



UNITED NATIONS
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EMERGING GENDER STRATEGIES FOR ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Regional Seminar on Alternative Development:
Information Networking and Sharing
Good Practices on Gender and Development



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Foreword

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recognizes alternative development as an important strategy to prevent and eliminate illicit crop cultivation. In Southeast Asia, being a main source of opium and heroin production, UNODC with support of international community works in partnership with government and non-government agencies to launch alternative development efforts aiming to provide sustainable development and lawful economic options to opium poppy cultivation. The success of alternative development depends largely on the commitment of national governments and support of the international community and funding agencies.

As strategies for alternative development and opium elimination in the region, UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific emphasizes promoting cooperation and collaboration of countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion, strengthening capacities of alternative development agencies and projects as well as sharing good practices, innovative approaches and lessons learned for alternative development. In recognition of the role of gender in alternative development, a regional study on “Engendering Alternative Development: Emerging Strategies for Sustainable Practices in Southeast Asia” was conducted as part of the activity of the subregional project on Alternative Development Cooperation in East Asia to compile experiences and good practices on gender and development and recommend strategies for mainstreaming gender in future alternative development in the region. In addition, a regional seminar on “Alternative Development: Information Networking and Sharing Good Practices on Gender and Development” was organized in October 2003 at the Doi Tung Development Project in Chiang Rai, Thailand to provide a platform for policy makers, gender specialists, researchers and alternative development project managers to share their experiences and discuss future implications for gender mainstreaming and alternative development. This publication compiles all the papers presented at the seminar to share some experiences and good practices on gender and development from Southeast Asia. I thank the authors of the papers for their contribution to the publication.

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Gender Responsive Technology Framework for Poverty Alleviation in Rural Thailand: Alternative Development toward Women Empowerment¹

1. Introduction

Traditional male dominance in the Thai and most other Asian countries makes it rather automatic to equate “farmers” with being men. In fact, at least in the context of Thailand, women also play major roles in rural communities. Male and female youths with low education level tend to migrate to Bangkok and other major cities to work permanently in the industrial sector - electronic and textile factories and construction work. Early middle-aged men, especially from the Northeast, tend to migrate permanently to become taxi drivers in Bangkok and send remittances home for hiring agricultural labor. Those who are left behind aside from the young and the aged are the married women who have to take care of the extended family as well as most agricultural activities.

2. The Research and objectives of the research

The conceptual framework of the research focuses on technology transfer to rural women and men to alleviate their poverty. There are two factors both at the macro level that affect technology environment: social and policy milieu. At the level of rural society, technology transfer depends upon technology traditions, gender traditions, family situation, rural logistics, rural economy options and rural institutions for technology transfer. All these variables assert their differential influences on technology needs and availability in complex manners.

Women and men have different technological needs in the spheres of agricultural production, post- harvest/processing activities as well as household activities. However, most scientists do not develop new technologies with “gender” in mind. Having a mind set that farmers are men, they do not take note of the different needs and cater to reduce men’s labor. Rural women have to shoulder work both within and outside the household with hardly any labor-reducing technologies.

The objectives of this research are:

- 1) To identify the activities, constraints and technology used by women in farm production, post harvest processing and household production

¹ The paper was presented by Dr. Angkarb Kanjapat KORSIEPORN, Social Research Institute Chulalongkorn University. This is based on the findings of the FAO-UNDP project of similar title:THA/00/002: SPPD: 2001-2003. The author acknowledges the generosity of Dr. Revathi Balakrishnan, Senior WID Officer, FAO/RAP/WID, the team leader of the project, who allows the use of the project findings.

- 2) To identify the activities, constraints and technology needs of women in farm production, post harvest processing and household production
- 3) To identify the technologies that are responsive to their needs
- 4) To identify the strategies that would improve women's access to technology sources
- 5) To enable rural women to engage in income generating activities - which is an important means towards their empowerment, self respect and confidence
- 6) To make gender responsive policy recommendations to the Royal Thai Government (RTG) to alleviate poverty in rural households.

3. Research sites and research methodologies

3.1. Research sites

The research is a pilot study comprising six villages in four provinces representing diverse agro-ecological conditions of Thailand. The villages were selected because they were the areas under UNDP projects as well as the fact that village headmen and a headwoman were cooperative. These villages are in Songkhla, Nan, Pitsanulok and Buriram provinces.

Table 1: Study sites and agro-ecological characteristics

Province	District	Village	Characteristics
Phitsanulok	Wat Bot	Ban Nam Kob	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on a plain, one side of which is hilly with altitudes of 60-120 m. • Field crops and paddy farming. • Provincial Per capita GDP: 40,345 Baht (1997)
Buriram	Nang Rong	Ban Tukur Tasa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on an upper plain. Hilly with altitudes of 190 m. and under. • Rain-fed paddy farming, field crops, orchards and rubber plantations • Provincial Per capita FDP: 22,805 Baht (1997)
Nan	Na Noi	Ban Nam Hin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on high ground, surrounded by mountains. Altitudes of 120-360 m. • Paddy farming and field crops. • Per capita GDP: 29,022 Baht (1997)
	Ban Luang	Ban Fa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated on high land with altitudes of 340-600 m. and surrounded by mountains. • Paddy farming and field crops. • Provincial Per capita GDP: 29,022 Baht (1997)

Songkhla	Bang Klam	Ban Kuan Nua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the coastal plain inland from Songkhla Lake, with altitudes of 10-40 m. • Rubber plantations, paddy farming, fishing. • Provincial Per capita GDP: 64,168 Baht (1997)
	Sathing Phra	Ban Sri Chai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the shores of Songkhla Lake at a low elevation, which means that flooding is a chronic problem. • Rubber plantations, paddy farming, fishing. • Provincial Per capita GDP: 64,168 Baht (1997)

Source: Fieldwork data of the FAO/RAP-UNDP Project gathered in 2001

3.2. Research methodology

To obtain both qualitative and quantitative information, combinations of research methodologies were used:

- Collection and review of secondary data at provincial, down to village level, e.g. annually collected data in the village surveys of the basic needs (*Jor Por Tor*) and the basic information (*Kor Chor Chor 2 Kor*) of rural community as a whole.
- Training workshop for field investigators in gender analysis and in the concept, methods and tools of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) they were assigned to collect data and information once they returned to their respective village, prior to actual field work of the research team.
- Key informant interviews with village formal and informal leaders and knowledgeable women and men to verify the work of the field investigators and obtain additional information.
- PRA with approximately 50 rural men and women from lower middle and poor households. The were conducted in Thai, using a number of PRA tools such as transect walk, wealth ranking, seasonal calendar, 24-hour clock, Venn diagram.
- Focus group discussions with formal village leaders, local NGOs, and sub-district GOs officers from the four major ministries engaged in rural development: the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI).
- Focus group discussions with provincial and district government (GOs) officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). If possible, a woman and a man from the village were invited to join.
- Desk review of the policies, strategies, projects and programs of key government institutions to gauge the level of gender responsiveness of these GOs.

4. Core activities

All the activities in this pilot research are crucial to meet the objectives of this research. Nonetheless, The core activities here considered to be most crucial are the PRA with the 50 participants and the provincial level workshop. Regarding the PRA, the rural women and men are the givers of first hand information and they know best what their problems and needs are. The workshop is the platform where high-ranking officials could be introduced to the concepts of gender, gender responsiveness and gender mainstreaming, be informed about the research findings and discussed how to overcome both the structural constraints of the Thai bureaucracy and the rural women's and men's constraints and to meet their technology needs.

4.1. The PRA procedures

- 1) The village head and the assistants helped identify targeted women and men and asked them to participate in the PRA sessions.
- 2) The national consultant team – a socio-economic and gender specialist acting as the national and team leader, a technology specialist and an organization/institution specialist – introduced themselves, the project and its objectives to the participants³ in each village. After the introduction, the information previously gathered by the field investigator and the national research team was showed in the form of flip charts taped to the walls for verification and additional information.
- 3) The participants were divided into women group and men group and parallel focus group discussions were conducted, facilitated by the research team and the field investigator. When the number of participants were large, they were divided into subgroups. For instance, the research team divided 25 women participants into three small groups, attempting to group women of the same poverty level in the same group to avoid dominance by those from better-off women. On the other hand, if the number is small, the team attempted to facilitate the discussions to avoid the dominance. After the parallel focus group discussions, another focus group discussion followed, comprising both female and male participants. Flip charts showing information using various PRA tools -done by women and by men- were put up on walls and were compared and further discussed. The focus of discussions were on the technology used, constraints and needs of women and men in all major production (e.g. paddy farming, cassava production, large livestock raising, orchard, etc.), post harvest activities and household production. This session included brainstorming on how to overcome the identified constraints and meet the technology needs of women and men.

4.2. Provincial level workshop

The research team had at all stages of the research tried to validate the obtained information. It is extremely crucial for the team to present the information from the PRA sessions of each village to the GOs representatives in the workshop. At the beginning of the workshop, the research project and its objectives were explained, emphasizing the meaning of “gender” and “gender responsiveness” in technology transfer. In the workshop, they discussed the needs and provided further useful

³ The number of participants were targeted at 50, but there were variations in each research site with the minimum around 20-25 participants.

information on local technology sources and in some sites traditional wisdom to overcome the identified constraints. In addition, they brainstormed with the aim to provide modalities to make Sub-district Technology Transfer Centers (TTCs) more effective in disseminating gender responsive technology to rural villagers and to take the holistic approach with regard to transferred technologies. That is, to monitor whether and how they are utilized, their efficacy, productivity and evaluating the outcomes of the transfer. Most importantly, they are instrumental in relaying the information on gender-segregated technology constraints and needs to the central government.

5. Major research findings

Almost all GOs officers from the grass rooted level to the provincial level did not understand the concepts of “gender”, “gender responsiveness” and “gender mainstreaming”.

- The Sub-district Technology Transfer Centers (TTCs) visit were not effective in disseminating technology to rural villagers. The working hours of the TTCs clashed with those of the farmers, disabling them to come to ask for information they need or want.
- Rural women and men did have different problems, constraints and needs in agricultural production, post harvest processing and household production.
- Rural women’s work in production, processing and household activities were taken for granted, unpaid and not recognized/appreciated.
- Informal and formal socialization since childhood made rural women in the research project submissive to men, be they father, husband, brothers and other male relatives, resulting in women lacking self-esteem and self-confidence to articulate their needs. The women expressed their fear to venture too far from their village for training and said they would go only if they go as groups and with the permission of the ir husband.
- Though the rural women in the research sites held the purse strings, the decision making on the use of cash tended to rest on the spouse, even though jointed decision making was documented. The balance of power in decision making was tipped when women could earn their own separate income acquired through selling processed food products or other micro enterprises.
- Women were much less likely than men to be recruited for training outside their village for more than two days and the training was usually on traditional women’s work, mainly food processing. This is despite the finding that within the sphere of household production, women actually took care of small livestock such as chickens and pigs and looked after their kitchen garden as well.
- Members of women’s groups were from well off households, who sometimes were village leaders such as member of *Tambon* or Sub-district Administrative Organizations (TAOs) or some other groups such as Livestock group. Some women groups had membership regulations that practically prevent women from poor households to join, barring them from access to formal loans.
- Women from poorer households did not have collateral to get loans from formal financial institutions and had to borrow from local moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates. This increases their poverty because the money was

used to pay previous debts and to buy rice and other necessary foodstuffs on credit from the regular grocery stall owners whom they know.

- Woman headed households were the poorest of the poor. This was the case especially when the household comprised only an aged widow. The very poor women could still depend, to extremely low extent, on the social safety net in the village. Only particularly close relatives could provide her with some assistance, as they were also poor.
- Very poor women were not willing to participate in the focus group sessions due to opportunity cost.
- GOs officers have to write their annual programs with budget, the target groups were set in terms of the number of villagers but they were not targeted by sex.
- Budget allocated for each planned program reached the GOs staffs very late. The implementation of many programs planned for early in the fiscal year had to be delayed. As the budgets for the programs poured in during the last few months before the fiscal year end at the end of September, the implementation of most remaining programs had to be expedited at the expense of cost effectiveness and appropriateness in the selection of trainees for training programs.
- Communication from the central government via provincial representatives to the village Heads was very slow. By the time a formal letter reached the Heads, they normally did not have time to recruit appropriate trainees.
- Most GOs officers' incorrect assumption of functional literacy and numeracy of trainees led to technologies not being transferred to others in their respective village. The training was thus neither effective nor conducive to technology transfer.
- The Division of Informal Education, under the MOE, trained women villagers in their own respective village. The training using the demonstration method was for groups of 5-10 interested women. For many women, they later formed themselves into informal groups to process snacks and/or food products for sell. The women were satisfied and proud of their income and ability.

