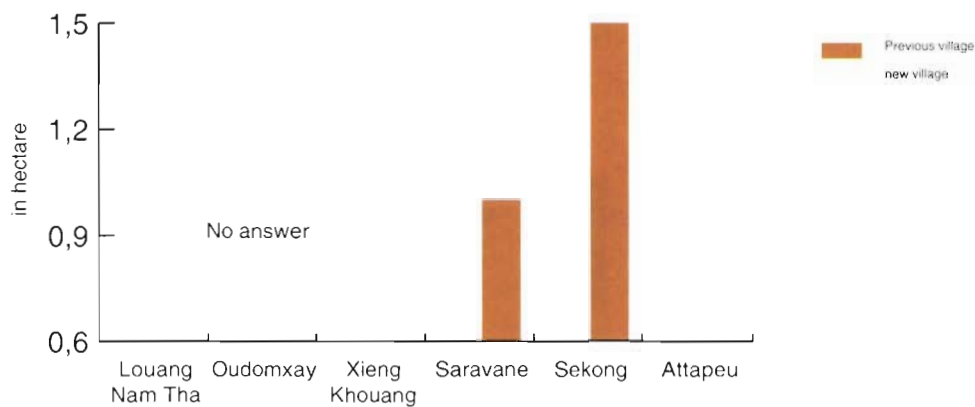
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
yes	74	33	7	61	78	75
poor quality soil	11	27	68	18	1	4
suitable for irrigation	3	6	17	0	0	0
unsuitable for paddy	1	4	6	1	0	3
too small	11	23	21	21	16	18
far from village	3	0	11	1	0	0



## Area under cultivation, yield and fallow period

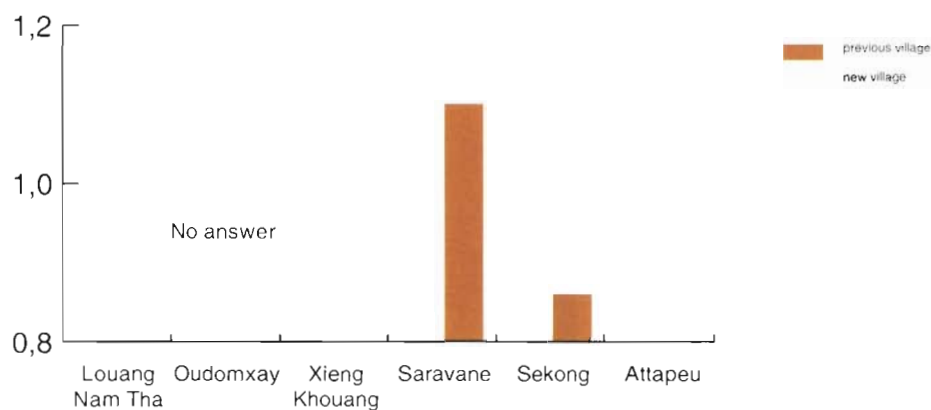
### Hai area

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
new village	-	-	-	1,3	0,9	1,5
Previous village	-	-	-	1	1,5	0,6



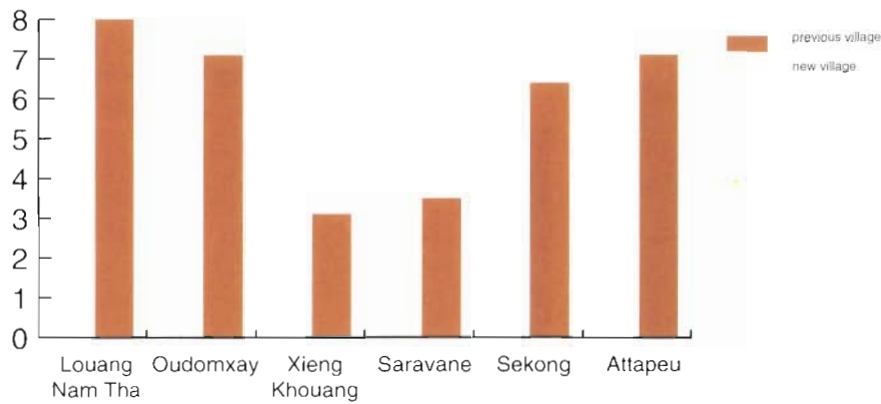
### Paddy field area

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
new village	-	-	-	1,1	1	0,96\
previous village	-	-	-	1,1	0,86	-



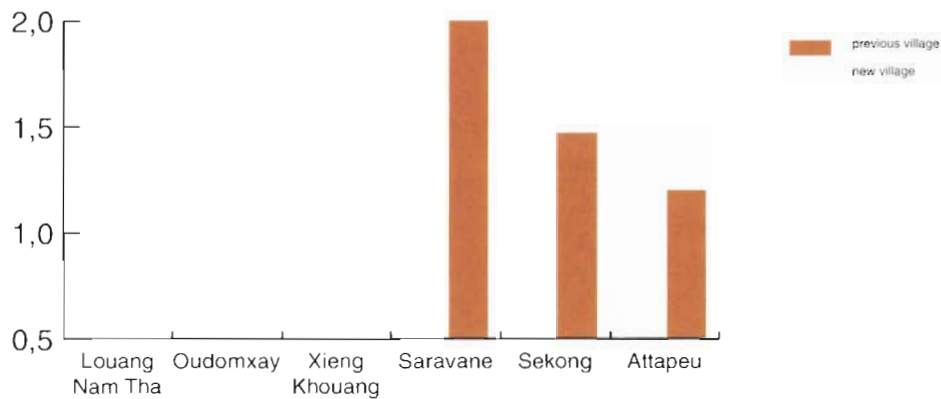
### Hai Fallow period

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
new village	5,7	5	3,2	3,1	2,75	1,7
previous village	8	7,1	3,1	3,5	6,4	7,1



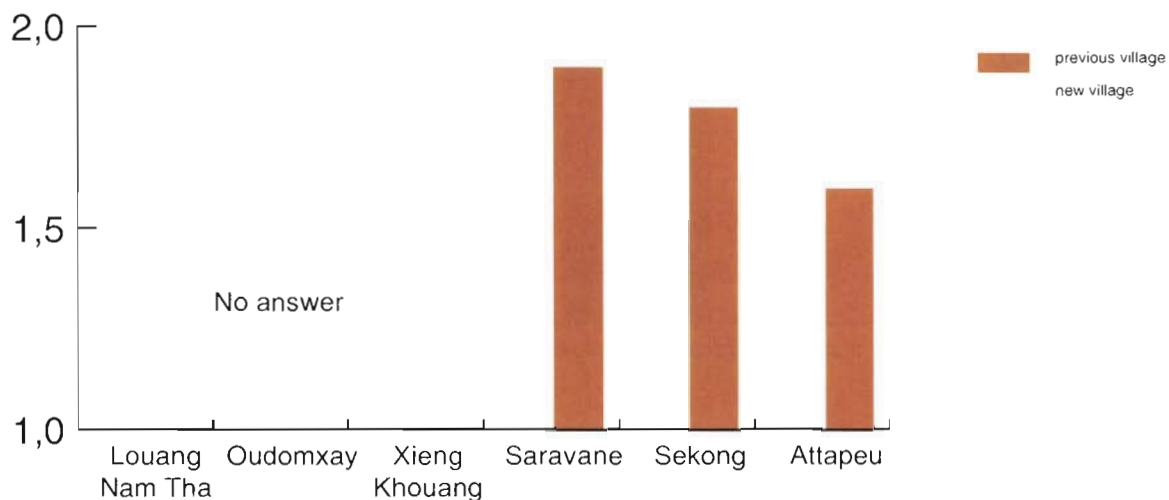
### Hai yield (ton / ha)

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
New village	-	-	-	1,5	1,15	0,8
previous village	-	-	-	2	1,47	1,2



**Paddy yield (ton / ha)**

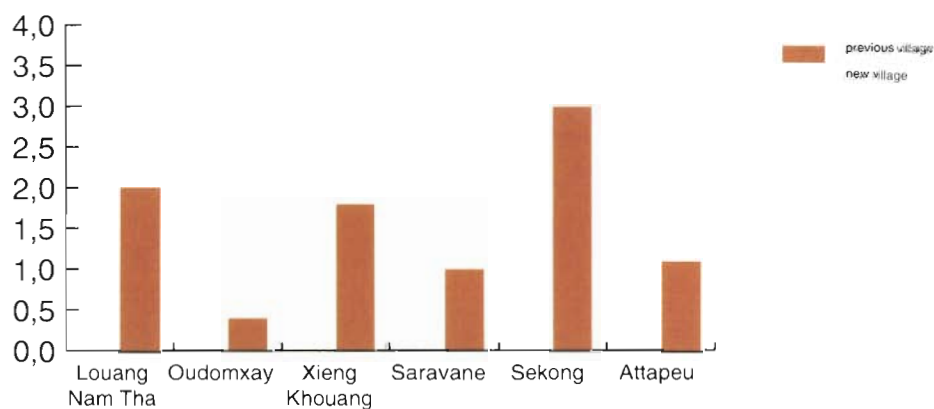
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
new village	-	-	-	2	1,4	1,2
previous village	-	-	-	1,9	1,8	1,6



**Shortages of rice and other crops**

**Rice shortage (in months)**

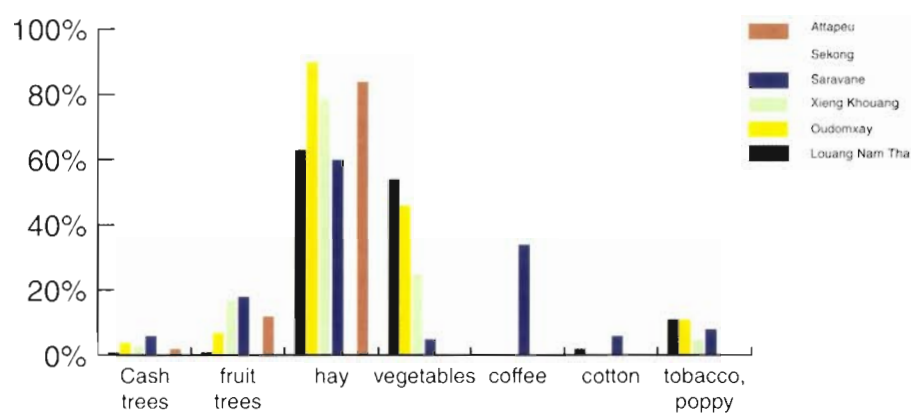
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
new village	2,9	1,4	3,5	1,9	3,6	3,7
previous village	2	0,4	1,8	1	3	1,1



## Other crops

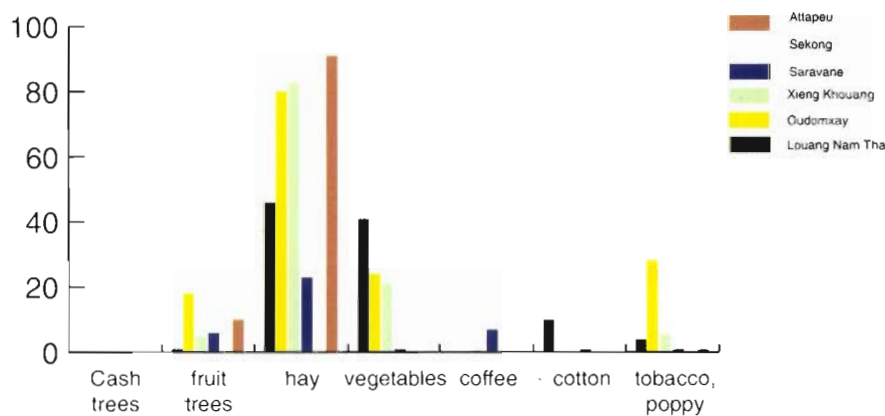
New village

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
Cash trees	1	4	3	6	1	2
fruit trees	1	7	17	18	28	12
hai	63	90	79	60	74	84
vegetables	54	46	25	5	10	0
coffee	0	0	0	34	41	0
cotton	2	0	0	6	0	0
tobacco, poppy	11	11	5	8	7	0



Previous village

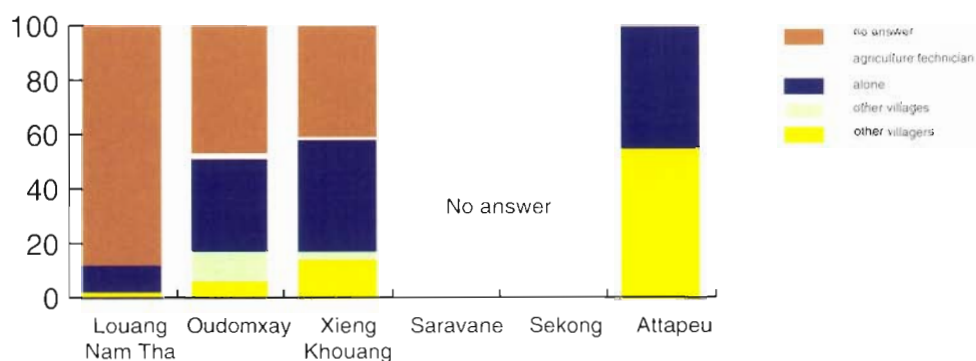
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
cash trees	0	0	0	0	0	0
fruit trees	1	18	5	6	16	10
hai	46	80	83	23	58	91
vegetables	41	24	21	1	1	0
coffee	0	0	1	7	17	0
cotton	10	0	0	1	1	0
tobacco, poppy	4	28	6	1	6	1



## Assistance, advice and production means

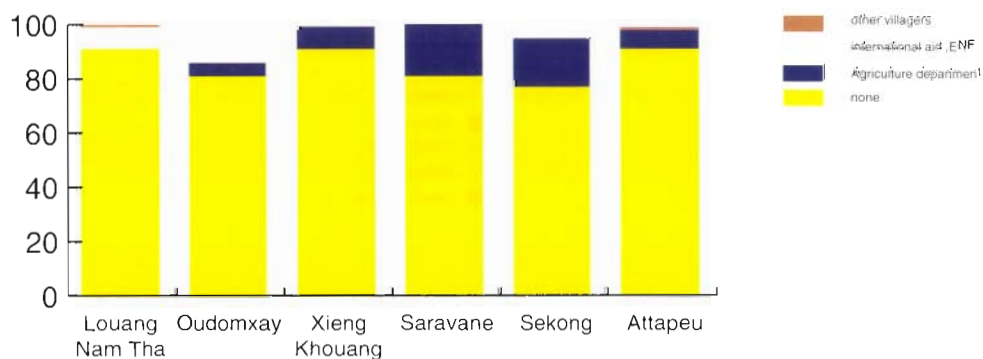
### Paddy field cultivation apprenticeship

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
other villagers	2	6	14	-	-	55
other villages	0	11	3	-	-	0
alone	10	34	41	-	-	45
agriculture technician	0	2	1	-	-	5
no answer	88	47	41	-	-	0



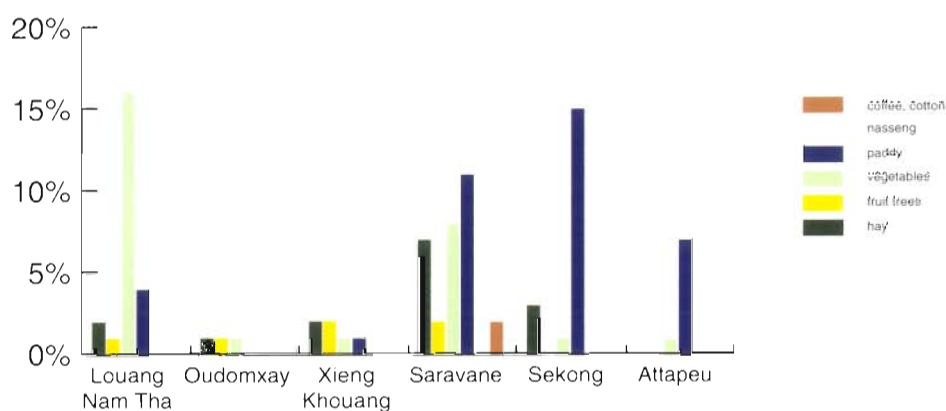
### Received assistance or advice on cultivation methods

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
None	91	81	91	81	77	91
Agriculture department	0	5	6	13	18	7
International aid ,ENF	8	17	1	0	10	0
Other villagers	1	0	0	0	0	1



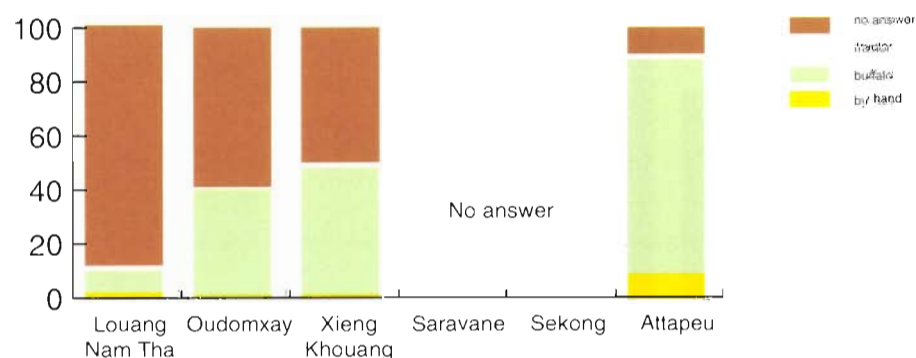
### Crops concerned

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
hai	2	1	2	7	3	0
fruit trees	1	1	2	2	0	0
vegetables	16	1	1	8	1	1
paddy	4	0	1	11	15	7
nasseng	2	1	0	0	0	0
coffee, cotton	0	0	0	2	0	0



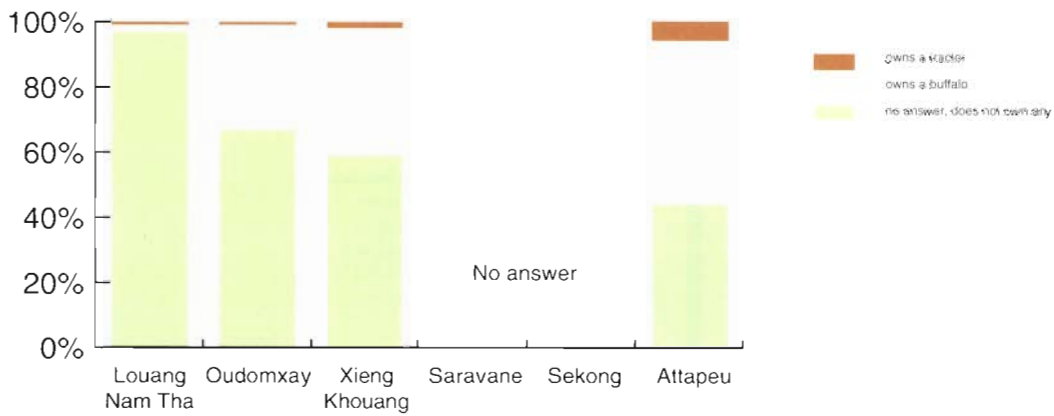
### Soil preparation

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
by hand	2	1	1	-	-	9
buffalo	8	39	47	-	-	79
tractor	2	1	2	-	-	2
no answer	89	59	50	-	-	10



## Buffalo or tractor ownership

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no answer, does not own any	97	67	59	-	-	44
owns a buffalo	2	32	39	-	-	50
owns a tractor	1	1	2	-	-	6

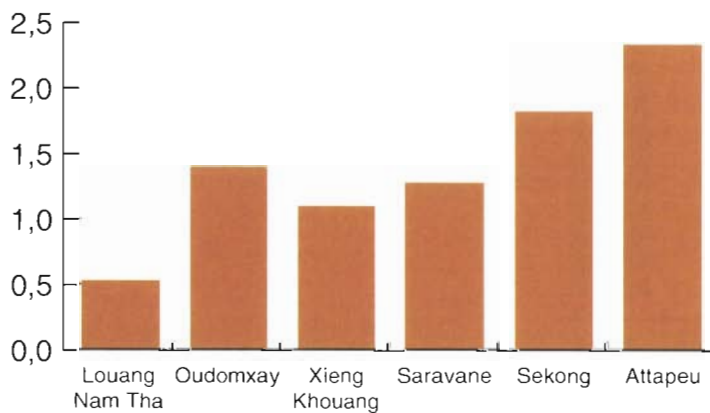


## Livestock Raising

### Average number of livestock

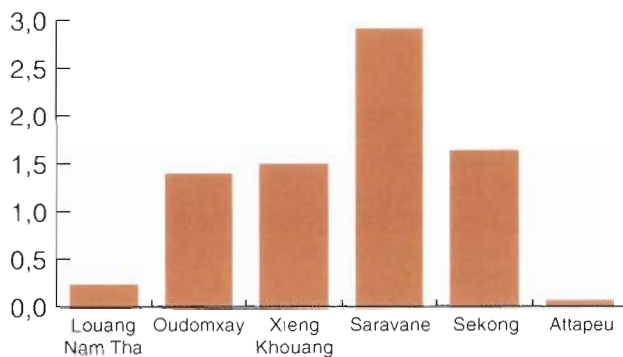
#### buffaloes

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
0,53	1,4	1,1	1,28	1,82	2,33



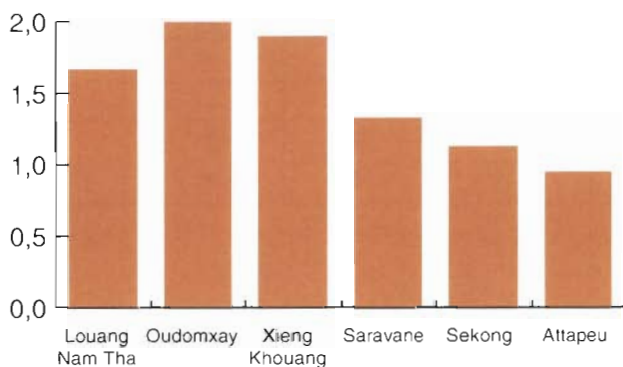
**cows**

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
0,24	1,4	1,5	2,92	1,64	0,07



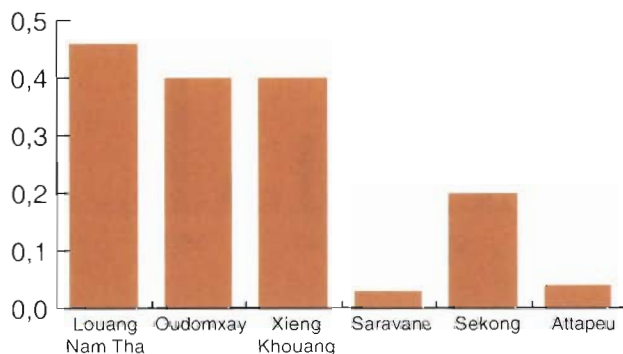
**pigs**

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
1,67	2	1,9	1,33	1,13	0,95



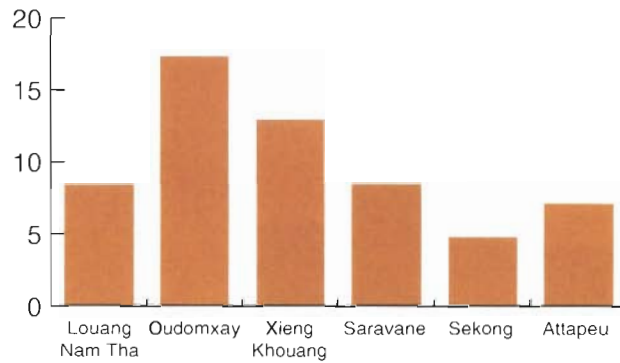
**goats**

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
0,46	0,4	0,4	0,03	0,2	0,04



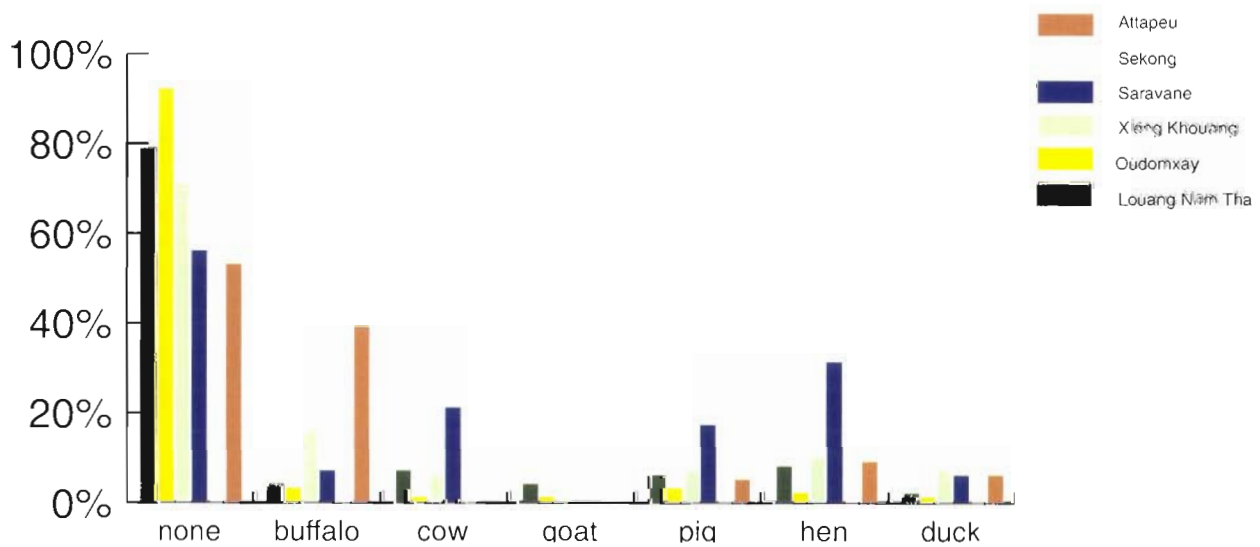
**poultry**

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
8,38	17,3	12,9	8,44	4,77	7,1



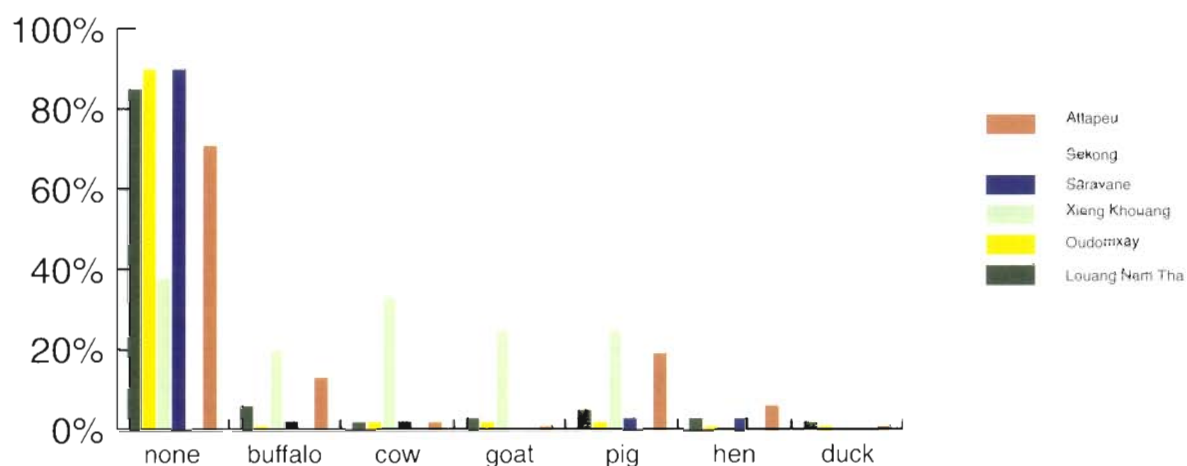
**New breeds**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none	79	92	71	56	53	53
buffalo	4	3	16	7	9	39
cow	7	1	6	21	15	0
goat	4	1	1	0	0	0
pig	6	3	7	17	15	5
hen	8	2	10	31	8	9
duck	2	1	7	6	22	6



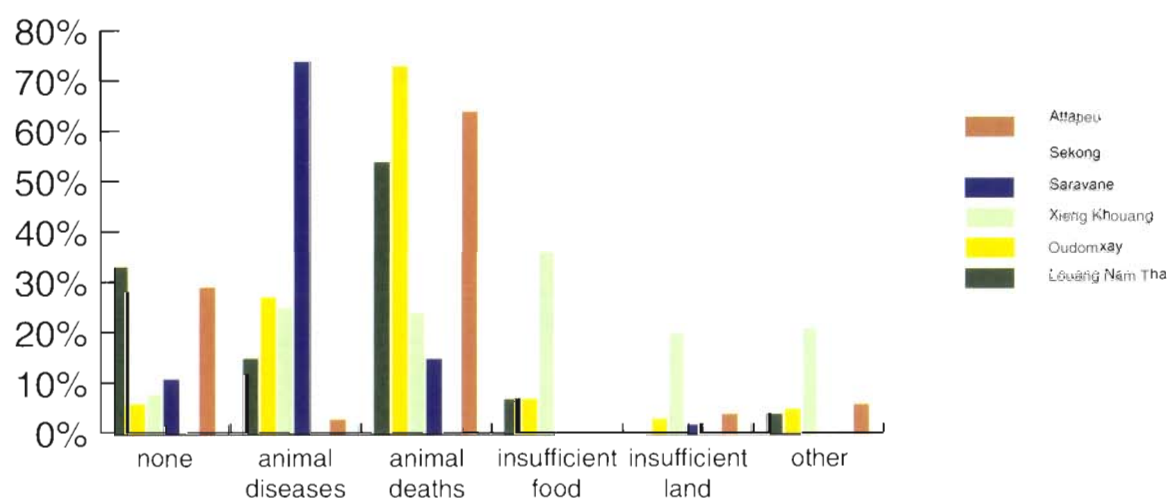
## Discontinued breeds

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none	85	90	38	90	81	71
buffalo	6	1	20	2	5	13
cow	2	2	33	2	3	2
goat	3	2	25	0	2	1
pig	5	2	25	3	10	19
hen	3	1	1	3	10	6
duck	2	1	0	0	3	1



## Difficulties in raising

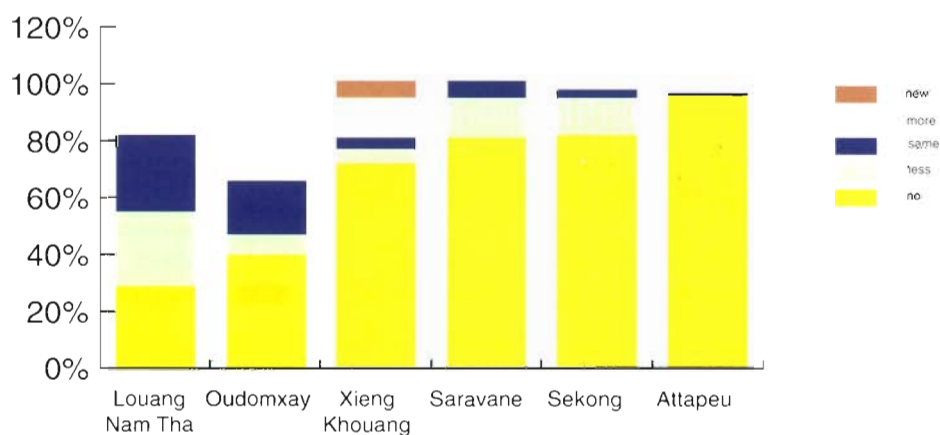
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
none	33	6	8	11	22	29
animal diseases	15	27	25	74	67	3
animal deaths	54	73	24	15	0	64
insufficient food	7	7	36	0	2	0
insufficient land	0	3	20	2	0	4
other	4	5	21	0	9	6



## Use of natural resources

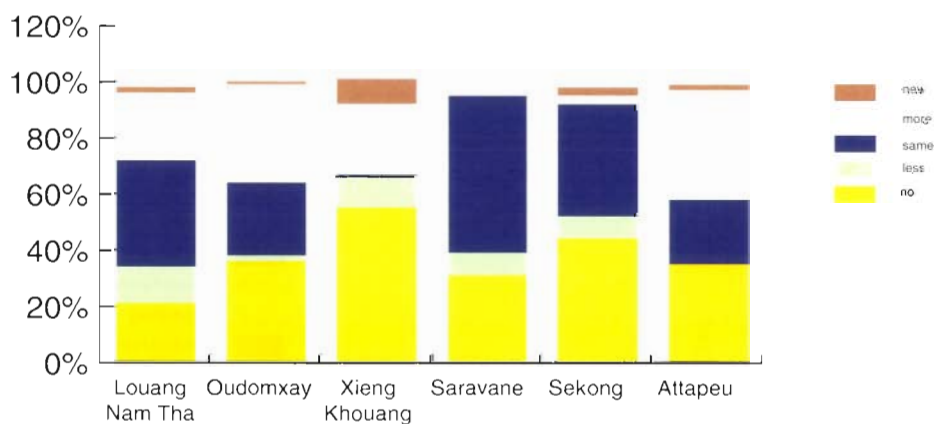
### Hunting

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	29	40	72	81	82	96
less	26	7	5	14	13	0
same	27	19	4	6	3	1
more	18	34	14	0	2	3
new	0	0	6	0	0	0



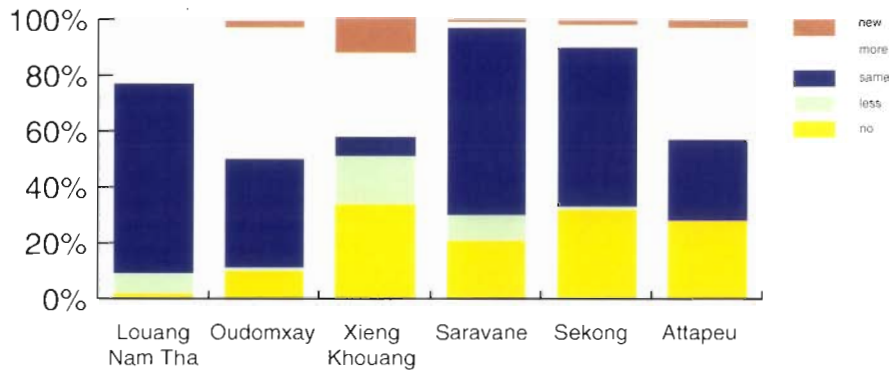
### Fishing

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	21	36	55	31	44	35
less	13	2	11	8	8	0
same	38	26	1	56	40	23
more	24	35	25	6	3	39
new	2	1	9	0	3	2



## Foraging

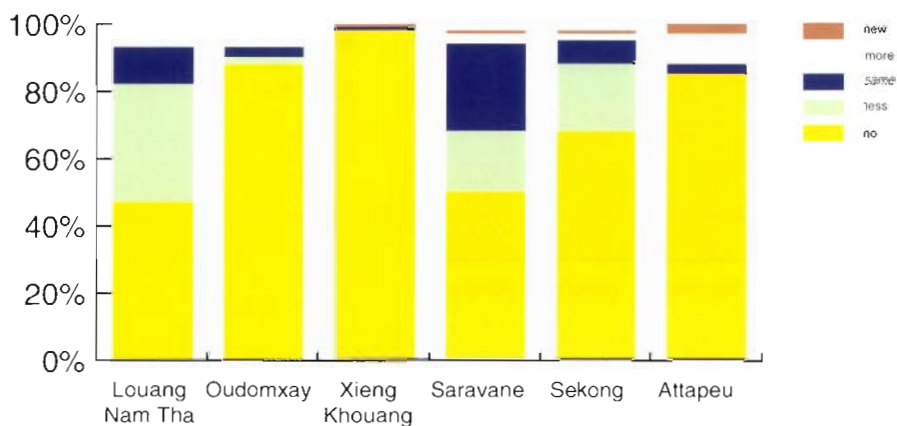
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	2	10	34	21	32	28
less	7	1	17	9	1	0
same	68	39	7	67	57	29
more	22	47	30	2	8	40
new	0	4	11	1	1	2



## Handicrafts

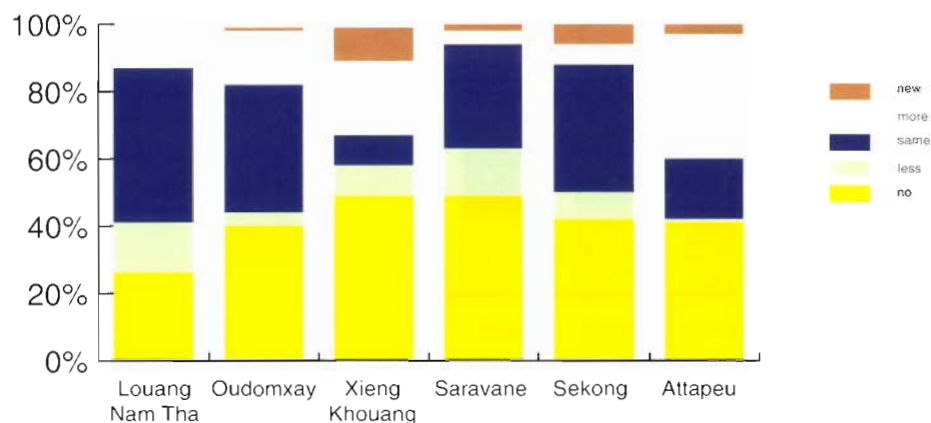
### Weaving

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	47	88	98	50	68	85
less	35	2	0	18	20	0
same	11	3	1	26	7	3
more	7	7	0	3	2	9
new	0	0	1	1	1	3



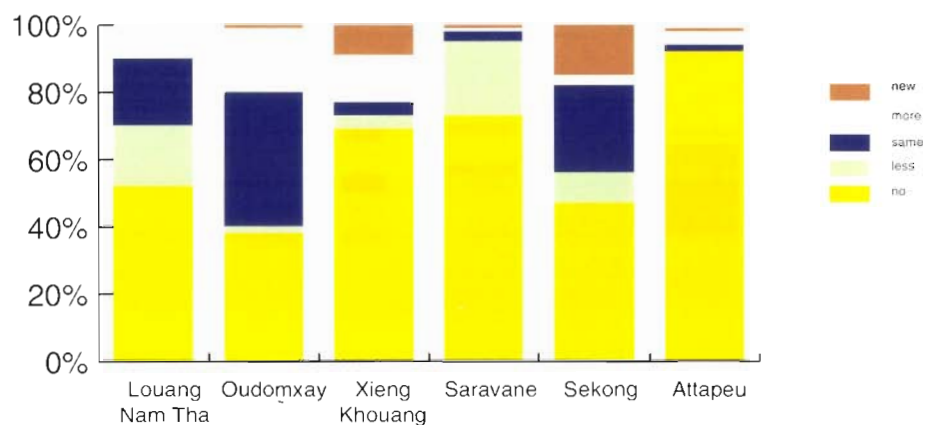
## Basketry

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	26	40	49	49	42	41
less	15	4	9	14	8	1
same	46	38	9	31	38	18
more	12	16	22	4	6	37
new	0	1	10	2	6	3



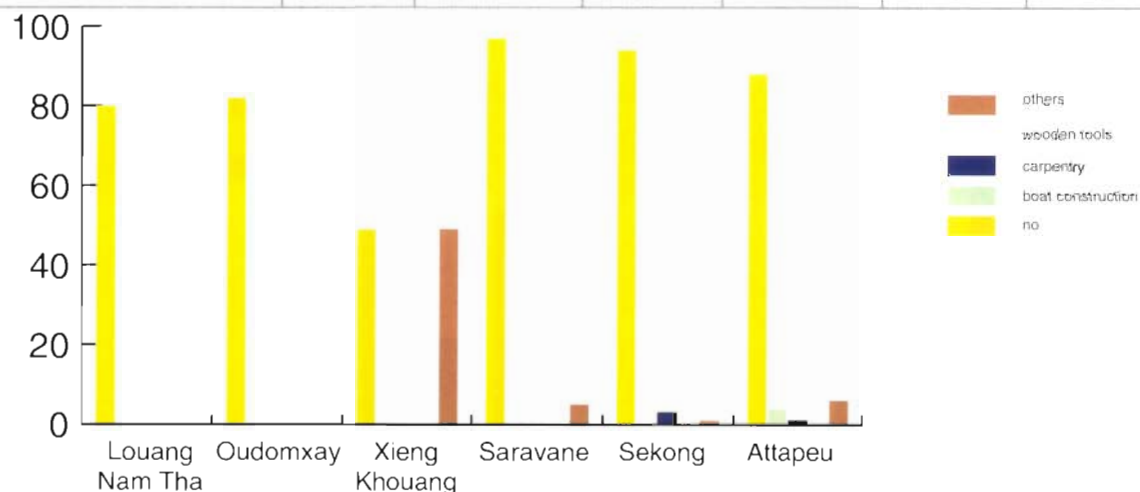
## Iron forging

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	52	38	69	73	47	92
less	18	2	4	22	9	0
same	20	40	4	3	26	2
more	10	19	14	1	3	4
new	0	1	9	1	15	1



## Other handicraft activities

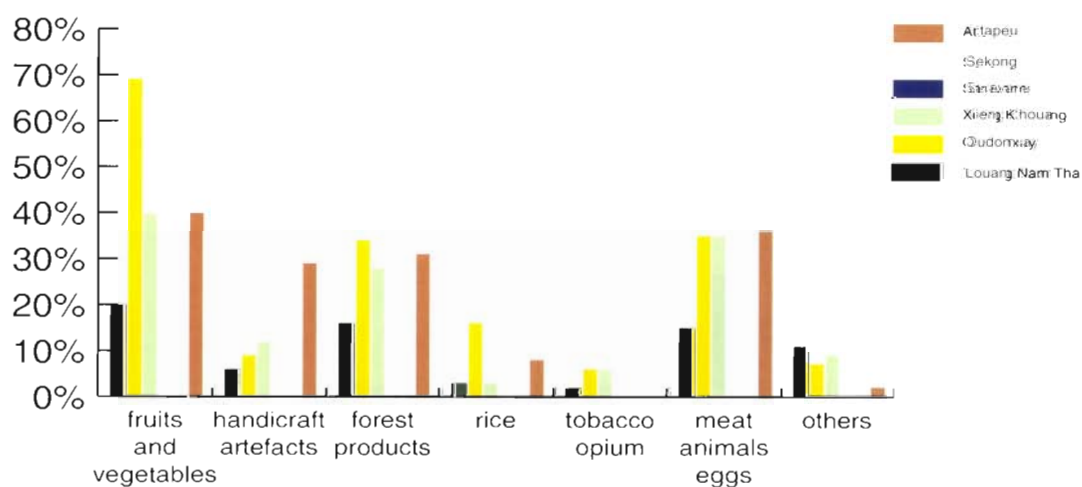
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	80	82	49	97	94	88
boat construction	0	0	0	0	0	4
carpentry	0	0	0	0	3	1
wooden tools	15	18	0	0	3	1
others	0	0	49	5	1	6



## Sales, purchases and barter

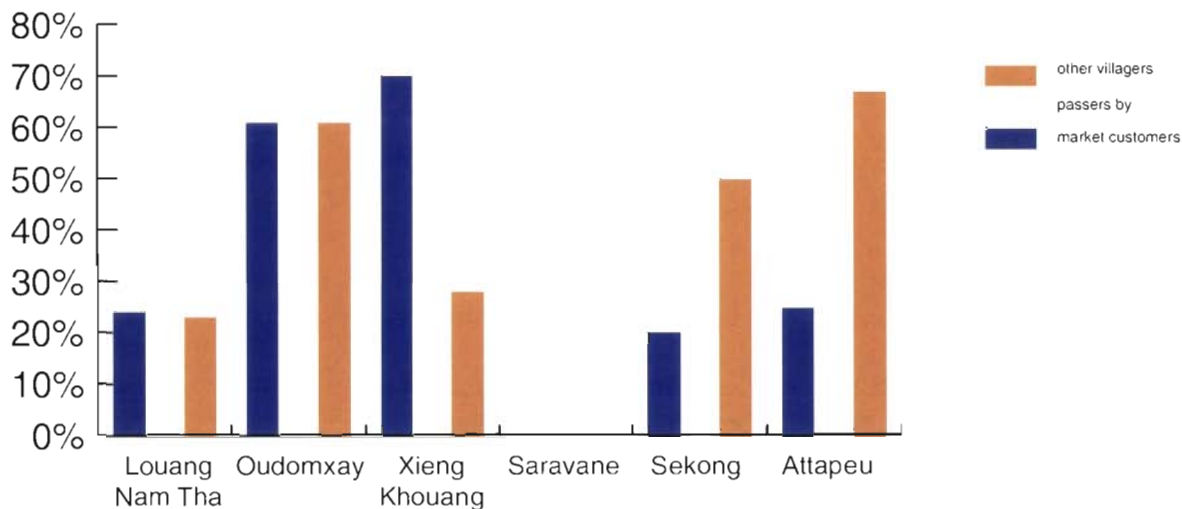
### Percentage of families selling the following products

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
fruits and vegetables	20	69	40	-	42	40
handicraft artefacts	6	9	12	-	5	29
forest products	16	34	28	-	15	31
rice	3	16	3	-	6	8
tobacco, opium	2	6	6	-	0	0
meat, animals, eggs	15	35	35	-	11	36
others	11	7	9	-	3	2



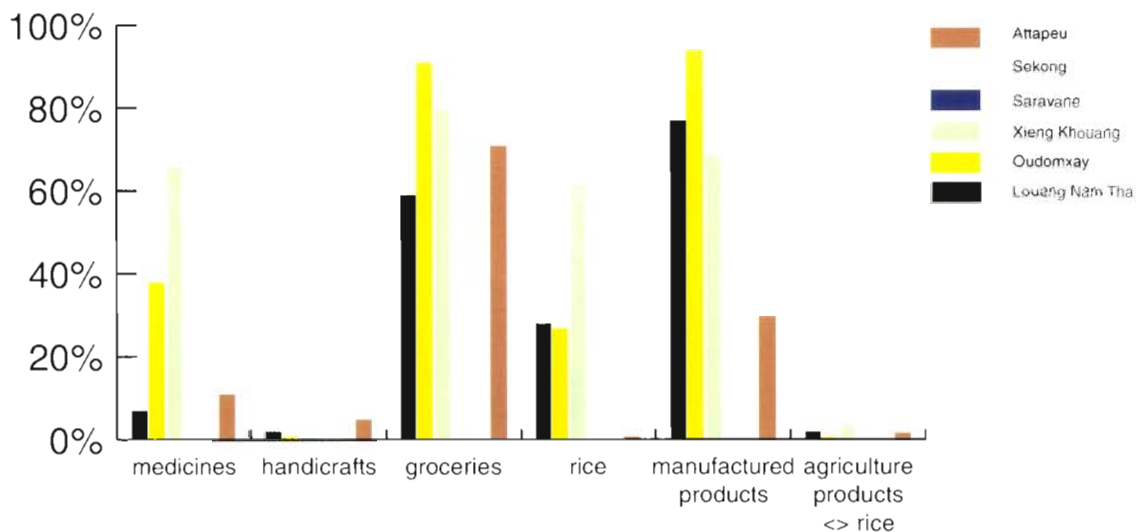
**Main market outlets**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
market customers	24	61	70	-	20	25
passers by	40	55	14	-	19	56
other villagers	23	61	28	-	50	67



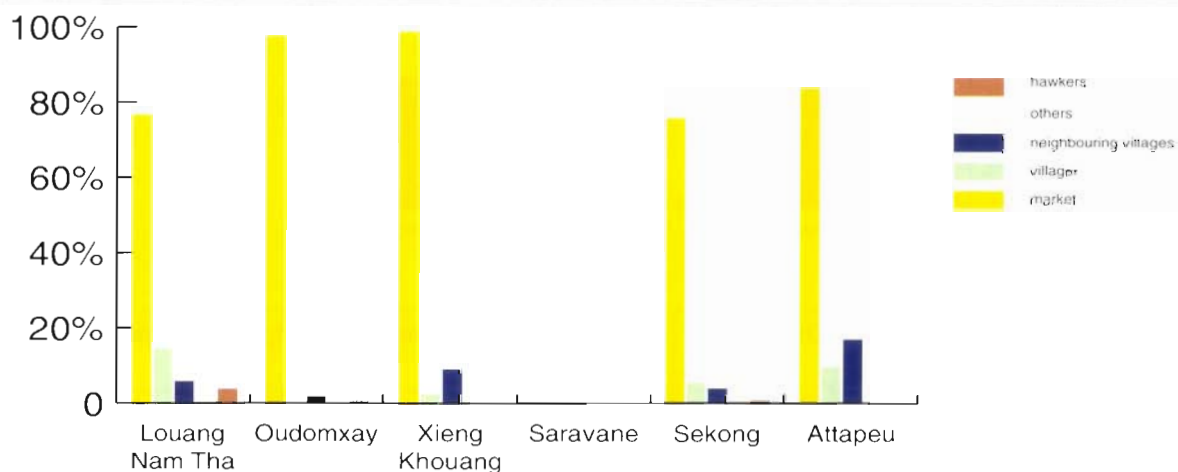
**Percentage of families buying the following products**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
medicines	7	38	66	-	1	11
handicrafts	2	1	1	-	35	5
groceries	59	91	80	-	28	71
rice	28	27	62	-	13	1
manufactured products	77	94	69	-	80	30
agriculture products <> rice	2	1	4	-	1	2



## Place where bought

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
market	77	98	99	-	76	84
villager	15	0	3	-	6	10
neighbouring villages	6	2	9	-	4	17
others	2	1	1	-	1	0
hawkers	4	1	0	-	1	0



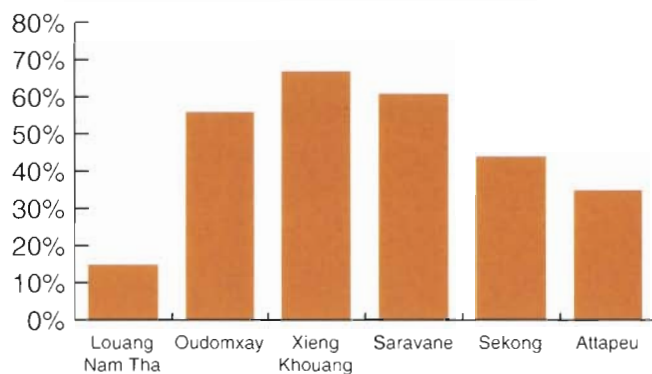
## Percentage of families bartering the following products

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
fruits and vegetables	5	0	9	-	2	3
handicrafts	4	1	0	-	1	1
forest products	2	0	0	-	2	1
rice	6	1	1	-	0	0
tobacco, opium	0	0	0	-	0	0
meat, animals, eggs	30	37	0	-	6	2
others	8	3	1	-	0	2

## Consumer goods (percentage of households owning the following items)

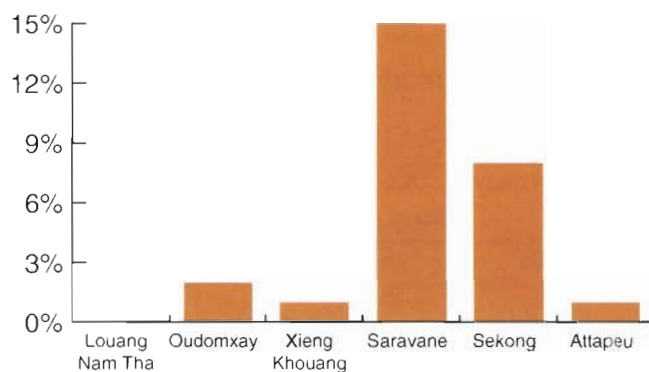
### bicycle

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
15	56	67	61	44	35



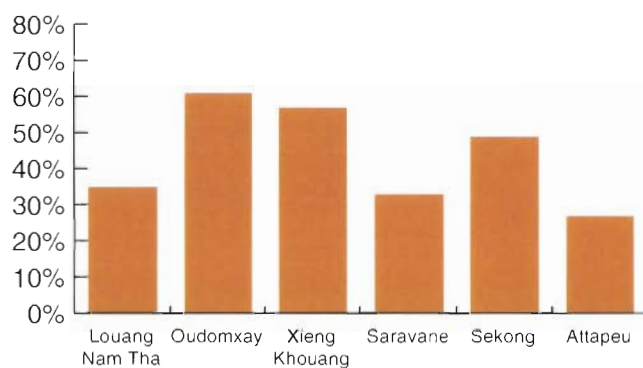
### TV

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
0	2	1	15	8	1



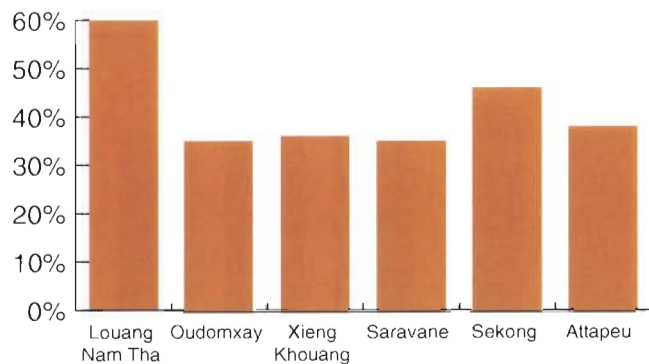
### radio

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
35	61	57	33	49	27



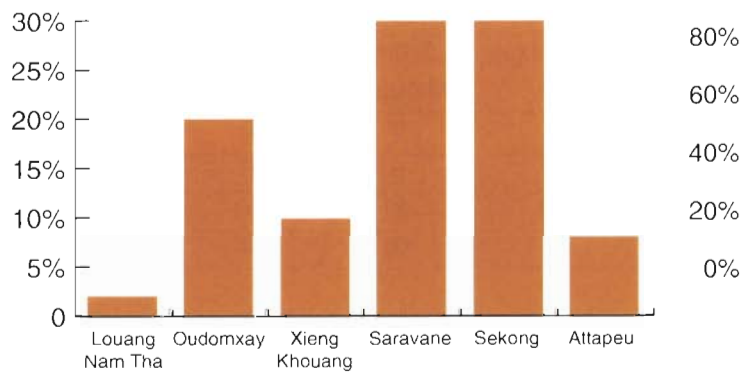
**mill**

Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
35	36	35	46	38	105



**cart**

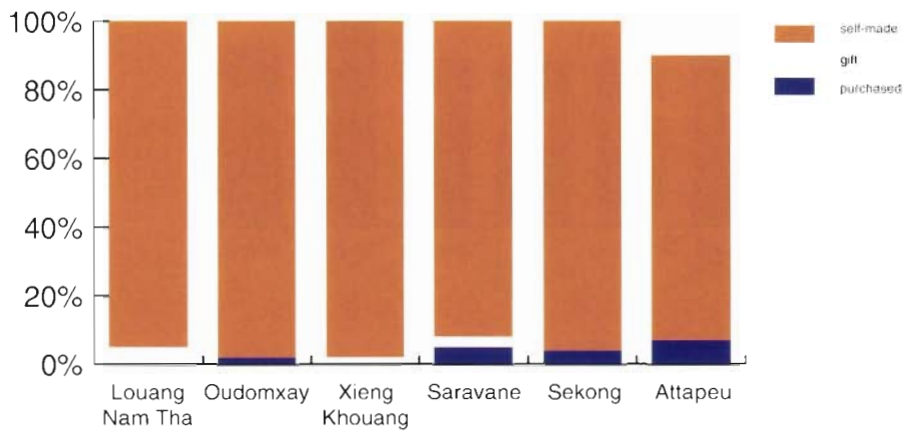
Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
2	20	10	30	30	8



**Method of acquisition**

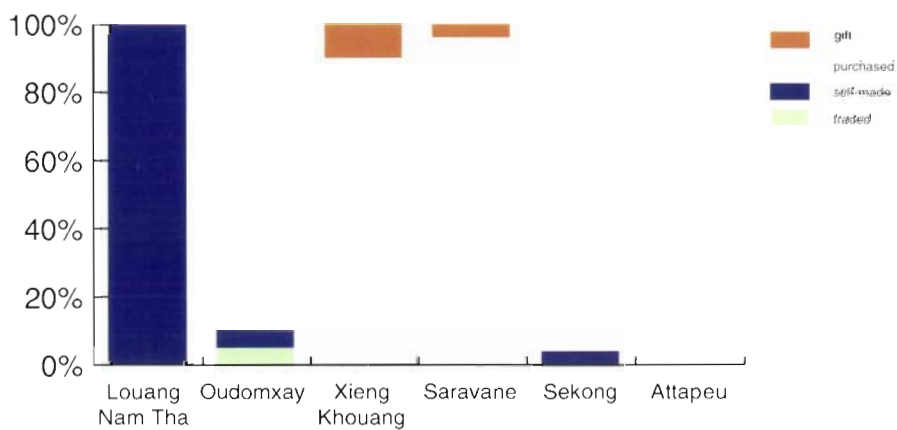
**mill**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
purchased	0	2	0	5	4	7
gift	5	0	2	3	0	0
self-made	95	98	98	92	96	83



**cart**

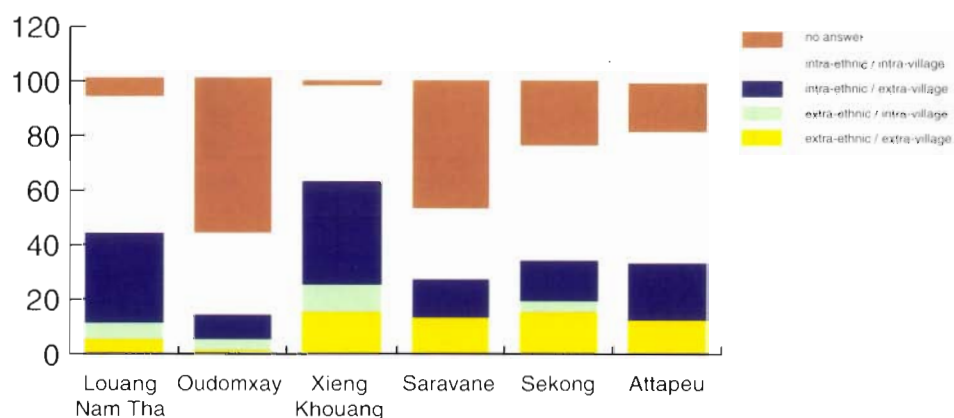
	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
traded	0	5	0	0	0	1
self-made	100	5	0	0	4	0
purchased	0	90	90	96	96	94
gift	0	0	10	4	0	0



# Traditions

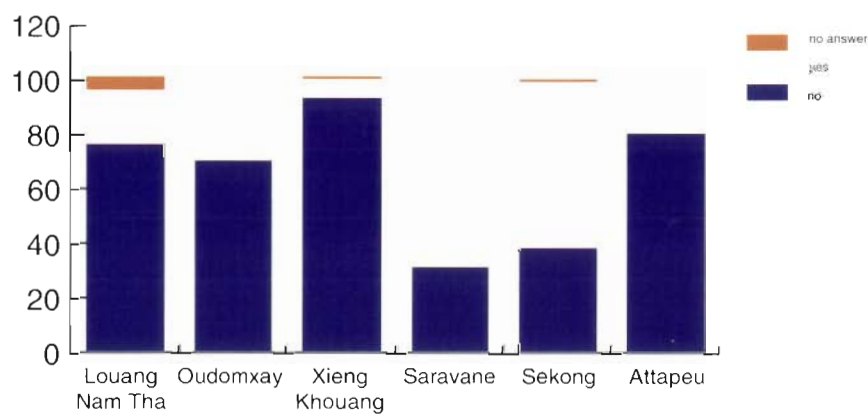
## Wedding type

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
extra-ethnic / extra-village	5	1	15	13	15	12
extra-ethnic / intra-village	6	4	10	0	4	0
intra-ethnic / extra-village	33	9	38	14	15	21
intra-ethnic / intra-village	50	30	35	26	42	48
no answer	7	57	2	47	24	18



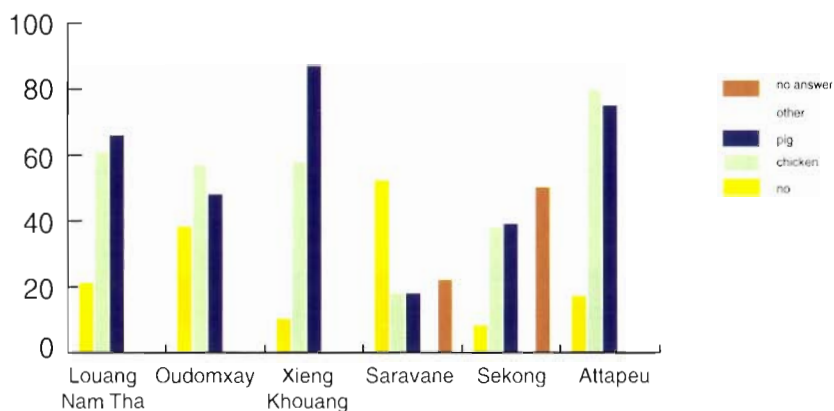
## Buffalo sacrifices

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	76	70	93	31	38	80
yes	20	30	7	69	61	20
no answer	5	0	1	0	1	0



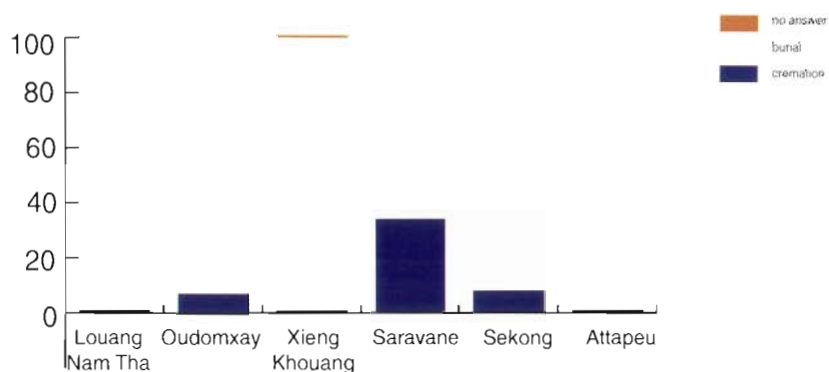
**Other sacrifices**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
no	21	38	10	52	8	17
chicken	61	57	58	18	38	80
pig	66	48	87	18	39	75
other	0	2	1	0	3	1
no answer	0	0	0	22	50	0



**Funeral rituals**

	Louang Nam Tha	Oudomxay	Xieng Khouang	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
cremation	1	7	1	34	8	1
burial	99	93	99	66	92	99
no answer	0	0	1	0	0	0







# Questionnaire

Village name: .....  
District name: .....  
House number: .....  
Surveyor's name: .....  
Date of interview: .....

Code: ...../...../.....  
Registration number: .....

## *Family survey*

This questionnaire consists of the following chapters

- I. Data on population**
- II. Data on education**
- III. Data on health and sanitation**
- IV. Data on social behaviour**
- V. New settlement characteristics**
- VI. Non Formal Education: where and why**

### **Note**

The reader will understand that in this survey the term 'house' means a dwelling unit that may shelter several families. The term 'family/household' means a group of persons who form a consumers' unit (sharing combined resources).

## *Population*

- 1.1-On a regular basis, how many persons live in the house?      persons.
- 1.2-How many families live in the house?      families.
- 1.3-Details about the house inhabitants (transfer answers to chart).
- 1.3.1 Name
  - 1.3.2 Gender
  - 1.3.3 Age
- 1.4-To which ethnic group(s) are the residents linked?
- 1.5-Does a kinship exist between the families/households?      YES/NO
- 1.6-Describe the relationship:
- .....

Since last rainy season:

- 1.7-How many children were born in the house? ..... births.
- 1.8-Among those children, how many are still alive? .....alive.
- 1.9-In the household, how many persons died? .....deaths.

## HOUSEHOLD

No	1.3.1 Name	1.3.2 Gender (m/f)	1.3.3 Age	2.1.2 knowledge of Lao language (0;1;2;3)	2.2 School attendance (yes/no)	2.3 School attendance (duration)
1				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
2				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
3				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
4				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
5				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
6				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
7				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
8				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
9				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	
10				0 1 2 3	Yes/No	

**Family/household structure** (if more than two families/households, please use an additional page).

### Family/home No 1

1.10.1-Father: YES  
NO

1.11.-Mother: YES  
NO

1.12.1-How many children?

children.

1.13.1-How many married children?

married children.

1.14.1-How many daughters-in-law?

daughters-in-law.

1.15.1-How many sons-in-law?

sons-in-law.

1.16.1-How many grandchildren?

grand-children.

1.17.1-How many grandparents?

grand-parents.

1.18.1-How many other relatives?

1.19.1-Describe the relationship with the father or the mother

.....  
.....

1.20.1-How many newborns did the mother give birth to?

newborns.

1.21.1-Among those newborns, how many died later?

dead children.

### Family/ home No 2

## Education

### Schools

- 2.1-How many people in your household have been to, or attend school? People.  
-2.1.1-People from 6 to 14 years? .....  
-2.1.2-People from 15 to 40 years? .....
- 2.2-Who? (go into detail per person and transfer answer to chart p 2).
- 2.3-Until which grade? (go into detail per person and transfer to chart p.2 answers expressed in achieved grades).
- 2.4-How many people must leave the village in order to go on with studies? .....
- 2.5-Who? .....

### Other training

- 2.6-How many people received training apart from formal schooling? .....
- 2.7-How many were trained during their military service?.....(specify training).
- 2.8-How many were trained in another structure? (specify structure and training).  
.....

### Knowledge

- 2.9-Generally speaking,do you think knowledge passed on by your family is well suited to your everyday life?  
YES / NO
- 2.10-Why?
- 2.11-Which fields would you like to study more? (please grade answers from 1 to 7).
- |                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| -reading and and writing   | -agriculture       |
| -water                     | -health/sanitation |
| -handicraft (weaving, ...) | -mechanics         |
| -other (specify)           |                    |

### Language

- 2.12-How many persons in the household speak Lao?.....  
(specify answer per person and transfer to chart No1)
- 0: do not understand and do not speak;  
1: understand and/or speak a little;  
2: understand and speak well;  
3: understand, speak, read and write.
- 2.13-Under which circumstances is Lao language most useful?
- for trade
  - for dealing with government services
  - for dealing with other villages' inhabitants
  - others
  - never

- 2.14-Is it the language spoken among relatives?  
name spoken language: ..... YES / NO
- 2.15-Which other languages are spoken by one or several household members?  
-Border languages ( specify) .....  
-Ethnic minorities languages (specify) .....  
-Foreign languages (specify) .....
- 2.16-How many bilingual persons? ..... How many trilingual persons?

### ***Health and sanitation***

- 3.1-In your household, where does the cooking and drinking water come from?  
- river - spring  
- rain water - well  
- water pump
- 3.2-Do you boil this water before drinking it? YES / NO
- 3.3-Do you own a mosquito net? YES / NO
- 3.4-Do you repel mosquitos in other ways? YES / NO
- 3.5-Do you use latrines? YES / NO
- 3.6-When there is a sick relative, what do you use (in priority order 1-2-3)?  
1 2 3 Plants  
1 2 3 Sacrifices  
1 2 3 Medicines
- 3.7-How many relatives have been to hospital?

### ***Village economy***

#### ***Agriculture***

Which crops do you cultivate at present?

- 4.1-Hai farming? YES / NO  
-4.1.1-How many hectares approximatively?.....hectares.  
-4.1.2-Fallow duration between two crops?.....years.
- 4.2-Paddy farming? YES / NO  
-4.2.1-Since how long?.....years.  
-4.2.2-How many hectares approximatively?.....hectares.  
-4.2.3-Seed quantity used?.....  
-4.2.4-How did you learn about rice farming?  
other villagers' example  
alone  
agriculture technician Specify .....
- 4.2.5-How was land prepared?  
buffalo  
hand tractor
- 4.2.6-Are you a landowner? YES / NO

4.3-Nasseng farming YES / NO

4.3.1-For how long? .....years.

4.3.2-Which irrigation system do you use?

- individual
- collective

4.3.3-How many hectares approximatively?.....hectares.

4.4-How much rice do you produce from hai?

(unit to be converted into kg) .....kg.

4.5-How much rice do you produce from paddy fields? i.e. ....kg.

4.6-How much rice do you produce from nasseng? i.e. ....kg.

4.7.Do you have a rice deficit? YES / NO

-4.7.1-Do you have months without rice?

-4.7.2-How do you get rice during this period?

.....

4.8-What other crops do you farm?

.....

4.9-Do you get technical assistance? YES / NO

4.9.1-Where from?

- NFE
- International aid

- Agriculture or Irrigation Department
- Others .....

4.9.2-For which crop(s)?

.....

4.10-Do you own enough land? YES / NO

-4.10.1-Why?

.....

4.11-How was land allocated upon your arrival in the village?

- Chosen
- Bought

- Allocated
- Other .....

4.12-Are you satisfied with your land? YES / NO

4.12.1-Why?

.....

### *Cattle raising*

4.13-How many cattle do you raise?

- buffaloes.....
- pigs.....
- chickens.....

- cows.....
- goats.....
- other.....

- 4.14-Did you start raising new breeds after your arrival in the village? YES / NO  
 4.14.1-Which ones? .....
- 4.15-Did you give up rearing some breeds after your arrival in the village? YES / NO  
 4.15.1-Which ones? .....
- 4.16-Did you find any new difficulties in cattle rearing? YES / NO  
 4.16.1-What type? .....

***Other economic activities***

**In the new village, do you go:**

- 4.17- hunting? YES / NO  
 4.17.1-How does this activity compare with the last village?  
   - new activity                 - +  
   - =   - -
- 4.18- fishing? YES / NO  
 4.18.1-How does this activity compare with the last village?  
   - new activity                 - +  
   - =   - -
- 4.19- foraging? YES / NO  
 4.19.1-How does this activity compare with the last village?  
   - new activity                 - +  
   - =   - -
- 4.20-Do you do basketweaving? YES / NO  
 4.20.1-How does this activity compared with the last village?  
   - new activity                 - +  
   - =   - -
- 4.21-In your household, do women weave? YES / NO  
 4.21.1-How does this activity compare with he last village?  
   - new activity                 - +  
   - =   - -
- 4.22-Do you know metalworking? YES / NO  
 4.22.1-How does this activity evolve, compared with the last village?  
   - new activity                 - +  
   - =   - -
- 4.23-Do you do other handicrafts? YES / NO  
 4.23.1-Which ones?.....  
 .....
- 4.24-Which goods do you sell?  
       -vegetables   - meat, animals, eggs   - rice  
       - forest products   - handicrafts   - other

- 4.25-Who do you sell to? (please grade answers)  
 1,2,3 other village people  
 1,2,3 or passers by  
 1,2,3 market shoppers

4.26-Which goods do you buy?

- rice
- others (specify) .....

4.27-Where do you mostly shop?

- neighbouring villages
- market
- other .....

4.28-Which goods do you trade?.....

4.29-Could you give an example of trade that you have done? (1 buffaloes = X, pigs = X, woven skirts, etc)

4.30-Do you own the following items?

	present village	original village	method of purchase	place of purchase
bicycle - motorbike	yes/no	yes/no		
cart	yes/no	yes/no		
grinding machine ?	yes/no	yes/no		
TV - video	yes/no	yes/no		
radio	yes/no	yes/no		

### *Social behaviour*

5.1-Since your arrival in this village, do you live in a different type of housing? YES / NO

5.1.1-Why?

- more suitable
- easier to build
- other.....
- advised
- already built

5.2-Did your family build the house alone? YES / NO

- helped you?
- villagers
  - outsiders

5.3-How did you get the building materials?

- bought
- brought with
- supplied (by whom?)
- gathered around the village

5.4-When did the last wedding in the household occur? .....year.

5.5-What, approximatively, did the dowry amount to? (money, buffalo, jars, etc)

5.6-Was it with someone from the same village? YES / NO

5.7-With someone belonging to the same ethnic group? YES / NO

5.8-Is there a preferential wedding type? YES / NO (specify - e.g.. uncle's daughter)

5.9-Which funeral rituals do you practice?

- cremation
- burial (specify type of ceremony)

5.10-Do you sacrifice buffalo? YES / NO

5.10.1-How many sacrifices have you organised since the last rainy season?  
 .....

5.10.2-On which occasions?  
 .....

5.11-Do you sacrifice other animals? YES / NO

5.11.1-Which ones?

***New village / Last village***

village name	year of arrival	season	reasons behind resettlement
(6)original village			
present village	(1)	(2) rainy	..... .....
		dry	
(3) last village	(4) Distance:..... Altitude:.....		(5)..... .....
last village	Distance Altitude		
last village	Distance Altitude		
last village	Distance Altitude		
last village	Distance Altitude		

6-1- In which year did you move into this village? (transfer answer to chart, square no1)

6.2- What was the season when you moved in? (transfer answer to chart, square no 2)

6.3-What village do you come from? (transfer answer to chart, square no 3)

6.4-What is the walking distance from the present village to your old one? (transfer answer to chart, square no 4)

6.5-At what altitude is your old village situated? (transfer answer to chart, square no 4)

6.6-Why did you leave that village (transfer answer to chart, square no 5)

6.7-Was it the first time your family moved so far?

NO (go back to question no 6.3 and fill in chart until original village identification)

YES 6.7.1-” last quoted village ...” is it your original village?

.YES (fill in column no 6 “original village”)

.NO (go back to question no 6 and ask the following following questions)

***In the old village, did you farm?***

6.8-Hai NO / YES

6.8.1-What area? .....ha

6.8.2-Yield .....kg  
 6.8.3-Fallow cycle .....years

6.9-Paddy NO / YES

6.9.1-What area?.....ha  
 6.9.2-Yield .....kg

6.10-Nasseng NO / YES

6.10.1-What area?.....ha  
 6.10.2-Yield .....kg

6.11-Other crops (specify)  
 .....  
 .....

6.12-Did you have rice all year round? YES / NO

6.12.1-How long was the deficit period?  
           - months                   - weeks  
 6.12.2-Where did you get rice during this period?  
 .....

6.13- How many persons were living in your house in your original village?  
 .....

6.14-How many families?.....families.

6.15-When somebody was sick, what did you cure him/her with? (in order of priority 1,2,3)

1 2 3   Plants  
 1 2 3   Shaman  
 1 2 3   Medicines

6.16-Where did the water your household used come from?

-River                               -Spring  
 -Rain water                       -Well  
 -Water pump

6.17-Did you boil this water before drinking it? YES / NO

6.18-Did you own a mosquito net?YES  
   NO

6.19-Did you repel mosquitoes in other ways? YES / NO

6.20-In the last village, were there latrines? YES / NO

6.21-What did you do with the things you owned in your original village?

-took with you                    -left behind                    -sold or traded

cattle  
 household goods  
 seeds  
 tools  
 sacred and ritual goods  
 jewellery  
 other  
 .....

6.22-Did you have your own money when you were resettled? NO / YES  
 6.22.1-How much? .....

6.23-Did you leave at the same time as other families? YES / NO  
 6.23.1-Before                      -After  
 6.23.2-Why?

6.24-Did you get outside assistance? NO / YES  
 -From whom?

6.25-What did you hope to find in the new village?  
 .....

6.26-Did any relatives die during the journey? NO / YES  
 6.26.1-How many died? .....people.

6.27-Did any of your relatives die in an epidemic outbreak during the two years following  
 your resettlement? NO / YES  
 6.27.1-Which disease?  
 - Diarrhea                      - Fever                      - Other

6.28-Is the original village still inhabited? NO / YES

6.28.1-How many inhabitants? .....people.  
 6.28.2-Are you still in touch with them? NO / YES  
 6.28.2.1- Very often              - Fairly often              - Seldom              - Very seldom

6.28.2 1-On which occasions do you visit them?  
 .....  
 6.28.3- Why did these people stay behind?  
 .....

6.29-Do you have relatives outside the village, who don't farm any longer? NO / YES  
 6.29.1-What is their occupation? .....  
 6.29.2-Where? .....  
 (City, Povince, District)  
 6.29.3- For how long? .....(Year).  
 6.29.4-Do you visit them often?  
 -Every week              - Every month              Every year  
 6.29.5-On which occasions do you visit them?  
 .....

***Non Formal Education***

7.1-Which relatives attend a Non Formal Education centre? .....  
 7.2-During which season? .....  
 7.3-How frequently? .....  
 7.4- Which subjects do they study?.....







# **Issues and Challenges for Resettlement Planning in the Lao PDR.**

**G. Zwack**



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB:	Asian Development Bank
CPAWM:	Centre for Protected Areas and Watershed Management
CPC:	Committee for Cooperation and Planning
EC:	European Community
EGAT:	Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
DCTPC:	Department of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction
DOI:	Department of Irrigation
DOF:	Department of Forestry
DPW:	Department of Public Welfare (Thailand)
EIA:	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FY:	Financial Year
GOL:	Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
HDI:	Human Development Index
HPO:	Hydropower Office
LCRD:	Leading Committee for Rural Development
LPRP:	Lao People's Revolutionary Party
LWU:	Lao Women's Union
MAF:	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MCTPC:	Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIH:	Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts
MLSW:	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MOD:	Ministry of Defence
MOF:	Ministry of Finance
MOI:	Ministry of Interior
NBCA:	National Biodiversity Conservation Area
NGO:	Non Government Organisations
PMO:	Prime Minister's Office
RDC:	Rural Development Committee
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
WB:	World Bank
WFP:	World Food Programme

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G. Z.  
Vientiane

# I. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESETTLEMENT AS A STRATEGY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## Preface

Whether or not planned relocation and resettlement will prove to be an equitable and enduring solution to the economic and social aspirations of the Lao PDR has yet to become clear. Tangible benefits from such a strategy will be slow to emerge and, at the beginning, hard to measure or quantify. The efficacy of a resettlement programme in terms of the people's willingness to conform to relocation, and to remain in the resettled areas, will give the earliest indications of a programme's success. But deeper investigation and analysis of the people's conditions after moving in comparison to their previous lifestyles is necessary to find out:

- a) If a programme is fulfilling its stated objectives?
- b) If it is suitable for the people who chose or were chosen to move? and,
- c) How should a programme for resettlement be continued?

It is necessary to place these leading questions within the political and institutional framework of the country, and the Lao PDR's ambitions towards national and rural development in particular. The institutional structures, and cross structures, that guide and implement resettlement programmes must be clearly understood for any recommendations to be made.

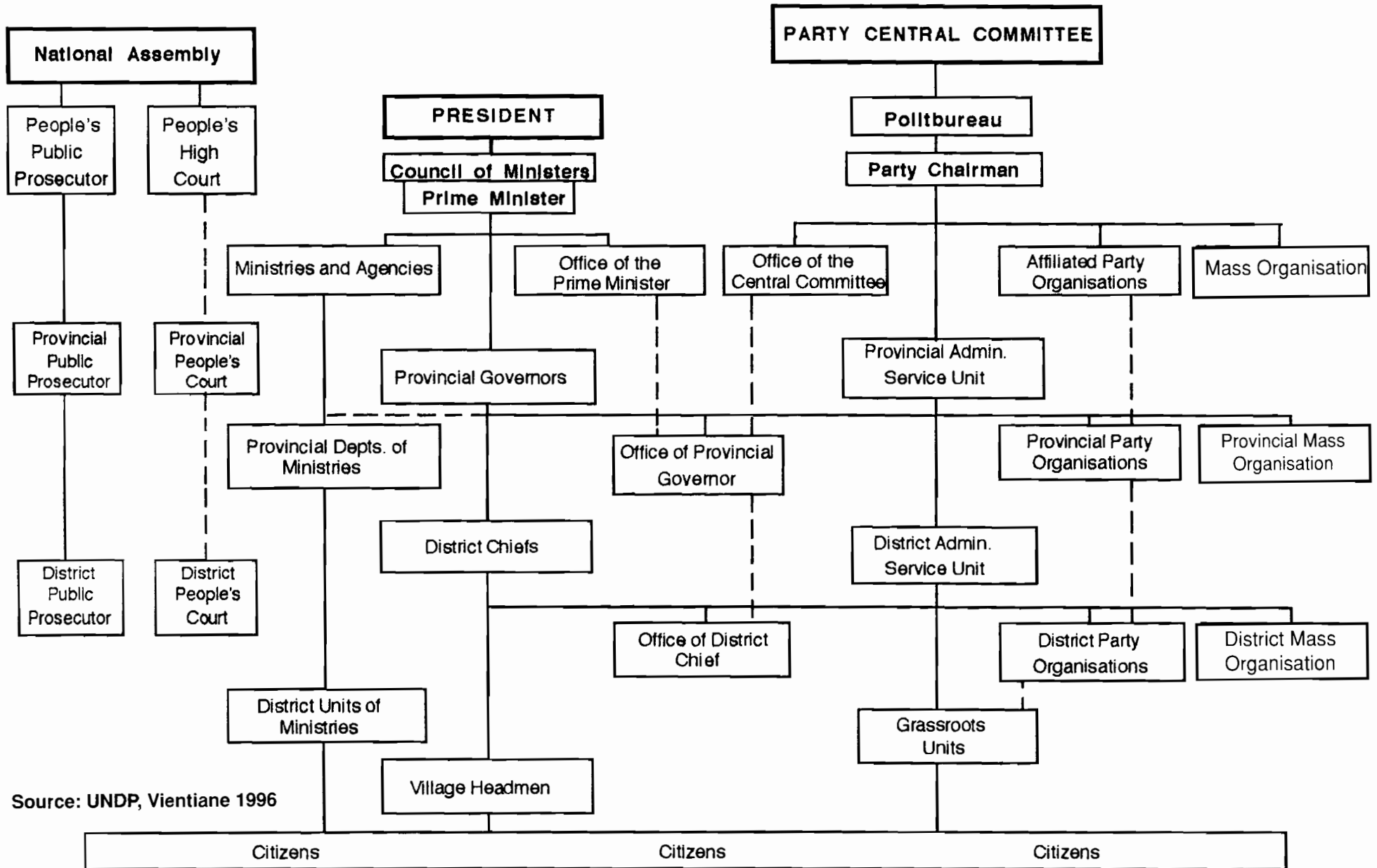
There are many reasons for relocation (moving to another place) and resettlement (assisted movement) in the Lao PDR. There is an immense possibility, too, that the displacement caused by infrastructure programmes development, for example, will be in conflict with the programmes for environmental protection. Arable land is a scarce resource and the value of good land lost to infrastructure projects has to be weighed against the benefits from the development.

Spontaneous and voluntary resettlement is a common way of life for rural communities in Lao PDR. But, planned resettlement is also a calculated part of growing number of development projects. These resettlement schemes are project specific and new guidelines are drawn up by each new project as the need for resettlement arises. Government officials have mentioned (HPO, interview, 4/6/96) that this process is protracted and illogical. It would be much easier if the government had a set of established guidelines for protecting people's rights, budgeting and planning, and streamlining assistance that could be referred to when the project makes its initial development application. Certainly, international guidelines for resettlement have been promulgated by many organisations with a deep understanding and long experience in this field. Even so, these guidelines, while serving to protect the humanitarian rights of those concerned, cannot provide the specific procedures that fit the laws and local conditions in the Lao PDR.

## 1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the institutional dynamics behind contemporary relocation and resettlement in the Lao PDR. The report is supplied as a complement to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) survey to assess "Basic Needs in Resettled Villages" implemented under the Department of Non-formal Education, Ministry of Education. The study has been designed, and is being carried out by UNESCO, and L'institute Francais de Recherche Scientifique Pour le

### Political structure of the Lao People's Democratic Republic



Source: UNDP, Vientiane 1996

Development en Cooperation, referred to from hereon as ORSTOM, has been subcontracted to supply their specialised inputs to the survey and the report. This work was commissioned in response to UNESCO's interest in examining the educational conditions in resettled villages, and enrich understanding of the villages' cultural conventions.

The ORSTOM survey will cover newly resettled villages in 18 Districts of six provinces in the Lao PDR, concentrating on seven themes: demographic and historic structures; the characteristics of the new settlements; the social infrastructure; agricultural activities; off-farm activities; health and sanitation; and, culture and education (ORSTOM, May 1996).

In response to the need for an understanding of the political and institutional background of resettlement in the Lao PDR the following will attempt to clarify the provenance of resettlement programmes, what they are for, and who performs them. The breadth of such a study necessitates focusing on the more relevant developments in resettlement trends beginning in the mid 1980s.

This report, which is the first of three, will describe relocation and resettlement activities in the Lao PDR in the context of the stimulants that cause human migration. The multifarious reasons for relocation and resettlement will be presented and discussed, providing connections between institutional arrangements and practical implementation of the enforcing policies. Hopefully, this will give the reader a picture of why resettlement programmes are enacted and, to some degree, how.

