



Progress report Of “Bridging the Gap Project”

Introduction:

Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association (SAEDA) formerly SAF requested funds from the German Development Service Lao PDR (DED) to conduct a data collection and needs assessment of farmers in Vangvieng district. The objective was to use these data to support the future activity plan.

Our team included 1 SAEDA, 1 LWU, 1 District Agriculture Office (DAFO) and 2 Gender Development Group (GDG). The study was carried out between 20-25 of December 2008. We targeted 5 villages: Nathong, Vangheua, Phonngeun, Nadao, Gnioutay. Following data review and analysis, a follow up exchange workshop was organized.

Objectives:

1. To update data of SAEDA trained farmer activity & production output in Vangvieng bridging the information gap
2. To assess local farmer needs and develop project ideas in order to help bridge the gap between needs & resources
3. To assess opportunities and challenges for SAEDA trained farmers & other farmers to evaluate the potential of developing a local Organic Farmers Market
4. To create & facilitate links between farmers, especially women farmers and local development partners, helping to bridge the gender gap & improve women's role & relevance in community development
5. Obtain relevant information for participatory future planning

Target Area:

Name of village	Plan	Actual	Women	Men
Nathong	19	23	18	5
Vangheua	22	18	17	1
Phonngeun	6	9	7	2
Nadao	34	23	10	13
Gnioutay	13	18	18	0
Total	94	91	70	21

Activities:

1. Questionnaires Testing
Prior to data collection we tested the questionnaires with the Lao Womens Union and target farmers in Vangvieng.
2. Data collection in Vangvieng District
3. Data analysis and report writing
We summarized and analyzed using the qualitative and quantitative methods
4. Exchange workshop
Exchange workshop was organized by SAEDA and LWU in Vangvieng district on 3 of April 2009. There were 28 participants including farmers from 5 surveyed villages, SAEDA trained organic farmers from 5 villages, government officers from LWU,



LYU, DAFO, Information and Culture Department (ICD), the SAEDA team. We presented the survey results. We also presented information about chemical use and impact. In closing, we did a future strategy plan exercise.

Methodology:

- . 3 questionnaires developed and tested with target group
 - Group interview questionnaire
 - . *Village Questionnaire*
 - . *Men’s group/ Women’s group questionnaire*
 - Household based questionnaire

. We used 4 methods for data collection

1. Group Interview
We interviewed key community members: village head, elders, LWU, Lao Youth Union (LYU), teachers. During these interviews we focused on general village information
2. Group discussion
We divided in to two groups: men and women.
We did a village problem assessment and ranking
3. Households survey
We interviewed 20%/91 households of the total 538 households.
4. Observation

We walked around the villages to observe the general agriculture situation and other things we could not get answers for from surveyed participants

. Exchange workshop

1) Concepts & definitions of ‘livelihood’
Individual reflection & group discussions & presentations reviewing 5 key livelihood components:

1. Physical (Infrastructure, Roads, Buildings, Electricity, Transportation....)
2. Financial (Money)
3. Natural (Tree, water, mountain, air, natural resources & environment)
4. Human (Health, Knowledge, Skills)
5. Social (Culture, Solidarity)

Consolidated Ranking Results

Components	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Total	Rank
Physical	2	2	2	4	2	3	15	3
Financial	4	3	4	3	3	2	19	2
Natural	3	4	1	2	4	5	19	2
Human	5	5	5	5	5	4	29	1
Social	1	1	3	1	1	1	8	4

Summary of priorities for Bridging the Gap future capacity building planning strategy

1. Human
2. Financial
3. Natural and Physical
4. Social



Working Group discussion about both negative & positive definitions of Human livelihood
(4 groups)

Negative		Positive
<p>• Group 1 Use chemicals Consume food grown with chemicals Polluted water sources Tainted foods causing sickness No medicine Lazy</p> <p>Group 2 Use of chemical inputs Lack of chemical impact awareness and knowledge No long term development plan Lack of technical support & capacity Poor nutrition Air pollution No income</p> <p>Group 3 Chemical usage and produced foods No income No medicines Overworked Poor family bonds Lack of information</p> <p>Group 4 Chemicals used Families are poor No 'clean' food No solidarity Air & water polluted No income</p>	<p>Human (Health & knowledge)</p>	<p>• Group 1 Chemical free food production & consumption Use organic inputs including BC & BE Clean water Have income Strong community</p> <p>Group 2 Organic agriculture Technical training and acquired capacity Know about chemical poisoning No use of chemicals Have technical support for healthy food production</p> <p>Group 3 Chemical free foods available and consumed Bio-fertilizers are used Ask and receive help More family time Read, watch TV Monitoring from supportive project</p> <p>Group 4 Use bio-compost Healthy food Solidarity in family Environmental protection Water resources conserved Economic stability Have socio-economic development plan</p>

Based on the results of the data collected & analyzed, and exchange workshop discussion groups, a comprehensive needs assessment and future project planning was completed.



Conclusion:

- Lack of SA technical knowledge prioritizing rice production, livestock, pest management and general agriculture techniques (Farmers and DAFO staff)
- In general Women have no chance to participate in any activities and have no seat in local governance
- There is little or no understanding of gender equality. Men randomly delegate work tasks to women excluding themselves from participation in outreach community activities. A gender training should be prioritized.
- As additional income all villages engage in off season planting

Acronyms

SAF	Sustainable Agriculture Forum
SAEDA	Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association
DED	
LWU	Lao Women Union
LYU	Lao Youth Union
GDG	Gender and Development Group
DAFO	District Agriculture Forestry Office
ICD	Information and Culture Development