6. Analysis of key factors, lessons learned and good practices

Alternative development (AD) for women empowerment certainly does not have one specific modality. Key factors are at work in complex manners, depending on which factor or sets of factors are more influential, on the rural women in each locality and region. Thus identifying any AD should be grounded on action research with clear-cut objectives, conceptual framework, desk review and fieldwork.

Before the analysis of the findings in this research, it should be noted that the research was a pilot project with very small number of project sites. Therefore, the findings from this research should not be generalized to represent the whole of Thailand. Taking this limitation into account, a full-scale research has to take into careful consideration the coverage of research sites and the degree of representativeness of the sites.

6.1. Analysis of key factors to empower rural women

- *Capability building for GOs officers on gender and gender mainstreaming*

The 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan has a section on women and development and the Thaksin Cabinet has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). GOs officials are supposed to be trained on gender analysis and to mainstream women in project/program planning for rural development. Yet, it is known that only the Department of Fishery of the MOAC has had training on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. It remains to be seen and assessed if the trainees could put what they had been trained on into actual implementation.

- *Gender responsive project and program planning*
Given that project and program planning are gender responsive, those who are responsible for implementation have to overcome the cultural barriers that make rural women in general submissive to their male counterpart, as well as the women's fear to venture outside their village without their friends. Another obstacle is the recruitment of trainees by village Heads, which in fact results from slow bureaucratic procedures and male biases that are pervasive in village setting everywhere.
- *Demonstration and on-site training for women*
Due to the patriarchy system and male biases, one government agency that could transfer processing technologies to housewife group or informal women groups right in the village was the Division of Informal Education. However, it was difficult to find trainers with varieties of skills, resulting in the women being trained in processing snacks of the same kinds – buttered banana chips, caramel peanuts, curry puffs, making herbal shampoo. Women's needs /desire to be trained in specific kinds of processing could not be met, such as making high quality wine from fruits, effective processing method to pickle bamboo shoots. Despite of this, demonstration and on-site training for women was amazingly effective to get around the obstacles created by patriarchy and male biases.
- *Income earning activities by women as a group*
Acquired knowledge and skills usually made women formed a group to produce snacks/foodstuffs for sale. By trial and error, they improved their products and were able to expand their market from within to outside the village. If the Division of informal Education could diversify training courses to include high value-added products in addition to food processing, it would be very beneficial for the rural women in their effort to create their own income. The generated income encouraged village women as a group to venture to their district to seek new market outlets. Through this process, they gain not only income, but also the sense of pride, confidence and self-dependence.
- *Promotion of sustainable women's savings groups*
Such government agencies as the Department of Cooperative Promotion under the MOAC and the Department of Community Development under the MOI have the responsibility to help establish cooperatives and savings groups. Nine out of ten are inactive. Sustainability and growth of women's savings groups have to depend upon spontaneous shared desire to establish their own savings groups. The amount of savings was usually increased with the guidance of group leaders. In one study site, an initially small woman's savings group gradually grew to become a small village bank, operating similarly to any large-scale banks. It also has a section that works as a cooperative, allowing

villagers to buy bonds, which give yearly dividends. In Surathani province, there is a village bank under strong leadership, which has more than 10 million baht⁴ of villagers' savings⁵. The point to take note of is that the ideas of setting savings groups have to come spontaneously from the women themselves if they are to expand and be sustainable.

6.2. Lessons learned

- *It is important to ensure that villagers should not expect any financial support from this research.*

Villagers were long used to consultant teams coming to their village to acquire information, returning to their respective headquarters and afterwards providing them with funding for village development. Before this research team introduced the project, the participants came with this expectation. After explaining long-term benefits, they were less disappointed and more willing to participate in the research project.

- *Desk review of relevant literature and government policies should precede the fieldwork.*

Desk review would give more background information to the research team and is likely to raise questions that could be asked during fieldwork. Extensive and update information facilitates likewise help researchers to ask questions in more focussed, more extensive and more detailed manners.

- *In planning fieldwork, site visits should not be timed too closed together.*

Fieldwork that is planned to be followed by another after only 3-4 days is not only exhaustive but also does not allow researchers to write up the findings in details and to have some time for initial analysis. Furthermore, information gaps are not identified and filled immediately by contacting the field investigator or others in the research site when their memory is still fresh. In addition, if there are rooms for improvement of the fieldwork strategies, having at least a week before the next fieldwork to improve the manner the fieldwork is carried out.

- *Time schedules fixed in advance should be adapted to accommodate the patterns of work of the villagers.*

In one village in Songkhla Province, both women and men engaged in rubber tapping started working around 11 p.m. and finished around 3-4 a.m. The field investigator arranged for focus group discussions at 1 p.m. The participants agreed to the arranged time but turned up round 3 p.m. The sex-desegregated focus group discussions had to be rescheduled to around 3 p.m. and the discussion group comprising both female and male participants had to be rescheduled to 7 p.m.

- *PRA tools should be as simplified and as easy to understand as possible.*

Most participants found 24-hour clock difficult to do. Such tools as problem family tree and matrix problem ranking should not be used as the villagers did not understand and their attempt to provide information through these tools were likely to make the information invalid.

⁴ Current exchange rate is approximately 39-40 Thai baht to one USD.

⁵ Private communication with a CUSRI researcher on October 22nd, 2003 and http://www.chumphon.go.th/data/policy_central/captial.doc

6.3. Good practices

- Acceptance of research teams that rural woman and men know best about their village.

Many researchers consider themselves expert in their respective discipline and are not inclined to consult with villagers. This kind of attitude would not encourage researchers to ask questions. In fact, villagers have been living in their village for most of their life and thus have extensive and intensive knowledge and insights. They have the wealth of knowledge and direct experience in the village life. A great deal of information can be gathered from villagers of various generations who might also have different perspectives and viewpoints on the same subjects/issues.

- Using PRA, with particular attention on poor rural women

Participation of villagers in focus group discussions in a PRA research facilitates them to discuss, analyze and articulate their opinions, problems and needs. The research team facilitates them in taking turns to present the results of group discussions to all the participants. For shy, docile women, it was a fearsome endeavor, but after many repetitions, they gain confidence to speak in front of an audience. This is an indirect outcome of PRA for women empowerment.

- Exposure of rural women to similar activities as focus group discussions

There are village meetings, called “Prachum Wayti Prachakom Moo Ban”, which requires that and at least three fourths of the total households have to attend and the head of households or his/her representative has to attend. This is another platform where rural women could express their opinions and be assertive. Frequent exposures are possible because in some villages, male head of households migrate either seasonally or permanently to major cities, giving the opportunities for their spouse to attend village meetings. The frequent exposures, like the indirect outcome from women’s participation in focus group discussions, tend to result in women empowerment.

- Empowerment of poor rural women through financial self dependence

The current cabinet introduced the very successful income-generating project for rural communities called “One Tambon, One Product” (OTOP)⁶. Mass media, especially television and newspapers, have been showing numerous success cases of rural women groups earning cash income from food processing, various kinds of handicrafts such as bamboo basket weaving, especially weaving traditional clothing materials using natural dyes. While traditional designs are maintained, government officers from the MOAC, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Industry have been giving assistance in the aspects of product quality, package design and marketing. This project not only generates cash income for poor rural women, but also empowers them as individuals and groups.

- Provision of skill training for women groups in micro enterprise

Woman groups involved in OTOP have one weakness –enterprise administration, especially record keeping of capital inputs, income and net income, as well as account keeping. Skill training to overcome this weakness would further empower poor rural women.

⁶ The RTG regional administrative structure consists in descending order of province, district, sub-district or *Tambon* and village.

- *Paving the way for poor women to access formal administrative and financial institutions*

Another project of the current government that is complementary to the OTOP is the “one Million baht/One Village Fund” project. It has a formal, rather elaborate administrative structure to ensure fairness and transparency⁷. Relevant to women in development (WID) and gender and development (GAD) is the fact that the selection criterion that the Village Fund committee – comprising 9-15 villagers – should have roughly equal number of female and male members. Having women in the Committee ensures that projects proposed by women’s groups are not likely to be neglected. The female members who enter this formal administrative arena at the village level have potentials to be selected as members of committees at higher levels. Once more women are in higher-ranking positions in the provincial administrative structure, the likelihood is that they would not neglect the plights, problems and demands of the majority of poor rural women.

7. Implications and recommendations

7.1. Research implications

- Poor rural women can be empowered through several means simultaneously.
- One very critical means is the training of government officials at all levels on gender analysis and on engendering policies, projects and programs.
- Government projects that are complementary are the best modules to rural economy and communities and to improve the status of rural women (e.g. debts moratorium + Village Fund + OTOP).
- Rural women need not deviate from their traditional role in food processing to earn their own income and gain the power to have more control on their own life.
- Functional literacy and numeracy are imperative if rural women and men are to access needed technologies.
- Poverty alleviation efforts would not be successful if the target group is the poorest of the poor; their opportunity costs are too high and their fear of failure is overwhelming.
- Growth and sustainability of a woman’s savings group requires the group’s own initiative and strong leadership.
- Involvement in the village level political sphere is a means to empower rural women.

7.2. Recommendations

- Rural tribal women in the upland areas along the border of Thailand should produce high quality handicraft products for sale.
- The women should sell as women’s groups or cooperatives and be trained in micro enterprise management.
- They have exceptional ability, especially in patching and cross-stitch. While traditional designs should be produced, they should be encouraged to create new designs.

⁷ For details and an example, see http://www.chumphon.go.th/data/policy_central/captial.doc and www.ifad.org/events/gc/thailand.htm

- Hill tribe women naturally produce traditional handicrafts to be used in daily life. To promote their entrepreneurship, government and international agencies could assist them to diversify their products and to adapt them to meet the market demands both within and outside the country.
- Women from various hill tribes should have the skills required to seek new markets and to promote their products, e.g., through exhibitions at OTOP fairs and – perhaps in the future – through e-commerce.
- Hill tribe women should learn to manage their finance within the family and in their groups/cooperatives. This is to avoid getting in debts and to enjoy and use their income for the improvement of the standards of their life and their family and to be reassured that they have sufficient savings in time of unexpected problems/events.
- Given that a proportion of women entrepreneurs have language barriers, it might be one prerequisite to teach them functional literacy to access information and technologies.
- Empowering hill tribe women could be accomplished in similar ways to those applied to the women participated in this research, with some adaptations to suit the culture and traditions of the targeted communities.
- Poverty alleviation efforts should be more successful if the target group is not the poorest of the poor; but the poor or the lower middle socio-economic households. They are more willing to try new innovations and the risk of getting in debts is less.
- The poorest of the poor women could be hired by women's groups engaged in micro enterprises and could learn from them.
- The funding practice by the government and international donors should be gradually reduced while the donors should concentrate on capacity building of human resource at the grass root level.

References

1. Fieldwork data of the FAO/RAP-UNDP Project gathered in 2001 (Now being finalized for publication in November 2003 as a report titled “Gender responsive technology for poverty alleviation”)
2. http://www.chumphon.go.th/data/policy_central/captial.doc
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4. <http://www.ifad.org/events/gc/thailand.htm>

Drug Demand Reduction and Gender Mainstreaming in the Context of the Balanced Approach to Opium Elimination in the Lao PDR¹

1. Introduction

Opium, ATS and cannabis are the main drugs abused in Laos. Under the balanced approach, drug demand reduction was originally seen to address only opium addiction. The actual situation has changed with ATS emerging as a new threat not only in the urban areas but also found in rural areas where opium poppy is traditionally grown.

The nature of drug abuse has undergone radical changes in the past few years. While addiction used to involve only opium smoking among the older adult population, there is abuse of amphetamines among youth. The emergence of poly drug abuse is also of concern.

1.1. Drug control situation and gender analysis

▪ Trends of opium poppy cultivation and addiction in the Lao PDR

During the last five years, opium poppy cultivation in the Lao PDR has been reduced by more than 70% from an estimated 26,837 ha in 1998 to 7,847 ha in 2003 and opium addiction by about 52.6% from an estimated 63,248 in 1998 to 29,961 persons in 2003.² Where in the past addicts had to be persuaded to join treatment & rehabilitation programmes, the scarcity of opium has led to a big voluntary demand for treatment & rehabilitation services for both men and women.

▪ Trends of opium addiction among women

The 2003 data showed that the distribution by gender remained similar to the distribution observed in previous year: 78% of the opium addicts were male (81% in 2002) and 22% were female (19% in 2002).