The second report will outline the relocation and resettlement strategies of other neighbouring countries in an attempt to draw upon lessons learned in the region that may be avoided, or adopted in the Lao PDR.

The third report aims at providing stronger guidelines for a general relocation and resettlement strategy that can be adopted for some, or all the resettlement programmes in the Lao PDR. This report will draw upon the experiences of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) with UNHCR, the World Bank, and other government and private agencies with knowledge of resettlement in the Lao PDR. This report may provide one more link to standardising the institutional and implementation processes for resettlement.

The relocation and resettlement programmes to be discussed in this report largely involve upland communities who belong to the multi-ethnic groups characterising the population of the Lao PDR. The author, wishing to evade using trite, or incorrect terms for the ethnic groups, will adhere to the terminology encountered in government literature and in government circles. Uninformed classifications or designations must be forgiven. The vernacular terms used will reflect what has been heard during interviews and in the field.

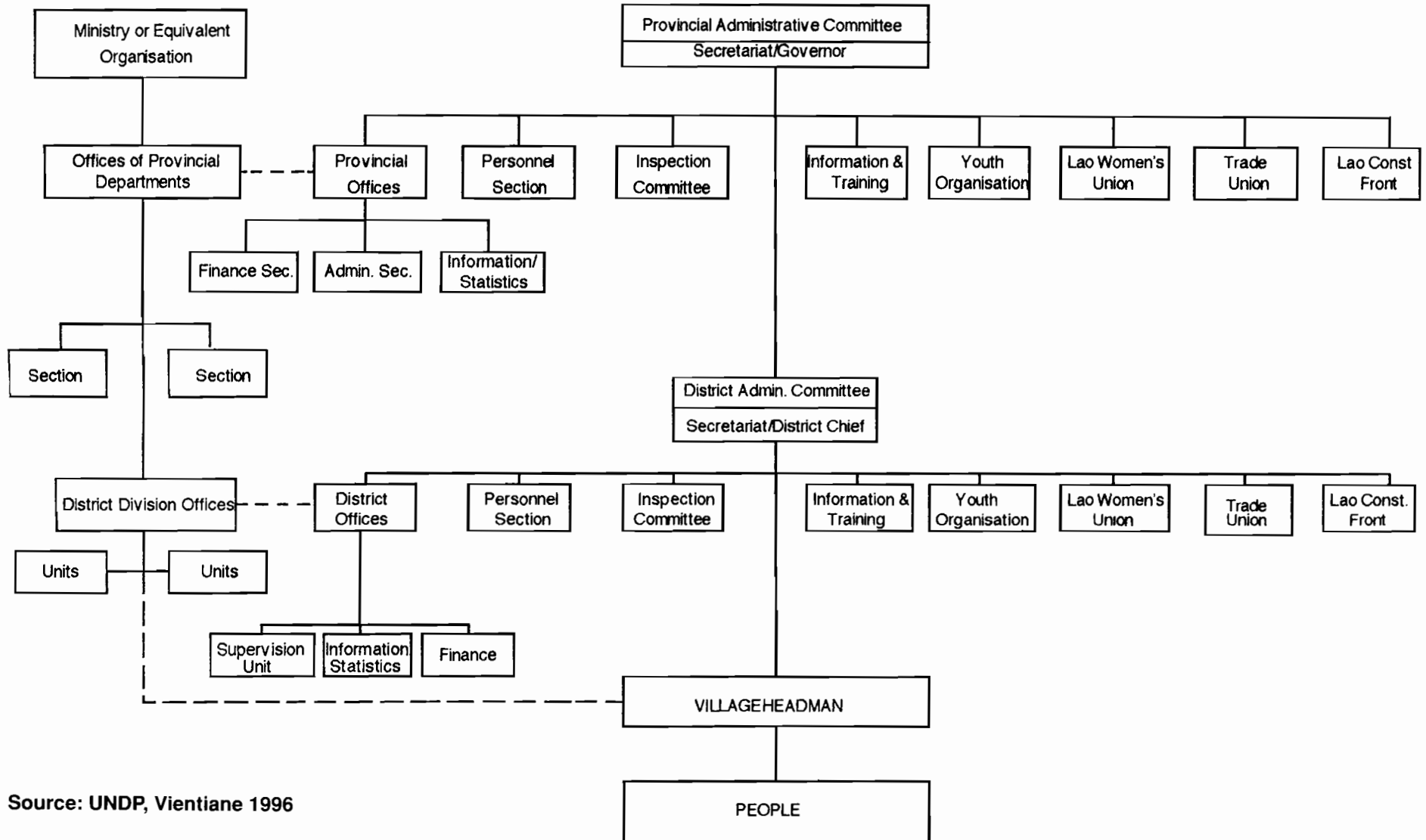
As a preface to the terms generally applied, "ethnic group" is used in the Constitution, in government literature, and by officials to describe the people in their jurisdiction. No official reference is made to the three arbitrary categories of Lao people so often used in descriptions of the Lao PDR. However, it is interesting to note that the classification Lao Sung (highland Lao people), Lao Kang or Lao Theung (mid-highland Lao people) and Lao Loum (lowland Lao people) was encountered in all the administrative areas visited during the fieldwork period. Some more detailed descriptive names of individual tribal groups were offered by local officials. But these classifications inevitably disintegrated into arguments as to the numbers and the true nomenclature for the groups. Another point to heed is that "Lao Sung", almost without exception, was the term applied to mean the Hmong minority group only. Thus the three generic terms will prevail, unless specifically noted otherwise. Terms may not be anthropologically correct, but simply reflect the terminology applied by the mass, and are not meant to mislead or influence the reader in any way.

## **2 Policy Structures Behind Resettlement**

### **Policy Making in the Lao PDR**

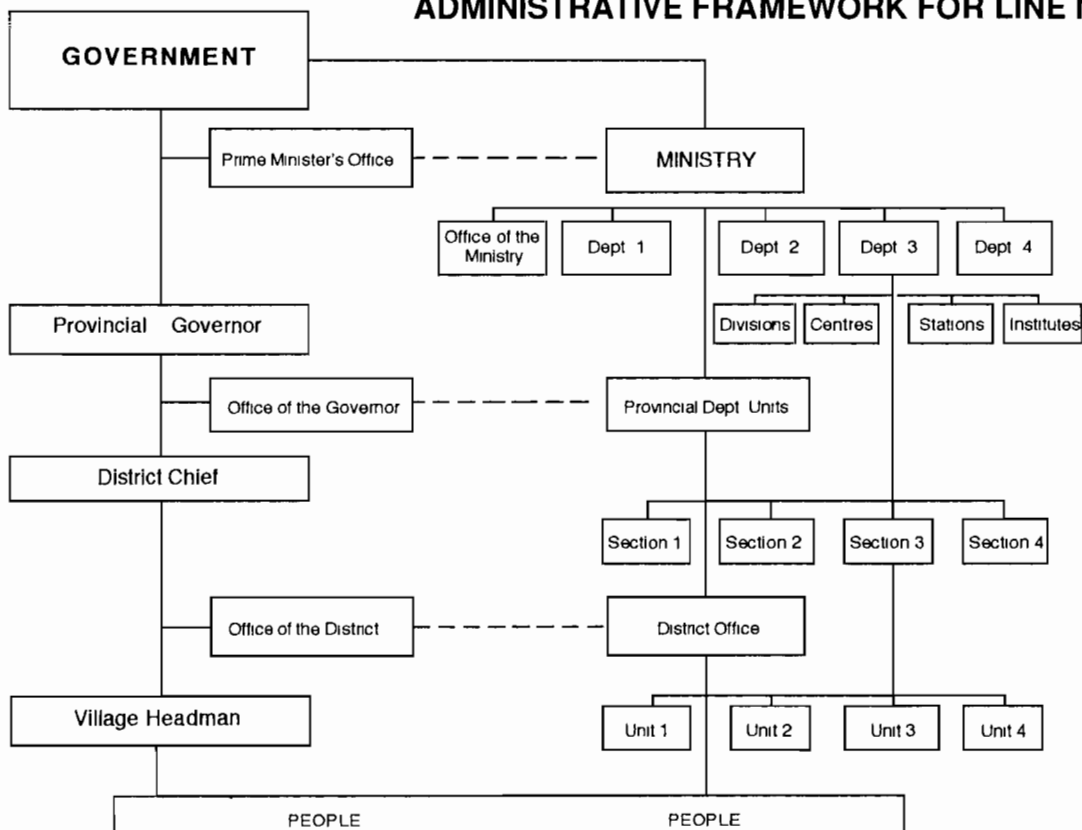
Policy, in a broad sense, can be seen as a spring board from which issues of importance can evolve and mature through dialogue. David Trippier, the (ex-) British Environment Minister, arguing against the adoption

## PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK



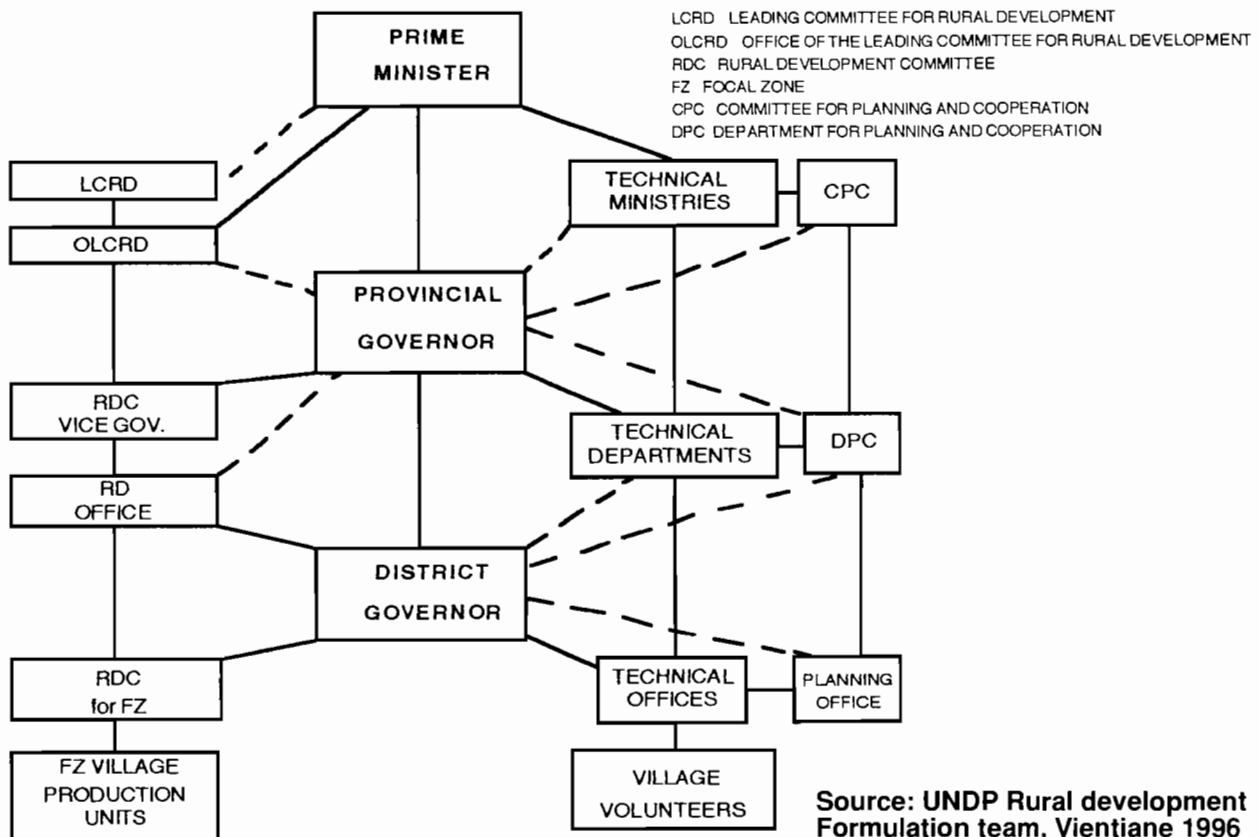
Source: UNDP, Vientiane 1996

### ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR LINE MINISTRIES



Source: UNDP, Vientiane 1996

### Interpretation of Relationships Between the LDRC, Technical Ministries and Administrative Branches at the Central, Provincial and District Levels



Source: UNDP Rural development Formulation team, Vientiane 1996

of a Directive proposed by the European Commission noted that, “ ... Policy is developing all the time. It involves repeated toing and froing between the many people involved... There is often no single moment in time when a decision is made” (Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1994).

In contrast, the term “policy” defined and understood in the circumstances of the Lao political situation takes a more structured form; it is a course of action adopted by the government with definite strategies and enforcing actions. The VI<sup>th</sup> General Party Congress stipulates the role of policy and policy making in the statement, “To continue leading the nation towards the set goals, we should thoroughly study and analyse the international context and the reality in the country in order to lay out the policy line and tasks appropriately” (VI<sup>th</sup> General Congress of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party, 1996, p 13).

Policies, once defined thus, are transmitted through the political system (the National Assembly and other State Mass and Social organisations (Figure 1), to the local administrations and line ministries. Enforcing actions to implement policy are further defined by these agencies of the government through detailed plans, programmes, and projects. Line and technical ministries may set up their own sub-sector “policies”, linked closely to the national policies and goals, and will reflect the sub sectors’ efforts to carry out national policy. For example, the national policy to control deforestation by providing shifting cultivation alternatives is realised through the crop development sub sector policy to diversify crops to supply domestic and export markets (GOL, 5<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting, 1994).

Even though policy presentation is more rigid than in the western democratic sense, Lao policy makers display flexibility and dynamism, allowing policy to naturally evolve and be more open to local interpretation. As a simple illustration of this point, the Resolution on the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) repeatedly stresses the need to promote economic development in the rural areas to create conditions to support the scattered subsistence production and encourage a shift from natural to commodity based production (5<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee, 1988, p 62). One way of doing this is by “granting the right of land tenure to the farmer” (p15). In other words, the NEM strategy sanctions the realisation that farmers are better empowered to follow government policy if they have some control over their resources. This is in stark contrast to the defunct collectivism and cooperatisation of the earlier revolutionary period.

Another facet of Lao government policy is the power of its dissemination to all levels of government and the people. District and village government representatives, as well as representatives of the mass organisations, are well versed on the policies and actions that directly concern their sphere of responsibility (Figure 2). They have gathered the statistics about the communities in their jurisdiction and possess a local understanding of the problems and constraints to implementing central government policy. In Xiang Kouang province, the resettling communities of Hmong farmers from Nong Hed and Muang Mork Districts were quite well conversant with the reasons why the government wanted them to move. They were aware, too, that the government assistance could be offered only if, and when, the government had the budget to disperse. But the government had provided rice loans and ploughed some land on credit, and was generally encouraging the resettled people to exercise any means available to them to make their move permanent, except going back to practice shifting cultivation.

This, of course, may not be the case in all Districts of the country. Quality of staff, and levels of dedication and motivation will differ in each province and for each person. One of the drawbacks to having a system in which policy and strategies are strictly defined for each ministry and department is that it tends to encourage non-coordination. The policy thinking and analysis has been done at the central level, based on reports from the provinces (Figure 3). The final strategies are passed back to the Provincial authorities to be refined to fit the local conditions. In this structure there is little room for coordination because each department has a clear course of action that it can follow, already synthesised at the central level.

Policy is often manifested in strong targets and goals for development. However, the true conditions in the local areas means that there is very little chance of these targets ever being met. The government has addressed this weakness in policy interpretation by asking provinces to strive for the goal, and achieve what is possible. This is reflected in the Provincial development plans which note that plans will be carried out as far as local

<sup>155</sup> The term ‘local conditions’ as applied in the Lao texts does not specify what conditions, although natural physical conditions are implied. However, broadly interpreted, this could mean the social, cultural, economic, or other conditions, as well.

conditions will allow<sup>155</sup>. Therefore, the ambitious aims of eliminating shifting cultivation, or establishing settled occupations for up to 60 per cent of 1.5 million people (TFAP, 1990: World Summit for Social Development, 1995), must not be taken verbatim, but as directional policy only.

Provincial governments are required by the Constitution (Article 8), through the Party and government policy for national development to ensure that all people of the Lao PDR have equal access to opportunities and to the services provided to the more privileged areas of the country. Discrimination against minority groups is forbidden (Figure 4, Pasason Newspaper, 28/6/96). The mountainous conditions hinder government efforts to integrate the people living in the outlying areas of the country. Thus, the general approach of the government, when unable to bring services to people in these remote areas, is to bring the people to the government services, through resettlement. Such services include road access, markets, education and health facilities<sup>156</sup>.

### **3 Evolution of Policy Towards Rural Development and Environmental Protection**

There has been an evolution in policy thinking throughout the 1980s regarding the country's aims for economic development and environmental protection. Recognising the link between environment and resource development for economic purposes the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), introduced in 1986, began the shift in thinking away from a subsistence to a market oriented economy. The NEM resolution stresses that the nature based economy must be replaced by a commodity economy, considering the farmer's household as the main production unit. This lowers the direct nature-livelihood relationship which encourages nomadic cultivation. Agro-forestry, animal husbandry, and natural resource regeneration are promoted (Resolution of V<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee, 1987).

The 1991 V<sup>th</sup> Party Congress underscored the NEM resolutions, providing the general framework for socio-economic development. It marks the progress made in the intervening years towards sedentary cultivation systems. Nonetheless it notes that support for farmers attempting to improve agricultural production have not been carried out seriously. Limitations on forest clearance for shifting cultivation, a major policy of the Party and the State, were not actively organised and implemented during this time. However, what the official texts do not cover is that some resettlement projects have failed because alternatives to shifting cultivation had not been found before the farmers moved. Furthermore, limiting upland cultivation areas made it almost impossible for some families to survive. Now some government resettlement programmes, such as the Kham District programme in Xiang Khouang, are experimenting with partial resettlement. This allows the farmers come and experience the new area and establish agriculture, before committing their families to move, thus reducing the risk to the farmer, and improving the chance that the resettlement move will succeed.

The Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), 1990, gives form to the activities needed to comprehensively address natural resource degradation in the highlands, and other forestry related issues. The TFAP lays out the institutional, conservation, land use, and industrial policies for the sector, integrated with the social and economic priorities. The upland people receive particular attention because their livelihoods are dependent upon the highland forested areas. They are also the group most vulnerable to resource degradation processes, and to bias conservation practices. Since the upland people find themselves wedged between using and conserving forest and water resources, the TFAP recommends sustainable use of upland resources, encouraging investment in sedentary agriculture, including livestock and forestry, and other work activities that do not require moving.

The First Constitution of the Lao PDR was adopted by the People's Supreme Assembly in 1991: The document defines the State and the role the legislative, executive and judicial branches of Government, with the Lao People's Revolutionary Party serving as the leading nucleus. The functions of the National Assembly are explained, giving it the right to decide the fundamental issues facing the country and supervise the executive and judicial branches. The Constitution states its policies to promote unity and equality among all ethnic groups; gives freedom of settlement and movement as prescribed by law; and, charges all organisations and citizens with the responsibility to protect the environment (Constitution of the Lao PDR, 1991).

In 1993, The National Assembly held its Inaugural Session, adopting the the Medium Term Socio-Economic Development Plan up to the year 2000. The targets for the 1994 -1995 socio-economic development plan

<sup>156</sup> Deputy Governor and Provincial Education Officer, Xiang Khouang; District chiefs of Phu Kud and Muang Kham, Xiang Khouang province: Provincial Development Plan for Luang Nam Tha

include increasing the gross national product (GNP) by 5 per cent, reaching \$350 per capita, and increasing gross agro-forestry products by 6 to 7 per cent. To fulfil these targets the Government focused on 7 major programs:

- 1 Paddy production for self-sufficiency;
  - 2 Eliminating slash and burn, farming stabilisation, and forest and water conservation;
  - 3 Commodity production through agro-forestry, field crops, agro-industrial processing and handicrafts;
  - 4 Infrastructure development, especially roads, particularly in mountainous areas; promote small, medium and large scale hydropower development, rural electrification and irrigation;
  - 5 Rural Development Programme: gradually eliminate slash and burn by establishing stable farming systems linked to agro-industrial production to raise the living conditions of the rural and mountainous people;
  - 6 Widen foreign economic cooperation
  - 7 Human Resource Development to include general education, specific training in agriculture stabilisation methods for rural people; rural extension, particularly in the focal areas.
- (World Summit for Social Development, 1995)

The VI<sup>th</sup> Party Congress concluded in March, 1996, reinforces the resolutions of the V<sup>th</sup> Congress and the goals of the socio-economic development plan until 2000, with minor adjustments in targets. The per capita GNP is expected to grow to \$500 by 2000, and the economy should continuously expand at a rate of 8 to 8.5 per cent. Food shortages and poverty alleviation must be addressed through integrated rural development activities in prioritised areas. Efforts to expand and develop the economic sectors are to concentrate on various zones bearing latent capacity for expansion. These “focal zones” will be developed according to their potential and capacity and will form the base and strength to support other zones that will develop concurrently, “especially mountainous areas, and former resistance bases which are still backward” (Draft Resolution of the VI<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party, March 1996).

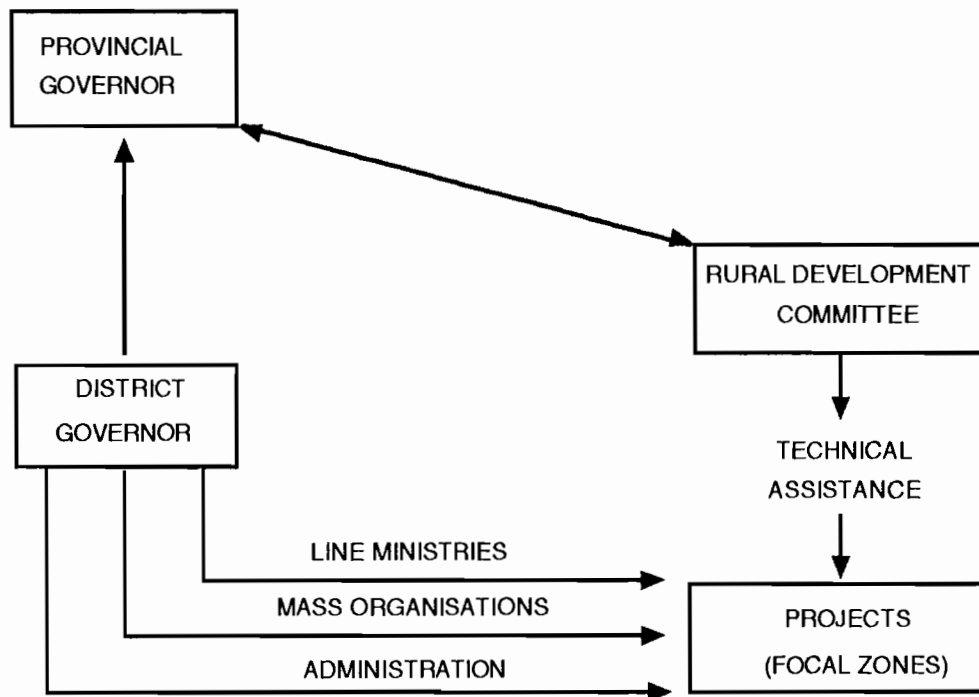
The rural development programme is the most significant policy implementation tool for the resettlement issue. The government’s drive to stimulate the rural economy led to establishing the Central Steering Committee for Rural Development (more often referred to as the Leading Committee for Rural Development, so the acronym LCRD will be used from here on). The LCRD was set up in 1994 by the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party Central Committee Political Bureau to implement the resolutions of the V<sup>th</sup> Party Congress and the resolution of Party Central Committee on rural development. (Regulation No 40: 3/11/94).

Figures 5a and 5b show the structure of the LCRD through the central to the village level and its links with administrative and technical branches of the government. The LCRD Office is currently within the Party Central Committee, but is expected to become a Department under the Prime Minister’s Office, led by the Vice Prime Minister. This new department may also absorb the rural development committees of the MAF and the CPC. This will change the administrative structure of the Leading Committee, but its aims are likely to remain constant.

The role of the Provincial Rural Development Committees is described in Figure 5c. The third point concerning the identification of focal zones and project planning is the critical element for resettlement. Each of the Provincial development plans, which contribute to, and complement the national plan, have a rural development component. The Provincial branch of the LCRD has the role of advising and coordinating rural development activities in accordance with Party and government policy.

The major features of the rural development work are land allocation, and development of focal zones. Land allocation is a method of rationalising land use, giving local communities management responsibilities for the land. Focal zone planning is intended to promote economic development in chosen areas, to encourage sedentary agriculture, and consolidate national security. These areas will provide the nucleus towards which

## ROLE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND THE PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES



Source: Interview with District governor of Kham District, Xiang Khouang province, June 1996

### ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE IN SAYABURY PROVINCE

- REALISE PARTY POLICIES
- DELEGATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADING COMMITTEE
- FOCAL ZONE IDENTIFICATION AND PROJECT PLANNING
- SUPERVISION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF FOCAL ZONE DEVELOPMENT
- COORDINATION WITH PROVINCIAL TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS
- APPOINT TECHNICAL STAFF AND ESTABLISHMENT OF VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS
- ISSUING NOTICES, ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS
- SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL WELFARE
- PROVISION OF COMMENTS TO THE PROVINCE AND GOVERNMENT

Source: UNDP Rural Development Formulation Mission

rural people can concentrate their economic activities, and divert them away from shifting cultivation and opium growing. People are urged to move away from the remote rural and mountainous areas to the focal zones that will provide better access to the basic services: roads, markets; irrigation; schools and health facilities. The focal zones are chosen for their physical potential for stable and sedentary agriculture. Other criteria for focal zone development include strategic sites near international trade borders, or in proximity to major roads and interections.

#### 4 Interpretation of policy

There is NO policy for the movement of people; resettlement is enacted as a **strategy** to address broader issues and problems facing the country for which policy may exist. There are many causes of resettlement in the Lao PDR, which will be discussed later in more detail. But it is important to note here that the current interest in the resettlement issue has been stimulated by the government's policy towards integrated rural development and the target to eliminate shifting cultivation in the highland areas by 2000. Though these may be the major motivating policies behind current resettlement goals, the other causes of resettlement should not be over shadowed by this one topic, even though it dominates discussion.

The most often quoted and misinterpreted statement leading to the assumption that resettlement is a national policy comes from the 1990 Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) Main Report which reads, "permanent settlement of 60 percent of 1.5 million people currently engaged in shifting cultivation by the year 2000" (MAF, 1990, p 21). This has been read as; "a government policy for the *resettlement* of 60 percent of the 1.5 million people ...by the year 2000" missing the point of the statement, which merely calls for permanent settlement, **not** resettlement. Furthermore, this is not a policy decision, but a strategic directive to enforce the government policies on "... how to manage and utilise forest resources..", a topic that was reviewed by the first National Conference on Forestry held in Vientiane in May 1989 (MAF, 1990, pp 20 - 21). Indeed, the Tropical Forestry Action Plan goes on to warn the government that its long term policy "... should be to support the people rather than to protect forest from the people" (MAF, 1990, p 26).

Although the implication is that 900,000 people should be moved, a more succinct interpretation of government policy towards the problem of shifting cultivation is given by Mr Bouahong Phanthanousy:

*"The problem of Shifting Cultivation in the Lao PDR has recently received increasing attention at the national level. The government has therefore formulated a policy on this issue, of which the five main aims are:*

- 1) *To find alternative occupation for about 227,00 families of Shifting Cultivators.*
- 2) *To protect existing forest areas.*
- 3) *To reforest up to 10 million ha of land.*
- 4) *To use existing forest resources for commercial purposes.*
- 5) *To develop new technologies and manpower training.*

*The principle lines of action suggested in the field of Shifting Agriculture are:*

- *Integration of Shifting Cultivation and reforestation (Agro-Forestry).*
- *Improvement of productivity in Shifting Cultivation Systems .*
- *Transformation of Shifting Cultivation into permanent up-land agriculture.<sup>157</sup>*

Phanthanousy goes on to stress that one of the main constraints to implementing these actions is the conflicting interests between the government and the shifting cultivators. The prime interest of the government is forest preservation, but for the local people the forest is the secondary consideration. Their prime interests are agricultural activities.

District level interpretation of this directive allows for village development to be carried out in-situ if this encourages a switch from shifting to permanent agricultural practices. Relocation or resettlement of people is not the primary goal, but an interim measure to achieve the policy of environmental protection (Constitution of the Lao PDR, Article 17). The most important goals of environmental protection are:

<sup>157</sup> Phanthanousy, 1994: "The Experience of the Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation Programme of the Department of Forestry": Paper presented at the Nabong Agricultural College Technical Workshop on Shifting Cultivation and Rural Development Systems in the Lao PDR.

- 1 To perpetuate forest preservation and rehabilitate degraded forest land to increase forest cover (up to 60 to 70 per cent of the country);
- 2 To promote people's participation in protecting forests; and,
- 3 Ensure that socio-economic development goes hand-in-hand with environmental protection. (Kingsada, DOF, 1996 )

In effect, this translates to reducing shifting cultivation, encouraging tree crops on degraded hillsides, and livestock raising as an alternative income source; encouraging the people to join the effort to reduce shifting cultivation by switching to more permanent forms of agriculture, in new areas if necessary (ie resettlement); and protecting watersheds, both for their own integrity, and to retard sedimentation processes in the basins planned for hydroelectric production (KPL: VI<sup>th</sup> General Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, 1996, pp 2, 4, 8, 17: Draft Resolution of VI<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, p6 ).

### **5 Reasons for resettlement**

There are eight broad reasons for relocation and resettlement:

- 1 Resettlement to establish permanent agriculture, reduce shifting cultivation and slash and burn practices, or opium growing in the highlands; currently activated by the LCRD, MAF, CPC, the Provincial and District authorities, and international assistance.
- 2 Relocation and resettlement for national security and political stability; currently implemented by the LCRD, MAF and the Provincial and District authorities, among others.
- 3 Internal resettlement for infrastructure development, such as reservoirs, roads and urban improvement. GOL, international assistance and commercial investment companies, in cooperation with the Provincial and District authorities.
- 4 Voluntary and spontaneous resettlement, usually for economic reasons, sometimes receiving support from District authorities, international aid and NGOs. (Note: In some cases people find themselves compelled move to in response to the restrictive regulations upon opening up new lands for shifting cultivation in the highland areas).
- 5 Watershed management for forest and water resource protection led by the MAF, in coordination with international aid, NGOs, and Provincial and District authorities.
- 6 Permanent or temporary resettlement for victims of natural disasters, such as drought or flood: receiving assistance from the GOL, international assistance, NGO and Provincial and District authorities.
- 7 Settlement of Lao repatriates from abroad, under the MLSW/UNHCR programme, supported by NGOs, the European Union and International Organisation for Migration.
- 8 Urban resettlement for urban renewal, supported by the GOL, ADB, and other foreign assistance sources.

These broad resettlement categories include those that require resettlement as a development aim, such as projects in which people are encouraged to establish alternative occupations to shifting cultivation in degraded areas; and those for which resettlement is a side-effect, such as reservoirs. Responsibility for each case of resettlement lies with the organisation, line ministry, or comparable organisation that owns the project.

A point of clarification should be added here concerning land that has been designated for environmental preservation. The Lao PDR has designated twenty National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCA) which now constitute more than ten per cent of the national territory. Management plans for some of these areas are being formulated with assistance from foreign donors including; the World Bank, SIDA, and FINNIDA. These management plans, as far as the author knows, do not have any programmes for the resettlement of the communities currently living within the NBCA boundaries. However, new settlements in the NBCAs will be restricted, effectively reducing land available for cultivation.

## Institutional Structures for Resettlement

There are many Government agencies involved in resettlement and, indeed, many foreign aid agencies and NGOs, whether they realise it or not. This is because there are three separate stages of resettlement: project development causing movement; the logistical processes of moving; and, post-settlement development. Thus, from a structural point of view, the line of responsibility for resettlement starts at the central decision-making level, is supervised at the Provincial level, and maintained by the implementing agencies and partners at both Provincial and District levels.

There are many angles to resettlement planning and implementation, needing a multi-sectoral approach and specialised services from different organisations. However, there is no one organisation entrusted with the responsibility for resettlement, even though there is clearly a need to resettle many people. Without a central decision making body to discuss and advise on resettlement matters, decisions about eviction to make way for projects are arbitrarily weighed against the potential economic benefits on a case-by-case basis.

Resettlement implementation is carried out by the organisation involved, or subcontracted out to specialised agencies and private companies. In the case of infrastructure developments, there is no national standardised mechanism to ensure that eviction and resettlement impacts are incorporated into the full costs of the project early enough to avert the worst social and economic consequences that might arise. (Vilaysouk, HPO, interview 4/6/96).

The diversity of institutional arrangements is well exemplified in the following three examples from the hydropower and the rural development sectors, and the refugee programme.

### Example A: Resettlement for Hydropower

The GOL has already signed memorandums of understanding with private investing companies to construct and operate 23 hydropower dams. Many of these projects will require evacuating the flood area and, in some cases, the watershed area as well.

The Hydropower Office (HPO) of the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts (MIH) explained that each of the project development companies has its own policy towards resettlement, HPO having no set standards for reference. There are no guidelines set except those formulated between the government and the developer, and these are based on the surveys that the developer presents in the feasibility study (Figure 6). The feasibility study submitted by the developer must incorporate three reports: a technical presentation; an economic analysis; and, an environmental impact assessment (EIA), which should cover resettlement matters. This feasibility study is distributed to the concerned government agencies for review by STENO, MIH, MOA and MOF. When the review period is over, each of the involved government agencies are invited to negotiate with the developer for changes or inclusions to the proposal. This may be a short or protracted process, depending on each specific case, the interests of the parties, the funders, and international opinion, if incurred.

The review and negotiation stages are the points when the government can best influence priorities for resettlement (and other issues). The Government agencies themselves are constrained in their ability to judge whether a project related resettlement plan is adequate or not, not just from a technical or manpower point of view, but also because there are time limitations to project development, and review of resettlement schemes takes time and money. As it is, without strong guidelines and rigorous review criteria for resettlement plans, the government is very much at the mercy of the developer's professional good will to incorporate equitable compensation schemes into their projects.

Resettlement, nevertheless, remains the responsibility of the project developer and each project chooses different options. There are two current cases of interest:

- 1 The methodology of direct compensation, giving evacuation victims money and letting them decide for themselves what they should do with it; and,
- 2 The option requiring that the developer finds the land and conducts formal resettlement. In this case, the developer has the responsibility to ensure that the new area for the resettlers is suitable, providing tangible services such as roads, schools and health facilities.

If option # 2 is chosen, then it is the responsibility of the project development group to provide the implementation budget for the resettlement programme as agreed between the government and the developer. The developer must define its strategy for resettlement with the Provincial authorities, assigning certain particulars of the programme to suitable technical agencies within the province, such as the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry (Vilaysouk, HPO, interview 4/6/96).

### Example B: Resettlement for rural development

This category reflects policy to move from a natural to a commodity based economy, through integrated rural development. It is also an essential part of government policy to unify the multi ethnic population by providing all citizens equal access to social services in the rural areas. Mr Oudom Katingna, Head of the Lao Construction Front and (ex-) Head of the Leading Committee for Rural Development, explained in an interview that, after having spent three years in the field of rural development with the Party, and having studied the problems of rural development, the main directional policies of the Party are based on the following:

- 1 90 per cent of the population in the Lao PDR live in the countryside.
- 2 The rural areas of the Lao PDR contain natural environment resources that are still in tact. But although the rural areas are still lush, these area are underdeveloped.
- 3 The nation as a whole is underdeveloped, which is manifested in :
  - *the economy*
  - *slow growth*
  - *the difficult life for rural people, who rely on rice planting to perpetuate their livelihoods*

Therefore there has to be a movement from the natural based economy to a commodity and market economy. (Katingna, interview, 18/6/96)

The three long term goals of the Provincial governments leading to this transformation of the economy are the same:

- Poverty alleviation
- Stabilise agriculture and promote permanent agricultural production
- Increase food production and food security by income generation, increasing yields and promoting crop diversification to commercial crops.

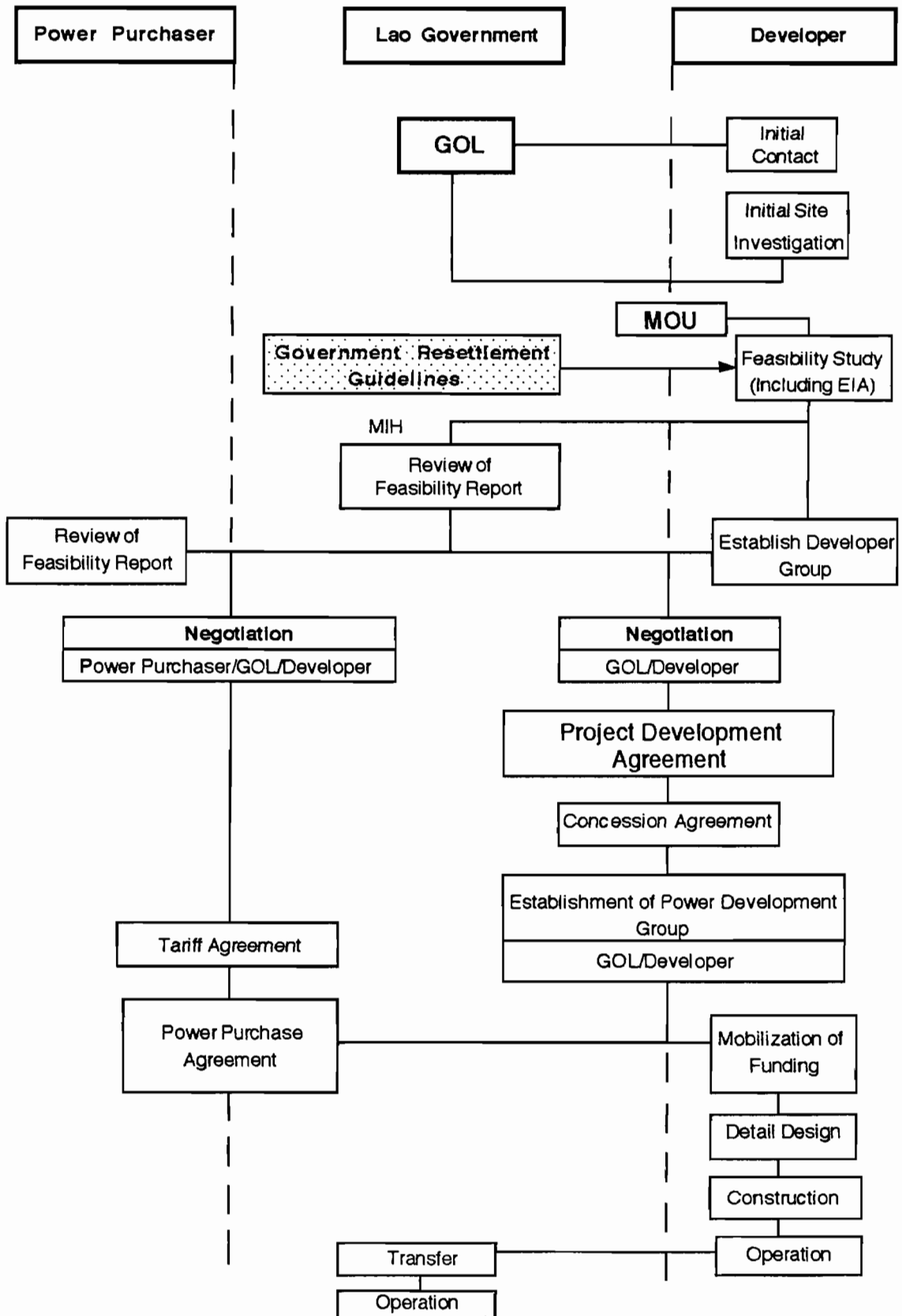
(Chairman of the Provincial Rural Development Committee and Vice Governor of Xiang Khouang Province, interview, 13/6/96)

Figure 7 shows the short and long term rural development objectives of Sayabury Province as an example of how these goals may be achieved. Resettlement for rural development is much more involved with the mainstream government lines of authority, but again, no blueprint for implementation exists. As explained earlier, the goals of integrated rural development are closely entwined with environmental protection, so many agencies and organisations have plans and programmes with similar or overlapping activities.

The LCRD, with a Rural Development Committee situated within each province, works from the premise of focal zone development. If resettlement from sensitive ecological areas, or strategic security locations is necessary, the Provincial Rural Development Committee will prepare a needs assessment and a budget, which will be passed to the Provincial CPC, the Provincial Finance Department and the Provincial Governor for approval. This plan and budget is then submitted to the Head of the central LCRD for consideration. For example, the 1996 - 2000 plan submitted by Xiang Khouang province covers resettlement in six focal zones with a proposed budget totalling over USD 6 million (Xiang Khouang Provincial Budget Application for Rural Development, 1995). The central LCRD will receive similar applications for assistance from all the country's provinces, and will have to prioritise needs, and find funding sources. The budgets, once passed, will be provided through the central government to the Provincial governor and dispersed to the agencies involved as stated in the development plans. In practice, however, the Rural Development Committees try to implement their plans as best they can with the cooperation of the people involved and the line agencies that have responsibilities in that field, or have spare finances to assist.

## IPP PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Figure indicates where the developer can adopt Government guidelines for resettlement. At the project application stage the developer could follow Government guidelines for resettlement, if they existed.



Source: Ministry of industry and Handicrafts, 1996

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR SAYABURY PROVINCE

### . **Short term objectives:**

Ensure permanent resettlement, sustainable production, poverty alleviation, forest protection and watershed management

### . **Long term objective:**

Ensure no slash and burn in Boten, Kene Thao and other designated watersheds by the year 2000

### . **Procedures:**

Site/village identification, assessment and selection which the criteria are based on road accessibility and potential for agriculture development

### . **Detailed contents (methodology)**

#### **1. In case of resettlement programme**

- . **Step 1:** site inventory (homestead and agriculture land and water source)
- . **Step 2:** land allocation, provision of land use contract, land clearing, training and introduce credits to people

#### **2. In case of non-resettlement programme**

- . **Step 1:** staff selection, team recruitment document preparation
- . **Step 2:** consultation with village administration and site identification

#### **3. For both cases**

- . **Step 3:** seminar on mandates, decrees of land allocation and management, forest inventory and socioeconomic survey, households select alternative activities
- . **Step 4:** introduction to different land use types
- . **Step 5:** measurement of individual household land(s)
- . **Step 6:** offering land registrations or land use contracts to individuals, organisation of productive units of farmers, extension worker groups and monitoring and evaluation team, credits and training

## Example C: Returning Refugees

The repatriation and settlement of returning refugees comes under the auspices of a national committee for refugee affairs. The committee is chaired by the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and the members include representatives from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the agency with the responsibility for funding and carrying out the programme, as well as providing technical and institutional support to the MLSW as their implementing partner. Technical Ministries, in particular the MAF and MCTPC, provide assistance in the field activities required for resettlement. Three types of settlement take place. Returnees may join families and friends in any province, providing that there is some guarantee by the receiving families that the newcomers will be integrated into the existing rural or urban village. Some refugees prefer to return in small groups of five to 20 families to an existing village with the capacity to provide land for housing and opportunities for establishing a livelihood. Those families who have lost links to their traditional villages during their years of absence may choose to return in large groups to settlement sites prepared by UNHCR, MLSW and the Provincial and District authorities.

In the case of large groups, the PMO has issued a nationwide appeal to all Provincial governors to implement the national policy for returning refugees by designating available land on which rural settlements can be established. UNHCR, using a set of locally acceptable and appropriate technical guidelines, works with the MLSW and Provincial departments to plan and implement the physical development of basic infrastructures before the arrival of the repatriates. Temporary shelter, food supplies, water supply, sanitation facilities, schools, housing materials, seed, cash and tools are provided as part of the assistance package. Public infrastructures, such as schools, irrigation systems, health facilities and water supply, are constructed for the benefit of the host communities as well as the returnees. UNHCR provides the MLSW with vehicles, daily allowances, office supplies and other inputs to support the effort of the central, Provincial and District Social Welfare Departments. A tripartite arrangement between the government, UNHCR and international NGOs is the mechanism for community development work in the settlement sites for a two year period following the returnees arrival. UNHCR provides the funding for this NGO support. After two years support, returnees are expected to be settled and have control over their natural resources and livelihood. UNHCR hands over the individual projects to the Provincial government with the provision that the NGOs may continue and expand their community development work at the District or Provincial level, using their own funding (Zwack, UNHCR, interview, 6/7/96).

A tripartite arrangement between the government of the Lao PDR, the Royal Thai Government and the UNHCR provides political guidelines and recommendations for this process. This is probably the only relocation or resettlement programme that has set-up an institutional and technical framework which is clearly defined, and seems to work.

## 6 Voluntary or involuntary resettlement?

As a conclusion to this review of policy and institutional arrangements behind resettlement in the Lao PDR, it is useful to place the subject in a wider context. No judgment is attempted here, it is simply an effort to articulate the singular portrayal of the Lao situation in the light of the international controversies surrounding the question of resettlement.

Voluntary movement of homes and settlements in the Lao PDR is a phenomenon that occurs frequently, usually in response to a physical disturbance in life that people cannot overcome by remaining in the area. People sometimes move a few hundred yards to avoid flooding, or to gain easier access to a road. Or they may move hundreds of kilometres to areas that promise a more fruitful livelihood, often on the invitation of a close family member. These movements are sanctioned under the Constitution, as long as they are in accordance with the Law (Constitution of the Lao PDR, Article 27). Rarely do the migrants receive any supplementary assistance from the government, since they are moving on their own volition. However, these settlers must first acquire the permission of the new village, a 'no objection' to staking claim to land in the area. Once the village has sanctioned the new neighbours, then the District authorities can formally register the family, or group of families, as members of that District.

Although much of the human movement in the Lao PDR is voluntary and spontaneous, other displacements are planned in the sense that they are predetermined. Planned resettlement is to make way for, or to be part of, a scheme for political or socio-economic change. This is often termed “involuntary resettlement” because it entails uprooting people who would not normally choose this course to improve their lives.

Involuntary resettlement, or forced evictions .... “might not necessarily be viewed as an issue of human rights, but rather as a simple side-effect of development, of urban renewal, a consequence of armed conflict, or an aspect of environmental protection or energy generation by, for example, hydroelectric dams” ... “Tolerated in most societies and officially encouraged in many, forced evictions dismantle what people have built over months, years and sometimes decades, destroying the livelihood, culture, community families and homes of millions of people throughout the world every year” (Human Rights Fact Sheet, May 1996, p 4). The resettlement programmes in the Lao PDR mirror closely the examples given in the above quotation, but if this opinion was adopted, many useful development projects would have to be abandoned just because they incurred resettlement. On the other hand, it could be the quality of relocation operations that are a greater cause of misery than the actual need for resettlement.

The World Bank notes in its resettlement review that the rejection of all resettlement is unrealistic (World Bank, 1994, p. iv). Development strategies in the Lao PDR, as elsewhere, involve people as beneficiaries and victims of development. Following this rationale the aim of the State should be to turn the victims into the beneficiaries, however convoluted a process this might be. Unfortunately, the victims of resettlement are very often the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society with no buffer to protect them from the instant impacts of resettlement. And, even if resettlement is successful in the long term, the resettlers may not be able benefit immediately from the privilege offered by resettlement. In other instances, there are no immediate, or long term rewards.

The local authorities in the areas visited during this study were far more aware of these arguments than the national level officials. It was quite evident there are not enough resources available to give quality resettlement services to those targeted for movement. This was reflected in the flexibility of the officials who, when faced with an obviously impossible situation, usually caused by budgetary constraints, were ready the compromise targets and goals to fit with the fiscal and physical resources available to them. Indeed, the government’s stated intention to abolish shifting cultivation by 2000 is regarded as somewhat of a dream in many provinces where there is a more realistic understanding of the administrative and infrastructure handicaps to accomplishing this. For example, Luang Nam Tha, a mountainous province with no road access to some District towns, cannot meet ambitious targets for rural development until the key infrastructures are in place which take time to build, more than will become available between now and 2000.

In some cases the proposed relocations coincide with the people’s desire to move away from economically depressed and deteriorated areas, especially if the livelihood benefits are obvious (Pannhasith, CPC, interview 30/5/96). In other instances, people will not oppose a change of location if the benefits are unambiguous and immediate. For people who are comfortable in their present economic and cultural setting, unfortunately, the reasons for resettlement are bewildering, and the move traumatic.

## 7 Summary

1. Geographic population redistribution, incurring population relocation and resettlement, is being planned and carried out to serve the aims of natural resource protection, socio-economic development and national security. This requires population planning which can be tackled in two ways: naturally, through birth spacing and control; and mechanically, by strategic resettlement (Inthavong, CPAWM, interview 6/6/96). These programmes are aimed at the rural areas where ethnic minority groups form the majority of the people to be affected by resettlement.
2. The urgency behind the country's drive to develop and stabilise its upland ecosystems has led to rash, and inappropriate, implementation of resettlement schemes before people were ready for them. This caused hardship and, ultimately, accelerated environmental degradation.
3. Evolution of policy direction away from ad hoc strategies for development has led to the formulation of more structured programmes and plans. The technical ministries, when given rein to formulate sectoral policy, are better able to rationalise policy into workable and fair strategies for economic development.
4. There is no policy for resettlement. The policy is to reduce upland shifting cultivation where it degrades the environment. Resettlement is an instrument to relocate people to areas where stable (agriculture) employment can be found. People have been moved away from strategic watershed areas, but have moved back to cultivate old fields when sustainable alternatives have failed. In response to this, the direction is to encourage resettlement to new areas that can provide sedentary alternatives to shifting cultivation, or to develop sedentary upland agriculture in-situ.
5. Experiences of resettlement, and the lessons learned by the Provincial and District authorities, has led to more moderate interpretations of policy. Targets for development can now be followed within the constraining circumstances of the local environment, and the budget.
6. Even though resettlement is beginning to be approached in a more planned way, no formal guidelines for internal resettlement exist. This weakness causes confusion between implementing agencies, and reduces people's confidence in the efficacy of the programmes. This, in turn, lowers the rate of voluntary participation in resettlement. Even if it is advantageous, farmers are learning to be more cautious before moving.
7. Rural development is only one reason for resettlement. Infrastructure development is, and will continue to be, a major cause for human settlement relocation. Concerns about adequate compensation, restoration of livelihoods and cultural stability, are only a few of the matters that must be addressed in the advent of major hydropower developments.
8. Protection and integration of the multi ethnic Lao society is given priority in the Constitution and in all policies of the Lao Government. However, in practice, the complex diversity of the ethnic populations is, in itself, a dilemma. This is because the authorities have neither the resources, nor the specialised understanding of each groups' needs to be able to implement blanket policies and instructions.
9. Land availability is a major constraint to resettlement. The mountainous terrain of the Lao PDR constricts arable land to the six main plains and to pockets in the highlands. Focal zone development is trying to address this problem with a surge of emphasis on developing all available productive land to serve the goals of food security, poverty alleviation and natural resource protection.
10. The MLSW/UNHCR settlements programme is the only one of its type to have created guidelines and implementation methodologies for the creation of new settlements which are specific to the conditions in Lao PDR and workable. However, the MLSW is seen by other government agencies as an emergency organisation, providing social welfare in distress situations. Other agencies, such as the MAF, regard themselves as more proficient and qualified to bring the whole package of development support to the people. Whether or not the aspects of the MLSW/UNHCR programme will, or can be adopted for future internal resettlement schemes, is yet to be seen.

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## II. INTERNATIONAL LAND SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES AND A LAO PERSPECTIVE

### Preface

Colonisation and the creation of new settlements, voluntarily or otherwise, is by no means a new international occurrence. Nor is bad planning. One passenger of the “Mayflower”, the ship that brought some of the earliest settlers to America in 1620, carried with him 126 pairs of shoes and 13 pairs of boots. The manifesto notes that amid his fellow travellers were two tailors, a printer, several merchants, a silk worker and a hatter bringing with them, among other ludicrous items, the complete history of Turkey. There were no farmers on board. Conspicuously lacking were agricultural tools, seed, livestock, or any preparatory implements that could ease the settlers’ transition as pioneer farmers in a hostile environment. Not surprisingly, nearly half of the settlers perished in the first four months leaving fifty-four people, many of them children, to turn their new home into a self-sustaining colony (Bryson, 1994). Similarly, the vast, but sparsely populated island of Australia became the recipient of the British convicts who could, once their sentences were served, pit their energies against the new environment, and became farmers.

The result of these colonial expansionist policies has been the wholesale slaughter, decimation and extinction of many indigenous people and cultures, as well as the natural environment. Why did they do it? Through ignorance? Possibly, although there is a wealth of writings on sociology and ecology from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to suggest that ideas of societal equity could be extended to all living beings, not just Christians. The most probable answer is that pre-twentieth century economic supremacy over the colonies by European powers held more sway with the decision makers than any attempt to rationalise human equality. The point is that relatively little has changed over the years. Unless overtly emphasised issues of human displacement and resettlement tend to fall to the bottom of the pile until they are so big that they impinge on other economic and social spheres.

The purpose of this report is to contribute something to the decision makers tool box. If resettlement is chosen as one way to achieve certain political and economic aims that can be carried out for the benefit of the mass, it must be done without inadvertently marginalising certain sectors of the community in the process. Furthermore, care must be taken not to create worse long term socioeconomic problems brought about by environmental degradation occurring as a result of resettlement, it being as much a political phenomenon as a physical one. The matter to be made clear is that whatever programme or project is earmarked for support, all displacement and resettlement needs should be explicit, reducing conflicts between those involved from the beginning.

### Background

The first of these three reports dealt with the institutional context within which resettlement programmes for the Lao PDR are described. Ultimately, this series of reports, in conjunction with the more concentrated surveys of villages that have already been resettled, will provide direction towards understanding:

- a) If a programme is fulfilling its stated objectives?
- b) If it is suitable for the people who chose or were chosen to move? and,
- c) How should a programme for resettlement be continued?

Prime interest for this collective study is to define the effect of resettlement upon ethnic and other minorities who form the largest target group for displacement and resettlement in current and planned projects in the Lao PDR.

### Purpose of the Study

This second report was commissioned to investigate resettlement experiences in other countries and provide a contextual starting point if similar programmes are to be undertaken and assisted in the Lao PDR. The reasons for resettlement, and the ensuing issues that they raise should be well differentiated from the

methodological problems that arise from the implementation of resettlement schemes. These issues must be deliberated separately. This report is more concerned with the underlying reasons for resettlement. The third report will deal more succinctly with the logistics and mechanics of resettlement and this is where the comparative studies will come in to their own and provide a basis for emphasising issues of importance.

This is the second report and it attempts to draw on the experiences of other countries as they are pertinent to the Lao PDR. The literature on resettlement is wide and correlating the crucial topics relevant to the Lao PDR demands discovering the Lao motivation for resettlement. Furthermore, because the political and social aims for resettlement in the Lao PDR are different from other countries, facile comparisons are dangerous and even redundant. Another important point to keep in mind when making comparisons with other countries is the very low level of economic development in the Lao PDR. This forgoes any chance of it replicating capital intensive programmes, such as the FELDA settlements in Malaysia.

The term resettlement usually goes hand-in-hand with “land settlement” meaning that many displaced people will be rehoused in new, planned communities. Little empirical or statistical data exists in the Lao PDR about the displaced people who were not officially resettled, particularly those who have been resettled inadequately, or who have rejected official assistance, preferring to rely on their own resources. A vast number of resettlement sites in the Lao PDR are being established naturally without outside help, and are usually stable. These are the homes of the so called “spontaneous resettlers” whose expertise is the most valuable, yet most commonly overlooked.

With this in mind, the report has differentiated between resettlement and displacement. It looks at resettlement first, describing its general manifestations, and then continues to examine the root causes of resettlement which begin with displacement. Three case studies show how and why countries have undertaken resettlement, and the implications they bear for the Lao PDR. A fourth and final case study looks at the World Bank’s experience with planned resettlement for infrastructure development. This has been chosen to illustrate the political and intellectual dilemmas that surround infrastructure development in light of the future expansion of these activities in the Lao PDR.

## RESETTLEMENT

### Planned resettlement: An overview

In this region the earliest organised or planned settlements were established in South Asia during the last decade of the nineteenth century by European colonial administrators. During the early part of the twentieth century resettlement became more common in Southeast Asia (Thapa and Weber, 1988). The implicit consideration for establishing these settlements was to create conditions favourable for expanding the production capacity for commercial commodities, especially consolidated land holdings for natural resource exploitation and plantations. Endeavours at planned land settlement were made in many countries in this region such as India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. As Thapa and Weber explain, the direction of land settlement policy in this region changed after the Second World War when it became directed toward population redistribution, land resource utilisation, regional development, poverty eradication, territorial integration, national security, and as an alternative to land reform. National governments are no longer following colonialist orders, but reacting to their own sovereign issues.

In contrast, the Lao PDR, although colonised by the French from 1893 until 1954 (Stuart-Fox, 1986) is only just beginning to experiment with the controlled movement of people in order to serve a distinct set of goals. Experiences this century have been limited to the resettlement of refugees from areas of intense conflict during and after the Indochinese war. Following liberation in 1975, populations in many areas of the country were in a state of flux, with internally displaced people moving by themselves or as part of specific programmes. Government attempts at resettlement at this time were aimed largely at diffusing the power of reactionary groups by preventing their concentration in remote or security sensitive areas. Other than these attempts there have been two other agents undertaking resettlement programmes for a considerable number of people in the Lao PDR: The first is the current GOL strategy to resettle mainly upland dwelling minorities in areas that provide opportunities for sedentary livelihoods in the lowlands, or in areas with potential for economic growth. This programme is implemented by the Provincial authorities in coordination with technical departments. The second is the UNHCR sponsored programme for refugee repatriation from abroad, implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW).

In the first instance, the current Government interest in resettlement stretches back to the early years of liberation. At this time, collectivisation and resettlement were ways to bring minority tribal people closer to civilisation and to maintain the momentum of the revolution through joint effort. Integrating minorities into lowland Lao production systems by forcing them to abandon (perceived) destructive slash and burn practices and adopt wet rice paddy techniques were part of the government's post liberation strategy to build national solidarity and fraternal equality, and consolidate national security (Stuart-Fox, 1986). However, according to Stuart-Fox, minority groups began to show passive discontent in reaction to the government's disregard for their traditions and coercive methods of integration. By 1980, the government mellowed its attempts at resettlement and focused more on increasing productivity in the highland areas. This is corroborated by stories related about Attapeu province between 1966 and 1975. Attapeu was one of the first provinces to be liberated, nine years before the end of the Indochinese war. During this time, much of the population had been moved from the hill areas to practice paddy cultivation in the lower areas, usually forcefully, and with little or no budget. Those who managed to obtain paddy land remained, but one can only speculate about what happened to those without paddy land.

After the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) resettlement was encouraged again, but under a government with a better institutional capacity and political understanding of the national situation. Voluntary resettlement was advocated in a manner that utilised new areas according to their potential for agricultural expansion and commodity production. Outside critics have charged that resettlement attempts by the Government to promote rural development have been unstructured and often impetuous (Lao Agricultural Development Project LUADP, Draft 1991). However, what has not been explicitly emphasised by outsiders is the Lao Government's own critical appraisal of their rural resettlement programmes, and its attempts to adjust the targets and methodologies to fit with the prevailing conditions (Interview; Deputy Governor of Oudomxai province, 20/7/96). These reactions to failures in the GOL resettlement programme have been uncommonly swift, a matter of a few years, in comparison to the laboured policy deliberations experienced in other countries.

The second resettlement experience is the MLSW/UNHCR refugee programme. Under this programme Lao refugees abroad can choose to return home and be resettled as individuals, as part of a small group, or as part of a large group scheme. The objectives of repatriation are to ensure the safe and voluntary return of refugees from asylum countries and reintegrate them back into Lao society as quickly as possible. The rate of repatriation and the number of people returning to the Lao PDR increased considerably after large group resettlement began. But, even in the face of its seeming success, the MLSW/UNHCR programme is not without its critics. Grievances span from giving the refugees too much help to giving them too little, and from reports, generally unsubstantiated, about conflicts between the refugees and the local community.

Nevertheless, the development policies of the Lao Government appear to be following in the footsteps of its Asian neighbours. Plans for large scale hydroelectric power schemes (Pham, 1994) and for the creation of an economic zone in the 'Golden Quadrangle' area of northern Laos (Luang Nam Tha Five Year Development Plan, 1996: Bangkok Post, Monday September 4, 1995) are but two examples of Government programmes that may require substantial resettlement of people in the future. Indeed, the Huay Ho dam project in Champassak province, scheduled for commissioning in 1998 is resettling 200 households, around 1000 people, amid conflicting opinions about the quality of this programme. The Nam Theun II dam Project Development Group is reformulating policy towards its resettlement plans, under World Bank guidance, but the process is slow.

Continued displacement from reservoir areas may compel the Lao government to address resettlement from a central level, perhaps creating general criteria and guidelines. This follows a wave of criticism about the government's neglect of these affairs, starting with the Nam Ngum dam, commissioned in 1972. Critics point to empirical evidence suggesting that before inundation people were simply evicted from the Nam Ngum reservoir, not resettled. Fears over massive displacement because of planned hydropower schemes are founded. Yet there are other projects, such as reservoirs for municipal water supply, that are as great a cause of displacement, but receive less publicity, but are nonetheless important.

Given the limited experience the Lao PDR has had with planned resettlement it is not surprising that international development agencies, especially the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, require evidence of, and commitment to, comprehensive resettlement plans before supporting any projects with this component.

## Unplanned or “Spontaneous” resettlement

Spontaneous resettlement (a misnomer, though commonly used in the texts when referring to less developed countries) carries with it an idea that the settlers responded impetuously, maybe irrationally, to some stimulus to move. On the contrary, people who move of their own volition have usually calculated very carefully why, where and when they will move, and have laid plans in advance so there is nothing “spontaneous” about their decision. Perhaps it is the lack of restrictions controlling of their movement that is more spontaneous, not the decision to move. UNHCS describes the spontaneous phenomenon as the gradual evolution of homesteads, villages and eventually towns, without an overall plan or the guidance of strict rules and regulations guiding their formation (UNHCS, 1986).

Whereas the spontaneous occupation of arable lands in developed countries is a thing of the past, it still occurs in the unsettled frontier lands of Latin America, Africa and Asia (UNHCS, 1986). These spontaneous movements often follow the pattern of development, especially infrastructure. New roads, for example, will attract farmers to open up arable lands in the vicinity to take advantage of the access to markets. These movements are usually sanctioned by the government which will create the administrative structure necessary for processing land claims. As national land ownership becomes consolidated and lands come under formal jurisdiction, spontaneous settlement is restricted; land, or land use rights, become a commodity to be bought and sold within the control of a legal framework which designates the forms of occupancy and land use type.

Proponents of this sort of resettlement maintain that the manner in which spontaneous settlers move and establish new livelihoods is due to their low expectations from outside help. Therefore, these families or communities are more successful and quickly adjust to their new surroundings because there is no other alternative for survival. Others argue that spontaneous internal migration requires control and direction if it is to lead to local, regional and national sustainable development (Thapa and Weber, 1986 and 1988). This may be true, but local sustainability (which opponents regard as a short term success but a long term drain on natural resources) is the first step in establishing national sustainable livelihood systems. If the people can survive without outside assistance or subsidy, then they are making a better contribution to overall national development.

## The Nature of Spontaneous Migration in the Lao PDR

In the Lao PDR, spontaneous settlement of new arable lands (not swidden in highland areas) is formally encouraged. However, constraints to land occupancy are already being felt. Government restrictions for conservation purposes on the expansion of upland areas for agriculture reduces the overall availability of land for arable and stable swidden cultivation. To exemplify this, a group of people recently migrated from Luang Prabang to Champassak province on the invitation of relatives to take advantage of new agricultural possibilities. Unfortunately, these families unwittingly settled in the watershed protected area of the Huay Ho dam. To solve this predicament the Provincial authorities called upon the services of the MLSW to resettle these people somewhere else, or send them back to Luang Prabang province. Similarly, a village that is scheduled to be moved from the reservoir area of the planned Nam Theun II dam chose a resettlement site within the Nakai National Biodiversity Protected Area (NBCA), which has restrictions upon opening new arable lands. In both these cases, the villagers were unaware of, or did not fully comprehend, the new laws that confine agricultural land to areas outside the boundaries of watershed protection areas and the NBCAs. More likely, they did not know that these restricted areas even existed. These instances are sad to the extent that they show that rural people, once so well able to determine and take initiatives for their own welfare are now confined by the new order of government control and environmental protection which they do not comprehend.

Demographic change within village society is another cause of spontaneous migration in rural Lao PDR. The national annual population growth figure of 2.6 per cent (GOL, 1995) is very general, and gives no indication of regional differences. The highest growth rate for the country is 3.4 per cent in Vientiane municipality, and Houaphan and Luang Nam Tha provinces (1.6 and 1.7 per cent respectively) have the lowest recorded growth figures for the country (Vientiane Times, August, 1995). These numerations give only the merest indication of population dynamics, although they suggest that the much accepted generality that population growth is highest in the remote areas may be a simplistic assumption.

Whatever, growth is noticed quickly in many villages when land plots diminish after division between children. In the lowland areas population growth is noticed first when the village area itself cannot be expanded to accommodate new houses. Kham Khi Kai village on Route 13, 20 km south of Thakhek, is a satellite settlement of its mother village a few kilometres away. The inhabitants of Kham Khi Kai return to cultivate their old paddy area every year, but live in the new village (PRA, CONCERN, 1995). This does not depict the situation in the highlands where swidden or rotational agriculture is practised and where both the actual village and cultivation areas are constricted. Once an upland village has outgrown its rotational capacity, it has two alternatives; it can expand to land far away from the village; or the whole village can move to seek new land. But the government's restrictive policy on opening new swidden confines the villagers to the first alternative, thus fallow periods are shortened and yields are reduced (Theun Hinboun Report, 1995).

Another typical example of migration is illustrated by the families from Ban Vang Dao and Ban Don near the Hinboun river confluence who have started to migrate to another village, Ban Phone Ngarm in the upper Nam Hai plain. These people are migrating because of heavy annual flooding, accompanied by a heavy silt deposit, which has killed the rice crop two years running. Farmers attribute the deposit to the construction of Route 8, 14 kilometres to the west, from which sediments are being flushed down six tributaries of the Hinboun river. Whether the floods have been exacerbated by human activity, such as logging and land clearing upstream, or reflect some other cause, is unknown (Theun-Hinboun Report, 1995). But the result has caused the villagers to question the viability of remaining in this otherwise fertile valley confluence.

Curiously enough, one of the problems facing migrating families who open up new areas for cultivation is finding enough people to join them or move in with them to create a village, which is, under law, a community comprising 20 households or more, or 100 people (Decree on Organisation and Administration of Villages, GOL 1993). These small communities are delighted to welcome new families to swell their numbers because this improves their sense of security, as well as their political and economic viability. This open policy was encountered in a number of newer villages including Ban Phone Ngarm and Ban Kham Khi Kai.

These socioeconomic profiles have shown that people are willing to move to be closer to services and to be closer to other people. Villages frequently comprise of many different ethnic groups who are willing to live together when they share a common purpose. The implicit criteria for spontaneous group settlement is to boost numbers to attract government recognition as a bone fide village (20 households or more) and to become integrated into the administrative functions of local government with a village headman, and qualifying the villages for social benefits such as schools and health facilities. Without the benefit of numbers, communities have to be integrated into the administrative jurisdiction of the next nearest village, which is akin to total obscurity if the host village wishes. Conflict of custom or tradition between ethnic background do not seem to be consequential in these instances.

### **Unplanned movement in the Lao PDR**

Moving to escape natural or human induced constraints upon livelihood patterns is not a new phenomena for many rural Laotian villagers. Apart from climatic reasons, such as flood and drought, the Indochinese war forced many villagers to leave permanent settlements. Heavy bombing and being too close to strategic political zones caused many villages to disappear completely. UNHCR faced this difficulty when repatriating refugees. Normally, refugees would be encouraged to return to their families, but many refugees were unable to trace their villages and home, which had disbanded and moved elsewhere during or after the Indochinese war.

However, some villages were reoccupied when the political tensions ceased. One such village, Ban Dao Than, on the Hinboun river close to Route 13 in Khammouane Province, is not marked on the 1983 national map, although the village is over 60 years old. This is because the whole village moved in the 1970's to avoid reprisals for being close to a strategic military post which might have indicted them as collaborators with the enemy. In the meantime, the map survey was taken, but the village did not reappear again until 1987. This is characteristic of many Lao communities.

## DISPLACEMENT

### Reasons for displacement

The major reasons for resettlement need to be stated and refined to give an idea of the vast nature of the challenge. The basis for this is to visualise resettlement as the consequence of displacement. Below is a list presenting some reasons for displacement that are split into two broad categories: unplanned and planned displacement.<sup>158</sup> Unplanned displacement arises from unpremeditated causes of a traumatic character, making migration imperative. Planned displacement is systematic eviction of people from their homes and off their land as a result of predetermined policies and programmes.

### **Causes of unplanned displacement<sup>159</sup>**

- political upheaval, war, ethnic rivalry and persecution which creates waves of internal and international refugees;
- environmental problems, especially;
  - land degradation and depletion of natural resources
  - droughts, floods and other natural disasters; and,
- poverty, and the creation of a social underclasses in both rural and urban areas.
- population redistribution;
- colonisation and cultural homogeneity;
- environmental protection;
- food security and poverty eradication
- national security;
- infrastructure and economic development ; and,
- as an alternative to land reform, especially by creating opportunities for land and commodity expansion.

### Unplanned Internal Displacement

Millions of people throughout the world have been displaced because of spontaneous calamities and natural disasters, but their resettlement needs are not being adequately met. UNHCR estimates that 24 million people are currently internally displaced (meaning displaced within the borders of their own country) due to civil war, ethnic conflict, and environmental disasters. This is in addition to the estimated 15 million international refugees (UNHCR, 1996).

This first category may also include the erroneously named “spontaneous resettlers”. This term is commonly applied to those people who move of their own volition in circumstances of relative peace. They are not fleeing an uncontrollable situation, but are motivated by the desire to improve their economic situation. However more and more people are being displaced involuntarily, or are moving as a last resort to escape poverty or environmental pressures. These people are left to either manage their own resettlement or become reliant upon emergency relief organisations, such as UNHCR.

The litany of distraught and despairing people thrown from their families and homes due to internal strife, ethnic and religious rivalry or the effects of famine, often both together, seems never to end. Presently, there are thirty five to forty countries that have significant populations of internally displaced persons. To give an idea of the magnitude of internal displacement, the following figures are proffered; 4 million in Sudan, 1.3

<sup>158</sup> Broadly categorising displacement into two themes as a prerequisite for resettlement is, of course, debatable. This is simply a method employed by the author to untangle and present the huge array of resettlement issues facing the world today.

<sup>159</sup> Sources: Compiled by the author from: UNHCS, 1986; Oberai, 1988; Maloney1990-1; World Bank, 1994, Mathur, 1995; UNHCR, 1996

million in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1 million in Iraq, 850,000 in Sri Lanka, 600,000 in Columbia, 500,000 in Rwanda, 500,000 in Myanmar and 55,000 in Cambodia (UNHCR, 1996).

Formerly, internally displaced people were reliant upon their government and emergency relief from donor agencies. Since the UNHCR's original mandate is to protect and seek durable solutions for refugees (those people displaced outside of their national borders) they were not called upon to help, even though they have the appropriate expertise in protection and resettlement. But the escalation in the numbers of internally displaced people has enabled the UNHCR to amend its Statute, under relevant international or regional legal instruments, to become involved in programmes on behalf of the internally displaced. Programmes in this area are currently focused on emergency relief, protection, opening dialogue to secure people's human rights, and raising international awareness about the plight of these people.<sup>160</sup>

Much has yet to be achieved for these people, many of whom are children. In 1992, 12,500 young Sudanese boys turned up at a Kenyan refugee camp, where they have remained for four years. These boys had wandered for five years across Sudan and Ethiopia, not knowing that they had crossed national borders back and forth. Before their induced wandering many had been kidnapped from their families and forced to join a children's army. Resettling victims of strife such as these, and the Bosnians, the Kurds the Rwandans, and all the people living in the UN created 'safe havens' within their countries' borders will be a long, disturbing, expensive and, maybe, never ending task. But returning these people to their homes or resettling them in new area will be the next step for the UNHCR and other organisations and NGOs.

The issues and expertise involved in resettling victims of intense internal strife fall outside the thrust of this report. Though it should be noted that the most successful planned resettlement schemes of recent times in the Lao PDR have been undertaken by the MLSW/UNHCR and implemented for refugees.

### **Planned displacement and "involuntary resettlement"**

The term "involuntary resettlement" is perhaps more succinctly described, in light of the above, as planned but involuntary displacement. It is reserved for those instances where development initiatives and political motives require sequestering land from people. Involuntary resettlement is now receiving deserved attention from the World Bank, in recognition of the problems of inadvertent displacement caused by its own projects in the past. Seldom is there a definite line between voluntary and involuntary resettlement for once the decision to go ahead with a development has been taken, voluntary movement becomes a carrot and stick process. The people will have to move; so how much compensation can be offered to get them to move discreetly? The World Bank refers to all evictions from property under any circumstances as involuntary.

In the literature of bilateral aid agencies, involuntary resettlement issues focus on those projects that move people to make way for roads, irrigation schemes, dams and so on. However, as we have seen, these are very much the tip of the iceberg when it comes to internal movement of people. From the list of common reasons for displacement needing resettlement, colonisation and population redistribution also account for a significant number the people targeted for movement. However, very often the targets set have not always been achieved in the ways foreseen by the implementing governments.

Colonisation has been used as a method of expanding commodity production by occupying and developing vast tracts of land, especially in southeast Asia and Latin America, that were previously covered in forest and populated by nomads or remote tribal groups. This type of frontier expansion not only opened up lands for economic exploitation, such as cattle raising in the Amazon basin area, or plantation agriculture in Malaysia and Indonesia, it also provided a convenient vehicle for governments to avoid the onerous task of land reform which would otherwise be necessary, especially after independence from colonial control (Oberai, 1988).

## **CASE STUDIES OF PLANNED RESETTLEMENT**

Many countries have found that rather than proving a panacea for solving problems planned resettlement has created a whole host of other complications in its wake (Thapa and Weber, 1988; Oberai, 1988 and

<sup>160</sup> Dr Francis M Deng, Representative of the UN Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons, Interview, UNHCR, 1996).

Mathur, 1995 among others). Resettlement can fail because of poorly planned or over ambitious programmes, or because the people should not have been moved in the first place. This stimulates the whole question of problem definition and what compels policy makers to revert to resettlement as a solution or a strategy for achieving certain aims. The case studies look at some ways governments have tackled internal problems using resettlement as a tool. Each example ends with a word about the application of this technique in the Lao PDR.

## 1. Colonisation and population redistribution: The Indonesian Experience

Colonisation has been used as a means of securing politically unstable areas, to extend national government control and as an alternative to land reform. Perhaps the most notable, because of its size, is the Indonesian experience.

Indonesia is a multi-ethnic archipelago, struggling to adopt a national identity, even out its lopsided population distribution, and promote economic expansion. So many aims have, without surprise, conflicted with both the natural resource distribution and the many interests of the ethnic people who resent the perceived central government arrogance.

The Indonesian Transmigration Programme<sup>161</sup> is one of the most renowned undertakings in planned resettlement that began early this century. The 1905 census conducted by the Netherlands colonial administrators showed that of the 37.5 million population, 80 per cent lived on the island Java, which accounted for only seven per cent of the national land area. Evidence of declining welfare in rural Java prompted the adoption of the ‘colonisation’ policy to move Javanese to the outer islands, initially mostly to southern Sumatra. Migrant families were given free transport, 1 hectare of reasonably fertile land, cash (later loans) to purchase housing materials, tools and seed. Between 1905 and 1922, some 22,000 people were moved. But migration stopped in the later 1920’s to be resumed again in 1932 as the effects of the international depression reduced small holder incomes. By 1940, an estimated 200,000 migrants resettled under the Dutch colonisation policy but during the end of the Second World War until independence in 1950, migration came to a halt.

Post independence Indonesian governments resumed the transmigration programme. Between 1950 and 1977, there were 771,100 people resettled in the outer islands, and at least as many moved independently, although these numbers were not officially recorded. During this period, regional economic development became a major thrust of the transmigration programme, fuelled by revenues from the lucrative oil exports of the 1970s. Consequently, between 1979 and 1984 people migrated from Java at a rate of 300,000 to 400,000 per year, achieving the government’s goal of 2 million people as set for that Five-Year Plan period. In the meantime the population of Java had grown by over 35 million, so the most often quoted objective of the programme, relieving population pressure, could only have had minimal impact on the island. Indeed, as Oberai notes, other studies have shown that the number of people moving from the outer islands to Java is about two and a half times greater than that of people migrating from Java to the outer islands (Oberai, 1988). Some even argue that the geographical redistribution of people from densely to sparsely populated areas is too simplistic. They contend that if the outer islands had the natural resources to support people, they would have already been occupied. The perceived population imbalance is therefore a reflection of resource distribution, and people are making a rational choice to follow these resources.

Less well documented in the Indonesian experience is the resettlement and its impacts on the indigenous populations of the outer islands, the host communities to the migrants from Java. The Indonesian government has tried to redress the recurring problems of assimilation and integration in four ways. One has been to move indigenous people into the planned settlements, with some sites reserving 20 per cent of the area for the locals who receive the same benefits as the transmigrants. The second has been to institutionalise compensation measures for land acquisition, a particularly sore point with the indigenous population. The third way has been to encourage the indigenous people to establish stores and other businesses that cater for the needs of the new settlers. The fourth has been an attempt to decentralise the decision-making giving local authorities greater power over the administration of the sites. These initiatives, as Arndt (1988) notes, are lagging behind in practical achievement.

<sup>161</sup> This section on Indonesia is based mainly on Arndt in Oberai, 1988.

What is most notable, and again less emphasised generally, is that the massive influx of main island people into the outer islands may be perceived as a policy for 'Javanisation' and pan-Indonesian expansionism, rather than one of relieving population pressure or promoting regional economic growth. This in itself is enough to perpetuate sociopolitical problems. The situation in the Lao PDR depicts a somewhat reverse Indonesian experience. Instead of moving people out of populated areas, the direction is to move people closer to the source of administrative jurisdiction.

Both countries share a topography that is difficult to control politically: Indonesia is an archipelago of thousands of islands, inhabited by a pluri-ethnic population, many of whom do not share the political aims of the dominant Javanese-Balinese languages and cultures. Transmigration is a response to the population pressures in the islands most closely linked to central government control and perhaps the most "Indonesianised". The new settlements are occupied by the dominant islanders creating culture enclaves among the local inhabitants of the outer islands.

The Lao PDR is explicitly a plural society, although the multiple minority ethnic people are spread throughout the highland areas of the country, which are inaccessible from the centres of power. The mountainous terrain and the poor financial and economic base of the country make it impossible for the State, even with foreign aid, to build the roads that can bring a measure of economic development into the remoter areas. Having pledged their allegiance to the present government during the struggle for liberation, many minority groups are still waiting for the prosperity that they were promised after the revolution (Stuart-Fox, 1986). This can only happen by bringing the people closer to the services that can be viably provided in the lower regions, closer to the Provincial towns, and some better serviced Districts. Yet, even in these lower areas there is very little in terms of economic opportunity. Agricultural exports are minimal, and plantation agriculture of the Indonesian type has no base in the Lao PDR.

Even so, Lao PDR can promote ethnic integration by concentrating populations closer to the service areas. Assimilating the minority groups into the dominant linguistic culture is one way minorities will achieve access to off farm jobs and higher education. But it is feared that this process, through the media of resettlement, will starve the unique cultural and linguistic groups of their ways of life, extinguishing their identity, not unlike the processes of colonisation have done in Indonesia.

## **2. Poverty alleviation, commodity expansion and regional development: The FELDA Scheme, Malaysia**

Malaysia's Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) has been lauded by many governments and international organisations as one of the most effective land settlement authorities in the world. This is due to its innovative, well planned model for land settlements initiated in 1956 to combat the likely effects that large numbers of itinerant landless poor would cause if not provided with stable livelihoods. By 1988, FELDA had established 441 land settlement schemes of which 308 had 111,728 settler families (Sutton in Mathur, 1995).

What makes the scheme noteworthy is its methodology or 'model' which is totally subsidised by the government in its early stages, with settler farmers paying back loans as their production output increases. The schemes clear and prepare 1000-2000 hectare blocks of land and plant the first main crop, and lay the infrastructure facilities; houses, roads, schools, and so on. The settlers are employed as salaried workers until the first crop is harvested. Once the repayment for the plot of land is paid off, the farmer settler is given title to the land. Later variations on this model effected a change from individual plots to block systems, where 15 to 20 settlers work as a team. Another change has been the introduction of a share system whereby settlers are only given title to their house plot plus 10 shares in the scheme. Neither of these variations are as attractive as eventual title to an individual plot. Whatever the variation, however, they are all based on intensive, plantation cropping producing oil palm, rubber and cocoa and some coffee. These schemes are highly commercially productive and have strong vertical integration linkages. FELDA runs oil palm mills, rubber processing factories, has transport and distribution subsidiaries and is able to market its produce. It also has marketing offices in London and Rotterdam (Sutton in Mathur, 1995).

When the FELDA scheme was established in 1956 its principal aim was to develop land for the landless and unemployed (Oberai, 1988). An additional organisation FELCRA (the Federal Land Consolidated and Rehabilitation Authority) was created to assist other poor rural groups, such as those with fragmented land holdings. Population distribution was never an objective of the FELDA settlement schemes. Instead, the motivating forces were to restrain rural-urban movement, as well as providing land for the landless (Oberai, 1988). In this respect, the FELDA settlements have been highly successful. Malaysia has relatively low rural-urban migration rates, which may be attributed in part to the settlements. A study has shown that between 1957 and 1970 the rural and urban populations in Malaysia grew at the same rate of 2.6 per cent a year (Oberai, 1988). The schemes have regulated and stabilised population movements in the rural areas, settlers being primarily from their own states because most of the states have a quota requiring a minimum of 50 per cent of the settlers to be from their own states.

Despite such an impressive track record, the FELDA model is not without its critics. The main reproach is that the schemes have slowed down the granting of land titles and has resisted handing over management responsibility to the settlers. As it stands, FELDA does not seem to be in any hurry to withdraw its management function. Among the reasons cited for the inability of the schemes to mature into self-reliant units are that the first plantation crops are old and need to be replaced, and that the original population is aging along with the plantations (Sutton, in Mathur, 1995). This means that second generation settlers will have to take out new loans to establish new trees, again placing the settlers in the debt of the managing agency. In other cases, elderly settlers lease out their lands, while their children with higher aspirations seek better employment elsewhere.

However, changing political and economic conditions are affecting FELDA's grip on the settlements, and may force it to relinquish management control. If FELDA privatises its transport and marketing subsidiaries then the settlers will be forced to sell their crops to non-FELDA processors, encouraging greater self-reliance. On the political front, FELDA may have to submit to the stronger UMNO, the Malay Government Party, that has already a staunch body of supporters among the settlers and supports many of their administrative and religious needs. Also, in 1989, in a sudden reversal of FELDA's landholding system, the government overturned the share and block system of operation and planned to give settlers individual land titles (Sutton, in Mathur, 1995).

Nevertheless, in comparison to settlement programmes in other countries, the FELDA scheme has shown that to be successful, and to avoid the hardships of the early years, a land settlement requires substantial planning and fiscal inputs. More than that, the FELDA model has shown that settlements can contribute very positively to regional economic development if the activities of the settlers are in line with the economic development strategy of the nation or the region. This is opposed to the small scale income generating approach, which although necessary, can sometimes alienate settlers from the mainstream economy to which they may need to belong. Lastly, the FELDA scheme appears to have achieved its aim of providing for the landless and preventing a flow of unemployed people into the cities which would have burdened urban resources and created a class urban poor. In fact, the settlements have encouraged the growth of 'urban' rural areas (Oberai, 1988), around which dynamic economic activity can thrive.