▪ ATS and other drugs abuse and gender

ATS is a problem causing great concern to Provincial and Central Authorities. ATS abuse was first reported in 1997. Provincial authorities have noted that ATS abuse cases has been increasing annually, mainly among the younger populations and spreading from urban to rural areas. ATS cases receiving treatment at some major hospitals has also reported to have increased. The percentage of male drug abuse is higher than female drug abuse. According to a survey conducted in Vientiane among 2,631 students (1,333 men and 1,298 women); men (25.1%) reported a higher percentage of drug use at some point during their lifetime compared to women (9.86%)³.

¹ The paper was presented by Dr. Kham Noan HSAM, the Programme Facilitation Unit in Vientiane, Lao PDR

² 2003 Opium Survey UNODC & LCDC

³ UNODC School Survey

- *Risk for drug abuse*
Based on the fact that the percentage of women who abuse drugs is lower than the percentage of men who abuse drugs, most experts long assumed that females were less attracted to or more wary of drug abuse than were males. A recent study found that the lower rate of drug abuse for female is largely a matter of opportunity.⁴
- *Consequences of addiction and abuse*
Although women normally comprise only about 10-20% of opium addicts and a lower percentage of abuse of ATS and other drugs, as primary care-takers, they are directly affected by the abusive patterns of others in their lives, whether parents, siblings, husbands or children, especially by men, who traditionally have had the greatest problems with abuse and addiction. The indirect effect of drugs and alcohol on women is also colossal. Women bear the brunt of managing substance abusers in the family.⁵

They are the first to feel the consequences of their household's social and economic decline resulting from men's addiction and its impact on children. While women generally have the greatest desire to reduce drug demand, they are also the most powerless.

Saddled with more and more responsibilities, women who try to rationalize the behavior of a substance abuser often end up psychologically depleted and physically exhausted, thereby increasing the dysfunctional family atmosphere which is so detrimental to its members.

Traditionally, women have suffered their lot silently and accepted the shame and stigma associated with having an abusing and abusive family member.

2. National Drug Demand Reduction programme in the Lao PDR.

2.1.Objective:

The National Drug Demand Reduction programme aims to address drug demand reduction as an integral component of the balanced national drug control approach including alternative development, demand reduction and law enforcement, components.

3. Main strategies or Methodologies

The National Demand Reduction Strategy, which was developed and adopted in April 2003, includes prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for opium users, ATS and other drugs based on reliable data collection and drug information systems.

The DDR strategy in the Lao PDR focuses on priority aspects of demand reduction and takes into account geographical distribution (urban versus rural areas), type of risk groups and main categories of substances abused as well as priority given to detoxification, treatment and rehabilitation of working age and female addicts. (A specific programme for women is not mentioned in the National DDR strategy)

Treatment methods in the Lao PDR drug demand reduction programmes are designed to address the needs of the population in general, as well as those of specific population groups, special attention being paid to youth. Both residential based approach and community based drug treatment and rehabilitation approaches are

⁴ NIDA National Institute on Drug Abuse

⁵ ILO Drugs & Alcohol and Gender Problem 2000

being practiced. In both approaches, all drug abusers (both men and women) can participate voluntarily. At present, there is no specific treatment programmes addressing the special needs of women drug abusers.

4. Core Actions or Activities

A comprehensive Master Plan on Drug Control comprising and balancing actions in, alternative development, demand reduction and law enforcement will be finalized in 2003.

In 2002, the CB-DAC guidelines has been established and revised. In April 2003, the National Drug Demand Reduction Strategy has been developed and adopted. In October 2003, the training manual on field level community based drug abuse control has been developed and published. Training and capacity building on Community Based Drug Demand Reduction at the Provincial, District and local community level have being conducted in some northern provinces. Community based treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts has been implemented in several provinces. Residential based or hospital based treatment for drug addicts mainly ATS and opium addicts are also being provided.

5. Results of Programme implementation

Gender awareness was raised among project staff, government officers and villagers (both women and men). There are formal inclusion and participation of women in village development planning and management and increased representation of women in Village Development Committees. Health, education, access to credit and income generating activities for both genders is slowly improving in project target areas. Men and women equally participate in training activities on drug demand reduction. For example for training carried out in Houa Phan province out of 34 trainees, 14 were women (41%). In Phongsaly province out of 28 trainees 14 were women (50%)

The following example indicates the percentage of women addicts who participated in treatment programmes in some UNODC projects during 2002-2003.

<i>Project</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male addicts</i>	<i>Female addicts</i>	<i>Percentage of female addicts seeking treatment</i>
Xam Neua	18	18	0	0%
Phongsaly	102	73	29	28%

Laos is still in the process of developing a system to measure the treatment outcome.

6. Analysis of key factors, lessons learned and good practices

The number of women seeking treatment services is much lower than that of men. This may reflect the fact that more men develop serious drug problems at the overall population level, as well as the reluctance of women drug abusers to seek treatment. As some women may be afraid, timid or feel that they may be stigmatized.

Women who enter addiction treatment are more likely to have an addicted male partner or to be divorced or separated. Drug dependent women are more likely to have a co-existing psychiatric problem, especially depression. Women have a complex array of personal, social, psychological, and cultural issues that accompany their substance abuse. They frequently have the added responsibility of needing to care for children.

Policies that ensure both women and men have access to projects' resources and services, in relation to their actual responsibilities are good practices that have to be implemented on a wider scale.

6.1. Constraints

Because of the higher level of referrals of men, treatment programs have overwhelmingly been directed toward males, even when females have been included, their special needs often have been overlooked.

Female drug abusers are likely to delay seeking treatment until their symptoms are severe compared with similar males. There is a lack of necessary medical and other support services, women have been refused service by some treatment center/hospital. In Lao PDR, there have been ongoing discussions to include facilities for women drug abusers in some treatment center, where treatment facilities for women do not exist.

7. Recommendations

7.1. Capacity building

It is important to ensure that both male and female have equal access to resources and services. Service providers need continued training and technical assistance and need to engage in collaborative efforts to ensure more comprehensive programs

7.2. Women specific programming

There are genetic, physiological, psychosocial, and environmental dimensions to drug abuse and addiction. Male and female differences in any of these dimensions can give rise to gender differences in the cause, effects, and consequences of drug abuse. Effective treatment could be enhanced through their adaptation for the differing needs of men, women, boys and girls.

7.3. Comprehensive services and treatment provided

The services should be based on understanding the context and needs of women's daily lives. Such as: Identifying and building on women's strengths; Avoiding confrontational approaches; Teaching coping strategies, based on women's experiences, with a willingness to explore women's individual appraisals of stressful situations; Arranging for the daily needs of women, such as childcare; Having a strong female presence on staff; Promoting bonding among women. Comprehensive treatment services with consideration for women, especially substance using pregnant women should be available on demand.

Service components should include:

- Vocational & educational services
- Inpatient drug treatment
- Transportation
- Child care and baby-sitting services

- Comprehensive medical services including psychological assessment and mental health care
- Family therapy & couples counseling
- Social services including possible food and financial support

Some 80% of the population live in rural areas but there is a trend towards increasing rural-urban migration and drug abuse is a growing problem in major cities of the Lao PDR especially among youth. The shift from rural to urban areas may also contribute towards changing strong community, family ties and cultural values that exist in most rural villages, reinforced by the presence of traditional village elders and leaders.

Young people are at high risk to various types of drugs such as amphetamine-type-stimulants (ATS) and solvents. Of particular concern is the spread of ATS abuse in the workplace both in rural and urban areas. With ATS being sold and promoted as energizers and strength perpetuating medicine by some members of the communities.

The emergence of poly-drug abuse is of grave concern and **timely as well as appropriate gender-sensitive prevention and awareness campaigns must be intensified and expanded.**

Gender Mainstreaming in the Balanced Approach to Opium Elimination Programme in the Lao PDR¹

1. Introduction

The Lao PDR sits at the crossroads of mainland Southeast Asia. The country covers an area of 236,800 sq km some eighty percent of which is mountainous. It is bordered by Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, China and Myanmar. Lao PDR had a population of 5,680,600 in 2003 and an average growth rate of about 2.4%. There are some 49 main ethnic groups officially recognized that encompasses over 230 ethnic groups belonging to four main ethno-linguistic families. (Mon-Khmer, Tai, Hmong-Mien, and Sino-Tibetan) This wealth per capita of cultural diversity is found in few other countries. It is estimated that ethnic minorities compromise some 70% of the total population.

The major drug problems confronting the Lao PDR are Opium, Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) and Cannabis.

Opium has been known in the Lao PDR for many hundred years but it was only in the late eighteenth century that it became a problem for Lao society. It formed a main source of tax revenue for the colonial government and later the Lao Royal Government. Ethnic minority villagers were forced to expand cultivation by the colonialist and later by the supporters of the former Royal Government. Many ethnic minorities became dependant on a livelihood based on opium for most of their cash, medicinal and addiction needs.²

The Lao PDR ranked 140 out of 174 on the human development index. Of the 830,000 households some 70,000 households or 8.4% living in about 2056 villages have cultivated opium poppy. About 112 tons of opium was produced annually, of which some 65 tons was consumed locally to sustain addictions as well as for medications in the absence of health services, leaving an annual surplus of about 50 tons for illegal export.

The Lao PDR is the third largest producer of illicit opium and has the second largest rate of opiate consumption in the world. Over 80% of the opium is produced in 6 of the 10 northern provinces. Ethnic minority groups in some of the most remote and isolated regions cultivate most of the opium poppy. Poverty is more evident in these areas than other parts of the country. Thirty-two or more than 2/3 of the 47 poorest districts in the country grow opium poppy. National criteria indicators for poverty are met in many opium poppy growing villages confirming the close interrelationship between opium and poverty in Laos.

¹ The paper was presented by Mr. Leik BOONWAAT, the Programme Facilitation Unit Vientiane, Lao PDR.

² LCDC 5 year action plan to eliminate opium

Since 1997 Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) trafficking and abuse has emerged as a new threat to the country affecting mainly the young. Of particular concern is the spread of ATS abuse in the workplace both in rural and urban areas.

National Drug Control Measures, Policies and Strategies:

The Government of the Lao PDR (GOL) is committed to creating a lifestyle without drugs for the Lao people as well as to reducing poverty and environmental degradation. In order to resolving these problems the GOL has taken significant steps. As a party to the 1961 International Convention on Narcotic drugs and since 1997 also party to the 1971 Convention Psychotropic substances, the GOL is committed to eliminating illicit opium production in the country.

In November 1999, the GOL and UNODC jointly prepared the National strategy program “A Balanced Approach to Opium Elimination from 2000-2006” In March 2001 the Seventh Party Congress approved the policy to eliminate illicit opium poppy cultivation by the year 2005. This was ranked as national priorities together with the policies to eliminate poverty and shifting cultivation. This strong Government political commitment has also led to a legal framework through which authorities are able to enforce the reduction and eventual elimination of opium poppy cultivation. The Government has chosen a gradual approach involving the introduction of alternative sources of income for opium poppy farmers with the goal of eliminating opium production by the year 2005. But lacks sufficient resources and funds to do so.

1.1. National Organizations for Drug Control:

The Lao National Commission on Drug Control and Supervision has the responsibility for national drug control and was established in 1990. LCDC includes representatives from the Ministries Health, Education, Agriculture and Forestry, Culture and Information, Public Security, Justice and Finance.

Drug control organizations of the Lao PDR exist from the National, Provincial, District, and in some cases village levels. They are responsible for facilitating and supporting drug control activities as well as for coordinating the efforts of various offices under the relevant line ministries to strengthen drug control efforts at the different levels.

2. Main Strategies and Methodologies

In Lao PDR the emphasis has been on a balanced approach to opium poppy elimination. The strategy has been prepared in 2000, as a UNODC proposal to effectively eliminate opium poppy cultivation by 2006 by means of an accelerated alternative development programme in the major opium producing districts.

A Programme Facilitation Unit was established in November 2000 jointly by LCDC and UNODC as the coordinating, monitoring and supporting backbone of the National Strategy Programme “ The Balanced Approach to Eliminate Opium Poppy Cultivation in the Lao PDR by 2006” The balanced approach has three main components. This includes: • **Alternative Development (AD)** to replace the socio-economic incentive to produce opium. • **Drug Demand Reduction (DDR)** to eliminate the need of addicts

for opium and · **Law Enforcement** (LE) to stop trafficking for internal and external markets.

Some 23 alternative development projects have been undertaken since 1989 and 12 new AD projects have been planned.

2.1. Gender & Development:

Gender mainstreaming is an important part of the village participatory approach of AD projects. Women are the mainstay of their households and do the majority of household work as well as to generate up to 80% of the household cash income working in the fields, especially in the labor intensive aspects of opium production, but most highland ethnic groups award women with little status or opportunity. Educating girls is given a low priority and their decision-making role outside the household is severely limited.

As part of the UN system, UNODC is required to promote the gender mainstreaming policy under its mandated function as the coordinator and center of expertise in drug control.

Gender mainstreaming focuses on gender roles and relationships rather than on women only. It is designed to ensure that both women and men have access to project resources and services in relation to their actual responsibilities. Recognition of women's constraints, responsibilities and know-how compared with those of men will be significant in terms of defining project/programme activities; introduction of new technology; training; information dissemination; extension strategies; credit and savings mechanisms; and marketing support.³

The Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development endorsed by member states at the UNGASS June 1998 places a special attention on gender related issues. Under the heading "Improved and innovative approaches to Alternative Development" it is stated that 'AD Programmes and international cooperation for that purpose should incorporate the gender dimension by ensuring equal conditions for women and men to participate in the development process including design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Guidelines for Best Practices for Gender mainstreaming in AD, states that in the context of UNODC AD projects gender mainstreaming would aim at an active participation of both women and men in project activities and ensure their access to project resources, services and benefits as well as taking into account roles and needs of women and men when designing projects.

2.2. The following goals have been adopted to apply in UNODC AD programmes;

- Provide equitable access and opportunities to women and men both individuals and groups to AD resources.
- Take measures to ensure women and men's equitable access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making in AD programmes.
- Contribute to the UN goal of reaching gender equality particularly in higher management positions.

³ UNDCP Report on Guidelines for best Practices on Gender mainstreaming in Alternative Development January 2000

- Include gender assessment as part of the situation analysis for each AD project document.
- Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data through monitoring and evaluation of AD projects.
- Define the implementation and monitoring requirements concerning gender in the contractual agreements with executing, implementing and cooperating agencies.

3. Activities

The UNDP supported Gender Resource Information and Development Centre through the Lao Women’s Union has assisted AD projects to raise awareness among project staff, government officers and villagers both men and women through awareness creation and a gender sensitive focus in human resource development interventions.

Support is provided to the empowerment of women by ensuring their effective formal inclusion and participation in village development planning and management and increasing the representation of women in Village Development Committees by supporting their health and education needs and by developing income generating activities and by facilitating access to credit for women where there is effective demand.

3.1. Constraints to Gender Mainstreaming:

The following table shows the population of the Lao PDR by ethno linguistic families:⁴

<i>Ethno linguistic superstocks</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Tai-Kadai</i>	66.2%
<i>Austro-Asiatic (Mon-Khmer)</i>	23%
<i>Hmong-Mien</i>	7.4%
<i>Sino-Tibetan</i>	
<i>Tibeto-Burman</i>	2.5%
<i>Chinese Ho</i>	0.2%

It could be said that ethnic minorities make up some 70% of the total population of the country. Ethnic minorities living in the mountainous and most isolated remote areas of the northern provinces cultivate most of the opium poppy. Among them, the Hmong are best known for cultivating opium poppy.

Hmong society is organized into patrilineal clans. In Laos and Thailand 18 clans have been identified. A Hmong lineage is a group of people who are able to trace their descent through the male line from a common ancestor.⁵ When women marry they and their children usually take up the clan name of their husband. This practice has led to many parents favoring their son’s access to education and daughters not having the same

⁴ ILO Policy Study on Ethnic Minority Issues in Rural Development

⁵ The Hmong 1998 edited by Robert Cooper

access to education but being made do farming and household chores as they would eventually be married and go to live with their husband.

Parents often feel that there will be little or no economic gain if girls are educated and that girls should be made ready for family life. Families earn their living from a low productive yet highly labor-intensive upland farming practices. Even if girls are given access to education they must continue to do housework, farming and preparation for marriage at a relatively early age as part of their domestic obligation.

In many male dominated mountainous ethnic minority communities women workloads are traditionally very heavy and men who are given preferential access to new opportunities, including access to education and training although women do most of the work. Women are not usually seen to participate at village meetings and training. The usual rationale given is that only the men can read, write and understand Lao and are able to benefit from the training. Opportunity to use of drugs during traditional ceremonies may also have resulted in higher male addiction rates compared to women.

A constraint to implementation of development interventions is the lack of Lao language comprehension found in many remote isolated mountain ethnic minority communities in northern Laos. Compared to men a much higher proportion of women are illiterate.

Lao women of different ethnic groups make up some 51% of the total population of the Lao PDR. Under the Lao constitution women and men receive equal rights. Conservative attitudes, so called backward traditions and slow economic growth have prevented women from reaching the goal of equal rights between men and women. The Policy of the Party and the Government has been to pay attention to implementing gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.⁶

According to figures included in the proposed Development plan for Lao Women 1998-2003 for every 100 women, 48 women are literate of whom only 9 have completed primary level education and only 2 reaching higher education. Women make up 52% of the labor force but only one third are dealing with work of a technical nature and only 6% in a managerial or higher level of administration.

4. Analysis of Key Factors, Lessons Learned and Good Practices

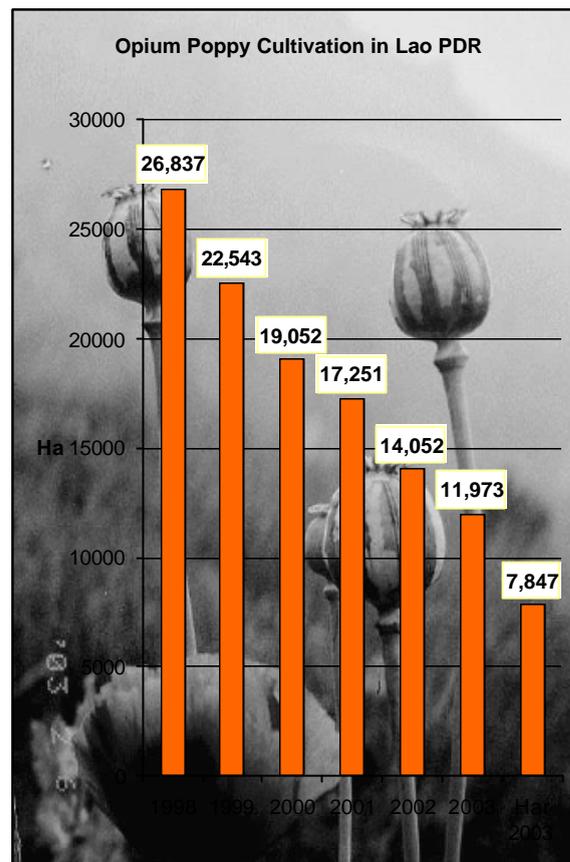
The summary of the Lao PDR National programme Strategy “The Balanced Approach to Opium Elimination in the Lao PDR” states that the role of women in Alternative Development and Demand Reduction activities is the key to success. The Programme thus needs to mainstream gender into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender disaggregated data was used in surveys leading to the development of the programme strategy.

To overcome some of the constraints to gender mainstreaming in AD projects various policies have been incorporated that address and refer to the roles, activities, needs and responsibilities of both women & men involved in development. AD Projects in the Lao PDR incorporate guidelines and procedures that ensure improvement of both women and men with the aim of socio-economic equity and equality, this includes:

⁶ Lao Women Union & UNIFEM “ Development Plan for Lao Women 1998-2003”

Ensuring gender balance on the composition of Village Development Committees to ensure the involvement of both men and women in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of community development activities.

- Applying social and gender analysis when undertaking PRA including gender disaggregated strengths, assets, roles, responsibilities and needs assessments and collection of relevant gender disaggregated data.
- Addressing issues identified by women *as well as other more marginalized community groups*.
- Supporting non-formal adult education.
- Applying gender sensitive achievement indicators: *such as no: of girls continuing to high school, number of women trainees, Village Development Committee participation, access to credit, level of income of men and women, male and female project staff*.
- Setting up and working with activity interest groups instead of individual households, and promote the use of group extension and training methods that ensure women participation as women usually could feel shy on an individual level with predominantly male project staff but would have no problem in working with the staff member in a group.
- Establishing special income generation and micro-credit activities specifically targeted for women.
- Close cooperation and partnership with the Lao Women's Union in AD project development activities as well as to carry out gender awareness training and campaigns.



5. Results of Programme Implementation

The National opium poppy cultivation survey of 2003 shows a significant reduction in opium poppy cultivation of 70% since 1998. These achievements are largely the result of Government commitment and efforts incorporating contracts and agreements with farmers to refrain from cultivation.

6. Implications and Recommendations

It is important to ensure that indicators for success in eliminating opium does not only include reductions in area cultivated but also those related to ensuring food security and improvements in sustainable livelihoods and household incomes that are non-opium based. That physical basic infrastructure together with socio-economic conditions continues to improve. In the opium poppy growing regions of Laos, the same issues relate to opium and poverty. To eliminate both is a long-term process that cannot stop even after most farmers have stopped cultivation. It is crucial that appropriate and timely assistance is provided to ensure that both AD and DDR efforts within the context of the balanced approach intensifies and expands.

Requirements regarding the elimination of opium include long-term political and financial commitments to enable ensuring the socio-economic and physical infrastructure that are prerequisites for development in the remote mountainous areas are provided. To enable the identification of appropriate technologies that can provide sufficient incomes and ensure non-opium based sustainable livelihoods. Establishing appropriate systems to extend appropriate technologies, providing credit and funding to ensure appropriate use of these technologies, appropriate assistance to ensure marketing of alternative development (AD) products. This includes sufficient funding, technical assistance as well as appropriate policies to enable sustainable human development processes in the remote mountainous highlands.

Some 70,000 households have cultivated opium poppy. Women are the mainstay of these households. They are also responsible for generating at least 80% of the household incomes through their field labor especially in the labor intensive efforts required to produce opium. Although women do most of the work, men usually control the proceeds. Given a choice nearly all women would give up opium cultivation voluntarily making them key players in the success of opium elimination. However most highland ethnic groups award women with little status or opportunity. And providing education to girls is given a low priority with the effect of severely limiting their decision-making role outside the household.

Continuing to ensure women's equal access to education as well as other social services is crucial. In the average mountain village boys usually outnumber girls two to one in primary school. The number of girls who continue to secondary and high school levels is even lower. The WFP has supported the initiation of a school feeding programme that provides 15 kg of rice and one tin of fish for every girl that attend school in selected remote districts. This has to some extent increased girl enrollment numbers.

Illicit Drug prevention campaigns are carried out nation wide that include the use of mass media, workshops, and seminars on drug awareness in schools, factories and villages. It includes mobilization of the public, communities, parents and youth to prevent drug abuse. Use is made of posters, pamphlets, information boards, radio, video, television, loudspeakers, drama and dance as well as special sport activities.

Gender and ethnic sensitive messages appropriately highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming and the role of women could be incorporated with these messages. Gender awareness training, workshops and meetings should continue to be supported in cooperation with the Lao Women's Union.

While policies and practices promoting gender mainstreaming have been incorporated in AD project implementation guidelines, achieving true gender equality and equity will take time. Policy makers, provincial and district authorities as well as project managers should ensure that gender related guidelines are implemented. Practical and creative ways of bypassing constraints faced in gender mainstreaming must be promoted to ensure equality and equity of gender participation in all aspects of a sustained human development process. Only then can a sustainable success be achieved in opium elimination.

The Changing Role of Women in Rural Development in Northeastern Thailand¹

1. Introduction

PANMAI is a women's cooperative in Northeastern Thailand. It can provide an example of the best practices of Gender and Alternative Development to empower women and to achieve gender equality. Originally, it was a rural development pilot project focusing on weaving, called Local Weaving Development Project (LWDP). In order to solve the migration problem this region had, a Thai NGO named Appropriate Technology Association, ATA for short, implemented LWDP in 1982. With the help of ATA, women were educated in the skills of natural dyeing, weaving techniques, organizational administration and marketing management. As the project evolved, member women became increasingly involved in the administration of the organization. After thirteen years, in 1995, the group was registered as a new type of NGO, the business cooperative named PANMAI.

2. Objectives of the Research and Methodologies

The objective of this presentation is to introduce this successful project and make some recommendation for future projects of Gender and AD. This presentation is based on my thesis entitled "The Changing Role of Women in Rural Development and in Constructing an NGO in Northeastern Thailand: A Case Study of PANMAI". The research was carried out through both documentary and field research. Documentary research included a book written by this group, *Weaving for Alternatives (1992)*, several evaluation reports conducted by outside organizations, as well as reports created by PANMAI, as well as newsletters from a Japanese NGO. In addition, I had the wonderful experience of doing my field research in Phoonpap Village in Roi-et province in Northeastern Thailand. The research consisted of in-depth interviews with villagers, project staff and project managers, group interview with villagers, observation of the participants, and data collection at the village level.