But is this type of scheme transferable to the Lao PDR? Given its low economic base, probably not. Even with intensive subsidy from foreign assistance, this type of scheme would be neither desirable nor fitting to the Lao context. Firstly, there is no common and guaranteed economic activity for settlers to undertake that could ensure their daily income needs. Monoculture goes against risk aversion tactic of the Lao farmer who prefers to undertake many small activities, aware that in any one year some of the activities will fail, and others will yield. Secondly, even if it were possible to set up schemes that provided assured employment, who should be the chosen settlers? 85 to 90 per cent of the population of the Lao PDR is dependent on agriculture, and most of these people survive at a precarious subsistence to sub-subsistence level (Theun-Hinboun Report, 1995). From this aspect, most of the country would qualify for a poverty alleviation scheme such as in Malaysia. Lastly, even if the funding for such organised schemes could be found, other international agencies, such as the UNHCR, have already stumbled across many of the constraints to forming land settlements. Their experience shows that new settlements have to be set up at a very simple level, giving as much as 50 per cent of the service benefits to the local community. Basic needs namely; water, housing, land, sanitation, schools, health facilities and road access are the mechanical prerequisites for a stable settlement. Once these are assured, the rest should be allowed develop by itself according to the determination of the settlers.

### 3 Environmental degradation: Ethiopia

Although population settlements have a long history in Ethiopia, the important activities relevant to the control of soil erosion and land degradation began in the 1980s. This section features resettlement and its aspects that relate to natural resource management and environmental protection. It emphasises the need to understand the processes of land degradation and their links to political economy and exemplifies why technocratic approaches to environmental problem solving, of which resettlement is one, may not be successful.

Population distribution in Ethiopia is historically influenced by the topography and the climate. There are three distinct agro climatic regions in the country: The Kolla region covers all lands below 1500 metres with mean monthly temperatures higher than 20 degrees C, and generally associated with low vegetation density. The second, or Weynadega region, covers lands between 1500 and 2500 metres, with medium temperatures of 20 degree C for the hottest months, and where rainfed agriculture is practised. The third Dega region consists of highland areas with altitudes of 2500 metres or more, and low temperatures throughout the year.

Most of the population in the Weynadega and Dega regions practice rainfed agriculture. These regions have good volcanic soils, high rainfall and cool temperatures and support more than 78 per cent of the Ethiopian population. The harsh, dry and hot conditions of the Kolla lowlands, combined with the widespread existence of malaria and the tsetse fly, make the area inhospitable for settled agriculture. The Kolla region represents about 60 per cent of the country's total land mass, and supports a mainly nomadic population who account for 10 per cent of the total population of Ethiopia (Chole and Mulat in Oberai, 1988).

Land degradation in Ethiopia is most evident and intrusive in the highland regions of Weynadega and Dega. In the past deep, fertile volcanic soils of the highlands, combined with high rainfall supported large forests with a wide variety of fauna and flora. The historical Abyssinian kingdom flourished in this environment and stable agricultural communities emerged.

In the twentieth century population growth put a limit on the scope for expansion of crop land, and traditional agricultural practices have been constrained by smaller sized land plots. The need for fuel wood has not only contributed to the loss of forests, but its scarcity has reduced soil fertility as people have been forced to use cow dung as a fuel rather than putting it on their fields. Soil erosion processes have been enhanced by natural factors and agricultural practices. Fallow periods have been reduced and heavy rainstorms have stripped the soil from the land. Increased sheet and gully erosion has been caused by heavy rainwater torrents flowing off the sloping lands that are no longer protected by bushes and trees (Stahl, 1992). Crops are now more reliant on rainfall, but poor rainfall distribution often leads to crop failures. Internal strife, population growth, and unpredictable crop harvests induced the government to address the ensuing increased rates of natural resource degradation.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) was restructured in 1979 to undertake settlement programmes in Ethiopia. The settlement programmes of the RRC became directed at three target groups: the urban unemployed; those who had been displaced by natural disasters such as drought; and for the nomads (Stahl, 1992). However, government programmes to combat degradation were implemented by a number of cooperating agencies and donors including the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the European Community (EC). The government programmes directed at stabilising land degradation, especially in the highlands, involved the building of terraces, the closure of hillsides, tree planting, irrigation schemes, as well as the relocation of people on a local level (villagisation) and at a regional and nation level (resettlement).

Despite the generally favourable efforts of the technical programmes to combat land degradation, especially bunding, tree plantation and irrigation schemes, the major environmental trend continued towards degradation (Stahl, 1992). Studies of this phenomenon show that the conservation programmes tended to affect only a small proportion of the highlanders, because the schemes were concentrated close to roads. Few conservation activities were implemented in the remote areas where most of the people live. Furthermore, though farmers demonstrated their understanding of the causes of degradation, they were unwilling to undertake conservation practices without outside help to which they had come to rely upon, such as food aid from the Food for Work programmes of the WFP. (Stahl, 1992).

In the eroded highlands government policy emphasised resettlement to serve a dual purpose: reduce pressure on the land and mobilise labour to exploit the vast lowland areas, which are sparsely populated. When the drought struck in 1984, the government carried out a large scale campaign resettling more than half a million people between 1984 and 1986. Realising that resettlement created more problems than it solved and faced with the huge fiscal burden that it represented, the programme lost momentum, and the resettlement schemes to move people from the populated highlands to the lowlands were largely abandoned.

The villagisation and resettlement programmes fell within the general development policy of the government. According to the Constitution of the People's Democratic Revolutionary Republic of Ethiopia, the Worker's Party of Ethiopia is the leading force of the state and the society. The Worker's Party promotes the transition to socialism in the countryside through, among other things, establishing collective production units, state farms, resettlements and villagisation. Within this framework, farmers were encouraged to pool their land and resources to cultivate collectively. This changed the traditionally dispersed settlement pattern by moving all the households belonging to a farmer association into nucleated villages. These new settlement patterns have tended to focus degradation into smaller, more severe packages. Cattle, once left to graze over a large area, were kept in small areas in or near village compounds, trampling ground and taxing water resources. Demands for fuel wood were similarly concentrated leading to severe fuel wood shortages in the direct vicinity of the villages (Stahl, 1992). There are now more than 15 million people living in planned villages.

The final analysis has been that the top down nature of the government and donor supported programmes dispossessed the farmers of their personal responsibility for environmental rehabilitation. This was most pronounced where land tenure and production was controlled by the government, driven by ideology rather than farmer choice, especially in the villagisation and resettlement programmes.

Environmental writers in the field of political economy have been rather more successful in demonstrating that simplistic cause-effect analyses of environmental problems will lead to technocratic solutions, such as resettlement. Technocratic solutions tend to address only the proximate causes of soil erosion, land degradation, overpopulation, demonstrating merely how the degradation is taking place, ignoring the underlying causes which may be better sought in patterns of socioeconomic alienation or international hegemony (Rock, 1996). Of course, one must be careful not to become too embroiled with discovering underlying causes, or to over stress the factors of life that can only be dealt with in the short term, not resisted.

However, the Ethiopian case is presented here to draw some lessons for the Lao situation. In both countries, environmental degradation is having an effect on people's livelihoods and on the development of the national economy as a whole. The Lao predicament is not nearly so advanced as in Ethiopia, but the Lao government has taken heed of international experience and understands, maybe too simplistically, that the forests in the this mostly mountainous country must be conserved to some extent to protect the integrity of the watershed areas to avoid massive soil erosion, maintain water quality in the rivers, and preserve the remaining biodiversity. These concerns are driven by national aims, especially more recently for the promotion of hydropower that needs watersheds intact to prevent reservoir sedimentation and to maintain water quality. The government is also reacting to international pressure to prove its commitment to environmental protection to serve the aims of the global community, the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (MFA, 1996) being just one example. But when "environment" becomes more important than people, or when people are regarded as separate from the "environment", resource use conflicts are created, and emotions are stirred.

The Lao PDR will have to consolidate conflicting uses of the environment and natural resources. Environmental protection measures that take land out of productive use or limit arable expansion may simply deflect the results of degrading activities and concentrate them somewhere else, as happened in Ethiopia. Moving people from watershed to lower areas, for example, will require higher inputs for roads and irrigation to intensify agricultural production to support a greater population. The government is aware of these conflicts, but lacks the resources to fully develop lowland areas to accommodate migrants from the hills. Thus, care should be taken in designing environmental protection projects. Accurate problem definition from the start may avoid technocratic solutions to situations that are human in nature. Resettlement options should be avoided, unless people are fully compliant and have access to the necessary administrative, legal and financial inputs that will make their resettlement successful.

### Infrastructure development:

This section draws heavily upon the experiences documented by the World Bank.<sup>162</sup> This organisation has had its fair share of international criticism concerning its handling of development projects needing resettlement in the past. Indeed, it is the World Bank's involvement that provides a special insight into resettlement controversies. Even so, the Bank continues to support development projects requiring resettlement because it believes that resettlement, if minimised and well planned, need not be a reason to stop economic progress of this type.

At the time of publishing the review *Resettlement and Development* (1994), out of a portfolio of 1900 active projects in FY 1993, 149 projects required resettlement, representing 1,963,000 people worldwide. About 2.5 million people in 192 projects were scheduled for resettlement during FY 1986-93. Of these 543,000 had already been resettled under 46 projects completed by FY 1993, the remaining two million being in various stages of resettlement in the current portfolio. These figures are provided to give an idea of the magnitude of resettlement needs worldwide. But, more importantly, these are the figures from the World Bank portfolio only and do not cover the resettlement needs of projects funded by other international organisations, national governments and private investors. In China, the Bank's share in resettlement is minuscule compared to the involuntary resettlement in projects with no Bank assistance. Transportation, urban and water resource projects displaced an estimated 31.5 million people (seven times the population of the Lao PDR!) between 1950 and 1989. China built 523 dams a year between 1951 to 1982, whereas the Bank has financed only seven of these dams since 1980 which displaced 167,000 people. None of these dams were those with the mega displacements of the Sanmenxia (319,000) the Danjiangkou (383,000) and the present Three Gorges (1.1 million).

In terms of regional distribution, of the 146 active projects (active in FY 1993) spread among 39 countries, East and Southeast Asia have 60 per cent of the Bank's resettlement projects, and 82 per cent of the displacement needs. This seeming concentration is due, in part, to the relatively high population densities and land scarcity in these areas. In India 974,000 people and in China 483,000 people are to be displaced which together account for 74 per cent of the people displaced under the World Bank FY 1993 portfolio. In contrast, Latin American projects account for only 9 per cent of the people in the Bank's resettlement portfolio, and Africa, Europe/Central Asia, and Middle East/North Africa together account for less than 10 per cent. In the Lao PDR, the World Bank is considering only one dam, the Nam Theun II, and its support will be as a guarantor for a commercial loan. The estimated number of people to be displaced is in the region 4,000. However, though this figure is relatively low, finding suitable resettlement sites is proving difficult because of the pressure on existing arable land in the vicinity of the proposed dam.

When looking for the causes of displacement, it is easy to overlook the specific project component that is responsible, especially if projects are ranked by sector, such as energy or agriculture. Even though dam reservoirs are the most frequent cause of displacement, accounting for 63 per cent of the people removed, there are other significant causes. Highways, and appropriating rights of ways along canals, drains and transmission water and sewage lines are also important. Forestry and conservation projects may also cause displacement of a substantial size. The Cote D'Ivoire Forestry Project has the largest resettlement component for Africa with 200,000 scheduled for resettlement, although the Bank has negotiated this number down to 40,000. Other conservation orientated projects are also emerging as a cause of resettlement, notwithstanding that the concept of resettlement for conservation may be an oxymoron.

It is important to know the exact cause of the displacement in order to take measures to reduce it or halt it all together. Often, the magnitude of the displacement is incorrectly estimated at the feasibility stage of project preparation. The Bank has, on occasion, approved financing based on appraisal reports to find out later that displacement and resettlement needs were much greater than foreseen. Since resettlement can account for a substantial part of all project costs, credible estimations of displacement and resettlement needs are necessary to forecast accurate financial and economic expenditures. Two thermal power projects in India, Farakka II and Singrauli II displaced about 50,000 people each, although at the time of the appraisal the issue of

<sup>162</sup> Much of this section is based on *Resettlement and Development; The Bank wide Review of Projects Involving Involuntary Resettlement 1986-1993*. Report No 12971 GLB. Produced by the World Bank Environment Department, April 8, 1994. Since most of the figures and data are taken directly from this report repeated reference is not needed, unless otherwise stated. However, the interpretation of this data reflects the author's own opinions, not necessarily those of this report.

resettlement was not addressed. In these projects, the cause of displacement was not the physical works or the factories, but the land take needed for ash disposal, open pit mining and other related land uses. In cases such as these, an adequate environmental impact assessment could have identified the need for displacement and pinpointed the areas and construction and implementation activities directly causing the displacement.

On the other hand, projects should not be stereotyped synonymous with displacement: not all dams, for example, take land from people. Even so, worldwide construction of high dams (above 15 metres) averaged about 300 new dams a year during the early 1990s. The Bank share of this total is only two per cent, financing six new dams a year, and creating 100,000 new evacuees annually out of a total global estimate of four million.

### Who is displaced?

The Bank Review points to a correlation between the location of development projects and the socioeconomic composition of the people to be displaced, although this type of information is far from comprehensive. The majority of the displaced are rural poor because projects tend to be brought to the most underdeveloped areas. In these areas, infrastructure is inferior although its upgrading may cause displacement. Furthermore, exploitable natural resources are usually found in rural areas; this is illustrated by the hydropower possibilities and mineral deposits which occur according to geography, limiting the choice of project sites, which may be at the expense of the rural communities as a result. There are many reasons why development projects are located in rural areas. Political as well as economic costs are lower in the remote rural areas making them preferable areas for project location. Political objection is less fierce and more easily reversed, and the costs of land appropriation are lower, although transportation costs can be higher.

However, politicising economic development is a current that flows in two directions. In one way, industry or development works tend to be cited close to the resource, the labour and/or the transportation networks. This leads to the argument that the areas of production are often the first to receive the negative impacts of the projects like direct pollution, land take, displacement, and so forth, but last to receive the benefits, such as electric power, resources for commodity production or trade. Thus the argument follows that these areas should not be exploited unless direct compensation is given, and that the development benefits be subdivided among the population affected by the development. In the other way, rural populations tend to welcome the consequences such as the infrastructure improvements, the greater access to the central market or work opportunities, being oblivious to the wider implications of their situation, which appear to be exploitative to outsiders. Thus care must be taken when analysing such situations. By pushing issues of inequitable benefit distribution one may inadvertently deprive rural people of immediate opportunities that they regard as beneficial. And only the affected populations can solve this paradox.

### Resettlement in the Lao PDR in perspective:

The discussion on resettlement so far is by no means comprehensive, and does not give everyone's side of the story. This would take a much deeper and longer exploration, which may be premature exercise at this point. However, the main points and issues important to the Lao PDR are beginning to emerge. It will be for each individual or organisation to differentiate between the conclusions presented here and the experiences which they regard as pertinent.

Resettlement is either a result of planned or unplanned displacement. People may be resettled under the direct management of an agency or a project, or they can be spontaneous and self motivated settlers. In either case, the most important consideration is the acceptability of the conditions under which people move and resettle. Criteria for acceptability will depend upon the specific circumstances of each region and each nation. What is most important, and possibly universally applicable, is that the people involved in movement are allowed to express their preferences, and that these preferences are heard and considered by the managing authorities.

The following observations deduced from the text conclude this report.

- People are no longer moving in the Lao PDR due to the upsets of war, or internal strife. Village displacement during the Indochinese war altered settlement patterns quite radically, and the memory of displacement is still fresh in people's minds. In this peaceful period, strife is no longer a cause of displacement, but the present location of many Lao villages is a legacy of the war era. Adverse environmental conditions (including environmental protection) and land acquisition for development projects are becoming the dominant forces behind displacement today.

- Understanding the causes and reasons for resettlement is the most important starting point for comparing settlement experiences, both internally and internationally. The motivating considerations for resettlement reflect a government's vision for national goals and internal planning, as well as the form of settlement adopted. This preempts the wisdom of copying or applying resettlement models of other countries in the Lao PDR.

- International experiences in planned resettlement tend to focus on the conventional land settlement model, whereby a national agency is assigned responsibility for finding and preparing land areas, moving the people and supporting them through an initial period of dependency. In the Lao PDR, land settlements for refugees returning from abroad have been set up successfully by the MLSW following this model, but in accordance with the local conditions.

- There are multiple causes of displacement in the Lao PDR which have not been systematically recorded. This includes spontaneous movement for private reasons, and those carried out for development projects, usually small scale. That does not mean to say that there is no record of movement. The government tries to officially record the residence of every citizen, even though systems of record keeping in remote areas may be crude. But there is no comprehensive compendium of why people have moved. But empirical evidence suggests that displacement does, and will, take place, guided more by circumstance than law.

- There will be a stronger need for planned resettlement guidelines as the Lao PDR undertakes more projects for national development. This is because the types of development projects that will be undertaken, such as infrastructure for hydropower, mineral extraction, urban or semi-urban development among others, will sequester occupied land. This is inevitable, and does not need to be negative. However, the location of many extractive or industrial projects will impinge upon premium arable land. The dilemma therefore arises as to whether it is possible to recompense people with land of similar quality, or provide them with comparable livelihoods.

- It is an irony that resettlement is often considered as a solution to environmental degradation. One of the guiding policies for the Lao PDR is protection of the watershed areas, both for forest conservation (and its attendant applications such as biodiversity) and control of sedimentation in hydropower reservoirs. All of these reasons are very important, and no attempt to diminish the policy is implied here. However, greater attention must be paid to the alternatives that exist for people who are moved from, or not allowed to settle in, environmental protection zones. Environmental protection is an holistic strategic tool which must encompass the many, usually conflicting, resource use claims, of the local people. Resource conservation may also be regarded as a non-use, another difficult concept for local people to deal with. No simple resolution is attempted here, other than to warn of the impending possibility that worse environmental degradation can occur if people are resettled for environmental reasons that they do not understand, or cannot be compensated for.

- Lastly, will resettlement become a threat to the integrity of ethnic society, especially among the smaller groups who are less resilient rapid socioeconomic change? Since liberation, reasons for planned internal resettlement in the Lao PDR have been confined largely to environmental protection, socioeconomic development, national security purposes and, more recently, to infrastructure development. However, the geographical distribution of the resources and the population coincide to the extent that some disturbance of minority ethnic communities is inevitable. What is yet to be examined is whether or not resettlement causes cultural erosion, and, if it does, are the effects any greater than those caused by normal pace of political and social change.

The Lao PDR has not yet formulated a resettlement policy, meaning that there is no one specific motivating ideology or central plan for resettlement, such as commodity expansion or colonisation. Nor does it have general guidelines that can be applied in particular circumstances, and this has several implications: The first is that without a policy towards a single goal there is no central budget so resettlement has to be implemented on a purely voluntary basis, with minimal financial government assistance and a lot of local complicity, for it to work. It also means that because the rules and guidelines governing the requisition of land for development projects are not clear, they have to be reformulated as each case emerges. This leaves the people who are to be displaced vulnerable to the negotiating abilities of the major stakeholders, who are the government and the project owners.

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### III. RESETTLEMENT PLANNING

#### Preface

Michael Cernea notes that, "Throughout history, rearrangements in human settlement patterns have been a companion of development and are indelibly imprinted in the evolution of industrial as well as developing countries" (Mathur, 1995). Indeed, population migration was core to the agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe. In eighteenth century Britain, the rural landless migrated to the cities eventually becoming the work force for the industrial era. The living conditions of the city workers were appalling for the most part, but over the decades and centuries these workers established communities with a character of their own. The post Second World War Labour governments in Britain tried to address the squalid conditions in the industrial regions of the country, especially in the north and in the midlands, by building massive housing estates. Planners utilised the high rise block as a low cost means of providing housing for the industrial poor. But although the traditional "back to back" tenements that the high rises would replace were dark, dingy and often unsanitary, they were also the hub of the community support systems. People were physically close to each other, and human contact was unavoidable. The high rises alienated people in the community from each other. The lifts were frequently vandalised, or became too dangerous to ride. Young mothers and old people became trapped in high story flats and the incidence of violence and suicide increased as the fabric of the communities fell apart.

Frequently, policy makers and planners undertake resettlement or rehousing programmes that they feel, from their bird's eye view, will benefit the people that they serve. Budgetary and financial considerations are also prime considerations for the planner, yet money alone need not be an excuse for poor planning or for ignorance of the fundamental social mechanisms that are the essence of natural human settlement patterns. Settlement planning is more a social than a technical challenge, and does not need to be expensive if the motivating reasons have been properly assessed, receiving the complicity and cooperation of those directly affected.

At its purest level the rural economy in the Lao PDR is striving towards what Redclift conceives as "...environmental planning and management in a way that does minimum damage to ecological processes without putting a brake on human aspirations for economic and social improvement.." (Redclift 1987, p 33). But this situation is unlikely to last as the country takes its first tentative steps into major economic resource exploitation.

#### Introduction and purpose of the study

This, the third report, will address the practicalities of land settlement planning. So far discussion has been confined to the issues which concern the the policy makers and planners. However, for those actually implementing the programmes, the pragmatic day-to-day tasks that face them are more important. During the implementation phases the flaws in programme rationale will become apparent. Therefore, policy and planning must be linked to implementation, taking into account all the variable factors which will affect the success of a resettlement operation.

The first section will give a brief conceptual understanding of the types of land settlement and management models that can be used. The rest of the report will be devoted to the application of land settlement planning in the Lao PDR.

#### Types of Resettlement Schemes

The review of literature has awakened questions about what is meant by the term resettlement. The models discussed here will centre around rural land settlement as it is likely to occur in Asia, accepting that there are many other models that could be examined and compared. Big programmes can manifest themselves as land settlements covering quite large geographic areas, encompassing many villages, and, possibly, crossing

administrative boundaries. These types of settlements will have their own management systems and may be autonomous of the local authorities. Land settlements can also be small and village based, comprising just one village or a collection of villages, receiving varying amounts of specialised or local management and administrative services.

### Model #1

Schemes for resettlement vary widely in their nature, but three Asian land settlement types have been identified based upon the varying degrees of support services provided (MacAndrews, 1978 in Thapa and Weber, 1988). This model provides a useful theoretical starting point for understanding the functions and roles of settlements.

- The first and simplest is the “non-integrated” type in which the settlers are only allocated land, which may or not be cleared, and some other facilities such as housing or limited extension services.
- the “semi-integrated” settlement provides the settler with cleared land, a house or housing materials, and some sort of subsistence payment until after the harvest of the first crop, and some limited social services.
- the “fully integrated” settlement involves a highly centralised settlement administration with the full spectrum of infrastructure and assistance such as housing or extension services. Land is prepared in advance of the settlers arrival and may even be planted with the first crops.

The GOL resettlement programme for upland shifting cultivators is of a non-integrated type. The Provincial or District authorities find land that can be allocated to the resettlers. This land may or may not be cleared and on-going assistance to settlers is given depending on the financial and physical resources of the Provincial and District departments involved. However, that is where the similarity to the typified land settlements rests because, as far as the author has observed, the areas for resettlement are usually single villages, or settlers move into existing villages to share the available land and regular services.

The package of services presented to the potential repatriates of the current MLSW/UNHCR resettlement programme could be said to fall into the “semi-integrated” category. The repatriates receive from the GOL and UNHCR a cash grant, cleared land, housing materials, an 18 month rice subsidy, schools, access roads, periodic medical examinations, a domestic water supply and latrines, and irrigation if it is possible (Table 1). After 18 to 24 months the UNHCR ceases its involvement with social and economic welfare of the repatriates whereupon they are fully integrated into the administration of the local government. This programme has proved to be successful, although verification of this statement will be necessary once the findings of the current evaluation, being undertaken by an outside consultant, have been assessed.

The third category of fully integrated settlements involving a highly centralised settlement administration with the full spectrum of infrastructure and extension services, such as the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) settlements in Malaysia, does not exist in the Lao PDR. The FELDA scheme, is widely regarded as the most, perhaps only, successful attempt at resettlement (Thapa and Weber, 1988, and Sutton, 1995, among others). The basis of the FELDA success appears to lie in the government’s thorough planning backed by a generous budget. Well developed packages of support services have been offered to the settlers and the allocated land was suitable for extensive oil palm and rubber plantations which have made the settlers transition a commercial success. (Oberai, 1988, Thapa and Weber, 1988, and Sutton, 1995). This model may not be reapplicable in the Lao PDR because the financial resources are not available and because it could lead to disparity between the settlers and the local community.

### Model # 2

Besides viewing land settlements in this static one dimensional format, Thapa and Weber have proposed a two model classification. The first is the conventional settlement development based on physical area, and the second is the regional rural development view (Thapa and Weber, 1988). The first is the most common model found in Asia and is confined to the land settlement which is seen as an exclusively independent unit. This model, Thapa and Weber note, neglects interaction with the outside economy upon which the settlement will have to rely once support facilities are withdrawn.

The second regional rural development model explicitly considers the land settlement as an integral part of the surrounding region. Thus expected development inputs are not confined to the settlement alone but accrue to the region as well. This also suggests that the settlement itself should not be isolated from regional planning and services. This model has been identified in the Mahweli area of Sri Lanka where new settlements have been incorporated into multi-purpose river valley projects. In other areas, the regional model has been adopted in theory, but not implemented in practice. But it is suggested here that the resettlement activities of the GOL for the reduction of shifting cultivation could fall within this second analytical framework because they are part and parcel of national aims and plans for socioeconomic development and integration.

### **Stages of development:**

Resettlement is also an adaptation to new circumstances which will pose varying degrees of difficulty for the settlers. New settlements do not stop maturing once the physical process of moving has been completed there being recognisable stages that the settlers must pass through before the settlement can be regarded as complete. (Scudder 1985, Chambers 198 and others) have identified various stages that the people and the whole settlement must pass through to reach security of livelihood and administrative acceptance. Obviously, how this comes about will depend on the circumstances of each country or region. However, Scudder's "4-Stage Dynamic Model of the Resettlement Process", frequently quoted, expresses this maturation quite succinctly (Table 2).

Table 2

Scudder's "4-Stage Dynamic Model of the Resettlement Process"

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Stage 1-*Planning, initial infrastructural development and settler recruitment.*

Stage 2-*Transition Stage.*

Settlers are risk adverse.  
Should favour continuity over change.

Stage 3-*Economic and social development.*

Settlers now prepared to take risks and to invest

Stage 4-*Handing over and incorporation.*

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Source: Scudder (1985) in Mathur, 1995.

Although somewhat academic in its presentation, the relevance of this phasing system is well adapted and illustrated in the section of this report as presented by UNHCR. Institutionally, it provides a useful guide to the challenges that will face managers and administrators, yet at the same time, it is a good tool for personal reflection. Most of us have undergone some movement or change in our lives to which we must adapt, and these stages are not unlike those listed above, although we may describe them in less formal terms. Looking at them in a more personal way may provide a better understanding of the changes with which new settlers must cope.

### **Judging the success or failure of a resettlement programme**

Defining what is success or failure of a settlement can be as much subjective as boldly scientific. The major objective of any land settlement is to ensure that the settlers can establish a household and a livelihood to support it, and to improve the overall quality of life (Thapa and Weber, 1988). This cannot be achieved with technical inputs alone. People, being what we are, often sabotage the success of technical assistance when social dynamics function badly. This in itself does not tell us much other than if a settlement is functioning well economically it probably reflects the fact that the social interactions between the new and old communities, the settlement administrators and other actors are adequate. On the other hand, poor economic performance may be as much a function of social disorientation as inadequate technical and financial support.

The main factors affecting the success or failure of land settlement programmes boil down to poor and hurried planning. Among the aspects of planning that have the most affect are:

- **site selection**, recognising the limited availability of suitable land in the Lao PDR, and that the land is not homogeneous in quality.
- **selection of settlers**, their expectations, who they are, where they are from and where they are going
- **livelihood opportunities** in the new area, important in Lao PDR since this is one of the weakest points of resettlement
- **management and administration of programmes**, and the institutional arrangements which are not clear in the Lao PDR

### Site selection

Resettlement evaluations from many countries report similar general findings regarding these factors of planning. Unsuitable sites, for example, may include those that have very poor soil quality, preempting any possibility for farmers to harvest a crop in the first year, and hindering any advancement in future years from agriculture. One of the biggest handicaps to establishing viable agricultural systems in the the Ubonrat Dam Land Settlement in northeast Thailand was the low nutrient quality of the sandy soils offered to the resettlers (USAID, 1979). This problem continues to pervade all extension attempts to improve agricultural output at in the Ubonrat Land Settlement, even today.

### Settler expectations

Selecting settlers is an even more complex task since selection criteria will depend on the objectives of the resettlement and the target group. If the target group are not fully informed of the programme, its benefits as well as its drawbacks, then settlers will come in with inflated expectations. Farmers, for example, may believe that they will become rich after their move, especially if it is one funded by an international organisation. Self motivated settlers have a greater advantage than assisted settlers because their expectations a more realistic.

Settlers of varied social groupings can also spur inter group tensions. Experience has shown that groups sharing similar language and culture, or come from the same villages have better social cohesion upon resettlement (Oberai, 1988; Evans, 1992). This emphasises the care that must be taken in choosing settlers when one of the main aims of a government programme is national cultural integration.

### Livelihood opportunities

Diversity of livelihood opportunities is a necessary prerequisite for resettlers. If agriculture opportunities are tenuous, either due to the environment or to the prevailing market economy for goods, there must be room for off farm employment. Off farm income compensates for the factors that would otherwise leave settlers poor and inefficient in improving their lives (Thapa and Weber, 1988). At the Ubonrat Land Settlement in Thailand, off farm income formed the basis of the economy in many villages. Men took seasonal work either in local factories or in the fishing industry in the south. Others left for Saudi Arabia or Libya on contracts lasting many years. Although this brought instant wealth to individual households, women without their husbands constituted the major proportion of many new villages, their families surviving on sporadic remunerations from abroad.

In many transmigration schemes in Indonesia efficient use of land was impossible due to soil acidity, a labour shortage and the the lack of good support services. This prompted new settlers to migrate again, either temporarily or permanently because of the lack of off farm work in the nearby villages (Thapa and Weber, 1988).

## **Administrative and management arrangements**

Resettlement, either on formalised land settlements or in scattered groups, normally functions under the administration of a government body responsible for this task. Successful settlement management is based on this agency's ability to wean the programme away from its support and integrate it into the local administration. This requires cooperation between settlement authorities, the local administration and other government departments. What tends to occur, however, is that the land settlement becomes an autonomous body of its own wherein the settlers become inured to the policies of the land settlement and distanced from the services offered by the conventional local administration. The land settlement authorities become a go-between for the settlers and local government, making it more difficult for the bureaucratic hand-over to take place.

Complex problems arise in administration when more than one agency is involved in land settlement programming. In Thailand there have been thirteen separate government agencies administering different types of land settlements (USAID, 1979; Thapa and Weber, 1988). The largest of these agencies is the Land Settlements Division of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW), now within the newly formed Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. It is responsible for 56 land settlements covering over 1 million hectares of land in 38 provinces (USAID, 1979). The DPW is a line agency, but other agencies such as the autonomous Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) are also involved in resettlement, especially for hydropower projects. What this multi-agency responsibility leads to is duplication in policy, squandering of funds and ultimately disparities between the conditions of the resettlers.

## **Planning resettlement for the Lao PDR**

There are four categories of core information needed for planning and implementing land settlement programmes:

- 1 the geopolitical nature of the country;
- 2 the institutional possibilities;
- 3 the socioeconomic context of the people targeted for resettlement; and,
- 4 the stated aims of the programmes.

Reports one and two have addressed these points to some extent. This section will attempt to fill in the gaps by giving a broad overview of the geographical setting, using the experiences of the MLSW/UNHCR settlement programme.

### **- 1. Geopolitics**

Knowing the Lao setting is important because the literature on resettlement tends to confine itself to performance evaluations of "land" settlement schemes after they have been implemented for many years. These evaluations focus on the inputs to and dynamics of land settlements, and what went right or wrong. Although research work on resettlement contributes very positively to understanding the potential pitfalls related to land settlement policy and its implementation, it does little to explain why or how it came about in the first place. Nor does it explain why it continues to be applied in so many countries despite its dubious success record in achieving its stated aims (Thapa and Weber, 1988, and Oberai, 1988).

This section does not aim to bore the reader with yet another physical profile of the country, so the data has been laid out factually in **Box 1** to serve as a reference rather than general discussion reading. The information in **Box 1** is static in its presentation, but it provides the backdrop onto which resettlement issues can be painted and understood. Planners must be cognizant with these factors before any meaningful discussion of resettlement is undertaken, especially on a comparative basis.

### **Making sense of geopolitical information**

The conditions in the Lao PDR are responsible for the unique profile for resettlement that has taken place over the last 30 years, or so, and certain trends have emerged:

**- resettlement is closely connected to the physical environment**

The land area in the Lao PDR possessing arable potential is limited to the flood plain areas of the Mekong river and its tributaries which have been modified by the paddy based agro-ecosystems of the lowland Lao. In face of the need for higher food production paddy land is desired by many groups of people whose agro-practices may not traditionally depend upon it. This is because paddy systems are more efficient food producers than upland systems, being both less labour intensive and more productive per hectare. The most desirable settlement areas have paddy land and are close to main roads, or navigable rivers, where the full economic potential can be easily realised. The valley areas that have not been exploited are usually in remote areas without road or river access to markets in bigger towns and villages, but building roads to service remote areas, passing through difficult terrain is very uneconomical.

**- resettlement is connected to traditional lifestyles that have been continuously modified to fit the physical environment.<sup>163</sup>**

The agro-ecosystems of the highland areas of the Lao PDR are simple, low input, but generally well adapted to the ecological conditions that dictate production potential. Stresses upon these systems to produce more, it is suggested, is creating an imbalance in the ecosystems manifest in land degradation and reduced annual yields. This proposal is not conclusive, and is certainly not true for every area. But is probably safe to say that people now need more (not just food) than they can produce, or buy, within the narrow confines of the agro-ecosystem available to them. To expect people to remain imprisoned within the confines of the existing system is unrealistic. The potentially more productive agro-ecosystems in the lowland areas offer some scope for increased production, especially with inputs such as irrigation and higher yielding varieties. These areas will all come under cultivation as the costs (material or otherwise) of exploiting new lands fall below the expected benefits. But the present political and environmental climates stress the need to accelerate this process in the lowlands to protect the upland areas from overuse and physical degradation. This requires rapid expansion of new land, and a similar rapid adjustment by the upland farmers in agricultural technique. The question remains, therefore, whether upland shifting cultivators can adapt their agricultural skills quickly enough to reap the benefits from lowland agricultural practices, or be able to exploit the other economic opportunities that lowland areas might offer.

**- the economic status combined with the institutional arrangements of the country will dictate the level of resettlement support services**

National led programmes in the Lao PDR cannot hope to achieve luxury class resettlement. People who volunteer or who are pressured to move under government schemes cannot expect the broad range of services that can be provided by donor supported programmes. The resettlement areas visited during this report reflected succinctly that the government moves people with a plan for a package of services that it cannot provide. In one case, the the budget submission for resettlement from Xiang Khouang province for 1995 to 2000 shows that the contingent necessities for the resettlers have been well understood and properly budgeted. An unofficial review of this submission by UNHCR noted that the budget had quite realistically projected a five year rice quota for the resettlers. Although UNHCR only gives an 18 month rice subsidy, it willingly acknowledged that from its experience five years is the expected period of time that it takes for resettlers to become self sufficient in rice production or acquisition. But it is unlikely that the Xiang Khouang budget will ever be fully financed, but the programme will continue anyway.

<sup>163</sup> The observation is based on Norgaard's coevolutionary perspective (Norgaard, 1984) which provides a link between the socioeconomic and ecological worlds. The coevolutionary processes that exist between a sociosystem and an ecosystem lead to a mutually beneficial organisation. Agricultural development can be seen as a coevolutionary process whereby the type of agriculture is a response to the ecological environment. As social demands change an equal and opposite adjustment in the ecological environment has to take place, and vice versa; as one changes, the other gradually shifts in unison. This can be exemplified by the paddy ecosystems of Asia and the wheat belt systems of the American mid-west which are ostensibly man made systems that sensitively used the relationship between socioeconomic demands and ecological processes. The ecological and economic processes in these systems are not bound to each other, rather they complement each other, and tends to be of benefit to man.

However, as man pushes and ecosystem in directions that meet his own needs, he intervenes in some of the nutrient cycles and disturbs some of the equilibrating mechanisms that evolved previously (Norgaard, 1984, p529). Environmental externalities occur when the equilibrium between social and ecological systems is imbalanced.

**- in general there has been no differentiation between the terms displacement, resettlement, relocation, and migration as they regarded as synonymous with one another.**

No special status or category has been awarded to those who have to move home, unlike refugees, for example. Historical migration patterns are complex and have not always been 'voluntary' in the contemporary interpretation of the word. The logistical responsibility for movement has usually fallen upon the migrants; dismantling old homes, transporting belongings, rebuilding new homes and clearing new land are some of the major tasks undertaken without formal assistance. Recently, the strive towards more structured rural development has led to the formulation of resettlement plans by the government, but these plans, as has been documented already, can only be implemented as far as the fiscal and human resources allow. Rural development is therefore still dependent on the ability of the people to provide the major inputs to resettlement, relying on their resilience and ability to adapt to new situations within their capacity.

**- resettlement and migration is not a static process**

Chambers (1983) notes that what every person resettling to a new environment wants more than anything is a decent livelihood securely under their control. If this cannot be achieved then the only alternative is to move again. Where truly self motivated resettlement (better termed migration) has taken place in the Lao PDR it is successful, but not as a static process. As new villages emerge they are still susceptible to the political and physical processes developing around them and if a suitable livelihood system cannot be obtained, villages, or groups of households, will move again. Empirical evidence tracing the history of villages and individual households reveals the tendencies that exist. Each family will have a particular story to tell and distinctive reason for moving, but definite patterns, linked to the prevailing historical conditions, emerge making sense of the complex ethnographic structures of each area.

**- 2. Management and administration**

The Lao PDR needs to institutionalise and tighten its strategies for the mass movement of people if it is to avoid the mistakes made by other Asian nations in their experiments in economic progression. Given the present low level of socioeconomic development the Lao PDR cannot afford to destabilise the traditional livelihood patterns at the expense of progress in one or two sectors of the economy. Because of the international focus on resettlement there has been rethinking of the issue and, parallel to this, the government has been learning and acting on its own experiences which are, after all, the most important ones.

The first report in this series explained that there is no one Lao government authority entrusted with sole responsibility for resettlement affairs. There are many government agencies involved in resettlement and, indeed, many foreign aid agencies active in post resettlement development activities. Conventional attitudes require that resettlement be carried out within a well defined management and administrative structure. So who can the Lao PDR propose to lead this process?

The main contenders for the position are the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW). The MAF has the control over land and forests, and the corresponding laws and regulations for land use and natural resource allocation. It also possesses the key technical support for long term income generation and livelihood planning. The MLSW, however, has responsibility for the returning refugee programme which makes it the foremost agency for land settlement planning and logistics in the country. From one point of view the MAF would be the best candidate to administer resettlement since it has knowledge about land and has the human resources to plan its use. The MLSW, although regarded as holding an emergency role dealing with people in crisis, understands social logistics and how to engender the assistance of technical departments (such as the MAF) and channel financial assistance as inputs to the resettlement process. But there are other stakeholders, including the Rural Development Committee (RDC) which has an important role to play. Issues, such as security, resettlement and welfare, do not lie with one line ministry alone, so the RDC has been given the responsibility of coordinating such issues between departments, especially at the Provincial and District levels (Inthawong, DOF. Interview, November, 1996).

It is recognised in the government that there should be a general plan for and national guidelines on resettlement and that these should be based on the practical issue of the land's carrying capacity. The first steps are to set up systems for:

- Planning, execution and long term monitoring and backstopping
- Information and feedback to policy from District and Provincial levels to institutionalise information on resettlement. (Intathwong, DOF. Interview, November, 1996)

The discussion at this point remains open. There is no point in criticising the lack of formal direction management and administration of resettlement since the whole process is new and undergoing an evolution of its own. Forcing institutionalisation of resettlement organisation may only further confuse the situation. At present, the type of organisation and management systems for all resettlement lies with the implementing agent, and the quality of these schemes is dependent on the level of commitment or interest of the funder.

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## BOX 1

### *Essential geopolitical facts about the Lao PDR*

**Terrain:** 80 per cent of the total area of Laos (236,800 km/sq.) is mountainous and only 8,778 square kilometres, or three to four per cent of the country is potentially arable (suitable for continuous cropping, not swidden). The highlands are dissected and, apart from a small area in the northeast, the river systems drain into the Mekong. The topography is influenced by the Mekong watershed, and though bio-physically diverse the terrain can be categorised into:

- the lowland flood plains of the Mekong river and its tributaries;
- the rolling hills and mid-level mountain slopes;
- high montane plateaus the most notable being the Plain of Jars of Xiang Khouang province in the north, the Nakai Plateau of Khammouane province in central Laos, and Boloven Plateau covering areas of Champassak, Sekong, Saravane and Attapeu provinces in the south.
- the highland and peak mountain areas: the highest mountain in the Lao PDR, Phu Bia, is 2818 metres.

**Climate:** The climate corresponds to a tropical monsoon pattern with distinct wet and dry seasons and internal temperature variables based on elevation. Average annual temperatures range from around 20 degrees C in the mountainous area to 25-27 degrees C in the plains. Cold season temperatures on the plateaus and in the mountain areas may drop to 0 degrees C in the cool season (November to February) and, in the hot season (mid-March to May), may rise to 40 degrees in the plains. The monsoon brings high rainfall and humidity from May to mid-October, 70 per cent of the rainfall occurs during this time. Annual rainfall figures vary from 3,500 mm to 1,500 mm depending on exposure to the south west monsoon.

**Soils:** Soils in the high plateaus and mountainous northern, central and southern areas tend to be heavily leached and acidic with a low water retention capacity and low fertility. The Bolovens plateau, however, possess deep, well structured, less acidic soils with relatively good water retention and drainage capacity. Soils of the river plains and levees along the Mekong river and its tributaries are characterised by alluvial soils which are acidic, shallow with low organic matter content and low fertility. The younger alluvial soils are more fertile than the older terrace soils but are prone to wet season flooding.

**Natural Vegetation:** The dominant natural vegetation of the Lao PDR is forest. The most recent official estimation of national forest cover is about 11 million hectares, or 47 per cent of the land area. For 1996, this is probably an overestimation of actual forest cover. Furthermore, knowledge about the state of the forest cover is poor. Very little virgin forest exists, except in the most remote and inaccessible areas of the country. Of the forest remaining, about 50 per cent is classified as mixed deciduous, 30 per cent is evergreen, 15 per cent is deciduous and 5 per cent of other types, mostly pine.

**Agricultural diversity:** Farming systems are simple and secondary inputs to agriculture, such as irrigation, fertilisers and mechanical equipment, are not widely used. Of the 709,360 hectares of land actually cultivated only 2.1 percent is irrigated by conventional means. The Lao PDR does not yet have a classification of agricultural systems. A preliminary classification has been made to facilitate agricultural research which distinguishes four areas conforming to the topographic areas described above.

1. The first agro-ecosystem is based on paddy rice production in the alluvial plains of the lowland areas along the Mekong River valley and its tributaries. It is in these areas that most irrigation facilities are available to provide dry season irrigation. Buffalo is the main form of draught power, with some mechanical power used especially in the Vientiane plain. Fish provide the main protein source, and livestock represent a form of wealth as well as a food. Vegetables, and other field and tree crops are grown for home consumption and for sale. A large proportion of the nation's food supply comes from the lowlands, which are also the most densely populated areas.

2. Most of the nation's rotational shifting agriculture is practised in the rolling hills and mid-level mountain slopes (or lower terraces). Upland rice and maize are the main crops, and livestock raising is also important. The people's subsistence livelihoods are supplemented by animal and plant products found in the forests. Bunded paddy is scarce and limited to small valleys and pockets of flat land in the between the hills. Traditional irrigation systems are to be found in some places, tapping water from mountain streams. Fish and wild animals constitute the main sources of protein.

3. The high plateaus have good natural pasture grasses upon which farmers traditionally graze livestock, especially cattle, for sale. Some areas have limited agricultural potential since the soils tend to be acidic. The Bolovens plateau, which has better soil quality, produces some of the country's major cash crops such as coffee, cotton, fruit, vegetables and potatoes.

4. The highland peak and mountain areas (or upper terraces) is where pioneering shifting agriculture is mostly practised. The main crops produced are upland rice, maize, legumes, tubers, fruit trees, and, in some areas, opium. Livestock are raised, and home vegetable gardens are important. The people in these areas are almost exclusively subsistence agriculturalists.

**Population growth and densities:** The national annual population growth figure estimated from the 1995 census is 2.6 per cent. Regional variation shows that the highest growth rate for the country, 3.4 per cent, is in Vientiane Municipality. Houaphan and Luang Nam Tha provinces in the north (1.6 and 1.7 respectively) have the lowest recorded figures for the country.

The 11,500 rural villages in both the lowland and highland areas of the Lao PDR represent about 85 per cent of the 4.5 million population. These villages depend primarily upon the land, a natural water supply, the climate and the forests to perpetuate their livelihoods. Although the officially recorded population density is low, 19 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in rural areas, and 128 in the Vientiane Plain, it does not adequately reflect the pressure upon lowland arable land. This is largely because 80 per cent of the total area of Laos (236,800 km<sup>2</sup>) is mountainous and only 8,778 square kilometres, or 3.8 per cent of the country is potentially arable (suitable for continuous cropping, not swidden). The current trend towards extending lowland cultivation to reduce highland degradation will require full use of the lowland arable resources to support the migrants who are already moving down to the plains.

**Ethnic Diversity:** Four ethnolinguistic families are represented in the Lao PDR, and at least 236 ethnic groups have been recorded. The ethnic Lao proper, the sociopolitical dominant group, comprise perhaps 35 per cent of the total population, and are distributed in the lowlands primarily along the Mekong and along the Nam Ou. Other lowland areas are inhabited by ethnic groups related to Lao who speak a variety of Tai-kadai languages. Members of the Austroasiatic family, considered to be the oldest inhabitants, are found throughout the country in both upland and lowland environments. Tibeto-Burman speakers arrived recently from the northwest, while the Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) peoples, likewise recent arrivals, came from the north and northeast. These latter two families are confined primarily to highland areas in the northern provinces.

**Political History:** Governed formerly by a royal family since the 14th century, for the past twenty years the Lao PDR has been effectively controlled by a socialist senior leadership that has made and handed down policy on behalf of the Party and State to the rest of the country. Though this new era has perpetuated internal peace, economic difficulties prompted the senior leaders to rapidly institute economic policy reforms that have been based on the unpredictability of social change. This reform might best be characterised as a continuation of Party rule, while emphasising the importance of rule by law and the need to develop the country.

Likewise, the preservation of a distinct national and cultural identity, and the integration of ethnic minorities in the face of powerful and numerically dominant adjacent countries, especially Thailand, Vietnam and China, has become a national priority.

At the present time the bureaucratic mechanisms which are in place are not adequate to undertake the legislative changes that are necessary for providing an adequate legal infrastructure to modernise the economy. The current legal framework is based largely upon a series of prime ministerial decrees aimed at legitimising development efforts and government policies. These are interim measures in place pending the ratification of laws by the National Assembly, a legislative body that was set up after the adoption of the First Constitution of the Lao PDR in 1991.

**Poverty:** The Lao PDR lies 133rd on UNDP's 1994 Human Development Index (HDI). The per capita income is estimated at US\$300, a figure that does not reflect regional disparities but does rank the country among the world's least developed nations. Agriculture and forestry dominate the economy and account for nearly 60 per cent of the GDP. Therefore, diversifying economic opportunity for the both the macro and local economies, especially in the short term, is a national priority.

Other poverty indicators include the availability of rice, household expenditure ratio for rice and access to market. There is a national rice deficit compensated with imports and donations. At the local level, many households are without rice for more than three months each year. Food expenditure accounts for an estimated 62 per cent of total household consumption, which is a very large proportion of total income compared to a national. This suggests both a very low money income and a failure to produce household consumption needs. It is estimated that 22 per cent of the population live in areas that are not accessible by truck, only 11 per cent of the population have electricity and only 7 per live in villages with a permanent market.

**Migration:** There are three marked stages, though general, in migration patterns since the 1960s, and the beginning of the revolutionary era. 1st Phase: In the liberated zones, before 1975, upland minority people who had assisted military activity were rewarded with land in the lowland areas, some of which had belonged to the ousted government supporters. Paddy production was promoted on a collectivised basis to boost food supplies for the revolutionary effort. 2nd Phase: From 1975 to 77, after revolutionary victory, people, mostly of upland ethnic minorities, were moved out of zones that posed security risks for the new government. These movements were forced, and at times brutal, reflecting the government's need to secure these areas as quickly as possible. 3rd Phase: 1977-85, after the austere period, the earlier ousted lowlanders started to trickle back to claim their old lands, which was regarded in some ways as beneficial since these were the people most competent in paddy rice cultivation. They could, therefore, contribute much to the agricultural rehabilitation and economic stability in these areas. 4th Phase: The period 1985-96 saw the emergence of a new political attitude and new economic aims. Villagers, too, expressed their need to move to more dynamic areas, close to roads and public services and to enjoy the more modern, lowland attitudes. The result of these movements, is a melange of people living together in villages, but having originated from many different areas. Some families have moved several times in the last 30 years, and will move again if the opportunity is advantageous.

**Resettlement:** Current rural development efforts in the Lao PDR encourage the concentration of villages near roads and establishing paddy or other irrigated agricultural practices. These are motivated by government concerns to protect forest resources and to provide education, health care, social services and economic opportunities to all of its citizens. In the past, resettlement has been a normal response to physical or political pressures that make life impossible in one particular area. Waves of migration have tended to follow the prevailing political conditions, or food shortage crisis, official backup being in the form of non-bureaucratic interference rather than as tangible assistance.

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources, but particularly Phannourath and Kanyavong, MOAF, 1994, and The National Forestry Action Plan, MOAF, 1990. Dr James R Chamberlain contributed the section on ethnic diversity.

### - 3. The socioeconomic context of the people targeted for resettlement

The World Bank (WB) has laid guidelines for involuntary resettlement!. Although these guidelines are specifically designed for those people displaced from infrastructure projects, they also hold lessons for all people undergoing change due to relocation or resettlement. The guidelines invoke the necessity for a thorough understanding of the socioeconomic and cultural context of the settlers in order to reduce the trauma of moving. This poses a huge task for land settlement planner firstly because of the great diversity in ethnic backgrounds in the Lao PDR and, secondly, because most of the people are impoverished before they move. There are two main ways to invoke these guidelines: intense studies can be undertaken to produce designer plans that will fit the specific needs of each moving group; or blanket strategies can be undertaken, accepting unconditionally that though there is tremendous ethnic diversity, rural economic circumstances are homogeneously poor.

The main thrust of the WB's guidelines is the replacement of assets and replenishment of former livelihoods of people who have been moved (World Bank, 1994). Comments on this strategy by UNHCR staff (Vientiane Branch Office) suggest that these aims in the Lao PDR are unrealistic and not necessarily what is wanted. Why? Because movement from one locality to another means that replication of former livelihood patterns may be impossible to achieve in light of the geopolitical conditions already presented in this report. The UNHCR suggested that anyone dealing with resettlement, for whatever reason, should refer back to the aims of the NEM for guidance. The NEM promotes sedentary livelihoods based on the commodity production, with emphasis on diversifying crop production, especially into the areas of agro-forestry and livestock raising.

UNHCR notes that, undoubtedly, there are large and medium sized areas of land throughout the country that are suitable for agriculture, especially lowland paddy. These areas could be surveyed and used for resettlement, but these areas are remote. To make remote areas commercially viable, they need roads and UNHCR stated that they had refused to exploit many such places for refugee resettlement because they did not have the vast budget needed to build the access roads. Thus they ask, is the international community ready to pay the price to exploit these remote areas, knowing that logging activity and, possibly, accelerated environmental degradation will follow? On the whole, no. Furthermore, UNHCR noted the government's skepticism about opening large tracts of land in unexplored areas given the national security implications.

The concern of UNHCR is that resettlement planning, and project based development planning on the whole, takes the view that is too short term. UNHCR suggested that the minimum view is 35 to 50 years, asking where will the country be at that time? Will the Lao PDR need the wilderness areas to support populations at that time? If not, then leave these areas alone and concentrate on the areas that the government have already identified in their development plans as being viable areas for maximum exploitation, namely the focal zones.

### - 4. The stated aims of the resettlement programmes.

Report I identified eight major reasons for resettlement in the Lao PDR, as reproduced below. If the perceived aims for each type of resettlement are not clear, then there will be confusion and non collaboration between the resettlers, project planners or donors, and the government. Each case will require finding land for resettlers, and money to finance the move and the ensuing technical support services. This represents a considerable stress on national resources, thus it is imperative that alternatives to resettlement should be a major part of any project plan, and avoided if possible. If resettlement is imperative, one way to reduce the impact of resettlement and increase its benefits is to identify complementary combinations between projects; rather than standing alone as single resettlement situations, project planners could try to unite them with national development plans.

This links resettlement, especially for the rural areas, with the government's aims for socioeconomic development. For example, it is becoming more and more evident that hydro development (as one of the biggest potential causes of involuntary resettlement) and progress in the rural areas must be tied to the

government plans for focal zone development, however odious this may appear to the international funding agencies. The government has long term plans that should not be ignored just because of their simplistic presentation. Time and time again, the consultant has found that there is logic behind the Provincial development plans, unrefined as they are, which is consistent with the probable changes that the country will undergo in the next 50 years.

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### Reasons for resettlement

There are eight broad reasons for relocation and resettlement:

- 1 Resettlement to establish permanent agriculture, reduce shifting cultivation and slash and burn practices, or opium growing in the highlands; currently activated by the LCRD, MAF, CPC, the Provincial and District authorities, and international assistance.
  - 2 Relocation and resettlement for national security and political stability; currently implemented by the LCRD, MAF and the Provincial and District authorities, among others.
  - 3 Internal resettlement for infrastructure development, such as reservoirs, roads and urban improvement. GOL, international assistance and commercial investment companies, in cooperation with the Provincial and District authorities.
  - 4 Voluntary and spontaneous resettlement, usually for economic reasons, sometimes receiving support from District authorities, international aid and NGOs. (Note: In some cases people find themselves compelled move to in response to the restrictive regulations upon opening up new lands for shifting cultivation in the highland areas).
  - 5 Watershed management for forest and water resource protection led by the MAF, in coordination with international aid, NGOs, and Provincial and District authorities.
  - 6 Permanent or temporary resettlement for victims of natural disasters, such as drought or flood: receiving assistance from the GOL, international assistance, NGO and Provincial and District authorities.
  - 7 Settlement of Lao repatriates from abroad, under the MLSW/UNHCR programme, supported by NGOs, the European Union and International Organisation for Migration.
  - 8 Urban resettlement for urban renewal, supported by the GOL, ADB, and other foreign assistance sources.
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### The UNHCR Group Settlement Programme

As a wrap up to the wide general discussions above, the UNHCR group resettlement programme will provide a concrete example of resettlement planning that has been endorsed and implemented by the MLSW. This is a practical example of what the planner faces in achieving successful resettlement in the Lao PDR.

The general objectives of the group settlement programme, indeed the whole of the repatriation programme are to:

- assure the safe and voluntary repatriation of refugees from asylum countries
- secure the welfare of the target group directly
- contribute to national welfare and to secure national stability and;
- create equitable social and economic conditions that preempt exodus (UNHCR, Rio 1992).

However, the immediate objectives in the Lao PDR are to ensure:

- the reintegration of former Lao refugees back into Lao society as quickly as possible
- long term food security
- immediate assistance to achieve the above by providing land security and basic social services.

The programme does not see itself as a development project but rather as a systematic tool to hasten the return of Lao political refugees from their countries of asylum. Whereas land settlement schemes in other

Asian countries have used resettlement as a direct intervention tool to achieve national goals such as poverty eradication and population redistribution, the group settlement programme is different. It is designed to bring refugees home, help secure their livelihoods and avert the possibility of a future exodus by indirectly contributing to national welfare. As such, it is not an intervention tool to promote national development goals, but part of the effort by the United Nations and its donors to find “durable solutions” to refugee problems. The most durable, and desirable, solution is to bring refugees back to their country of origin in safety.

### Finding Sites for Rural Settlements <sup>164</sup>

Since 1986, UNHCR have built 27 settlements for 10,169 repatriates. The largest site, Pha Tao in Vang Vieng District, has received 1,110 people, and the smallest, Na Sue in Baek District, Xiang Khouang province, has settled 92 people, both small by international standards. But the shortage of arable land in the Lao PDR constrains identifying suitable sites for sustainable lowland rural settlement, not just for the repatriates, but also for those relocating internally. Upland farmers who remain in the hills live within a restricted area by cultivating no more than three rotational plots, and resource limitations are forcing lowland farmers to increase production by exploiting the foothills using swidden practices. UNHCR has to squeeze in its new settlements somewhere between the two.

### Operational Procedures for Rural Settlements

The process by which rural settlements are prepared and occupied takes place in five phases, these are: 1) site proposal by local and central authorities; 2) preliminary assessment by Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW)/UNHCR technical teams; 3) detailed investigation and planning for basic infrastructure; 4) recruitment, preparation and installation of repatriates, and; 5) monitoring and provision of basic assistance.

The systems and logistics to implement these have, over the past two years, been tested, refined and become well established. Standardised methods for site assessment, property rights surveys, and development of infrastructures necessary for the installation of repatriates (temporary shelter, domestic water supply, sanitation and schools) have provided the framework for a rural settlements programme which can respond to the needs of voluntary applicants within a relatively short period of time, although the optimal time required for planning and establishing a new rural settlement is between six months to one year. The MLSW/UNHCR programme has the ability, as shown by several settlements in 1992 and 1993, to prepare and have sites occupied within four months after their identification.

Site proposal by local and central authorities takes place throughout the year and in a variety of ways. Requests by central to Provincial government for potential sites sometimes produce lists which can be investigated by MLSW and UNHCR. However, they usually require further verification and authorisation from the proper District and Provincial authorities. Only after written confirmation that a site is available for development has been received from the District and province will technical staff be sent to make a preliminary investigation.

Preliminary investigations are made by the technical team and the MLSW/UNHCR programme officers, with support provided by Provincial and District officials from the Departments of Agriculture, Forestry, and Irrigation. A preliminary investigation entails the collection of secondary data (maps, and Provincial and District statistics) and a visual reconnaissance of the area.

To expedite site preparation and the economic integration of the repatriates, sites are usually selected for detailed investigation when they offer:

- **Relatively easy access** to local communication networks, or accessible to Provincial and District towns;
- **Access to reasonably flat arable land**, or land which offers potential for sedentary farming of rainfed wet rice;
- **Potential sources of domestic water** which can meet the needs of a population proportionate to the amount of land available, and;

<sup>164</sup> Source: Group Settlements: Site Selection and Preparation Document of the UNHCR Branch Office, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 1993.

- **Land for village development** which is not susceptible to flooding or other natural occurrences which would make habitation unsafe at certain times of the year.

Detailed investigation and planning for infrastructure takes place when, again, written verification of the site's availability is received from District and Provincial authorities, and if the site meets the requirements outlined above.

A detailed study of the proposed site begins with the collection and analysis of secondary data additional to that already cited in the preliminary investigation. This information is collected from the central government ministries, intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, and Provincial and District sources. Analysis and verification of this data provide a picture of the potentials for and the constraints to relocation within the province and District, and indicates priorities for development and donor assistance for each sector. An attempt is made to determine the Provincial and District administrative capacities to relocate a repatriate community and integrate it into their present scope of work.

Probably the most important aspect of the detailed investigation is the physical assessment of the site, and the present livelihood systems of the host community. With this information the assessment team can judge the impact of a new rural settlement on the local economy and the resources available to sustain the community through the transition stage and into the stage of potential development.

Planning for basic infrastructure and the installation of repatriates commences with the commissioning of a detailed demarcation and cadastral survey of the project area. The determination and marking of the exact boundaries of the project area, as identified by local officials and surrounding villages, is commissioned to technicians using a specific and standard terms of reference. A detailed survey of occupied land and the names of cultivators within the boundaries of the proposed site is reported in the cadastral survey. Provincial and District authorities accompany the survey team to villages in the surrounding zone of the site to discuss and explain the results of both the demarcation and cadastral survey.

All of the concerned parties are asked to help verify information about cultivators within the boundaries of the proposed site to determine, not only the amounts of occupied land, but the nature of the cultivator's tenure. Those who have reserved land with no plans for immediate development, and those who cultivate on a temporary or shifting basis, may be asked by local authorities to surrender their reserved area to the project. Those who cultivate on a permanent basis are normally given continuing rights. The local (Provincial and District) authorities and village leaders within the site's zone are asked to sign both the demarcation and cadastral maps, indicating their understanding of land rights within the project area.

The product of the demarcation and cadastral survey is a set of maps which define the site's boundaries, identify outstanding physical features, delimit occupied and cultivated areas within the project boundaries, and proposes both a village layout and agricultural land allocation system. These maps, along with the detailed investigation report, are provided to the camps in Thailand as promotional materials for the recruitment of repatriates to the proposed site. Only when a group has indicated their interest by submitting their voluntary applications, through UNHCR Bangkok, can serious expenditure on a site be undertaken.

Based on the information yielded from the detailed investigation, project officials will determine the carrying capacity of the site and prepare a settlement plan. This plan includes a description of the proposed livelihood system for repatriates, the anticipated amount of land needed by an average family of six to sustain this livelihood, and the infrastructures to be completed prior to and during the first year of occupation.

The recruitment, preparation and installation of repatriates is contingent on the information provided to the camps as a result of the detailed site investigation. It also requires the refugees' understanding of the nature of the project and policies of the Lao Government and its ability to arrange for movement to the settlement in time to allow repatriates to cultivate during their first rainy season in residence. This is perhaps the most time consuming step in the process in that UNHCR is dealing with a decision making process which, for the repatriates, is based on minimal information, peer pressure both for and against repatriation, and worries about an uncertain future. In many instances the UNHCR is proposing a settlement site which is not in the repatriates province of origin, near their kin or otherwise familiar to them.

It is important in this stage to think about the sociocultural characteristics of the population to be moved and how these will affect their response to a new environment. Decisions at this stage determine which groups will be repatriated to the sites offered by the Government of the Lao PDR. These decisions can be made less stressful by the provision of accurate information about the sites and the local surroundings, the types and provision of various assistance related inputs, and potential opportunities for the development of a stable livelihood. The successful launch of a new settlement project can be directly related to the types and accuracy of the information provided.

It is evident that potential repatriates are eager to receive this information from the Lao side rather than through intermediaries in the camps. The impact of predeparture refugee briefings in the camps by staff of the Lao Government Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and Foreign Affairs and UNHCR, Vientiane, clearly reduces anxiety during the recruitment stage and allows project officials to gather information about the applicants to ensure adequate preparations before they arrive in Laos.

Monitoring and provision of basic assistance begins with the movement of repatriates to Laos and their final destination under the supervision of the MLSW and UNHCR. Prior to their departure from the camps, agriculture and carpentry tools, and seeds are distributed, as well as a cash grant provided on the Thai side. Once in the Lao PDR, cash grants (Kip) are distributed, food is provided while in transit and rice assistance is disbursed. In the case of group settlements, a District, or sometimes Provincial, official from MLSW stays on the settlement site to see that the settling in process is smooth and that the repatriates become familiar with their new surroundings. A two to three day orientation about the Lao political and legal systems is provided by local authorities and arrangements are made for the processing of identification cards. Either resident or visiting medical personnel from the local District are sent to deal with special medical cases, and to evaluate the general health and welfare of the settlers. MLSW and UNHCR staff make frequent visits to the site to see that the distribution of assistance is timely and meets the immediate needs of the repatriates. They also determine the need to up-grade or expand any basic services, such as temporary shelter, domestic water supplies and sanitation facilities.

### **Relocation as a Process**

Those undertaking the management of the process should think of it as occurring in four stages. These stages can be labelled recruitment, transition, potential development and handing over or incorporation.

The recruitment stage deals with the provision of information and the making of decisions about where a given population should go and how the move should take place. It is important in this stage to think about the sociocultural characteristics of the population to be moved and how these will affect their response to a new environment. Decisions at this stage determine which groups will be repatriated to the sites offered by the Government of the Lao PDR. These decisions can be made less stressful by the provision of accurate information about the sites and the local surroundings, the types and provision of various assistance related inputs, and potential opportunities for the development of a stable livelihood. The length and severity of the transition stage can be directly related to the types and accuracy of the information provided.

It is quite evident that potential repatriates are eager to receive this information from the Lao side rather than through intermediaries in the camps. The impact of predeparture refugee briefings in the camps by staff of UNHCR Vientiane and the Lao Government Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and Foreign Affairs clearly reduces anxiety during the recruitment stage. For example, the group of repatriates who relocated to Hinboun District in Khammouane were briefed in detail about the site, its surrounding environment, assistance to be provided, and the need for community organisation prior to the move. The transition period for this group has been relatively short and with little stress.

The transition stage occurs when the repatriates become involved with the relocation process. Prior to this most of the decisions on the preparation of a given site have been made for them. The transition stage is emotionally demanding for the repatriates and for the implementing agencies trying to cope with the repatriates latent fears. The priority at this stage is to bring transition quickly to a close so as to pave the way for the next

stage, potential development. Rarely will the transition stage be shorter than two years and often, as seen with many of the repatriate group settlements established in the late 1980s, it will be much longer. All of the group settlements are currently in the transition stage, still receiving some form of external assistance and have yet to reach a stage of potential development as described below.

The stage of potential development is characterised by increased initiative, readiness to undertake risk and the emergence of a more dynamic community. Development is measured by rising standards of living for a significant portion of the repatriates. Although a majority are better off in their own eyes and in the eyes of an analyst, this stage is usually characterised by widening wealth differentials, a phenomenon exhibited when they lived in the camps.

It often happens in rural settlements that this stage never materialises. The settlement can fail and the people disperse through no fault of the people or the implementing agencies. In other cases the settlement continues, but the majority of the population do not improve their standard of living. They see no margin for risk and are unwilling to risk the little they have. This is also typical of the indigenous people who lack the social structure or resource base on which to depend in case of failure.

The handing over, or incorporation stage, too, may never be reached. This stage is defined by the occurrence of a number of events. A rural settlement community is a long-term success as an entity when the management of local production systems and the running of the local community are handed over to a second generation that identifies with the community. Where relocation and development has been carried out by special agencies with exceptional funds, staff and other resources, incorporation or integration will involve the phasing out of such agencies and the successful shouldering of their responsibilities the local government. Incorporation completes the process whereby the community is able to take its place within a larger territorial frame that includes host communities, Districts and Provincial towns as well as commercial networks and markets.

The recruitment stage is one of immense importance and paves the way for a smoother and sometimes shorter transition period. The stage of potential development can be more productive if transition is completed quickly and smoothly. As mentioned above, all of the repatriate rural settlements in the Lao PDR are currently in the transition stage and have been for varying lengths of time. It is important, therefore, to look at the indicators which might determine the end of this stage and the beginning of the potential development stage so as to gauge where the programme stands at this point in time.

### **Assessing the End of the Transition Stage**

Clearly the transition stage will not end for everyone at the same point. UNHCR has to therefore, look at a rough set of indicators which will help to assess the current situation and future of the rural settlements. One of the first indicators is whether or not the repatriates are supported by food assistance and welfare. In the case of rural settlements, the minimum length of time under such assistance will be 18 months and, in some extreme cases, 24 months depending on seasonal constraints and other variables which determine the ability of repatriates to cultivate and produce enough food for family consumption. Other indicators include the emergence of local leadership and their ability to push community interests with local hosts and government officials.

The long term viability of these new settlement villages will depend on the livelihood systems that the repatriates develop over time and the level of horizontal integration they achieve with the surrounding communities (Conway and Barbier, 1990). Although none of the new settlement sites has been established long enough for any conclusive trends to emerge, that only very few, less than 2 percent, of the repatriates had left their new settlement in 1995 is quite encouraging (UNHCR 1995). Indeed, the overriding trend is for families and friends from other parts of the country to move in with the repatriates and share the repatriates new land.

The creation of these semi-integrated land settlements poses a dilemma because the services provided to the repatriates under the UNHCR auspices are vastly superior to any government services provided for the

internal migrants. Although the repatriation programme has a clear mandate to ensure that local people benefit from the schools, hospitals, roads, water resources and other welfare advantages that it brings, there is still a wide gap between the privileges that the repatriates receive and the social welfare assistance that most rural Lao people have never received. However, the UNHCR maintains that the peace and stability within the country will be enhanced if the repatriates are supported in the process of assimilation back into Lao society (UNHCR, Rio de Janeiro, 1992). This is ostensibly a political aim, but one that overrides any suggestion of moral unfairness between the treatment of repatriates (even though they did flee the present government regime in the first place) and the local inhabitants.

The group settlement programme, although a small settlements programme both in international terms, may provide the concerned government agencies with at least some constructive administrative and technical skills in the equitable movement and resettlement of people.

## CONCLUSION

Land settlement models are one dimensional, considering land area as the prime point of planning. Or they are multidimensional, regarding the interaction of all activities in the area of the land settlement as crucial inputs to planning and the integration process of the settlers. The administration and support facilities for land settlements can be minimal or long term, ranging from semi-autonomous areas with a self-help element encouraging rapid absorption into local conditions, to highly centralised units, independent of local government.

The Lao PDR has developed one model, the semi-integrated type, which is manifest in the MLSW/UNHCR group settlement programme for returning refugees. These settlements are still in the early and transition stages of development. It is yet to be seen whether or not they will progress smoothly to the completely unassisted integrated stage. Government led programmes to reduce shifting cultivation and promote rural development are much more organic in nature. These projects fit loosely into the non-integrated model, relying heavily on the adaptive skills of those being moved rather than upon external inputs. However, both programmes forge links with the surrounding local and regional communities, neither of these programmes having been designed to operate autonomously.

Success or failure of rural settlements is dependent upon at least four major factors of planning: site selection; choice of settlers; potential for a wide range of livelihood opportunities, and; the structure and competence of management and administration. To define these factors accurately, rural settlement planning must start with a thorough understanding of the physical, political, institutional, and socioeconomic status of the country. The stated aims of any programme must incorporate these elements and, accordingly, adjust its objectives around them.

Lastly, three preconditions are necessary to build national strategy towards resettlement:

- Political will
- Institutional capacity
- Planning capacity

Funds, though necessary, do not have to be enormous, but without these three preconditions, a resettlement strategy will not gain the respect or the support from donors. The government of the Lao PDR does possess a national political and institutional framework, but few agencies know about it, or want to work within it. This can be seen in the government led implementation of programmes to reduce shifting cultivation and promote rural development, probably because government performance in these areas is inconsistent. This is largely due to the immature stage of development planning and internal institutional structuring that the country has reached, which is normal considering that the State is only 21 years old.

The country is trying to take a long term view of its national socioeconomic development, but planning is marred by the continual national and international changes that effect its short term goals. A step by step process is thus recommended to attain the full potential of the prerequisite functions of resettlement. These steps are:

- A clear strategy for each type of resettlement
- A clear institutional structure for resettlement management and administration, with lines of responsibility demarcated for each line ministry and technical department
- Qualifiable milestones and objectives for each programme
- Distinct and effective channels for investing international aid

### **Foreign Assistance for Resettlement**

It has been noticed during the course of this study that donors steer away from projects that consider resettlement, choosing to assist areas that have no resettlement programmes, or areas where the resettlement has already taken place. Resettlement has had bad press and possibly, in some cases, rightly so, but

## Conclusion

Provincial and District authorities are still promoting its role as part of social and economic development, with or without donor assistance. In that many rural families are actively applying to move from upland to lowland areas suggests that the programme is not without merit (Pannhasith, CPC. Interview 30/5/96). Ignoring its potential role in promoting social, economic and environmental aims because of the fear of more insidious undertones to its application may be short sighted, and detrimental to the people.

The government has announced its need for assistance with resettlement in many of the Provincial development plans. These plans, simple in structure are in line with the major short and long term aims of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) and the National Socioeconomic Development Plan until 2000. Planned activities are directed towards roads, irrigation schemes and social service infrastructures in the identified focal zones which are the potential reception areas for settlers who show their desire to desist practising shifting cultivation. But no one wants to finance these focal zone plans as they stand because they entail the word "resettlement". Instead, the international funders tend to ignore the simple requests in the plans preferring to chisel off the bits that fit in with the *raison d'être* of the agency without addressing the issue of resettlement directly. Yet there is no deficit of comment and verbal support for those people who are to be moved for dam projects. International opinion differentiates between the two cases, but it is perfectly feasible to channel aid to government efforts in rural development that entail resettlement.

-1. A distinction should be made between the resettlement of people from upland areas for the purpose of reducing shifting cultivation and improving the economic security of poor highland people, from the resettlement needs of major projects that are assisted by foreign investors. The first type is a Lao based programme that, for good or bad, is part of the Lao Government's socioeconomic aims for development. The second type of resettlement is very much involuntary, and should be financed by the companies involved. However, they both share one common factor which is that resettlement of any kind lacks regulation at the policy level. Therefore, planning, quality monitoring and follow-up is implemented on a case-by-case basis, with no legal framework to enforce good practice, or to punish those who conduct resettlement in an unsatisfactory fashion.

-2. Given the lack of guidelines and regulations donors must chose the types and methods of assistance carefully. If they wish to back the Lao Government's resettlement for highlanders then the factors controlling those situations should be assessed separately. This suggests a development (rural) role for donors. For major infrastructure, the aims are to encourage the developers and the Government to become more responsible for their actions. This suggests more of an advocacy role. .

-3. The nature of the Lao Government's programmes for resettlement is unorganised....which is not negative. The methods for each programme reflect the political will of the province, and the resources available. Even if finances are scarce, provinces still carry out their resettlement, because they feel they have to. Thus assistance packages for the resettlers vary considerably from province to province, and from district to district. Each case has its own problems and the people react accordingly, although they seem to have few choices. They can remain in the new villages, they can return to the highlands or, more commonly, they can remain in the new village and continue to cultivate their old fields!

-4. The government resettlement schemes have been implemented in a very "organic" or incrementalist way. This means that no one has enough information to make a watertight plan. Everyday, little changes must be made, according to the specific circumstance (the Lao are very good at this). If these changes are made swiftly, they have no time to grow into big problems. Big problems are much more difficult to deal with. Big plans always have big problems because they are too inflexible. The Lao resettlement programme is flawed, but manageably so. Foreign donors may evaluate such programmes as unstructured and messy, preferring to come up with one of the inflexible, time constrained, indicator ridden plans that take more time for reporting and monitoring than they do for the actual resettlement.

-5. UNDP, ADB, among other donor organisations, have been inadvertently supporting resettlement for years through rural development projects. This should be made explicit. Wherever rural development funds are directed, there is usually an effort on the part of the government to integrate this assistance into the resettlement programmes. So for donors to say that they will not support resettlement is redundant; they already are.

## **Recommendations:**

- Donors should try to take a more holistic view of current resettlement schemes aimed at the reduction of shifting cultivation and look at whether these programmes doing anything to reduce shifting cultivation? Are they providing the settlers with better lifestyles?
- Donors should not be scared of assisting the development activities for new villages. The government will carry out this programme anyway, with or without foreign help. Perhaps the foreign community has a responsibility to assist financially in order to improve the quality of services offered to the settlers. This could be directed through the Provincial and District authorities and distributed in such a way that it helps the existing communities as well as the new ones.
- Foreign donors should not meddle with the existing institutional structures, even if they appear weak. These are being worked out by the government itself. It is a laboured process for it, but has to be accomplished autonomously. This is new country and forcing the structures to evolve will only cause confusion.

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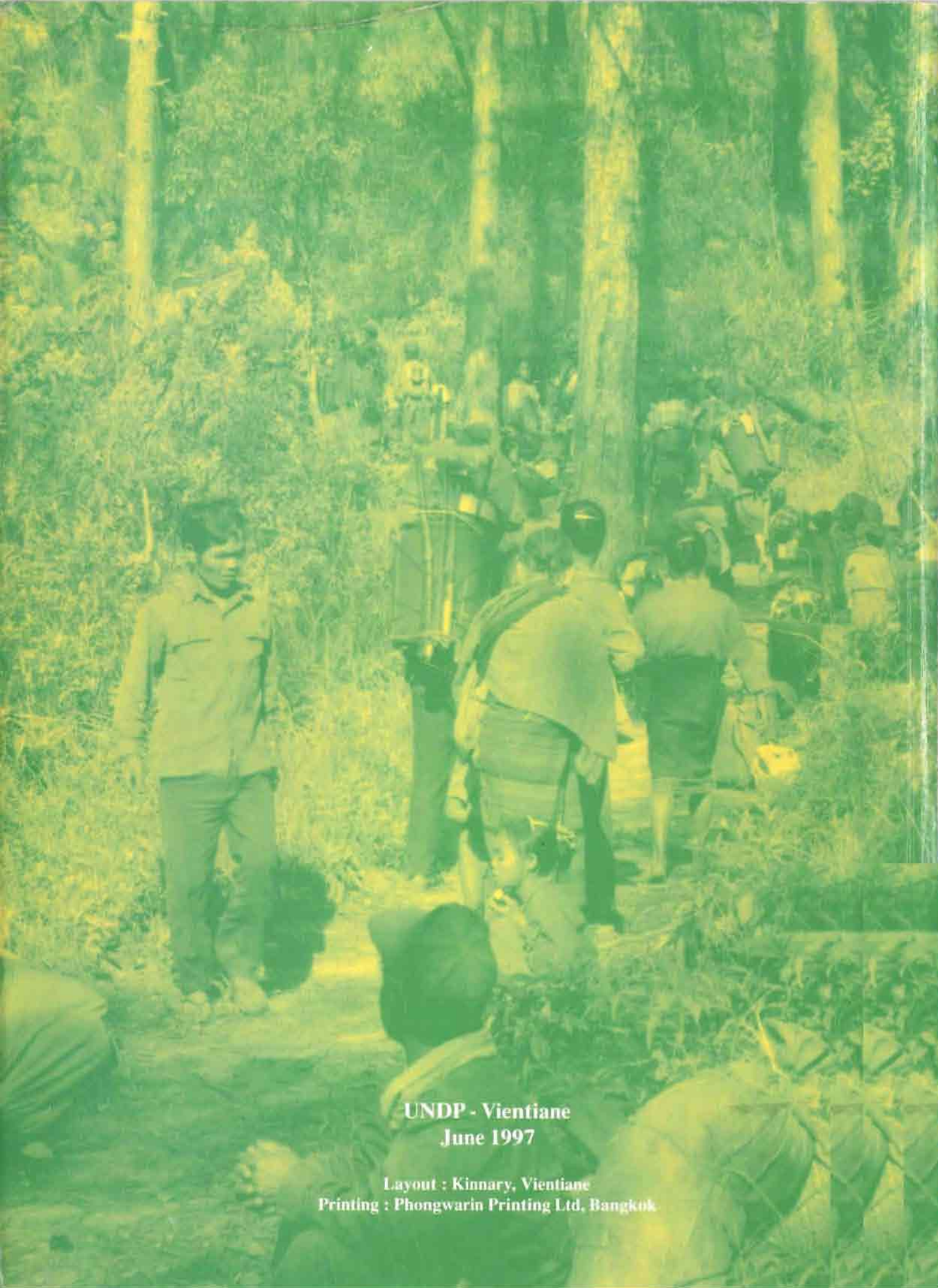
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- 5 Saravane - Sekong** *P. LUCAS*



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# **& Resettlement & Social Characteristics of New Villages**

**Basic needs for resettled communities  
in the Lao PDR  
An ORSTOM Survey**

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## Preface

Rural development is one of the key national priorities of the Government of Lao PDR. Most of 46% of the population who live below absolute poverty live in the rural areas. Among the major challenges for rural development in the Lao PDR is the inaccessibility of parts of the country, a problem accentuated during the rainy season. In recent years a national response to this situation has been to move some of the more isolated populations nearer to communication lines and towns. As the majority of these people are hilltribe minorities who traditionally practise slash and burn cultivation, helping them to settle in the lowlands has implied switching to wet rice field cultivation and reducing slash and burn agriculture, in line with national policy.

The new villages formed in this way have had to adapt quickly to their new way of life in order to survive. Not only is the surrounding natural environment different, but the economic and cultural context of the lowlands is new to these highlanders. Local authorities have recognised the problems that the relocated villagers have faced and often appealed to international organisations and NGO's for help in the most trying situations.

It was to better identify the difficulties experienced by relocated communities that UNDP and UNESCO, in cooperation with the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, embarked upon a survey on this issue. All parties recognised that this study would provide information on an important aspect of Lao rural development policy and could provide alternative solutions to resettlement.

The survey, undertaken by ORSTOM, covered six provinces and nearly seventy villages, one of the biggest socio-economic studies ever carried out in the Lao PDR. Based on objective information, the survey places the phenomenon of the new villages in a historically and geographically wider perspective. It allows better understanding of the extent of resettlement and the various reasons for it. It also sheds light on the current effects of resettlement and the likely results if the trend develops further.

UNDP is supporting the Government of Lao PDR in formulating the national policy in rural development. In this process, UNDP has been requested by the Government to facilitate dialogue with the donor community to enhance understanding on rural development and resettlement issues, and to seek assistance from the donor community in the implementation of its policy. We believe that the results of this survey are a valuable aid in forming sustainable strategies for implementing national rural development policy and projects. Partially as a result of the findings of the survey, UNDP's own assistance at the grassroots level aims to alleviate rural poverty by assisting vulnerable rural communities wherever possible where they live.

I would like to thank all those involved in initiating and compiling the survey; Dr. Yves Goudineau and his team for their excellent and professional work; the Ministry of Education for their support and understanding; Marc Gilmer and Bjorn Nordveit of UNESCO for their inspiration and concern. The survey would also not have been possible without the former UNDP Resident Representative, Jan Mattsson, who has had strong personal concerns for the resettled communities and has greatly

supported this study. Last but not least, I would like to thank the communities that cooperated in the survey and hope that their experience will lead to deeper understanding of how the donors can assist the Government in supporting their needs and the needs of the other vulnerable communities in the remote areas.



Jeffrey Avina  
Resident Representative a.i.

(Commissioned by UNESCO and financed by UNDP, the report's views are those of the authors and not necessarily of these organisations)

## Editor's note (vol. 2)

The following reports are the result of research missions conducted in six provinces of the Lao People's Democratic Republic from June to September 1996. The studies were undertaken within the framework of the Sat 1/96 survey in relation to Lao project UNDP 92/010, 'Non Formal Education needs of new ethnic minority villages'.

In 1992, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) established educational programs for ethnic minorities through the Ministry of Education. These Non Formal Education programs are intended to raise literacy among mountain people who rarely have access to schools, and to provide training in such fields as agriculture, health, and home industry.

Some of these highlanders have been relocated over recent decades and live in valleys far from their villages of origin, in an environment vastly different from that which they knew prior to relocation. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNESCO became interested in studying this phenomenon of relocation. UNDP wished to prepare its rural development plan for the coming years, while UNESCO needed to choose new villages for the extension of its programs, as well as to adapt teaching methods to the needs of the populations concerned.

L'Institut de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation (ORSTOM) was entrusted with this survey, and formulated the following subjects for study:

- The geographical importance of relocation, and its evolution over time
- Causes and motivations for relocation
- The socio-economic and cultural impact of relocation
- Difficulties and specific expectations of the different communities

The surveys were carried out in the provinces of Luang Namtha, Oudomxai, Xieng Khouang, Attapeu, Sekong and Saravane.

Y.G.

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# Luang Namtha

O. Evrard



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# INTRODUCTION

In Luang Namtha, where the great majority of villages have moved during the last 20 years, a problem of definition arose early on in the survey. How should we define a “resettled”, a ‘relocated’ or a ‘new’ village? Does each of these terms reflect a different reality in the field? Is it possible to clearly differentiate ‘forced’ relocations from voluntary, independent relocations which are more akin to migrations?

Firstly, it is very difficult to determine whether the relocation of a village was spontaneous or involuntary, as the answer tends to vary according to the information source, be they a government official or a villager. Several factors may lead a village to move: rapid population growth, government limits on forest clearance for slash and burn, the influence of a ‘progressive’ leader, a continuing security problem, and so on. All of these factors may be at work within a village at any one time, such that the combination of voluntary and involuntary forces precludes any objective analysis. In some instances, the authoritarian nature of the relocation has been undeniable, particularly during the period 1975-1985, but in 1996, the involuntary and the voluntary dimensions are in permanent coexistence. Should we say a village is ‘relocated’ because the government does not allow slash and burn any longer? Or that a village ‘displaces itself’ because it splits into two units owing to poor crop yield, or because its inhabitants have diverging interests?