3. Core Activities

Presently PANMAI consists of 266 members from 11 different villages. The villages vary in background and economic conditions. For example, Phoonpap Village is

¹ The paper was presented by Ms. Chigusa IKEUCHI, Intern at UNODC Regional Centre

located a little west of Kaset Wisai, Roiet. The village is small, covering an area of perhaps one square kilometer. There are over 50 households and 290 people in the village, and their local language is Khmer. In terms of education, opportunities are not fully provided to the students around this area. Typical village women stay in the village after finishing 9th grade, helping with the family work and getting married to men in local region at around the age of 20. PANMAI activities are considered as one of the community groups' activities such as Or Bor Tor (community council) or Or Sor Mor (community health volunteer) in the village. The village first joined PANMAI in 1989 during the community development period. Phoonpap village was one of the villages that the district office suggested to ATA for the program. Although the village was not ATA's first choice, the village chief showed a strong interest in the project, while the others did not. This is how they started becoming involved with the project.

In the research at the village, I personally witnessed men now actively helping their wives weave or reel silk threads or even doing housework. One of the reasons of their support is that this weaving activity can make money to help support the family. In several in-depth interviews, some men in the village said they don't care if it is woman's job or not anymore. They think it is natural to help women when they have time and can do it. Some women said their husbands don't help weaving, but they used their carpentry skills to make weaving tools and implements out of wood for their wives. When I went to one house, I saw a 12-year-old boy helping his mother reel the silk thread. He often helps his mother and he enjoys it very much. Another boy was helping his mother dye the silk thread when I went to his house for an interview. These facts indicate that the weaving activity has really penetrated the village and become an activity participated by the entire community, regardless of gender. Even more interesting I talked to one husband who decided to stay home and to take care of all the housework while his wife became a full-time staff member of PANMAI. Using Caroline Moser's theory I did a detailed analysis of the project. I concluded that the expected role of women in the village has started to change, primarily as a result of women's empowerment.

All in-depth interviews provide ample evidence of the women's expected role and status before their involvement in Panmai in this village. What was revealed in the interview was that women were considered to be "home-makers", while men were considered to be "breadwinners". Village women were also expected to remain passive figures and their expected status was as the men's subordinate.

Looking at women's roles precisely, it is classified into three categories: reproductive work, productive work and community managing work just as Moser proposed. Women are expected to **stay at home, take care of children and do the house work including cooking or cleaning**. These are regarded as reproductive work. Their work also included **tending to the cattle or water buffaloes, helping their husbands in the field to take care of crops**. They also weaved, but it was not categorized as productive work because it was only for their own consumption and not as an income-generating activity. Some examples of the community managing work that women have been engaged in include **Or Sor Mor** and the activities related to the public health of the village. PANMAI activities were in addition to the tasks they had undertaken previously. These changes in gender roles were not targeted by ATA at the beginning, but have been acquired as a consequence of implementation. However, the

key factors that have brought these effects are clearly linked to the project activities. As a result women have become more confident in themselves.

The evolution of PANMAI activities is divided into four stages, which are as follows: **initiation period, community development, sustainable systems development, and public progress**. These categories were based on David Korten's idea, and I modified it according to my analysis of PANMAI with a help of Dr. Chalerm Sri, who used to be a director of ATA. As LWDP evolved to become PANMAI, the women involved with the project became increasingly empowered.

3.1. Initiation Period (1982-1985)

First stage, the Initiation Period, lasted from 1982 until 1985. This was the period during which ATA laid the foundation of the project. ATA had a clear final goal which was that the men would stay in the village, dealing with farming, and the women would weave for supplemented income. However they did not have a clear action plan. So, in collaboration with three foreign NGOs including an NGO named Japanese Support Group For Thai Villagers or JSTV, ATA and the other NGOs attempted to implement an action plan. The process encountered some obstacles which perhaps could be considered based on cultural differences: for example JSTV expected more stringent progress report standards and even considered withholding funding if their procedural standards weren't met. But at the same time it was a great opportunity for ATA to review the project. Despite the conflicts, ATA and the other NGOs were able to resolve the differences. Ultimately PANMAI was a product of their collaboration of ATA and other foreign NGOs.

They chose weaving because one of the staff members of JSTV was a dyeing craft man and he suggested it so that he could apply his expertise to solve the community problems.

Having **meetings** with sub-district development officer, the agricultural officer, the village headman, and his assistant to consult on collecting data.

- Experimenting a **chemical dyeing** process.
- Seeking the **possibility of natural dye**.
- Taking a **study tour** to learn Mudmee design and natural dye techniques.
- Trying another development program.

3.2. Community Development (1986-1990)

The second period, community development lasted from 1986 until 1990. The project expanded considerably in this period. Various projects on weaving and dyeing as well as on community development were implemented. The number of participants steadily increased. This period played a very important role in building up the organizational structure of the community and this structure became a framework for the independent cooperative.

As for the **women's education program**, the supporting NGOs provided it by hiring a teacher to teach staff members how to read and write in order to perform the jobs in the office. In the interview, one of the staff members said her family is really proud of

her ability to read and write now. She has gained more knowledge, which makes her more confident about herself.

As for **a revolving fund**, they initiated the fund with ICCO and other NGOs donation at the beginning. “Investment was provided for these weaving groups to borrow as a loan for buying the necessary materials and equipment for natural dye weaving production” (Dhamabutra 1991: 10).

As for **a saving system**, after coming back from the study tour to India, they created it as a solution to the loan problem with Panmai they had. They pooled their money to create a fund. Those who had financial difficulties could borrow some money from the fund and return it within a year. They spend the money on farming nowadays, too. At first it was a system created for weaving women, but then they developed it and integrated it as a village system.

As for **the business system**, women established it upon working. When producers, as weavers, bring in the products, mediator, as committee members in the village grade them with A, B or C. Products are brought to the PANMAI office and women are paid according to their quality with the rating of the grades. They get 96% of the price and the rest, 4%, goes to the PANMAI group. The office takes 1% out of 4% for working expenditures of the group and 3% will be saved for each member under her name. They will earn 3% savings after the year is over, which means the producer receives 99% of the merchandise after all. Although they get no interest with this business system, they all agreed with this system at the annual meeting since they can receive a certain amount of money after one year.

- Providing **seminars** and **workshops**.
- Providing **Women Development Programs**.
- Holding **exhibitions**.
- Developing **regulations** for the group.
- Building trust among women.
- Getting some understanding from husbands
- Introducing **Benign Technology** to the members.
- Organizing other **community development projects**.
- Making a baseline network with other villages.
- Establishing **a revolving fund**.
- Taking **study tours** both abroad and domestically
- Creating **Klum Om-sap**, a saving system.

3.3. Sustainable System Development (1991-1994)

Third stage, Sustainable System Development, lasted from 1991 until 1994. This was the time of systematic transition from LWDP as rural development project to PANMAI as a business cooperative. As LWDP was reaching an end, ATA along with the other NGOs and the villagers themselves were searching for a way to sustain the momentum created by LWDP. They slowly started as a weaving group, and they started calling themselves as Panmai. After ATA started to recognize the women’s progress, with their help, they suggested this women’s group to develop as a business cooperative. In this stage staff member began thinking about the future. They diversified their activities; cooperative shop, cooperative rice mill, and gasoline project.

By the end of the third stage women had become actively involved with the administration of the organization as well as activities in this period. Village women, who used to be students at the seminar, now teach others as instructors. They also discussed their future planning with NGO staff. It is interesting to note that they rarely spoke up at the beginning, but by this time, they were taking initiatives and it is a great progress with women.

As for the **social protection program**, it included two projects such as the **life insurance** and the **PANMAI provident fund**. **Life insurance** would cover members between 15 and 70 years of age. Each member has to contribute 300 baht per year. Upon the natural death of a member, his or her family would get 50,000 baht whereas in the case of accidental death, the compensation would be 100,000 baht. PANMAI provident fund allocates 2% of total sales while members also contribute 2% of their income from sales of products to PANMAI to make up a total of 4% for the fund.

- Holding annual meetings
- Holding **workshops**, **seminars** and **exhibitions**.
- Organizing the **market system** as an enterprise.
- Having discussions on sustainability
- Setting up **the social protection program**.

3.4. Public Progress (1995-)

The fourth stage, Public Progress, lasted from 1995 to present. After they became self-reliant, their business continued to do well. PANMAI was widely introduced as a successful project in rural women's development. Village women were invited to foreign countries as well as other cities in Thailand.

- Taking the **educational approach on dyeing and weaving**.
- Securing a **loan fund** from the Thai government.
- Starting to deal with some other projects.
- **Setting up a system of networking** to strengthen linkages between members.
- Winning the "50 years Anniversary Celebration Global Community Development Contest"
- Participating at the Expo 2000' held at Hanover in Germany.
- **Strengthening the network** with other NGOs.

3.5. The Present Situation and Their Problems

Yet recently they have been going through a trial period. Although their activities broadened, they had to face more problems by themselves. The record from the latest meeting and in-depth interview shows the present situation of PANMAI and its problems as followings. According to the report, sales amount on clothes in 1990 is 444,695 baht while the one in 2001 is 2520,207 baht. Comparing these two numbers, it is clear the activity is getting bigger in size. However the number of participating village is decreasing from 24 in 1994 to 11 in 2002, even though the number of participants is increasing. In the meeting several issues were raised:

- They wanted to get money more quickly.
- They proclaimed that they prefer to stay home with the family
- They have less equipments and skills, but have no access to them, either.
- They cannot control the quality of cloths or their colors.

They seem to be at a turning point. They are trying to strengthen the structure of their network with other NGOs to overcome their present difficulties.

4. Results of Project Implementation

The outputs that PANMAI received as a result of project implementation are as follows. As already mentioned, PANMAI itself is a product of LWDP. Together with foreign NGOs, ATA and local village women constructed a cooperative, PANMAI. It also initiated a cooperative **rice mill** and **gasoline project** in order to strengthen the organization. The villagers' are mainly rice farmers and they are keen to run their own mill. For the smooth running of the enterprise, Panmai would need the gasoline for transportation of goods. This project has been registered as a company called "Tongkula Petroleum Company".

As mentioned earlier, they established a money system including **a revolving fund, a saving system** and their own **business system**. From the beginning of the project, the women have expressed a need for a stable funding system.

The main supporting NGO, ATA collaborated with several NGOs on the process in order to strengthen their weakness, as each NGO is small in size and activities are limited for their nature. This connection has become **a network** and PANMAI takes advantage of this networking.

This relationship also helped the organization establish the **market route**. Japan is one of their major customers nowadays and they developed this connection while they dealt with a Japanese supporting NGO, JSTV.

They started to receive **additional income** of 1616 baht per month as net-income. (3232 baht for altogether). The amount of money depends on the year. As the latest in-depth interview at Phoonpap village revealed that the village women received 5-600 extra income from PANMAI activity last year. It is quite a lot for them, considering the average income per capita in Roi-et is 6,692 baht according to the statistics of Bank of Thailand.

Through seminars and workshops, weavers in the village acquired the **technique of weaving and natural dye**. Although the technique of weavings and dyeing is something inherited in the region, the technique was originally dying out at each household when the project first started. All the new products are now flowing into the villages from the city, and they can buy beautiful weavings if they pay. JSTV and other foreign NGOs sent experts to the villages and they tried to dig up the dying technique. Mixed with expert's knowledge, they invented a new weaving and dyeing technique. Thus these techniques are a fruit of all the involving people.

5. Analysis of Key Factors, Lessons Learned and Good Practices

PANMAI was successful in terms of gender and development. One of the reasons could be because they chose **weaving** as a tool of alternative development, since it is a traditionally regarded as women's activity and women have full control over its tools of production, the process of production, and the fruit of production. **Natural dye** was

another key factor of this PANMAI group. They first started with chemical dye, but weavers had trouble with their health by using it. However modifying their strategy to use natural dye, their health condition became better and the waste of dyeing would not affect the environment as much as chemical dye.

Networking and coordination with other NGOs helped strengthen the development work. As NGOs are smaller in size and have limited capacity in instructing techniques or giving them support, they can strengthen their weakness by networking with other NGOs. They can also exchange the knowledge they gained through the project. In the case of PANMAI, they had a difficult time with one Japanese supporting NGO, JSTV. Both LWDP/ATA and JSTV had their own way to tackle the project and they sometimes do not compromise each other. However after going through the experience, LWDP/ATA started seeing their problems and a foreseen vision more clearly and they could make their project planning more practical.

In order to make the organization sustainable, **a revolving fund, a saving system and a business system** were very effective. It was important to create organized money system to make the group self-reliant. As for a business system, women are happy to receive lump sum money at the end of the year, then they can spend it on something costly that they usually can not afford. These systems are part of the reasons they stay in PANMAI.