While this report sketches out a provincial typology of new villages, a systematic classification will not be attempted. Our initial observations are based on all village units which have been in existence for less than 20 years, within which a considerable geographical and historical diversity is apparent. The villages will then be classified by comparing results gathered in each district, by referring to survey statistics concerning the needs of villages, and by examining the motivations of the relevant actors, be they Lao officials or foreigners.



## I. HUMAN DYNAMICS OF THE REGION

Luang Namtha has 114,519 inhabitants, (58,631 women and 55,888 men) in 20,580 family units, over a total area of 9,325 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the 14th largest province in Laos. Since the 1985 census the population has grown 1.7%, while the density has increased from 10.41 to 12.28 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, which makes it, along with Sekong and Attapeu, one of the most thinly populated provinces in the country<sup>1</sup>. This part of Laos, along with the modern province of Bokeo, constituted the province of Houakrong, known as Upper Mekong during the period of the French protectorate, until 1983.

### A/ INTRODUCTION: A POPULATION IN CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION DURING THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

Luang Namtha is very mountainous, with altitudes ranging from 600 m to 2,130 m. The two large plains of Namtha and Sing are the economic and administrative centres of the province, these two districts (muang) representing 50% of the population. Following depopulation due to war from the late 1950s to the late 1970s, these districts have seen steady population growth, with the return of refugees - mostly Tai Dam and Tai Nyouan who fled to Bokeo province - and the relocation of a number of highland villages to the lowlands. Geographical conditions today dictate that village relocations move mainly in one direction.

With the exception of the two large plains, 90% of the remaining area is mountainous. Vieng Pou Kha and Long districts do have some scattered and narrow valleys, converted into rain fed paddy fields, often just around the district town, whereas in Nale 98% of arable land is used for slash and burn. These three districts represent, respectively, 19%, 13% and 18% of the total provincial population.

In Laos, Luang Namtha is officially the province with the highest number of ethnic minorities - although the number may vary from 21 to 43, depending on the informant or author and the typology they use! The most numerous groups are the Khmu and the Lamet (Austro-Asiatic groups), the Akha, the Kouï and the Lahu (Tibeto-Burman), the Hmong and the Yao (Miao-Yao), and the Tai Dam, Tai Deng, Tai Neua, Tai Nyouan and Tai Leu (Tai Kadai). Each of these large ethnolinguistic groups represents a different period in the peopling of the province. The Austro-Asiatic groups have been there longest and are nowadays concentrated in the south of the province. Beginning in the 10th century, Tai-Kadai speaking groups progressively took control of the plains. Finally, in the 19th century, Tibeto-Burman and Miao-Yao groups migrating from China and Burma began to occupy mountainous regions in the west and north of the province. Generally, each minority follows its own migration pattern, with the original village splitting into one or two new units, depending on the type of agriculture it practices and the frequency of trade with neighbouring peoples.

Because of its geographical position as a crossroads between China, Burma and Thailand, Luang Namtha has for centuries been a place of trade and movement to and fro. Numerous mule trails, nowadays simply footpaths, once criss-crossed the province linking Siamese, Burmese and Chinese border posts, together with those of Oudomxai province. French administrators in charge during the time of the protectorate stressed the important part played by these local lines of communication. Between the 15th and 17th centuries the province also saw several invasions from China, Burma and Siam pass through, about which little information has yet been collected. This special socio-economic and political background gave rise, notably among lowland populations, to a tendency towards mobility. Village relocation occurred for many reasons, resulting in a highly unsettled population.

Population movements today are therefore not new to the region, where migrations and trade have gone on for centuries. On the other hand, it cannot simply be said that history is repeating itself, since motivations for relocations from 1975 onwards differ greatly from those of the pre-revolutionary period.

<sup>1</sup>1995 census figures.

## **B/ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO VILLAGE RELOCATION SINCE 1975**

At the provincial level, village movements cannot readily be divided into major historical phases that are independent of one another. The following chronology makes sense only if it is borne in mind that certain types of relocation may have occurred during various periods simultaneously. For example, certain relocations which were ordered by the provincial authorities and initiated mainly between 1975 and 1977, are still going on, but the methods and the arguments used to justify the movements have changed. The objective is no longer security, but to gain access to the village for development purposes, or to stop deforestation. Conversely, the voluntary relocation of villages in search of a new lifestyle did not suddenly start at the beginning of the 1990s. At various times since the end of the independence struggle, various leaders who participated in the revolutionary process have decided to change the location and way of life of their villages.

### **1. From the mid-1960s: Relocation and integration of ethnic revolutionaries**

When the Lao Issala liberated the province in 1962, a large number of Tai villages from Muang Sing and Muang Namtha fled to Houeisai, leaving behind their paddy fields and their homes. From the early 1970s, these areas were occupied by people who had fought for the revolution, mainly Austro-Asiatics from the mountainous area which separates modern-day Oudomxai and Luang Namtha provinces. Only a few families from the villages involved in this first wave of relocations - the present governor is from one of them - took up the suggestion of the new administration, and were given substantial logistical support. Families which volunteered were transported by military truck from Muang Beng, in the south of the modern province of Oudomxai, to Luang Namtha via the road network constructed by the Chinese in the 1960s. In this way the revolutionary administration hoped to reward the minorities who had fought for it, and at the same time to make an easy start to the land collectivisation program in the plains. In Sing and Namtha districts, a number of Akha villages which had contributed to the victory of the revolutionary forces were also able to settle in valleys where the government offered them land.

### **2. 1975-1977: Nation building and war against anti-revolutionary subversives**

Although the revolution had been victorious in 1975, south-west Luang Namtha province was not completely pacified until the late 1970s. Paramilitary troops trained by the Americans and supported from abroad formed counter-revolutionary groups and continued to stage attacks on Lao territory. Based in Vieng Pou Kha and Long districts, the rebels looked for support among neighbouring Khmu, Hmong, Yao, Lamet and Lahu villages. In some instances, they forcibly requisitioned food and men. In order both to supervise the villages and cut off supplies to the rebels, the government decided to remove all villages from unsecured areas to sites along the main roads.

Ban Oudomxin, a Yao village in Muang Sing - which has since split into four units - was relocated for this reason, with military trucks arriving to gather the villagers and remove them from their village. More than half the villages now settled along the edges of the road between Namtha and Vieng Pou Kha were similarly relocated during this period. The same thing was observed in the north of Muang Nale among the populations of Khouene and Khmu Nyouan. This phase of relocation seems to have been difficult for most of the affected villages, which lost a large part of their population and their cultural heritage in the process.

The campaign against the subversive groups lasted until the mid-1980s, notably in Muang Vieng Pou Kha, and was used to justify the removal and regroupment of the villages to their inhabitants. With the exception of some emergency aid - rice, quilts for the cold season, and some livestock - these villages received no external support.

### **3. 1977-1985: Return of the Tai peoples and continuing depopulation of mountainous areas in the south of the province**

Together with the government territorial security policy, the period 1975-1985 was marked by a 'second generation' of relocations, which were more or less directly related to the earlier phase, or fell within the framework of regional land development.

When the Tai populations who had fled the fighting at the beginning of the 1960s gradually returned to their homes, they found their lands occupied by Austro-Asiatic peoples who had come up from the south at the urging of the revolutionary administration. The legislative framework had not been modified at that time, so cultivating a paddy field in the absence of its owner did not confer ownership of that field, even after a number of years. From a legal point of view, nothing could prevent the Tai Nyouan, the Tai Leu and the Tai Dam villagers from reoccupying their old lands. Furthermore, as the experience with collectivisation had not been successful, the government no doubt welcomed the return of a population which would be easy to control and which possessed a long held knowledge of rain fed rice cultivation.

From the beginning of the 1980s, a new series of relocations began to take place among villages which had already been relocated and now found themselves dispossessed of lands which they had occupied for about 10 years. The great majority of these were Khmu, although a number of Tai Khao, originally from Luang Prabang province but who had come to Namtha during the 1960s, also found themselves in the same situation.

The first group were sent (or rather, sent back) to Nale, on the banks of the Tha river, with a few cows given by the provincial government as compensation for the loss of their paddy fields, or to Muang Sing, where a small Austro-Asiatic population had existed in the north of the plain since the early 1950s. Some villagers joined the ranks of the provincial administration. The second group were offered a few paddy fields in Muang Long, where the Tai speaking population was at that time very small. The Tai Khao opened new land, making it possible to build settlements along the edges of the trail. In this way the movement of villages became a special tool serving a political mission to manage and take control of territory.

At the same time as these relocations in the plains and valleys, two kinds of relocation were taking place in the southern mountains.

Some villages continued leaving the highlands to settle along the trails. Pressure exerted by the administration doubtless played an important role in many cases, but other relocations were simply a consequence of earlier migrations. In some places it became impossible to go on living in areas when neighbouring villages had already left, breaking the trade network and leaving those who remained feeling completely isolated. Many Khmu Nyouan and Khouene villages from Nale and Vieng Pou Kha districts came down to the valleys under these circumstances.

Other villages which had already relocated or gathered in valleys with other villages, moved out and settled along main roads, so as to relieve population and land pressure in temporary postwar settlements. In some cases, they were fleeing sites where too many villagers had died.

### **4. 1985-1996: Emergence of a new policy and new needs**

In the last 10 years, according to officials, villages have been moving exclusively on their own initiative. The provincial Rural Development Committee cites three main factors which incite villagers to relocate:

The government "authorises and facilitates" relocations, within the limits of its means.

Villagers move away to avoid working longer hours, due to soil degradation and having to travel greater and greater distances to their fields.

A new generation of villagers refuses to stick to 'the old ways', striving for new jobs, new skills and closer proximity to infrastructure and public services.

These arguments relate mainly to themes in provincial development, themes which are raised by provincial officials in the course of meetings with villagers or with foreign aid workers. In most cases, officials seek to convince their audience of the necessity, in the villagers' own interest, of pursuing the policy of relocation followed since independence. At the same time they seek the support of the various development agencies to make it more effective. At the level of the village community, this approach finds some resonance among the youth, as it emphasises the possibilities of external aid which may come as a result of relocation, as well as the ease of access to consumer goods sold in the marketplace. The youngest villagers then seek to convince the least willing - often the elders - by translating and reiterating the 'progressive' line of the officials. The chapter dealing with the role of international aid and institutions shows that the more recently relocated villages have received external aid more quickly than the others, as these relocations have been effected on the basis of promises made by the government. In this sense, the present period differs from the preceding one, in which foreign aid was absent.

### a) Improving village access for public services

During a recent meeting in which the Luang Namtha Provincial Development Plan up to 2000 was presented, the Vice-Governor explained that where provincial services were not able to reach villages, the villages would have to make themselves accessible. This style of logic is an accurate reflection of the current government approach to national development, which stresses first and foremost the settlement of new villages along the edges of trails in order to facilitate access. The next priority is to regroup all the small villages around more important centres so as to maximise use of infrastructure constructed by the government, such as health centres and schools.<sup>2</sup>

Village name	Date of construction of the school
Ban Namleuang Mai	1983
Ban Namtalan	1991
Ban Nampick	1984
Ban Pakha	1990

Out of only four villages in Muang Namtha which have primary schools constructed since 1975, all are along the road and are of recent construction. The same tendency to favour new villages which are accessible by road the year round is apparent in Muang Sing.

According to the government, better access to villages will increase the efficacy of public services, creating a new generation of citizens and eliminating ethnic divisions, with all the inhabitants adopting a Lao lifestyle. Advocating settlements alongside main roads is a policy common to all districts. The theme of easier access is also related to methods of cultivation, with roads frequently being built along the valley floor where flat areas, once developed, will permit the gradual abandonment of slash and burn.

### b) Sedentarisation and abandonment of slash and burn

The image of the Lao forest until very recently was of an inexhaustible supply of food and building materials, which at the same time was the edge of the civilised world as symbolised by the muang, a dark realm into which lowland people projected their fears and fantasies. When the war of independence came to an end and the idea of the nation state was adopted, the forest began to acquire a different status, that of a national resource, a public property to be exploited and at the same time protected. Slash and burn came to be seen as a serious danger, and its total eradication by 2000 became one of the government's main goals.

In their discussions with villagers, officials often compare the meagre, irregular returns from hai with the food security which comes from a good paddy field. Stricter law enforcement for clearing land induces most villages to opt more and more for sedentary agriculture and, therefore, valley settlement. However, relocation does not mean the villagers change their cultivation habits immediately. In Muang Namtha, all recently

<sup>2</sup> Such a geographical rupture makes it impossible to preserve traditional links between villages. In such cases, relocations have been accompanied by a loss of cultural referents.

resettled villages along the road still practice slash and burn while slowly converting land to paddy fields, as the provincial Agriculture Department is not always in a position to help them. For numerous recent settlements, trying to switch to new modes of cultivation is very difficult (see Chapter 2) and takes several years, during which time the villagers' existence is extremely precarious. For some villages the arrival in the valley is a bitter disappointment, with the promised ricefields turning out to be tiny plots of swampy land.

Because the lowlands of the province were, until recently, underpopulated relative to their agricultural potential - particularly in the case of the Muang Sing plain - a phenomenon of 'paddy field grabbing' began to appear in 1975. This became more pronounced between 1992 and 1995, when numerous Akha villages which lacked land in the highlands, relocated themselves to the plain in the hope of finding unoccupied fields. (Whether this was entirely voluntary or because of pressure exerted by certain government departments, notably that of Agriculture and Forestry, is again very difficult to determine.) When the initial years in the lowlands or beside the trail proved too difficult, some villages returned to their original areas. At least 2,000 Hmong villagers also arrived after the Vice-Governor of the province, himself a Hmong, announced on the radio that there was plenty of spare land close to the district capital. Finally, several Leu, Phou Noi and Ho villages also left their home provinces to seek new land on the Muang Sing plain.

### c) Eradication of opium cultivation

Stricter control of areas where poppy is cultivated is also one of the principal objectives of relocation. When Ban Sophi settled beside the road in 1993, the Agriculture Department arrived to destroy plants which could easily be seen from the road. Nevertheless, provincial officials realise that a gradual approach is essential, as some villages will increase their production to cover rice deficits suffered in the early years following resettlement.

### d) Conclusion

Recently there has been a tendency for 'progressive' ideas to spread amongst the younger members of ethnic minorities. Moreover, the problems of land pressure owing to demographic growth and a stricter application of the law with regard to slash and burn have brought about the relocation of many villages, sometimes from provinces other than Luang Namtha, in search of arable land in the lowlands.

## C/ GEOGRAPHY OF RELOCATIONS SINCE 1975

### 1. Muang Namtha

According to statistics provided by the government, village relocations between 1975 and 1995 involved 24,951 people in a district with a total population of 35,179, in other words, 71% of the population! The chart at the end of Chapter 1 summarises these movements and shows that the great majority occurred before 1985.

The Tai Nyouan and Tai Dam alone account for 65% of relocations. The Tai Nyouan came back to their paddy fields in 1975 after staying for 10 years in Houeisai town. Half of the Tai Dam did the same; the other half of the population left the plain for only a few years, taking refuge in the surrounding mountains and surviving with the help of Khmu villagers. Some of the Tai Dam joined the revolutionary forces, so that a few of them remained in the province between 1965 and 1975.

Among the Austro-Asiatic people affected by relocation, about 2,500 altogether, three trends are apparent:

The Khmu Rok originating from the south-east of Muang Nale who came to settle on the plain at the request of the new administration mostly settled at Ban Donmoun, essentially a military village, in the south of the main plain. Others had to leave again in 1983 for the Namtha escarpment, further south, after the return of the Tai Nyouan.

The Khouene, mostly originating from Muang Vieng Pou Kha, settled all over the province. Some of them had lived for several years at Houeisai.

In 1985, 522 Khmu from Oudomxai settled in the district. We have no information about them.

The statistics provided by the province do not mention the many small hamlets, most of them consisting of fewer than 20 houses, which have sprung up between 1984 and 1994 along the road leading to Muang Sing. Most of them are inhabited by Austro-Asiatic families originating from Nale who have lived for a few years in Luang Namtha. Nowadays they are seeking new lands and are adopting a more modern lifestyle, with the help of family links to various officials. Their principal occupation is raising livestock and caring for cattle belonging to the military camp at Km 21.5 (from Namtha) and to provincial officials. It is certain that these hamlets will be moved again in the next few years under the policy of regroupment of small villages. At the same time, the creation of a state park and the construction of a dam are planned for this area.

Relocated villages belonging to other ethnic minorities account for only a small percentage of the total population.

Two Hmong villages were relocated in 1975 and 1983, the first from the Pakta region of Bokeo province. The second one was already settled in the district before its move.

Three Lanten villages totalling 736 people settled closer to the main roads: one of them moved barely a year ago.

Finally, a fairly large Akha village, Ban Lakram (34 families), began to settle near the road to Muang Sing in 1986. In the early 1990s, the villagers returned to their old village several times because living conditions in the valley became too harsh. The European Union (EU) has been working on the site for two years.

## 2. Muang Sing

The number of inhabitants who have already relocated is less significant here than in Muang Namtha, although it still makes up 44% of the total population.<sup>4</sup> 50 villages out of the 114 that make up the district were relocated between 1975 and 1996, 33 of them in the years 1975-1985. As in Muang Namtha, the main plain attracts most resettlements but, due partly to a more favourable natural environment and partly to severe land pressure around the district capital, heads of rural development nowadays direct villagers towards other areas in the north and west of the district (see part III).

### a) Relocations from 1975 to 1985

These essentially concern the Akha subgroups who traditionally lived in the mountains west of the district capital. 28 Akha villages (1,073 families, 5,498 people) left the highlands during this period and started to work in paddy fields. Mostly heading towards the Muang Sing plain, these migrations were frequently accompanied by considerable human losses. Some valleys to the north and west of Muang Sing were also involved. The district administration claims that these relocations were all voluntary.

Four Yao villages (700 people) were also relocated from Vieng Pou Kha during this period because of their links to the counter-revolutionary guerillas. Removed in trucks by the army, dozens of villagers' lives were lost in the months following the relocation. Today they are divided into four villages, all situated 10 km from the district capital, and have managed to stabilise their population growth and establish ownership of their land.

Finally, 23 Khmu families originally from Nale resettled at Ban Tchom and began to develop paddy fields. These villagers formed the bulk of the population which arrived at Muang Namtha at the end of the war, only to have to relocate once again when the Tai Dam and Tai Nyouan returned from Bokeo.

<sup>4</sup>According to figures supplied by the province, the number of persons now living in the district who have left their original village in the last 20 years is 10,540 out of a total of 23,557 individuals.

### Villages of Sing District (to be read with the table of displacements, appendices of Chapter one)



### **b) Between 1985 and 1996**

17 villages were relocated in this period. Compared to the preceding period, fewer villagers were affected by relocation, although their diversity in terms of ethnicity and place of origin was greater.

The nine Akha villages relocated during this period today occupy for the most part the rice growing areas to the west of the plain. Officially, these relocations were motivated by a unified desire on the part of the villagers to change their lifestyle. In all, 37 Akha villages have come to settle in the lowlands since 1975.

Four Hmong villages comprising 2,250 people were created in 1993 following a sudden migration which took the provincial authorities by surprise. These villagers had heard the Vice-Governor of the province announce on the radio that there was plenty of spare land in Muang Sing, and consequently left their home provinces - Luang Prabang for some, Houaphan, Xieng Khouang and even Vientiane for others. After hiring a collective car, they arrived to take possession of the 'promised lands'. The reality was less inspiring and, after three years, the situation of the new villages is still of great concern, especially from the point of view of sanitation. The villagers appear to have sold off many of their assets to get them through the difficult early years, and possess no buffalo. All of these communities have settled along the road leading to Long, to the south of Muang Sing.

Other migrants - Ho, Tai Dam, Leu and Khmu - came from the same home province of Phongsaly, and the same motivation for moving. All of them explained that they were forced to leave their old villages due to pressure on the land. This no doubt results partly from population growth in these villages, and partly from the strict application of laws designed to reduce slash and burn. These recent migrations have not given rise to a multi-ethnic community, as each group has occupied an area separate from the others. Most of these villagers, with the exception of the Leu, have built their houses at Ban Xiengtchay, close to the market.

## **3. Muang Long**

This district is the only one in the province we were unable to reach due to a shortage of time and the extreme difficulty of access during the rainy season - it is cut off from the rest of the province for more than six months of the year. The trail leading to the district capital should soon be upgraded thanks to a World Bank loan. For the time being, district officials, who must attend meetings in the provincial capital from May to October, have to walk for two days to get there. Isolated from the districts of Laos which border their own, the inhabitants of Long have regular contact with the Burmese population across the Mekong, and with Bokeo province, accessible by boat all year round. The statistics provided by the district demonstrate the influence of this unique geographical situation.

**a) Between 1975 and 1985**, 43 villages, about 6,000 people, were relocated within the district.

Leu villagers alone make up 45% of this total. District leaders say that most of them are people who left the area in 1967-1968 for Bokeo. These relocations would have been caused by counter-revolutionary military activity. Starting in 1975, the inhabitants gradually returned to their old villages.

At the same time, about 2,500 Akha villagers, 500 Kouï and 500 Hmong were reported to have resettled inside the district between 1975 and 1985. Their movements and their motivations have not been recorded.

**b) During the same period**, 63 villages were reported to have come from outside the district.

38 of these, mostly Akha, would have come from eastern Burma and settled in the north-west of the district. The same thing probably also happened in Muang Sing, although the head of the Statistics Department did not mention it. If such a migration did indeed take place, it may explain the 'paddy land race' apparent since 1975 among Akha people near Muang Sing. These people have been settled in Laos for a long time, and may have been pushed eastwards by the new arrivals.

Other villages that settled in Muang Long at this time, 27 in total, came from Muang Sing. 2,318 Akha villagers and 772 villagers referring to themselves as "Doi" settled in the north of Muang Long. These people, as a general rule, settled alongside the trails.

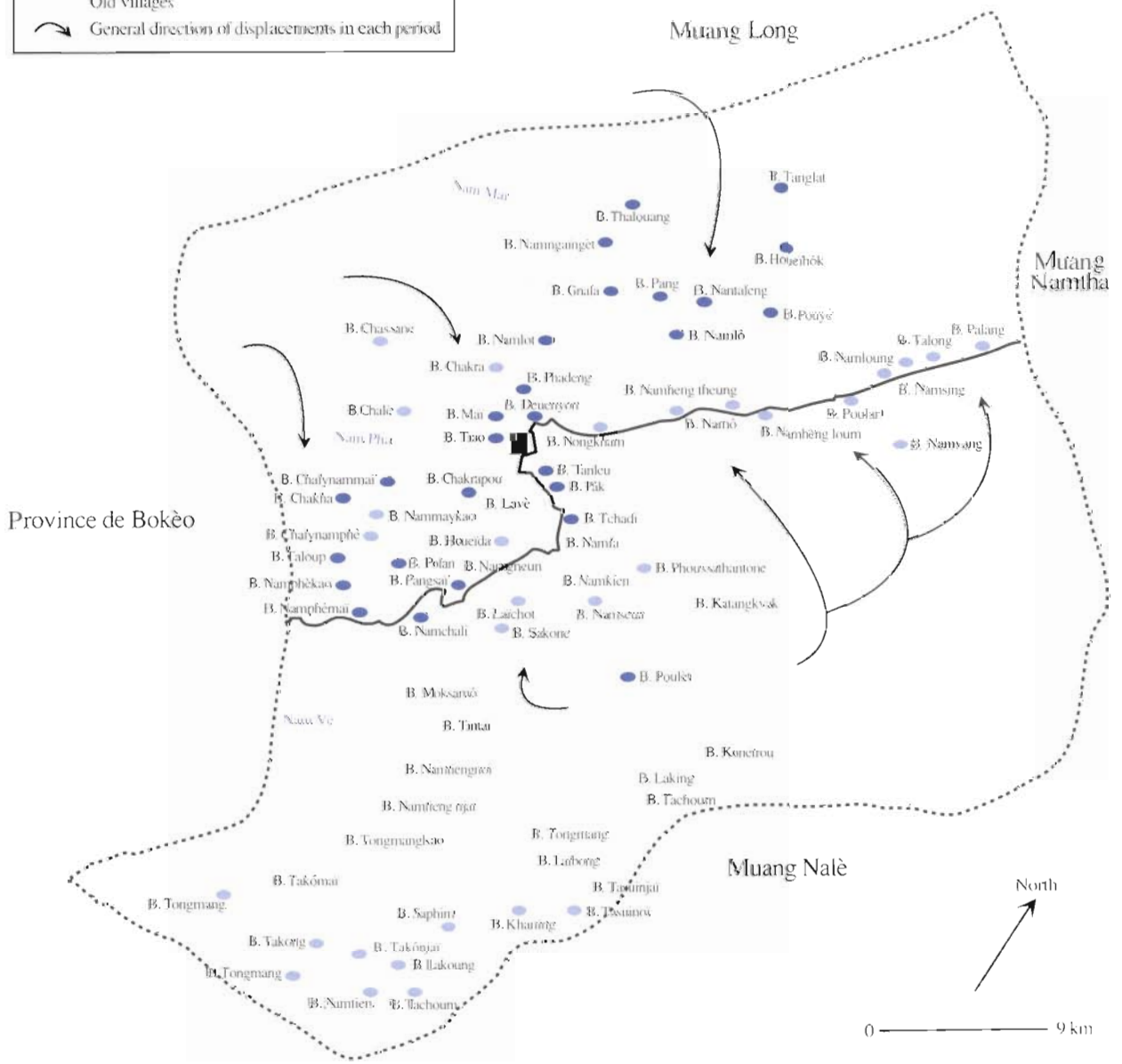
# Vieng Pou Kha District : Geographic distribution of displaced villages

from the Education Service Map of 1991

**Key**

- ..... District boundaries
- Main road
- District town
- At least 10 years at current site
- At least 20 years at current site
- Old villages
- ↷ General direction of displacements in each period

Note : the map applies to the tables in chapter 1 appendices



**c) Comparatively, there seem to have been fewer relocations between 1985 and 1995.**

Four villages were reported to have left Sing and Namtha districts and settled in the main valley of Muang Long. 953 Tai Khao people, 800 Tai Dam and 560 Yao thus would have migrated to the west of the province. The Tai Khao and Tai Dam populations had originally come from Luang Prabang province and occupied paddy land on the Namtha plain, land which they were forced to vacate on the return of its previous owners, the Tai Nyouan.

Making a simple calculation on the basis of these statistics, we can see that relocations - within the district, from a neighbouring district or even from a foreign country - in Muang Long have involved 18,059 people, or 84% of today's total population! Moreover, 90% of the relocations took place between 1975 and 1985. During this first phase, the role of the state seems to have been weak and most of the relocations occurred in a fairly anarchic fashion. In the second phase, the relocations, less numerous but more organised, became an instrument for the management and control of territory: by settling in underpopulated valleys and beside trails, the Tai populations made for the 'domestication' of the province.

The statistics provided by the district authorities do not mention the relocation of villages to neighbouring districts. Thus far these have been relatively few, mostly at the beginning of the 1990s when numerous Lahu and Akha villages left to settle in Muang Vieng Pou Kha.

#### **4. Muang Vieng Pou Kha**

Situated on a plateau surrounded by mountains, this district must have been a historical centre of some importance after the 15th century, and for a long time was a staging post for caravans coming from Yunnan. Passing from the control of the Nyouan to the Burmese and then the Siamese, this region has only been part of Laos for a century. During the French protectorate, a network of dirt roads was laid out mostly using the labour of the local Austro-Asiatic population. These routes, now abandoned, made it possible to reach Muang Sing or Houeisai from the centre of the district in two days. The French and the Americans also constructed several small airfields from which air raids on Namtha and Yunnan were mounted during the war of decolonisation. When the plateau was taken over by the Lao Issala, Vieng Pou Kha was heavily bombed.

Support for the counter-revolutionaries among several ethnic groups and the continuation of guerilla activity until the mid-1980s led the new administration to take a firm line with regard to the highland villages, and many were forcibly relocated at the end of the war. Many villages also decided to leave the area, some for Bokeo, others for refugee camps in Thailand. Today, Vieng Pou Kha is the least populous district of Luang Namtha (14,873 inhabitants, 13% of the provincial total), and, along with Long, the most difficult of access during the rainy season. During the summer all the traders leave the district - most of them come from Namtha - and the market is practically deserted. A chicken costs Kip 3,000, and a duck Kip 4,000. A two-lane highway is under construction linking Namtha to Houeisai and, in effect, Yunnan to Thailand. A Chinese company has commenced construction of bridges in the north of the district, while a Thai enterprise has built a good track as far as the coal mine which it has been operating for two years, 15 km south of the district capital.

The district administration was not able to supply us with statistics as detailed as those for Sing or Namtha. Nevertheless, on the basis of the information in their possession and that collected during visits to villages, three main types of relocation seem to be identifiable.

**a) Forced relocations at the end of the war involving at least 14 village units**, mostly Khmu Nyouan and Hmong. To this figure must be added those which relocated to other districts, for example the Yao population now settled close to the Chinese border at Sing. These relocations were organised hurriedly, first by moving the people to an assembly site, then distributing them along roadsides. (Most of the Khmu Nyouan and Khouene villages belong to this category.) Loss of life was high in most of the relocated villages during this period, with some of them returning to the mountains as a result.



**b) From the mid-1980s, the involuntary nature of the relocations becomes less clear-cut.** A new generation of villagers wants to change its way of life, to get closer to the roads and to possess paddy fields. At the same time, the authorities wish to stop slash and burn and achieve better control of areas that are still insecure. About 10 villages belong to this category of relocation, most of them Khmu Nyouan.

**c) The 1990s thus far have been characterised by a greater diversity, both in terms of the ethnicity of affected villages,** and of the regions where they have resettled. Relatively depopulated since the war, the north and the west of the district are nowadays seeing more Akha and Lahu villages coming to settle in the still empty hills or small valleys, having left Sing or Long districts due to inadequate land in their home village. Still, the district leader, Khamsay Viphounpouthai, says that these days he has to refuse requests from some villages wishing to settle in the area due to a shortage of available land.

In total, 11 villages were reported to have been relocated since 1990 (22 according to our own count). Most of them have come from the eastern part of the district - Lahu, Khoui and Akha villages - and settled on the banks of the Nam Pha, formerly home to Yao villagers and a priority development zone for the district. The other villages relocated since 1990 have arrived in the east of the district and are looking to settle along the road. These are Khmu villages leaving the progressively less populated areas along the border with Muang Nale.

## 5. Muang Nale

Nale is situated in the south-east of Luang Namtha province, and consists of a large valley formed by the Nam Tha. The valley is narrow in the north and south but somewhat wider in the centre, and as a result of these topographic conditions, has no paddy fields. (The Leu, traditionally considered a lowland group, here practice slash and burn exclusively, as does the Austro-Asiatic population.) Nale contains 18% of the provincial population and has a gender imbalance that is more pronounced than in the rest of the province, with 9,475 men to 11,142 women.

Created in 1983 from the merging of the western areas of Oudomxai province and the eastern foothills of the Vieng Pou Kha plateau, Nale's existence as a cohesive entity barely dates beyond the time it became a district of Luang Namtha province. The Nam Tha, which traverses the length of the district and which for the moment represents the sole means of access, for years served as the frontier between the kingdoms of Nan and Lane Xang. The paths linking Vieng Pou Kha to the Nam Tha were plied by caravans which would descend by river to Pat Tha and thence to Thailand or Luang Prabang, but which never crossed the territories on the left bank of the river. Similarly, during the last war, the modern district of Nale was the scene of quite violent encounters between the troops of the Lao Issala on the left bank, and the counter-revolutionary guerillas on the right bank. The Nam Tha was a true frontline at that time.

More so here than in the other districts of the province, the events which took place between 1960 and 1975 seem to provide a key to an understanding of the village relocations which took place afterwards: By fighting on the winning side, the Austro-Asiatic populations on the left bank gained political representation at the provincial and district level, paddy fields at Namtha (for some of them, at least), more schools than the right bank, and, finally, the chance to refuse to relocate their village if a majority of the population opposed the move. The villages remain at their original sites, but population growth has been curbed considerably by a rural exodus linked to political integration.

In the areas along the right bank, the situation is reversed. More than half the villages have been relocated towards the river or Vieng Pou Kha for military reasons, few schools have been constructed and there are no villagers at high levels of the provincial administration. The old Khmu Nyouan area is today completely isolated, and officials visit it rarely. Few villages now remain at their original sites.

The case of the Leu villages softens this dichotomy somewhat. Thanks to the lam system, the Leu formerly controlled the hilltribe populations, on whom they could impose certain corvees and taxes. With the disappearance of this system in 1975, the Leu stood to lose their local influence, as they had for the most part collaborated with the counter-revolutionary forces. Nevertheless they retain key posts in the provincial

government and still control the river navigation. With the exception of villages which split into different units for internal reasons such as population pressure, the Leu were little affected by the relocations that took place upon Liberation.

**a) Between 1975 and 1985**, village populations generally moved from the hills on the left bank to the north of the district, which was not heavily populated in 1975 because of numerous rapids which obstruct navigation on the Nam Tha for much of the year.

According to district statistics, 20 villages were reportedly relocated between 1975 and 1985, mostly for security reasons. The list of village names provided by the district shows that every village came from the right bank of the Nam Tha, while the large majority of relocated people were Khmu Nyouan. Out of 4,082 relocated villagers, 1,951, or 47%, were Khmu Nyouan, and about 1,000, or 24%, were the Austro-Asiatic Khouene who also lived west of the Nam Tha

**b) Between 1985 and 1996**, 10 new villages were relocated and/or regrouped to form a larger settlement, still mostly from villages on the right bank. Nevertheless the growth of the population often brings land scarcity and problems in the provision of water. In the meantime, villages relocated during the former period moved again, mostly splitting up into smaller units, fleeing from illnesses encountered at the first site in the valley, heading for the new trail under construction, or once again seeking new land where they could practice slash and burn.

Altogether, nearly 2,100 people were relocated between 1986 and 1996. At least 40% were Khmu Nyouan. Lamet people are also involved, since three villages have started to build temporary dwellings near the river. Some of them, formerly counted in Muang Vieng Pou Kha but situated several days walk from the administrative centre, now belong to Nale following a modification of the district boundaries.

## **D/ CONCLUSION: SOME THOUGHTS ON A TYPOLOGY OF RELOCATIONS AT LUANG NAMTHA**

At the end of this first section, population movements in the province appear to be characterised by a diversity that cannot be explained by any single factor, be it ethnicity, location, motivation, or historical period. We shall therefore compile the information already outlined into a table which takes into account the main human, historical and geographical aspects of the relocations. Even if it is not possible to build a precise typology of population movements, there are a number of keys which can be deployed to reduce the diversity.<sup>5</sup>

Reading from this table, it seems possible to divide village relocations into three main groups:

Relocations related to the war or to a long period of insecurity in the area of origin - flight, forced relocation, access to paddy land after the departure of the owners.

'Second generation' relocations, indirectly linked to the first type of relocation - populations spreading out from the first gathering of settlements, and relocations from the mountains to the plains (or vice versa) because of the return of the original owners of the paddy fields or owing to difficult living conditions in the valley.

Relocations related to the policy to eradicate slash and burn and/or excessive land pressure.

Such a typology shows that there are relocations which are caused by internal factors such as population pressure in relation to available land, or the presence of a 'progressive' faction encouraging the more conservative elements to move. Others are motivated by external factors, such as the direct intervention of the army to enforce the prohibition on clearing new areas of forest. In 1996, both elements are closely entwined, and it is very difficult to determine which weighs more heavily on the decision of the villagers.

The Khmu Rok are a special case. Just after the war, a number of families responded to the call of the new government and went to cultivate paddy fields on the Namtha plain. Even so, no settlement was relocated in its entirety, with only a few families leaving from each village.

<sup>5</sup> The last column of the table shows the number of people involved in relocation. These figures are intended simply to give an idea of magnitude in order to be able to compare the different categories. Long months of research would no doubt be required to be able to present truly accurate statistics for each ethnic group, each region and each historic period.

Nor do relocations of entire village units make up the majority of cases. Often only part of the village will move, especially in the case of a village whose population has outstripped its agricultural resources. In the case of villages forcibly relocated at the end of the war, a real breakdown of the old unit would take place. Assembled into temporary villages between 1975 and 1977, the populations were then once again divided up into small groups and distributed among other settlements, or indeed other districts. A desire to make it impossible for the population to reunite in a single new village seems to have motivated this dispersion.

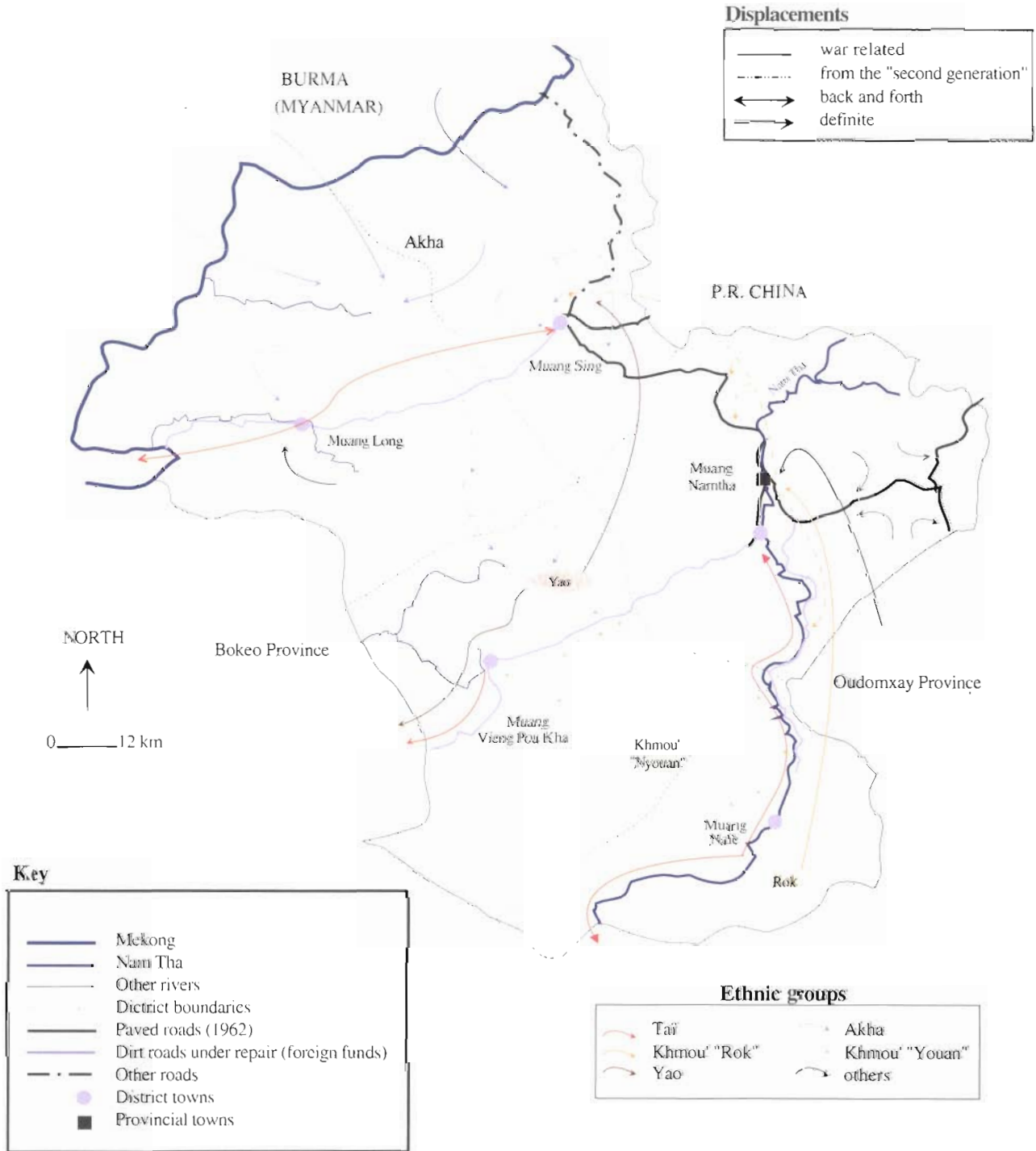
The table that follows attempts to present this first attempt at a typology (see also . The field survey methodology, results and commentary are presented in the second part and seek to show the different effects of relocation in the areas of health and sanitation, agriculture and education in relation to population type and length of time since relocation.

### Village Relocations in Luang Namtha Province from 1975 to 1995

Tribe	current region	period	displacement type	number involved
Tai-Lu	Muang Long	1975-1985	displacement due to war	2500-3000
		1985-1996	none	0
	Muang Sing	1975-1985	displacement due to war	?
		1985-1996	left Phongsaly to find new land	around 200 people so far
	Muang Nale	1975-1985	displacement due to war	?
		1985-1996	overspill from overpopulated villages	400
Thai Dam	Muang Namtha	1975-1985	displacement due to war	around 2800
		1985-1995	Family displacements	several dozen families seeking new land
	Muang Long	1975-1985	none	0
		1985-1995	looking for new land from Louang Prabang and Louang Namtha	800
Tai Youan	Namtha	1975-1985	displacement due to war	around 2300
		1985-1996	none	0
Khmou' Youan"	Vieng Pou Kha	1975-1985	displacement imposed by the army	at least 3000
		1985-1996	to combat slash and burn, isolation	at least 1000
Khmou' "Youan"	Muang Nale	1975-1985	displacement imposed by the army	around 2000
		1985-1995	regrouping villages, isolation, site overspill 1975-77	at least 1000
Khmou' Lu	Muang Nale	1975-1985	displacements linked to political integration of certain leaders	at least 400
		1985-1995	same phenomenon	?

Khmou' "Rok"	Muang Nale	1975-1985	movement to lowlands linked with the political integration of leaders, or movement to the highlands due to the return of farmlands	at least 1000
		1985-1995	rural exodus linked to the political integration of leaders	?
Lamet	Muang Nale	1975-1985	few displacements	negligible
		1985-1996	voluntary movement towards the river and services	400
Khouene	Muang Nale	1975-1985	displacements imposed by the army	1000
		1985-1996	Displacements from the first site, 1975-77	?
Akha	Muang Sing	1975-1985	displacements linked to seeking farmland unoccupied land in the lowlands	5500
		1985-1995	adoption of paddy-farming and abandonment of slash and burn	1200
	Muang Long	1975-1985	a) ? b) migration from Burma c) migration from Muang Sing d) not stated	a) 2500 b) 7000 c) 2300 ?
	Muang Vieng Pou Kha	1975-1985	no relocations	a dozen villages
		1985-1995	relocations from Muang Long to find new land	0
Yao	Muang Sing	1975-1985	relocations by the army from Vieng Pou Kha	700 personnes
Hmong	Muang Sing	1975-1985	none	0
		1985-1995	voluntary migrations from eastern provinces	2250
	Vieng Pou Kha	1975-1985	relocations for military reasons; exodus towards Thailand and Bokeo	no information
Lahu	Vieng Pou Kha	1975-1985	no information	
		1985-1995	settlement was more or less forced west of Vieng Pou Kha, on account of the need for paddy-farming land	at least 8 villages
	Muang Long	1975-1985	no information	?
		1985-1995	no information	?

### Simplified diagram of villages relocations in Luang Namtha province between 1975 and 1996



## II. RELOCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

After discussions with the local authorities, we chose three or four villages in three out of the five districts which make up the province. The choice was made according to ethnic and historical criteria, so as to ensure that the population samples represented the various possible types of relocation in the province.

In each settlement, we conducted guided interviews with 30% of the families. Altogether, survey staff visited 147 homes. They filled in the questionnaires prepared in Vientiane with answers collected from each home. The information was then translated into French and put onto a computer. The results of the survey can be read in nine strata: one for each of the districts visited (Muang Sing, Muang Vieng Pou Kha, Muang Nale), and one for each of the ethnic groups involved in the survey (Tai Leu, Hmong, Akha, Khmu Nyouan, Khmu Rok, Khouene).

### A/ SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THE VILLAGE STUDIES

#### 1. Muang Nale

##### **Ban Saloi**

Khmu Leu village of 52 houses which, with Ban Hatloi on the other bank of the Nam Tha, forms the same administrative unit. 22 families were relocated to Ban Sop Ngim in 1977 and settled in the present site in 1985. The other households originated from a different village, and came directly down to the site in 1989. Most of the families experience a rice shortage for three months of the year.

##### **Ban Poulouang**

Khouene village with 31 family units. The former centre of the tasseng, the village was relocated in 1976 during fighting between the guerillas and the revolutionary army. Since that time the inhabitants have relocated twice following unexplained deaths which occurred at the earlier settlements.

##### **Ban Hatnaleng**

Mixed Samtao, Khouene and Khmu village with 31 families, Hatnaleng was formed by the merger of five different villages, most of which came down in 1977 during fighting between the counter-revolutionary guerillas and the regular army. Each of these villages stopped at one or two other points before settling at the present site. The village has become a halt for boats plying the river.

##### **Ban Kengkran**

This village belongs to the same administrative unit as Ban Hatnaleng. 18 households from five different Khmu Nyouan villages settled here between 1986 and 1989. The villagers came expecting to find land that they could convert into paddy fields. Today they are refusing to resettle at Hatnaleng, despite pressure from the district and very precarious conditions at the present site.

##### **Ban Sop Xim**

A Khmu Rok village of 31 families which settled on the border between Nale and Namtha districts in 1983, after the return of the Tai Nyouan forced them to leave the paddy fields they had cultivated at Namtha between 1970 and 1980. Thanks to family ties with people in the provincial administration, the village has a school and a large herd of cattle. The EU has been working in this community for a year.

## 2. Muang Vieng Pou Kha

### **Ban Phadeng**

Khouene village of 33 families settled close to the district capital since 1985. The inhabitants left their original village in 1973 to cultivate the paddy fields of Yao villagers relocated to Muang Sing. Between 1975 and 1985, the villagers were relocated to the district capital. One third own rice fields. In spite of a large number of school-age children, the village has no school.

### **Ban Deuennyon**

15 families counted under the administration of Ban Phadeng but living some distance away have been settled here since 1986, after staying for a year in a temporary village created as an assembly point. At the same time, other families were sent to Sing and Namtha. Only one family out of the 15 owns a paddy field.

### **Ban Namvang**

43 Hmong families and 42 Kouï families have settled at this high site since 1987, occupying distinct areas. The Hmong were relocated from the south of the district in 1976 and settled in the valley to the west of the present site. 53 people and most of the animals died within three months, after which the villagers decided to return to the mountains. Ban Namvang today has a small spring tap and two husking machines, financed by the villagers themselves. The village has a rice surplus.

### **Ban Namlouang**

A Khmu Nyouan village of 42 families which came to Vieng Pou Kha in 1985 in search of paddy fields and is nowadays settled at the edge of the trail. The villagers left the present site in 1986 - 48 people had died the previous year - to live at a somewhat higher elevation, returning to the same spot in 1994. 16 families possess paddy fields. Trade within the village means that it is self-sufficient. A new school has just been built by the district.

## 3. Muang Sing

### **Ban Tchom**

Settled in the north of the plain one hour's walk from the district capital, this Khmu village - one of the only ones in the district - is made up of 33 families which arrived at the present site between 1953 and 1996. The majority of them are from Muang Nale, and Phongsaly province. There is a marked difference in status between the recent arrivals and the senior members, the latter, originally from China, possessing 80% of the rice fields. A land dispute has brought the village into conflict with a neighbouring Akha community.

### **Ban Houeikot**

6 km from the Muang Sing market, this Leu village consists of 34 families, most of whom came from Burma (1979) and Phongsaly (1993). The immigrants from Burma were motivated by lack of security, while those from Phongsaly had been suffering from a shortage of land. 11 of the most recent arrivals died during the first year at the new site. The village has been unable to claim the rice fields created by the former inhabitants as these now belong to the neighbouring Akha village. 14 families have no paddy fields. The period of food shortage lasts, on average, four months.

### **Ban Sophi**

38 Akha families live in this village 9 km from the district capital. At the time of the first relocation in 1975, 200 people died in one year (the oldest person in the village is 42). The villagers, who have been at the present site for three years, cultivate paddy fields given to them by the district (25 ha for a population of 179). The village has no school and the food situation is very worrying, as it is reliant on a functioning irrigation system and a high degree of village cohesion.

## **B/ EFFECTS OF RELOCATION ON HEALTH AND SANITATION**

### **1. High mortality rates following relocation**

In most cases, heavy losses of human life occurred during the first year in the new settlement, mostly affecting elderly people and newborn babies. Ban Namvang lost 53 people in one year, Ban Namlouang 48, Ban Houeikot 11, Ban Sophi 200. The results of these deaths were a loss of cultural heritage, and successive relocations as the villagers fled the influence of the bad spirits. In the case of communities where the elders are traditionally the leaders, these losses can undermine social cohesion. Many animals also did not survive relocation, succumbing to various epidemics, which in turn affected the villagers' ability to trade and to develop their new land. It is only after several years at the same site that a village is able to establish a demographic balance. In most cases, therefore, the village will leave the new site after two or three years and, in some instances, will not settle permanently until it has tried three or four different places.

### **2. Principal aggravating factors**

#### **a) Altitude difference between the old and new settlements**

The greater the difference in altitude, the higher the death toll during the first relocation (Ban Namlouang, Ban Sophi and Ban Namvang). Only villages which descend progressively from a high altitude can hope to avoid the tragic loss of a large proportion of their population.

#### **b) Water use**

On arrival in the plain, the villagers did not find spring water as easily as in the highlands, especially in Muang Sing, so they used water from the nearest river or stream. At the same time they did not systematically boil drinking water, at least at first, even though it was far more important to do so here than at higher altitudes. 33% of all families interviewed did not boil drinking water; in three settlements, this percentage was closer to 90%. In Ban Namvang, after the first failure in the valley, people climbed back up into the hills and built themselves a small spring water tap. With just a little knowledge and money, other villagers could do the same.

#### **c) Health care**

The proximity of a hospital, a health centre or a pharmacy is one of the arguments most frequently advanced to encourage villagers to move to the lowlands. Yet if medical practice seems to evolve statistically towards a higher consumption of modern medicines following relocation, this does not necessarily mean that the quality of health care is improving. For the villagers to have better access to modern medicine is one thing, but to use those medicines properly is quite another.

Statistics show that while in 66% of cases the patient will use modern medicine in the first instance, recourse to sacrifice when the medicine fails to cure the malady is greater, at 48%, than prior to relocation (29%). Traditional medicine, on the other hand, appears to fall from favour, being the second choice for treatment only 22% of the time, as opposed to 31% prior to relocation. From the point of view of development, the increased use of modern medicine may seem like a positive step, but it is being made at the cost of traditional knowledge. In all the districts visited, more than in the past, sacrifice is the preferred option when modern medicine fails.

On the other hand, use of hospitals was practically nil in all the villages visited. There appeared to be no exceptions to this rule, which is due partly to the cost of care, partly to the fear of not returning to the village, and partly to a lack of technical means in the hospitals. If medicines bought from a pharmacy or from a hawker don't solve the problem, a villager will initiate a sacrifice rather than go to hospital. As well, few people know how to use the medicines correctly, which are usually sold without instructions in Lao. The

## Relocation impact

improvement in health care brought about by the proximity of health centres and pharmacies therefore seems to be illusory.

The provision of health services at the time of relocation appears to be very patchy. Mobile teams sometimes come and vaccinate children, but these operations are often organised by foreign projects (as in Sing and Vieng Pou Kha).

### d) Relocation and opium

In some recently resettled villages, the number of opium smokers seems to have risen in the first few years. When sick for a long time, or when confronted with extremely difficult living conditions, people who used to grow opium in their previous villages would increase their opium consumption. In some cases, they would become dependent on other families for their survival. We do not have any accurate statistics, yet one only need observe recent Akha settlements close to Muang Sing to be aware of this problem.

On the other hand, at Ban Namvang, only nine opium smokers, of which only two were younger than 30 were counted. This is in spite of the fact that the village is one of the principal centres for the production of opium in the north of Muang Vieng Pou Kha. According to the village leader, the number of smokers declined when the village returned to a higher altitude after a catastrophic few months spent in the valley.

### e) Conclusion

From a health point of view, village relocation has mainly negative consequences in the short and medium term.<sup>6</sup> Positive effects will not begin to appear until better health services and a planning system which takes greater account of the health of villagers are put in place.

## C/ EFFECTS OF RELOCATION ON PRODUCTION AND TRADE PATTERNS

### 1. A difficult transition to new modes of production

#### a) From hai to paddy

Most of the recent relocations have been within the framework of the slash and burn eradication policy. New laws or population growth reduce the land available for clearance, fallow periods are shortened, and eventually villagers move out in search of new land. In many cases, however, relocation does not necessarily bring immediate access to paddy land - a circumstance that can provoke bitter disillusionment, as in the case of Ban Kengkran.

Only 11% of villagers interviewed in Luang Namtha owned a paddy field. This figure varies from 2% in Muang Nale to 38% in Muang Sing. Interestingly enough, there were more paddy land owners before relocation than after. Among all the interviewees, 88% had not owned a paddy field before leaving, while 89% do not own one now, with the exception of Muang Sing, where this gap widens from 56% before to 63% after the move. Two factors explain this paradox. On the one hand, those recently settled in Muang Sing often used to own paddy land in their previous villages (Leu people from Phongsaly, Khmu from China). On the other hand, lands allocated by the district are mostly areas which require several years of development and outside technical assistance. In Ban Tchom, for example, Kip 1.5 million was sufficient to develop another 25 ha of fields.<sup>7</sup>

Faced with these difficulties, villagers continue to practice slash and burn as this gives them food security.

<sup>6</sup> The survey shows significant differences between recent resettlements and villages which have been in place for more than 10 years

<sup>7</sup> The government issued new land laws in 1991 in order to guarantee land accessibility for ethnic populations who had come down in the previous 10 years and occupied paddy land that the Leu had abandoned during the war. If the former owners come back to their original village, they cannot in theory reclaim their land, and must create new fields.

Now that they are directly under the control of their district administration, the areas cleared each year for slash and burn by the villagers are significantly reduced by comparison with their original villages. If we consider all the families interviewed at Luang Namtha, the average area of land cleared and planted per family per year has declined from 1.25 ha prior to relocation, to 0.98 ha afterwards. The gap varies from district to district. At Nale, for example, where it has not been possible to develop paddy fields, the reduction in area cleared for slash and burn is less than in the other two districts surveyed:

Average	cleared land old village (ha)	cleared land new village (ha)	net rice production old village (tonnes)	net rice production new village (tonnes)	follow period old village (month)	follow period new village (month)
Districts						
Muang Sing	1,15	78,63	1,26	0,66	2,28	2,68
Muang Nale	1,53	1,24	1,242	1,03	2,39	2,69
Vieng Pou Kha	0,8	0,76	0,916	0,75	1,84	3,32

This table shows an overall trend for all districts: cleared land and total dry rice production is dropping. The largest production drop occurred in Muang Sing, since the number of ethnic villagers who used to own paddy land before being relocated is more significant than elsewhere: wet rice production is stagnant, either because villagers have not mastered the skills or because of the lack of working animals, with livestock having succumbed to epidemics, or having been sold prior to departure.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, villages have not managed to compensate for this production loss with other activities, although in some cases villagers who have learned to fish, or who do so more often, find that it can provide a significant addition to their diet.

### b) Increased periods of rice shortage

Consequently, the periods of rice deficit are increasing. A comparison of present to former periods for each district gives the following results:

Follow period (before/after)	equal (no. of families)	longer (no. of families)	shorter (no. of families)	TOTAL
Districts				
Muang Sing	13 (42%)	10 (32%)	8 (26%)	31 (100%)
Muang Nale	22 (50 %)	13 (29,5 %)	9 (30,5 %)	44 (100%)
Vieng Pou Kha	11 (36%)	14 (46%)	5 (18%)	30 (100 %)

Vieng Pou Kha is the district most affected by the increase in the duration of rice deficit, both in relative and absolute terms. The reduction in arable land is not compensated for by a diversification in activities, nor by the gains due to proximity to a transport route, which is not in good enough condition to allow villages to sell their products regularly.

At the same time, there are not necessarily many alternatives to rice, as the relocated communities are not sufficiently integrated into commercial networks (see next paragraph). In fact, these alternatives amount to borrowing from other villagers, the sale of livestock, or the hiring out of labour. As most of the families no longer possess many animals, the cohesion of the community is the most important factor during the period of deficit. If cohesion is weak, then exchanges will become monetarised and/or expensive. The case of the

<sup>8</sup> 91% of the villagers interviewed at Sing had no buffalo, and 88% had no cows. At Vieng Pou Kha, the corresponding figures

Khmu communities which have suffered a breakdown of their original villages is doubtless one of the most problematic, as these families can no longer count on their traditional trade networks.

In most resettlement sites with heterogeneous populations and/or populations made up of groups which have relocated at different times, senior families tend to monopolise paddy fields, or at least the best situated and most fertile lands. The official argument that villagers relocate to reduce the distance from village to field therefore seems a little specious: in some cases the old fields continue to be cultivated after the relocation, as the new lands are not sufficient to ensure the survival of the family in its new environment.

## 2. Gradual adaptation towards a commercial network

### a) Some villages succeed in taking advantage of their new locations. This was observed in all three districts visited.

From August to September for the last two years, the villages that have resettled on the upper reaches of the Nam Tha sell the wild cardamom they collect in the hills to a Korean company that pays Kip 4,200/husked kg. All the villages visited during the survey were engaged in this commercial activity, although as regulation seems to be nonexistent, one wonders for how much longer the district will be a cardamom producer. Some villages sell medicinal products, mostly plants, but for a tiny price. The traders, however, are making good profits.

Some recently relocated Akha villages in Muang Sing are also taking advantage of their situation. As the plain has now been precisely surveyed and land use is tightly regulated, many villages no longer have access to the species of bamboo used for matting (mai sang, mai bong) and for house construction (mai sot, mai ha). The villagers therefore must buy the mats in the market from others who do have access to the right varieties. Some Akha villages have therefore specialised in the manufacture of mats used to thresh rice, the price of which has nearly doubled in three years.

In Muang Vieng Pou Kha, two villages that we visited have integrated themselves into commercial networks thanks to raising livestock or hunting. The Hmong village of Ban Namvang has succeeded in rebuilding its stock of pigs and cattle since it left the valley. The inhabitants of Ban Poulan, on the other hand, hunt over a wide and mountainous area and sell their game beside the trail. Both of these examples show that it is not necessary to live close to a main road to develop trade. These are exceptional cases, however, as at both Nale and Sing the hunting grounds of new villages are both smaller than in the past, and less abundant. For several villages in Nale, the banks of the Nam Tha back onto the border with Oudomxai province, and the villagers are often faced with extra taxes if they wish to hunt, gather or grow crops on the left bank.

### b) Risk of a trade imbalance

For most villages, relocating to the lowlands means at least potentially better access to consumer goods, both edible and manufactured. However, it can happen that families sell off too many assets in order to be able to buy things. At the same time, the meagre earnings from roadside or riverside sales do not cover the expense of relocation. A survey of family indebtedness would provide valuable information about this problem. In most of the villages, recently arrived families were often indebted to senior families on the site. This process directly influences the division of land and helps to entrench the monopoly enjoyed by the longer established households.

### c) The opium question

Luang Namtha is no longer the principal opium growing province in Laos, yet the Tibeto-Burman and Miao-Yao minorities continue to cultivate and sell, and sometimes to consume, the sap of the poppy. Relocated villages have a tendency, during the first five years, to produce at least as much as prior to the move. There are several reasons for this phenomenon:

Opium is easy to process and transport and, above all, generates enormous surplus value for the

producers. During the difficult process of adopting new agricultural methods following the move, it makes a practical alternative when rice and other assets are short.

In villages with a high level of cohesion, opium can provide an easy means to develop the village. At Ban Namvang, for example, the two husking machines and the spring tap were financed by the sale of opium. Very few villagers consume the drug themselves. If the reduction of opium production is one of the objectives of the government and international agencies, then the priority in such cases should be to provide those things that villagers currently gain through opium (even if they refuse to resettle beside the road) rather than simply destroying the plants to encourage the cultivation alternative crops that will be far less profitable, at least in the early years.

When the addiction rate is already high in the original village, the health situation at the new site can deteriorate rapidly; epidemics or diseases that were unknown at the previous site lead villagers to smoke to escape their troubles. At the same time, as land use is more strictly regulated in the valley, the villagers will have less land available to cultivate the poppy, which can lead them to reduce fallow times dangerously, and to become more or less dependent on other villages to ensure a supply of opium.

### 3. Conclusion

Most resettled villages are currently experiencing a period of transition. For villages relocated following the war this transition has been going on for 20 years, with a lack of public assistance causing long-term impoverishment. This kind of village has not seen its standard of living improve, whereas more recently resettled villages, after a difficult first few years, often benefit from foreign aid - as is the case with several Akha villages on the plain of Sing.

In general, relocation seems to bring about a relative concentration of land use and a slow colonisation of new areas. The village economy becomes monetarised and opens itself little by little to the influence of small local markets. In these villages, the traditional sources of cohesion and solidarity provide the key to a successful transition.

## D/ EDUCATION AND VILLAGE RELOCATION

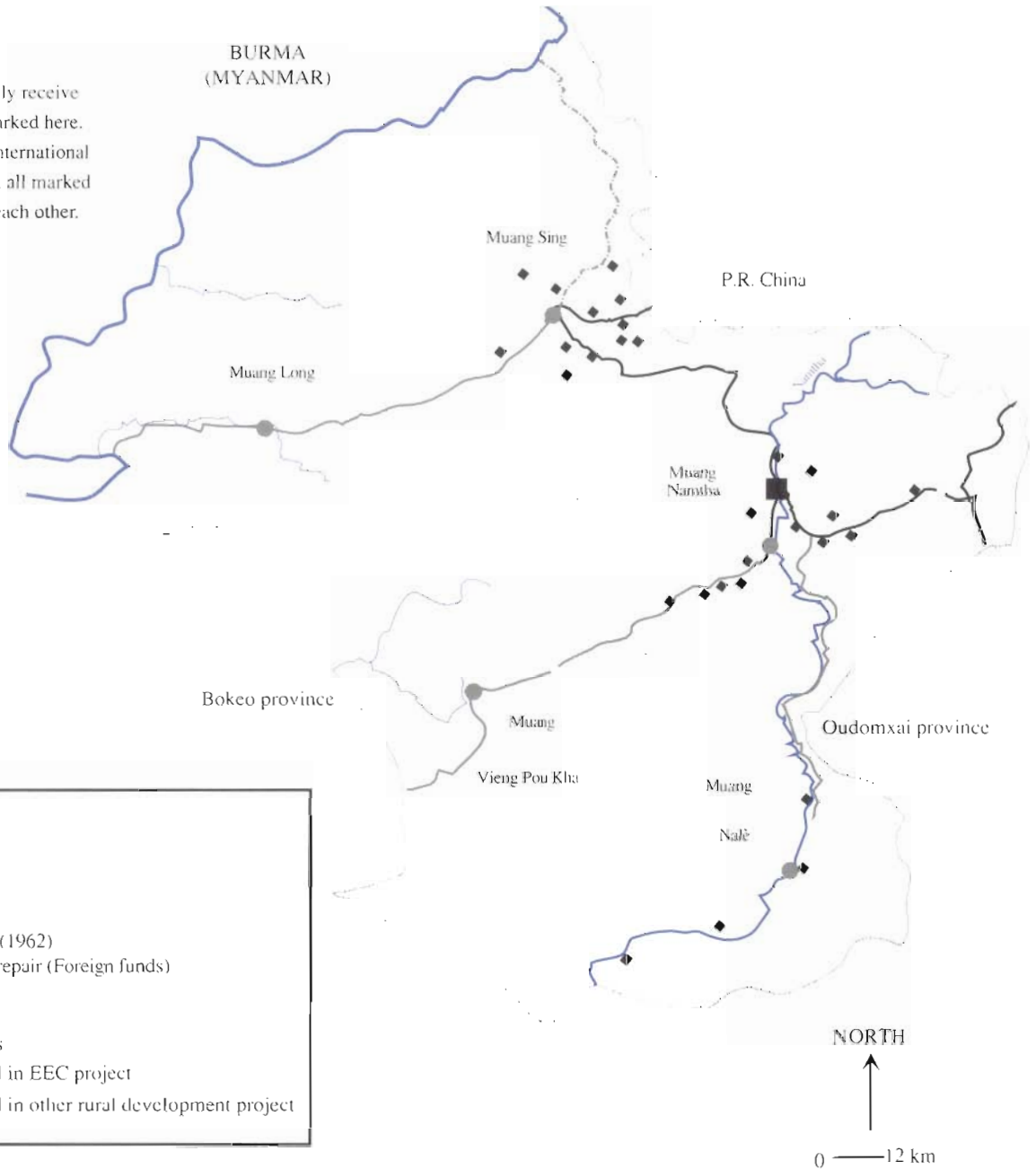
### 1. Geographic concentration of formal education structures

When in 1983 the province of Houakrong was divided into two new provinces, Bokeo to the south and Luang Namtha to the north, formal education had little structure. Most of the rural schools and military training centres were concentrated in the south-east of Luang Namtha province, an area which had been liberated very early on by the revolutionary army. The communist government then decided to extend primary education in the north of the province (Namtha and Sing districts). Nevertheless the expansion of formal education structures began from administrative centres situated on the plains. This concentration of educational structures still exists today, as shown by the two maps drawn up by the provincial Education Department for Sing and Namtha. In the former district, an effort was initiated in 1975 for the construction of primary schools - there was a total of 47 in 1995, as opposed to 20 in 1975 - but the map shows the weakness of the educational network in the mountains of the north-west, an area inhabited only by minorities. In Luang Namtha, the centralisation of formal education structures is even greater.

This geographic concentration of formal education structures is reinforced by the relocation policy: with the exception of politically important subdistricts, all new schools are constructed in villages which have relocated to the lowlands, as the table below shows.

### Map of International Aid, Luang Namtha Province

Note : villages which only receive rice donations are not marked here. Also, villages receiving international aid in Muang Sing are not all marked as they are too close to each other.



**Key**

- Mekong
- Nam Tha
- Other streams
- District borders
- Permanent roads (1962)
- Dirt roads under repair (Foreign funds)
- Other roads
- District towns
- Provincial towns
- Village involved in EEC project
- Village involved in other rural development project

## New schools built in Sing district

Village name	date of the construction of the school
B. Sai	1985
B. Xiengkeng	1992
B. Bouarkouk kao	1994
B. Bouarnassai	1992
B. Pabat Noi	1994
B. Heula	1992
B. Pabhat	1994
B. Tchom	1994
B. Kiyeu	1994
B. Sophi	1994
B. Oudomxin	1994

Out of 11 settlements, nine are ethnic minority villages recently settled in the plain of Sing. Of these nine villages, eight received assistance in education in 1994 when a German aid program started work in this area. Of these eight villages, some had been relocated in 1977 and therefore had to wait 17 years before receiving any external aid in the area of education, while some Lao Loum villages such as Ban Sai - also a new village - received a new school in 1985 with the aid of public money. As well as being unequally distributed in a geographic sense, public assistance in education also appears to have been ethnically selective as recently as 1985. This observation applies above all to the districts of Sing and Namtha.

In Muang Nale, historical circumstances favoured the early construction of schools in the hilltribe villages on the right bank, and many Khmu villages are now integrated into the system. Nevertheless the same phenomenon of geographic concentration of new facilities, here also 50% supported by German assistance, has been apparent for several years in the north of the district, where a number of villages have been relocated since the beginning of the 1980s.

A similar tendency is observable in Muang Vieng Pou Kha. But while the relocations have generally had no effect on education - the villages have no school, either before or after resettlement - some relocations have had a negative effect, in that some villages have lost schools which they possessed at their previous site, structures built with French or American aid. As well as suffering from a loss of cultural heritage, a breakdown of the community and the reduction of arable land, this category of village has also lost its schools!

## 2. Low impact on school attendance

In all districts, less than 10% of adolescents had completed their first year of primary education, regardless of sex. Education levels for adults are very low and demonstrate the persistence of sexual inequality in access to education: 46% of the men had never attended school, compared to 62% of women. 11% of men had reached third class of primary school, as against 4% of women. The privileged minority who had completed a primary education accounted for 10% of the men and 5% of the women interviewed.

Relocation does not seem to have had a major impact on the school attendance of children. There is often a greater need for labour compared to the old village, while the relative value of education remains low as the completion of primary school does not seem to bring benefits equal to the outlay. Even when the village has a school, children almost never leave the village for further study.

### 3. Better knowledge of the Lao language

While integration into formal education structures remains weak, people's oral command of the Lao language seemed to be improving in all villages visited, with the exception of Ban Sophi. Whether as a language of trade between villages or as the language of commerce in the local market, Lao is gradually becoming an indispensable tool for integration into the new environment. From this point of view, and if we set aside the question of loss of cultural heritage, relocation has had a positive effect on the linguistic integration of the ethnic minorities. It can also help children to adjust better to education structures, as long as these structures are set up soon after the move, and as long as the state takes steps to integrate children into the second cycle of education.

Given the motivation of villagers to send their children to school, it seems to us that relocation usually has a positive aspect in the area of education, which is lacking in the areas of health and economics.

### E/ CONCLUSION

Regarding the impact of relocation on ethnic minority settlements, we must take into account three essential elements:

The health situation in most of the affected villages is disturbing, and is usually worse than in the village of origin.

Stabilisation of the village economy remains uncertain, and the degree of solidarity within the community is without doubt the most important factor during this period of adjustment to new methods of production and trade.

Better access to education, at least in the medium term, seems to be the main positive consequence of relocation.

The problems encountered by the villagers in the areas visited show, furthermore, that external aid, either from the government or foreign sources, is almost never extended to villages prior to relocation. Two reasons may explain this fact:

The government does not plan for such aid, which would suggest a certain cynicism among the leaders, most of whom are well aware of the difficulties encountered by the villagers. This kind of thinking no doubt prevailed at the end of the war but seems to be less present nowadays.

The financial means are not available. In this case it is necessary to consider how such aid may eventually be made available. An analysis of Lao policy and of the results of the first foreign aid programs should point the way for such a consideration.

### **III. INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS AND INTERNATIONAL AID**

The aim of this chapter is to show how international aid is directly related to the issue of village relocation, to provide decision makers with information about the objectives and requirements of provincial leaders, and to introduce some thoughts about Non Formal Education and possible actions in this field.

#### **A/ INTERNATIONAL AID AND ITS ROLE VIS-A-VIS VILLAGE RELOCATION**

##### **1. International aid in Luang Namtha: Quantitative data**

Luang Namtha is one of the most favoured provinces in terms of donations, investment and foreign aid. German Cooperation (GTZ), the non-government organisations ZOA, World Concern, Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF), Ecoles Sans Frontieres (ESF) and Enfants et Developpement (EED), as well as the EU and the World Wildlife Conservation Fund (WWCF), have all specialised in community development. Their combined budget for 1994-2000 amounts to roughly \$25 million.

The World Bank, using Asian Development Bank funds, is involved in infrastructure construction, adopting a repayment plan over 40 years, commencing from the completion of the work. The total loan, which includes salaries, amounts to \$9.6 million for 1994-2000.

Altogether, Western aid, either as grants or loans, amounts to about \$35 million for provincial development. This sum is spread out over six years, at an average of \$5.7 million per year.

##### **2. Geographical distribution of aid**

Map 5 clearly shows how aid is organised in the province. Of the 45 villages shown,<sup>9</sup>38 (86%) are situated along trails, roads or riversides, and have been relocated in the last 20 years. Non-Tai minorities live in 33 villages. Several projects, each with a different focus, may work within the one village. Villages are generally chosen following provincial recommendations.<sup>10</sup>

It is clear from all this that international aid has become involved in the government's relocation policy, at least in the two districts of Sing and Namtha, which are serviced by a good road. This is simply an observation of an objective fact, and is not intended as a judgment about the intentions of those concerned.

There are some exceptions to this in the other districts, notably in Vieng Pou Kha where the EU has chosen to work with Hmong, Akha and Khoui villages in the mountains. GTZ is also working in non-relocated villages, financing schools and developing rice banks. In Muang Nale, on the other hand, all the villages in which GTZ has projects are settled beside the river, and many are new Khmu Nyouan or Khmu Leu settlements which have in some cases been relocated several times since 1975.

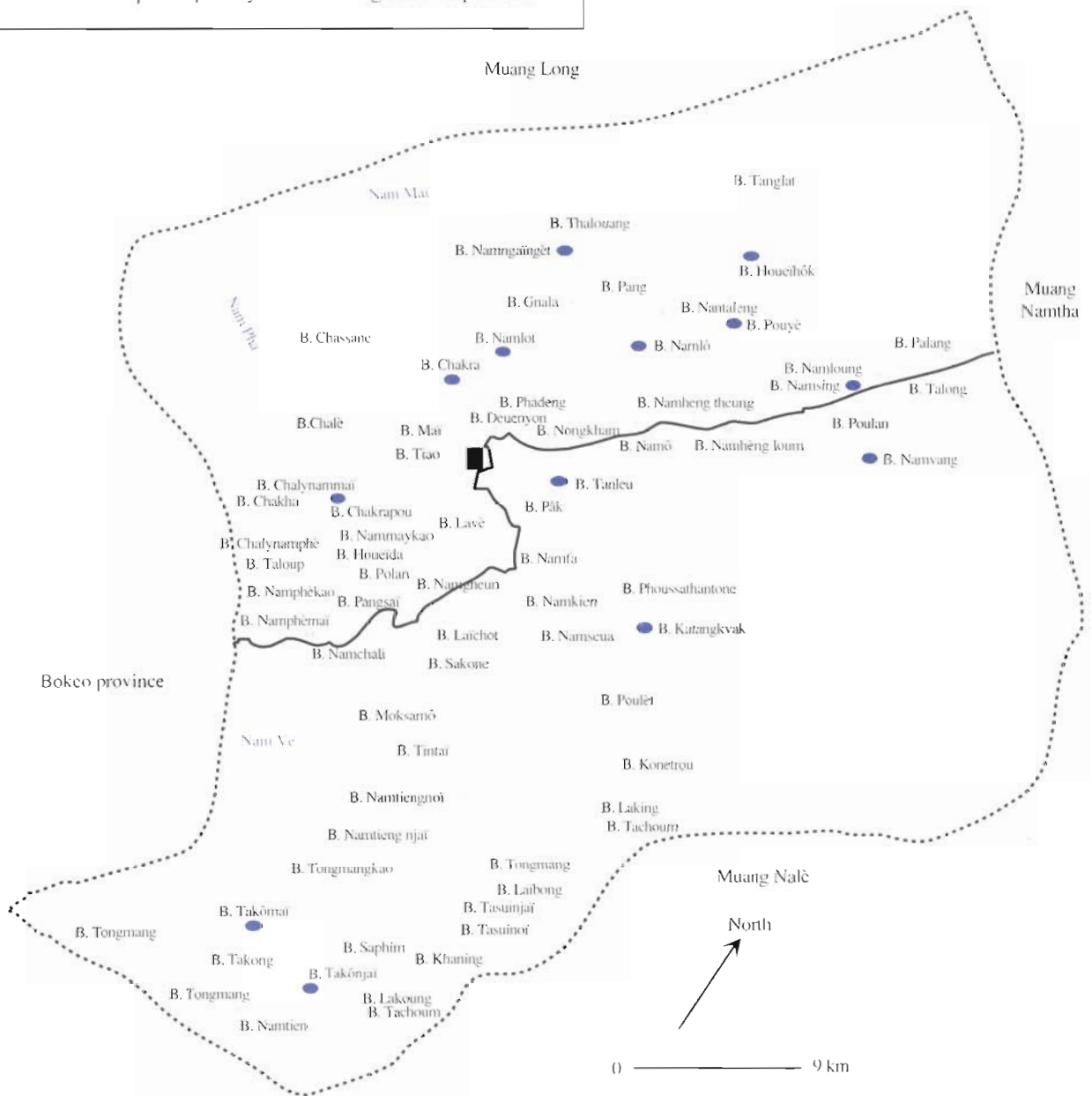
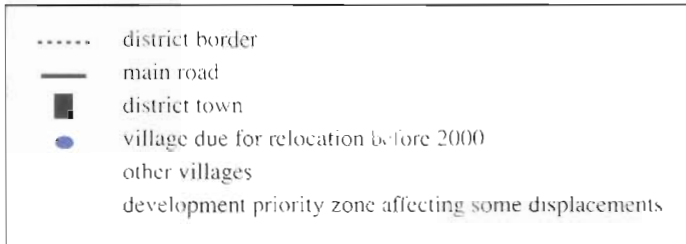
At the same time, international aid is also helping to upgrade the road network in Long, Vieng Pou Kha and Nale districts. In most cases the relocation of nearby villages to the roadside has already begun.

<sup>9</sup> The real number is somewhat higher, but for reasons of presentation, some settlements in Muang Sing could not be shown, as they are very close to one another. These villages are situated east of the district capital, inside the V formed by the road to the Chinese border.

<sup>10</sup> Looking at the maps of the Namtha administration, it is interesting to note that the number of villages shown is far smaller than the real number. The omissions are all villages which have remained at their original site, in the mountains. Does a village only begin to exist when it moves to the lowlands?!

## Expected Relocations in Vieng Pou Kha, 1995-2000

### Key



## B/ PRESENT OFFICIAL POLICY AND PLANS, 1996-2000

### 1. Current government attitude towards relocation

#### a) Policy

Most provincial leaders involved in rural development are fond of repeating that relocations nowadays take place on a voluntary basis as people seek access to services and “new jobs”, that is, work in paddy fields. Thus, officially, it is the villagers who appeal to the government for new land. Provincial officials declare that they are no longer in a position to satisfy every demand, since there is not much land left near the main roads. The government therefore wishes to create priority development zones, or focal zones, in each district, where people from various villages can be grouped later. These focal zones are in the process of being identified and the villages involved have not yet been moved. These focal zones consist generally of small valleys, large enough to allow paddy field development. They are not yet traversed by trails, but will probably influence road network building in the future. As these projects are not yet under way, we do not have a complete list of focal zones. Maps 6 and 7 show the location of two of them, while the document provided by the administration of Muang Sing goes into detail in the Lao language about the characteristics of future focal zones in the district.

#### b) Actions

Projected relocations from now until 2000 can be found at the end of part I supra. They give rise to three observations:

Relocations concern mainly small villages with fewer than 20 houses, the minimum for a settlement to be officially considered a village. For example, in Muang Nale, nearly all the villages listed are on the right bank and make up the final remnant of the population which has largely been relocated since 1975. In other cases, the size of the village is not a factor motivating the relocation. Ban Namvang, one of the villages which participated in the survey, is also one of those listed for relocation to Vieng Pou Kha, doubtless in an effort to curb its opium output, regardless of the villagers' wish to remain in the mountains and in spite of the fact that the EU has already begun to work in this village. In other cases, such as Lahu and Akha villages in the west of the district, it is simply a means of steering the village economy towards sedentary agriculture.

It also seems that villages will be removed and reunited according to their ethnic origin, doubtless to make the transition in agricultural methods easier by bringing traditional skills to bear.

Except for Muang Namtha, where some 20 villages are still about to move, district authorities seem to be applying more caution than formerly. They wait for construction of the new settlement to begin before asking the villagers to move. This has been the case at Vieng Pou Kha, where the government temporarily refused permission for some Khmu villages to settle beside the trail.

In the resettled villages, the government wishes to encourage regional specialisation according to the traditional skills of each ethnic group. In this way it hopes both to limit slash and burn,<sup>11</sup> and to integrate villages in a regional economy with enterprises such as market gardening, plantations of rare timber, and cattle. Although province officials are still talking about extremely ambitious targets in the current Five Year Plan (elimination of slash and burn, 80% literacy, etc), they are nevertheless very conscious both of the difficulties in the field, concerning mainly health and economics, and of the long term risks of such plans.

One successful relocation, Ban Hatnjao, was examined at a Rural Development Committee meeting. It is a small Hmong settlement situated a few kilometres away from the district capital, specialising in the production of pineapples which the villagers sell at a sizeable profit in the Luang Namtha market. “But we realise,” say the officials, “that if the number of such villages increases in the next few years, other problems will arise. How to dispose of so much merchandise in such a small market? How to export the produce with roads that are unusable for part of the year? If overall demand does not increase, how can prices be prevented from collapsing in the medium term? How can we ensure that enough development funds are available for the communities, and that interest rates will remain as low as possible?”

<sup>11</sup> According to statistics provided by the government, Luang Namtha has 6,770 ha of paddy fields and 13,000 ha cultivated by slash and burn.

## Expected Relocations in Nalé district, 1996-2000

Note : map drawn from education service map, 1991 and completed with observations in the field

### Key

- ..... district border
- district town
- villages due for relocations, 1996-2000
- other villages
- Focal zone



## 2. Possible advantages for concerned populations

### a) A necessary cooperation

As the process affecting most of the ethnic minority people of the province seems irreversible and, in fact, not very different from situations in other South-East Asian countries, it is less important to show the negative aspects, which are fairly well known to most development workers, than to offer guidance and help the government make good decisions at the right time.<sup>12</sup> If international aid is unable to oppose village relocation then it should, in the interest of the villagers, anticipate it. It is better to plan actions with the cooperation of the government than not to act until after the villagers have moved out. While working in Luang Namtha province over the last few months, we realised that local government services were not trying in any way to hide planned actions concerning relocation. On the contrary, they wished to keep international aid officials briefed.

The results of the survey carried out in 12 provincial settlements points clearly to the fact that the five years following relocation are the most crucial, during which time health and economic problems are the most pressing. Outside assistance should therefore start at least two years prior to relocation, and continue for at least three years afterwards. As the edges of the roads and rivers were and continue to be the main destinations for relocated villages, it makes sense to help the administration develop these sites before new populations arrive to settle there. In this regard, it seems to us incredible that when, for example, a new road is built with international assistance, the construction of health centres and amenities for potable water are not included in the budget.

Moreover, relocations within the province in the short term hinge on the development of the focal zones. It makes sense to identify these precisely and to develop them as quickly as possible in accordance with the wishes and traditional knowledge of their future inhabitants.

### b) Development does not necessarily mean relocation

It may be worthwhile trying to convince Lao decision makers that successful development does not necessarily mean relocating villages in valleys or plains. In several instances, living conditions in an old village situated in the mountains were far better than those experienced after the village had moved, even 10 years after relocation. Cattle rearing is also more feasible at altitude than in the valleys.

In some cases, it would make sense to find out early on if any agricultural specialisations and health and education services can be brought to a village even when it lies far from any transport route. Many villagers would prefer to do the work to upgrade a path which they use every day, than relocate without being sure that any aid will be forthcoming once they have resettled.

In this connection, the most important thing is to change the thinking of provincial bureaucrats. One way to achieve this might be to divide foreign aid into two categories and apportion it using a quota system. One category would be for villages that have already been relocated. The other would be for villages which do not wish to move and which have a promising capacity for development, as well as sufficient community cohesion to contribute, through their own labour, to the transport of the necessary materials. Such actions might take longer to carry out and cost more money, but from a social point of view the results would be far better. Lao officials themselves are fond of pointing out that good development does not proceed too quickly, and that the social aspect of development is one of the priorities of the central government.

### c) Estimation of financial requirements

We asked the Muang Namtha administration to estimate the type and cost of actions they think necessary for future relocated settlements. They produced a document of which the following is a translation:

<sup>12</sup> Some Western countries have also used relocation in the past as a method of developing their lands. The current policy appears to us to be far less pernicious than many people seem to think. Fundamentally it concerns a problem of development whose complexity should be grasped before any judgment is passed.

Type of action	Cost (millions of kips spent over 3 a 5 ans)
transporting population	33,46
building medecine stocks	5,693
aid for house construction	52,96
Financial aid for planning rice fields	172,942
irrigation	125,632
school construction	247
rice donations for follow periods over initial years	36,224
access road, construcyion to end village isolation	82,634
wells, tapping watersources	47,26
advance planning of site	97,946
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>902,752</b>

We are not in a position to comment on these figures because the survey did not cover Muang Namtha, but it seems to provide a good basis for reflection on future plans.