In the interview with staff of ATA it was mentioned that project sustainability depends on **the market potential**. Whether they can find the potential market route or not controls the project success. In case of PANMAI, they explore their potentiality with their supporting NGOs from different countries.

Seminars and workshops are provided all through the program. The topic changed from time to time according to the women's needs such as natural dye training, mulberry planting, silkworm raising, leadership program, record keeping and eco-conscious local technique. It is noted that some instructors were picked up from the group during this period. Some skillful weavers became instructors and educated their friends. One of the villagers told NGO staff that they prefer to have friends as instructors, since they can ask questions more freely.

As pointed out earlier, **women's education program** (how to write, calculate and read) was very effective. It was needed for women to operate the PANMAI administration smoothly. Over time it became that members gained more knowledge and their family became very proud of her ability and change. This experience gave them more confidence about themselves, which led to women's empowerment as a group. It was repeatedly mentioned in the interview that one of the important factors is to **keep records**. It is a technique taught by the Japanese NGO whereby one keeps record of what color comes from which tree and also attaches a sample. Later on, women developed the colors themselves based on this knowledge (show the pictures?). They had **experiences to travel outside of the village** including cities, other towns and abroad. Some of the weavers mentioned that their trip to India in 1992 and Laos in 1991 made a strong impression. One old women who went to those countries with Panmai said that it was an eye-opening experience to see Indian women, who were struggling in harsher conditions, do an amazing job in the same sort of activity as Panmai. She said she learned a lot from them. This experience gave them the power to deal with their

problems. After coming back from India, village women established a sort of a saving banking system, Klum Om-sap (saving group) as mentioned earlier.

The major problems at that moment concerned **the quality of the weaving products**. ATA set a strict standard for the products in order to maintain the quality. But the village women did not understand why some of the products were priced higher, while the others were not. The village chief had to explain to them on behalf of the committee because the board member could not manage those complaints. He also helped them with calculations, since they did not know how to do so at first. After a couple of years, village women started to conduct the activity by themselves.

As mentioned before, Phoonpap village participated in the project with **a help of village chief** and his participation helped a lot to give a smooth start to the project as well as to get understanding of the project from the whole village including husbands. In the documentary research, especially at the beginning of the project, some difficulties in urging the women to join the weaving activities was always mentioned due to the lack of husbands' understanding. Some villages started inviting the men's group to do community development work. After a while the men or husbands helped to draw the attention of the women into joining the weaving. But in the case of Phoonpap village, such problem never occurred because the trustworthy village chief was fully involved with the project. Furthermore as revealed in the interview, women were believed to lack decision-making capabilities and women themselves thought they were not capable of doing anything by themselves, since they were not used to doing so. Therefore, the village chief worked with them and helped them a great deal for the first couple of years. He said they also needed someone to manage the group in the beginning. He accompanied the village women everywhere when they went to other towns for seminars or workshops. Thus the participation of village chief was one of the major factors to make this project successful.

It was also very important to build **understanding** among the village women. When project was initiated, only eleven women joined the project, since some of the village women were skeptical about being able to work well with other women or to have worthwhile meeting instead of gossiping. They were fearful that conflict would arise among the weavers. However once they saw the members were earning an extra income, and were able to work together happily, more people joined the group. ATA also tried to have meetings occasionally, so that they could get to know more about each other. The number of members rapidly grew to 44 in the following year.

6. Implications and Recommendations

With an overview of the project, some ideas for best practices can be discerned in each of the four stages of the project. Here, a few suggestions based on what was learned with PANMAI will be made.

In the initiation period it is very important to **get an understanding from the community**. In case of PANMAI, the project worked out well because a chief of village got interested in and worked with village women at the initiation period. Thus in the case of Thailand, it is highly recommended to have support from village chief or Or Bor Tor

as they are the closest to the people in the community. Also building up the trust and understandings among the villagers or weavers is important. As the weavers mentioned in the in-depth interviews, they are anxious about working together with other women as a group. It is important to make time for women to communicate with each other so that they can build relationship. Moreover it is critical to foster understanding within the families of the participants of the project, especially the husbands.

When building up a plan, it should be focused on responding to the **community needs and situation**. PANMAI was successful because they tried natural dye after having trouble with chemical dye. ATA's original purpose in the project was to give village women income-generating alternatives in order to solve the migration problem this region had.

As raised in the meeting, village women feel they need to have more education on dyeing technique. It was necessary to **provide seminars and workshops** all through the project implementation. The topic changes from time to time, depending on the people's needs. In case of PANMAI, one of the key factors is quality control of the weaving products, as villagers had difficulties assessing the quality of products.

As mentioned above, it is very important to organize the funding system. As an organization it is important to have constant funding to keep the project running. Since this cooperative is a business group and their income depends on the economic situation, it is necessary to develop a funding system to make the project stable. As raised in the meeting, individual participants are anxious to receive a stable income. In order to respond to their needs, some type of saving system is needed.

It is recommended to **strengthen the market system** after the organization is established. Whether they gain an effective market route or not affects the project's success.

Gender and Alternative Development in Lao PDR: A case study of Lao Women's Union¹

1. Introduction

This paper will present some information on gender issues in the Lao PDR. This will include the situation of Lao women in economic participation and gender mainstreaming process. The document will focus on the development activities of the Lao Women's Union. It is imperative to introduce the activities of the Gender Resource Information and Development Center. Some recommendations were included in this papers.

2. Women's Roles in Development



In the Lao PDR, women contribute about 54% and men 46% to the economy. The participation of women in agriculture is 55.5% and men's 52.3%. In industry women's participation is 38% and men 62%. In trade 41% for women and 59% for men; and services is 57% for women and 43% for men.

The change from traditional to modern society is affecting the women and men's roles in society. Still, there is a strong feeling that men are responsible for outdoor activities in the public, and women indoor activities within the household in the private domain. Women are more involved in unpaid family work than their male counterparts. However, the gender roles are changing in the economic sphere. Women continue to work on the farms and household, they are also involved in small-scale income earning activities, which bring more income for their families. Women are providing security at household level through their hard labor in handicrafts production and other agricultural produce².

¹ The paper was presented by Ms. Bandith PRATHOUMVANH, National Project Director of GRID and Director General of Lao Women's Union.

² Lao Women's Union GRID Centre, 2000, *Gender and Land Documents: How do Society's Perceptions of Gender Affect Women?*

The status of women in the Lao PDR varies among ethnic groups. Women play an important role in the economy, particularly in the agricultural sector. Women provide labor for such activities as land clearing and preparation, rice planting, spreading manure and chemical fertilizer in the fields. In the rice sub-sector, women are responsible for transplanting paddy to threshing areas. Women are responsible for feeding and rearing small animals such as pigs and poultry. In the horticulture sub-sector, they are responsible for vegetable growing, while in forestry they are responsible for minor forest products, mainly for home consumption, including bamboo shoots, mushrooms, leaves, wild fruit, medicinal herbs and small animal. Lao women of different ethnic groups are known for their traditional artistic talents, especially in silk, cotton, weaving, and embroidery and have contributed to generating additional household income.



3. Gender and Opium Production

In the Lao PDR, women contribute about 62% of labor for opium production, while men are involved in clearing and burning the fields and the construction of fences around the opium fields. Women are responsible for poppy land preparation, sowing seed, weeding the crop, and harvesting the gum. The labor required to cultivate opium is difficult and tedious. The average distance to most opium farms is about 4 kilometers of walking over steep and rugged terrain³. The average labor hours required for opium production is between



240-500 hour to produce one kilograms of opium. As in the case of other forms of agricultural and field related activities, prolonged involvement in opium cultivation exposes women to more hazards than men. Besides, while women are the ones primarily involved in the actual cultivation the control of the proceeds is usually in the hands of men.

According to various studies, many women involved in opium production would like to change to alternative means of earning income. About 96% would like to stop opium production if they are provided with alternative means of subsistence. Most women believe that their families would not survive without the money they get from opium production. But they wanted to change and improve their status and quality of life. Many women occupy low status among the ethnic minorities. Most of them have limited decision-making power on family and community issues. Men are the ones invested with

³ LCDC/UNDCP, 1998, cited in the Interim Report, Lao PDR, UNDCP.

decision-making and community leadership. Despite that however, women and girls play a great role as providers of food and taking care of family members, especially children, the old and the sick. They are also involved in handicrafts production, which they sell get money to supplement family subsistence needs.

4. Interventions of the Lao Women's Union

The Lao Women's Union is a mass organization responsible for representing the rights and benefits of Lao women in the whole country. It promotes women's advancement and the implementation of gender equality in the society in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. It is the focal point for monitoring and reporting on the Beijing Platform for Action. The Lao PDR became signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and has participated in following up and monitoring activities, including the special UN Assembly Beijing +5 Review conference in June 2000. The LWU also promotes gender mainstreaming through its own programs and processes. Below are development strategies of the Lao Women's Union (2001-2005):

- Build capacity of the Lao Women's Union. This will concentrate on women's education, technical, and professional skills;
- Protect the rights and benefits of Lao women and children of various ethnic groups, supports the implementation of equal rights between women and men as stipulated in the Constitution and Laws and also put gender issues on the agenda of every government sector development plan. This is done with a view to enable women to participate in policy and decision-making,
- Conserve the traditional culture of the country,
- Expand micro-credit projects and establish more saving groups and village development funds for women's groups, and
- Improve knowledge and skills of female entrepreneurs.



In collaboration with many international donors and NGOs, the LWU is implementing 13 projects in 2003 as follows:

- 1) In collaboration with UNICEF, the LWU has been implementing Mother and Child Development Project. This project provides income generation activities, micro credits, rice banks, promotion of handicraft, and agricultural activities in 8 provinces (189 villages).
- 2) The World Bank has supported the Land Titling Project in the Lao PDR, together with the grant co-financing from the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) since February 1997. LWU has played an important role to mainstream gender concerns in this project. The objectives of this project are to

- foster the development of efficient land markets, and to facilitate domestic resource mobilization by providing a system of clear and enforceable land use ownership rights, and by developing a land valuation capacity.
- 3) Under financial support from the Government of Norway and UNDP, LWU is implementing Gender Resource Information and Development Center (GRID). The GRID Centre is a capacity building project of the Lao Women's Union. The goal of GRID is to promote awareness, understanding and practice of gender sensitive, equitable socio-economic development in the Lao PDR. The project promotes the mainstreaming of gender issues as well as the participation of women in development planning, and facilitate access to and dissemination of information relevant to gender and development. Main achievements of the GRID Center are as follows:
 - Establishment of five GRID centers and libraries; and gender shelves at the National Library and the Library of the National University of Laos;
 - Publication and production of videos/films;
 - Setting up of radio broadcasting programmes;
 - Organized training of trainers on gender. Currently GRID has 96 master gender trainers (60 females and 36 males). The project has conducted gender training for senior government officials (so far 2004 have been trained 818 females and 1,186 males from all the ministries, at provincial, district and village levels).
 - Mainstreaming gender into the development planning process of the Committee for Planning and Coordination (CPC),
 - Working in partnerships with the National Statistics Centre to promote the use of sex-disaggregated statistics.
 - Cooperate with other Government institutions, mass organizations, international organizations, UNDP and other UN agencies in gender mainstreaming into development projects.
 - Networking and sharing gender information and experiences at national and international levels.
 - 4) In collaboration with UNFPA and FPIA, Lao Women's Union is implementing two Reproductive Health Projects. The projects launch family planning; safe motherhood and child care programmes for 14 districts and 200 villages in 3 provinces.
 - 5) LWU has implemented several rural development projects, which cover income generation activity, micro-credits, vocational training, establishment of saving groups, and agriculture activity.
 - 6) As the national machinery for the advancement of Lao women, the Lao Women's Union (LWU) together with other mass organizations such as the Youth Union is involved in the campaigns to eliminate drug abuse.

5. Best Practices in Alternative Development



The best practices and successes are being replicated in the country and documented in order to disseminate to the wider public to show and to ensure the rural people that they can survive without opium cultivation.

The challenge is to speed up the establishment of alternative development activities in the concerned villages so as to be able to eliminate opium in a sustainable manner.

There is need to mainstream drug control into the national development programmes among other programmes such as poverty eradication, environment, governance in collaboration with the donors, especially in the areas of, service delivery, coordination and financing. For example ADB has contributed financing the provision of access road in opium producing areas in the Houaphan Province, which has opened opportunities to agricultural development, access to services and markets. UNODC has also established a village-based micro-project for the development of ADB component of shifting cultivation project in Houaphan Province.