### **3. Requirements for training and Non Formal Education**

#### **a) Needs as expressed by the province**

During a recent speech, the Vice-Governor of Luang Namtha explained how he envisions education developing in the province. The following is a paraphrase of the speech:

Slow development is necessary for the sake of the social wellbeing of the province's inhabitants. Education for all is essential to such a policy. The province seeks to achieve central government goals for the year 2000, with literacy reaching 80% and 50% of the school age population finishing secondary school (matthanyom).

It is therefore necessary to build schools in the lowlands but also in the mountains, in order to teach the villagers the Lao language. Village heads must receive training to improve their capacity to develop their villages. During 1997, 105 village heads will receive training. 1,000 village agricultural technicians will also receive training before being dispatched to focal zones. Only this kind of effort will help to reduce the cultural differences between the various ethnic groups of the province. The promotion of traditional medicine must also be an important focus of activity. In all cases, the relocation of a village to a focal zone should be the product of a discussion with all of the inhabitants and an analysis of their traditional knowledge.

At the provincial level, professional training of cadres is one of the essential elements. The province also wishes to develop educational exchanges with other provinces, or with neighbouring countries, so that civil servants can master new technologies.

Although the themes raised in this speech were too general to form a basis for actual planning, they seem to provide a good framework for reflection for leaders in Non Formal Education at the central level. It remains now to elaborate this framework in the light of an analysis of the survey results from 12 villages of the province.

#### **b) Needs expressed by the villagers**

Two Non Formal Education (NFE) centres have been set up in Namtha and Sing districts, while a total of seven villages benefit from a Non Formal Education centre run by a volunteer in each village. Since the

villages taking part in NFE programs were already well known to us, the provincial Education Department asked that we conduct our surveys in other villages. As a result we were working under rather unusual conditions, as none of the villagers we interviewed had a basis on which to answer our questions. None of them had yet been inside either of the two provincial centres. In cases where the settlement was close to the district capital, people would explain that they did not dare enter the building as they felt undereducated or not well enough dressed.

In total, we interviewed 143 heads of families, but only 122 could answer one or more of the following questions:

What do you expect from the NFE centre regarding handicrafts?

What do you expect from the NFE centre regarding agriculture?

What do you expect from the NFE centre regarding health care?

### Statistical results of enquiry into new villages needs in non formal education

Demand	Number (statistical frequency )
1/ Husbandry skills	39
2/ Irrigation	4
3/ Crop plantations	9
<b>Agriculture Total</b>	<b>52 (100%)</b>
4/ Clear water	21
5/ Health	19
6/ Vaccination	5
7/ Health education (notices, diagrams)	3
<b>Health Total</b>	<b>48 (100%)</b>
8/ Advisors	6
9/ Weaving	9
10/ useful products (sheets, mattresses, machetes)	4
11/ mechanics	2
<b>Crafts Total</b>	<b>21(100%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>122</b>

Regarding agriculture, nearly every villager wished for assistance with rearing cattle. Many had lost most of their animals during relocation, and could not trade much in the market or in other villages. Some were interested in growing commercial crops, such as teak plantations. In this case a medium-term investment would be necessary, accompanied by training in horticulture.

In the area of health, the two most frequent requests were for a drinking water system (gravity fed system, well or spring) and the permanent presence of a paramedic to vaccinate animals or to teach villagers some basic facts about the human body.

Finally, with regard to handicrafts, the presence of advisers would be appreciated, as would the setting up of a network for the sale of basketry. (Most of the villages visited were Khmu.)

It must be made clear that, when villagers talk about plantations, irrigation or drinking water, they expect technical assistance, not just training without material support. We believe that to meet these needs, a precise study of the possibility of partial self-financing combined with the permanent presence of a provincial or foreign technician would allow for the transfer of basic knowledge without the need for a large budget. In some of the villages visited, people had already built a system for the delivery of water, but unfortunately the water remained non-potable owing to a lack of skills and means.

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# Oudomxai

**B. Mounier**



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The team in charge of this survey in Oudomxai consisted of four people: Mr. Thongvane (staff member of the Non Formal Education Service), Mr Khamput (instructor), Mr Santi (translator) and the team leader. This team stayed two or three days in each of the surveyed villages. The information in this report has been gathered from exchanges with the administrative services, discussions with the members of the village councils, and our own observations. Several people from the provincial and districts Education Offices have been of great help. Many thanks to all of them.

## INTRODUCTION

This survey was carried out in 13 villages in Oudomxai province, although these were not equally spread over the different districts. Six villages were in Muang Xai, four were in Muang La, two were in Muang Beng and one was in Muang Hoon. This was because of the greater number of village relocations in Muang Xai, and because the villages were chosen according to their date of settlement, their ethnic makeup and their reason for relocation. Moreover, the rainy season made it difficult to visit Muang Nga, a two-day walk from the district capital. Given the short period of time, we were not able to survey all the villages, especially the more remote ones. We used village accessibility as a selection criterion, which is why most of the selected villages are alongside the roads. Among the 13 surveyed villages, seven had a Non Formal Education centre.

# I. PROVINCIAL CONTEXT OF RELOCATED VILLAGES

## A/ BACKGROUND

### 1. Overview of the province

Oudomxai province was created in 1967. In 1985, Oudomxai comprised nine districts (muang) and 883 villages; in 1990 it had 11 districts. Presently, Oudomxai is made up of seven districts and 813 villages for a population of 211.300 covering 15.370 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population density of 14 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Muang Xai includes 174 villages; Muang Nga 101 villages; Muang Beng 100 villages; Muang La 70 villages; Muang Namor 105 villages; Muang Hoon 182 villages and Muang Pakbeng 81 villages. The province is mountainous and has scarcely any lowland areas.

### 2. History of relocation

In northern Laos movements have long been significant and have resulted in the intermingling of ethnic groups and cultures. Families and villages moved spontaneously according to the constraints imposed by slash and burn cultivation and their traditional beliefs. The Hmong, Yao and Tibeto-Burman populations started to migrate to northern Laos in the 19th century. Village relocations have always been frequent. During the colonial period, the administration encouraged numerous families to settle in the plain so villages could be created and administrative functions could be established at the village level.

#### a) Relocation due to the war

In Oudomxai, the war of decolonisation took place against the French from 1953 to 1958. From 1958 on, combat was between the revolutionary troops and the Royalist Army supported by the Americans. Villagers scattered in the mountains and the forests to flee the fighting and the bombings. Likewise, many young people and families fled to escape recruitment into either army. Oudomxai was taken over by the revolutionary administration around 1961.

#### b) Relocation after the war

Since 1967-1968 the administration has had a policy of integrating the ethnic minorities, and has encouraged them to settle alongside the roads or in the plains to participate in national reconstruction. In this way, the administration hopes to promote village development and have more control over these populations. Villages also returned to the plain to recover lands that were prone to flooding, unexploited or abandoned during the years of war. At that time, the regrouping of villages was orchestrated by the administration. From 1973 onwards, families that had fled to Luang Prabang and Sayaboury began to resettle in Oudomxai province. The villages settled alongside the roads or in the forest, or where they had lived before.

#### c) Collectivisation of agriculture

Between 1976 and 1980, villages relocated themselves in order to develop the land, to increase rice production and, through the creation of collective farms, to participate in national reconstruction. These collective farms, however, did not always regroup villages or families; numerous collective farms were created in already existing villages.

#### d) Liberalisation of the economy

The change in 1986 to a more liberal economy, thanks to the launching of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), promoted the development of production resulting in surpluses that allowed the multiplication of economic exchange. The relocation of villages to the lowlands continued, but the goal was for the people to benefit from wet rice cultivation and to promote commercial exchange while putting an end to their isolation. A geographical analysis clearly shows the zones of origin and resettlement.

### B/ THE PROCESS OF RELOCATION

#### 1. Provincial summary

The district maps clearly show the different periods of relocation. It has not been possible to develop such a map for every district, and the four existing maps are the result of the cooperation between the Education Department, the Committee for Planning and Cooperation and the provincial and district Administration Departments. Upon our request, the Rural Development Committee and the Committee for Planning and Cooperation (RDC and CPC) gave us their forecast of relocations (in red on the maps). It was impossible to show all the movements on the maps, as the maps would have been illegible. These maps allow one to get an idea of the movements and to define the zones of origin and resettlement.

##### a) Muang Xai

From the map of Muang Xai we can see that the villages on the road to Luang Namtha (Route 2) are fairly old villages; the same is true for the ones on the roads to Muang La and Muang Beng. Most of these were long distance relocations, unlike in the other districts in the province. The relocations around the provincial capital took place during the 1970s and 1980s, and earlier. The relocated and newly created villages on the road to Nambak (Route 1), on the other hand, are more recent, dating from the late 1980's and 1990's. Many families originating from Luang Prabang resettled on this road, whence they had fled during the war to avoid the American bombings.

We noticed, on the other hand, that nearly all the relocations were towards the road. Is this due to the villagers' desire to break their isolation and promote trade, or is it the administration that insists on their resettlement to promote their development and at the same time to have more control over them? This is difficult to answer: the administration wants to relocate the villages alongside the road in order to change their cultivation techniques (from hai to paddy); but we have also to acknowledge the fact that some of the villagers themselves want to settle alongside the road. The administration tries to influence the villages which want to move so they will choose new settlements in the plain or alongside the road. This trend is borne out for the four districts surveyed. We also noticed that most of the village relocation projects take place in the rural development areas (focal zones). This was the case in the other districts as well.

##### b) Muang La

Relocations have not been as numerous in Muang La as in the other districts, perhaps because Muang La has the fewest villages of all districts in the province. Unlike Muang Xai, the recent relocations have essentially been around the district capital and in the focal zone. In contrast, the settlements along the road date to movements that occurred from end of the 1960s until the early 1980s.

##### c) Muang Beng

While the relocations from Muang Xai have had a tendency to go northwards, the relocations from Muang Beng go south. This may be due to the fact that the district capital is in the far south of the district and lies only 30 km from the capital of Muang Hoon, thereby promoting trade between them. The inhabitants of the villages in between these two towns use both markets. The relocations, once again, have had a tendency to

approach the roads. Many of the relocations in the 1960s were over short distances, while recent ones have been longer. In this district, there were not as many relocations during the 1980s compared to the 1970s and 1990s.

#### **d) Muang Hoon**

In Muang Hoon, most of the relocations took place in the 1970s and clearly show a trend of movement from the mountains to the roads in the plains. The present relocations are small shifts to gain better access to the district capital or the road. Even so, Muang Hoon is the only district where most of the resettled villages are outside the focal zone.

#### **e) Provincial forecast**

The administration has forecast the relocation of at least 39 villages for the four districts surveyed (12 at Muang Xai, eight at Muang Beng and 11 at Muang Hoon). It is a pity that the rainy season made it difficult to access Muang Nga because most of the regroupments have already taken place there, and a road is under construction. It should be pointed out that in most of these cases, it is groups of families that move, rather than entire villages. There can be many different explanations for the creation of a new village, but it usually happens for a combination of reasons.

## **2. Regrouping of villages**

Since 1990, numerous relocations have resulted from a more intensified regrouping of villages. The Village Decree states that the provincial authorities should regroup all villages with fewer than 20 families. Further, a village on the plain should have at least 50 families and a maximum of 200 families. The regrouping of villages or families has caused many relocations, independent of other reasons. There are still several villages that have not reached the criterion of 20 families, and these will certainly be moved in the future, especially since most of these villages are fairly remote and difficult to access, and therefore difficult to control.

Regrouping does not necessarily mean relocation. If two villages are close to each other, very often there is an administrative unification. In this way, the number of villages in Oudomxai dropped from 1,200 in 1990 to 813 in 1996. According to the provincial administration, Muang Nga was the site for most of this. We do not have exact information on this district because of the rainy season and the extremely difficult road conditions.

## **3. Resettlement along roads**

The roads of Oudomxai were constructed between 1963 and 1975 by the Chinese. From 1967 to 1968 villages moved to the roadside. Route 4 from Oudomxai to Muang La was completed in 1969, while Route 1 to Nambak was completed in 1973. Villages willing to move were encouraged by the authorities to settle alongside the roads, one of their main arguments being that it brought people closer to communication facilities and gave better access to public services (health, education, and so on). Another argument that began to be put forward at this time was that it makes paddy land more accessible, since most of the roads are in the lowlands. Presently, many roads are under construction in the province and villages have already settled along them, even before they are finished.

## **4. The fight against deforestation and watershed destruction**

### **a) Reasons for deforestation**

Many villages also seem to have moved so as to reduce slash and burn. Since 1975 the Lao government has continued to affirm its commitment to reduce hai cultivation. Slash and burn cultivation and forest exploitation

are considered responsible for the disappearance of forest and the drying of the watersheds. It is difficult to control commercial exploitation of the forest because part of it is clandestine and most of the time it is done during the dry season when the wood is easier to cut and to transport. In Oudomxai, forest exploitation by companies is only possible along the sides of roads that are under construction. This area is not negligible since at least 300 km of new roads are to be built in the province. These problems related to clandestine exploitation of the forest are not easily quantifiable.

### **b) Deforestation and slash and burn cultivation**

The desire to reduce hai cultivation focuses essentially on highland ethnic minorities who traditionally do not practice irrigated rice farming. These people settle at the summit of the mountains and practice slash and burn cultivation in areas that are not densely forested. The growing shortage of wooded areas and the impoverishment of the soil have very often obliged these people to leave their villages and resettle in new forest zones.

### **c) The fight against hai cultivation**

Surveys have been conducted by the Rural Development Committee and the district Agriculture Departments to quantify the surface area of available paddy land. The provincial and district departments need to provide these zones with irrigation. The development of these zones will enable new villages to be established, thereby decreasing hai cultivation.

The area of lowland for paddy cultivation is not sufficient, however, so the villages are requested to reduce the extent of hai by limiting it to secondary forests and areas where slash and burn has been practiced in the past. The authorities request the villagers to diversify their production, primarily promoting livestock raising and agro-forestry (teak, banana trees, mango trees, etc) to enable the villagers to make enough money to buy rice for consumption.

### **d) Village responsibility regarding forest management**

To encourage a sense of responsibility for the protection of the forest, the authorities give the villages management rights over the forest. The district Rural Development Committees determine, together with the villagers, the land use zones. These include hai areas that need to lie fallow for three years; areas for gardening and market gardening; protected forest areas with a hunting ban; protected forest areas where hunting is permitted; exploitable forest areas (in general fairly small compared to the two previous zones); previous hai areas that require a fallow period and, finally, livestock zones and agro-forestry and gardening plantations where hai is banned. These zones are the villagers' responsibility and the diversification of activity enables them to settle permanently.

### **e) The fight against opium cultivation**

The fight against opium cultivation is the object of particular attention. The Lao Soung smoke opium by tradition but a large part of the production is sold to 'wholesalers' who turn it into heroin. The traditional consumption of opium by the minorities is not a problem in itself, but the excess used for heroin production provokes international pressure to reduce its cultivation. The villages have to reduce their production and eventually stop altogether. The opium poppy is cultivated at higher altitudes using the slash and burn techniques of the Lao Soung. The goal of some relocations to the lowlands is to stop opium cultivation. Some village relocations to the lowlands, or to focal zones, are mainly to reduce opium cultivation and at the same time to reduce the area of hai production. Since poppy cultivation is the main source of income for some villages, it is difficult for them to stop this practice, especially as there are no alternative crops for these villages to grow.

## **5. Development projects in the province**

The administration would like to diversify provincial activities by, among other things, district specialisation that would enable an increase in economic exchange within the province. Muang Hoon and Muang Beng would become the 'rice baskets' of the province because, of all the districts, they have the largest lowland areas. Muang Xai and Muang Pakbeng would be the tourist towns because of their restaurant and guest house facilities (although, except for the hotel facilities, there is nothing in Muang Xai to interest tourists). Muang Xai could also specialise in market gardening in the plain, while Muang Hoon and Muang Beng could specialise in chicken, duck and turkey farming, as well as agro-forestry plantations. More generally, the lowland areas would focus on farming small animals (chickens, ducks, etc), while big animals (buffalo, cattle and pigs) would be raised in the mountainous zones. Muang Namor could specialise in mining, such as iron.

## **6. Provincial focal zones**

At the provincial level there are two "focal zones", one at Muang Beng and the other at Muang Hoon. These are integrated zones where the construction of roads is nearly finished and where the establishment of health centres is planned to prevent the village from moving again in case of epidemics. These health centres are financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) up to Kip 17 million. The Education Department is in charge of building schools, although this has not yet begun due to a lack of funds. The Rural Development Committee provides funds to build irrigation systems and to diversify and intensify livestock raising and forestry activities. Credit is available and ranges from Kip 150,000-300,000 per family, lent by the Rural Development Committee. Families may borrow money if they build the irrigation systems themselves. These focal zones are only at the early stages of development and very few villages have been moved yet, but relocations to these zones are planned for the near future. These focal zones are under the supervision of the Rural Development Committee, which coordinates closely with the different administrative services.

The Muang Beng Focal Zone is in a mountainous area which includes valleys where rain fed rice cultivation is possible. Ban May (see Description of the Villages, p 61) is already being relocated and another will be moved in 1997. There are already seven villages in this zone and a school, a clinic and a small market will be built at its centre. It is impossible to say if villages will be established after the construction of this centre. 12 villages will benefit from this integrated development.

The Muang Hoon Focal Zone consists of 22 villages of which four will be regrouped next year. It is difficult to know how many villages will be relocated because it was not possible to do an in-depth survey of Muang Hoon due to the lack of time. However, at district level the Muang Hoon administration forecasts the relocation of least nine villages next year. As for Muang Beng, the school and the health facilities will be at the centre of the zone, although it is uncertain whether a new village will be created.

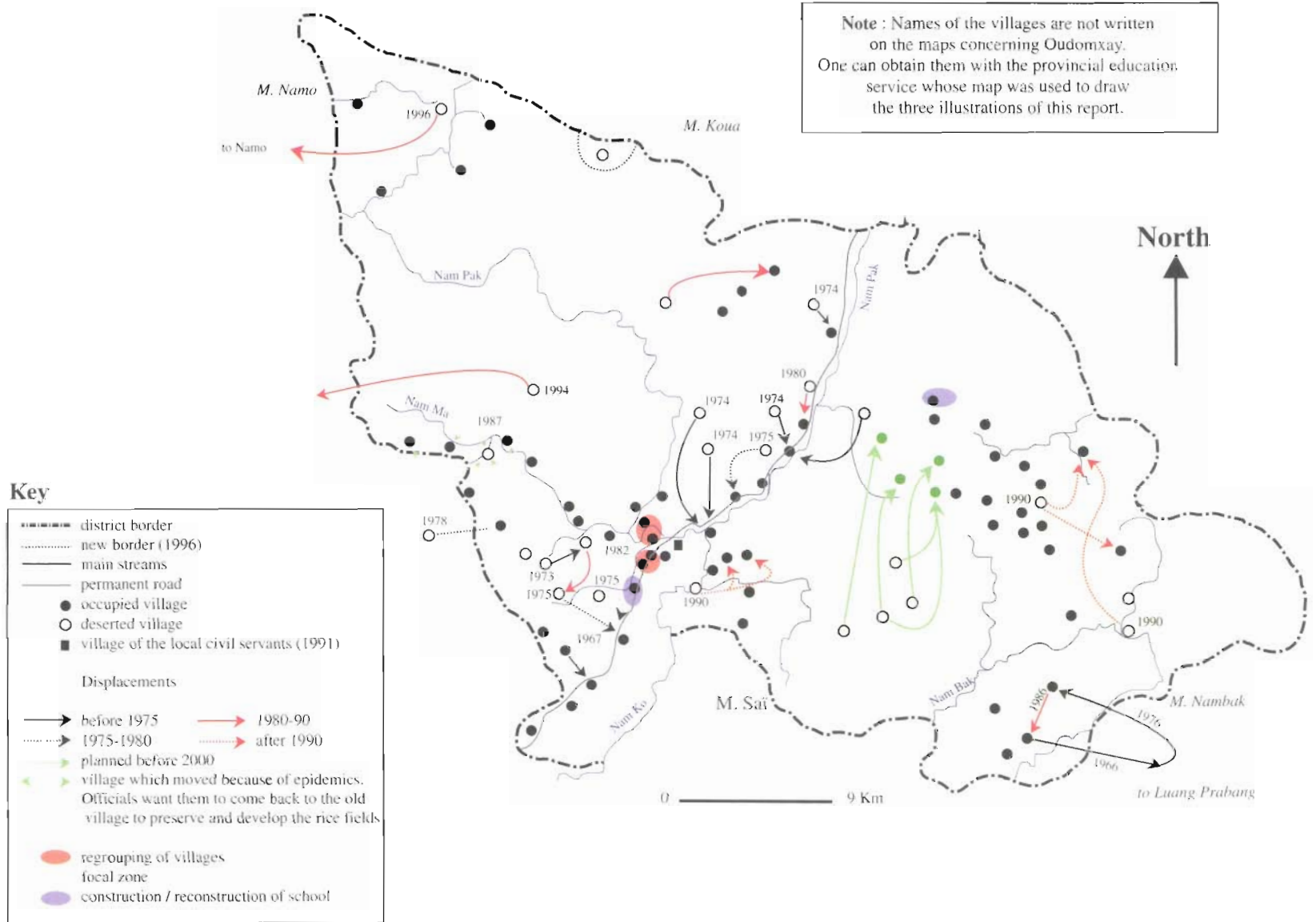
## **7. District focal zones**

Each district has a focal zone but it is difficult to know which projects they cover. They reflect the idea of district specialisation and are supposed to promote the reduction of shifting cultivation. Several focal zones will have a health centre funded by the ADB to enable better settlement of the villages. Most of the relocations involve these focal zones. Villages that are already settled in these zones will be regrouped, while villages in neighbouring areas will be relocated inside the zones. Most of these relocations are still in the planning stage because the development of these zones (irrigation, health centres etc) has not yet started and because there are no funds available for these relocations (for transport, taking care of the sick people, and so forth).

## **8. Administrative process regarding relocation**

When a village wants to move, different options are possible. If the families know the site they wish to move to they present it to the district, which requests authorisation from the province. A second possibility exists when a village wants to move without knowing where it wants to go. In this case, the Rural Development

**La District : displacements of villages since 1960**



Committee is responsible for defining new settlement sites, especially when the village wants to change to paddy cultivation. The search for new settlement sites can take several years, during which time the villages cannot move. The authorities may incorporate these villages into their development plans according to the different strategies explained above.

A third possibility is linked to the campaign to counter slash and burn and poppy cultivation. Some villages have been influenced to choose settlement sites that facilitate administrative functions (close to a road) and that are, if possible, in the lowlands (changing to wet rice cultivation). In general, the idea of relocation comes from outside the village.

Finally, for the regrouping of villages - and this can also apply to the three cases mentioned above - the district investigates the villages, picks out the smallest settlements and proposes plans for their regroupment to the provincial authorities. In this way, villages may be influenced in favour of relocation. Regrouping without relocation has also taken place where villages are relatively close together, in which case the authorities merely reorganise the village statistics and consolidate the administrative functions of the unifying villages. Most of the time this type of regrouping involves two or three villages.

In addition, in each district the administration has established a village near the district capital where government staff and their families can live. The establishment of these villages, organised by the administration, enables regrouping of civil service families, although there is little actual relocation.

## C/ PROFILES OF THE SURVEYED VILLAGES

### a) Muang Xai

#### **Ban Mokok**

A village of White Hmong situated at Km 16 on the road to the Nam Ou, Ban Mokok settled here in 1975 and has had a Non Formal Education centre since the end of 1994. The village comprises 35 families totalling 254 people (127 male and 127 female, with 133 children up to 14 years) living in 30 households. In 1975, when the first groups of families created Ban Mokok, they wanted firstly to break their isolation and move closer to the road. Secondly, the village headman was at that time head of the tasseng and was aware of administrative circulars urging the limitation of slash and burn cultivation, so consequently chose to relocate the village. It was a small relocation that allowed the villagers to take along their livestock and belongings. Only when they arrived at the village did they began to practice wet rice cultivation (12 ha of paddy and 20 ha of hai).

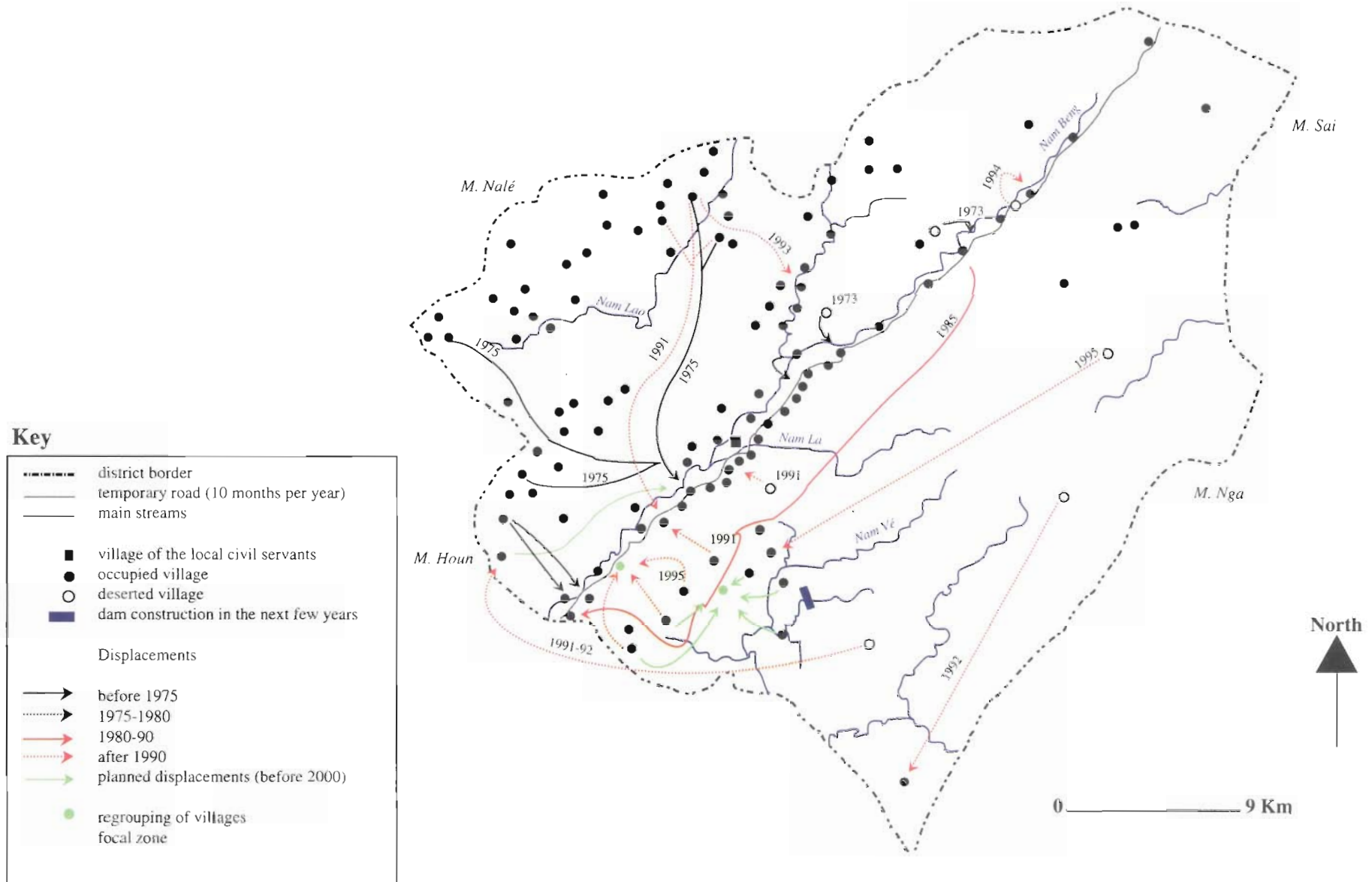
#### **Ban Nassaythong**

Ban Nassaythong is a Leu (Lao Loum) village situated in a high valley 18 km from Oudomxai (2 km after Ban Mokok), through which the Neon river passes. The population of 205 is evenly divided between male (105) and female (100), the majority being children (112). The villagers settled here in February 1987 following the regroupment of three villages. These three villages are Ban Nanjang north, Ban Nanjang south and Ban Nanjang centre, which came from Pakba district of Luang Prabang. They decided to move because there was not enough land in their previous village, and what land they had was not very fertile. The villagers now farm paddy land (22 ha) and for two years have planted nasseng (1.7 ha). One year after relocation the Quaker Service installed an irrigation scheme, and for two years the village has had a Non Formal Education centre.

#### **Ban Khiou Hia**

Immediately after Ban Nassaythong there is a small village, Ban Khiou Hia, with 18 houses. Established in 1977, Khiou Hia has 134 inhabitants, all White Hmong. This village has been provided with Non Formal Education. The villagers did not completely settle until 1987, having abandoned the site between 1980 and 1987 because at that time they did not know how to farm paddy (they currently have 8 ha of paddy and 5 ha of hai). They were originally relocated in 1977 as part of an administrative strategy to populate the roadsides. Their second move was more to show their willingness to fight slash and burn cultivation. Since 1993, this village has had an irrigation system built by the Quaker Service.

### Beng district : displacements since 1973



### **Ban Nangiou**

Established in 1974 to amalgamate groups of families scattered in the mountains, Ban Nangiou is a small village of 178 Khmu Leu. The 31 families of this village are settled 500 m before Km 9 on the road to Luang Prabang. In January 1991, the village voluntarily moved 500 m, crossing a stream known as Houaykhang to be closer to the road. Restrictions on slash and burn cultivation have been imposed and the villagers have started to cultivate paddy (5 ha of paddy and 11 ha of hai). No help was provided during either relocation. Since 1994 they have had a Non Formal Education centre.

### **Ban Houaymork**

Established at the beginning of this year (1996), Ban Houaymork is situated five hours walk along a path leading off Route 22 at Km 14 between between Muang Xai and Muang Beng. This village is the result of a regroupment that is still in progress. A Khmu village was settled here before, but as this zone was traditionally inhabited by the Hmong, the Khmu chose to leave before the arrival of the first White Hmong and Hmong Lay. Only three Khmu families stayed, living about 500 m from the Hmong houses. A Hmong village (previously Ban Houaymork) has begun to relocate (two families have already moved) while another village arrived in January 1996. This village had been settled at Km 22 between Muang Beng and Muang Xai where they stayed for one year (18 families). These two villages have lived together in the past.

The relocation-regrouping of these two villages took place because they were small and as part of the fight against opium cultivation. Another reason was that the settlement at Km 22 suffered from flooding during heavy rains. Because the government has not yet installed an irrigation system, the villagers have not begun working the paddy (15 ha), continuing instead to cultivate hai (8 ha, which will expand upon the arrival of other families). Besides the 23 families already mentioned, the village has received five additional families from Luang Prabang, although these may be sent back because their move was not authorised.

### **Ban Lak 44**

Situated at Km 44, as its name indicates, on the road leading to the Nam Ou, Ban Lak 44 is located at an altitude that does not permit wet rice cultivation. The 56 families of this village practice slash and burn cultivation (about 50 ha). Composed of different groups of families, the village was created by the relocation of the villagers from Km 41 in 1991. The settlement at Km 41 was abandoned because it was too small and did not allow the village to expand. These people lived in the Phou Laoly mountains before the authorities requested that they resettle alongside the road. During the first move they were given no assistance. The area of land at the previous site limited expansion, but the relocation to the new site has enabled the village to receive more families and establish a bigger village. The Lao Women's Union took an active part in this relocation decision and served as intermediary with the Quaker Service for their development assistance (mosquito nets, a rice mill, two sawing machines, a six-month adult literacy course and credit to the Health Department to build a small reservoir). Moreover, the Agriculture Department provided vehicles for use by the Health Department. Since then, other families have joined this village. Some families live at Km 41, even though they are included in the village statistics.

## **b) Muang La**

### **Ban Thnongpo**

Established in 1930, this village, composed of 30 houses, has been settled 6 km from the market at Km 16 on the road from Oudomxai to Phongsaly since 1952. The villagers moved to the lowlands to practice paddy cultivation but lack of land forced them to move back to the mountains to continue slash and burn cultivation (58 ha of hai; six families have bought 2 ha of paddy). All the 204 inhabitants belong to the Khmu Ou ethnic group. The Non Formal Education centre has functioned since 1994. This village may move again in the future because the inhabitants still want to farm paddy but cannot find enough land, and will need help from the administration.

### **Ban Phonsay**

Situated at Km 17 on the road to Phongsaly, this village was created in 1966 by 11 families coming from Ban Thnongpo Noy. About 20 families joined them in 1967-1968, some coming from Ban Thnongpo. The 57 families currently settled here live in 40 households and are all of the Khmu Ou ethnic group. The 290 inhabitants have received technical advice and literacy training from the Non Formal Education centre. Despite

their lowland location, slash and burn cultivation is still important (50 ha). Only 24 families practice wet rice cultivation, as the families from Ban Thnongpo and Ban Samikhisay possess only 5 ha of paddy land. In 1991, the families started a fair which takes place twice a month, and has allowed the development of a small local economy.

#### **Ban Samikhisay**

This settlement lies 2 km from Ban Phonsay towards Oudomxai; it has 75 houses and is the largest village we visited (111 families). Ban Samikhisay is a Khmu Ou village established in 1976-1977 when four villages were regrouped (Ban Deuendin, Ban Namohon, Ban Khioukhok and Ban Houaylay) when yields from hai cultivation began to drop and the authorities proposed that they regroup along the road. Hai is also the dominant cultivation practice here (120 ha) and the few hectares of paddy available are all owned by 12 older families of the village and their heirs (14 families cultivate 15 ha of paddy). These 14 families support nearly the entire village, as they supply the families who are in need of rice. The population of 529 is almost equally divided between males (260) and females (269). The children are able to attend P1 in the village, but to continue their education they have to go to Ban Phonsay.

#### **Ban Donsay**

Situated at Km 37 on Route 4 (linking Muang La and Muang Khua in Phongsaly province), all 156 inhabitants are Khmu Ou. This village is locked between two mountains and bordered by the Nam Phak river, preventing the 32 families from practicing lowland rice cultivation. The village is marked by a demographic imbalance with 91 females for only 65 males, a disparity which is even greater among the children under seven years of age (20 out of 31 are girls) and people over 45 years (21 women and 13 men). Established at Km 35 during a regrouping of villages in 1975 to populate the roadside, a group of families moved to Km 37 to be closer to the hai fields (24 ha).

### **c) Muang Beng**

#### **Ban Phonsy**

Situated 12 km south of Muang Beng, Ban Phonsy is a village with 27 houses and 167 people. It has a small demographic imbalance, but in the opposite direction to the other villages: there are 92 males. The 29 families are all White Hmong, and only cultivate hai (25 ha). They settled at Km 75 in 1993 to be able to plant paddy rice, but problems remain with the other villages concerning the arrangements for the hai, blocking all negotiations over the paddy land. This village relocated spontaneously and has many problems. It was certainly one of the poorest villages we visited.

#### **Ban May**

Situated in the focal zone, Ban May is about 10 km from Muang Beng by a small path, but is also accessible by road (under construction) during the dry season. However, it takes another half an hour to walk from the road to the village. The administration proposed two sites for this village. The 139 inhabitants are all White Hmong and come from four different villages: Ban Nam Phe, Ban Namcka, Ban Namet and Ban Phou Falan (Muang Nga). The 42 families still cultivate hai and will continue to do so until the Agriculture Department and the Rural Development Committee build an irrigation system so they can switch to lowland rice. While it did not receive any outside assistance, the village was able to provide for its own needs and will be able to take advantage of future focal zone projects. However, difficulties have arisen because the relocation was expensive.

### **d) Muang Hoon**

#### **Ban Nongboden**

Situated 3 km from Muang Hoon, Ban Nongboden is a large multi-ethnic village, with a majority Hmong population. The 80 families that inhabit this village practice slash and burn cultivation (28 ha) and paddy (28 ha). The demographic male surplus (524 inhabitants, 294 of them male) is explained by the proximity of the town and its attractions. This village was established with the regrouping of two villages (Ban Nongboi and Ban Nambeng) in 1986, and has since expanded due to some fairly large population movements between 1988 and 1993. The Hmong traditions have tended to disappear, and most of the houses are on stilts. It is common to see the women wearing a traditional Hmong jacket with a Lao sinh. The first two villages were able to move with the help of trucks provided by the government. These two villages, Ban Nongboi and Ban Nambeng, received a husking machine, metal sheets for roofing and a bellows for the ironworks from the Quaker Service upon arrival. A promised school and health centre, which were used to encourage the villagers to move, were not built until three years after their arrival.

## II. EFFECTS OF RELOCATION

### A/ BEFORE AND AFTER RELOCATION

#### 1. Overview of the survey

The village relocations have had varying causes and effects. Broad trends are distinguishable, but each village presents a particular case. It is not really possible to establish a typology of relocation; for one thing, most of the villages surveyed were alongside roads, which introduces a bias about the causes of relocation.

Assistance offered from outside adds to the variety of reasons for moving. This assistance is on the increase. Families relocated during the 1970's had to undertake all the costs of moving. During the second half of the 1980's, the villagers began to receive assistance, especially from international NGOs.

During the current decade, aid has been quite substantial and, most of all, it is systematised. Villagers may receive help with transport, or to establish the new settlement, or they might benefit from technical assistance - although they will not necessarily get all three. Despite this rough classification, the support that villagers receive is varied. It is only recently that the government has begun to help villages which relocate. In contrast to villages that move after consultation with the authorities, the villages that move spontaneously do not receive any aid. The motivating forces to move are very different from one village to another, the more so because the villages are composed of groups of families coming from different sites.

#### 2. Villagers' motivations

##### a) Relocation due to land problems

Villagers move because their soils are becoming infertile, because there is not enough land to go around, or because of a lack of water. The villagers inform the district that they are willing to move; the district then requests provincial authorisation. If the village knows where it wants to move, authorisation is given save in exceptional cases. Ban Donsay was not able to move to Km 37 in 1975 because there was a re-education camp there, so the villagers had to wait until 1985 to gain closer access to their hai fields.

The villagers of Ban Mokok found a site that enabled them to farm paddy fields, but the possibility of cultivating hai held priority. The attraction of paddy cultivation also has a lot of influence, however. Ban Thnongpo wanted to move so it could switch to lowland rice cultivation, while Ban Phonsay settled alongside the road because it was possible to farm paddy there. This was more important than the presence of the road.

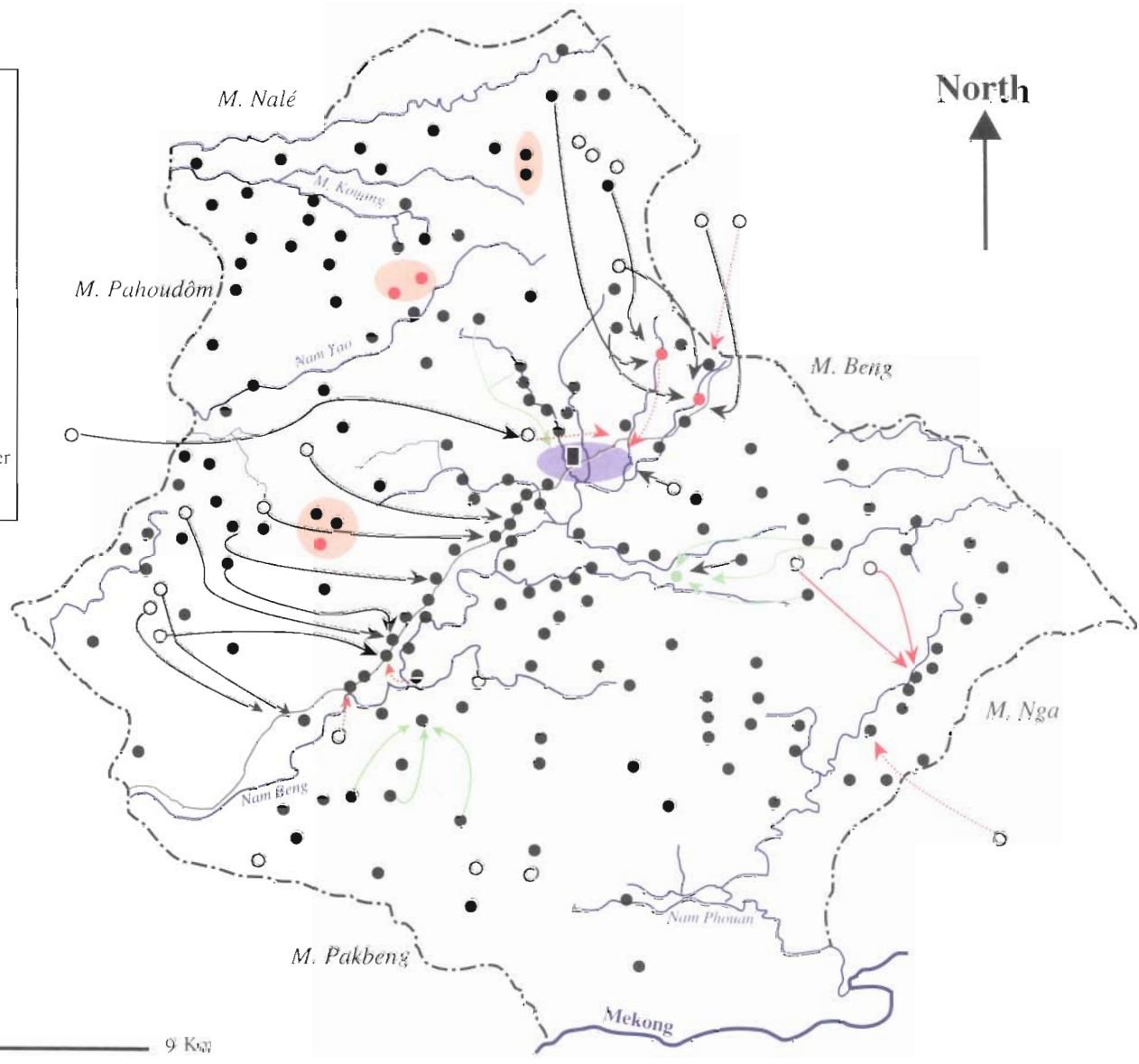
##### b) Village motivation and advice from the government

On the other hand, villages may wish to move, and the authorities take the opportunity to suggest regrouping. The villages which were regrouped at Ban Samikhisay had been coming to the end of their fallow cycle and intended to move away. When they reported this to the authorities, they were incorporated into government planning, and it was proposed that the small settlements should gather into one large village. At the time of the regrouping, villagers started to cultivate lowland rice. Ban Thnongpo has already been waiting to be relocated for several years without finding any adequate sites. Villagers told the authorities that they wished to move in order to grow rain fed rice. As they had not been able to find a suitable site for resettlement, they hoped that the government would help them select one. Ban May is in the same situation, with relocation inevitable at some point within the next two years. The government offered them two locations in Muang Beng Focal Zone, but the villagers chose a remote site in the forest in order to keep animals away from areas under cultivation. The authorities had played up the projects from which the villagers could benefit in the focal zone. In this way they hoped to entice them to come, thus preventing them from continuing hai cultivation in other areas of the forest.

**Houn district : displacements since 1968**

**Key**

	temporary road (10 months per year)		
	main streams		
	village of the local civil servants		
	occupied village		
	deserted village		
	creation of a village in the next few years		
	regrouping of villages		
<b>Displacements</b>			
	1968-1975		1980-90
	1975-1980		1990-96
	planned before 2000		
<b>focal zone</b>			
	areas where villages will be grouped together		
	district towns (too much villages to draw a clear picture)		



### **c) The attraction of projects**

The attraction of projects plays an important part in the decision to relocate. The economic development of Laos is generating financial resources which enable the government to offer assistance to relocated villages. The villagers of Ban Houaymork had lived at Km 22 for a year. The authorities decided to relocate them in order to combat slash and burn cultivation and, more importantly, poppy farming. The villagers agreed to move because the Agriculture Department promised to help them grow lowland rice by building irrigation canals. The government provided trucks during this relocation. The families at Ban Lak 44 agreed to move as well because it was a small relocation, with help promised for resettlement. However, the villagers would not have moved if the government and the Lao Women's Union - the instigators of the relocation - had not told them that they would receive assistance from the Quaker Service, a foreign NGO.

### **d) Influence of important people in the village**

When a village decides to relocate, the village chief and other important people play an active role and exert a strong influence on other villagers. During administrative regrouping, village chiefs are in charge of explaining the advantages resulting from relocation, as at Ban Samikhisay, Ban Houaymork and Ban Nongboden. Some villagers who work or used to work for the administration will read certain circulars and participate in the decision to relocate. For example, the chief of Ban Mokok was a former tasseng chief and knew the government's intentions regarding the eradication of hai cultivation. He therefore took a position in favour of relocating alongside the road, close to suitable land for lowland rice cultivation.

### **e) The role of the social network**

During relocation, social links play an active part in decisions regarding relocation. Families from Ban Nambeng elected to leave for Bokeo province where some of their relatives lived, rather than settle in Nongboden and benefit from development projects there. Likewise, families which are regrouped together have often lived together in the past, which makes the move easier. For instance, villagers from the former Ban Houaymork had lived with the people of Ban Houay Gniou at Km 22 during the 1960s and 1970s. Being acquainted, they set up administrative positions at the resettlement level without difficulty.

## **3. Positive and negative impacts**

### **a) Until the mid-1980s, the government provided little assistance for relocation**

Relocation affects village life in many ways. Some families are sent on a reconnaissance mission in order to prepare for the arrival of other families and make sure that the new site is well suited to village needs. Most importantly, relocation brings development projects as, with time, assistance for resettlement has increased. The few villages that got help from 1970 to 1975 were usually assisted by the army, to keep them away from royalist influence. For example, the military assisted Ban Nambeng (presently regrouped in Ban Nongboden) in coming down from the forest to settle. Few villages benefited from army assistance at that time and the vast majority of them incurred all relocation and resettlement expenses alone, resulting in extreme poverty and debt.

### **b) Outside assistance**

Nowadays, most relocated villages receive assistance. It may take different forms and depends on living conditions in the previous villages. Ban Lak 44 and Ban Houaymork were able to take advantage of government services, such as truck transport, since they lived alongside the road. In contrast, the villagers of Ban May had to cross the forest by foot, as no road led from their previous settlement. Assistance at the time of resettlement has varied widely. Resettlements that occurred during the 1970s and the 1980s seldom received assistance. Ban Nongboden is one of the rare exceptions. On their arrival in 1986, the villagers received corrugated iron roof sheeting and a rice mill supplied by the Quaker Service. The government lent them trucks to move their belongings, and promised to build a school and a dispensary. Aid increased during the 1990s. Now a village is seldom relocated without assistance, except if the move is undertaken unilaterally by the villagers. Ban Houaymork and Ban Lak 44 received assistance with transport. Through the Lao Women's Union, Ban Lak 44

also received a rice mill, two sawing machines, literacy training for adults and loans for the construction of a water tank. Yet Ban Houaymork and Ban May got no help establishing their villages. The villagers expect planned irrigation projects to be implemented, but nothing has happened so far.

### c) Advantages of being close to roads

Settling close to the road often represents an advantage for villagers as roads favour human and economic interactions. As travel becomes easier, people go to the district market more often; in this way, they manage to earn some income and acquire the products they need more easily. The closer villages are situated to the district capital, the stronger the attraction. Ban Nongboden finds an easy outlet for villager products, while spending less on transport. Moreover, access to public services is facilitated, notably health care. Government officials visit villages located near roads more often than those situated in the forest. However, two settlements do not seem to benefit from proximity to the road. Ban Mokok and Ban Khiou Hia resettled alongside the road some 10 years ago, but they have not experienced the same development as other villages. They are quite poor, as the state of housing indicates, and incomes are too low for any capitalisation. The only advantage the people are getting from road proximity is easy transport to other villages or to the provincial capital, and more frequent contact with public services.

### d) Breaking isolation

For some villages, relocation is a way to break isolation, most obviously in the case of villages resettled alongside the road, although far less so for others. Even so, the villagers of Ban May have more frequent contact with the outside than before they moved. They used to live deep in the highlands (six hours walk from the road), and seldom had contact with outsiders. Nowadays, they have an excellent relationship with the Khmu village of Ban Phoulon. The people of Ban Phoulon helped build the first houses and families readily help each other when illness occurs. On the other hand, Ban Houaymork was less isolated in its previous location (for families originating from Km 22), but if the road is renovated and tar sealed, this isolation should only be temporary.

### e) Rain fed rice cultivation and hai

Growing irrigated rice represents an enormous advantage for villagers. Hai cultivation requires constant attention and work. Yields for lowland rice are more or less the same, yet cultivation is less time consuming. The resulting spare time enables people to undertake various other activities, such as fishing or cattle raising. Despite this progress, the villagers of Ban Mokok and Ban Khiou Hia do not seem to take financial advantage of their spare time and continue to pursue subsistence activities. Likewise, the people of Ban Donsay stopped growing and spinning cotton, as it was time consuming and output was not rewarding enough.

### f) Relocation and short term impoverishment

When relocation takes place the village needs to be properly prepared, or enormous difficulties can arise. If the distance between new and old settlements is small, villagers will take along nearly all their possessions, but if the relocation takes them far away, they will leave many things behind, and the situation will be more precarious. Families from Ban Phou Falan (nowadays resettled at Ban May) had to leave 20 tonnes of rice in the previous settlement, while the people from Ban Nam Phe (new Ban May) left two tonnes of rice behind - major losses, under the circumstances.

When villagers move, the change of climate and altitude may cause diseases and weaken their health (malaria outbreaks occur most frequently). Villagers are caught off guard, and at a total loss, since establishing the village requires manpower and time. Usually, relocations take place between January and April: the first families arrive in January and prepare land for hai, and other families join them progressively. In case of epidemics, production is delayed because of insufficient clearing, late planting, lack of work force for slash and burn, etc. As a result, the village will not be self-sufficient in rice during the first years. In the following years, people build more substantial houses, as construction upon arrival is often quick and temporary.

Rice shortages force villagers to purchase food, or, more and more often, resort to borrowing from district rice banks. The rice bank system enables villagers to avoid usurers, but it does not prevent short term impoverishment. Numerous families borrow from rice banks on arrival or during the following year. Relocation delays and drops in production do not allow complete repayment, all the more when epidemics destroy cattle, depriving villagers of an important source of income. Besides, in many settlements we visited, some family members - usually old people - stayed in the previous village in order to watch over livestock. The families at Ban Houaymork left their cattle under the responsibility of people who remained in the old settlements, except for the families from Luang Prabang. In some instances, fishing and hunting provide an appreciable food complement - Ban Donsay managed in this way to keep acute impoverishment at bay. Obviously, village debt is likely to be greater when relocation occurs over a long distance because villagers stand to lose more of their goods, especially rice, as noted above.

Village debt also depends on the method of resettlement. When people move by foot, they have to replace any items they leave behind. On the other hand, when relocation occurs by car or by truck, villagers are able to take everything along. However, some villages such as Ban Nassaythong spend considerable money renting vehicles, while other settlements benefit from transport provided by the district. Ban Khiou Hia is one of those settlements where relocation caused more problems than it solved. 10 years after resettlement, the village still has not achieved the production levels it enjoyed before relocation. Even though villagers do not talk readily about their finances, many families are very poor, and some of them must be heavily indebted. Some families have sold paddy fields to people from Ban Mokok and the provincial capital, which attests to their need for money to pay their debts.

## **B/ ANALYSIS OF RELOCATION IMPACTS BY SECTOR**

### **1. Health**

#### **a) Epidemics and diseases due to relocation**

During relocation, villagers must get used to a new environment, and this presents obvious problems. The change of climate brings diseases which have still not been properly identified. Some women in Ban Phonsy suffered from a kind of leg paralysis after childbirth. Malaria is often the main disease in villages located in the plains as mosquitoes are more numerous there. During the two-year period following relocation, about 10 people died of malaria in Ban Phonsy, or 6% of the population. These malaria outbreaks are not due solely to changes in altitude. Even villages from the plains suffer malaria outbreaks during relocation, as people in Ban Nongboden explained to us. Villagers also often suffer from diarrhea, which in some cases is fatal. Six children in Ban May died of measles while the others, though sick, survived. Some villages move frequently because of epidemics affecting the entire province. These relocations are usually only over a short distance, but their frequency has impoverished the villagers, who need to be taken care of by the district.

#### **b) Health assistance during relocation**

An official from the Muang Xai Health Department accompanied the villagers of Ban Houaymork and cared for them during relocation and establishment of the new village. Ban Lak 44 received loans from the Quaker Service and built a water tank near the village. Yet most relocated villages were not so lucky, and received assistance from the Health Department only during major epidemics resulting in fatalities. However, the construction of more health centres signals a change of approach. Nowadays new settlements benefit from better health and sanitation assistance during relocation, in order mainly to prevent epidemics from breaking out and inducing people to leave again. For example, Asian Development Bank financing allowed 16 health centres to be built in Oudomxai in 1995/1996 (see next page), and should lead to the construction of a further 21.

(See table Oudomxai Health Centre Construction Project next page.)

**OUDOMXAI HEALTH CENTRE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

Asian Development Bank financed for 1996-1997

District	Previous tasseng	Village	Number of villages	Targeted population
Muang Xai	Longya	Hua Nambak	13	2583
	Jomhong	Jomhong Tai	13	2049
	Jamkha	Tankok	12	2412
Muang Namor	Phoutham	Phouom	5	2118
	Namngern	Namngern	13	2265
	Dongbin	Nakham	8	1391
Muang La	Pavee	Samikhisay	7	1699
	Sampan Oudom	Thatmovan	9	1224
Muang Beng	Tangdou	Tangdou	12	1300
	Lai	Lai Nyai	8	1548
	Phouxay	Tandjong	6	1256
Muang Nga	Nahsan	Hatdeu	8	3678
	Ladhan	Ladhan	17	4034
Muang Hoon	Phouviengxay	Kang	14	2343
	Namphouan	Donkang	10	1845
	Phouxae	Kongmuang	15	3624
	Niew	Niew	11	1986
	Namphoun	Koukan	15	2959
Muang Pakbeng	Mokvan	Phouhoung	17	2210
	Tangon	Homxai	13	3760
	Mok Khoh	Mokgan	8	1874
TOTALS		21 dispensaries	234	48158

**OUDOMXAI HEALTH CENTRE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

Asian Development Bank financed for 1995-1996

District	Previous tasseng	Village	Number of villages	Targeted population
Muang Xai	Banlao	Nam Khout	14	2823
	Na-Ngam	Thasaleuang	12	2294
	Phonhom	Piengxai	11	2085
Muang Namor	Nathong	Nathua	10	2983
	Ban Khouang	Ban Khouang	11	2937
	Houay Hoo	Houay Pot	9	2500
Muang La	Sampanxay	Sobjai	9	1754
Muang Nga	Nakok	Nakok	8	1535
Muang Pakbeng	Xaysana	Xaysana	5	1766
	Sinxay	Sinxay	9	2293
Houay Hok	Navang	Navang	9	2566
	Muang Hoon	Pakhom	26	2191
	Nasiangdi	Nasiangdi	11	3161
Muang Beng	Napa	Napa	13	2621
	Nahom	Savang	8	1822
	Ban Kon	Ban Kon	12	2266
TOTALS		16 dispensaries	177	3759

### c) Dysfunctional health centres

A newly constructed dispensary does not necessarily 'work' well. Some health centres are built of concrete, but there is no funding to buy equipment; others are fully equipped, but have no staff. Ban Nongboden had a splendid dispensary constructed in eight months, but had to wait one year before it was fully equipped. Finally, because there was still no health staff, the villagers decided to share the medicines among themselves, recover the useable material and give what they could not use to the Health Department. Nowadays, the centre houses primary school classes.

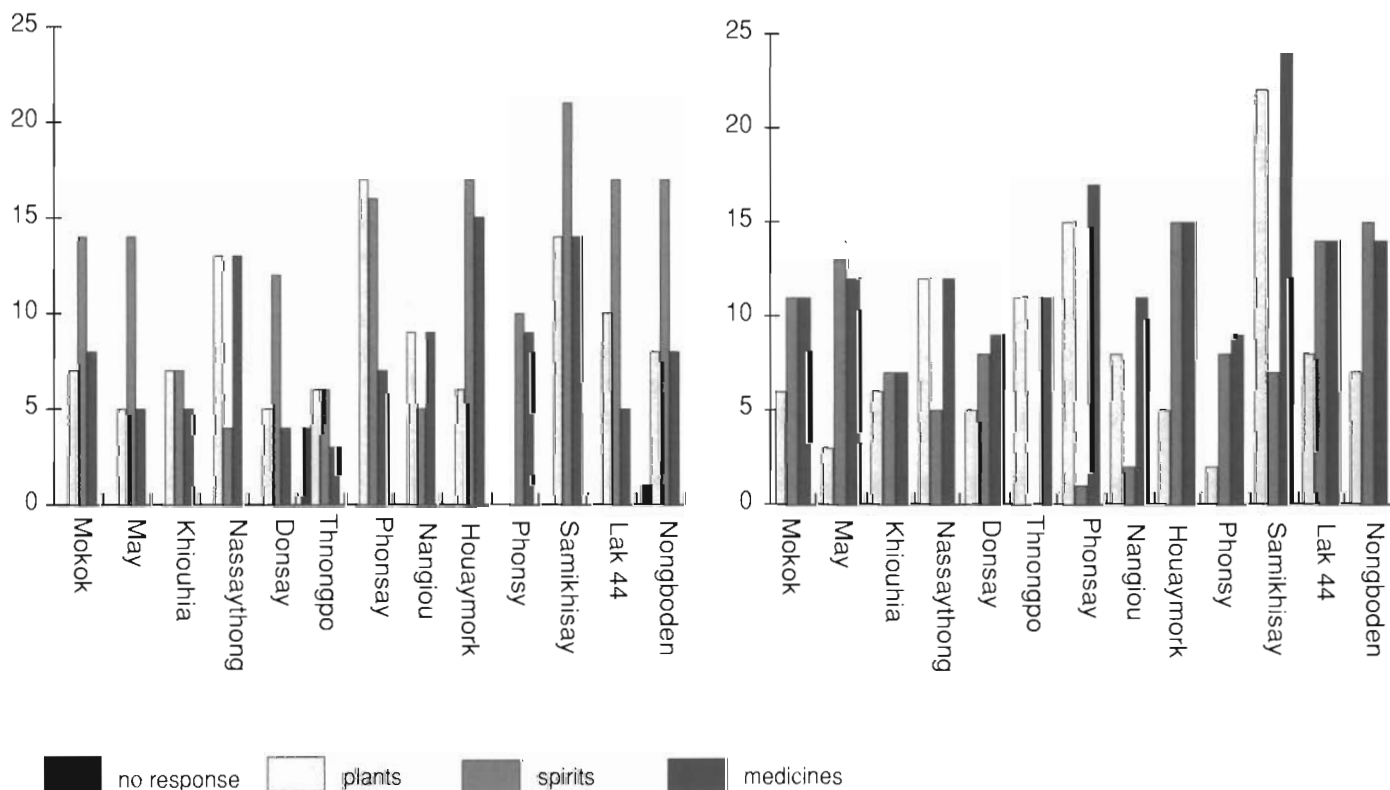
### d) Modern health care and traditional medicines

The presence of the road facilitates access to health care, including medicines and clinics. People consult modern health care services more frequently, even though traditional medicines still play an important role. When referring to the following graph, we observe that relocation on the whole brings more regular use of modern health care, at the expense of sacrifices, shamans and, less often, medicinal plants. Roads make villages more accessible for district service staff, who visit them more readily than when they have to walk several hours. Nearly all villages settled alongside the road have seen an increase in visits from health services. On the other hand, it is the opposite for villages with Non Formal Education projects. These already teach people primary health care, thus making visits from district and province health services less necessary.

Huge health problems remain in villages situated alongside roads, however. At Ban Khiou Hia and Ban Phonsy, children did not appear to be very healthy and were in torn and dirty clothes. Influenza is more widespread in these two villages than in others. More medical assistance is needed in these two settlements, although help in many other fields is also required as they are the poorest villages we visited.

#### Medicines used by villagers before and after relocation

The first table represents health care before the move, and the second, after relocation



## 2. Agriculture

### a) Land pressure and rice farming type

Numerous villages have moved in order to cultivate rain fed paddy fields. These relocations occurred chiefly during the years 1970 to 1980. Oudomxai's mountainous terrain, however, limits villager attempts at irrigated paddy field cultivation, so that multiple relocations to plains areas have caused fairly strong land pressures. As a result, less relocation occurs nowadays towards the plains, while quite a few villages situated in the plains have had to resort to slash and burn cultivation in order to ensure food self-sufficiency during rice shortages. Out of 13 villages investigated, only one (Ban Nassaythong) did not practice slash and burn methods, but this was due to the fact that Lao Loum people do not traditionally cultivate hai. Even this settlement has been self-sufficient in rice for only the past two years, because villagers started nasseng cultivation (2 ha). All other villages, whether self-sufficient or not, continue hai cultivation, partly out of tradition (Hmong or Khmu people) but mostly to meet food requirements.

Rain fed rice cultivation allows production increases and, above all, more free time for other activities. In some villages, however (particularly settlements located alongside the road to Luang Prabang), rain fed rice yields are not actually higher due to sandy soils. At Ban Nangiou and Ban Khiou Hia, hai yields are even higher than paddy field yields. Four villages cultivate only hai (Ban Lak 44, Ban Thnongpo, Ban Donsay and Ban Phonsy). Two other villages (Ban Houaymork and Ban May) should be able to undertake paddy field cultivation when the Rural Development Committee or the Agriculture Department completes construction of irrigation systems. A few villages relocate, but maintain hai cultivation on old sites. In this way, they manage food self-sufficiency without too much difficulty. However, when relocation takes them further away, villagers have to change cultivation sites and face the difficult work of preparing the soil and building the new settlement.

### b) Production delays caused by relocation

During relocation to distant sites, some villages have to abandon rice in the previous settlement. Then they need to clear land for hai and rice fields, build the new settlement and care for sick people. Often they are not able to clear all the land required, or only with a delay which can affect the crops. A newly established settlement cannot initially achieve the same production levels as the previous village. Usually it takes several years to obtain the same yields. For example, it took six years for Ban Nassaythong to attain the same production levels as the previous village, while Ban Khiou Hia took nine years. Buffalo and cows succumb to epidemics, hampering efforts to plough and prepare the soil, while human illness limits the village labour force. For a long time, villagers simply had to put up with these hardships, but now things are changing.

German assistance (GTZ) has provided rice to the districts, allowing rice banks to be formed in villages. These banks borrow milled rice from the district which they repay in paddy with 15% interest. New settlements receive preferential treatment with a two- to three-year interest-free repayment period. This is a recent policy; four years ago this system did not exist, and villages had to borrow from other settlements or buy rice in the market. Very poor families seldom borrow from rice banks, however, out of fear that they will be unable to repay the loan. People responsible for managing credit (village chiefs or others) are reluctant to lend to the most needy people, who often have to work for rice.

### c) Transition to paddy field cultivation

Some villages nonetheless relocate in order to switch to paddy field cultivation, without mastering or even knowing the proper techniques. Technical assistance in farming new crops is unevenly distributed. Ban Khiou Hia settled in 1977 on the present site, but as they did not know paddy field cultivation methods they went back to the mountains. Only upon their return in 1987 did they start rain fed rice cultivation with help from the Lao Loum villagers of Ban Nassaythong. It is noteworthy that the Lao Loum villagers, who arrived at approximately the same time as the people from Ban Khiou Hia, received assistance from the district, which provided an agricultural adviser and a tractor to clear land for paddy fields. They also got help from

the Quaker Service in 1987-1988. Ban Khiou Hia did not receive any assistance, although their need was perhaps greater. The Lao Loum traditionally practice and know rain fed rice cultivation methods. This is not the case for the Hmong. Ban Mokok and Ban Khiou received Quaker assistance only in 1993. A Vietnamese technician assisted Ban Mokok in 1975, but they actually adopted rain fed rice methods in 1986 upon their return to the village, thanks to help from the Lao Loum of Ban Nassaythong. Ban May and Ban Houaymork should benefit from technical assistance regarding irrigation network construction and rain fed rice cultivation, but for the time being they still practice hai cultivation since they own very few buffalo and cows. Lastly, Ban Nongboden got assistance from the district in 1989 and then from the province in 1994. This enabled the village to add 28 ha of irrigated paddy fields. The UNCDF-UNDP project is currently developing and irrigating another 40 ha.

### **d) Relocation and animal epidemics**

During relocation, epidemics often decimate herds, thereby reducing village income sources. Animals represent a sizeable resource for villagers, who sell or eat them. Disease reduced the pig populations of Ban Nongboden and Ban Houaymork by two thirds. Ban Phonsy lost three quarters of its pigs, one third of its chickens and five or six buffalo (only one survived) during relocation. Epidemics create other serious problems. Villages cultivating paddy fields lose an essential source of power which is difficult to replace. Families must then rent buffalo from other villagers or neighbouring settlements (about 200 kg rice per buffalo, or 20 kg seeds). When they move away, some families leave their animals (pigs, buffalo and cows) behind for relatives to look after in order to protect them. Even though epidemics cannot be prevented when the rest of the family is relocated, losses are not so high and they are able to sell more animals, creating supplementary income during the difficult time of relocation. Nearly all Ban May villagers were able to buy corrugated iron roofs in this way.

### **e) Alternatives to hai**

In order to eradicate hai, the government urges villages to vary crops in favour of more lucrative sedentary cultivation. District specialisation has not been followed through, however, and villages seek to diversify agricultural activities both in line with province instructions, and according to what they see in other settlements. Thus, all districts are developing fruit tree plantations, which are supposed to be specific to Muang Beng and Muang Hoon. Villagers are not addressing the question of markets for their goods, especially with teak, simply assuming that the government will buy it all. (As the government asked them to plant teak, they think this is the natural outlet.) Several villages have already received assistance from the Agriculture Department with teak plantations. Ban Lak 44 follows the provincial instructions concerning pig, cow and goat raising fairly closely. Other villages take into account province recommendations, but the general idea of the provincial development strategy is somewhat lost. Ducks and chicken may be raised in mountains as well as in the plains, while fruit trees (mango, banana and orange) are planted in every district. This diversification of agricultural activities effectively helps eradicate slash and burn cultivation, and contributes to family and village stabilisation.

### **f) Fallow period reduction**

Fallow period reduction is not without problems. Limiting fallow periods involves a drop in yields because there is not enough time for the soil to become fertile again. The soil is degraded and villagers have to increase hai areas, situated farther and farther from the settlement. Because of the ban on slash and burn, villages enter a cycle of decreasing yields, endangering food self-sufficiency and sometimes village survival (Ban Phonsy, and to a lesser extent, Ban Mokok and Ban Khiou Hia). These settlements lack activities that are profitable enough to compensate for the elimination of hai cultivation. Moreover, poppy cultivation is under strict suppression. Some villages have been relocated in order to limit poppy cultivation, but family incomes drop sharply as a result. No credible alternative to opium growing has been suggested, so opium farmers face financial difficulties when they abandon this cash crop. Besides, for some villages, opium is the only substitute activity during rice shortages. Such an important cash crop is not easy to replace, but other less profitable alternatives can still be suggested. The people of Ban Lak 44 have stopped growing opium, except for opium addicts. They have no other crop to make up for the lost income, and revenue has dropped by a factor of five.

### 3. Economics

#### a) Expenses for establishing villages

More often than not, groups of families relocate by foot, through the forest. Relocation may take several days, although most of the time villages undertake small relocations taking less than a day. They carry as many possessions as possible in big baskets. Villagers who move a long way are forced to leave various items in the previous settlement (rice, seeds, sacred artifacts, etc). Upon arrival in the new site they have to clear land for the new village and build their houses. In the first stage, families construct temporary shacks in a few hours time. Some villages are helped by other villages. People from Km 35 helped their fellow villagers move to Ban Donsay, while families at Ban May got help from neighbouring Khmu villagers. Bigger houses are nearly always constructed collectively. Later, men and women alike clear land for hai and paddy fields. Women are responsible for planting seeds and weeding, while men keep building houses. Two to three days are necessary for a house to be completed. House building does not involve too many expenses for Khmu villagers, as they have mastered the art of cutting planks. The Hmong, however, must buy wood for construction from Lao Loum or Khmu villagers.

#### b) Outside assistance and development projects

Government and foreign organisations have been assisting villages for a number of years now. For example, Ban Nassaythong had to rent trucks during its relocation in 1987, but from the second year after establishment of the village, the Quakers gave assistance in building irrigation systems. About the same time, the government urged villagers at Bang Nongboi and Ban Namet (formerly Ban Nongboden) to regroup together, and provided trucks for the purpose. A group of families at Ban Lak 44 were transported from Km 41 in government vehicles. Similarly, families coming from Km 22 to Ban Houaymork were relocated using government trucks.

Apart from assistance in transport, there is also aid for establishing the village. The first families who arrived at Ban Nongboden benefited from Quaker assistance, including a husking machine, blacksmith tools and corrugated iron for roofs. The Quakers also assisted Ban Lak 44. However, projects concerning infrastructure (irrigation, schools, clinics, etc.) are seldom implemented before the arrival of the villagers. Ban Nongboden had to wait for three years before the school and a health centre were constructed. Ban May and Ban Houaymork, resettled respectively in 1995 and 1996, have not yet received any infrastructure projects.

#### c) Proximity to roads and opening of the village economy

Relocated villagers are not always ready to face economic change. Usually, several groups of families come down from the mountains and settle alongside the road, disrupting the balance of their previous lives. Many old settlements were self-sufficient, with very little exchange with outsiders, monetary or otherwise. Families would always produce the same products, the village was isolated in the highlands and little outside economic or social contact took place.

During relocation a change occurs from a non-monetary economy to a commercial system. The relocation itself is fairly expensive, and brings an increase in needs and desires. Roads encourage trade and trips to the district or provincial capital. Before relocation, villagers could only barter with neighbouring villages, whereas in new settlements people tend to visit mainly the market in the district capital. The proximity of the market opens a new and easy outlet for village products and encourages expenditure. Bang Nongboden set up some shops in order to take advantage of its proximity to Muang Hoon, and the considerable income earned from this allowed three quarters of the families to build houses on stilts. They were able to profit from proximity to Muang Hoon because the villagers had lived around Muang Hoon before relocation, and knew its market very well. This success is also due to the presence in the village of the families of military and former civil service personnel.

#### d) Roadside trade and monetarisation of the village economy

Small roadside shops tend to develop in most villages, although this is not always the case. Commercially speaking, small villages are more advantageous than larger ones. Families at Ban Donsay left Km 35 in

order to get closer to cultivation sites, but also because they found the settlement at Km 35 too big. When families grow and raise the same products and animals, roadside trade becomes almost impossible due to strong competition, so villagers have to go to the market in the district capital more frequently. Competition is less obtrusive in small settlements, even if people sell the same products. People at Ban Donsay sell their wares along the road, and get their supplies in the district market. Yet ignorance of financial methods remains a problem. Villagers do not yet have any real capitalisation strategy. They will buy buffalo or build a better house rather than accumulate capital which could be used to initiate improvements to the village. Other settlements are unable to take advantage of the proximity of the road, their small size notwithstanding. Ban Khiou Hia is located alongside the road, but for its people the main attraction is the opportunity to go to the provincial capital. They do not trade much, because of low production. Even though this village has opened its economy, it is still functioning along autarchic lines.

#### e) Family networks and village solidarity

Family links enable people to create mutual aid networks. Often families move together, but sometimes they scatter among different villages. Family networks provide support during hard times, notably with gifts, loans or preferential prices. However, in very poor villages (Ban Phonsy and Ban Khiou Hia), individualism emerges at the expense of solidarity. Needy families are so desperate that they tend to think about their own needs first, before helping outsiders. Besides, when they do help, this aid does not come free. This phenomenon also exists in relatively well off settlements. Living conditions in Ban Samikhisay are good, yet the villagers do not cooperate much. Ban May, on the other hand, has a very strong cohesive spirit. In case of sickness, villagers help families in difficulty. More surprising yet, this spirit of mutual aid is present also with the Khmu village of Ban Phoulon as well. A fairly strong relationship links both villages. The Khmu people helped the Hmong villagers build their first houses; the Hmong forge tools and knives they give as gifts to the Khmu. Furthermore, the Hmong seldom use the old foot mill for rice, preferring instead to use the husking machine in the Khmu village. Ban Mokok, Ban Nassaythong and Ban Khiou Hia also have good relations. The Lao Loum villagers of Ban Nassaythong taught the people of Ban Khiou Hia to farm irrigated rice.

### 4. Culture and education

#### a) Loss of traditions

In numerous villages, rituals connected to traditional beliefs have declined. The Hmong still call the shaman to help cure diseases while Lao Loum and Khmu villagers would rather use traditional plants, but owing to relocation and the introduction of modern medicine, traditions are slowly being abandoned. Roads allow easy access to health centres where treatment is often more effective than traditional medicines. Numerous villages have abandoned spirit worship. For example, Ban Nangiou called in a monk to exorcise spirits from the village houses. Hmong villagers, opium smokers by tradition, have reduced their consumption under the influence of anti-opium campaigns. On the other hand, they have started drinking alcohol, imitating the Lao Loum and Khmu. At Ban Phonsy, villagers who used to drink only a little lao hai (rice beer) in their previous settlement, now drink lao-lao (rice distilled alcohol). Villagers at Ban May have started to drink alcohol with their Khmu friends from Ban Phoulon.

#### b) Proximity to towns and change of culture

Nearness of towns creates a change of culture. The Hmong of Ban Nongboden live in houses on stilts, with only the poorest still living in Hmong style houses. Hmong style houses that were built on arrival serve as kitchens. Moreover, in this village, women wear the traditional Hmong vest together with the Lao sin. Villagers wear traditional Hmong costumes only for celebrations or during the New Year festival. This behaviour is less apparent in the more remote settlements. Village living conditions and openness to the outside world play an active part in the loss of traditions. Villages like Ban Phonsy, Ban Khiou Hia and Ban Mokok are located near towns, yet people retain their traditions because the harsh living conditions do not enable them to adopt different house styles. We observed that people change house styles before altering clothing styles.

### c) Inequalities in access to education

Marked disparities exist regarding access to education. Ban Phonsy and Ban Houaymork have no school. Schools in Ban Nangiou, Ban Mokok, Ban Khiou Hia and Ban Thnongpo offer the first and sometimes the second primary classes and are included in the Lao 92/10 Non Formal Education Project. On the other hand, children in Ban Phonsay and Ban Nongboden can attend the full primary school cycle in their own villages. Ban Phonsay boasts a complete primary education centre, with four teachers paid by the Education Department and one teacher paid by the villagers. Ban Nongboden is the only village we visited where education was not a problem. The Education Department and the NGO World Church Service assisted the village in constructing six classrooms (two P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5). UNICEF is currently financing the construction of five additional classrooms. Eight teachers are presently in charge of the six classes (the Education Department pays seven of them). Both villages (Ban Nongboden and Ban Phonsay) are situated centrally in a group of villages, and numerous children from neighbouring settlements go to school there. However, a lot of villages do not have any classes because so few children attend primary school.

Only one quarter of the children in Ban Phonsy go to school. Among the reasons cited by parents were the fear of accidents along the 3 km road to the school, and the fear that children would get into fights at school. For the last two years, children at Ban Khiou Hia have attended the first two primary classes in the Non Formal Education centre (some 20 children). Yet very few go to Ban Nassaythong to pursue their schooling (two children in 1995, as opposed to five this year). While waiting for a school to be built in the focal zone, the children of Ban May are scattered among Ban Phoulon (15 attend P1 classes), Ban Lak (five children), Muang Beng (five children) and the provincial capital (five children). Furthermore, the Hmong seldom send their children to school outside the village, as the children must care for their younger siblings.

Children attending school in another village often sleep overnight on the school premises. They take their meals with them, except when their village is situated nearby. Ban Samikhisay children come home every evening to eat their supper, and take the next meal back with them when they return to sleep at the school. Children from Ban Thnongpo also spend the week at school, but return home less frequently as their village lies 90-120 minutes walk from the school. Parents tend to believe that by letting their children sleep in the school they will spend more time studying. They also feel this limits the risk of truancy. However, no institution takes charge of feeding the children, and accommodation remains scant.

### d) Sex inequalities at school

We observed that boys and girls have different success rates at school, as illustrated by the charts below. This leads villagers to hold a prejudice against girls, believing they are less intelligent. They forget that girls have more household duties than boys, and therefore spend less time studying. Girls must care for their little brothers and sisters, and cannot attend school during that time. This inequality is not a recent phenomenon, as it is also present among the adults.

### e) Training difficulties and absenteeism

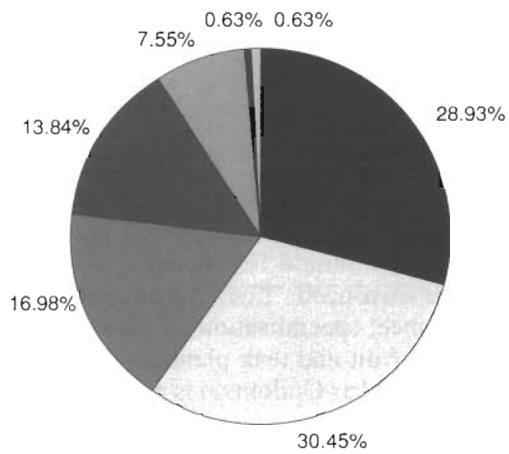
The Education Department is trying to construct schools out of concrete. Schools were previously made of bamboo, and required renovation work after every wet season. Few new schools have been built, as priority is given to concrete construction.

Teacher training is not always adequate, as many teachers only complete primary school before undergoing a short training in pedagogy. This lack of competence has a number of consequences. Often villages only pay teachers to pass on a minimum of knowledge, so teachers do not give classes all year round. On the one hand, villagers are not able to pay a full yearly salary to teachers, while on the other hand, teachers do not feel obliged to be present every day, as schoolchildren are so often absent. Thus, classes are very irregular, and teachers give only an average of six months instruction per year. Ban Nassaythong used to pay for the services of a teacher to ensure a full primary cycle education, but then decided to do without because classes were so irregular. In Ban Thnongpo, one of the teachers moved to another settlement in order to grow rain fed rice as a supplement to his teaching fees.

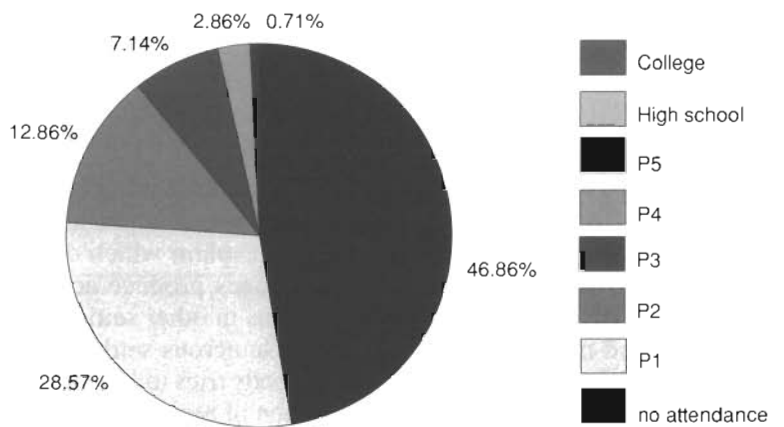
### f) Communication and training

Education difficulties are numerous, all the more so when the Lao Loum teacher does not speak the ethnic language. Children are expected to know the Lao language before starting school! Ban Phonsay is one of the privileged villages, since the five teachers are all Khmu. Three were born in the village, one comes from Ban Samikhisay and the other one from Ban Thnongpo. This situation is obviously to the students' advantage. The teacher is able to explain in Khmu when children do not understand the lesson, and to cite examples they can understand. Relocation brings no solution to the education problems of ethnic groups. Absenteeism is still common, numerous interruptions of the cycle occur, financial difficulties do not allow children to attend school regularly and parents and relatives are seldom in a position to help children with their schooling.

School attendance for 6 to 14 year old boys



School attendance for 6 to 14 year old boys



## III. PROSPECTS

### 1. Prospects at provincial level

#### a) Rural development zones

The district and provincial authorities have planned relocations for years to come (indicated in red on the maps). Most planned relocations will end up in Muang Beng and Muang Hoon Focal Zones, and in rural development zones in other districts. These zones should favour integrated rural development, and help the fight against slash and burn cultivation methods and opium cultivation. Focal zones are part of the planned district specialisations. Development points will be created centrally in these zones with a school and a dispensary. The government will build irrigation systems that will enable villages to abandon hai cultivation. These zones will develop sedentary activities, notably tree plantations. However, teak planters might meet difficulties in selling their production without government assistance since they have no idea how to market the product; however, the government certainly intends to export teak. The setting up of purchase stations would give villagers easy outlets for their products, while facilitating export through centralisation of production.

#### b) Specialisation by district

Although diversification is a good solution, its implementation remains tricky. Indeed, diversification goes hand-in-hand with district specialisation, which might only be obtained with difficulty. Agriculture Department staff have visited villages in order to explain which directions agriculture should follow, but these plans have yet to be put into practice. Villages produce according to their own needs first, then according to market conditions and to what happens in other settlements. For instance, specialisation by district is not observed much at the village level. Numerous settlements have started fruit and teak plantations, and are intensifying livestock raising. Everybody tries to imitate their neighbour, and as Oudomxai is a mountainous region, the potential for diversification of agricultural activities is limited.

Moreover, encouraging certain zones to specialise in given products appears risky in the long term. These zones risk being stuck with excess production that will not be easy to sell. Ban Phonsay, Ban Thongpo and Ban Samikhisay are developing and intensifying the same products - pineapples, bananas, teak, pigs and chickens. For the time being, outlets are easy to find as production has just begun to expand. But because of the current policy to eradicate slash and burn cultivation, these villages might have to increase these cash crops, and villagers will have to visit the market more often. A massive output of pigs, chicken, pineapples and mangoes will end up on a saturated market, causing prices to drop.

At the same time, reduction of hai cultivation will limit rice production, leaving villagers in trouble. Rice will become more expensive while other agricultural products will become less valuable. Furthermore, specialisation is supposed to occur by district, so that if instructions are followed to the letter, all the villages will end up producing the same crops. For this to be viable, economic interaction must be made easier. Roads will have to be improved and villages will have to have access to vehicles. Trade would then mainly be an inter-district interaction rather than an intra-district interaction. The idea is good, but few villagers are in a position to go to other districts frequently. Wholesalers could remedy this situation, but their number would need to increase. Besides, the wholesalers tend to put undue pressure on villages while extorting low prices and acting as usurers.

#### c) Forest conservation and relocation

The struggle against hai cultivation and opium farming has motivated several village relocations. Yet Oudomxai has a population density of only 14 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. Dufumier [1996] estimates that 23 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> is the minimum demographic density at which forest reproduction problems might begin to appear. When subtracting the population not practicing hai methods, the province density decreases even further below 14 people/km<sup>2</sup>, so the risk of deforestation is minimal. (However, some deforestation and spring

drainage problems exist on the tops of the mountains.) The policy to eradicate slash and burn cultivation is conducted jointly with village relocations in order to protect the forest and springs. These relocations may cause serious problems for villagers, so it would be desirable to provide additional assistance to prevent impoverishment of villages, which is difficult to overcome in the short term.

### **d) Demographic and land pressure**

Villages tend to relocate alongside roads, preferably in the plains, in order to grow rain fed rice. The results are increased land pressure and difficulties for newcomers looking for paddy fields to cultivate. Road proximity encourages trade and product sales, but it requires population concentrations where access to rain fed rice fields might be difficult. It also increases economic activity, enticing still more villagers to come and live closer to towns. Laos lacks manpower, but the current rural exodus threatens the present balance. District towns and the provincial capital do not offer many opportunities for these newcomers, apart from already numerous small shops. Hai cultivation reduction and the lack of prospects for alternative production threatens to trigger a further rural exodus in the next few years. Industrial activities and services will be necessary in order to create work for newcomers. These activities are presently in the hands of Chinese, and very few Lao participate in them. If the exodus were to take place now, it would be difficult for families to find jobs outside small business. Rural development and focal zones should be able to bring alternatives. However, these zones will welcome only a few villages, not all hai farmers.

### **e) Infrastructure construction**

Oudomxai province is supposed to benefit from several projects. The Asian Development Bank is currently financing health centre construction, so that every former tasseng should eventually have one dispensary. One condition for financing these dispensaries is that the target population should exceed 3,000 people. We observed that figures provided by the ADB seldom reached this total. One may thus reasonably expect that further relocations will occur in zones where the target population is less than 2,000 inhabitants. Provincial authorities confirmed this, since several zones clearly identified as welcome zones will receive ADB health centres.

In addition, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Swedish Institute for Development and Agriculture (SIDA) are financing the improvement of several roads that are currently usable only during the dry season, as well as the construction of new roads connecting focal zones. The road to Muang Beng Focal Zone is already under construction, and future village locations have already been defined. Other roads will be constructed in order to promote economic interaction and to integrate inaccessible regions (lying several hours or even days walk away). The strategy pursued in the past of populating the roadsides is being revived, as is apparent from the relocation of a village such as Ban Houaymork alongside a trail that is to be improved.

### **f) Culture and development**

Living closer to roads involves many side effects, apart from an increase in trade. Cultural change is connected to road proximity. If this trend should continue, lifestyles would become standardised. Villages which move closer to the road and still cling to their customs are usually the most destitute settlements. More integrated villages slowly give up their traditions, whereas not so well integrated settlements maintain them. This presents a dilemma for a number of reasons. Cultural differences are sources of wealth for the nation, wealth that is non-material and therefore unquantifiable. Moreover, this cultural diversification enables people to adjust better to difficult situations. For example, plant-based traditional medicine remains valuable, as it fights diseases for which modern medicine as yet has no cure. Medical laboratories can use traditional medicines to develop new treatments.

### **g) Assistance to new settlements**

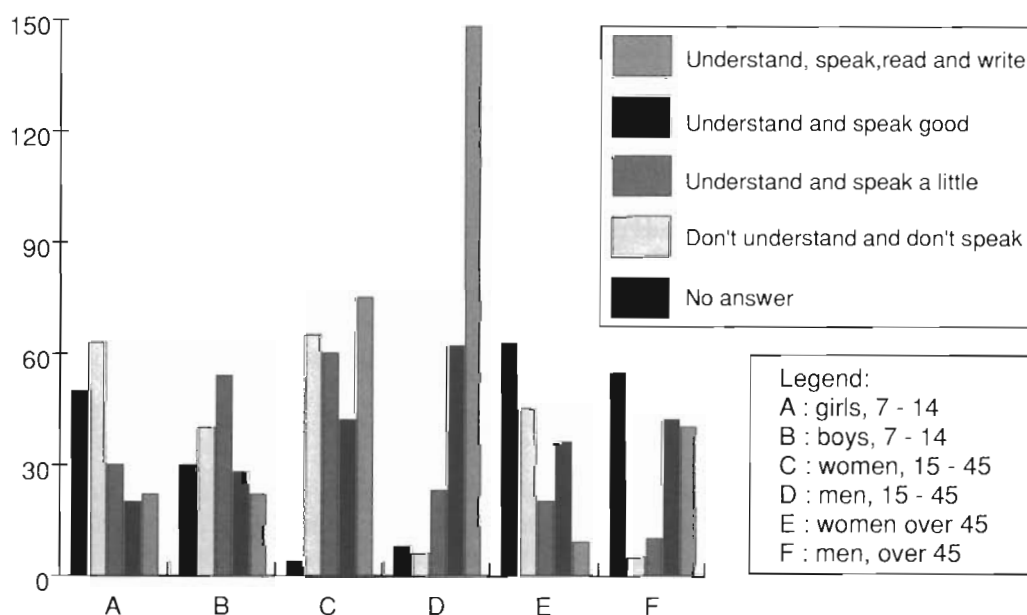
The tendency to give more assistance during relocation should continue. We observed, however, that some villages move before assistance is available, resulting in extremely harsh living conditions in the resettlement sites. The first two years following relocation are the most difficult, during which time villagers need outside

help the most. Irrigation and agriculture projects should be put in place before the villagers arrive, in order to ease relocation and prevent excessive village impoverishment. However, some villages move unilaterally, without receiving any assistance. The example of Ban Phonsy indicates that these villages probably need more aid during relocation than other villages. Assistance of the kind given for approved relocations is out of the question, as provincial credit is limited. Yet assistance identifying vacant paddy fields near to resettlement sites would be most useful, the more so since families who stay behind in the old village may later benefit from focal zone rural development projects (the families from Ban Phonsy, for example, were unaware of this at the time of departure). Aid could therefore be rationalised to make it more equitable. For the time being, some privileged villages get assistance while others merely trust their luck.

## 2. Non-Formal Education

### a) Lao literacy

Villagers welcome the Non Formal Education centres, although Lao literacy classes have variable results. At Ban Khiou Hia, illiteracy remains high: female Lao illiteracy dropped a little (five women have learned Lao since 1994), whereas the male literacy rate remains unchanged. On the other hand, Ban Nangiou took advantage of Lao literacy classes. In 1994, 55 people did not know Lao, but in two years, this figure dropped to only 29 (seven men and 22 women). Lao literacy classes can be effective, depending on villager motivation. They would be useful in the numerous villages where nobody can speak Lao.



### b) Non Formal Education and children

P1 and P2 classes make it easier for children to attend school, as they do not need to leave the village during the first school years; more children attend classes than would do so if they had to go to school in another village. Yet Ban Nangiou intends to build a school and has already collected the money for its construction. Children in Ban Nassaythong and Ban Phonsay do not visit the NFE centre much, usually only to read books during the holidays. Both these villages boast a primary school.

### c) Health care and sanitation

In each village with a NFE centre, the centre has managed to create a medicine bank. People are using traditional medicines less often, but the bank's modern medicines provide better treatment for some diseases. Health care and sanitation training have resulted in improved village health. Villagers have started to fence their houses in order to keep animals away, as clouds of insects and mosquitoes usually follow the animals, especially buffalo. Instructions on malaria prevention have been issued and mosquito nets have been distributed. Thanks to this training, health conditions have improved notably and epidemics have declined. The education centre has taught some villagers to give first aid and treat mild diseases. Therefore, villagers are very happy with the Non Formal Education centre's health care training.

### d) Irregular classes

However, problems exist regarding the regularity of classes at the centres. Just as in the primary schools, villager absenteeism leads teachers to cancel classes. Villagers and teachers are aware of the problem of class irregularity. Teachers are well integrated into village life, but sometimes feel rather isolated. At the beginning of the wet season, teachers go back to their own villages to help prepare for cultivation, and villagers seldom attend the centre during the rains. As it is, villagers hardly find enough time to attend to daily activities such as hai farming and hunting. The chief of Ban Khiou Hia told us that the centre's main problem was lack of time: villagers attend classes at the expense of their work.

### e) Lack of experience

Classes are planned after discussion between the teachers and potential students, although villagers are unhappy that some teachers lack experience. Lessons on livestock raising and plantations are conducted indoors with books and explanations. This theory is very interesting and useful, but the practical side is left to the villagers themselves, who do not always know how to deal with problems in the field. It should not be difficult to mount practical courses, using trees and plants that can usually be found around the centre.

### f) Non-Formal Education and rural credit

NFE centres enable villagers to get credit to develop certain activities. Non Formal Education services finance medicine banks with interest-free loans repayable in three years. Other loans are for chicken raising (these are the most popular), pig raising and tree plantations. These loans are available four times a year. Repayments are made to the village chief, although this poses a problem when he is not available. For example, villagers at Ban Thnongpo cannot repay their debts within the stipulated time of one year as the chief is often absent, mostly during the wet season. Moreover, it is difficult for loans to reach the poorest families. During the first year in which loans were issued, this group did not dare ask for them out of fear that they would not be able to repay in time. "Pilot" families seize the opportunity instead, and their success encourages others to ask for loans as well.

This loans policy allows new cash activities to be launched. It has proved very popular as far as chickens are concerned, but not so successful for other activities. Poor families still do not take advantage of loans because they worry they will not be able to repay them. Moreover, the heads of village (chiefs and teachers) are reluctant to grant them loans as they fear a lack of repayment would harm the village's reputation. This problem is recurrent in every loan project, and as a result, differences of living conditions become more pronounced. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the primary purpose of the centre is education.

### g) Non-Formal Education and slash and burn cultivation

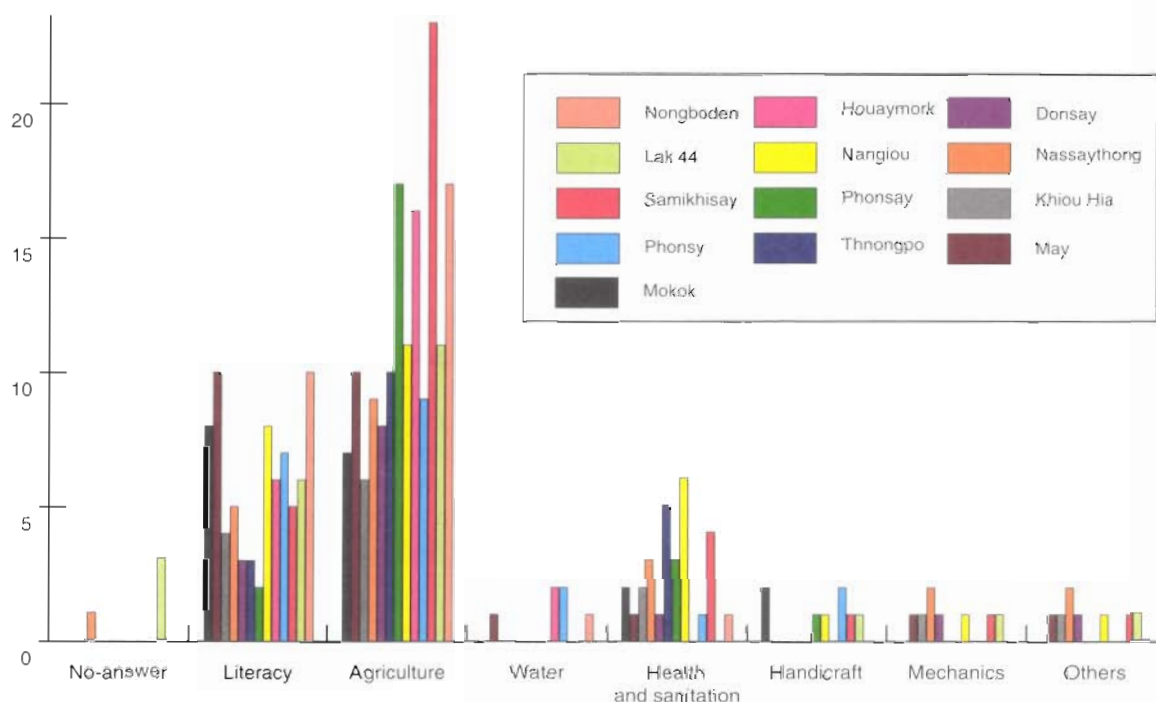
The NFE project created rice banks in villages by lending Kip 300,000 interest-free over five years to stock the banks. Again, poorer families lack the confidence to borrow rice from the banks out of fear they might not be able to repay it, preferring to hire their labour out to other villagers. Initially, people in Ban Phonsay did not want a rice bank in their village, but with the enforcement of the anti-slash and burn policy, they

changed their minds. Non Formal Education loans helped create a rice bank. It has no real utility for the time being, but villagers foresee many difficulties as they intend to stop hai cultivation before the year 2000 in order to have enough time to adjust. NFE centres play a useful part in the campaign against slash and burn, enabling people to substitute and intensify new cash crops and products. This solution is not perfect since hai rice is consumed directly, whereas new products need to be sold to earn money to buy rice. At the same time, all villages are being offered the same activities. Village crop specialisation would help develop local economies and promote inter-village trade, without villagers having to go to the markets in the district or provincial capital. The seven NFE centres offer the same activities, although villagers attend different classes in different villages. A specialisation which takes into account village traditions and the needs of each ethnic group would offer more opportunities to villages and create favourable conditions for local markets.

## h) Demand for classes in agricultural techniques

Livestock raising and tree planting activities have been highly successful and villagers are keen to learn new techniques. Many villagers told us that the credit distributed by the centre represented a good opportunity, but that courses were more useful than credit. In many villages, people are ignorant of techniques and let their animals wander about in semi-freedom. Villagers complained of a lack of knowledge about how to build dykes and irrigation systems, and about how to protect their crops from vermin. The greatest number of requests were for courses in agriculture, followed by literacy in Lao.

### Histogram of villagers' requests for training



## i) Handicraft activities

Development of the handicraft industry would be useful within the framework of a diversification of crafts. All the various ethnic groups have some handicraft skills. The Leu (Lao Loum) of Ban Nassaythong receive loans for weaving activities. Hmong villagers are excellent blacksmiths and make very popular baskets. The Khmu weave bamboo or rattan trays that sell fairly well. All these handicraft activities are seldom done with a commercial end in mind. Their promotion and expansion would provide ethnic groups with additional income, thus enabling people to reduce hai cultivation. It would also help to increase inter-ethnic interactions and allow district diversification.

**j) Problems affecting the poorest families**

One of the challenges Non Formal Education centres should meet is improving the living conditions of poor families. These families should be approached in a special way, to give them access to loans and to enable them to put lessons learned at the NFE centre into practice. They could be allowed to repay over a longer period and in several installments; or they could take the credit in groups, which would limit the risk of non-repayment, giving each family more confidence. NFE centres were not intended to create elite groups and should also work for the benefit of more needy families. Teachers often are unable to speak the village language, which can make literacy classes very difficult in the beginning for villagers who do not speak Lao. Teachers should be taught a basic knowledge of ethnic group languages, which would make contact with villagers easier and make lessons more flexible. Likewise, literacy classes are only for the Lao language and no ethnic language books are available. Publications in ethnic languages should be issued and circulated so that villagers can learn to read and write their own language. Should the present trend continue, people will master the Lao language which will enable them to communicate with other ethnic groups, but at the expense of their mother tongue.

**k) Suggestions regarding additional villages the Lao 92/10 project might cover**

The villagers at Ban Khiou Hia are finding it difficult to develop their village and overcome dire poverty, despite the presence of a NFE centre. Problems have plagued the village, and last year an epidemic killed 90% of their pigs. A few areas remain to be irrigated, but they are scattered widely and the people have not mastered techniques required for irrigation.

Ban Phonsy could also be a candidate for the Lao 92/10 project, as the villagers are very poor. Nearly all livestock died during relocation and soil quality problems prevent them from growing rain fed rice, even though 10 ha is available close to the village. Almost no children attend school. This village is extremely poor and may face the same difficulties as Ban Khiou Hia in extracting itself from poverty if assistance is not given. Many villagers do not speak Lao.

Ban Houaymork deserves help from the NFE project as well. The school is situated relatively far from the village, while relocation has caused periods of rice shortage. Villagers practice hai while waiting for the Agriculture Department to develop irrigation, but as they have never grown rain fed rice, they would benefit from technical training. People should be prepared beforehand for relocation and warned of any resulting change to work activities, as well as to their health and their economy. They would then be in a better position to face the difficulties which will confront them during the first years following relocation.

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# **Xieng Khouang**

**G. Le Hegarat**



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The provincial Education Department was of great help in carrying out the survey. They put two interviewers at our disposal for the length of the inquiry. They also provided us, several times, with four wheel drive vehicles and drivers. The support of the district heads was also essential, as they provided us with vehicles, housing and even a military escort when needed. Moreover, a district representative joined us during most village surveys. Mr. Bounsouan deserves a special mention for the precious help he gave in the field.

# INTRODUCTION

## A/ XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE

### 1. Physical overview

Situated in the north-east of the Lao PDR, Xieng Khouang is bordered by Houaphan, Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Bolikhamsay provinces and, to the east, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Most of the province is mountainous, with several peaks reaching 2,600 m; the average altitude is 1,200 m. The two main plains in Pek (around the provincial capital Phonsavan) and Kham districts lie at 1,000 m and 700 m respectively. These are the two most densely populated areas of the province.

The main road is Route 7, which crosses the province from east to west. Only the section linking Phonsavan to the Vietnamese border is tar sealed and functional all year round, thus facilitating trade with neighbouring Vietnam rather than the rest of the country. Route 6, going north to Sam Neua, is the province's second major road.

Accessible only with difficulty from Vientiane, Xieng Khouang province nonetheless boasts a fairly developed internal road network: all district administrative centres are accessible, whatever the season, except for Muang Mork in the south-east, the least populated area. This secondary road network is still insufficient, but is steadily being extended beyond the district capitals, mostly with the help of forestry companies and the IFAD and UNDCP project to reduce the isolation of remote villages.

The administrative expansion into seven districts is fairly recent, since Muang Poukhou was created in 1986 and Muang Paxay only at the end of 1992. The division into districts is relatively well established. At lower levels, administrative division seems to be continuously under reform, and the number and names of the subdistricts<sup>1</sup> is subject to variation. At the village level, the administrative attachment of remote houses and small communities sometimes remains uncertain.

### 2. Population

The provincial population is close to 200,000, half of whom live in Pek and Kham districts. There are relatively few ethnic groups, but they are widely contrasted. According to the data and classification of the Department of Culture:

The Lao Loum group represents about 60% of the population, consisting of two thirds Phouan people, but also Tai Dam, Tai Deng, Tai Khang and Tai Lan.

The Lao Soung group, comprising essentially Hmong people (divided into various smaller groups such as Lay, Khao, Dam, Leng), accounts for 30% of the population.

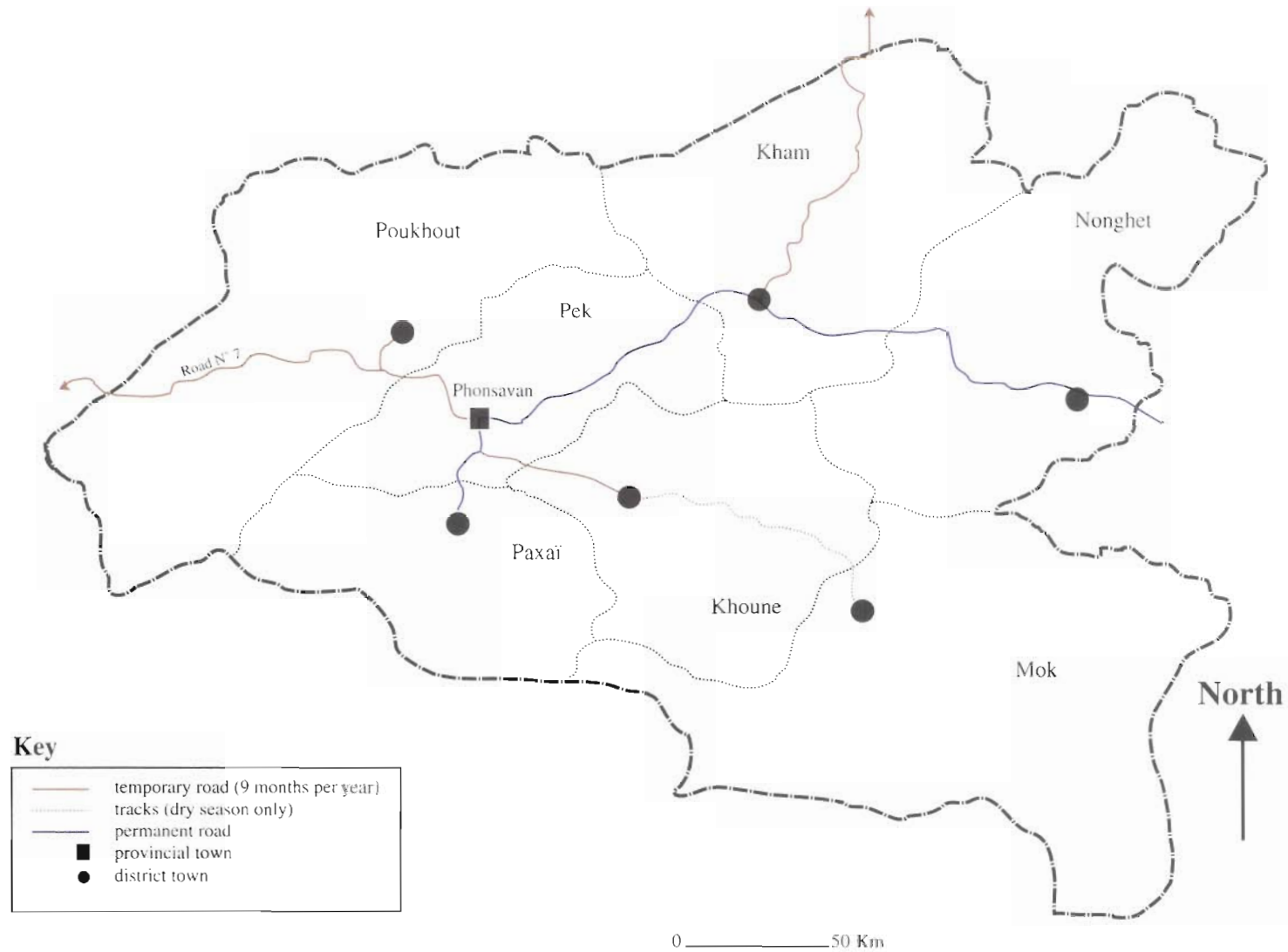
The Lao Theung group, comprising mainly Khmu people, makes up 10% of the population.

#### District population distribution

District	Population	Notes
Pek	56,985	Situated at about 1,000 m, mainly Lao Loum
Kham	39,397	Plain, warmest region, 700 m
Nonghet	33,333	Border district, population 80% ethnic minorities
Khoune	28,984	Previously provincial capital, insecure mountainous area
Mork	7,810	Mountainous and inaccessible border district, partly outside government control
Poukhou	20,190	Recently created, has government administrative buildings
Paxay	13,376	District bordering Saysomboun Special Zone, an insecure area from which amnestied rebels sometimes "emerge"
Total	200,07	Source: Provincial Department of Statistics

<sup>1</sup>Even the administrative unit name - khet or tasseng - may vary from one district to another.

## Xiengkhouang province : presentation



Lao Loum people represent the majority of the population in every district, except in Nonghet where there the population is 60% Hmong and 20% Khmu. Hmong people have traditionally administered this district since the end of the 19th century (before the Second World War, 17 Hmong tasseng existed in Xieng Khouang).

### 3. Present context

Xieng Khouang was one of the country's most heavily bombed areas in the period from 1961 to 1973, and the physical and psychological scars of war are still very apparent. Craters mark the landscape everywhere and bomb remnants appear on the surface of the land. People recover these and use them with great ingenuity for many purposes. More hazardous, numerous pieces of unexploded ordnance remain underground, making cultivation and the development of new rural areas dangerous. Owing to its strategic position, military presence in the region is very strong, with many bases and an important airfield at Phonsavan.

Another historical inheritance is the insecurity problem which remains in some areas of the province. This is because some people among the Hmong population, whom local authorities have described either as bandits or as anti-revolutionary subversives, engage in violent attacks. Because of this insecurity, access and traffic south of the province is difficult (especially in Paxay, Khoune and Mork districts). Moreover, it damages the Hmong people's name and position with the government and the rest of the population. Security is a major factor in the relocation strategy.

This problem originates in the role the Hmong people played during the Indochina conflict. Part of the Hmong community supported the United States and was employed by the CIA with General Vang Pao as their leader. The rest of the Hmong population fought, instead, against imperialism. This divergence is partly due to clan rivalry and conflicts.[Evans, 1983]<sup>2</sup>

The last Indochina war was not the only cause of insecurity and upheaval. There has been a history of Hmong uprisings in Xieng Khouang since the Hmong Kaitong rebellion of 1896 and the 'Batchai's revolt' in 1918-1922.[Alleton, 1981, Gunn, 1990] These were staged more against abuse by the local authorities than against the central government.

A suspicion of the Hmong people and continued security problems in several areas of Xieng Khouang play a recurring role in relocation policy.

## B/ SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted during July and August 1996 in six provincial districts: Pek, Khoune, Paxay, Nonghet, Kham and Poukhou. Only Muang Mork in the south-east was impossible to reach during this period. The survey began with the provincial administration: the Education Department, the provincial Vice-Governor, the Rural Development Committee, the Planning and Statistics Department, the Health Department and the Department of Culture. Then, it was extended into each of the six district Public Administration Services. Finally, based on the data collected in each district, we extended our studies to the villages. In total we investigated close to 30 villages during the two-month survey period.

The survey questionnaire was used in 12 villages. Generally these villages were chosen according to information and advice given by the district chiefs (or their assistants). Some recommended settlements were chosen on the recommendation of the provincial administration. We identified others thanks to unofficial information - notably Ban Som in Kham district.

We were able to visit some 15 other villages and areas which fell within the survey framework. They formed the subject of a general qualitative and non-systematic investigation, in which village authorities and residents were interviewed. Chosen at random, or according to various sources of information (foreign

<sup>2</sup>In the beginning, the two main Hmong Kaitong families in Laos, the Lo and the Ly, were allied. They fell out following the suicide of the mother of Touby Ly Fong in 1922. The two clans subsequently joined different sides in the civil war, Touby supporting the French colonial cause and then the Vientiane government, while Lo Fay Dang became leader of the Pathet Lao Hmong.

organisations, informal talks, villagers), most of these settlements had some involvement in the relocation issue.

In this sample, we found a large variety of situations and relocation types. In this sense, the sample was probably representative of relocations in Xieng Khouang. However, not all ethnic groups were represented. For example, the questionnaire addressed only Hmong families, whereas relocation also affects other groups. We adopted this position for two reasons. Firstly, only three villages out of the 30 visited were not Hmong; secondly, relocation as it affects the Hmong is a particularly complex issue, especially from the point of view of methods and motivations. However, we were also able to collect qualitative data about the Lao-Tai and Khmu ethnic groups.

We must specify that in numerous villages (two thirds of the settlements visited), only part of the population were recently resettled. A typical example (in one third of the settlements visited) shows Hmong people constituting a new section in a long settled Lao Loum village. In this instance, we interviewed only the residents of the new section about their relocation. Thus in Xieng Khouang province, village relocation is only one aspect of population relocation.

# I. BACKGROUND TO RELOCATION

## 1. History

Hmong people arrived in northern Laos during the first half of the 19th century, and probably as early as 1830 in Xieng Khouang province, originating from southern and central China. They traditionally settled in the provincial highlands, that is to say in the Nonghet area and in the southern and western mountains. In the period preceding 1975, population moves were closely related to regional conflicts. In 1954, some of the people involved in the war, among whom were many Hmong and Tai Dam, left the border areas and settled around the towns of Xieng Khouang, Dong Dane and Lat Houang. During this period, some people began paddy cultivation in the nearby valleys. At the same time, other people from Nonghet and Mork districts left for Vietnam.

Population moves on a large scale started in 1962, with shelling and fighting for control of the strategically positioned Plain of Jars. An exodus took place in the direction of Vientiane, Luang Prabang and the highlands under Royal Government control to the south-west of the Plain of Jars (the present Paxay district and the Saysomboun area, and Samthong and Longcheng centres; the last two in 1969 had populations of 15,000 and 30,000 respectively). Another section of the population took refuge in Nonghet and in Vietnam, around Neo Lao Hak Sat (Pathet Lao) bases.

The advance of the revolutionary forces imposed a succession of relocations upon the people of Samthong and Longcheng from 1968 to 1969, under the supervision of the Royal Army commanded by General Vang Pao. In 1975, these populations were gathered in the Phou Bia region. The Lao and Vietnamese armies pursued their joint action until 1979 in order to crush this last pocket of resistance. In 1975, the province was reoccupied within the specific context of the change of government and national reconstruction.

Many people fled the area in the first years after the war. Numerous people went to refugee camps in Thailand, and then to the United States or France. Because of the part they played in the war, the Hmong people of Xieng Khouang province were particularly involved in these moves. Many thousands of families were transported out of the province by helicopter to Thailand, not long before the Lao PDR was founded in 1975. A second wave of departures, this time clandestine and by land, occurred in 1979. In addition, many soldiers of the revolutionary forces from Xieng Khouang and Houaphan were demobilised and went to Vientiane.

Returnees, who had fled in the face of war, compensated for these departures by settling once more in Xieng Khouang, building their villages anew and starting production. These spontaneous returns were insufficient and the new provincial authorities intervened with the intention to:

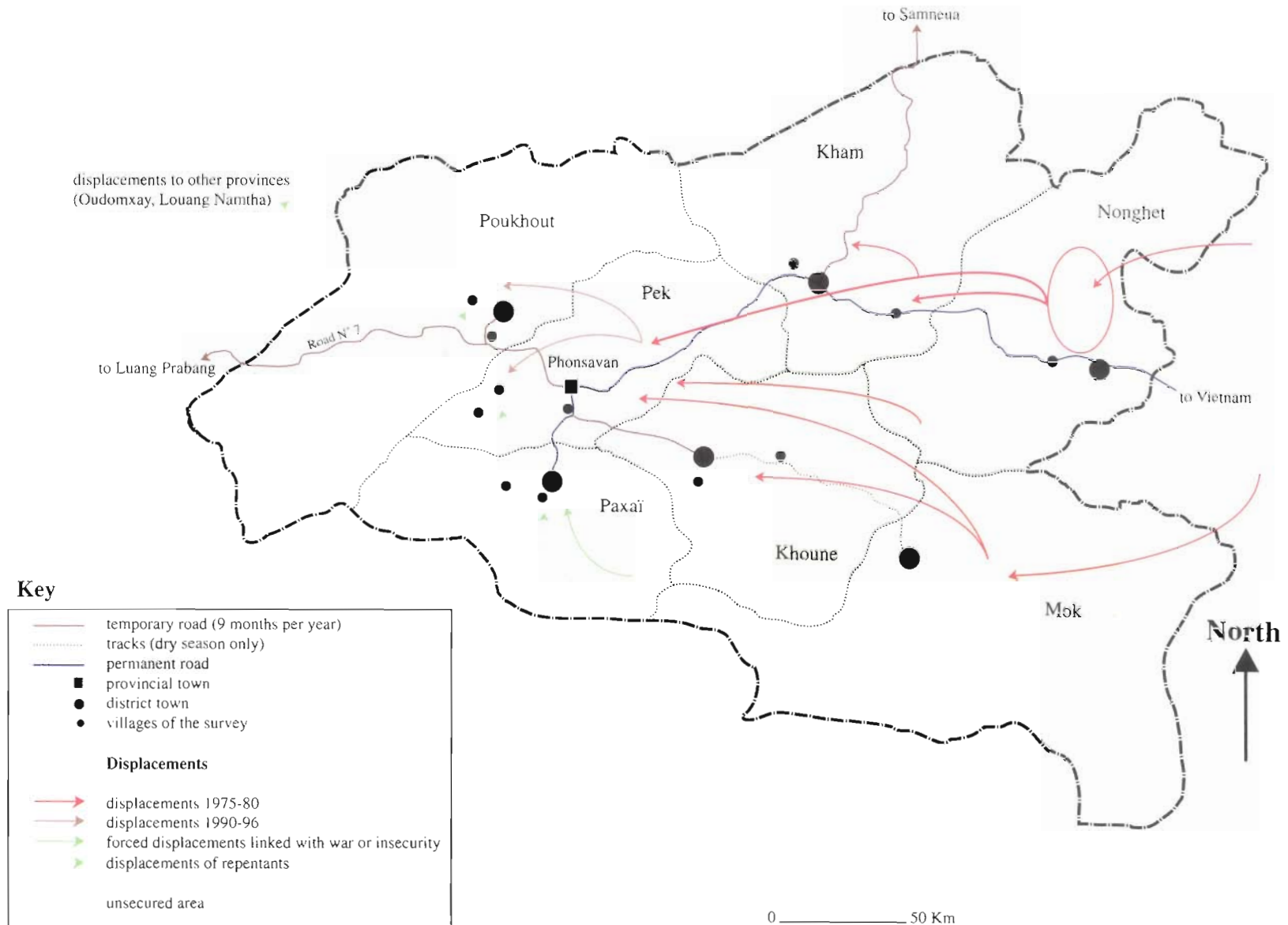
Reconstruct or create administrative centres and repopulate every district town and the new provincial capital, Phonsavan

Start agricultural activities and partially vacate some mountainous areas (especially in Muang Nonghet) in favour of the Kham and Pek plains. Broadly speaking, they emphasised lowland occupation rather than the highlands in areas such as Ban Phathang in Muang Kham and Ban Nok near Phonsavan.

Strengthen provincial security enforcement due to Hmong rebels who were still carrying out violent actions. Though officially defeated in 1979 with the help of the Vietnamese army, according to numerous testimonies these rebels kept up sporadic guerrilla, propaganda and recruitment activities.

As early as 1975, former Pathet Lao military originating from the border zones (Tai Dam from Houaphan province, and Hmong from Mork and Nonghet districts of Xieng Khouang province) settled in valleys near the new capital and the administrative centres. They were allocated paddy fields (for example, Ban

# Xiengkhouang province : general orientation of the displacements



Samngioun in Muang Khoune). These settlements were related to the reconstruction policy and also to more strategic concerns. Indeed, these former soldiers were responsible for overseeing and controlling population movements.

From 1983 to 1984, many of the village relocations were related to the anti-revolutionary threat. These villages had been either attacked, visited by, or simply subjected to the propaganda of subversive elements. It was a matter of strategy to secure certain areas. These relocations were enforced by the army in an apparently authoritarian manner. Such actions involved exclusively Hmong villages, particularly in Muang Nonghet and the south of Muang Kham during the years 1985 to 1986, and Paxay and Mork districts in 1990 and 1991.

Populations thus displaced were scattered in small groups in lowland villages far from so-called insecure zones, and settled in existing Lao Loum villages. This is how the Hmong sections in Ban Nong (Khangsi), and Ban Ngoy (Khangpeun), Muang Pek, were created in 1985.

## **2. Provincial policy objectives**

Current provincial government objectives regarding population relocation are much the same as during the previous period, but they are expressed differently:

Top on their priority list is the eradication of slash and burn cultivation by the year 2000 in order to preserve the forests. From this perspective, Muang Nonghet is considered overcrowded due to a lack of arable land, which does not allow a change in the mode of agricultural production. The excess population is estimated to be around 15,000, that is to say 50% of the district total. The slash and burn eradication policy was broadcast throughout villages as early as 1985, but relocations related to the ban on hai cultivation started only in 1988.

The government is depending upon the creation of development centres, or focal zones, in rural areas to realise its development strategy. These focal zones provide the health and education structures that will help the social integration of isolated populations. Thanks to development and closer trade structures, new opportunities will arise enabling a cash economy to emerge. Outside the focal zones, the government urges people to live closer to roads so as to break their isolation.

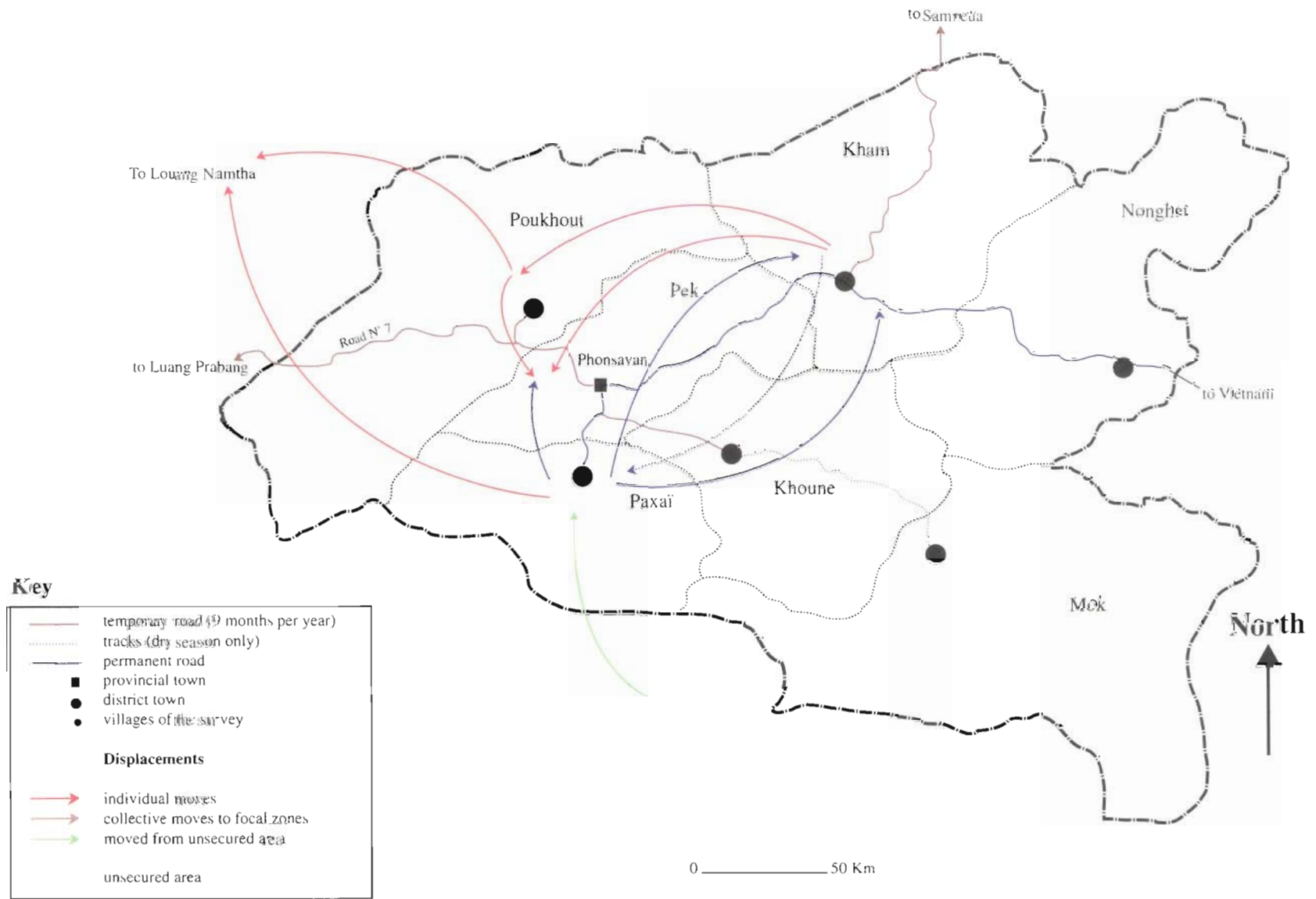
The province is not totally secure, so many people keep moving or are relocated. Security enforcement goes hand in hand with the amnesty policy, favouring voluntary surrender from rebels or gangs. However, the government is also attempting to repopulate some insecure regions by turning them into focal zones.

These three provincial policy objectives generate a variety of relocations which follow two main trends:

At provincial level, an east-to-west move from Nonghet and Mork to Kham, Paxay, Pek and Poukhoud districts (see province map).

At subdistrict level, a general trend to move closer to roads and reunite isolated villages (see map of Muang Paxay).

### Successive resettlements for a group of families



## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVINCIAL POLICY

### 1. Coordinating organisation: The Rural Development Committee

Although the three provincial objectives correspond to apparently differing rationales, they complement each other on the issue of population moves. People are relocated and sent to focal zones for security and ecological reasons; likewise, creating focal zones in unsafe areas is a way of overcoming insecurity.

Relocation is always within the framework of the provincial rural development policy, which is coordinated by the Rural Development Committee (RDC). The Rural Development Committee<sup>3</sup> exists only at the central provincial level, not in the districts. Its task is to conceive, formulate and coordinate development projects for the rural areas, in cooperation with the provincial and district technical departments. The RDC submits these development projects for provincial government approval. The province presents the approved projects to the national level, which may choose to finance some of them. Government financed projects are given priority, and are directly implemented by the provincial RDC. Provincial and district technical departments take charge of the remaining projects, and work under RDC supervision.

The RDC for Xieng Khouang province has drawn up 35 development projects for the period 1995 to 2000, distributed among the seven districts. The provincial government has approved only seven of these projects. On the occasion of a national meeting on rural development held in Thakhek in June 1996, two of these were made priority projects: they have been given national financing and have been entrusted directly to the RDC. The remaining five projects fall under provincial and district responsibility.

The RDC is thus responsible for the implementation of two projects and coordinates five others. Of the two priority projects, one is considered important because it concerns a remote location in an insecure area (Muang Mork), while the other is in an area favourable to paddy field development (on the Kham plain).

### 2. Implementation methods

Government initiated relocations occur under various circumstances and for different reasons. Implementation methods vary widely, whether for reasons of security, for environmental purposes, or for development. Methods for the attainment of the same objective have also evolved over time. These are to varying degrees either negotiated with or imposed upon the people, depending on the ethnic, social and economic characteristics of the community, and its level of cohesion - for example, whether it is merely a group of families, or the whole village.

Lastly, Xieng Khouang province is home to a "nomadic" population, whose initial displacement was not followed by permanent resettlement. The government is now attempting to settle these people permanently in the development areas. Though impoverished by successive relocations, they are still eager to move again in the hope of finding better living conditions.

The method of resettlement is open and unsystematic inasmuch as it is implemented on a case-by-case basis after examining the people's demands or essential needs. Nor does the government provide systematic assistance. In some instances, families take charge of all expenses incurred during relocation and resettlement. It may also happen that relocation is carefully controlled and supported.

#### **a) Relocations due to insecurity**

##### **i) Village relocations for security purposes**

These relocations imply an element of duress, as they are connected to matters of national security. They may involve villages that have been exposed to attacks from counter-revolutionary groups or to subversive propaganda, or where some inhabitants may be related to rebels or suspected of supporting them.

<sup>3</sup>The province Vice-Governor, Mr Sivone, presides over this Committee. Mr Na Da Ya, his assistant, is in charge of day-to-day affairs.

The last relocation of this type that we could identify during the survey occurred in 1991. Two villages of Muang Paxay were resettled near Paxay district capital. In this case, only one month passed between the decision to move the villages and the relocation itself. Not only did the people of the two villages remain together, but one of the village chiefs retained his post in the new settlement. Some families also leave insecure zones on their own initiative, as from Khoun and Paxay districts.

## ii) Amnestied rebels

Another type of relocation is tied to the security question concerning Hmong people who have responded to amnesty measures. In this case, testimonies recount that these people “came out of the forest” voluntarily. They were incited to do so in different ways: some found leaflets written in the Hmong language in the forest that promised amnesty if they would surrender; others met Hmong civil servants from Muang Paxay who entered the forest in pairs, unarmed, to convince them to surrender.

After leaving the forest, families settled around the district capital. Later, they scattered among development zone villages in every district. In Muang Paxay, we identified at least one village of amnestied people (Ban Natong). Repentant “forest people” who came to Muang Paxay now live in other district focal zones such as in Muang Kham.

These two relocation types are not always easily distinguished. The people in question are all known as “refugees”. Indeed, they often live in the same settlements and are subjected to the same kind of supervision. Government assistance in these cases is intended to meet essential requirements. Rice is given during the first year, and sometimes lent in the following years, and basic household equipment is allocated to every family. Less often, the government provides building materials for houses.

## b) Incentives and negotiation

Village relocation is always preceded by administrative intervention. This may take a variety of forms, from persuasion to promises or incentives. The element of compulsion is variable, and depends upon the timeframe. In the case of settlements urged to congregate and live closer to roads, the village makes the decision. The administration generally entices the people overtly with promises and incentives.

The village chief is the first one to be convinced, all the more easily if he has been an employee of the subdistrict (khet) or the district. Often, the move is associated with a reorganisation of the village administration and the appointment of a new village chief.

The advantages of a new lifestyle are repeatedly affirmed by the village chief or the district representatives. The prospect of the development of trade also plays a very attractive role.

Promises are made concerning the arrival of new public services such as health care and education, and especially possible foreign aid. As a mid-term measure, equipment for public works and new activities are also promised.

In the event of such relocation, villages seldom move further than 5 km, and the villages retain the same community structures, even though the move may take several years, during which time some families leave the community for good.

Resettlement along the roads is accompanied by a number of government recommendations (land distribution, alignment of the houses along the road, change in the style of the houses, etc). These recommendations are nearly always followed by the village authorities.

Relocations related to slash and burn eradication carry a stronger element of obligation. Indeed, they are in line with development policy at the national level, reinforced by legislation. The order to eradicate slash and burn has been broadcast in villages since 1985, and was transformed into a ban on deforestation in 1988-1989. Moreover, there is now the newer regulation limiting the fallow period to three years. As new highland cultivation becomes close to impossible, people have no alternative but to move down to the plains. All the while, the administration advertises the rural development zones, the vacant arable lands, the irrigation projects, the availability of paddy land, and the possibility of new activities in the lowlands.

At this stage, we observe two different processes in the villages:

Some villages ask for a delay and/or assistance, and even negotiate their relocation conditions beforehand (for example Ban Kon Ngoua, a Hmong settlement in Nonghet district which negotiated its departure to Napa Vangboua Focal Zone). Some villages faced with forcible relocation adopt a voluntary attitude, identify the new site themselves and move on their own (for example, Ban Done Kham has been allowed to resettle in a disused military base).

Other villages scatter in small family groups, regroup as families, or ask for access to focal zones, as has been the case for some Hmong villages. Young couples tend to leave first and resettle near Phonsavan.

### III. PROJECTS RELATED TO RELOCATION

#### 1. Analysis of focal zones

The idea of “focal zones” or “rural development zones” is somewhat vague. All of the rural zones in Xieng Khouang are likely to be developed. For instance, in Muang Kham alone there are no fewer than eight rural development zones, named after the eight subdistricts (khet). In these zones, top priority is given to existing agricultural activities, or the start of new activities. The provincial Rural Development Committee identified 35 such projects.

*During the survey period three meetings were held to explain and present rural development zones (two meetings with the RDC, and one with the Planning and Statistics Committee).*

*During the first meeting with the RDC in early July, seven rural development zones were presented (two ongoing projects - Napa Vangboua in Kham and Khan Nongpanieng in Pek - and five others, one in each remaining district, which had just started).*

*During the second meeting with another government representative in early August, the number of development zones dropped from seven to two: out of 35 projects submitted, the province approved only seven (one for each district), and only two will be carried out in 1996-1997. These are the Napa Vangboua project in Muang Kham, and a project in Muang Mork. Only the first one was described in detail.*

*Meanwhile, during a meeting with the Planning and Statistics Committee, 10 "focal zones" were earmarked for development before the year 2000 (five ongoing projects and five in the pipeline). The provincial RDC directly manages Napa Vangboua and Mork. The 10 projects listed by the Planning Department probably reflect government intentions for the future.*

As an example, the Napa Vangboua project in Muang Kham is presented here:

This development zone is designed for a total of 500 families. For the time being, they expect 200 families (nearly 1,400 people) to come from two villages in Muang Nonghet as early as next year. Since the beginning of the year some families have been establishing hai at the new site, while still living in their old village 70 km away. These families will settle permanently when irrigation works are complete.

The government is financing new activities which will enable people to “change their lifestyle”. Paddy field cultivation will be the main activity as the zone is located in a flat area. The project comprises:

The development of an irrigation network to supply 380 ha of paddy fields.

Trees for wood and fruit production. For this purpose, the project includes the necessary nursery construction, village training, seedlings and land preparation.

A small hydroelectric plant has been built and now supplies electricity to some neighbouring villages.

Construction of two primary schools, one college and a health centre is scheduled in the framework of the same project (building should start this year).

The total budget for the irrigation works is Kip 600 million (as estimated by a Vietnamese company). The other activities will have to await the next budget or other financing sources; aid for paddy field development is expected.

This focal zone is the object of various types of relocation:

200 families from Nonghet are expected to settle in Vangboua in the near future. Since the beginning of this year some have planted hai at the new site, while waiting for the irrigation works to be completed.

About 10 Hmong families from Phou Bia (former rebels) have lived in Ban Pathang (a Tai Khang and Tai Lente settlement) since January 1996. They represent the third section of the village.

The residents of Ban Pathang living in the Tai Khang section only came to settle in the Kham plain in 1977. They comprise 94 families who originate from Nonghet. In 1991, this section moved about 500 m in order to live closer to the road.

35 families from Ban Done Kham, settled here in 1991 in a disused military base. All these families should partake in development planned for the zone.

## **2. The role of international cooperation**

International cooperation provides assistance to the RDC for equipping and implementing district managed focal zones. Some aid, coming from bilateral organisations, province based non-government organisations or international organisations, is directed towards villages which have resettled close to the road, or to focal zones with relocated populations. There are numerous examples of these:

The Quaker Service has taken charge of school construction in several new settlements.

The Asian Development Bank is financing health centre construction in the province. These are, or will be, built in the development zones.

The NAWACoop financed by GTZ is planning integrated rural development projects in Pek and Poukhou districts. The head of the district has directed these programs towards villages that receive relocated people (Ban Piang Luang, among others).

The UNDCP-IFAD program to break the isolation of opium producing villages and promote crop substitution (\$US 5.3 million for 1991-1995 and \$US 425,000 for 1997), is directly involved in this provincial policy.

## **3. Resettlement in focal zones**

The new residents of focal zones may come as entire villages or, more often, as families or groups of families originating from different areas. In some cases, their arrival at a site has been spread over a 10-year period, according to the following pattern:

The first people were resettled by the army, in line with the strategic resettlements of 1985.

When resettlement became inevitable, other people who moved to join their families in the plain inevitably resettled in the same place.

RDC publicity broadcasts have attracted the most recent settlers. The broadcasts promise materials, public services and new development opportunities such as paddy cultivation, orchards and cattle raising.

The government does not provide systematic assistance for moving, resettling or starting new activities, and the RDC does not always take responsibility for transport. Their part may be limited to registering new families in the zone. Owing to the limitation on the number of families allowed, registration is important.

On the other hand, district services and, where possible, assistants within the village issue numerous recommendations regarding resettlement along the roads and the spatial organisation of new settlements (for instance, changes in lifestyle and cultural beliefs, house style and alignment, and land distribution). Nearly all these recommendations are followed. This work of persuasion extends to the areas of education, health and trade.

It is difficult to generalise about the availability of utilities within the focal zones visited, but villages usually share what there is. Health centres, schools, and marketplaces are sometimes built half-way between two or three settlements. In some instances, a small hydroelectric dam supplies several villages with electricity.

The government plans to develop new agriculture, forestry or handicraft activities in focal zones. This development policy calls for the construction of infrastructure such as dams or irrigation networks. But in practice these seldom materialise, due to lack of means. Often, families or groups of families resettle within the framework of RDC managed projects several years before any tangible alternatives to slash and burn cultivation are available (paddy fields, cattle raising, or other activities).

The people involved in these development projects have often been “mobilised” for a certain amount of time already, having been unsuccessfully relocated at least once. Usually, the people are very poor or, in some instances, have not had access to arable land for years. They may be either “refugees” or helpless villagers driven to relocation. Despite the limitation on vacant land, some families choose to move, with no certainty of successful resettlement. Sometimes, the village chief rejects them and they are forced to move on. Through this process, volunteers for resettlement in focal zones outnumber the available space, which is why resettled populations in development zones remain unstable. They may wait for several years for promised irrigation or for animals so they can start cattle raising. But if help does not come the families who can afford to do so, will move again.

## IV. SURVEY RESULTS

### A/ THE SAMPLE

#### 1. Village summaries

Before analysing the survey results, the following is a summary of each village.

##### a) Muang Pek

###### **Ban Yuang (Khoum Khangpeun)**

Located some distance from a Lao Loum village, this Hmong section has been settled since 1985. The 28 Hmong families come from several villages in Muang Nonghet, the army having supervised their relocation in 1985 for security reasons. This village belongs to Khang Paniang Focal Zone, and 11 families own paddy fields. The chief of the neighbourhood lives in a house built on stilts. Village women do some embroidery for a Phonsavan shopkeeper who brings them materials and pays for the embroidery work only.

###### **Ban Phan**

43 Hmong families were resettled by the RDC in a Lao Loum village between 1991 and 1996 (in Khang Paniang Focal Zone). The neighbourhood chief recently moved into a house built on stilts; all houses are built in line and spaced evenly along the road. New families are expected in the weeks to come. There is no irrigation system for the paddy fields that have already been developed.

###### **Ban Nong (Khoum Khangsi)**

90 Hmong families settled in a Lao Loum village in stages between 1985 and 1996 (120 families moved in at first, but more than half of them left again for various destinations after 1987. In 1996, 13 new families arrived). The first newcomers were relocated for security reasons, the more recent ones are searching for arable land. One of the first arrivals bought a video recorder with cash provided by relatives living abroad, and shows tapes in the Hmong language made in California.

###### **Ban Hayhin**

75 Hmong families settled in a Lao Loum village in 1996. Their previous village was located in the reservoir area of the Phonsavan public water supply project. The families have practiced slash and burn cultivation near the new settlement for three years. Construction of a health centre is scheduled for 1997, funded by an Asian Development Bank loan.

##### b) Muang Khoune

###### **Ban Samnioung**

This Hmong village, made up of Pathet Lao veterans, settled for the first time in 1965, then again in 1975. New families arrived successively from 1980 to 1996. Villagers help control movements in the valley.

###### **Ban Naho**

A Hmong village divided into three sections. The first inhabitants took over land that was deserted during the war and never reclaimed. It is a transit area for the people from the Sat Luang valley.

##### c) Muang Paxay

###### **Ban Namka**

A Hmong village made up of people relocated from the same district for security reasons in 1982. Ever since, it has received regular and successive arrivals from other provincial districts, and has had few departures. A hydroelectric dam was built this year, and every family has access to electricity.

**Ban Nonghoy**

Hmong village settled on the outskirts of the district capital in 1991. Inhabitants came from two neighbouring villages, and were relocated for security reasons. Their place of origin is now a non-priority focal zone, and there are plans for them to return.

**d) Muang Nonghet**

**Ban Khan Paniene**

A Hmong village of 89 families from four neighbouring settlements grouped together to live closer to the road, a process that began simultaneously for all the villages in 1985, and is still going on for two of them.

**e) Muang Kham**

**Ban Som**

A Hmong section in a Lao Loum and Khmu settlement. In 1995, the RDC relocated and helped resettle 45 "pardoned" families from Paxay. After an epidemic that claimed the lives of 14 people in two months, most families left. 10 families stayed behind.

**Ban Phathang**

In this Lao Loum village (Tai Dam and Tai Khang), with a new Hmong section, three relocation types are represented. Lao Loum people came from Nonghet and settled in 1977. In 1991, the same people moved 500 m closer to the road. In 1995, 10 amnestied Hmong families came from Paxay, setting up a new section.

**f) Muang Poukhoud**

**Ban Poua (Khoum Nongfai)**

A Hmong section in a Lao Loum village. As part of a rural development project, a 15 m high dike was erected in order to irrigate a 'plain'. It crumbled not long before the wet season, and most families left.

**Ban Pianglouang**

The RDC installed Hmong people in 1995 in a Lao Loum village. The Hmong originally came from Nonghet but had been settled near Phonsavan for several years already. They came down from the hills following a RDC publicity broadcast. They are not yet fully settled owing to lack of access to land.

Sample villages were chosen according to the way they were created (history, successive arrivals), their division into different sections, the number of families and their origin. In each village, eight to 15 families were designated to answer the questionnaire.

**2. General facts about the sample**

The main population characteristic is instability, that is to say several successive relocations over a relatively short period of time. 50% of families have experienced three or four relocations, and in some places, the proportion is as high as 90%. Moreover, the most recent relocations have nearly all occurred in the last five years, 75% of sample families having resettled in their present village after 1991, 47% after 1993.

Owing to population instability and relocation trends in Xieng Khouang, the quantitative data are difficult to interpret. For instance, to confirm or to determine an indicator (such as mortality) linking an epidemic with relocation, the sample has to have been stable over time. Therefore, we must be cautious when examining certain survey results, and should compare them to the history of each village. However, most data are valid and give a correct idea of the present situation of the sample populations.

## B/ ANALYSIS BY SECTOR OF THE IMPACTS OF RELOCATION

### 1. Health

Relocation seems to directly influence access to modern medical facilities. 99% of new village populations now take modern medication. Some indicators such as the use of mosquito nets (87% of families in the new village against 49% in the previous village), or the practice of boiling water (93% against 58% before relocation), attest to major progress: advice on health issues has reached every village. The vast majority of villagers follow the recommendations, except for the use of latrines (although in this case, lack of equipment is probably the main obstacle, rather than poor information dissemination). Despite these encouraging signs, we cannot conclude that there has been an improvement in the health situation in the villages.

Ban Som in Muang Kham experienced an epidemic during the first year after relocation - the chief reported 14 deaths out of 45 families over two months. But because of successive relocations by small independent groups, this phenomenon of epidemics tends to disappear from the statistics (less than one family out of 10 has been affected). Successive relocations also confuse the issue of the effects of environmental change (from highlands to lowlands). Ban Som was a case of relocation from the mountains to the plain.

One indirect consequence of relocation is the consumption of alcohol and opium among young men. In one village of Muang Khoune, out of 23 opium smokers, 12 are younger than 35 years. Alcoholism is common among villages from Muang Nonghet that have resettled along the roads and around Phonsavan town. Although neither phenomenon is new to the area, worried village authorities repeatedly raise these problems during informal discussions.

### 2. Production and trade

Cultivation methods before and after relocation vary from village to village. There is a general trend to develop paddy fields (16% of families worked in paddy fields before relocation, against 47% now). Slash and burn is on the decline, as only 65% of families still practice this cultivation method, compared to 83% before relocation. This change, however, does not translate into an improvement in family production. On the contrary, we observed a disturbing increase in the period of rice shortage, from less than two months to an average of three and a half months out of the year. This is due to a drop in the yield of cultivated plots, especially hai, for which the average yield dropped by half.

Trade activities partly make up for this loss of food self-sufficiency. Living closer to the main roads and the towns helps develop certain activities, although these are not considered prestigious as they concern the collection of firewood or scrap metal, or daily wage labour on construction sites. In villages made up of two ethnic groups (Hmong and Lao Loum), certain skills or trades are much in demand, spurring exchanges between the groups, for example of Hmong ironwork, or selected breeds of livestock.

However, people tend to give up traditional handicraft activities unless they generate cash directly, like ironwork or embroidery. New commercial networks, based on relatives living abroad, have appeared in some villages. Traditional Hmong embroidery, made in large quantities, is exported by mail to the United States. There are also local networks: shopkeepers from Phonsavan and Vientiane sometimes supply materials required to produce goods to order, paying only for the work.

As a rule, family support from overseas plays an important role in the lives of resettled Hmong people. In some instances, this support helps people to survive, but it may also help set up a new economic activity - to purchase paddy fields, or equipment to open a video parlour - or it may be used to finance technical training. Exchanges with overseas relatives play a considerable part in the culture too, owing to their significance and regularity.

### 3. Education and culture

When academic level is compared to age it indicates clearly that the younger generation in the new villages go to school at an earlier age, and for a longer period of time. The reason behind this obvious progress is that the relocation zones are better served by public services. The Lao language is taught at school from the age of seven years, on average. Access to education is uneven, and girls are still at a disadvantage, although within the last generation (six to 14 years) school attendance is more regular. It is thus necessary to improve literacy and Lao language learning outside the school structure, especially for the female population.

These data, like district and provincial education statistics, take into account only Lao language learning. This picture is incomplete, as the Hmong language is commonly used to communicate with relatives living abroad. Younger generations and adult women know how to write the Hmong script. Overseas contacts allow some villages access to books written in the Hmong language, and even videotapes (Chinese movies dubbed in Hmong).

As far as education is concerned, one of the most striking results is that people are uncertain about the future: 95% of families think that the skills that their children acquire are insufficient in today's world. The data show that villagers are conscious of the changes that are occurring nationally and internationally, yet feel unprepared to face the changes that relocation entails. These include changes to production systems and cultivation methods (the first thing they ask for help with in Non Formal Education), and changes of lifestyle due to the constraints of a new environment they barely understand. However, many people have reacted positively and optimistically to their new situation, and some have sought technical training (in mechanics, watch and radio repair, and so forth) financed by relatives living overseas.

Current Non Formal Education programs, having been centred around literacy in the Lao language, have not yet taken into account these experiences, and leave little room for meaningful vocational training.

### C/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NON FORMAL EDUCATION

Literacy programs in rural areas of Xieng Khouang have been in place since 1964. The accent on education was intensified from 1975 to 1980. However, according to an Education Department census the province still counts close to 16,000 illiterate people, 95% of whom are highlanders, the majority of them women. Reaching these people in their remote mountain villages also means crossing great cultural and linguistic barriers, and will not be easy. The provincial Education Department has determined that extra efforts must be directed to the Lao Soung group, particularly the women. For practical reasons, these actions mostly concern people who have moved down to the lowlands.

Two distinct education types exist outside the traditional school cycle: standard education as a continuation of the literacy programs of the war period, and Non Formal Education which, strictly speaking, is the 504 Project dependent on the Lao Women's Union.

The standard education program is based on village volunteer teachers employed and paid by the Education Department for six months at a time. In 1996, 17 villages in six of the seven districts participated in this program for six-month periods. In 1997, the budget will allow the Education Department to employ an additional 40 volunteers, to be sent into the seven districts for two six-month periods. Districts are responsible for recruiting and training village volunteers, who are usually young college graduates.

Literacy lessons are usually given on the school premises outside school hours (Saturdays or Sunday mornings) so that all interested villagers, men or women alike, may attend. The volunteer teachers follow the manual specially designed by the Ministry of Education for this program.<sup>4</sup> Teaching is centred on literacy and at the end of the six-month course, students are supposed to know how to read and write in Lao. The manual integrates practice exercises with technical advice about agriculture, cattle raising and sanitation, as well as giving general concepts about history, geography, and national culture.

<sup>4</sup>The Ministry of Education does not have enough books to distribute to every student.

The 504 centres have more ambitious objectives, and are organised differently. There are seven Non Formal Education centres in the province, one for each district. They are open to all district women for six-month courses. Courses cover general knowledge (literacy, arithmetic, geography, history, and national culture), technical training (weaving, sewing), and advice (on cattle rearing, sanitation, children's health, etc). Free accommodation for six months is provided for women from remote subdistricts, who are also given a monthly allowance of Kip 5,000. At the end of the six months, students who pass the final test may receive a loan from the centre in order to start an activity in keeping with their training. From one Non Formal Education centre to another, this loan may vary from Kip 40,000 to 90,000, repayable in one year. Upon departure, every woman who has attended weaving lessons receives her own loom.

The number of women admitted into the 504 centres varies from one district to another, from about 20 to 40 for a half year. Applicants must be recommended by the village chief and the Lao Women's Union. A typical trainee is a young woman with no children, originating from a village close to the district capital or the 504 centre. In some centres the majority of students are ethnic Lao.

Despite such attractive training conditions, there are a certain number of dropouts, mostly among the Hmong women. Many reasons were put forward to explain this, including long distances between centre and village, the loss of labour due to the prolonged absence of a family member, and men's reluctance to allow women to acquire training. Furthermore, lessons are given in the Lao language and may be difficult to follow.

At the same time, the main technical subjects (traditional sewing and weaving) do not seem to be a priority for the students or their families. This is particularly true for clothes making, which cannot become a viable activity, either commercially or for the family, because it has to compete with imported products available in the market. In fact, the loans given to students are more often used to start chicken raising. As for weaving, it is rare for Hmong students to fully master the traditional Lao Loum techniques taught at the centres.

It is obvious that Non Formal Education programs designed at the national level are not specifically adapted for the minority groups of Xieng Khouang, in this case the Hmong. We believe that such adaptations can be compatible with the idea of cultural integration. There are numerous possible adaptations that could make this program easier, more attractive and therefore more effective.

A first step would be to take into account the particular cultures and traditions of the ethnic groups involved. Some recommendations can be formulated in this respect:

Programs could include Hmong language literacy. Indeed, contacts with family living abroad are important and translate into a real demand for such learning. The use and development of the language can facilitate teaching the elements of geography, culture and national history, as well as the acquisition of knowledge in various other fields such as health and sanitation.

Non Formal Education could improve traditional handicraft skills, while taking into account commercial opportunities and available natural resources. Weaving and ironwork are two examples of cash generating activities that are traditional skills adapted to the abilities and requirements of the students, although they are not pursued in all villages. In addition to the economic possibilities, the choice of these activities would assure the continuation of cultural practices.

Secondly, these programs could be adapted to fit the students' economic requirements and help their adjustment to a modern environment.

For example, the sewing apprenticeship classes at the 504 centres have not brought the expected results. Numerous other courses, such as general mechanics or radio repair, would help newcomers to the village to establish themselves. Non Formal Education has an obvious role for improving agriculture, cattle raising or cash cropping, promoting new seasonal crops such as garlic or peppers. Usually, resources in the form of technical advice or seeds are readily available in the villages where the newcomers have settled.

The adoption of good sanitary practices (for example, the increased use of mosquito nets and boiled drinking water) is an encouraging sign and shows how useful action in these fields can be.

# CONCLUSION

The reasons that officially motivate relocation and resettlement are, as we mentioned before, the eradication of slash and burn practices in order to preserve the forests, to bring the people closer to public services, to reduce the isolation of the villages, and to enforce security. In the same resettlement site, whether in a focal zone or not, the reasons for relocation differ: some families have come to seek paddy land, while others have fled insecurity. Moreover, one family may have moved once for security reasons, then moved a second time due to the ban on slash and burn cultivation.

During discussions with officials (village chiefs, district and provincial staff), it became obvious that control over the movement of the Hmong population is one more reason for relocation. This seems to be justified in view of the security problems. Due to high mobility and population mixing caused by relocation, this concern is present in every site and is confirmed both by administrative practice and by the status of the relocated Hmong people.

Village heads and other local government representatives stressed that it was their task to supervise and control new communities. Usually the chiefs of village sections assist the village chief; thus, the Hmong section chief acts on behalf of his people, and answers to the village chief for them. Hmong settlers therefore do not have direct access to the district or provincial government.

Closer proximity to public services can enable district officials to take measures toward cultural integration. This policy is obvious when, on the occasion of relocation, they impose another house style (traditional Hmong houses have a dirt floor). In several resettlement sites, the Hmong chief has been given a house built on stilts.

## **1. Implementation of relocation policy**

The efficacy of the RDC's relocation methods is well established. However, its capacity to stabilise relocated populations in focal zones is yet to be proven. There is a strong contrast between the ordinary surveyed sites and the pilot projects in the focal zones, such as Ban Khan Paniene in Muang Nonghet, Ban Hayhin in Muang Pek, and Napa Vangboua in Muang Kham. These pilot projects are intended to be showcase communities, so they benefit from various kinds of support and are under close government supervision. The following remarks concern the less favoured focal zones:

In already populated areas, the original inhabitants and the first newcomers have taken the best land (arable land and village space). The official definition of 'available land' does not take into account soil quality or the irrigation works necessary for its development. Families often come for available land and find that the soil is very poor and unfit for cultivation.

People are often relocated before the rural development process is properly underway, with land development, installation of an irrigation system, and initiation of alternative activities. Relocated families wait, sometimes several years, for these services to arrive in the focal zones. They feel they are unjustly treated and lose confidence in the local government. This is why some resettlement sites fail and some of the people begin a new type of nomadic life, drifting from one 'rural development' site to another.

Relocations involve a change of environment, increasing the risk of epidemics. This was the case at Ban Som in Muang Kham where an abnormally high death toll drove nearly all families away to settle in other sites.

This is also why numerous families still volunteer to live in rural development focal zones. They are not volunteering for relocation, as they have already been relocated, perhaps more than once, but are merely seeking permanent resettlement.

Faced with this situation, provincial authorities require the assistance of the district to take care of the more difficult relocation situations. As mentioned before, the Rural Development Committee takes an active part only in the moving phase. In practice, family relocation and resettlement by the RDC in a development zone usually takes place when the project zone is still in preparation. If these families are worried because the project site is not ready, the RDC refers them to the district services.

## **2. Prospects for the future**

The drive for relocation is a significant phenomenon. It has been fairly faithful to its objectives, as outlined above: most of the people we encountered had come from the mountainous districts of the east and resettled in the central lowlands.

On the other hand, with regard to population stabilisation, a phenomenon of nomadism has appeared and taken on a form of its own. Xieng Khouang province may have reached a level of population saturation for people who have been relocated and resettled. In this respect, the Napa Vangboua project (for villagers from Muang Nonghet whose resettlement will be contingent on the installation of irrigation works) shows stronger demands coming from the side of the villagers, as well as greater caution on the part of the government.

Future relocations will depend upon the cooperation of international organisations and their response to the Lao rural development policy. Without any support, this policy (to resettle half the population of Muang Nonghet and completely eradicate slash and burn before the year 2000) cannot be carried through. However, the government expects international cooperation to increase.

If the resettlement of 50% of the population of Nonghet district is carried through it will involve about 15,000 people. On the other hand, the province seems to have given priority to the stabilisation of those villages relocated over the last 10 years. A lack of means is presented as the principal obstacle to establishing other development zones. To this should be added a lack of space where viable settlements can easily be developed.

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# Attapeu

S. Lucas



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# I. BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

## A/ GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

### 1. Geography

Attapeu province is situated in the far south-east of Laos. In the east the province is bordered by Vietnam, and in the south by Cambodia. The province extends over 10,320 km<sup>2</sup>.

Topographically, Attapeu has two mountainous zones. In the east, the Annamite chain borders Vietnam, while the Phouvong mountains border Cambodia. There is a large area of plains in the centre. The province has many rivers, in particular the Sekong river and its tributaries, the Se Sou, the Sekaman and the Se Pian. The dense network of rivers makes travel difficult.

Forest covers 850,000 ha of Attapeu (figure for 1981 in Tropical Forestry Action Plan [1990]), or 82.3% of the total area of the province.

### 2. Population

According to the census of March 1, 1995, there are 87,182 people (44,806 female, 42,376 male), a sex ratio of 94.6. Population growth is estimated at 2.2%/year.

Population distribution by district

District		Number of villages	Population			Number of households	Average Size
Number	Name		Male	Female	Total		
01	Saysetha	32	12 356	13 156	25 512	4 347	5,9
02	Samakhisay	23	9 548	9 779	19 327	3 246	6.0
03	Sanamsay	50	9 522	10174	19 696	3 524	5.6
04	Sansay	56	6 012	6 317	12 329	2 273	5.4
05	Phouvong	27	4 938	5 380	10 318	1 777	5.8
Attapeu	Total	188	42 376	44 806	87 182	15 167	5.7

Source: Lao National Census, March 1995

### 3) Ethnic distribution

Attapeu province has a majority of Lao Theung people, with Lao Loum making up only 34% of the population. In the two mountainous zones the Lao Theung represent almost 100% of the population. The following table shows the location of the ethnic groups and the number of villages they occupy:

Ethnic group	Number of villages <sup>(1)</sup>	Main location
Lao Loum	40	Plain
Lave	44	Plain, Phouvong mountains
Talieng	34	Sansay mountains
Oy	23	Plain, near Phou Louang
Alak	17	Sansay mountains
Sou	14	Plain
Nge	9	Sansay mountains
Cheng	3	Plain
Loven	3	Edge of Bolovens Plateau
Nya Hon	2	Edge of Bolovens Plateau
Ta Oy	1	Plain

<sup>(1)</sup> These figures are only approximations

## B/ METHODS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

### 1. Methods

This survey was carried out between July 2 and August 30, 1996, with the assistance and support of the Department of Education. During the two months of the survey, the Department of Education provided two interviewers and transport.

The survey was conducted at two levels:

**General level:** Meetings with different government departments (Agriculture, Health, etc) at provincial level, but also informal discussions at district level.

**Village level (12 villages):** Surveys of at least 16 families per village (organised by the staff of the Ministry of Education), meetings with the village headmen, visits (village, school, paddy fields), and informal discussions.

### 2. Limitations

First there was the time limit. We had only a few days per village, which was not enough. Therefore, it was not possible to meet with all the people we wanted. The constraint of time was compounded by the rainy season, which made travel difficult. Moreover, most of the village people were living by their paddy fields or their hai, which were often several kilometres from the village. Also because of the rainy season, the survey was limited to the plains area.

Finally, the villages were chosen by the provincial authorities and the Department of Education. Because of the time constraint, there was no preliminary survey to pick out the most significant villages, although the surveyed villages appear to represent the relocated minority villages of the province fairly well. We do, however, acknowledge the overrepresentation of Lave villages and the absence of certain other ethnic groups in our sample.

## II. RELOCATION IN ATTAPEU

The goal of this second part is to analyse relocation in Attapeu province. First we will look at relocation from a historical point of view. Later we will discuss past and present policies regarding relocation. We conclude with an assessment of the relocations.

### A/ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1. Traditional communities

We have very little data on the traditional communities of the province. However, if we refer to writings of the end of the 19th century [Aymonier, 1897; Harmand, 1878-79; Baudenne, 1913] the largest Lao Loum villages already existed at their present sites at that time. The following villages are an example:

Coming from Champassak: Ban Tuot, Ban Ouk, Ban Puoi, Attapeu (Muang May)  
Heading towards Saravane : Ban Tha Lan, Ban Hat Sethi, Ban Sok

We have very few details on ethnic distribution. For Attapeu province, Aymonier or Baudenne listed 20 different ethnic groups - including Lave, Kasseng, Tompuan and Tsou - but without any precise geographical distribution.

#### 2. Before the war: Some relocations

The Sou, presently located in or near Muang Sanamsay, would have come originally from the banks of the Se Sou River, to the east. It is not clear when or why this migration took place.

Other relocations concerned the Oi ethnic group. These people have long practiced rice farming in the valleys but lived in the foothills of the Bolovens Plateau. Apparently, some of the inhabitants moved to the valley on a permanent basis during the first half of this century. This movement continued until the end of the 1970's.

#### 3. During the war: Numerous and confused relocations

It was very difficult to get information about the period of conflict. One thing is certain, the great majority of the inhabitants fled into the forest or the countryside, or to the area around Pakse. This is how some families have come to farm paddy fields or hai outside their villages of origin.

#### 4. 1975 and after: Important changes

##### a) Return to the towns and villages of origin

Practically all the people who had left their village of origin, returned. This caused the sale or abandonment of land in certain areas.

With the development of new district capitals, new administrative divisions were put in place (for example the merger of north Phouvong and south Phouvong).

##### b) Phouvong: An empty district

During the period 1975 to 1976, it was decided to depopulate the mountainous areas of this district, bordered by Cambodia in the south. This affected 11,000 people, and took place over several years. There were no fixed settlements; populations had to settle in the plain.

### **c) Spontaneous migrations**

As well as these large relocations, smaller movements took place. These spontaneous migrants were people who wanted to be closer to social infrastructure and administrative services, and have better access to markets. This kind of migration affected only a few families in each village, and has continued until now.

### **d) Protection from the Khmer Rouge**

During the period 1974 to 1975, three villages of Muang Sanamsay left the areas of Sekong bordering Cambodia to escape increasing incursions by the Khmer Rouge.

## **5. Up to 1985: Period of adjustment**

In 1985, Sekong province was established, taking the northern part of Attapeu, while most of the southern part, the Bolovens Plateau, went to Champassak.

During this same period, the inhabitants of Phouvong received authorisation to return to the mountains. About 5,000 people returned to their old villages, about 50% of the people who had come down, which shows the partial failure of the major relocations between 1975 and 1980. Those who did not return to the mountains never really settled. It is common, therefore, to meet families who have changed villages three or four times in 20 years. Such cases are now more accurately defined as displaced families rather than displaced villages.

## **6. 1992 onwards: New relocations**

Starting from 1992, a new relocation strategy began, concerning mainly the people of Phouvong. They moved from plain to plain; or, for those who had already returned to the Phouvong mountains, from mountain to plain. These people are, or will be, included in a new development plan. In addition, dam development may cause further population relocation.

## **B/ PROVINCIAL RELOCATION POLICY SINCE 1975**

### **1. Relocation from the Phouvong area**

After Liberation, as mentioned earlier, about 11,000 people were moved from the mountainous areas of Phouvong. It has not been possible to determine who made this decision or its underlying causes, but the main reasons were:

- To develop paddy land instead of hai
- To participate in nation building
- To protect the people from the war in Cambodian

Only one village with about 30 families stayed in the mountains, Ban Mak Kiang, which was the border guard village. The relocations continued for a long time. Apparently the first families arrived in 1973 and the movements continued until 1980-1981.

The population received little assistance for relocation. Most of the villages surveyed picked their new settlement sites themselves, asking for permission at the district level. Others were assigned a settlement site by the government. The population was divided over four out of five districts. No Lave villages resettled in Sansay district which was populated by Talieng, Alak and Nge. The assistance that was given was mainly agricultural, comprising two buffalo per 10 families to work the paddy fields, and agricultural advisers provided by the district and province.

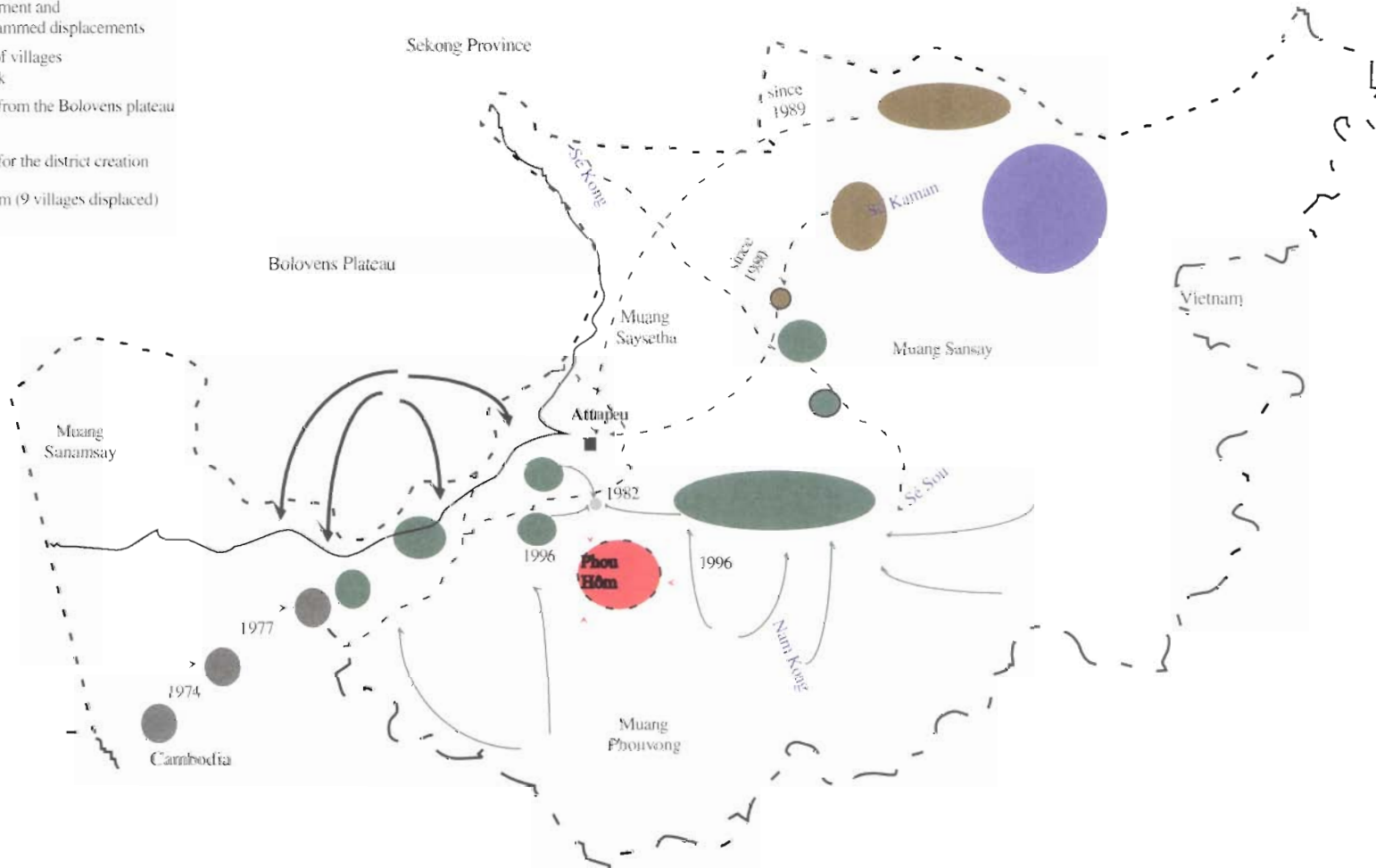
However, the situation varied from village to village and this aid should only be considered as an example.

Attapeu province: Displacements of population  
1970-1996

### Legend

- Displacements from Phouvong district and receiving area
- Border reassurance
- Area of development and reents or programmed displacements
- Displacements of villages Talieng and Alak
- Displacements from the Bolovens plateau (before 1975)
- ▼ Displacements for the district creation
- Sé Kamane dam (9 villages displaced)
- Main road

NORTH



Finally, at least three new agricultural cooperatives were established which welcomed the new people: Ban Katha, Ban Don Say and Ban Na Seurk. These cooperatives no longer exist.<sup>2</sup>) Other measures taken up to the end of the 1970s

## **2. Other measures taken up to the end of the 1970s**

### **a) Border protection**

The inhabitants of three villages in Muang Sanamsay, Ban Don Phai, Ban Had Hai, and Ban Seng Keo, migrated in 1974 and in 1977. According to our interviews, these migrations arose more out of external encouragement than a wish on the part of the villagers to escape the Khmer Rouge. Two out of these three villages have been re-established since 1990. The people who have returned possess the same amount of land in their new villages as they owned in their old villages.

### **b) Migrations to Sansay**

As opposed to Muang Phouvong, Muang Sansay is predominantly populated by Talieng, Alak and Nge and is in favour of maintaining its population in the mountains. During the interviews, people said that they had fled because “normally, one cannot leave the district because it wants to preserve its population”. Those who arrived in the beginning wanted to be involved in the reconstruction of the nation, “to be close to development” and to do business generally, people of means and influence in the area. They were then joined by poorer people looking for better living conditions and the support of relatives already living there.

## **3. 1985 onwards: Progressive repopulation of Phouvong**

From about 1984 or 1985, villages were authorised to return to the Phouvong mountains. The reason behind this change is not clear. The people we interviewed were very evasive, saying only that “it was a shame to leave the mountains”. A few families decided to return to the mountains and were organised into 15 villages. We presume that this return to the mountains involved families who had been unable to find a stable existence in the plain.

## **4. Establishment of the Rural Development Committee**

The Rural Development Committee was established in 1995 as part of the provincial administration, to which it reports directly. Its role is to coordinate the activities of the different services in charge of rural development. The Rural Development Committee is carrying out a ‘complete’ rural development program in Phouvong and Sansay districts. However, its activities are limited and cover only some fields of action in the three other districts.

Its fields of activity are as follows:

- Construction
- Providing pumps
- Village improvement
- Clearing land for paddy
- Providing irrigation
- Inspection of land for new villages

We were not able to obtain more specific details on these activities and their overall importance. Five staff are employed: A manager; an accountant; an architect; an agronomist; a bridge and road engineer. This number is to be increased to 15 people; additional personnel will be recruited particularly in the areas of health, agriculture and education. For the period 1995-1996 the Committee was allocated a budget of Kip 171 million by the government.

## 5. A new development area close to the plain of Phouvong

### a) Transfer of the district capital

In 1992 a new district capital was established in the plain about 12 km from the provincial capital. It replaces the former administrative centre, which was located in the mountains, and, as well as being a showcase for the population, has enabled the reform of the civil service. The new administrative centre developed fairly quickly from 1993 until 1996. During these years they established:

- A new district administration
- A hospital
- A college
- A good trail to the provincial capital (in 1995)

The population of the district capital comprises not only civil servants, but also Lave people who come from a different area of the plain (Ban Kang, Ban Don New, Ban Houay Koud, among others). It seems that these areas have begun to be overpopulated (low land availability, far from paddy land) and that this new area will be a zone to receive relocated people.

A second village, Ban Vong Vi Lay, is being established nearby (500 m). This village consists mainly of people from Ban Katha (a cooperative village close to the present village which was disbanded in 1992) and the people of Ban Don Say (a cooperative village disbanded around 1987). These two villages represent a population of approximately 1,000. The inhabitants of these two villages received the following assistance: a rice bank in the district (at 15% interest); capital for livestock farming (without interest, but a large amount of money has to be borrowed), pumps and wells in both villages, and medical care at half-price at the hospital.

### b) More ambitious projects

The development of the new administrative centre was only the beginning of a wider development policy.

#### - i. A new program for the inhabitants of the Phouvong mountains

In 1996 a new program started in Muang Phouvong to attract one out of two families from the mountains to the plain. The major component of this program is to protect the forest and to stop tree felling. In effect, the province is following the measures laid out in the Tropical Forestry Action Plan [MAF, 1990]: “the permanent settlement of 60% of 1.5 million people currently engaged in shifting cultivation by the year 2000”.