Other alternative institutional interventions that can be launched in the long run include:

- **Drug Abuse Surveillance Systems for the Youth:** This could involve using community and village committees to establish surveillance systems for drug use, addiction and abuse among the youth.
- **Health Surveys:** These could also target youth who are the future human resources and use clinics available in communities to monitor their physical and mental health.
- **Risk Behavior Surveys:** Capacity should be built for monitoring and assessing risk behavior among young people especially adolescents because use and abuse of drugs among them may lead to other problems such as pregnancy and other health hazards.
- **Impact Assessment Activities:** There is need for capacity to assess the actual impact of drug abuse and use on education among children and youth and on the delivery of services and family transfer of knowledge among adults.
- **School and Staffing Surveys:** There is need to assess how much of the curriculum in schools devote time to counseling on drugs and drug abuse and how much capacity exists or is needed in schools for this kind of counseling support.
- **Child Abuse and Neglect Data Systems:** In the long term we need to build and strengthen capacity for collecting, checking, verifying and using data on child neglect and abuse arising out of the abuse of drugs to be able to help child victims of such abuse and counsel the parents involved in such abuse.

6. Conclusion

In view of this therefore, the LWU should be involved in research and designing gender sensitive alternative development projects to make drug elimination sustainable. This will include project identification, implementation, monitoring, gender budgeting and auditing, and evaluation by using gender sensitive approach. Gender training could be organized for staff from drug control projects.



GRID center of the LWU could play a role in researching and collecting more information on the gendered aspects of drug abuse and control for effective programming of alternative development activities. Then disseminate the results to disseminate to wider public, policy makers and planners for sustainable drug control mechanisms. Availability of sex-disaggregated statistics on drug abuse and control will facilitate Government's Drug Elimination and Control Programmes and Alternative Development Strategies.

Engendering Alternative Development: Emerging Strategies for Sustainable Practices in Southeast Asia¹

1. Introduction

Gender became an issue in recent years, as paradigm of development has shifted from economic oriented to human capacity buildings, and further to engender women into the policies. Gender and development became an issue around the world just after the Beijing Conference in 1995 which called for gender mainstreaming to reduce gender inequality and disproportion of development. UNODC's work concerning with alternative development in Southeast Asia are now placing gender issues into practices. Involvement of women in development could bring positive and sustainable changes, particularly in their roles of generating incomes, in improving community infrastructure, in education, in maintaining health of families, and in other activities. However, the issue of gender relations is overlooked or under-notified in the most part. It is, therefore, important to understand the gender role and participation of women in community-based alternative development. Lessons could be drawn from the programs that successfully involved women in the process of changes which can be modified and applied to alternative development and eradication of opium in this region as well. This study thus aimed to review gender role and situation in alternative development areas of China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Some of the development programs and activities are studied to identify best practices in gender and development. Analysis of key factors of success and balancing of gender role are presented with recommendations for future alternative development efforts.

However this study is a documentary research which has its limitation based on availability and quality of documents, reflecting the gender role and issues which relates to alternative development. Documents prior to 1995 hardly deal with gender issues and are unaware of the matter. Numbers of materials between 1995-2000 showed some disaggregated data on women but they were not much gender sensitive or did not intend to make gender visible. In reality, some programs may already tackle issues of inequality between male and female in several issues but they did not yet make it visible in their reports, especially programs that called for community-based development. It is likely that gender were not yet given recognition and yet to be put in the mainstream of development. This research has its constrain, thus, a comparative analysis of the situation of the region became a challenge.

¹ The paper was presented by Dr. Suvajee CHANTHANOM-GOOD, Consultant, UNODC Regional Centre, Bangkok.

2. Opium Cultivation in Southeast Asia: Gender Focus

The earliest opium production can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty in the Provinces of Yunnan, Szechwan, and Kansu. During the Ch'ing Dynasty (AD1645-1911), opium poppy was reported to have spread to Kwichow and Fukein. By 1836, it was grown extensively in Kwangtung, Fukien, Eastern Chekiang and Yunnan. During the first half of 19th century, Chinese began to expand domestic poppy cultivation as the number of addicts increased. Even though the Empire prohibited opium consumption and cultivation in 1800, they were not enforced since opium consumption and cultivation were readily available. The Opium War between British and China in 1839-1842 brought British an opium trading route between India and China. When British won the second Opium War in 1858, the Chinese agreed to legalize opium (Renard, 2001). From 1882, opium poppies were grown not only in the hills, but also in the lowlands of the south-western provinces of China. Cultivation of opium poppy in China did not specify the ethnic minority background of the growers. However the practice was found among the Hmong and Yao ethnic minorities. The minorities had to trade with Chines (majority) for salt, fish, fabrics, and tools. In Keichow, the basic money in the commercial transaction for the Hmong was salt, but it was controlled by the Chinese authorities. The situation forced them to adopt opium as an exchange currency for rice and other necessity (Lee, 1981). The Hmong uprising of 1855-1881 against the Chines rule (Han) in Southern China must have interrupted or even put an end to opium cultivation in many areas, particularly when the Hmong were "suppressed" by Chines troops. Because of the suppression of their uprising, many Hmong migrated to North Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand, and migration brought the cultivation of poppy and other traditional crops to those countries. In 1894 Hmong were reported to cross the Maekong River into Thailand and went as far as Tak by 1929 (Lee, 1981).

From the beginning of their colonial presence, the need for revenue prompted the French to encourage the expansion of opium production for sale to the colonial monopoly. Production, thus, increased considerably under the French rule and by the 1930s opium became an important cash crop for the Hmong and Lao Sung. By the second World War, opium cultivation in Indochina was widely spread and the main users were Chinese and laborers. People in the hills used opium primarily for medicine such as pain reducers, toothache, diarrhea, and treating symptoms of malaria. Many villagers produced opium for cash exchange. Opium poppy was once an advantage crop to grow in highland where temperature was cold and the soil was poor. It required minimum attention and care from the villagers. Therefore it was one of the easy crops to grow and opium was easily traded in the illegal market. Numbers of governments today already put opium as illicit crop and had been rigorously active in reducing opium poppy cultivation throughout the region with bilateral as well as multilateral cooperation between international agencies and the states.

A number of historical data do not show women involvement in the opium production process. However, with the traditional practice of gender roles in agricultural activities, it could be induced that women involved especially in harvesting of the opium, while men were responsible for selecting the species and deciding the site for plantation. Since products of opium were highly valuable, comparing to other agricultural product, women could less likely be involved in trading the products, where men had a better chance of doing the trade and traveling a long distance to sell it. Gender differences in handling the means of production could

be recognized as male often hold a position of head of household, especially when the tribes had no fixed farming agriculture to establish a kind of matrilineal or matrifocal kinship which would give women more power over the use of the land in general agricultural setting. Gender role in opium cultivation may vary by locality of the production and tradition of producer's culture. However, one role that was found to be common among women is to take care of addicts in the families. Five countries in this study show these similarities and differences.

In the mid 1990s, the global narcotics trade seemed highly resistant to any renewed war on drugs. According to McCoy (1995), there were indications that we were at the threshold of a major change in the world drug market. Looking into the future of the opium trade, four apparent trends could be observed: (1) a rapid, even dramatic, growth in world opium supply during the coming decade; (2) a parallel increase in global consumption of opiates, with increased abuse in established areas and an extension of use to new countries or continents; (3) spread of communicable diseases, such as AIDS and Hepatitis-B, through intravenous injection of heroin; and, (4) rise in the negative social side-effects of mass heroin use –in particular, police corruption, political venality, syndicate violence, organized crime penetration of politics, *gender-specific*, petty criminality, ethnic insurgency, and illegal arms trading. If these assumptions are true, the control program of opium cultivation must take into more complex and sensitive areas locally and internationally.

3. Historical Background of Alternative Development (AD)

Alternative Development (AD) is one of the evolving approaches to opium eradication. Renard classified the opium poppy replacement and development work to eradicate the opium in Thailand into 3 phases: a) beginning of the 1970s as an early initiatives involving crop replacement, b) between the 1970s and the 1980s as rural integrated development, and c) the 1990s to the present as participatory alternative development phase (2001: 69). This classification is in the same line with international approach. In the early 1970s, the international community began to support crop substitution projects in Asian developing countries where poppy was cultivated for opium production (Berg, 2003). Pro-active development policies were initiated to bring about a sustainable reduction in opium cultivation because of a new understanding of drug problems as closely linked to development problems. Thailand was the first country to implement the policy. The goal of alternative development during this period was to replace illicit drug cultivation with other legal groups which synonymously called "*alternative*" crops.

Integrated rural development approach, aiming at curbing drug cultivation, was adopted in Asia, in 1980s and in Latin America, in the mid-1980s. The concept of '*alternative development*,' however, was created in the 1990s, aiming to create "economic and social conditions in which households could achieve an acceptable standard of living without having to resort to drug cultivation (Berg, 2003:52). The Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, adopted by UN-GASS –UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug problem, in June 1998, defined *alternative development* as:

“... a process to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through specifically designed rural development measures in the context of sustained national

economic growth and sustainable development efforts in countries taking action against drugs, recognizing the particular socio-cultural characteristics of the target communities and groups, within the framework of a comprehensive and permanent resolution to the problem of illicit drugs.” (the statement was cited in Berg, 2003: 53)

The projects for alternative development include a number of measurements:

- Creating alternative income-generation opportunities in or outside agriculture;
- Safeguarding the natural resource based on which livelihoods depend on;
- Improving social and physical infrastructure, e.g. by expanding the road network and communications in order to improve trade links;
- Supporting health and education services, primarily by setting up schools and health care facilities;
- Strengthening community institutions and self-help groups, e.g. in order to encourage greater participation by citizens in development processes; and
- Improving the institutional framework for sustainable human development by promoting local self-government, participatory land-use planning, and an environmentally compatible use of natural resources.

According to Chinnanon, UNODC, “Thailand has implemented crop replacement and alternative development programmes in the highland areas for more than 30 years, and has managed to sustain opium reduction since 1994. Laos has also launched a series of alternative development projects since 1989 when the UN and the international community began to provide assistance to eradicate opium production in the country. New alternative development projects are being launched in the opium growing provinces. Myanmar began alternative development projects with the support of UNDCP² in the early 1990s in different areas of Shan state. The current Wa alternative development project is being implemented in the Wa region where opium is grown intensively. In 1996, Vietnam launched an alternative socio-economic development project by Ky Son in north-western part of the country where opium poppy was cultivated. The second phase of the Ky Son project together with a new alternative development project in Song Ma started in 2002 to sustain the opium elimination in Vietnam. These alternative development efforts and the increased drug control measures in the region have contributed to overall opium reduction in Southeast Asia” (Chinnanon, 2003:56).

4. Gender and Alternative Development

According to the *Guidelines for Best Practices on Gender Mainstreaming in Alternative Development, UNDCP, 2000*, *gender* is defined as social characteristics which is a means of identifying the different roles, responsibilities, constraints and expectations of both women and men in societies and cultures which affect their ability and incentive to participate in development projects, and lead to a different project impact for women and men. These roles and expectations which are learned, change over time and vary widely within and between cultures.

The term “*Gender and Development*” (GAD) emerged in the 1980s as an alternative approach to the earlier approaches of “women in development – WID” and “women and development – WAD.” GAD focus is on *gender relations* rather than

² UNDCP (United Nation International Drug Control Programme) is a former name of UNODC.

primarily on women's roles (Boonsue, 1992). Gender relations are those socially, culturally, and psychologically constituted relations between men and women which are shaped and sanctioned by the norms and values held by members of the society concerned (Showalter, 1989; Rathgeber, 1990). GAD takes into account all aspects of women's lives, including ideology and its social reproduction and material practices. It rejects the view of biological determination of differences between sexes. Rather, GAD employs a holistic and dynamic approach to understand the structure and gender relations. It looks at the totality of social organization, and of economic, and political life.

According to Young (1987), GAD approach can be identified as:

- 1) Relations of Production and Reproduction: or appropriate function between productive market activities and reproductive family activities which lies in family unit. The implication of GAD is the demand for flexible-working schedules for women and men in order to allow father to take his share of parenting responsibility.
- 2) Gender and Class: within the wider international system, historical and cultural specificity must be taken into account in order to analyze forms of gender inequality which does not only structured by gender relations.
- 3) Sexual Division of Labor (SDL): is not a concept for analyzing gender relations only in the form of social division but also in the form of social connection, that is to understand how males and females are interdependent. Development strategy of GAD, however, is to stress the role of state in promoting the improvement of women's position.

This new paradigm on gender and development was put into the mainstream policies and programs, a result of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995. International Organizations such as UNIFEM, IFAD, World Bank, and Asia Development Bank, played significant roles in spreading this new paradigm all over the world. Numbers of programmes were designed for achieving the new realization and were launched by these agencies. The examples are as followings.