The people of the Phouvong mountains practice shifting cultivation as the land is not suitable for paddy fields. According to the Department of Statistics, **50% of the families in the mountains, or 422 families**, are scheduled to be relocated. This relocation, a government decision, is planned for 1996-2000.

The first relocations will be the families that leave on a voluntary basis. They made the decision after the visit of a Rural Development Committee representative and five civil servants. They say that nothing has been promised to them but “they know they will receive help once they settle in the plain”. Rural Development Committee staff affirm that the families are aware of these conditions. People receiving aid from the Rural Development Committee have no right to return to the mountains if these conditions are not suitable for them.

#### - ii) Relocation process

For the description of the relocation process we will look at the examples of two villages, Ban Patana and Ban Phou Hom. The latter was established in May 1996, with 21 families. Most of the families involved did not move from the mountains; but are poor families from neighbouring villages who have been given a chance to improve their living conditions.

## Relocation

### The new sites

New villages will be 5 km from the district capital and a few metres from a river. These sites have been chosen by the Rural Development Committee in cooperation with the Agriculture Department.

### The date

The date, April 1996, was fixed by the Rural Development Committee. This date seemed rather late if houses were to be built and the farm work started before the beginning of the rainy season. This proved to be the case.

### House construction

The first project that was launched was to clear the site and to start the construction of the houses. Every family received a plot of 30 m<sup>2</sup>. The houses were designed by the architect of the Rural Development Committee and have all been built according to the same model (from bamboo and grass), and are of similar size.

The inhabitants received the following from the Rural Development Committee: Grass already sized for roofing; nails; tools (hammer, saw, etc)

The clearance of the site and the construction of the houses took 41 days.

### Agricultural activities

It is in this area that the Rural Development Committee is focusing its assistance.

Every family received:

- 1 ha cleared area for paddy
- One buffalo (to be paid back after four years without interest (price: Kip 175,000))
- A plough
- 50 kg rice seed

Further, three Lao rice cultivators were employed to advise and help the new inhabitants develop their paddy fields during the first two or three months.

### Health care, water and sanitation

Regarding health care, little action has been taken. The Lao Red Cross has compensated for this omission by giving mosquito nets, clothing and household items to the villages.

On the other hand, the Rural Development Committee will distribute rice until December; the inhabitants have only to pick it up at the district granary. Every month, each adult receives 20 kg of rice, and each child 15 kg. Three pumps have been installed by a private company. They are a Chinese brand, and not of the same quality as the pump installed by the Water Department (which uses the UNICEF 'Tara' model). The area around the pump is not protected. Since maintenance training was not given after installation of the pumps, they are not used and the inhabitants take water from the river.

All these actions are followed up with frequent visits from representatives of the Rural Development Committee, the district and the province.

The road and school are still at the planning stage, but should soon be finished. The school will have three classes (P1 to P3) with two teachers.

### iii) The project to 2000

The families arriving in 1997 were to benefit from the same services from the Rural Development Committee, which translates into an allocation of Kip 620,000 per family (or about Kip 13,000,000 for 21 families). The budget comes from the government; no foreign aid is involved.

In 1997 two entire villages are to be relocated to the plain: Ban Hoa Boy and Ban Pou Muang. These two villages contain 136 families, or approximately 700 people. These will continue to populate Ban Phou Hom until a population of 300 is reached (130 families, according to our informants). This will form one of the six zones for the families from the Phouvong mountains.

#### iv) The future of the families in the mountains

Currently, there are 16 villages in the mountains. Three villages will not be affected by these measures: Mak Kiang, Ta Oum and Vong La Kone. These villages have a military presence which requires the support of the people. The 13 other villages will probably be reorganised into larger villages. Every effort will be made to limit hai cultivation, and development of fruit trees and livestock farming will be encouraged. If people stay in the mountains it is not a problem for the province as long as they do not cultivate hai.

Before the villagers leave the mountains, they have to reforest their hai with plants provided by the Agriculture Department. Even when they live in the valley they have to take care of this land. But is it realistic to expect people to maintain land which is located three days walk away?

## 6. Projects in other districts

### a) Supporting the people in the Sansay mountains

**(We were unable to confirm this information as we had no time to visit the district capital, which was three days walk away.)**

Since 1975, Sansay district has been reluctant to relocate its inhabitants to the plain. The province would like to relocate the mountain people to the valley for the following reasons:

- To develop trade
- To switch from hai to paddy cultivation
- To avoid banditry

While visiting the district villages, civil servants try to encourage the people to join the new villages in the valley (with low prices for land in Ban Si Vi Lay, and permanent schools at Ban Misay). However, this district continues to enjoy a large level of autonomy. Very few Lao Loum work in this district, and the settled ethnic groups want to undertake the development of their district by themselves.

Currently, two projects have begun, or will begin, in this district:

#### i) The Sekaman I Dam

A dam on the Sekaman is under construction close to the Vietnamese border. Nine villages will have to be relocated because they live in the future reservoir area; 410 families (or 2,000 people) will be affected. These are the names of five out of the nine villages to be affected: Ban Hin Dam (Alak); Ban Don Ken (Nge); Ban Tong Ker (Nge); Ban Ngiang Dak (Nge); Ban Piang Se (Nge)

Relocation was to begin in September 1996. It was impossible to find out where the new villages for these families will be located. The first version was that there would be a new zone established at Saysetha and three other places, wherever the people desired. A second version talked about six zones in the Muang Sansay from which two villages have been nominated, Ban Misay and Ban Douan. One thing is certain, in October 1996 nothing had started yet. Funds for relocation have been allocated by the contractors but management and organisation are up to the Rural Development Committee.

#### ii) Projects in the mountains providing an alternative to hai

It is not clear if the relocations mentioned above will be limited to the construction of the dam or if they will involve other villages as well. At the foot of the mountains there is certainly not as much paddy land available as at Phouvong. On the other hand, there is flat land in the mountains where paddy development is possible. The Rural Development Committee is well aware of this situation and is trying to develop new activities in the mountains. An irrigation system has been built enabling 20 ha of nasseng. The state provided the funds

and the farmers the labour. Another area of 80 ha has been prepared to plant fruit trees (banana, orange) or other crops (vegetables, corn). Coffee (katimore variety) has been introduced and covers 5 ha. There are also livestock farming projects. A road to the district is under construction; this same road will be used to access the dam.

### **b) Prospects for future relocations**

#### **i) Relocations due to dams**

The relocation of Ban Misay will be necessary with the commissioning of the Houay Ho Dam. Other villages will be relocated with the construction of the dam on the Se Pian for which studies are just beginning.

#### **ii) Irrigation and roads in Muang Sanamsay**

A gravity irrigation network is being developed in Muang Sanamsay. This currently enables the irrigation of 20 ha, with 50 ha projected for next year and eventually 400 ha of nasseng. (These figures were supplied by the Agriculture Department. The district has announced 15 ha, 40 ha and 100 ha respectively.) This irrigation network is close to Som Long village, a sparsely populated area. We wonder if the final aim of this network could be to receive the population from this area.

Furthermore, the head of the district thinks the people will move to be close to a planned road linking the district capital to Cambodia, and the existing road to Pakse, which is to be upgraded for year round use.

## **C/ ASSESSMENT OF THE RELOCATIONS**

### **1. Assistance: On the increase**

Since 1975, the government has been increasing assistance to the relocation process. Before 1975, government aid was limited to advice and ideological supervision; nowadays aid is more concrete.

The example of Ban Phou Hom shows that the relocation program is working. A few remarks can be made:

Assistance is concentrated on paddy land; people focus their efforts in this area and forget about their gardens, livestock and handicrafts. The issue of health has also been neglected.

In the first year villages receive massive assistance, but after this people are left on their own (no more rice, no more advice on paddy cultivation). This invites major problems in the second year.

However, this province takes responsibility for its policy and does not depend on international organisations or NGOs to compensate for their mistakes. In any case, to our knowledge, only a few foreign organisations are working at the provincial level (Health Unlimited, and World Education in two villages).

### **2. The fight against slash and burn: A questionable priority**

The justification given by the interviewed people for relocation from the mountains to the plains is the increasing deforestation due to the highlanders' slash and burn cultivation practices. However, the agricultural service estimates the area of hai cultivation at 2,304 ha, which is rather low (0.22% of the total area of the province). By way of comparison, the Sekaman I dam will cover approximately 19,000 ha. They also explain that the swidden cultivators in Attapeu only rarely clear primary or dense forest, because this is much harder than secondary forest clearance. Most of the cleared forest areas are not dense and consist largely of bamboo. Finally, average population density in the province is low (10 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) and even less in the mountainous zones. Therefore the slash and burn system is perfectly sustainable in this province.

### **3. Relocations in the present context**

We consider the current propositions to be fairly appropriate. However, the Rural Development Committee does not take into account population growth (>2%). Therefore, the current distribution of land will soon be obsolete and within the next 10 years, families, or at least their children, will have to move again. This situation has already occurred in the new Lave villages close to Se Sou, but an identical scheme is being put in place.

### III. VILLAGE SURVEYS

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

In this part, the objective is no longer to describe the migratory influx and the policies but to analyse the consequences for the people surveyed. First we will repeat the survey conditions, then present a brief description of the villages surveyed and the ways they have been relocated. Finally, we will analyse the advantages or difficulties created by relocation in each area.

#### A/ SURVEY DATA IN SUMMARY

##### 1. Villages surveyed

We conducted surveys in 12 villages. The following table shows some details about the surveys:

District	Village	Number of Families Interviewed	Percentage of village families interviewed
Phouvong	Boung Sam Phane	20	15.7
	Vong Vi Lay	16	26.2
	Phou Hom	16	76.2
Samakhisay	Houay Keo	19	82.6
	Si Vi Lay	20	28.2
Sanamsay	Boung Keo	16	25
	Khanh Mak Nao	16	34.8
	Had Say Soung	16	23.9
Sansay	Misay	20	13.9
Saysetha	Pia Keo	16	28.6
	May	18	36
	Had San	16	34
Total		209	26.9

Families were not chosen at random but according to the following criteria:

- Economic status
- Arrival date at the village
- Production system

It should be noted that mainly families with fields near the village were surveyed.

##### 2. Mode of relocation for the 12 villages

###### a) The 12 villages relocated for different reasons

Actually, the 12 villages surveyed reflect in part the history and the policy of the province as follows:

Coming from Phouvong after 1975 which settled permanently in the valley :

- Ban Had Say Soung, Ban Had Sanh, Ban May

Coming from Phouvong after 1975 which undertook numerous successive migrations or returned to the mountains :

- Currently receiving no assistance:
  - Ban Pia Keo, Ban Houay Keo
- Currently receiving assistance at village level:
  - Ban Vong Vi Lay, Ban Boung Sam Phane
- Currently receiving assistance at village and family level:
  - Ban Patana

Originally from the plain but fled to Phouvong during the conflict :

- Ban Khanh Mak Nao

Involved in protection of the Cambodian border :

- Ban Boung Keo

Coming from Sansay to participate in national construction and to trade :

- Ban Misay, Ban Si Vi Lay

If we consider now the villagers' perspective (in 1996), we can note that the villagers gave the following reasons for their relocation:

Reasons mentioned	% of families (*)
State encouragement	47
No possibilities to farm paddy	44
To join family	32
War and its consequences	16
No land	12
Remoteness	8
Poverty, starvation	6
Epidemics	4
To gain assistance	2

(\*) Several answers possible per family

## b) Characteristics of the relocations

*The points listed relate to the families; the history of each family is not necessarily the history of the village.*

### i) Date of arrival at the new village

For the villages surveyed, the date of arrival in their present locations varies a lot and is spread fairly evenly over 20 years.

Arrival	Total
Before 1975	4%
1975 to 1980	29%
1981 to 1985	13%
1986 to 1990	22%
1991 to 1993	16%
1994 to 1996	16%
Total	100%

## Analysis

36% of the families arrived before 1996 and 68% before 1990. However, all of these villages have experienced many difficulties. Relocations do not, therefore, only have consequences in the short term. It takes several years before the village and the families reach a point of stability again.

### **ii) Season of arrival**

83% of the families chose to move in the dry season. The propitious period is December to March. Relocations should be avoided if they do not allow the people to harvest the crop of the previous year so that the installation of a new cycle has to be accelerated. In addition, the people need to clear the area and build their houses. It is important that the organisation of the relocations respect all of these conditions.

### **iii) Change in environment**

19% of people surveyed were relocated from plain to plain, particularly those from Ban Boung Keo. The majority of these people have been relocated from the mountains to the plains (81%), sometimes requiring a three-day walk. Coming to the plains, these families experience a complete change of environment, physically, culturally and ecologically.

### **iv) The different stages**

Only one third of these families did not move again after their first move. Others moved one to four times. 43% of the families migrated twice. These migrations were for several reasons, but the following cases came up often:

- Poor families who want to join their relatives in another village
- Land saturation, where people have no land or do not live close to their fields
- Disappearance of the cooperatives and hesitation between going back to the mountains or going to another village

These multiple relocations did not occur for Ban Misay, Ban Si Vi Lay or Ban Boung Keo.

### **v) Belongings and money taken with them**

In general people take as much as they can during relocation. However, most of the time they leave behind heavy or bulky objects, as well as their houses. Tools are taken in 92% of cases, and household items in 84%. 67% of people take their cattle and 11% sell them (19% of the families had no cattle to begin with). Seed is taken (69%), sold or exchanged (19%). Sometimes these seeds are not very useful in the lowlands, agro-ecological conditions not being suitable. As for sacred objects and jewellery, two thirds of people stated that they did not have any to begin with. It was impossible to determine precisely the amount of money taken during relocation, no conversion table being available. We can only surmise that **57% of families came without money.**

Overall, families did not lose much 'material capital' during the relocation because they were able to take most of their belongings (except for the house). **Nor did the relocation cause indebtedness.** However, there is one village in particular, Ban Si Vi Lay, that used a completely different strategy, mainly for the first families which moved. These people sold all their belongings in the mountains (except for their tools). When they reached the plain they had capital of Kip 3 million. This was the only village in which one had to buy land to develop paddy fields.

### **vi) Assistance received**

**93% of the families answered that they had not received any help.** Only Ban Patana received assistance of any consequence. For the other villages, the assistance was more specific (transport to Ban Boung Keo), indirect (Ban Boung Sam Phane, Ban Vong Vi Lay) or non-existent.

**vii) Change of house style**

**Only 17% of the families retained the style of their old houses.** The other families adopted Lao style houses. 40% think that these are more suitable, 27% think they are easier to build, while 14% were following advice. The Lao style houses do not seem to offer any advantages over the traditional houses, although it is true that they are easier to build in comparison to the Talieng and Alak houses. The families mostly build the houses themselves or with the help of the other villagers; only 6% received help from outside the village. The houses are fairly simple and built with materials found surrounding the villages (73%). More prosperous families sometimes purchase materials (Ban Si Vi Lay and Ban Boung Keo). At Ban Patana, the Rural Development Committee donated construction materials.

**viii) Diseases and epidemics during relocation and the following two years**

One quarter of the families experienced at least one death during or just after the move. In 25% of the families, people died because of fever epidemics in the following two years. Diarrhea seems to be less of a problem (5%).

It is imperative that the families of the relocated villages receive more health care. This translates into vaccination before the relocation, and medical assistance during the relocation and in the first months following. Distribution of mosquito nets and a prevention campaign need to be put into action to avoid malaria, especially if malaria was non-existent in the zone of origin.

### 3. General data on current village conditions

Village name	Boung Sam Phane	Vong Vi Lay	Phou Hom
District	Phouvong	Phouvong	Phouvong
Distance to district or provincial capital	Chief township	500 m	5 km
Means of access	Road	Path	Path
Number of inhabitants	666	27	130
Number of families	127	61	21
Ethnic group	Mainly Lave	Lave	Lave
Year of creation	1993	1992	1996
Number of villages of origin	6	6	7
Main motivation for relocation	Being close to the district, having enough land for paddy fields	Varied	State support to grow paddy
Aid during relocation	Road, land clearing	Land clearing	Agriculture, pumps, rice, houses
Economic development (relative to other villages listed)	Medium	Medium	Poor
Hai	?	2 families	None
Paddy fields	29.6 ha, 61 families	59 families, 23.2 ha	21 ha
Garden	61 families	All families	Around the houses
Livestock	Buffalo, chickens, pigs, cattle	Buffalo, pigs, chickens	Chickens, buffalo
Handicrafts	Basket making, ironwork, masonry, woodwork	Basket making, ironwork, wood sawing	Basket making, ironwork
School	P1 and P2	P1 and P2	No
Community centre	Yes	No	No
Health facilities	Hospital	No	No
Water source	Pump, well, stream	Pump, well, stream	Pump, stream

Village name	Houay Keo	Si Vi Lay	Boung Keo
District	Samakhisay	Samakhisay	Sanamsay
Distance to district or provincial capital	30 min from Attapeu by boat 30 min by bike (path)	2 km from Attapeu	18 km
Means of access	Path + boat	Path + boat	Path + boat
Number of inhabitants	107	377	314
Number of families	23	71	64
Ethnic group	Lave (21), Lao (2)	Talieng (66), Cheng (3), Lao (2)	Sou
Year of creation	1994	1989	1976-1977
Number of villages of origin	12	8	3
Main motivation for relocation	To grow paddy	Grow paddy, lack of land, following family, trading	State encouragement, insecurity
Aid during relocation	No	No	Transport
Economic level (relative to other villages listed)	Poor	Rich	Medium
Hai	?	42 families	3 families
Paddy fields	?	29 families, 25 ha	61 families, 42 ha
Garden	Around the houses	?	?
Livestock	Buffalo, chickens, pigs	Buffalo, pigs, chickens, goats	Buffalo, chickens, pigs
Handicrafts	Basket making, ironwork	Weaving, tailoring	Weaving, basket making, ironwork, sawing, masonry
School	P1 to P4	P1 to P2	P1 to P3
Community centre	Site selected	No	No
Health facilities	No	No	No
Water source	River	River	River

Village name	Had Say Soung	Khanh Mak Nao	Misay
District	Sanamsay	Sanamsay	Sansay
Distance to district or provincial capital	10 km	11 km	28 km (Saysetha), 70 km (Sansay)
Means of access	Path + boat	Path + boat	Road
Number of inhabitants	305	218	665
Number of families	67	46	144
Ethnic group	Lave	Lave	Alak (123), Talieng (21)
Year of creation	1975	1978	1980
Number of villages of origin	7	11	8
Main motivation for relocation	State encouragement, to farm paddy	National construction in the valley	To farm paddy, to settle
Aid during relocation	No	No	No
Economic level (relative to other villages listed)	Poor	Rich	Rich
Hai	17 ha	6 families	20 families, 10 ha
Paddy fields	12.7 ha	45 ha	59.34 ha
Garden	3.7 ha	Behind the houses	All families
Livestock	Buffalo, chickens, pigs	Buffalo, pigs, poultry	Buffalo, pigs, ducks, chickens
Handicrafts	Basket making, ironwork, boats, pots	Basket making, weaving ironwork, sawing	basket making, ironwork Weaving
School	P1 and P2	P1 and P2	2 P1, P2 to P4
Community centre	No	No	No
Health facilities	No	No	Yes
Water source	River	River	River

Village name	May	Pia Keo	Had San
District	Saysetha	Saysetha	Saysetha
Distance to district or provincial capital	Saysetha (12 km)	Saysetha (24 km)	Saysetha (12 km)
Means of access	Path, boat	Road	Road
Number of inhabitants	300	402	288
Number of families	50	56	47
Ethnic group	Lave	Lave	Lave
Year of creation	1983	1981	1980
Number of villages of origin	7	9	5
Main motivation for relocation	To grow rice	To grow paddy, to join family	To grow paddy
Aid during relocation	No	No	No
Economic level relative to other villages listed	Poor	Poor	Poor
Hai	4 families	2 families	3 families
Paddy fields	46 families	5 families	44 families, 33 ha
Garden	All families	All families	All families
Livestock	Buffalo, ducks, chickens, pigs	Buffalo, pigs, ducks, chickens	Buffalo, pigs, ducks, chickens
Handicrafts	Basket making, ironwork, boat building, tailoring	Basket making, ironwork, tailoring	Basket making, ironwork, boat building, sawing
School	P1 and P2	P1 and P2	P1 and P2
Community centre	Yes	No	No
Health facilities	No	No	No
Water source	River, well	River, well	River, well

## B/ RESULTS BY SECTOR

After looking at the mode of migration for the 12 villages, their new situation, and present general characteristics, we will make a sectoral comparison of conditions before and after the relocations. Where this comparison is not possible, we will describe the current situation and the difficulties that the relocated people have had to face.

### 1. Language

#### a) Command and use of the Lao language

**The ethnic language remains the mother tongue in all villages surveyed and is used among family and in the village.** Only the Sou of Boung Keo use Lao more and more on a daily basis (28% of the people surveyed). The learning of Lao remains an on-going process:

- 82% of girls and 85% of boys under six years of age do not understand or speak Lao
- 10% of girls and 18% of boys between six and 14 years do not understand or speak Lao
- 5% of adult women and 1% of adult men do not understand or speak Lao
- 18% of women over 45 do not speak or understand Lao

The people use Lao for activities outside the village. In general, one member of the family is able to speak Lao fluently. Families said they used Lao -

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| - To speak with the inhabitants of other villages | 95.6% |
| - To trade  | 86.6% |
| - To talk to government staff                     | 24.9% |

the results of the survey, 70.3% of the surveyed people speak at least a little Lao.

#### b) Other languages

##### i) Ethnic languages

Depending on the village, in 30% of families at least one member knows one or several ethnic languages (different from his/her own). Most of the time it is the head of the family (aged at least 35).

One generally finds two groups of languages, Katuic and Bahnaric, both from the Mon-Khmer group of the Austro-Asiatic language family. These groups are further divided into:

The Katuic sub-group with Nge

The North-West Bahnaric sub-group with Alak, Kasseng, Talieng

The West Bahnaric group with Lave, Loven, Cheng, OŌ and Sou

Very often people are able to speak other languages in the sub-group to which they belong. However, it is not unusual to find that people speak languages of other sub-groups due to the location of their former village or commercial tradition (for example, Ban May and Ban Pia Keo).

**This knowledge of other ethnic languages is disappearing as the young people use Lao as the main means of communication.**

##### ii) Border languages

In 4% of families one person speaks Vietnamese, while Khmer is spoken in 3%. These percentages are rather low. Those who speak Vietnamese are mainly people who played an important role during the conflicts and who still play an important political role in the village. The Khmer speakers are mainly refugees from Cambodia.

### iii) Foreign languages

Nobody speaks a foreign language, such as English or French.

## 2. Education

### a) General situation

Attapeu province is making a strong effort in the area of child education. Most of the villages, even in the mountains, can provide one or two years of primary education. Freshly graduated teachers from the teacher training school must normally stay for four years in a remote village. They receive a salary of Kip 26,000 a month.

11 out of the 12 villages surveyed had a school. The last village to arrive (this year) will have a school in time for the new school year; the inhabitants had a school in their former location.

Remark: The instructors are mostly Cheng.

### b) Results

#### i) Children

##### *Low attendance rate*

Even though there is a school, children do not attend classes: 44% of the girls and 31% of the girls between six and 14 years have never been to school.

There are many explanations for this:

Parents, often illiterate themselves, do not see the use of forcing the children to go to school, so the children decide themselves.

Competition between education and work. Children who have reached school age are also considered old enough to work.

Children, like their parents, do not see the need for reading and writing because besides official papers, they do not have the opportunity to use their knowledge.

Sometimes learning conditions are inconvenient (tables and chairs the wrong size for the children, school too small to receive all the children, lack of materials/books, or the instructor(s) do not come on a regular basis).

##### *An education limited to the village*

Schooling is very often limited to the village school. A few boys continue their education in the neighbouring village or at the district capital. However, this is the percentage we have for students in P3 or higher:

- Boys between six and 14      8%
- Girls between six and 14      6%
- Adult men                      43%
- Adult women                    13%

In general, schooling is received late and most children do not attend school outside their village. There are several reasons for this:

Customarily, girls do not leave the family home.

The other villages or the district capital do not have the infrastructure for the children to board. The distance does not always allow them to return to their villages the same night. So they have to stay over, which is only possible if they have friends and enough money to pay for their food.

## Analysis

The villagers are not used to the idea of their children going somewhere else and do not know how to go about it. It is up to the Education Department to inform the villages of the possibility, and to help them to organise transport (canoe to cross the river, or by grouping classes in two neighbouring villages, etc). It would be very useful to develop classes where the students could be resident without too much expense for the family.

**Example:** Ban Si Vi Lay has co-financed a school on the other side of the river (P1 to P5) but the children do not attend because they have to cross the Sekong River.

### ii) Adults

#### *Literacy education*

Results for the following categories:

Category	No understanding of Lao	Speak, read and write Lao	School attendance frequency
Adult women	5%	27%	49%
Adult men	1%	69%	86%
Women > 45 years	18%	6%	12%
Men > 45 years	3%	48%	52%

Judging from the low literacy rates, attending school does not guarantee skills in reading and writing. The failure rate has increased because, in the past, fewer people went to school, but knew that in doing so they would learn how to read and write. Nowadays, attending school does not necessarily mean that they will be able to read (50% of the adult women succeed). In any case, the literacy ratio is low. The language problem is not crucial as the majority of the illiterates are able to speak some Lao.

#### *General level*

Even among those who have been to school, few have gone beyond primary level. Of the adult men, only 6% had been to middle school and 2% to high school, while 2% of the adult women had been to middle school. Likewise, few people have received any subsequent education outside the educational framework, except for some soldiers, veterans and, in Ban Si Vi Lay, some women who had received training in weaving.

#### *New knowledge*

**89% of the people are satisfied with the knowledge that their parents passed on to them.** Apparently, the villages surveyed are not eager to gain new knowledge. The people are not used to being asked what they want to learn and the answers to this question were very vague and concerned broad areas such as “to plant” or “livestock raising”, but contained no specific points with which the people have difficulties. We obtained the following results:

Subject	Percentage (*)
Agriculture	86
Literacy	42
Hygiene/Health	26
Handicrafts	16
Mechanics	3
Water	2
Others	2

(\*) Multiple answers possible per family

Before launching new programs or actions, it will be necessary to analyse, jointly with the village people, their real problems to find adequate solutions. Such analyses should be undertaken prior to any educational activities, which are rarely spontaneously requested.

### 3. Health

In most cases, a comparison can be made between the old and new villages based on health factors.

#### a) Main diseases

The main illnesses are malaria, followed by diarrhea. These facts have been confirmed at the provincial level. 32% of hospitalisations are for malaria. At Ban Khanh Mak Nao and Ban Had Say, cases of tuberculosis have been identified. Muang Sansay has had to cope with cholera for several years.

#### b) Fertility and infant mortality rates

Women have an average of 5.9 children; 2.1% of their children die. This represents an infant mortality rate of 320/1,000. This rate is markedly higher than the national average infant mortality rate of 204/1,000 for villages.

#### c) Use of boiled water, mosquito nets, latrines

We studied three indicators for primary health care: use of boiled water, mosquito nets and latrines.

##### i) Water: Origin and treatment

In most cases water is taken from the river in the dry season and, during the rainy season, from the river and wells. This is little different from the old villages where the water is also taken from water courses. Before, 11% of the families from the old villages boiled their water, now 48% boil their water. However, the situation is different depending on the village or district. Only 22% of the families of the three Saysetha villages boil water. Moreover, telling them that they should boil their water does not necessarily mean they will do it. It merely means that they know that they should boil it.

Even if the majority of the people boil their water in the villages, they do not do the same in the fields. Some consider the well water cleaner than the water from the river. Others only boil the water when they are sick. Three out of 12 villages have been given pumps or wells. However, people do not use them very often, saying that the water has a bad taste, the pumps are difficult to use, or they are too far away. So these are very expensive investments for the amount they are used: it is necessary to give a sanitary education along with installation of equipment or facilities. It is also necessary to fight against the idea that one does not have to boil the water coming from a pump.

**Example:** A village chief wants a pump in his village so the inhabitants do not have to boil their water anymore.

##### ii) Mosquito nets

59% of the families are using mosquito nets in their new villages, as against 13% in their old village (the old villages were at a higher altitude, and not affected by malaria). However, mosquito nets do not always shelter the entire family. Moreover, some mosquito nets are damaged and do not provide protection. People are aware of the utility of mosquito nets - the message has got through - but say that they are expensive. Only a few people possess impregnated mosquito nets.

##### iii) Latrines

Only 5.2% of the families use latrines, mainly in Ban Boun Sam Phane, the capital of Muang Phouvong.

#### d) Hygiene and cleanliness

At many villages there is little segregation between humans and animals. Chickens and dogs roam about the house or peck at the food, while the underside of houses in the rice fields are used for pigsties, so that a slurry has to be crossed to gain access to the house. Effort needs to be put into penning animals to create a healthier living environment.

#### e) Medical techniques and access to treatment

##### i) Medical techniques

The surveyed people use three different techniques to treat illness:

Sacrifice	89% of families
Medicines	85% of families
Plants	50% of families

In 53% of families, sacrifice is the first form of treatment.

Before, people used the same techniques but with the following percentages: 96%, 18% and 23% respectively.

One can see that the people are buying medicines while maintaining their traditional practices, or at least not losing them completely (pigs and chickens may be sacrificed instead of buffalo). Contact with the Lao Loum people is also developing their use of herbal medicines.

However, one should be careful with introducing medicines too rapidly. In the villages vendors sell all kinds of products: people choose the tablets for their colour and shape rather than for their effectiveness against the illness.

##### ii) Access to treatment

###### *In the village*

There are few facilities in the villages. Only Ban Misay has a health centre but it was not yet in operation at the time of our visit. There are very few medical staff in the villages. Often there are two old 'revolutionary health workers' who are in charge of vaccinations. There are also traditional midwives. One or two people in Ban Bong Sam Phane and Ban Vong Vi Lay have recently received training as village health workers. The health services come to give vaccinations to the children and women. It is impossible to know whether or not these vaccinations have been effective, as several vaccinations a year are required.

###### *Facilities in the districts and the provinces*

Every district has a hospital and a maternity and child care centre; 55% of the families declared they had visited the hospital. The attendance rate is different for every district: 87% of the families of Muang Phouvong, but only 33% at Muang Sanamsay. The provincial hospital has an operating theatre. There are 24 doctors for the whole province, most of whom received their education in Vientiane. A few were trained in Vietnam.

The province receives aid from the British NGO Health Unlimited (health centre, distribution of mosquito nets, etc) and the Lao Red Cross (training of village health workers). The province has also been given medicines by the Japanese aid agency, JICA.

## 4. Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the crucial issues for the relocated villages in the province. In fact, whereas in other provinces relocated people continue to practice *hai*, in Attapeu this is not the case, and new villages are strongly advised or made to practice paddy cultivation.

## a) Hai and gardens

Hai is a system which is accepted in certain villages, but which is disappearing overall. However, for all the villages in the mountains it was the only system in use (the village of Boung Keo is an exception). Altogether, 82% of the families had been involved in hai before resettlement, but now only 17% are. (This figure may be an underestimate, as families and village chiefs tend to play down the number of families and the area of hai.)

As for families who continue hai, conditions have changed greatly. If slash and burn cultivation had been suitable in the mountains, it is not the case in the lowlands. First of all, the area available for hai cultivation has been reduced from an average of 1.5 ha before relocation to 0.6 ha following it. The period of fallow has decreased from 7.1 years before relocation, to an average of 1.7 years now. A fallow period that is so short does not allow maintenance of fertility and increases the workload as the weeds are never completely destroyed. As a consequence, the rice yields decrease. In fact, production has dropped from 1,200 to 840 kg/ha, representing a decrease of 30%.

Finally, villagers tend more and more to develop gardens (souan) instead of hai. These gardens are located around or behind the houses. Gardens are rarely fertilised and it is likely that soils will rapidly become depleted.

We do not have sufficient data to make comparisons between the crops cultivated in the former hai and those cultivated in the new ones or in the gardens. However, the hai and the garden are very useful, almost indispensable. They enable families to produce cucumbers, fruits, peppers, etc, allowing a better diet. This also permits an improvement in their daily nourishment during periods of rice shortage, which can last a long time for those whose paddy harvests are poor. While the province strongly promotes abandoning hai cultivation, it encourages gardening as an alternative to cover the rice shortage. Each family is encouraged to cultivate between 1 and 2 ha around or behind their houses. However, no fertilisation system has been introduced.

## b) The paddy system

Paddy represents a new production system for these villages. Many inhabitants still have difficulties with this completely alien form of cultivation. They say they have "changed profession" or "changed their way of life". The introduction of the paddy system is not only a change in production patterns, but it is also a new way of interacting with the environment and nature, and equally, a new cultural practice.

This is a significant phenomenon, as 89% of the families surveyed now cultivate paddy, compared to only 10% previously.

During the process of establishing the paddy fields, the people of these new villages encountered some difficulties.

### i) Land access and choice of land

Regarding land access and choice of the land, several options are possible. First of all, the village may settle in an unoccupied area, in which case villagers can choose the location of their paddy fields themselves. For certain villages, the soil appears to be inadequate for rice cultivation, for example because it is sandy or lacks water.

Other villages settled in zones that had been cultivated before, perhaps by the Lao Loum who fled to the forest during the conflict and abandoned or sold their paddy fields after 1975 to return to their native villages. The previously cultivated lands may also have been former prison areas which were sold when the prisoners returned to their homes. These locations have very often been chosen by Lao Loum who are used to cultivating paddy, and they are often of high quality. Finally, certain parcels of land given to the new villages are quite suitable except for some that are near the capital of Muang Phouvong, where flooding is quite frequent.

Note: In September 1996, just after the time we conducted this survey, the 12 villages we investigated had been flooded. We have no information on the percentage of the rice crop that was destroyed.

## ii) Development of the paddy fields

Except for paddy fields that were bought (and even then, in many cases, they were no longer cultivated at the time of the purchase), people had to clear their own fields. Very often hai cultivation was continued for some years as the people cleared the land and got used to the new area. Families gradually developed their fields year by year, improving them at an average of 0.2 ha per year per family.

This process has been accelerated at Ban Patana where the families already had a hectare of cleared land upon their arrival. The inhabitants of Ban Vong Vi Lay were able to rent a tractor from the Agriculture Department (from 1992-1995) for Kip 15,000/ha.

The development of the land can be seen as a function of the number of years that the people have cultivated paddy:

	Total (in hectares)
1 year	0.8
2 to 5 years	0.87
6 to 10 years	0.91
11 to 20 years	1.01
more than 20 years	1.34
Average	0.96

Though a “progressive” process, paddy development poses difficulties for families who lack the labour to develop the fields. In fact, these families are not capable of coping with the workload during the rainy season, while during the dry season the soil is too hard to make the necessary improvements. These families are in a vicious circle: less land, very long rice shortages and therefore sickness, and a further lack of labour. These are often the families that do not have buffalo. Such families are quite numerous, making up at least 28% of the surveyed families.

In Ban Si Vi Lay, land clearing is not possible and villagers have been forced to buy the old paddy fields at Kip 200,000 to 300,000/ha. Some families do not have the means to start or to increase their plots. In these cases, they usually continue to cultivate hai.

## iii) Cultivation

### *Ploughing and harrowing*

In southern Laos ploughing is traditionally done using a buffalo and a plough with a wooden harrow. This causes problems for the new villages. First of all, not all the families have buffalo (41% of the families do not own a buffalo). These families are forced to rent buffalo providing they have the necessary means (32%). Renting one animal costs between 200 and 400 kg of rice. Otherwise ploughing is done manually with a hoe which takes longer: only one paddy field a day in the case of manual work compared to three to four fields otherwise. As far as tools are concerned, people easily learn how to make them, or they buy them. The prices are not as high as for the buffalo (a wooden harrow is Kip 3,000, and a plough is Kip 5,000)

Another important cultural aspect to consider is the sacrifice of buffalo. This practice is still very common for serious illnesses. In villages with few buffalo, sacrifices that deprive families of their only buffalo simply accentuate the problem. This is particularly true for the villages surveyed in Muang Saysetha. An alternative needs to be proposed that will, at the same time, respect the customs of the animist population.

*Maintenance of paddy bunds*

The construction, the strength and the maintenance of paddy bunds varied from village to village. The bunds we saw were very low. With the least rain the water flows from one paddy to the other. As only one village had a drainage canal, most of the rice went from drying out to being inundated (asphyxiation). Also, the bund was sometimes insufficient to prevent the development of weeds in the paddies. Sometimes it was not known how much water was needed for the rice in its different stages of development.

*Fertilisers and pest control*

The farmers confirmed that their buffalo graze in the paddy fields. There are few cattle, and they never stay long on the same place so the provision of organic matter is low. The people do not use chemical fertilisers (neither do the surrounding Lao Loum). In this area there is still room for improving production: rice grows 20 cm higher near the houses because it receives the household refuse. The villages do not use pesticide products despite problems with insects in several villages.

*Seed*

People trade or exchange seeds. It seems that they receive the same variety from the province as the Lao Loum. The Agriculture Department also sells new seed varieties (Kip 260/kg in 1996).

*Crop yields*

Harvesting is done using a sickle, leaving the stubble in place. The average paddy yield is 1.2 t/ha. These are very low yields compared to the provincial average of 2.43 t/ha. This is the same figure as the yield for hai in the old villages, although the average area planted is 0.96 ha against 1.5 ha for the hai.

*Technical support*

The technical support given to these villages is very poor. Only Ban Patana is receiving substantial aid, but this is only for one year. It would be a miracle if the villagers learned everything in one year. Government agricultural technicians visit these villages from time to time, but do not follow up regularly. The interviewed families learned rice cultivation by themselves (45%) or by following the example of other villages (55%).

**c) Other crops**

Very few crops, except for rice, have been well developed. The population continues to plant gardens and to have fruit trees but very few people plant field crops. Only Ban Bong Keo and Ban Khanh Mak Nao produce bananas in large quantities, but there is no marketing structure. A few people have started planting teak, particularly in Muang Sanamsay. These plantations will not be profitable for decades, and one has to fight against the idea that it is a fast growing wood. It is at least 60 years before one can really make profit.

**d) Food self-sufficiency**

Because of the change in their environmental setting and production system, the rice shortage period has grown from 1.1 month (or five weeks) to 3.7 months (or 15 weeks) per year. This is an increase of 10 weeks! Rice production per capita has dropped from 311 kg/year to 183 kg/year. For six out of the 12 villages surveyed, the average is less than 200 kg of rice per year.

**Remark:** The FAO standard is 300 kg of rice per year per adult.

Because of this people are very vulnerable to disease and spend a greater percentage of their time looking for substitute products such as bamboo shoots and tubers. These people urgently need technical support to develop their land and improve their yields.

## 5. Livestock

### a) General

All the villages practice livestock farming. The main animal species raised are buffalo, pigs and poultry (chickens and ducks). A few families raise cows and goats. The Lave consider the dog a livestock animal.

In all cases, livestock farming is extensive. Most of the time the animals walk around in the village (poultry and pigs) and eat scraps off the ground. Sometimes the animals stay in a hut or pen, fed by their owner. This method, though more restrictive, is more efficient (lower mortality and cleaner), but is not widespread.

### b) The raising of herds

Livestock raising is not widespread, which shows that capitalisation is very low in these villages.

#### i) Buffalo

Buffalo are indispensable for lowland rice cultivation, yet 41% of the families surveyed did not own one. The price of an adult buffalo fluctuates between Kip 140,000 and 200,000. The number of buffalo is low (only a few families at Boung Keo have more than 20). Only 11% of the families have more than three buffalo, and in five villages, no one has more than five. In most of the villages buffalo are vaccinated by the Agriculture Department (Kip 200-500 per head). We observed that certain villages have only albino buffalo. Is this because of custom, or are they cheaper?

#### ii) Cows and goats

Only 20% of the families of Ban Si Vi Lay have cows. The head of Ban Misay would like to raise cows but does not have the capital. There are also a few families that have goats in Ban Si Vi Lay.

#### iii) Pigs

49% of the families do not have pigs. Those who do, seldom have more than one litter. Fat pigs are rarely seen in the villages.

#### iv) Poultry

78% of the families have poultry. Most of them have chickens, but there are also ducks (especially in Muang Saysetha). Families usually own about 10. Poultry is used for meat, but not so much for the eggs as they are difficult to find.

### c) Modification of livestock farming since relocation

Relocation has not changed the composition of the herds, which still consist of the same species. On the other hand, the purpose of raising buffalo has changed. The buffalo, which previously had been a semi-free animal captured for sacrifices, has become a domestic animal trained to work in the rice fields.

Note: In Ban Lavi (Muang Lamam, Sekong province), and also among the Kavet and the Kreung in Cambodia [Baird / Tubtin, 1996], it is culturally forbidden to make buffalo work. Did the Lave (close ethnic group) have, or do they still have, the same restriction? This custom was noted early on in the three villages cited, but nobody mentioned it in the villages we visited.

### d) Principal difficulties encountered

67% of families complained about disease and the death of animals. This affected all species. Epidemics are more frequent in the new villages than in the old ones. Formerly the animals had grazed in the hai or in smaller villages, where they had less chance to become infected or spread disease.

Ban Si Vi Lay does not have enough land for all its cattle. Some villages have difficulties penning their animals and this sometimes creates neighbourhood conflicts, or causes the death of an animal. Finally, in the three villages in Muang Sanamsay, stealing of animals, poultry in particular, is very common.

## **6. Natural resources**

### **a) Hunting**

The interviewed people gave us little pertinent information on hunting. Hunting is prohibited in the province and all the inhabitants are well informed of this (penalties are severe). However, people continue to hunt (deer, wild boar, etc) and to capture all kinds of animals: frogs, birds, monitor lizards, tortoises, and so on. Some are for consumption (frogs and birds) while others are for sale (monitor lizards, turtles or monkeys).

### **b) Fishing**

Fishing is an important resource for villages located next to a river. 65% of the families practice fishing. 39% claimed that they fish more than in the old village. Keep nets, cast nets and sport nets are all used, either on foot or from a canoe. Fishing is an important source of protein for the families and is also a source of income when sold at the market, to other villagers, or to people who pass by. Since the population is concentrated around the Sekong river and its tributaries, fishing of the rivers takes place all year round. Because of this some villagers felt that there had been a reduction of fish in the river (in Boung Keo village in particular). At Khanh Mak Nao there are a few fish ponds (four or five families). Reproduction is natural in these ponds. This activity could be developed using bomb craters.

### **c) Foraging**

If the two previous activities were performed by the men, foraging is done by the women. It is well developed by the people who use a multitude of different plants for food or to make utensils (done by the men). Compared with the old villages, foraging is more important for two reasons:

The rice shortage period is longer so substitutes such as bamboo shoots and tubers have to be sought. Because the market is often close by, the produce can be sold for rice or cash.

At Ban Misay, foraging was also done for commercial purposes (non-timber forest product development). Below are a few products that were sold, and their prices:

Resin: 1 kg = Kip 80

Mak tion (a ball that swells in the water): 1 kg = Kip 500

Rattan (vai): 1 m = Kip 150

### **d) Gold exploration**

The Sekong river has gold, especially near Sansay. People sometimes look for gold but they are gradually abandoning this activity because it is not very lucrative (time spent/gold found). However, in April some women, and currently children, become gold panners.

## **7. Handicrafts and non-agricultural activities**

### **a) Specific ethnic skills and transfer of knowledge**

Every ethnic group in this region has specific products and handicrafts that are exchanged from one ethnic group to another. Every ethnic group has its own specific ethnic characteristics. Very few new techniques have been learned and the people continue to produce according to their traditional knowledge. However,

new skills have appeared with the fabrication of fishing nets and the construction of agricultural tools (ploughs and harrows). A specific example occurred in Ban Khanh Mak Nao: a Lao woman from Sam Neua trained four or five Lave women in the technique of Lao weaving.

The transfer of knowledge is passed from generation to generation, but loses its continuity every time a 'modern', less expensive product replaces it at lower cost. Weaving has decreased because less expensive manufactured clothing is available in the market.

### **b) Weaving**

The weaving practice depends on the ethnic group. The Lave villages we visited did not practice weaving (except for Ban Khanh Mak Nao). The Sou village practiced weaving, although this was decreasing because manufactured products are less expensive than the thread needed for weaving. This village does not cultivate cotton any longer.

The Alak and Talieng villages still wove, quite intensively in Ban Si Vi Lay. The Lao Women's Union established a commercial circuit going all the way to Pakse where currently the Talieng fabrics are very well represented. For this last village, weaving was an important source of income. Training has been organised already and a loan system to buy the thread has been put in place with a provincial bank loan of Kip 50,000 at 7% interest. This activity has been able to develop because of the village's close proximity to the road and the town. Production was lower before but was sold at a higher price (Kip 10,000, as against Kip 5,000 or 6,000 for two lengths of material - enough to make two skirts - now).

Weaving is done on a traditional loom, wedged between the back and the feet. The thread is always bought at the market. The dye-producing plants traditionally used can no longer be found in the plain and the use of these plants does not allow for commercialisation of weaving, as it does not comply with quality standards. This tradition is dying out as only the older women know how to use these plants.

### **c) Basket making**

In all the visited villages the people used wickerwork for many essential tasks (baskets to carry on their backs, winnowing baskets, rice baskets, etc). Most of the people know how to make these objects. However, their designs are becoming increasingly functional and less aesthetic (the baskets to carry on the back are less finely worked, for example).

The Talieng and the Sou still make these items for personal use. On the other hand, the Lave have commercialised these products, in particular rice baskets, baskets for steaming rice, winnowing baskets and mats. The sale of these baskets is less organised than for weaving. Every family produces and sells to satisfy their needs and their available time. Normally, these items are sold in the village, or in neighbouring villages. A better organised and wider sales network for these products could generate a better income.

It should be noted that such an activity requires access to bamboo. Some villages complain about the distance to the bamboo stands from their villages.

### **d) Ironwork**

In every village there are two or three families that know how to work iron; usually, these people are very influential in the village. Their main product is knives. The obstacle to extending this activity is the lack of iron, so its trade is limited to within the village and among neighbouring villages.

### **e) Construction of canoes**

A certain number of Lave villages make canoes, involving five or six families in the village. Canoes are made out of a single tree trunk (mak ken). They are sold all over the province, and are often ordered in

advance. This is a fairly lucrative activity, but it poses some questions. Is there enough wood near the riverbanks? Is it sufficient to develop this activity? Do the villagers have the authority to cut the trees (permission for felling, payment for trees, the ban on logging)? This activity already existed in the mountain areas.

#### **f) Pot making**

We gathered very little information about pot making, which apparently is done traditionally near the Cambodian border. We have no information about the materials or methods used.

#### **g) Wage earning activities**

The villagers very often turn to wage-earning activities, especially the poorer people. Some people work in the paddy fields and are usually paid in rice. Others go to work in Paksong, mostly poorer people and young people. They work in the coffee plantations, but also on construction sites and in the saw mills.

The following wage figures were supplied to us (1996):

Kip 30,000 to 40,000 to clear or weed 1 ha of land

Kip 1,000 to 1,500 per day for weeding coffee plantations on the Bolovens plateau

## **8. Economy and commerce**

### **a) Traditional trading**

It should be noted that the villages in the mountains were not self-sufficient. The exchange of goods was well developed, in particular for handicrafts, livestock and ritual items. This trade was not limited to Laos but went all the way to Vietnam and northern Cambodia. The Talieng and Lave men told us that they went on long journeys to sell village products and also to hawk goods from one village to another. They did most of their business with Vietnamese people. This kind of trading is still going on but has decreased. However, at Ban Misay, for example, sarongs are sold to Lave who in turn sell them at the Vietnamese border.

### **b) Purchasing patterns**

Families purchased practically all the staple foods such as salt and monosodium glutamate. These two products were mentioned spontaneously. Many families also bought their clothing. 11% of the families bought medicines. Only three villages had a small shop. In the others, the people were forced to buy outside the village or from the many visiting vendors supplying salt, monosodium glutamate, sugar, etc. The vendors sold in small quantities and had a good variety of items for sale including food, clothing, medicines and cigarettes. However, 27% of the people bought in the village or the neighbouring villages and informal trading had developed. Finally, 84% of the people bought at the market, which remained the favoured place for shopping.

### **c) Selling patterns**

Sales, like purchases, were varied, and included handicrafts (40% of families), meat and dairy products (36%), forest products (31%) and fruit and vegetables (29%). The sales were done in the market place (25% of families), especially when the market was close to the village. Villages that were further than 10 km from the market did not benefit from it. Thus when one talks about improved market access for the relocated villages, this can only be true if the market is within 10 km; if further away it is no longer of benefit to the people.

For those villages further than 10 km from the market, selling is done in the village or in neighbouring villages: 67% of these villagers sell to other villagers, and 56% to passers-by.

Relocation has afforded some families closer access to trading areas. The head of Ban Misay noted that produce from the mountains had been sufficient, although not everybody could market their products, and some families were afraid to go down to the valley to sell.

#### d) Exchange

Exchange was practiced, but only above a certain value level, such as exchanging a pig for rice.

#### e) Material possessions and capitalisation

We have done a comparative survey about the use of consumer goods before and after relocation. However, one needs to be careful with the results as, for example, in some zones possession of a bicycle is useless because one cannot ride it.

Item	Possessed currently	Possessed before relocation
Bicycle	35%	4%
Television	1%	0%
Radio	27%	8%
Cart	8%	0%
Mill	38%	13%

These figures were below the national average:

- 57% of Lao families own a bicycle
- 53% of Lao families own a radio
- 19% of Lao families own a television

In general, the people had no capital in the form of manufactured items. We saw only a moped (owned by a former civil servant), a few motorised canoes (Kip 400,000) and a motorised rice thresher (Kip 700,000). On the other hand, capitalisation such as it existed was at the community level in the form of livestock, and sometimes ritual objects, such as a gong or a jar.

## 9. Culture

It is difficult to give a complete 'cultural assessment' as we only stayed a few days in every village. However we can give a few quantitative elements and examples.

#### a) Village and house styles

As mentioned before, traditional houses are being replaced by Lao Loum houses or huts for the poorer people. Only the Lave continue to build their traditional houses in the paddy fields. They consist of one principal room, with a terrace on both sides of the house, beneath which are one or two smaller rooms. The village is also Lao style. It lies on either side of the road, with the houses lined up in one or two streets. This street is parallel to a stream or river.

#### b) Festivities

We received little information on festivities, in particular on festivals that relate to agrarian rituals. Sacrifices were mentioned for diseases but never for festivals. Only Ban Si Vi Lay told us they sacrificed a buffalo for the paddy harvest (everyone contributed). This has become less important than when the tradition was to sacrifice 10 buffalo.

In her book *Un village en foret* Jacqueline Matras describes the 'paddy festival' [Matras, 1983]. This takes place 10 days after sowing. It is the most important agrarian festival for the Brou (called Lave in Laos). For this occasion, altars are built. It seems that the Lave of Muang Saysetha have adapted this ritual for paddy fields. The same altars are found in front of the houses. It would be very interesting to follow the evolution and adaptation of this ritual more closely in the new villages.

### c) Marriage

It was impossible to compare the characteristics of a marriage before and after relocation. The majority marry within their own ethnic group or with someone from the same village. Relocation has without doubt encouraged marriages outside the village, but most of the time it is with somebody of the same ethnic group. Lave women marry men of another ethnic group relatively often and, in this case, the man goes to live in the village of his spouse.

#### *The Lave*

It seems that the Lave do not have a system of preferential union. After the marriage, the couple has to work four years for the parents of the wife, and four years for the parents of the man. The couple can then settle. The dowry varies from nothing, to one or two buffalo for the rich. Apparently the amount for the dowry has not diminished over time, as even people who married more than 30 years ago paid varying amounts. In the case of divorce, a double dowry has to be given back, or the cost of the wedding party must be repaid.

### d) Funerals

In the villages that we visited, 99% of the population is buried according to tradition (while cremation is a rule among Lao people). Only the Sou continue to bury their dead, but then have a Lao style funeral party. If the person dies outside the village the body is cremated.

### e) Sacrifice

20% of the interviewed families said they sacrifice buffalo. Actually it depends on the district (perhaps because of a ban on this practice). In Muang Saysetha, 62% of the families confirmed that they sacrifice buffalo. Only 20% of the families do not make sacrifices, while 80% sacrifice chickens, and 75% sacrifice pigs. Sacrifices are made for disease; the meat is always eaten.

### f) Clothing

#### *The Lave*

The elderly Lave men usually wear a short sarong or loincloth. Tattoos were very common until the 1950s. Very often the women are tattooed on the face or on the back. Men are tattooed on the chest, arms and legs. The Lao Loum are tattooed at puberty.

The Lave women used to wear big bracelets on their feet and wrists, but most of them have sold these bracelets. They also wear cheap pieces of jewellery with all kinds of odds and ends (keys, pieces of metal, coins) attached. Only the older women still wear these.

Finally, to a lesser extent, the older men and women have pierced ears. The traditional Lave earrings are ivory caps a few centimetres in diameter. The holes in the ears are made progressively bigger to be able to put in the earrings. This tradition no longer exists and some men have even had their ears stitched up again to erase this ethnic distinction.

### **g) Social links**

The composition of villages always changes during relocation. Often villages comprise people from as many as half a dozen different places. People do not always know the inhabitants of their village. In some villages we had the impression that there is no village solidarity. Family bonds are still strong, but village ties have practically disappeared.

## **C/ CONCLUSION: “ADVANTAGES” AND “DISADVANTAGES” OF RELOCATION**

We have established a sectoral analysis of the situation in the new villages and made a comparison with the old villages, where possible. Finally we will try to make a general assessment.

In general the people have moved closer to the communication systems, the markets and to services (hospitals, etc). The advice on primary health care is regularly followed (boiling water, using mosquito nets). But it still needs a lot of effort because of the high infant mortality rate, and because the people do not go to the hospital when they are sick. The state of education has changed little as there are schools nearly every village, even the more remote ones.

The greatest upheaval concerns agriculture. Firstly, the people have difficulties adapting to the new environment (different crops) and, secondly, the mode of production is totally changed. This adaptation can only take place slowly because developing paddy land calls into question all their beliefs, their concepts of space and their use of the environment. Even the young adults who have worked in the rice fields all their lives consider themselves shifting cultivators and not paddy rice cultivators.

All of this suggests a decrease in food self-sufficiency and the need to find other livelihood activities, as the current activities are, in general, insufficient to provide the families with enough rice. Livestock raising is one possibility, but is hardly profitable because of the many diseases affecting the cattle and poultry.

Handicrafts are very often produced along traditional lines. There are great opportunities to sell them, yet only Ban Si Vi Lay has been able to take advantage of this. Other villages have hardly increased their production for sale.

From the cultural point of view, there is a tendency towards a homogenisation of cultural practices. Lao has become the lingua franca, the houses and the alignment of the houses are Lao, the observance of traditional festivals is in decline, and the clothing is Lao.

Thus if we wish to judge the success or failure of relocation - and this is admittedly very subjective - we can say that only two villages have managed to take advantage of their new circumstances: Ban Si Vi Lay and Ban Misay. These villages have not improved their agricultural output, but have been able to find more lucrative activities through such activities as livestock farming, weaving and working in Paksong. These are the only villages that have improved their standard of living. Let us not forget, however, that these were two voluntary and well-considered relocations (especially Ban Si Vi Lay, where the people arrived with some capital).

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NON FORMAL EDUCATION

### 1. Current status of Non Formal Education in Attapeu

Non Formal Education in Attapeu is still in its early stages. Two people work at the provincial Education Department. The head of Non Formal Education is simply the head of his section, and does not have a key position. There is also a NFE representative in each district.

NFE programs are carried out in two villages:

Ban Don Ta Pat, ethnically Oi, in Muang Sanamsay  
Ban La Yao Neua Mai, ethnically Oi, in Muang Samakhisay

These are supported by World Education. GTZ has also conducted surveys for a project for Non Formal Education and the development of small handicraft units in the province.

### 2. Areas of intervention

We shall propose actions that need to be taken in various fields. However, all these proposals need to be discussed at the village level. The villagers will only take an interest and devote their energy to NFE if what they learn is easy to practice and helps them to solve their problems, at least in part.

#### a) NFE for children

The NFE centres are not useful for the children as traditional education is still available everywhere. However, the following needs improvement:

Advice needs to be provided for the construction of classrooms. It is not necessary to have a school with a permanent structure, but the schools need to be spacious, light, and provide proper seating for the students. If different classes take place at the same time with different instructors, room separators need to be installed. These conversions are not expensive, but provide the students with better learning conditions. School materials need to be provided, in particular schoolbooks and books for students to read at their leisure. The construction of the first two classrooms needs to be continued for every village; subsequently, shared systems can be put in place with neighbouring villages. At the same time transport and chaperone systems need to be established (for example, a boat driven by a parent). Finally, for middle school classes a boarding school could be re-established (similar to the previous ethnic colleges financed by UNESCO).

Programs for primary health care and hygiene could be included in the traditional education curriculum. Pilot classes already in place in and around Vientiane could be taken as a model.

#### b) Non Formal Education for adults

##### i) Literacy

First, the NFE literacy programs cannot be given all year round. During the cultivation season the inhabitants are not in the village and are very busy. The NFE programs can only be carried out during the dry season when the inhabitants are in the village and have more free time.

The village school can be used for the NFE programs, if these take place during the evenings (using a generator). In any case, the NFE programs have to be distinguished from the normal school program. NFE must not replace traditional education.

Literacy concerns a large number of adults, and women in particular. The lessons need to be entertaining. The Lao language presents no insurmountable problems, as many adults are already able to speak a little Lao. Once a few basics have been acquired they have to be consolidated through easy reading exercises which tell stories close to the people's everyday experience, perhaps using illustrated books. Since these people have to learn how to read and write they could work in groups on themes such as "the history of the village" or "events of the week". Children should not be excluded, but such courses should only be complementary to their regular education.

To establish these activities it is not necessary to have an instructor; they could be run by a resident of the village who has had a more advanced education. This person is better integrated in the community, speaks the ethnic language if needed and will be less expensive. On the other hand it is necessary that this person receive some training in advance.

### **ii) Agriculture**

#### Rice growing

Agriculture problems are significant for the relocated villages, as nearly all the inhabitants practice paddy rice growing but have little experience at it. Furthermore, the Agriculture Department does not have enough employees to do follow-up on a regular basis.

In the beginning, the presence of the Lao Loum people, who are used to paddy rice growing, was a great help for these relocated villagers. However, the Lao Loum who pass on their skills in paddy growing need to be motivated, educated and advised by the Agriculture Department. A preliminary training for these people could be organised. The same people should continue to return to these villages for several years to come, in order to build up a relationship of confidence so the new inhabitants acquire a grounding in new rice growing techniques.

However, little training can be given for rice growing as there has not been much testing in the following fields:

- Fertility maintenance
- Pest control
- Planting calendars and seed varieties

There are no miracle recipes, and, besides education, a testing system needs to be put in place. Later on, agriculture extension services should be implemented.

Remark: The relocated people do not benefit from the prevailing conditions in the same way as the people who have lived in this environment for a long time, but they imitate the surrounding population, in particular for seed beds and transplanting seedlings. The use of a seedling bed is labour intensive, and requires certain skills. Direct seeding, which is fairly similar to the upland rice method, could be an in-between phase. This would free up time to clear more fields. Once the paddy fields have been completely established, the transplanting method for seedlings can be adopted.

#### *Vegetable gardens and market gardening*

The relocated people are used to having a garden (souan or hai). They could be encouraged to garden in the dry season in order to vary their nutritional intake.

#### *Fruit*

Training could be established for different varieties with the distribution of young fruit trees. We have to look first at which fruits they are used to eating. Marketing these fruits does not really seem possible to us (transport delays, no outlet). Another possibility would be to develop processed fruit (fruit juice or dried fruit).

### **c) Livestock**

Priority in this field is the penning of animals (especially poultry and pigs). Animals roaming wild spread diseases and are infected easily. Moreover, the eggs of the chickens cannot be collected. However, penning the animals means an increased workload for the villagers; food needs to be carried to the animals, and the pens need to be cleaned and repaired. This system could be put in place in one or two families in every village; if the results are positive, other families may adopt this system. 'Model' hen-houses already exist; there is one in particular at the NFE centre at Km 15 from Pakse. Buffalo vaccination needs to be encouraged. For the other animals, a transport system for vaccines should be put in place.

### **d) Commercialisation of handicrafts**

All the villages visited made handicrafts for personal use and for sale. However, the production methods were not always the fastest ones. Furthermore, they did not always sell at the price they should. For example, a well finished rice basket was sold at the same price as a roughly made basket from Pakse. It is important to support the production of handicrafts, but also to train people with basic commercial knowledge (the benefits of selling further away, and which are the most saleable items).

### **e) Health**

This field still needs much development. First, health extension should focus on:

Clean water: Water needs to be boiled, whatever the purpose it is being used for, and stored in covered and clean containers.

Hygiene: Wash hands, cover food, clean and maintain the house.

Medicine: Not buying from travelling salesmen or from private pharmacies without a prescription. It is often no more expensive to go to the hospital.

Malaria: Messages are not enough. More mosquito nets need to be distributed.

As for the use of medicines, one or two village health workers could be trained in every village. They could have a few basic medicines to be put at their disposal. Midwives can be trained so deliveries can take place in better and cleaner conditions. Herbal medicine could also be taught in villages where there is a lack of resources. The people already know the plants; they only need to be taught how to use them and for which sicknesses they can be helpful.

### **f) Environmental protection**

Currently this is not a concern for the newly relocated populations, but it poses risks to the ecological balance of the new zone. Because people are concentrated more and more in the plain, a growing shortage of game and some small animals will take place. Villagers need to be informed of the dangers facing these species and that it is prohibited to hunt or capture them.

The same goes for fishing, particularly in the Sekong river. Moreover, the construction of the dam on the Sekaman may limit the reproduction of fish. A few restrictive rules could be put in place (minimum size, limited fishing in the reproduction season, etc). In this field of work, collaboration with IUCN and Ian Baird (a fish expert) could be established.

### **g) Conclusion**

Several forms of action can be taken in Non Formal Education. However, besides literacy tuition which can be in traditional style, programs should go hand-in-hand with other kinds of development activity. It is useful to provide advice on agriculture or livestock farming, but a credit system to buy buffalo would be more helpful. The same is true for health; the distribution of mosquito nets in the village or the installation of a pump could improve the living conditions of the population. A balance must be found between Non

Formal Education, covering all aspects of everyday life, and integrated rural development projects. Education by itself cannot replace this integrated rural development approach.

### **3. Which villages should be chosen for new programs?**

All the visited villages could benefit from Non Formal Education, but the villages that have switched from shifting to paddy cultivation seemed to have the greatest need. The three villages surveyed in Muang Saysetha, which seemed to have been neglected and suffer deplorable sanitary conditions, should get priority.

As for the villages that were not surveyed, the Lave villages in the plain appeared the most disadvantaged. Villages of other ethnic groups seemed less impoverished because they were used to practicing paddy cultivation. For example, the OÔ do not make handicrafts but they are big rice producers.

Finally, it seems essential to support the villages in the Sansay mountains. It is the only place in the province where the traditional structure of the villages is not going to change. The province and district, which have chosen to promote permanent agricultural production rather than to relocate the population, deserve support to enable the success of this program. We did not have the opportunity to visit this zone, but a deeper investigation of this district would complete this survey.

## CONCLUSION

Attapeu province will, without doubt, develop quickly over the coming years. Currently, infrastructure continues to be put in place. The Pakse-Paksong-Attapeu road has already opened up the province, while roads to Vietnam and to Cambodia are under construction or at the planning stage. There has also been talk of a bridge over the Sekong, which would make travel in the province easier, especially during the rainy season when cars cannot use the ferry.

Along with the road projects, Attapeu received a telephone system in 1997 and expects electricity in 1998 (from Houay Ho dam). The construction of the dam on the Sekaman will also generate important economic activities.

However, economic development should not be exclusive to a certain part of the population, nor should it lead to cultural homogeneity. However, it seems that in some plains the inhabitants will be "Lao Loum-ised" or excluded (most of the time these will be the Lave who will not be able to adapt to the new way of life). On the other hand, the mountains of the Sansay area, which are quite isolated, will be more and more marginalised (the Lao Loum fear the inhabitants of this district for their magic powers). The people will therefore have to develop the region on their own.

Non Formal Education should enable these marginalised people to adapt to their new life (in case of relocation), or to improve their present living conditions. It should also enable them to become aware of the uniqueness of their cultures, so that development does not go against their culture. However, this objective could easily be overlooked and Non Formal Education should be careful not to become an "instrument of acculturation".

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# **Saravane Sekong**

**P. Lucas**



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#### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NON FORMAL EDUCATION**

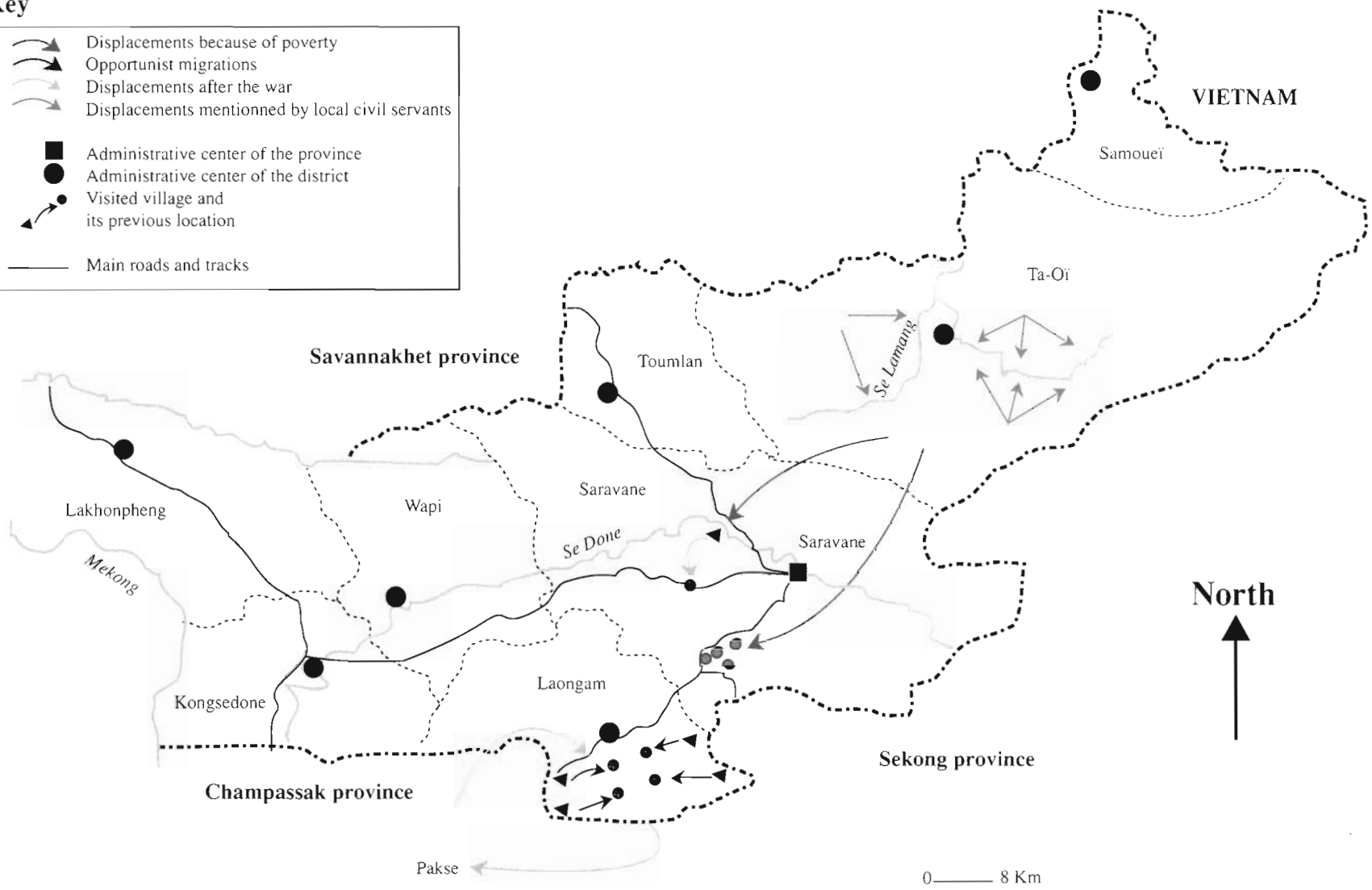
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# Displacements in Saravane province

## Key

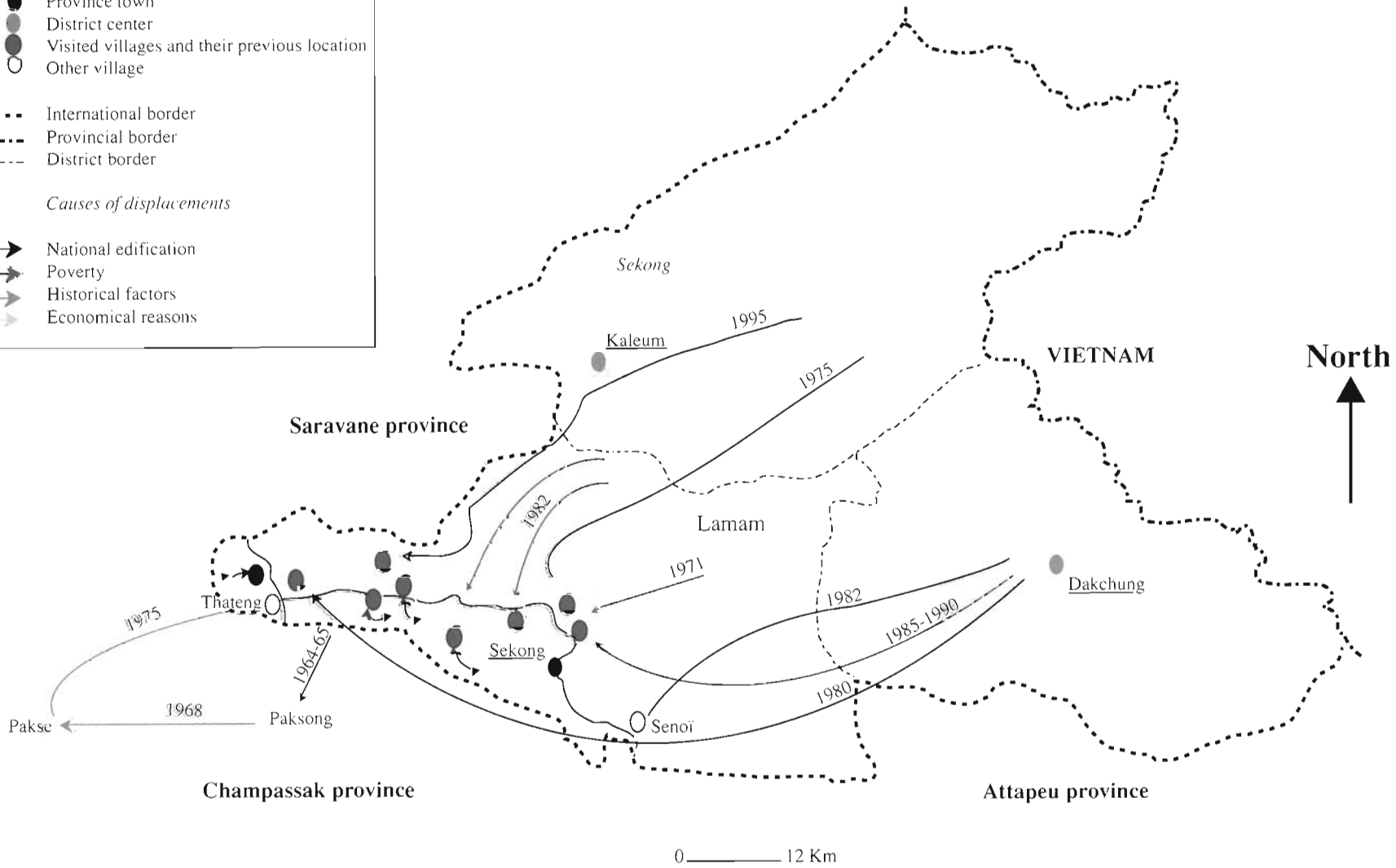
-  Displacements because of poverty
-  Opportunist migrations
-  Displacements after the war
-  Displacements mentioned by local civil servants
-  Administrative center of the province
-  Administrative center of the district
-  Visited village and its previous location
-  Main roads and tracks



**Villages displaced in Sekong province between 1975-1996**

**Key**

	Province town
	District center
	Visited villages and their previous location
	Other village
	International border
	Provincial border
	District border
<i>Causes of displacements</i>	
	National edification
	Poverty
	Historical factors
	Economical reasons



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# I. SURVEY FRAMEWORK

## 1. The survey and its limitations

This document presents the results of surveys carried out in Saravane and Sekong provinces. The phenomenon of relocation is complex but, owing to local constraints, it was usually difficult to spend more than three days in each village. The results presented are therefore incomplete, yet they constitute a base for understanding the complexities of the relocation process. We could only attain a partial view, more factual than analytical, and in many cases our conclusions will need to be checked and confirmed. In this respect, we suggest some avenues for more thorough research at the end of the document. One should consider this document as more of a snapshot depicting the situation in the villages at the time, than an exhaustive discourse about relocation in Sekong and Saravane provinces.

As the survey was carried out during the wet season, travel was limited. In Sekong we were only able to work in Lamam and Thateng districts, although this was not a big problem as new communities originating from Kaleum and Dakchung lie mostly in these two districts. In Saravane, however, heavy rains made access to Toumlan and Ta Oy districts impossible. Both districts have been strongly affected by the relocation process and would have been most interesting for the survey. Thus, we had to restrict ourselves to working in Saravane and Laongam districts in the foothills of the Bolovens plateau, although these districts are less affected by relocation. Observations made in Saravane therefore constitute only a limited picture of the provincial situation.

We chose to investigate nine villages in Sekong and nine villages in Saravane. In Sekong, we were able to choose villages that corresponded to the survey criteria, that is, minority settlements relocated since 1975. In Saravane, however, we followed the suggestions of the Education Department. The first four villages did not meet the two criteria, as they were Katang villages that had been relocated well before 1975. We asked for new villages to be suggested.

In each village, 16 families were selected and interviewed using a quantitative questionnaire designed for the survey. First we asked our local interviewers to draw a map of the village and to select households using a sample that would include families at all levels, from the poor to the well off. Housing was used for rapid assessment of the economic status of each family.

While the researchers interviewed families, we made more quantitative enquiries at the village level. First of all we studied village history. We stopped from time to time when we encountered people working in the fields or under their houses. Conversation was semi-directive (talking about various subjects at random). In every case, we also tried to view the areas under cultivation around the village. Lastly, we interviewed provincial and district officials in order to grasp an overall understanding of policy and actions.

## 2. Data computerisation and results

The results presented here offer a synthesis of quantitative figures, qualitative data, and various observations made in the villages. In each province, 144 families were interviewed exhaustively. This is the first time that such figures have been gathered - figures that will either corroborate or invalidate our observations and assumptions.

Statistical methods consisted mostly of descriptive statistics. Data analysis was systematically conducted at two levels:

Diachronically, wherever possible, at the village and province level - that is to say, by comparing the situation in the new settlement to that in the village of origin.

By relocation type. We have defined four relocation types based on the reasons for relocation. In order to conduct this analysis, we sometimes used deductive statistics. This permitted us to determine whether there were any relevant differences from one type to another, in terms of relocation circumstances, agriculture, sanitary methods, or any other theme that we studied. In this way, we attempted to carry out cross averages on the 'type' variant, and other variants, submitting them to the Fischer test. We also used visual Correlation Factor Analysis (CFA), which allowed us to represent correlation levels between several qualitative parameters.

Lastly, using multiple linear regression, we tried to explain the “rice shortage” variant, by comparing the agricultural parameters given for each family to particular areas, yields, and buffalo ownership. We have tried to discover which of these variants had a significant impact on the period of rice shortage.

For the presentation of field work results, we thought it relevant to group Sekong and Saravane provinces together. Until 1985, these two regions constituted a single historical and administrative unit. Moreover, the two provinces share the same geographical characteristics, that is, a division between the valleys (Sedone valley in Saravane, Sekong valley in Sekong) and the highlands (the Annamite range to the east, and the Bolovens plateau in Laongam and Thateng districts, to the west). Since the 14th century, the major population groups have similarly been divided between mountains and valleys. The valleys are mainly populated by the Lao (Tai linguistic group); these people are Buddhist, work in paddy fields, and have a written language. In the mountains, on the other hand, live a mosaic of minorities belonging to the Austro-Asiatic linguistic group (subdivision Mon-Khmer). [Haudricourt, 1974] These highlanders practice slash and burn cultivation methods, follow animist beliefs, and have no written language. Their social space is often confined to the village. [Condominas, 1980] We find the same phenomenon in the entire Indochina peninsula: large, organised nation states (Khmer, Cham, Vietnamese) live in developed centres in the valleys or deltas, while the mountainous areas are a sort of political fringe, where numerous ethnic groups reside and practice slash and burn. [Goudineau, 1994; 1997] Nevertheless, Jean Boulbet [Boulbet, 1975] in his work on Vietnam stressed the fact that paddy cultivation is not more specific to the lowlands than slash and burn is to upland areas.

Saravane province has 256,550 inhabitants in an area of 10,691 km<sup>2</sup>, that is to say an average of 24 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. [Lao Census, 1995] The average population growth rate is 3.1%. The province is divided into eight administrative districts. Four districts are situated in valleys (Saravane, Vapy, Lakhonepheng and Khongsedone), three are located in the Annamite range (Ta Oy, Samoui and Toumlan), and one lies at the foothills of the Bolovens plateau (Laongam). According to the interviews and the information we could collect, most of the recent relocations had occurred from Ta Oy and Samoui to Muang Toumlan.

Sekong province is smaller, with an area of 7,665 km<sup>2</sup>. It has 63,836 inhabitants, an average of 8.33 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. The average annual population growth rate is 2.3% (the population doubles every 20 years). The province counts two districts in the Annamite range (Kaleum and Dakchung), one district in the valley (Lamam) and one district at the foothills of the Annamite range (Thateng). Relocation has occurred mostly from Kaleung and Dakchung to Lamam and Thateng.

## II. RELOCATION CHARACTERISTICS AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL - AN ATTEMPT AT CLASSIFICATION

We will analyse here the relocations that have occurred in Sekong province and in parts of Saravane province. The first observations are from a historical point of view. In the second stage, we shall try to highlight the main trends and medium-term prospects <sup>1</sup>.

### A/ SIX MAIN PHASES OF RELOCATION IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Even though the survey focused mainly on relocations since 1975, we think it necessary to stress the fact that village and population movements existed well before Liberation.

#### 1. The colonial period

Accounts by explorers and colonial administrators in the early part of this century mention the existence of relocated villages and population movements in connection with trade. During his 1883 trip from Attapeu to Saravane, Aymonier noted the presence of 15 "houses" of the Souay ethnic minority at Ban Phon in the Sekong valley. He also described the "border post" villages of Ban Dan and Ban Chan (which then counted 10 Lao houses) situated respectively at the provincial boundaries of Attapeu and Saravane. [Aymonier, 1897]

In 1935, Captain Le Pichon [1938], Principal Officer of the Annamite Native Guard, conducted several pacification missions into Katu territory in the Annamite range. In the ethnographic description he published in 1938, the author relates the mobility of Katu people due to bartering activities on the Vietnamese side of the border.

Besides these movements related to trade, there also existed some seasonal migrations of ethnic groups who came and worked in the coffee plantations of the foothills. J.J. Dauplay, then posted at Thateng, pointed out that the planters were faced with labour shortages. [Dauplay, 1929] L. De Reinach stressed the importance of coffee in the Lao economy of the early 20th century. [De Reinach, 1906] According to the testimonies we were able to gather from the Sekong valley, we believe that mostly Alak and Souay people participated in these seasonal migrations. The Alak village of Ban Tiou, in the Sekong river valley, was probably installed at its previous location by seasonal workers. [Lucas, 1995]

#### 2. The Indochina conflict

During the Indochina conflict, the entire map of southern Laos was temporarily altered. The perimeter of the Bolovens plateau was the scene of numerous village relocations due to political and military conflicts. In the early 1960s, the Royal Lao Army relocated villages along the main roads, so that the revolutionary forces (Pathet Lao) could not recruit any of the male population. This was the case for Ban Lavi Noi Fangdeng in Sekong in 1960. From 1963 on, following an escalation of American bombing, [Adams/McCoy, 1970] the Royal Army ordered that numerous villages located in the foothills of the plateau be moved to the Paksong region, and then to the periphery of Pakse, between Km 8 and Km 21. Among the villages we surveyed, this had been the case for Ban Cha Kam and Ban Paleng Neua in Muang Thateng, and four villages in Muang Laongam (Ban Da Xia, Ban Phon Hin, Ban Moun Pak Di and Ban Koua). Villagers who did not relocate sought refuge in the forest (Ban Lavi).

#### 3. Liberation and after, 1975-1981

The first province to be liberated in the south was Attapeu in 1970, followed by Muang Lamam in 1972. Saravane was liberated in 1973, and Pakse in June 1975. As each district was liberated, villagers who had sought refuge in the forest went back to their original villages. It was only after the liberation of Pakse that people who had gathered around the main town could return to their villages in the Bolovens plateau.

<sup>1</sup> The data presented concern Sekong and part of Saravane province (two districts visited, Saravane and Laongam), and information collected at provincial level about Ta Oy, Samoui and Toumlan districts. For more information about these districts, and about Austro-Asiatic ethnic groups in Saravane and Sekong, we invite the reader to consult the work of Yves Goudineau.

In the Sekong valley, some Katu and Talieng soldiers who had participated actively in the Pathet Lao liberation of Saravane province decided to stay in the valley districts to set up new villages. Together with their families and some former military like themselves, these “progressive” pioneers gave up their original settlements. Officers, who initiated the new settlements, often played an active part in the new administration (in the Finance Department, Rural Development Department, Culture Department, etc). Among the villages created immediately after the war, we surveyed the Katu villages of Ban Tad Noi, Ban Beng and Ban Bong in Muang Lamam, and Ban Palay Cao in Muang Thateng. Ban Hong Lai, a Talieng village in Muang Lamam, was similarly founded at its previous location in the aftermath of Liberation.

Liberation was also the occasion for certain political relocations. The new government asked villages who had temporarily sheltered or given information to the Royal and American forces to resettle alongside the roads. Ban Nong Bou Nhai in Saravane was one such village. These settlements were under close supervision.

#### **4. National reconstruction and collectivisation, 1981-1987**

The cooperatives movement, that is to say cooperative farming on collective lands, started in 1978.[Evans, 1996] Apart from this collectivisation, state farms were created. These were called nikhom and their employees earned wages. O. Ducourtieux [1994] notes that three nikhom were set up on the Bolovens plateau between 1978 and 1984. In 1980, the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party VIIth Plenum relaxed the collectivisation process. Management of state farms was then entrusted to families.

In the Kaleum and Dakchung mountainous districts, families were encouraged through incentives to come and work voluntarily in these nikhom. This was the case for Nikhom No 7, created in 1980<sup>2</sup> in Muang Thateng on the initiative of the Saravane provincial governor.

At the same time as these relocations related to the creation of state farms, other communities decided to leave their remote mountainous districts to settle in the valleys, work in paddy fields and participate in national reconstruction. Thus, some villagers moved from Dak Din to Dakchung and founded the Talieng village of Ban Senoi as early as 1982.

National reconstruction is a key element in understanding relocations during this period. One needs to consider the political context of post-war reconstruction. After Liberation, the new socialist society was supported by the Soviet Union and neighbouring Vietnam. Vietnam sent agricultural technicians to advise the cooperative workers. The broadcasting system relayed the message of national reconstruction to the remote districts. This theme was also developed within the military and the new administration, where it was taken up with enthusiasm.

Other communities came down to the valleys, attracted by lands put at their disposal, in order to escape extreme poverty and benefit from “progress” (chaleun in Lao). Confronted with long rice shortages, and living far from health services, families moved down to settle along roads on vacant land put at their disposal by the district. This is how Houay Kieo was founded, and was populated by stages from 1975 on. Pioneering Alak families came from Trung Hung plateau in 1975, followed by others from 1979 to 1989 who came from near Kasang Kang on the Dakchung road. From 1989 on, Nge people arrived, whose previous settlement had been on the Sekong river. It seems that these ethnic groups lived together without problems, even though the first arrivals were privileged regarding land access and choice. In 1992, as part of its policy of supporting the development of paddy field cultivation, the government undertook the construction of Ban Phon irrigation canal which now serves part of the village. We shall come back to this matter of support for relocation in the following chapter.

Even though the motivations to move and set up new villages were varied and came in many combinations, we observed that in any given case, one motivation tended to dominate. In some instances, villagers moved for political reasons. In others, people were trying to escape poverty and isolation. Data concerning the economic status of the previous villages confirms the genuineness of this desire.

#### **5. Economic opening and environmental concerns, 1988-1992**

The IVth General Congress of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party in 1986 saw the end of collectivised production and the beginning of the New Economic Policy. What remained of colonial plantations that had

<sup>2</sup> The director of this nikhom was the present director of Sekong province Agriculture Department, also Vice-Governor since 1998.

been managed by state farms during the collective period was returned to family management. Economic liberalisation permitted the resumption of coffee cultivation. From 1987 onward, coffee prices rose, encouraging farmers to expand their plantations, although efforts were limited by the labour required for weeding. [Ducourtieux, 1994] The Paksong Coffee Company was created in 1987 as a provincial public company, responsible for improving and marketing plateau coffee. Company trucks pass through villages and buy mature and dried coffee beans. In order to sell their production more easily, some isolated villages (more than half an hour's walk from a main road) decided to move closer to the roads. Among the villages we studied, those that had moved for this economic reason were: Ban Cha Kam Mai, Ban Choon La and Ban Paleng Neua in Muang Thateng, and Ban Daxia Noi, Ban Phon Hin, Ban Moun Pak Di and Ban Khoua in Muang Laongam.

Pressured by international concern for environmental protection (Stockholm 1972 and Rio de Janeiro 1992 United Nations Conference for Environment and Development), the Lao government took action to protect forest resources. Alarming reports denounced the negative impact of slash and burn cultivation methods. According to Bouahong Phanthanousy, [in Van Gansbergue, 1994] hai cultivation destroyed 300,000 ha of forest per year between 1981 and 1987. Total forest area dropped from 15 million ha in 1981 to 11.2 million ha in 1987. According to Laurent Chazee, [1993] who bases his conclusions on 1981 and 1988 Spot satellite images, the total national hai cultivation area increased by 73% during this period.

The Tropical Forestry Action Plan [August 1990] defined the country's environmental and forestry policy framework for the next 10 years. This document stressed the need to limit slash and burn and to create new economic activities in order to allow farmers to improve their living conditions in the highlands. It also pointed out the importance of issuing laws on land use and natural resources use. This plan constituted a declaration of intentions to be realised by future policies. It also proposed concrete measures. [Dufumier, 1996]

The first measures, taken in 1992, were a decree which limited fallow times in forest areas to three years, a ban on burning primary forests, and the demarcation of protected forest. According to our observations, the authorities put the fallow time limitation into effect fairly strictly. However, this measure endangers the sustainability of the slash and burn system. Shortening the cycle favours weed multiplication (weeding is the main constraint in terms of work). [Lucas, 1995] It also limits fertility regeneration, resulting in serious drops in yield. At Luang Prabang, Joost Foppes [in Van Gansbergue, 1994] notes that in a 20-year period, when forestry fallow periods drop from 6-8 years to 3-4 years, the average yield of hai drops as well, from 2.5-3 t/ha to 1.2-1.4 t/ha.

An important question in connection with the implementation of environmental policy is land legislation and natural resources use. A World Bank report [Lao PDR, 1993] underlined the urgency of elaborating this legislation. According to the Vientiane Times, the discussions at the National Assembly were postponed in spring 1996 until the autumn session. This legislation will be a key factor in the relocation question.

## **6. Relocation as a way to implement the 1992-1996 Rural Development Policy**

Since 1992, relocation and resettlement have been presented as a way to help environmental protection policy. [see supra, Zwack, in vol. I] They have been supervised, incorporated into the Five Year Plans, and funded. For example, we were able to follow the relocation and resettlement of Ban Kan Don from Muang Kaleum to Muang Thateng in March 1996. In this example, the Rural Development Committee organised the relocation and resettlement from the provincial level.

The provincial Rural Development Committees (RDC), created in 1994 (Decree No 40 of November 3, 1994), constitute one of the main instruments for carrying out rural development. The RDCs in Sekong and Saravane provinces have been operating since spring 1995 and are attached directly to the governors' offices, as resettlement is managed at this level.

This last period has been characterised by the putting in place of support projects for relocated villages and the definition of priority development zones, or focal zones. The importance of these zones was reasserted during the VIth General Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party in 1996.

From 1991, several projects were implemented in Sekong province with relocated villages.

Between 1992 and 1994 the government built an irrigation canal at Ban Phon in order to irrigate 120 ha of paddy fields in the wet season and 20 ha in dry season. The 7 km canal serves four villages of which two have been relocated, Ban Bong and Ban Houay Kieo. 15 similar canal projects are planned in Sekong province from 1992 to 2000 (13 financed by the state and relying on village labour, one financed with Australian aid at Ban Kaphen in Muang Thateng, and one financed by the EU).

UNDP started an education program in six ethnic relocated villages (Lao/92/10).

From 1991 to 1996 the French NGO Action International Contre la Faim (AICF) conducted a program called "Water and Health for Minorities in Southern Laos". It built drinking water sources in more than 51 Lamam and Thateng villages. [Lucas, 1996] It constructed several community health centres as well as maternity and child care units, plus one pharmacy at the provincial hospital. [Rousseau, 1996] The program covers ethnic villages, many of which are relocated alongside Route 16.

In the two districts where we were able to work in Saravane province, the main projects under way since 1992 are the following:

In the medical field, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) have provided support since 1991 to district hospitals. Since 1994, they have helped improve the cost recovery system. The NGO Entraide Medicale Internationale (EMI) will take over after MSF leaves; they wish to work more in the provincial highlands. The Lao Red Cross, organised with help from the Dutch Red Cross, has carried out primary health care and first aid activities at the village level.

In the education field, UNESCO started an education program to assist ethnic women (504/Lao/11).

UNICEF, in collaboration with Nam Sa-aat (Clean Water Department), has carried out a drinking water supply program in villages in Muang Laongam. During our survey, the project was building a spring water tap at Ban Phon Hin.

In Muang Laongam, the Lao-Swedish Forestry Program has implemented several agro-forestry programs in 14 "pilot" ethnic villages since 1991. These were taking place in four of the villages we studied: Ban Daxia, Ban Moun Pak Di, Ban Khoua and Ban Phou Hin.

## **B/ A TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF RELOCATION TYPES**

From this division into six periods we can discern a number of characteristics of relocation that are specific to Laos.

### **1. Relocations continue but motivation and supervision change**

Village relocation is traditional in Laos, but the reasons for it have changed with time. Regional economic and political contexts are one influence. For example, the development of coffee cultivation during the colonial period caused villages to move; so later did the war. Since Liberation, "national reconstruction" seems to have been the main reason for relocation. This concept has evolved along with the priorities announced at each five-yearly party congress, so that if at first it emphasised populating valleys and developing wet rice cultivation, these days it addresses environmental protection and ways to increase foreign exchange earnings (crops for export, forestry, hydroelectricity)<sup>5</sup>.

While motivations change, resettlement in southern Laos has long followed a particular pattern, involving movement from sparsely populated areas to more crowded regions. In Vietnam, on the other hand, the government has encouraged the Kinh (the Viet ethnic group) to settle in areas inhabited by minority ethnic groups, [Lothore and al., 1994] while in Indonesia, the government favours migration to the less populated islands<sup>6</sup>.

Since 1990, the level of organisation of relocations in Sekong has changed. From 1975 to 1990, this amounted

<sup>5</sup> Since 1994 the government has sought to develop crops for export, such as coffee, fruit and teak. This policy favours villages situated in the foothills of the plateau, in agro-ecological zones which favour such crops.

<sup>6</sup> See the work on this subject by Patrice Levang, ORSTOM, and M. Charras / M. Pain (ed.) Spontaneous Settlements in Indonesia, ORSTOM / CNRS / Departemen Transmigrasi, Jakarta, 1993..

to no more than the district selecting a site. None of the villages visited had received technical help or transport, nor had they been given any equipment or supplies of rice.

Since 1990, and particularly since 1992, technical assistance has increased. Currently, it is provided by the Rural Development Committee and by appeal to international organisations to help the local administration. The clearest example of this is Ban Kan Don, relocated from Muang Kaleum to Muang Thateng in March 1996. This move was part of the 1991-1996 Five Year Plan. A division between villagers volunteering to move and those opposed to relocation delayed the departure date each year. This year, with the end of the Plan, the whole village decided to move before the wet season. Provincial authorities wished to make this into a showcase of village relocation, as the Katu inhabitants had played an active part in the Pathet Lao during the war. A 4 km road was built to the new village site and the province rented trucks to transport the 695 inhabitants (five vehicles; five trips were needed to move the whole village). The provincial Rural Development Committee provided corrugated iron roofing for 58 houses which the villagers themselves built. Rice was also supplied at the rate of 20 kg per adult per month, and 10 kg per child. Provincial bulldozers helped clear 0.4 ha of land per family. Villagers built their new houses according to the model recommended by an official of the provincial Department of Culture, a Lao Loum style house with the garden at the back and temporary latrines at the end of the garden. The houses were aligned in three rows, defining two main streets.

The death toll due to this relocation was heavy: three children died of exhaustion during the move, nine people died during the first month, probably of malaria, and 10 people died in a measles outbreak the following month. In total, there were 22 casualties during the first three months<sup>7</sup>. Among organisations which intervened during the weeks following the relocation were AICF, which gave warning during the measles outbreak, and the Red Cross, which released emergency credits to construct 18 latrines and three bores for drinking water.

According to information we obtained in Saravane, the RDC spent Kip 20 million in 1995 to relocate 45 families in the Sepone valley (Muang Samoui). This figure is comparable to the Kip 13 million announced by the Attapeu Rural Development Committee to relocate 21 families to Ban Patana (Muang Phouvong).

## **2. Four types of relocation, according to motivation**

From the 18 villages we visited in Sekong and Saravane provinces, we were able to identify four types of relocation, basing our classification first of all on the cause of relocation.

Type I: Relocation in order to participate in national reconstruction.

Type II: Relocation to escape harsh living conditions in the original villages.

Type III: Relocation for economic reasons. These are in the coffee producing villages of Thateng and Laongam districts.

Type IV: Relocation due to war, political or historical reasons.

Lastly, there are four villages that were relocated early this century. Although they fall outside the scope of the study, we have included them in the treatment of the qualitative data, as they provide an example, from a socio-economic point of view, of villages that relocated 50 years ago (type V in the statistical treatment).

<sup>7</sup> According to information collected on the spot, nobody had been vaccinated.

Each type presents characteristics that we shall confirm in the quantitative data processing.

Type I National reconstruction	Type II Poverty	Type III Economic	Type IV Politico-historic
Relocation over a large distance	Relocation over a large distance	Relocation over a small distance	Relocation over a small distance
Generally in one stage	Generally in several stages, achieving stability is difficult	Generally in one stage, long presence in the zone	Generally in one stage, long presence in the zone
Numerous former military	Several ethnic groups originating from different villages	Integration into lowland society	Less acculturated, stick to their forestry environment customs
Government instructions are strictly put into effect	Poverty, inadequate technical knowledge	Advanced economic and technical level (mechanisation); existence of an important cash crop; rice production is no longer a priority	Poverty; generally neglected regarding infrastructure (school, drinking water, etc)
	Demographic dynamic of village continues, importance of family network	Strong inequalities regarding land access between older inhabitants and newcomers	

### C/ MEDIUM-TERM PROSPECTS

Although it is not easy to gather accurate data about relocation projects in Sekong and Saravane up to the year 2000, we believe it is necessary to add some points to the provincial relocation chart.

All indications are that relocations will continue and their numbers will increase. In August 1995, the Vice-Governor of Sekong affirmed, while addressing UNDP and UNESCO representatives on mission, that this province intends to reduce slash and burn from 5,000 ha to 500 ha by the year 2000. The government uses relocation and resettlement as a way to control slash and burn. In Saravane province, stopping hai cultivation, stabilising population and promoting permanent activities (paddy and livestock raising) are the priority objectives of the Rural Development Committee from 1996 to 2000 in Toumlan, Ta Oy and Samoui districts. Kip 331 million was invested in Samoui by the RDC in 1995, and Kip 191 million in Ta Oy. The head of the provincial Forestry Department confirmed to us that the relocation of shifting cultivators to the valleys is a way of limiting slash and burn. Some movements have occurred from Muang Ta Oy towards the Sepone valley, relocations which will probably continue in the coming years. (We did not have permission to go to this valley.)

The new land and natural resources management law will probably have a determining effect on future relocations, owing to its impact on the viability of “traditional” highland agriculture systems.

Finally, Kaleum and Dakchung districts in Sekong appear to have quite different development prospects. At Dakchung, the landscape is more open, and during our March mission, we noted that upland rice farming is possible in the low areas. The government intends to develop this type of cultivation (see Vientiane Times, May 1996). Furthermore, construction of a road linking Sekong to Vietnam via this district is under consideration, with foreign cooperation. By contrast, the more closed valleys and steep slopes of Muang Kaleum make paddy field development more difficult. Therefore, it seems possible that more relocations might occur from this district.

### III. ASSESSMENT AT VILLAGE LEVEL

In this second part, we wish to analyse, through 18 village examples (every village has its own specific characteristics), the impact of relocation on the interviewed families. First, we will recall survey circumstances. Then, we will give a summary description of the surveyed villages and the way they were relocated. Finally, we will analyse, sector by sector, the after effects of relocation. The analysis will be conducted in a diachronic way at provincial level, then, where possible, by relocation type. We have determined four main relocation categories above, from qualitative inquiries. We would like as well to verify, if possible, from quantitative data, the variances or significant differences between the various categories, in order to validate each classification.

#### A/ SURVEY CONDITIONS

During the two months of field work, we were able to visit 18 villages. Apart from the first four villages in Saravane, all the villages surveyed were minority villages relocated after the 1975 resettlements. In every settlement, we interviewed 16 families with the quantitative questionnaire. This family number is not proportional to village size; we chose it according to the number of interviews one researcher could do within the survey period.

In one village out of two, more than half the families were interviewed. In big villages like Ban Choon La, Ban Kan Don and Ban Da Xia, the percentage of families interviewed was very small; we must take this fact into account when viewing our results. This low percentage makes any generalisation impossible.

#### B/ VILLAGE DATA

##### 1. Circumstances of relocation

The survey gives a first “snapshot” of relocation conditions.

##### a) Relocation period

In Sekong, 46% of surveyed families moved for the last time between 1992 and 1996. In Saravane, in the districts we were able to visit, the relocations were less recent: 69% of them had occurred after Liberation, between 1975 and 1981.

When considering the relocation period according to the suggested classification, we observe that Type IV - political or historical reasons - relocations occurred immediately after the war, whereas Type III - economic relocations - appeared during the collectivist period, with the renewal of coffee cultivation. Types I and II are more recent. These heightened in the early 1990's, when the New Economic Policy and environmental measures came into force<sup>12</sup>. The Fischer test confirms that there are significant differences (5%) between the period in which each type of relocation occurred.

##### b) Spatial dimensions of relocation

In Sekong, village relocation occurred from the highlands towards the lowlands. These were mostly Types I - national reconstruction - and II - poverty. These new settlements experienced, and have had to adjust to, a new physical, agro-ecological and cultural environment. 38% of the families settled in a location more than three days walk from their previous village. 46% of relocations took place in the same agro-ecological milieu and within a limited distance from the previous site (53% families live less than one day's walk away). These were mostly Type III settlements in Muang Thateng.

<sup>12</sup> In this chapter, calculation is based on the answers of each family. Relocating a village is a long process. For example, Ban Tad Noi was created in 1975, but the last families arrived in 1992. The process of populating the village continues.

In Saravane, 74% of relocations occurred in the same agro-ecological environment, that is, from “plain to plain”<sup>13</sup>, and involved short distances (97% of resettlements lay less than a day’s walk from the previous site).

In Sekong, as in Saravane, families moved chiefly during the dry season (49% and 83% respectively). Two major reasons for this are that transport is easier at this time, and it is possible to plant rice early in the wet season in the new village in order to feed the family the following year.

In Sekong, however, 69% of villages visited had moved **only once**. In Saravane, 54% of villages had moved once, 27% had moved twice, while 20% were experiencing their **third relocation**. Many of these successive relocations are connected to the impact of the Indochina conflict on villages in this province.

According to the Fischer test, significant differences exist between the types we have suggested, in terms of the variants of “distance” and “number of previous relocations”.

### c) Causes of relocation and villagers’ expectations

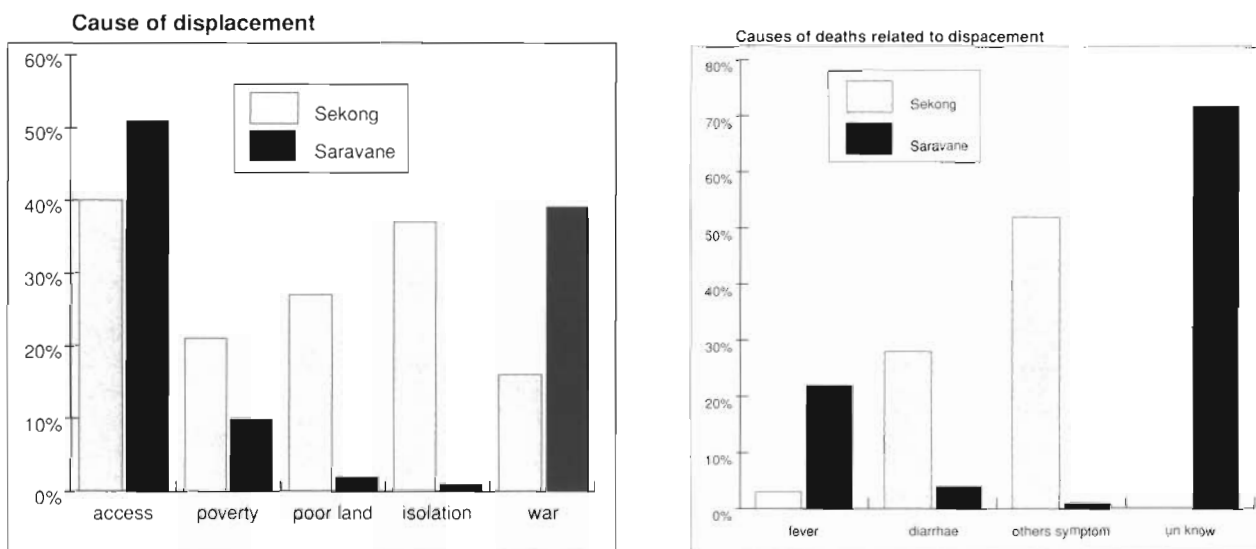
In both provinces, the desire to live closer to main roads was an important motivation (40% of families in Sekong and 51% in Saravane). In Sekong, the next two reasons put forward were isolation (37%) and the impossibility of cultivating paddy land (27%). In Saravane on the other hand, the after effects of war (mines, defoliants, etc) were the second most important reason for departure (38%). 40% of relocated families in Saravane wished to see their living conditions improve. In Sekong, the motivations were more economic: 31% of families wanted to grow paddy and 12% wanted to plant coffee, as encouraged by the government.

### d) Mortality related to relocation: Significance and causes

Among 90% of the families from Sekong, no deaths occurred that were directly connected to relocation. In 10% of the families, however, at least one person died during relocation or immediately after. In 29% of cases this was due to diarrhea and, in 52% of cases, to unidentified diseases. Unvaccinated villagers from Ban Kan Don arrived, exhausted by the journey, in new surroundings that proved lethal for their immune systems<sup>14</sup>. A measles epidemic broke out during the first week following the villagers’ arrival in Muang Thateng. More than 10 people died over two weeks.

In Saravane, in 60% of the families, no one died because of relocation, but in 26%, one to two people died from causes related to relocation. In 22% of these fatalities, fever was one of the main symptoms.

### e) Mode of departure and assistance for relocation



<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to differentiate plain from mountain in Laongam and Thateng. The term “plain to plain” is to be understood as relocation within the same agro-ecological environment

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Dr Dominique Ollier, Education et developpement (EED), Vientiane, June 1996.

In both provinces, 63% of interviewed families moved **at the same time** as their village. 83% of families in Sekong did not get any assistance in moving, nor did 74% of families in Saravane. Regarding our suggested classification, families involved in Types III, IV and V relocations did not receive any assistance. Type II relocations received a small food allowance. People involved in Type I relocations, if they received anything, were given transport and building materials.

In Type III, IV and V relocations, all the families tended to move at the same time. In Type I relocations, families would join relatives who had left earlier. However, in Type II relocations, some families tended to leave before the rest of the village in order to escape poverty.

#### f) Possessions left in the original village

In Sekong, in 93% of cases, villagers **abandoned** part of the **livestock** they owned in the previous settlement, and in 54%, they **took** some of their livestock with them. In 56% of cases, families took the **seeds** they owned. Most people also took **tools** and **household wares** (90% and 83%). On the other hand, more than 40% of families stated that they did not own any sacred artifacts, jewellery or cash. However, villagers may not have wished to speak to outsiders about valuables they possessed.

In Saravane, 42% of families told us that they had moved with part of their **livestock**. 56% of families took their **seeds**. 58% took their **tools**, and 59% took their **household wares**. As in Sekong, most families told us they did not own any sacred objects or jewellery in the previous village. The no-answer rate for all these questions in this province was quite high (greater than or equal to 25%). This phenomenon is related to the fact that four villages did not answer (Type V villages).

We took special interest in what became of **livestock** during relocation, as we thought it might be relevant to relocation type. The CFA (Correlation Factor Analysis) indicates that in Type I and II relocations, people tended **to sell or relinquish** their livestock, probably because they had to travel long distances. One should read this result with caution, as the two main axes account for only 23% of the variance. As to Type III relocations, villagers often **did not own any livestock** or they **left it grazing around the previous settlement** if this was only a few hundred metres away. In Type IV relocations, livestock was **taken along**.

## 2. Summary description of new villages

On the following pages are descriptive data relating to the surveyed villages:

	Tad Noi	Hong Lai	Houai Kieo
District	Lamam	Lamam	Lamam
Distance to district or provincial capital	16 km from Sekong 10 km from Ban Phon	7 km from Sekong 4 km from Ban Phon	14 km from Sekong 2 km from Ban Phon
Accessibility	Trail	Trail	Trail
Number of inhabitants	117	224	118
Number of families	22	44	25
Ethnic group	Katu	Talieng	11 Alak houses 1 Katu house 6 Nge houses
Village creation date	1975	1990	1979
Number of original villages	3	3	9
Chief motivations	National reconstruction	To escape poverty	To escape poverty
Assistance during relocation	No	No	No
Economic level	Average	Low	Low
Hai	Yes (2 families)	Yes (1-5 cycle)	Yes
Paddy fields	Yes (20 families grow paddy and hai)	Yes (no irrigation)	Ban Phon canal allows paddy farming during the dry season
Vegetables or plantations	Vegetable gardens around the village	Yes	Fruit trees
Cattle rearing	50 buffalo (10 females, 40 calves)	Less than Ban Tad Noi	Significant, particularly bullocks
Handicrafts	10 blacksmiths, some basketwork. No sale, domestic use only. No weaving due to lack of cotton. Make resin torches to sell on the market. Cut timber boards and sell them in Ban Phon	Ironwork only for village needs. No weaving	Timber cutting. Charcoal making with byproducts from Ban Phon sawmill
School	No, children attend Ban Phon school	No, children attend Ban Phon school	No, Ban Nong Bong has P1 and P2
Community centre	Yes, in the village centre. Presence of paintings and statuettes	No	No
Health centre	At Ban Phon	At Ban Phon	At Ban Phon
Water source	Houay Vi river	Nam Sa-aat installed water pump	Canal and pool water

	Choon La	Cha Kam May	Nong Bua Say
District	Thateng	Thateng	Thateng
Distance to district or provincial capital	17 km from Thateng 35 km from Sekong	15 km from Thateng 37 km from Sekong	5 km from Thateng
Accessibility	Trail	Trail	Forest path and trail
Number of inhabitants	666	128	150
Number of families	210	24	17
Ethnic group	10 Alak families, 200 Souay families	Nge	16 Talieng families Katu family
Village creation date	1987 to 1992	1991	1980
Number of original villages	1	1	3
Chief motivations	Economic, live closer to the road	Economic	Creation of nikhom
Assistance during relocation	No	No	Yes
Economic level	High	Average	Average
Hai	Yes	Yes	Yes (15 ha)
Paddy fields	Few, currently being developed	Few, currently plantation being developed Souksavan industrial in front of village	No
Vegetables or plantation	300 ha coffee	30 ha coffee	20 ha coffee
Cattle rearing	Little	Little	65 bullocks, 2 buffalo
Handicrafts	Small shops , alongside the road little handicraft work	No	No (village remoteness)
School	P1 and P2 Monks teach in a wat pa	No	P1 since 1995
Community centre	Wat pa doubles as community centre	No	No
Health centre	At Ban Phon	Thateng hospital	Thateng hospital
Water source	2 AICF water pumps	Nearby river	Nearby river

	Paleng Neua	Palay	Kan Don
District	Thateng	Thateng	Thateng
Distance to district or provincial capital	5 km from Thateng	South-west of Ban Cafe	19 km from Thateng
Accessibility	Trail + forest path	Trail + forest pat	Trai
Number of inhabitants	255	178	695
Number of families	51	29	172
Ethnic group	Ta Oy	Katu	Katu
Village creation date	1977 then 1985	1973 then 1993	1996
Number of original villages	1	3	2
Chief motivations	Economic	To escape poverty	National reconstruction
Assistance during relocation	No	No	Yes
Economic level	Average	Low	Very low
Hai	Yes (1-3 cycle)	Yes	Yes (86 ha)
Paddy fields	More than 10 ha, partially developed by Thateng Agriculture Department	None unfavourable topography	Planned
Vegetables or plantation	More than 10 ha coffee Numerous fruit trees	10 ha coffee. Fruit trees	Planned
Cattle rearing	Over 150 buffalo, bullocks likewise	Little, a few goats	30 buffalo
Handicrafts	Little, only for village needs	No	No
School	P1 and P2	P1 since 1995	No
Community centre	In the village centre; paintings and statuettes	No	No
Health centre	Thateng	At Sekong or Thateng Medicine hawkers pass through the village	Thateng hospital
Water source	Spring tap	River	Red Cross financed water pumps

	Nong Bou Nhai	Daxia Noi	Phon Hin
District	Saravane	Laongam	Laongam
Distance to district or provincial capital	18 km from Saravane	12 km from Laongam	11 km from Laongam
Accessibility	Trail	Road + trail	Road + trail
Number of inhabitants	183	1,054	455
Number of families	27	207	87
Ethnic group	Tong (akin to Ta Oy)	Souay	Souay
Village creation date	1975	1975	1975
Number of original villages	1	1	1
Chief motivations	Political control	Economic	Economic
Assistance during relocation	No	No	No
Economic level	Low	High	High
Hai	No	120 ha (2-5 cycle)	49 ha
Paddy fields	Since the beginning of the century. No dry season crop	No (unfavourable topography)	2.5 ha
Vegetables or plantation	Fruit trees	150 ha bananas 30 ha coffee (Lacomex company employs people in coffee plantations)	19 ha cardamom 5 ha groundnut
Cattle rearing	11 buffalo, 6 cows	343 bullocks	85 bullocks
Handicrafts	Cut and sell timber boards; gathering with	Little, only for village needs	Clothes making (3 small shops) view to sale
School	No, children attend Ban Kout Moun school	Wat school for last 2 years (P1 to P3)	Wat school ( P1 to P5)
Community centre	No	Wat pa doubles as community centre	No
Health centre	Ban Kout Moun	At Laongam health centre	At Laongam
Water source	River and pool	Spring tapping under way	River

Moun Pak Di	Khoua	Dong Ko Tay	
District	Laongam	Laongam	Saravane
Distance to district or provincial capital	5 km from Laongam	6 km from Laongam	24 km from Saravane
Accessibility	Trail	Trail	Road + trail
Number of inhabitants	746	198	160
Number of families	159	47	38
Ethnic group	Laven	Laven	Katang
Village creation date	1975 then 1987	1976 then 1987	1910 then 1956
Number of original villages	1	1	1
Chief motivations	Economic	Economic	
Assistance during relocation	No	No	
Economic level	High	High	Average
Hai	21 ha	27 ha	Yes (2-3 cycle)
Paddy fields	No (unfavourable topography)	No (unfavourable topography)	Yes
Vegetables or plantation	46 ha coffee 9 ha cardamom Some groundnuts	37 ha coffee 2 ha cardamom 300 teak trees	Banana trees
Cattle rearing	6 buffalo 145 bullocks <sup>3</sup>	5 bullocks	Very developed cattle herd (54 head), sale in Saravane market
Handicraft	Rice milling;a carpenter repairs carts	Rice milling machines	Little
School	P1 and P2	No, children attend Moun Pak Di school	P1 and P2
Community centre	No	No	No
Health centre	At Laongam	At Laongam	At Ban Sa Phon
Water source	Houay Ta Phou river	Houay Ta Phou river	River

	Dong Ko Kang	Na Say Khop Phao	Don Khao
District	Saravane	Saravane	Saravane
Distance to district or provincial capital	25 km from Saravane	22 km from Saravane	22 km from Saravane
Accessibility	Road + track	Road + track	Road + track
Number of inhabitants	200	150	To be checked
Number of families	47	30	To be checked
Ethnic group	Katang	Katang	Katang
Village creation date	1910	1896	Early C20
Number of original villages			
Chief motivations			
Assistance during relocation		No	No
Economic level	Average	Average	Average
Hai	Yes (2-3 cycle)	Yes	Yes
Paddy fields	Yes	No	Yes
Vegetables or plantation	Numerous fruit trees	Banana trees, Cotton	Numerous fruit trees
Cattle rearing	Highly developed	Highly developed	Developed
Handicrafts	Little	Little	Little
School	P1 and P2	P1 and P2	P1 and P2
Community centre	No	No	No
Health centre	Ban Sa Phon	Ban Sa Phon	Ban Sa Phon
Water source	River	River	River

## C/ ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN NEW VILLAGES

Having considered relocation methods, we will now analyse the characteristics of the new villages by statistical sectors. We shall compare these characteristics to the ones in the previous settlements, whenever possible.

### 1. Demographic characteristics of the relocated villages

#### a) Composition of relocated families

In Sekong, every relocated family had approximately 7.79 people, a figure higher than the provincial average (6.71 persons per household). [Lao Census, 1995] This was also the case for Saravane province where relocated families had approximately 6.94 persons, against 6.05 persons per household at the provincial level. The average number of families per house was 1.1 in Sekong and 1.01 in Saravane. In both provinces, adults (14 to 45 years old) represented 41% of members of the families surveyed. In Sekong, children less than 14 years represented 46% of the members of families interviewed, as against 44% in Saravane province.

#### b) Effects of relocation on family structure

In Sekong, 26% of relocated families surveyed were nuclear families with children old enough to work; 24% of families had grandparents and 19% were couples with small children. In Saravane, nuclear families with children old enough to work represented 28% of the relocated families; families with grandparents represented 25%. Couples with small children made up 13% of the interviewed families.

#### c) Ethnic composition of relocated villages

In Sekong, among the relocated families we met, 33% were Katu originating from Muang Kaleum, and 22% were Talieng coming from Muang Dakchung. In Saravane, we met a majority (42%) of Katang people; 22% were Laven people, and 22% were Souay. The last two groups live on the periphery of the Bolovens plateau.

## 2. Health data for new villages

#### a) High infant mortality rate

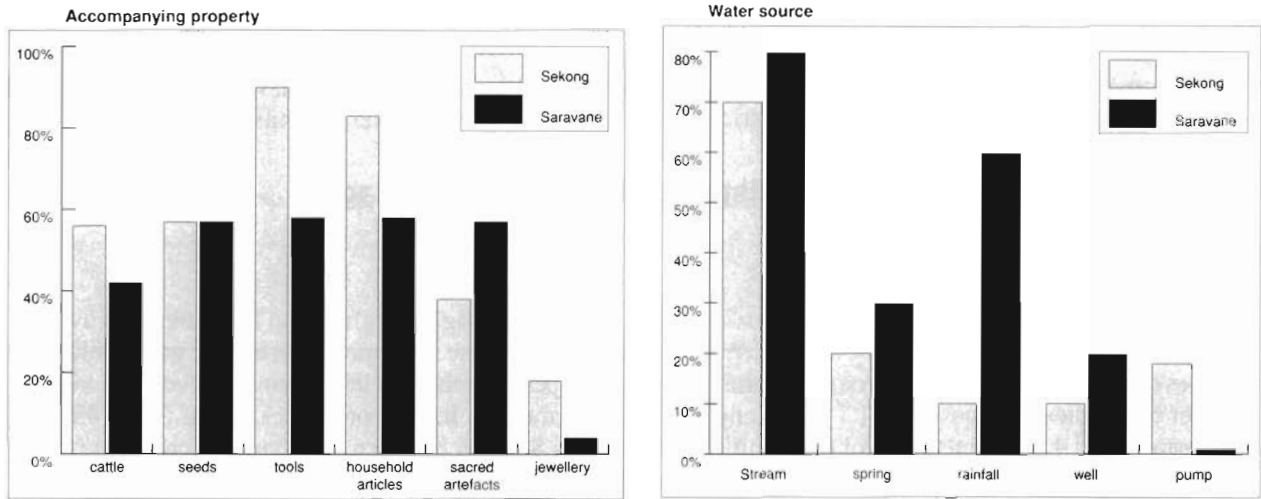
The infant mortality rate for children five years and younger was 196/1,000 in Sekong and 306/1,000 in Saravane, compared to a national average of 204/1,000. As calculation relied on people's memories, and answers were sometimes imprecise, the figure for Sekong may be an underestimate. This rate varied greatly from one district to another in the same province. In Sekong, it came to 228/1,000 in Muang Lamam as opposed to 178/1,000 in Muang Thateng. In Saravane, it rose to 235/1,000 in Muang Saravane, and exceeded 391/1,000 in Muang Laongam.

#### b) Water supply

Sekong: Whereas 50% of families told us they did not boil water in the previous village, only 26% did not do so in the new settlements. Yet even though 72% said they boiled their water, this does not necessarily mean that the water is potable. We must merely understand this figure as meaning that 72% of families have understood the health education message. In fact, boiling time varies a lot from one house to another. Even if villagers boil water at home, they stop doing so during the wet season when they are at their hai fields. [Lucas, 1996]

In 70% of new villages<sup>15</sup>, domestic water was drawn directly from the river. In 17% of cases, a pump had been provided by AICF. However, people do not seem to change their behaviour just because a pump has been installed in their village. The health education program - suspended in Sekong due to a shortage of funds - can influence the use of the new equipment. In some villages the people stopped boiling their water once a clean water supply had been installed, even when the water was not taken from the pump.

<sup>15</sup> In the former villages, 77% of families took their water directly from the river.



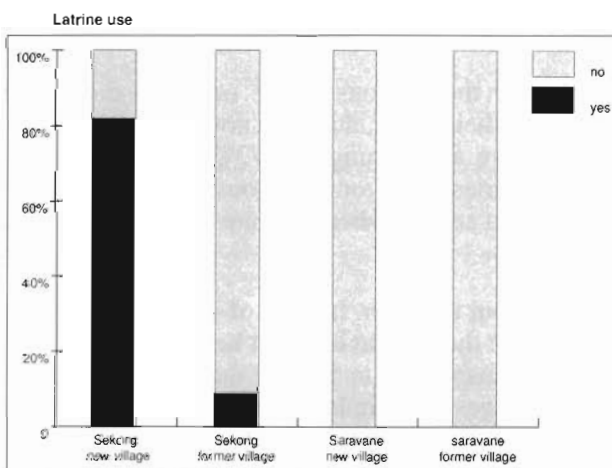
Saravane: 70% of families stated that they had not boiled water in the old village, while only 43% in the new settlements did not (this figure is still high, nonetheless). The drinking water supply program, partly financed by UNICEF, seemed less advanced than in Sekong. None of the villages visited in this province had a clean water source.

In the original villages, 63% of the water came from rivers and 14% from springs. In 79% of the new settlements, water was drawn from the river. During the wet season, 60% of families drank rain water.

If we analyse the way people sterilised water according to relocation types, we note that Type I and II villages had the highest percentages who boiled water: in Sekong, 100% of Type I villages and 78% of Type II villages boiled water, respectively. These settlements were more open to health messages, but were also under stronger supervision. These results have been confirmed by CFA.

**c) Latrines: Little used in either old or new settlements**

In Sekong, 82% of the families did not use latrines in the new settlements, as opposed to 86% in the original villages. In Saravane, if we include the no-answers with the negative ones, no family used a latrine either in the new village, or in the previous one. Type I and II villages used latrines the most often (31% and 12%, respectively).

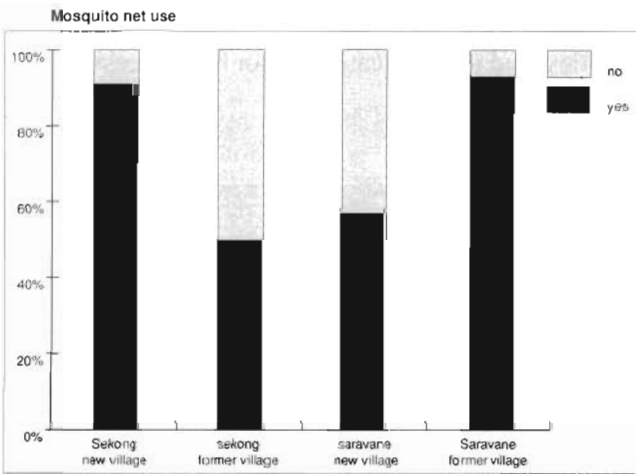


**d) Use of mosquito nets: More widespread in new villages**

In Sekong, 90% of families used mosquito nets in new settlements, as opposed to 48% in the previous villages. These figures result from a campaign against malaria launched by the Health Department in cooperation with AICF, through which impregnated mosquito nets were distributed in villages for free. However, one must still take into account the state in which these mosquito nets are maintained, which is not mentioned in these figures. Furthermore, we do not have any data on the impact of malaria in the highlands of Kaleum and Dakchung districts. Some families asserted that they used mosquito nets, but often did not have enough for all household members. In villages not covered by the program, the mosquito nets we found had been distributed by Vietnamese army “sanitation fighters” in the 1970s and were very well worn!

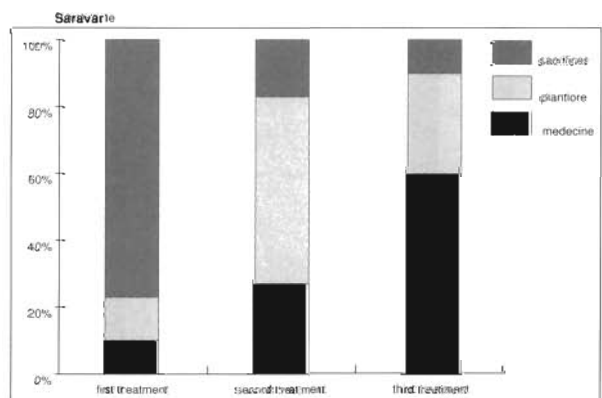
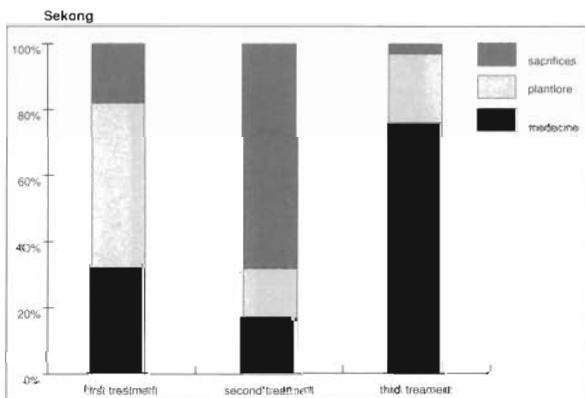
In Saravane, only 6% of families used mosquito nets before relocation, but now 56% of the people have them. This figure is much lower than in Sekong.

The CFA indicates, with an explained rate of variant on the two main axes of 46%, that Type I and II villages, together with Type III villages, used mosquito nets the most. For Types I and II, this is explained by the fact that these villages are under strong supervision, reinforced by support programs, while villagers are also more receptive to government instructions (especially in former military communities which participated in national reconstruction).



**e) Treatment of illness**

In Sekong, most people (49%) used plants as a first cure for illness. If this failed, the most popular alternative was animal sacrifice (70% of families). We attended a buffalo sacrifice in Ban Tiou, an Alak village, because somebody was sick, probably with malaria. 77% of families bought medicines only as a third resort. These practices point to the fact that cultural beliefs remain strong and widespread, but also that medicines and health centres are expensive, which deters many families from using them.



This order of priority does not change if compared to the situation in the previous villages, where 51% of families used plants first, sacrifice came second (76%), and purchased medicine was the last choice for 85% of interviewed people.

In Saravane, however, customs varied between the old villages and the new settlements. As in Sekong, in the old villages people resorted to plants first (38%), then to sacrifice (56%), and lastly to medicine (59%). In the new settlements, 79% of interviewed families bought medicines first; if these did not work, they resorted to sacrifice (56%). Medicinal plant use came last for 60% of families.

### f) Low use of health facilities

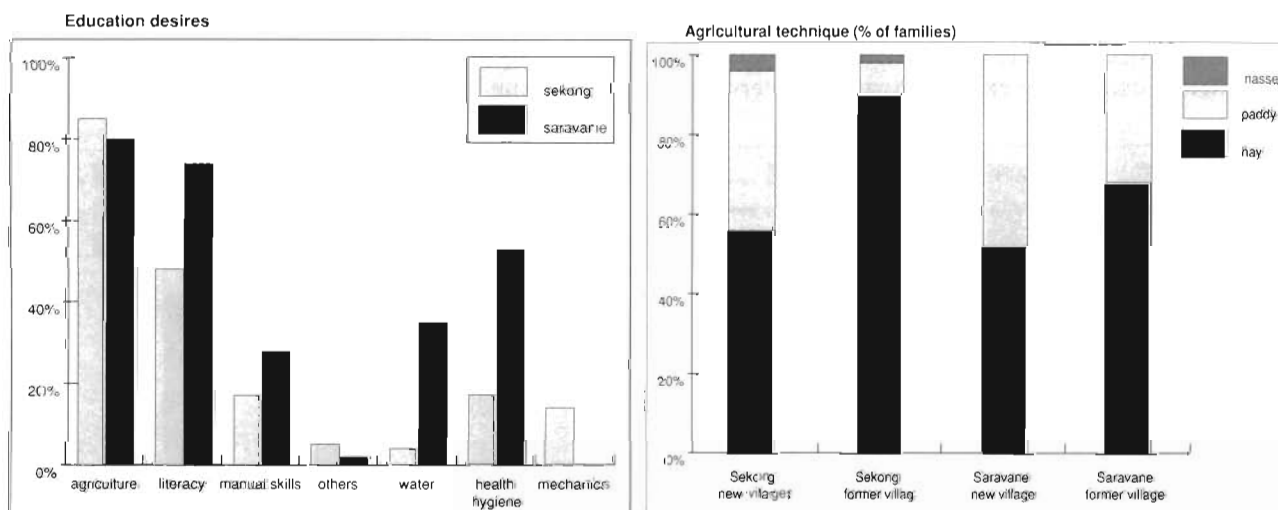
In Sekong, in 58% of interviewed families in the new villages, no relative had ever gone to a health facility (clinic or hospital). In Saravane, the figure was 71%. One of the main reasons for this weak attendance rate was the cost of medicines. This was followed by a lack of trust in the existing facilities, distance, and traditional beliefs regarding diseases. These figures show that even though people have been resettled, they do not attend health centres more often.

When we consider the hospital attendance rate according to relocation type, we see that Type II villages go to the health centre the most, followed by Type I villages. This is probably due to the fact that Type II villages are more vulnerable from a health point of view, and achieve food balance with difficulty. Type IV villages, on the other hand, seldom visit any health facilities, and in some cases do not have access to any. This phenomenon could be related to their history.

## 3. Education and language: Integration ways

### a) School attendance remains low

Generally speaking, the average education level remains low in the new villages. In Sekong, only 23% of the six to 14 year old girls and 22% of the boys reach a grade equal or superior to P1 (in Saravane, the figures are 16% for girls and 26% for boys)<sup>16</sup>. 36% of adult males had received formal education up to or above P2, as opposed to 18% of women. Often there had been no school in the previous village. The provincial government has trouble finding teachers who are prepared to settle in a village in the Annamites for Kip 26,000/month. There is no system in Sekong like that which operates in Attapeu, whereby young teachers are obliged to spend four years working in villages in the mountains on completion of their training. In Muang Kaleum, consisting of 65 villages, only four villages outside the district capital have schools. The district school and middle school accept students who come from villages more than two days walk away.



<sup>16</sup> In both provinces, the no-answer rate was very high.

It takes several years to build a new school in a relocated village and for a teacher to be posted there. Although relocated in 1975, Ban Tad Noi does not yet have a school. Sometimes, agreements are reached with neighbouring villages. In Ban Tad Noi, for example, children go to school in Ban Phon, and children from Ban Houay Kieo go to Ban Bong.

### **b) Knowledge is mostly passed on by parents**

Most villagers' knowledge is acquired from their parents. In Sekong, indeed, out of more than 90% of the families, no one had received further education or studied outside the village (96% and 88% respectively in Saravane). As to satisfaction with this knowledge passed on from parents, there was a big difference in attitude between the two provinces. In Sekong, 96% of interviewees thought that the knowledge their families passed on had been well suited to their needs, yet in Saravane, one family out of two considered it inadequate (47%).

### **c) Lao language: A way to increase opportunities**

Our survey results indicate that Lao language learning is a process that is taking place progressively at school and, above all, through contacts outside the village, especially in the market place. In Sekong, of girls less than six years old, one out of two (49%) did not understand or speak Lao. Among the six to 14 year olds, there were only 19% who could not speak Lao, and this dropped to 16% once they were grown up. Among adults, there was a great difference between men (only 4% did not speak or understand Lao) and women. The army plays an important role in teaching the Lao language to boys.

In the village, most people spoke their ethnic language. 90% of the people used Lao for trade and to communicate with other villages. 68% of families emphasised that it is useful when dealing with the administration.

### **d) Expectations for education: Priority given to agriculture**

People wished to improve their agricultural knowledge before learning to read and write. In Sekong, 85% of the population wanted to learn agricultural technical skills, as opposed to 48% who wanted to learn to read and write (in Saravane, the figures were 80% for agriculture and 70% for literacy). This priority for agriculture is only natural, given that it is the people's main concern. Answers lacked precision, however. There was often a will to learn, without people knowing exactly what they wanted to study. Village committees insisted on having a primary school built in the settlement, as having to go to another village deters many parents from sending their children to school.

We decided not to carry out our survey again in the Non Formal Education villages, as we felt they had already been well investigated.

## **4. Agricultural change**

Agricultural change is an important aspect of village relocation. From a political point of view, the reasons put forward for relocation by the authorities concern the environment; from the people's point of view, when they are relocated they experience a change of agro-ecological environment, and have to leave behind their "traditional" production systems.

### **a) Transformation of agricultural production**

#### **i) Hai practices**

Most highland people practice shifting cultivation. This was the case for 90% of the families we surveyed in Sekong province and 74% in Saravane. Numerous authors [Boulbet, 1975; Condominas, 1980; Chazee, 1993; Dufumier, 1996] have described this cultivation system, which does not use irrigation. It works as follows: the farmer clears and burns a plot in the forest in which he plants rice together with various other

plants (tobacco, medicinal plants, peppers, tubers). After two or three years cultivation, regular intensive weeding is necessary to prevent the rice becoming smothered by other plants. This, combined with a drop in yield, obliges farmers to abandon their plot and start again elsewhere. [see Shifting Cultivation, FAO, 1991] In the traditional systems of the Annamite range, at least 10 years pass before farmers return to a previously cultivated area. This fallow period is long enough to allow secondary forest to develop (Jean Boulbet calls it "stabilised anthropic forest" [Boulbet, 1975]). When growing back, the forest canopy limits weed development due to the shade it generates. This helps renew soil fertility as well, inducing minerals deep in the soil to emerge in a superficial stratum. Ashes from the burning also fertilise the soil.

According to Lucien Bernot, [1975] compared to lowland rice cultivation this system is mainly defined by negatives: "no cart or plough is used, and likewise, no cattle to pull them. Only one tool is used: the hoe or a stick; no fertiliser, apart from ashes; after one or two years cultivation, the land is left fallow for some 10 years. Instead of alternate planting on the same field, they grow the same crop year after year, changing only from one area to another".

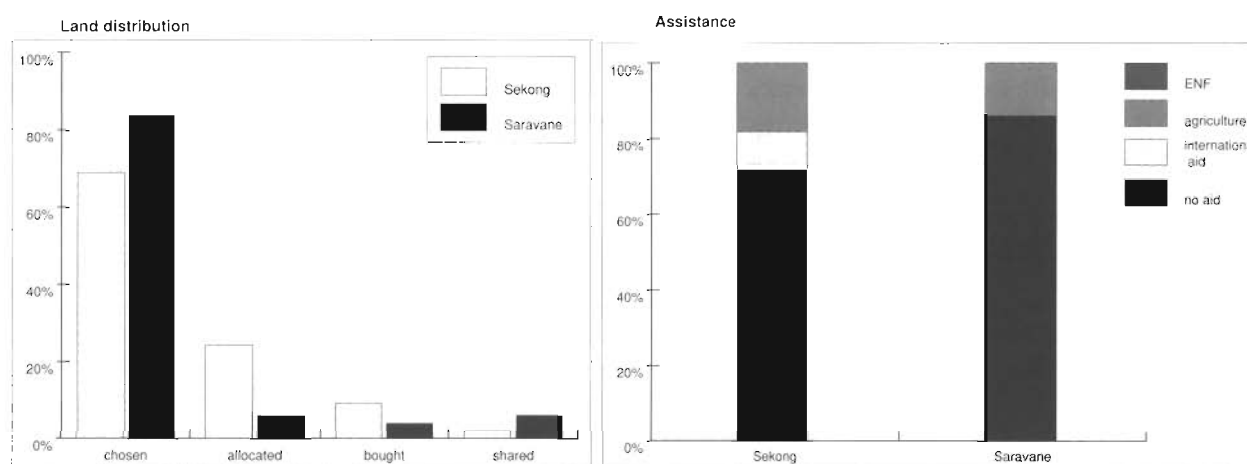
Such a system is suited to mountainous regions, with slopes too steep to allow paddy cultivation. Material requirements are small, and population density is the main constraint to its sustainability. Marc Dufumier reckons that maximum population density is 23 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. [Dufumier, 1996] Above this limit it is not possible to ensure a cycle of two years cultivation followed by a 15-year fallow period.

Finally, contrary to popular belief, slash and burn cultivation methods do not destroy biodiversity, as long as they do not affect primary forests. According to Jean Boulbet, "forestry agriculture, far from involving hopeless destruction, becomes a long term technique. It does not mean they kill the forest, but rather they domesticate it". [Boulbet, 1975] This domestication relies on "the preservation of a balance between the level of exploitation and the ability of the forest to regenerate itself." This question of biodiversity is clearly illustrated by a comparison between the number of species under cultivation in hai and in paddy fields. Ian Baird has made an inventory of more than 130 different species that the Brou, Kavet and Kreung highlanders of Cambodia grow in their hai. [Baird / Tubtim, 1996]

The low population densities of Sekong (6.6/km<sup>2</sup>) and Saravane (24/km<sup>2</sup>, with lower densities in Ta Oy and Toumlan districts) should in theory make hai sustainable. However, shorter fallow periods were already being experienced in the former villages. The average period is six years in Sekong province, and 3.4 years in Saravane.

*- A system that is becoming unsustainable*

In the new villages, farmers under pressure from the administration are reducing hai cultivation. In Sekong, only 73% are practicing hai, and 54% in Saravane. Moreover, areas under cultivation per family are on the decrease, having regressed from 1.5 ha to 0.89 ha in Sekong. The forest fallow period has dropped from six years to 2.7 years, involving a reduction in yield from 1.47 t/ha to 1 t/ha. All these reductions endanger the sustainability of the system.



According to the Fischer test, there are significant differences in hai area, hai yield and forest fallow period, according to the types of relocation that we have suggested. Type I and II villages have the smallest hai areas, their fallow periods are closer to the three-year period that the government advocates, and their paddy areas are larger. These are the types of villages which follow government directives most strictly.

*-Importance of the souan or garden.*

Most relocated families tend a garden (souan) near their house (74% in Sekong and 60% in Saravane). These gardens look like hai because of the variety of plants and the way they are cultivated. The garden plays an important role in diversifying the family's diet, and during rice shortages. In addition to vegetables, it provides tubers that replace rice along with bamboo shoots and other roots that are collected in the forest.

**ii) Paddy field development**

*Transition process and difficulties*

With hai practices diminishing, rain fed rice cultivation in fields (na) is booming. In Sekong province, 51% of relocated families cultivated paddy compared to only 9% in their original villages. In Saravane, 47% of the interviewed families practiced paddy cultivation, as opposed to 26% in the old settlement.

Paddy farming has been established longer in Saravane than in Sekong. The average age of a paddy field is 23 years in Saravane, as opposed to five in Sekong. Newcomers encounter a number of difficulties when transferring from hai farming to na (paddy) cultivation.

*-Land access*

In the villages we visited, most families had chosen their own land (69% in Sekong, 84% in Saravane). Generally speaking, one only needs to clear a piece of land (with permission from the village committee) to be granted the right to farm it. However, in 23% of cases, land was allocated to newcomers in Sekong, confirming that the relocation had been orchestrated. Land purchase is still limited (8% and 4%), although it is happening more often in Laongam and Thateng districts. In these places, land saturation has led to speculation.

If the current demographic distribution trend is to be pursued, the Rural Development Committee will be faced with a land saturation problem. In some villages, like Ban Choon La or Ban Beng, all arable land is used, especially in Ban Beng, where all suitable land for paddy is under cultivation. Conflicts over land and water resource use occur between neighbouring villages, while newcomers only have access to the poorest quality land. Members of some large families have had to look for land in the neighbouring village, Ban Bong. [Lucas, 1995]

However, 64% of families in Sekong province estimated they owned enough land, and 78% are satisfied with its quality. In Saravane, 21% of the families thought that their land was too small, as opposed to 61% who were satisfied. 56% of people interviewed in this province reckoned they owned enough land.

*-Problems of adaptation to paddy cultivation*

For these relocated highlanders, shifting to paddy farming means as much a cultural as a technical change. It also means sedentarisation. Erecting small dams, by hand for the most part, represents a lot of work. We observed that a family of six people (with three active persons) could develop two to four 0.2 ha plots per year, on average. Families must find new rice varieties (different from hai). In addition, they need to apply new cultivation techniques: sowing in a nursery bed, ploughing, transplanting seedlings, and weeding. Watching their neighbours work is often the only training they get. They trade seeds, often among families or in the market place. They find controlling water supply, if indeed it is possible, very difficult to master in the beginning. Working in paddy fields requires more complex and expensive tools than hai. A metal blade is needed to make a plough and harrow, and a buffalo costs from Kip 150,000 to 200,000 and has to be trained. In Sekong, all these constraints cause low average yields for the new villagers: 1.4 t/ha as opposed to 2 t/ha in Saravane. Besides, technical difficulties cause great variations from year to year. Owing to

insufficient equipment among some families, and poor technical knowledge, rain fed paddy cultivation is more subject to climate hazards than hai. Dry season paddy farming requires irrigation, which is not yet fully developed in the new villages (7% of Sekong villages).

#### *Insufficient technical assistance*

Newcomers receive hardly any technical assistance to help them switch to new rice cultivation methods. In Sekong, 77% of the families we surveyed had never received assistance, while the figure for Saravane was 81%. In Sekong, 18% of families received advice from Agriculture Department technicians, while 10% had received it from foreign aid organisations. This assistance was for rice farming (15% of families) and for coffee cultivation (9%).

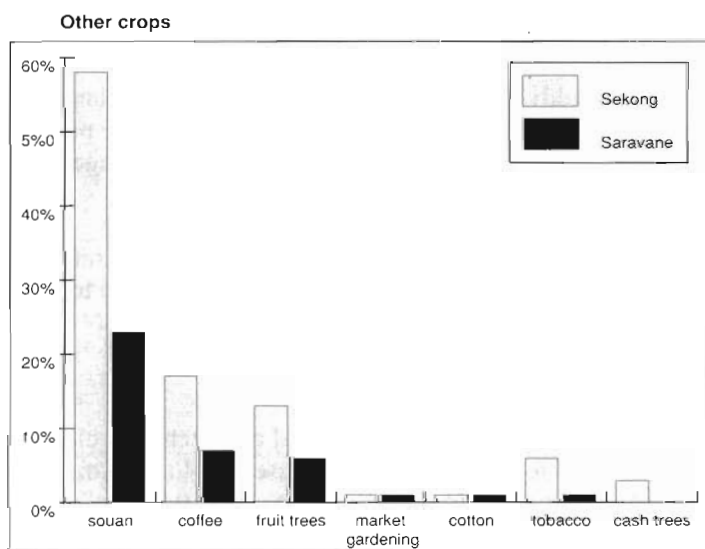
#### *Observed paddy field characteristics*

Most of the newly developed paddy fields are non-irrigated rain fed rice fields. [Abe, 1995] At Ban Beng and Ban Tiou, soldiers who had been in Vietnam initiated the construction of gravity fed irrigation systems for the paddy fields.

### **b) Agriculture policies and new crop development**

Since 1992, the government has encouraged farmers to develop annual crops for export. Coffee was grown by 41% of families surveyed in Sekong (31% in Saravane), while 28% of Sekong families and 18% of Saravane families grew fruit. People were testing teak as a third possible cash crop. These crops are planted on previous hai areas, most often associated with other annual crops during the first three years (rice, peanuts and soy beans at Laongam, for example). One may expect to see trade networks develop, perhaps for coffee, before the end of the century. The construction of the Ban Beng-Thateng-Sekong-Attapeu road should help this process considerably.

Coffee is an important cash crop for villagers. In 1996, 1 kg cost Kip 1,200. Some producers have done so well that their income has allowed them to purchase 'walking tractors', or even rice threshing machines. Rice production is not a priority for these villagers, since they buy it with their revenues from coffee. Instead, they concentrate all their efforts and care on coffee plantation development.



### **c) Cattle rearing**

Generally speaking, cattle rearing is more developed in Saravane than in Sekong province. Average herd size is not very relevant, however, as a large number of families do not own even one buffalo, while some families own large numbers of cattle. In Muang Saravane, the presence of the provincial capital and its market encourages surrounding villages to raise cattle commercially for meat.

More than 62% of the relocated families of Sekong do not own any buffalo, making the transition to paddy rice farming difficult. There are two main reasons for this: first, one buffalo costs from Kip 150,000 to 200,000, and secondly, some Austro-Asiatic ethnic groups such as the Lave use buffalo strictly for sacrifice; it is forbidden (khalam) to put them to work.

Most families own a few chickens and one or more pigs, which they allow to roam freely. [32] This method requires little care, as the animals wander about the village feeding on garbage and cleaning the grounds. Yet productivity is low, and numerous pathogens and diseases can be passed to humans and animals alike. Keeping these animals enclosed is the first step towards good sanitary conditions in the villages.

Generally speaking, disease is the first difficulty that villagers encounter, whatever type of livestock they raise. This was the case for 67% of the interviewed families in Sekong and 74% in Saravane.

### **d) Forest protection: Policy limitations**

We observed that the site selected for the resettlement of Ban Kan Don lacked wood materials traditionally found in the secondary forests of the valley. The ecosystem at the resettlement site consisted of one grass stratum and one tree stratum. Dominant species were *nya falang* (*Chromolaena odorata*), together with several bamboo varieties common in Laos [Vidal, 1962] that villagers used for building their houses: *mai bong* (*Bambusa tulda*), *mai hia* (*Cephalostachyum virgatum*) and *mai phang* (*Bambusa ionoifimbriata*). A few *mai peuai* (*Lagerstremia angustifolia*), recognisable by their indented white bark, remained on the landscape. An enquiry with the Forestry Department indicated that a two-year concession was granted for 1990-1991 to a Vietnamese forestry company at the Toc Loc site. This company cut the more precious woods, particularly *mai dou* (*Pterocarpus macrocarpus*), *mai khen* (*Hopea* spp.), *mai bak* (*Anisoptera cochinchinensis*), and *mai nyang* (*Dypterocarpus alatus*). [34]

The same operation occurred at the new site of Ban Palay three years before the village was resettled. Forest conservation policy thus ought to aim more at the foothills than the valleys. Land management programs are conducted in some villages. These programs demarcate protected forest areas with a great number of coloured boards.

Forest logging causes a number of effects and consequences, of which some are already perceptible. These involve:

#### **i) Opening of the forestry ecosystem**

From a cultural point of view, highlanders find themselves in a new environment lacking forest. Yet the forest traditionally served numerous purposes:

A productive function, providing building materials, game, and complementary food during rice shortages. But on relocation, the villagers find that the Forestry Department has forbidden hunting. The government confiscates firearms that most villagers have owned for years. Only the village militia may keep its firearms.

A social and spiritual function: The forest is the realm of the spirits. The deceased are buried in sacred forests.

#### **ii) A threat to the stabilisation of agriculture**

The forest's third function is the ecological one of protecting catchments. The trees play an important part in water and soil conservation. The forest constitutes a reservoir that supplies water to rice fields. According to the Japanese agriculture engineer Seriya, author of a treatise on the ecological role of rice fields in the environment, [see Abe, 1995] "in order to ensure a steady water supply to rice fields, a tapping zone is necessary, constituted by forests six times larger in area than the rice fields". If tree felling continues, what will be the long-term consequences for the environment?

### iii) A new environment affecting health

The third effect of opening an ecosystem and regrouping people and animals is that it is linked to the risk of new illnesses. It is necessary to set up careful epidemiological, veterinary and hygiene programs to prevent the spread of disease and ill health in new settlements.

### e) Food self-sufficiency

From our point of view, food self-sufficiency is the most important short term challenge for rural development in Sekong province. In February 1996, the Vientiane Times ran a headline that said that Sekong province had to face a nine-month rice shortage. In September this year, floods due to a typhoon destroyed more than 25% of the rice crop. Relocated villages figured among the most affected and vulnerable.

#### *Rice shortages: A general increase*

In most new villages, the period of rice shortage lasts longer than in the old villages. In Muang Lamam, it has climbed from 2.5 months to 4.3 months per year. In Muang Thateng, it remains more or less stable (three months), but in Saravane it has gone from 1.2 months to 1.6 months and at Laongam district from less than a month to 2.2 months. These figures represent average values, but nevertheless illustrate the difficulties faced by resettled people in the area of agriculture.

#### *Trial analysis of rice shortage parameters*

In order to understand rice shortage parameters, we checked whether the rice shortage is related to other agriculture variants, such as land area, yield and level of mechanisation. We first considered each parameter alone, then combined them, using multiple regression and Sphinx data processing.

When considering parameters one by one, we noted that:

The rice shortage is moderately related to hai yield (34% of variation explained). The rice shortage drops when yield increases with a correlation coefficient of -2.03.

On the other hand, the rice shortage is more closely connected to the dry season rice yield (eight observations explain 46% of variation). The rice shortage drops when nasseng yield increases with a correlation coefficient of -2.97.

Rice shortage does not appear to be closely related to buffalo ownership (4% of variation explained).

Moreover, there seems to be no significant relation between rice shortage and year of arrival (4% of variation explained).

If we combine parameters, our analysis begins to approximate reality, showing that:

A strong correlation exists between rice shortages and hai area, paddy field size and buffalo ownership (77% of variance explained). Moreover, the software suggests a regression equation of the following type:

$$\text{Rice shortage} = - 1.591 * \text{hai a} + 0.889 * \text{paddy field a} - 0.204 \text{ buffalo} + 3.404.$$

The negative coefficient in front of the hai area parameter is logical, while the positive coefficient in front of the paddy field area may seem surprising. In every calculation we made, the presence of paddy fields was a factor in the increase in rice shortage. This may be due to the numerous difficulties people encounter during the period of transition to a new production system. The constant is 3.4 instead of 12 (months), since calculations include Type III villages, where villagers buy rice with cash from sales of coffee.

There is a strong correlation rate between rice shortages and area of nasseng, nasseng yield and buffalo ownership. These three variants explain 86% of variation.

The Australian NGO Community Aid Abroad (CAA) has started working with rice shortage problems in Muang Thateng by encouraging the creation of rice banks in two villages. This kind of initiative should be widely imitated. Moreover, it should go hand-in-hand with technical assistance in variety selection, in yield improvement (as confirmed by the equations), and in buffalo purchasing. Setting up suitable community credit systems may be a way to help villagers buy buffalo. Market gardening development may be a solution during the dry season, and the experiments begun last year in some Non Formal Education centres ought to be continued. This type of cultivation helps diversify the family food base, and could generate cash by selling produce in the market or to kitchens on the region's numerous building sites.

Finally, let us not forget the important part played by the forest, mentioned in the previous chapter. Forests represent one of Laos's greatest riches. We constantly marvel at the variety of produce it supplies to villagers. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature is working in this direction, in the framework of its Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) program. It may be possible to get such results again in sites other than pilot villages. We shall see in the following pages how relocation and trade influence these natural resource use practices.

## 5. Handicrafts and barter: A slow transition

### a) Evolution of natural resources exploitation

The Forestry Department forbids hunting in every village. This ban explains the high negative answer rate that we obtained in both provinces when we asked about hunting (82% "no" in Sekong and 81% "no" in Saravane). In fact, many villagers continue to hunt discreetly with crossbows, blowpipes or snares. Any small game that they kill in this way brings additional protein to the daily food ration. Government services confiscate firearms, thus limiting big game hunting. Hunting is strictly the preserve of men.

Fishing, on the other hand, is a popular activity. In Sekong, 43% of the interviewed families fish as much as or more than in the old village, and 62% in Saravane. They use three techniques: cast net, fishing rod and trap dams. Some ethnic groups such as the Lave and the Katu use toxic plants.

Gathering remains an activity that is complementary to agricultural production. 65% of the families practiced gathering as much as or more than in the old settlements (69% in Saravane). In some ethnic groups, this activity was restricted to women as far as food gathering is concerned, while men gathered building materials. According to CFA, gathering tends to rise in Type I and Type II villages. It drops in Type IV villages and is seldom practiced in Type III settlements.

### b) Handicraft activities tend to decline

As a general rule, handicraft activities tended to decline in new settlements, particularly weaving. 50% of families in Sekong practiced weaving less or not at all, and 63% in Saravane. This was largely due to the fact that people lived closer to market places and received frequent visits from clothes sellers. One must also take into account the difficulties women said they faced in finding thread, and the fact that in some new settlements, they were busier during the dry season (gathering and foraging to help cope with rice shortages, or working in the paddy fields).

Ironwork is also disappearing. In Sekong, 56% of families we interviewed (and 75% in Saravane) declared they did not practice it any longer. Basket weaving was mostly for family needs (38% in Sekong, and 31% in Saravane).

### c) Trade is more orientated towards market places

Generally speaking, relocation has helped villagers to live closer to market places and main roads, and has encouraged cash exchanges.

Villagers sold hai fruits and vegetables (42% in Sekong), and forest produce (15% in Sekong). In Ban Tad Noi, some families took advantage of their proximity to Ban Phon market to sell, for Kip 100 each, torches made from the resin of mai peuai (*Lagerstremia angustifolia*). Some villagers also sold timber boards that they cut in the forest.

In villages in Muang Laongam, wholesalers bought agricultural products directly: cardamom, groundnut, soy beans, coffee, etc. These settlements benefited from several favourable factors such as an agro-ecological environment suitable for these crops, and the proximity of markets and sales networks.

In each village, families (80% in Sekong) purchased manufactured products mostly in the market place (76%). These were chiefly food products, in particular salt and monosodium glutamate, and rice during rice shortages, but also clothes and household wares.

#### d) Easier access to equipment

On the whole, villagers gained easier access to certain kinds of goods in the new settlements. A comparison between the previous and new villages indicates this clearly:

Item	Presently owned		Owned in the previous village	
	Sekong	Saravane	Sekong	Saravane
Bicycle	44%	61%	20%	20%
Grinding machine	46%	35%	48%	24%
Cart	30%	30%	6%	4%
Radio	49%	33%	29%	9%
Television	8%	15%	0%	0%

Ownership of basic consumer goods among families in Sekong was far lower than the national average:<sup>10</sup> [Lao Census, 1995]

- 57% of Lao families own a bicycle
- 53% of Lao families own a radio
- 19% own a television

These figures should, however, be put in their context. What is the use of a bicycle or a cart to a Ta Oy or Kaleum villager living at more than 1,000 m up a steep, forested track? On the other hand, the appearance in new villages of battery equipped radios or televisions could be useful in setting up a distance education program (as has been done in the Andes, in South America).

## 6. Customs and cultural heritage

The impact of relocation on culture is certainly the most difficult aspect to judge. Resettled villages are situated in a new social and cultural environment. Their social space widens, [6] and they come under the influence of the majority Lao Loum group. In our quantitative surveys we used a certain number of parameters to get an idea of cultural change induced by relocation.

#### a) Intra-village and intra-ethnic wedding practices remain

In Sekong, intra-ethnic weddings within the same village remained dominant in new settlements (42% of answers). The same was true in Saravane (26%, with 47% no-answers). However, in Sekong, 15% of marriages

were extra-ethnic/extra-village (this kind of wedding seldom occurred in the previous villages), while 15% of marriages were intra-ethnic/extra-village. In Saravane, 13% of marriages were extra-ethnic/extra-village.

Intra-ethnic/intra-village marriages concerned mostly Type I villages. Extra-ethnic/intra-village marriages were more frequent in Type II villages like Ban Houay Kieo, where several ethnic groups from various origins lived in the same settlement. In Type III villages, extra-ethnic/extra-village marriages were most frequent, probably due to the trade contacts that these settlements had with other villages. Lastly, Type IV and V villages prefer intra-ethnic/extra-village marriages.

## **b) Animal sacrifice**

In both provinces, more than 60% of villagers still sacrificed at least one buffalo a year (61% in Sekong and 69% in Saravane). However, the reasons are different. In Saravane, 60% of sacrifices occurred on the occasion of village celebrations, as opposed to only 6% in Sekong. In Sekong province, 47% of sacrifices were made to fight disease, as opposed to 6% in Saravane. These results agree with answers we received regarding traditional techniques for curing illness.

Among the other animals sacrificed were chickens (38% of families in Sekong, and 18% in Saravane) and pigs in the same proportions. All Austro-Asiatic ethnic groups practice sacrifice. The animal is offered to the spirits as a means of intercession and communication with those spirits. Barbara Wall describes with ethnological precision all the causes for sacrifice that she observed among the Nya Hon people of the Bolovens plateau. [Wall, 1975]

## **c) The evolution of funeral rituals under Buddhist influence**

This is certainly one of the most significant indicators of present cultural evolution. Austro-Asiatic groups traditionally do not cremate their dead, but bury them, often in sacred forests. Yet, in 8% of new settlements in Sekong and 34% of those in Saravane, villagers have begun to practice cremation under the influence of missionary monks. We observed that in some Souay villages (Ban Choon La in Thateng, Ban Daxia and Ban Phon Hin in Laongam) and some Laven villages (Ban Khoua and Ban Moun Pak Di in Laongam), these missionary monks have erected small wooden temples (Georges Condominas calls them "Vat Pa" [Condominas, 1980]). They initiate the villagers into Buddhism and provide primary schooling when there is no public school.

It is mostly in Souay and Laven Type III villages that Buddhist cremation is practiced.

## **d) Housing and relocation**

After funeral rites, house style is the second most significant cultural indicator.

In Sekong, 77% of the families we met had changed the style of their houses when they were relocated (likewise, 75% of Saravane families). Among the reasons people put forward for this change, 53% in Sekong said that the new type of house was more suited to their new environment (51% in Saravane). 21% reported that they had been advised to do so (2% in Saravane); while 3% pointed out that this new house type was easier to build (18% in Saravane).

When we examined these reasons according to relocation type, we found that Type I and II villages explained that their new housing style had been "recommended" and was "more appropriate". For Type III and IV villages, the new style was "easier to construct".

85% of houses in new villages in Sekong are Lao Loum style (76% in Saravane).

An outstanding example of this is Ban Kan Don. In their original village in Muang Kaleum these Katu people used to inhabit dwellings arranged in a circle. When they were relocated in March, the government asked them to build Lao Loum style houses. These houses, all on the same model, were built in three rows

delimiting two main streets.

By chance, we were able to talk with the civil servant in charge of relaying provincial directives to Ban Kan Don. He is Talieng and lives at Ban Hong Lai. A former military man from Dakchung, he works for the Sekong Department of Information and Culture. He was responsible for transmitting and implementing provincial instructions in his own relocated village. Last March, he was given the responsibility of advising Ban Kan Don on house building.

Solidarity plays an important role in house construction. Following relocation, 67% of families in Sekong got help from other villagers to build their houses (84% in Saravane).

All these indicators exemplify the cultural changes that follow relocation. In the last chapter, we will conclude by showing the pivotal role of relocation in rural development.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NON FORMAL EDUCATION

In this chapter, we shall outline some analytical directions based on observations made during the study, and make some suggestions. We shall also draw on the experience of the Non Formal Education program in Sekong, which is more than a year old.

### 1. Two conceptual approaches to rural development

Any rural development strategy may be envisioned in two ways. The first, which is currently the case in Sekong, consists of a centrally directed policy to relocate target populations towards priority development zones where certain kinds of infrastructure are planned or already exist. Administrative assistance programs too often impose technical packages, trying to make local situations fit general models. For instance in agriculture, 'green revolution' policies seek to intensify production by creating artificial agrosystems which minimise diversity. Numerous authors have pointed out the limitations of these approaches, whose social and environmental impacts we are now only beginning to understand.

The second type of process takes development to the target communities, rather than relocating them. Programs set up under this approach try to allow the communities in question to stay in their original region. One way to do this is to break the isolation of these zones by building roads, while seeking economically profitable agricultural solutions which take into account local requirements and conditions. Projects arising out of this approach seek to apply the traditional knowledge of the communities in which they work, giving prominence to the ethno-sciences. This philosophy places value on biological and social diversity, trying to manage ecosystems both in a holistic way and in relation to human communities.

The NGO CUSO has initiated an agro-forestry and community forestry project that fits in with this approach in Muang Dakchung (Sekong). The objective is to discover alternatives to hai cultivation which will allow the people to stay in the forest. The IUCN is likewise trying to raise the value of Non Timber Forest Products. The NTFP approach attempts to help forest communities realise the economic potential of the forest within the framework of conservation, biodiversity and sustainability.

Joost Foppes points out that there is no universal alternative to hai cultivation. [in Van Gansbergue, 1994] One has to work on a case-by-case basis, and combine several alternatives. Solutions that may sound promising in Luang Namtha might not work on the Bolovens plateau. For instance, small scale hydraulic systems, which some authors recommend, [Dufumier, 1996] depend on local topographic conditions. They require assistance and technical knowledge, as well as a system of community water management.

### 2. Non Formal Education: A reformulation is necessary

UNDP has conducted a Non Formal Education program in Sekong province since 1992 to address the problem of highlanders' access to education. One of its aims has been to contribute to the social and cultural integration of the minorities. Further, it seeks to generate experiences and ideas regarding training needs and pedagogical methods. Although priority was given to the participatory approach (PRA), it was inevitable that the program's first phase would fall within the centrally planned rural development process described above.

Indeed, NFE centres were unnecessarily implanted in relocated villages where there was already a school. They were intended for adults, but mostly children attend them. The schedule of activities for the adults has been neglected, as has the fact that in some villages families live in the fields from May to November.

The content of the program has suffered because of its holistic aims. The objective was to provide villages with assistance in hygiene, agriculture and education. However, the fact that an agriculture program cannot be conducted like a hygiene program or a literacy program, and will differ in terms of duration, objectives and methods, has not been taken into account. For example, at Ban Bong, a NFE project village, one of the

limiting factors for lowland rice development was the lack of buffalo (despite the Ban Phon irrigation canal that allows dry season rice cultivation). Less than one family in three owns a buffalo, partly due to a lack of means and partly because of epidemics which have decimated animal numbers. In March 1996, a two-day training session on ploughing was organised with the participation of an expert from Vientiane. One does not learn about ploughing technique in just two days. Besides, such an initiative benefits mainly buffalo owners, but does not help the others to buy an animal. Moreover, the program suffered from a lack of coordination between the Education, Agriculture and Health Departments.

In the framework of an eventual extension of NFE programs, we believe that activities should be “relocated” to Kaleum and Dakchung districts, which sorely lack education structures. For instance, in Muang Kaleum, only four villages out of 64, other than the district capital, have a school (two primary classes, P1 and P2). NFE centres could be set up along the model of the minority schools of the 1980s, in villages that are centrally located one or two hours walk from several other villages<sup>17</sup>. Regarding course content, if Lao language is taught as a means of social integration, the teaching of traditional knowledge should have an even greater role.

### **3. Proposed directions for research**

We could only attain a partial and incomplete view of the consequences of relocation because of time limitations. We would like to suggest a number of points which merit further research.

#### **a) Relocation**

Assess the economic impact of relocation by following certain families.  
Detail relocation and resettlement patterns on maps, especially in Saravane.  
Check and refine the suggested typology of relocation.

#### **b) Agriculture and natural resource management**

Compile an inventory of livestock systems and veterinary problems in new settlements.  
Follow up the environmental impact (soil, water) of opening up ecosystems with relation to timber exploitation in the Sekong valley.  
In cooperation with people working in the field, explore the possible alternatives to hai cultivation, while allowing communities to improve their living conditions in mountainous districts.  
Increase experiments aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency in villages.

#### **c) Ethno-anthropological research**

Follow up initial documentation work on the traditional knowledge of the highland communities of southern Laos.

#### **d) Health**

Start review work with Medical NGOs in the region (MSF, EMI) about setting up health facilities suited to highland zones, and integrating these with traditional medical systems. Yves Goudineau's 1992 medical anthropology work could be of great help.

### **4. Conclusion**

This survey has aimed to describe objectively and scientifically the dynamics of relocation and resettlement that are taking place in Sekong and Saravane provinces. This picture is still incomplete due to survey limitations, and the issue deserves further examination.

It is impossible to draw any conclusion on the success or failure of relocation and resettlement. Such an assessment would only be subjective and based on partial conclusions. The survey was conducted at a single point in time by comparing present circumstances with the situation in the original villages, a situation that

<sup>17</sup> This criterion is used for the location of health centres.

## Recommendations

was frequently affected by the specific circumstances of war. It would be necessary, therefore, to compare the indicators selected over several years. Whereas relocation allows populations to live closer to market places and to get hold of mosquito nets, it also involves considerable social and cultural losses.

Faced with a strong push for relocation, such as at Ban Kan Don, aid workers are confronted with a dilemma: refusing to participate in a policy that is already underway means denying assistance to communities that need help. The best compromise seems to be to seek long term solutions with local decision makers, implementing actions in the original districts, and integrating these with the wishes and cultural characteristics of the highland people.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AICF	Action Internationale Contre la Faim (ACF today)
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CPC	Central Planning Committee
CUSO	Canadian Volunteer Organization
EED	Enfants et Developpement
EMI	Entraide Medicale Internationale
ESF	Ecoles Sans Frontieres
EU	European Union*
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
GTZ	Gemeinsame Technishe Zusammenarbeit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
MSF	Medicins Sans Frontieres
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
NFE	Non Formal Education
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
NGO	Non Government Organisation
ORSTOM	Institut francais de Recherche Scientifique pour le Developpement en Cooperation
RDC	Rural Development Committee
SIDA	Swedish Institute for Development and Agriculture
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WWCF	Worldwide Fund for the Conservation of Nature

## GLOSSARY

ban	village
hai	slash and burn cultivation, fields
khet	subdistrict
lao rai	rice beer
lao lao	rice alcohol
Lao Loum	lowland Lao
Lao Soung	upland Lao
Lao Theung	“middle” Lao
muang	district
nam sa-aat	clean water
nasseng	dry season cultivation
nikhom	state farm
sin	skirt traditionally worn by Lao Loum women
souan	vegetable garden
tasseng	former district subdivision, roughly equivalent to khet
wat	Buddhist temple
wat pa	Buddhist temple in the forest

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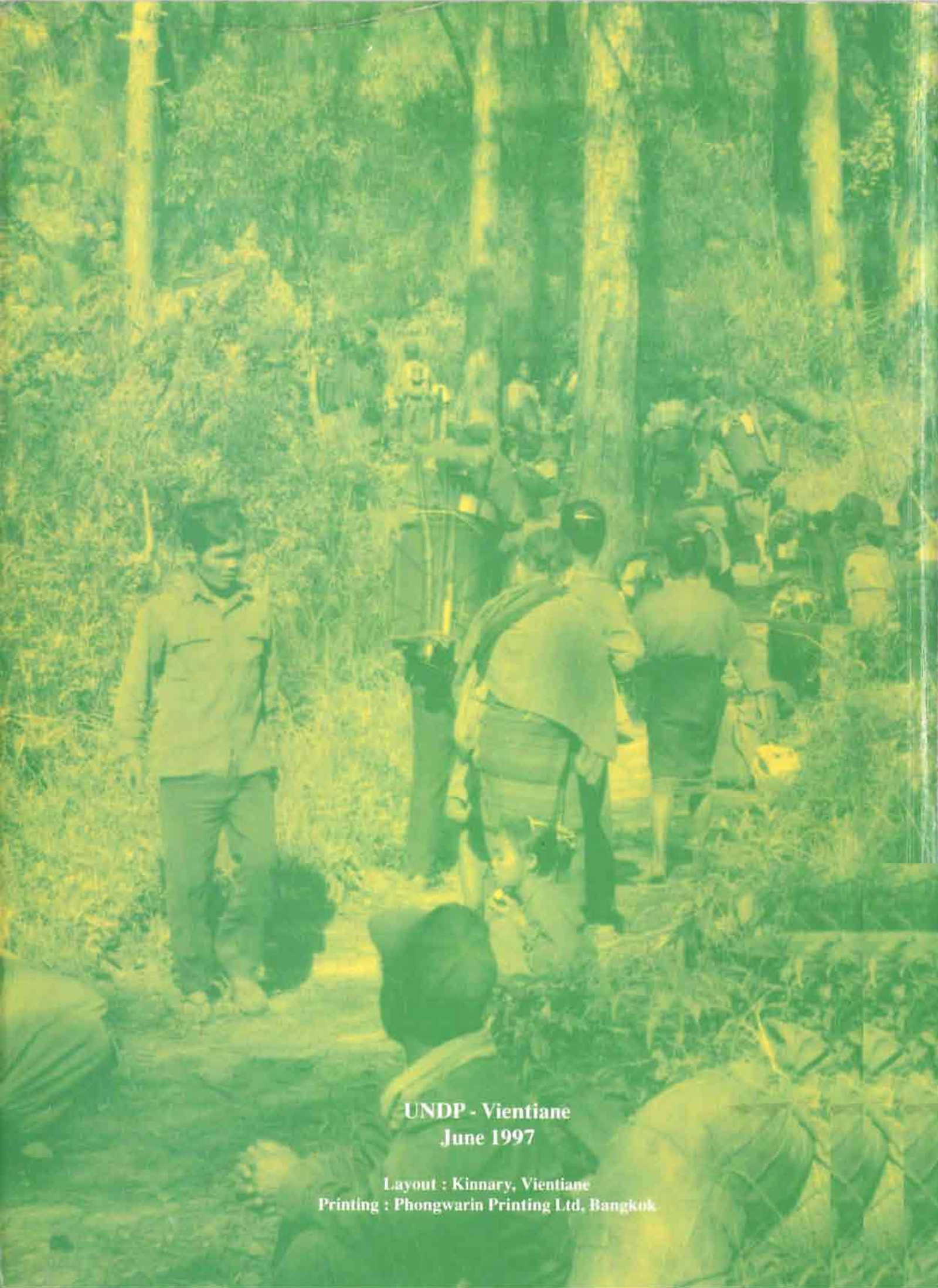
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