Asia Development Bank (ADB) adopted GAD policy in May 1998 which focused on adopting mainstreaming as a key strategy in promoting gender equity. This will be achieved through mainstreaming gender considerations in all aspects of ADB operations, including macroeconomic and sector work, policy dialogue, lending, and technical assistance operations (ADB, 2001). The key elements of the GAD policy to address gender disparities and promote gender-inclusive development include a) designing projects that address gender equity concerns, while ensuring that gender concerns are addressed in all other ADB projects; b) assisting in policy support, strategic agenda setting, capacity building and GAD awareness, and in formulating and implementing policies and programs directed at improving the status of women; c) facilitating gender analysis of proposed projects, and ensuring that gender issues are considered at all the appropriate stages of the project cycle, including identification, preparation, appraisal, implementation, and evaluation; d) promoting the increased GAD awareness through training workshops/seminars and developing approaches and guidelines to implement the policy; e) exploring opportunities to address some of the new and emerging issues for women in the region.

The Social Development Division (SOCD) is Asia Development Bank's focal point for GAD activities. In 2001, SOCD assistance with the preparation of Gender

Strategies as part of the country strategy papers were scheduled for India, Lao PDR, Maldives, Pakistan, and Vietnam. RETA 5835 Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in developing member countries placed six consultants of gender specialists for a period of 3 years in 6 ADB's resident missions in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

The *Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations* has two approaches in dealing with gender issues, one is women in development (WID) and the other is gender and development (GAD). Under the WID, FAO uses women as the center of actions as appeared in the statement that "*The Advancement of Women is Central to Achieving Sustainable Development*" (FAO, 1997). FAO seeks to achieve this goal by addressing what women need from development, as outline in the *Plan of Action for Women In Development*: a) gender based equity in access to and control of, productive resources; b) increase participation in decision- and policy-making processes at all levels; and c) a reduction in workloads and enhanced opportunities for remunerated employment and income such as in a project called '*Agrobiodiversity and natural resource management by local community in the highland area of Northern Thailand (Karen tribe)*.'

With new paradigm of GAD, FAO has *The Plan of Action* which aims at a) promoting gender equality in the access to sufficient, safe, and nutritionally adequate food; b) promoting gender equality in the access to control over and management of natural resources, and agricultural support services; c) promoting gender equality in policy- and decision- making processes at all levels in the agricultural and rural sector; d) promoting gender equality in opportunities for on- and off-farm employment in rural areas. The *Gender and Development Plan of Action 2002-2007* (FAO 2000) aims at removing the obstacles to women's and men's equal and active participation in, and enjoyment of the benefits from, agricultural and rural development. It emphasizes that a transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is an essential condition for people-centered sustainable agricultural and rural development. FAO has shifted its paradigm from women in development (WID) to GAD which places gender and the unequal power relations between men and women as a central category of analysis. GAD approach requires that social, political, economic structures and development policies are re-examined from the perspective of gender relations.

World Bank is another good example of organization that deals with gender and development issues. World bank has been rigorous in analyzing gender role and development in numbers of countries and put together *Country Gender Assessment (CGA)* which includes a profile of

- 1) The different socio-economic roles of males and females, including their participation in both the market and household economies;
- 2) Gender disparities in access to, control over, and use of assets and productive resources;
- 3) Gender disparities in human development indicators;
- 4) Inequalities between males and females in the ability to participate in development decision-making at the local and national levels;
- 5) Laws, institutional frameworks, norms, and other social practices that lead (implicitly or explicitly) to gender discrimination and/or gender inequality. (World Bank, 2002)

Emerging Paradigm: Engendering Development. In 2002, World Bank introduces a new paradigm, *engendering development*, to integrate gender into the World Bank’s work. In the report,

“*Engendering development* reaches three important conclusions about **gender inequality** in the world today. First, male and female have unequal rights, resources, and voice in decision-making in almost all countries, including the developed countries. ..., the average extent of gender gap varies from region to region ...[but] No region, however, is free from gender inequality. Second, gender disparities tend to be greater in low-income than in higher-income countries, and, within countries, greater among the poor than in the more affluent strata of society. ... Third, the nature of gender inequalities varies from region to region and countries to countries. ... However, issues such as *ownership of land by poor women, gender inequalities in labor markets, return to education, and gender violence* remains important. .. **Gender is thus central to the World Bank’s business.**” (World Bank, 2002: pp. 12-13)

Following the Engendering framework, the development planning and projects require to use *gender lens* that can be informed through *gender analysis* to investigate the socially constructed differences between men and women, then established patterns of inequality and inequity that need to be exposed, explored, and addressed.

Gender Analysis, is a tool to systematic understanding of men and women within a given context, aims to understand: a) the division of labor for both productive and reproductive activities; b) the access to and control over, resources (land, labor, technology, services, etc.) and benefits; c) social, economic, and environmental factors which influence both of the above; d) decision-making capacity. (UNDCP, 2000)

To examine and make an investigation on gender and alternative development program and activities in this study, the researcher uses the following framework (Table1).

Table 1: Framework of the study

Programs	Gender elements	Evidence- based analysis	Process and Level of Participations
Development Objective	Do gender relations influence the project goal? Does the program have gender specific goal or gender responsive goal? Does the program aim at reducing gender inequality?	Is there a sex-disaggregated data and analyzed in terms of gender? Is there any goal for gender sensitivity and people empowerment?	Who are involving in the goal setting? Do they use participatory approach to problem setting and finding solutions?
Purpose of the Program	Gender Needs Does the project have gender-responsive objectives?	What kinds of evidences available to show gender awareness and sensitivity of the program in identifying gender needs?	What are important factors: internal/external to ensure gender responsive objectives?
Outputs	Gender Division of benefits	Evidence of project benefits accrues to women and men, and different	Who are the beneficial and stakeholders of the program? Do women

	Is the distribution of benefits taking gender roles and relations into account? Do the ratios of gender differences decrease and participation in decision making equally shared?	types of women engagement to reduce gender inequality.	play roles in generating the output, as change agents?
Activities	Gender roles and functions Are gender issues clarified in the implementation?	What are the contributions of women and men? What goods and services do projects beneficiaries contribute to the project?	What are the important factors necessary for achieving the activities and ensuring the continued engagement of women and men participants in the projects?

This framework takes into account both male and female participants who can be seen as active member of rather than passive beneficiaries of development projects.

5. Regional Situation of Gender Role in Alternative Development Target Countries: China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam

Recent information shows that gender role in Southeast Asia has been changed quite rapidly with the course of over all national development. Each country has its own specific context for human and gender development, depending very much upon political situation, policies, national agenda, economic and social goals of development. Comparing human and gender development indicators, Thailand has done much better in term of gender development (rank at 40 out of 140 countries), but China is more progress in gender empowerment (China ranks 33, while Thailand rank 60). Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam are put in almost at the lower end of developmental rank. Ratio of female population of these countries is about half of their population. In China, female infanticide, higher female mortality rates and male-favoring birth rates, contribute to lesser percentage of female than male population. Life expectancy at birth of all five countries is found that women tend to live longer than male (See Table 2). With economic growth in recent year, women are found in a number of labor forces in various sectors, but they remain in a lower skilled and lower waged jobs than men.

Table 2: Comparative Human and Gender Development Indicators

Indicator	China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Vietnam
Female Population* (2000 data) %	48.5	50.1	50.3	50.5	50.2
Life expectancy at birth for male*	69	53	54	67	67
Life expectancy at birth for female*	72	55	59	71	72
Literacy Gender Parity Index*	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0
Pregnant women receiving prenatal care* (1998 data) %	79	25	80	77	78

HDI Rank**	106	136	131	59	122
GDI Rank**	93	125	120	40	108
GEM Rank**	33	--	--	60	--
Adult literacy**	--	56.6	83.1	93.8	93.7
Infant mortality rate**	--	102	105	31	33

* Source: World Development Indicators 2002

** Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1998

5.1. Gender Role in Economic

China

In China, women began to appear in paid employment outside their homes since 1949 (as it began to record). The percentage of women aged 15 years and over was 73% and women accounted for 45% of the total of employed people. The vast majority of men and women were employed in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishing. However, the proportion of female hired in this sector was higher (76.1%) than that of men (69.1%) (FAO, Fact Sheet China).

Women in China worked more on farm than men in sparsely populated areas where shifting cultivation can be found. Their roles in agricultural production were relatively minor in almost all localities. They were limited to chores such as harvesting and weeding. Women accounted for 41.2% of the rural labor force in agriculture and rural enterprises and 22.9% in agricultural services. Although women spent more time and energy on agriculture, they still played a supportive role. Men were in charge of production and decided what to grow, who to grow, and where to sell (FAO, Fact Sheet China). Tea processing, spinning, weaving, basket making and other handicrafts are some of the subsidiary occupations rural women take to generate income for their family. It is quite interesting that after rural reform, the mushroom industry in countryside, especially in Yunnan province, attracted many women to become wage earners which opened up the opportunities for women to be more independent or self-employed.

Lao PDR

In spite of the fact that the Lao constitution declare that citizens of both sexes have equal rights in the political, economic, cultural, and social spheres, as well as in family affairs, differences in the achievement levels of women and men are quite distinctive. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) reveal a magnitude of male-female disparities. The differing roles of women and men, girls and boys, have deep roots in the many differing Lao cultures and local livelihood system, with different gender patterns emerging in each distinct ethnic group. Gender role differ between urban and rural setting, in part, due to the level of development, opportunity, and degree of external contact. Urban women have a far better chance than their rural counterparts (women). Literacy rate of women in urban areas is 82 % (compare to men 96%) while in rural area women literacy rate is only 49% (compare to men 79%). Number of years in school for female in rural area is much less than both sexes in urban area (average of 2 years in rural area while average of 5 years for female and 6 years for male in urban area) (UNDP, 2001).

Nature of works and occupations indicated differences in gender roles and power structure in public sphere. In Lao National Survey of Census (2000), women held lower positions in power structure and job that required higher skills, 6% of legislator/senior officials, 33% of professionals, 38% technicians and associated

professions, 3% in operators and assemblers. Male have much higher rate of participation in power structure, which kept women in more conservative roles and function (compare to men) –as clerks 54%, service workers (56%) and in agriculture and fisheries (54%).

The UNDP (2001) reports that based on “gender” and “number of hours” spent in income-generating activities (IGA), Lao women spend more time (11% more) than male counterparts. Men experience more travel and leisure/sleep than women. Girls work 1.5 hours or 37% more than boys, while boys spend more time than girls at school and in leisure/sleep. Women do somewhat more business and cottage industries work (vending their own produce and products, weaving, sewing, other textile work, and handicrafts) than men.

Thailand

The Office of Labor Force, statistic report has classified employment into 5 categories: employer, government employee, private employee, unpaid family worker, and self-employed worker. Women exceed men in only the category of unpaid family worker, which distinguished contribution of women to household enterprises such as farming, fishing, trading, and handicrafts. The female labor force participation rate has been consistently high at more than 60 percent for the past two decades, which is about 20 percent lower than the male rate. Rising of female participation rate in formal economy is related to decline in fertility and the number of children in the household as well as higher level of education (only in the urban areas). Female-headed households currently comprise of one-quarter of the population (Asia Development Bank, 1998).

Rural labor force participation rate for women reduced since the 1970s to the 1990s, reflecting countries’ rapid economic growth in industrialization. 82% of women engaged in agriculture in 1971 dropped to 40% by 1995. Off-farm activities such as local wage labor, petty trading, handicraft productions were all responsible to women. Agricultural industries (20% of manufacturing activities) were all female labor-intensive industries. Women in Thailand have a high-unpaid family work in domestic household. Women workers in small-scale industry or informal business (subcontract to work at home) are quite high. Women normally manage family finance. Informal credit is accessible to women, while they constitute only small numbers of clients for the Bank of Agricultural and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC).

Vietnam

According to FAO, *Women in Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Production: Fact sheet Vietnam*, the average percentage of female headed household in Vietnam is 32% (1995 data), and nearly 23% of the population live in female-headed households. In urban areas, ratio of male per female head of household is half-half, but in rural areas the proportion is double in rural area (6 male per 2 female headed household). 42% of female-headed household are still married to their husband, who are either present or work as migrant laborers away from the village. 41% are widows, and only small numbers are separated or divorced. In general, rural female-headed households in Vietnam are less vulnerable to poverty than rural male-headed household because male migrant laborers of these families contributed to improvement of their economic position in rural areas. The adult literacy rate among Vietnamese women is 88.7%, comparing to 95.8% men (sources from UN, 1995). 53% of the farming population is female and 73% of these women are employed in

the agricultural sector. Women are involved in trading the agricultural products in the market and marketing cooperatives. Both men and women are actively involved in aquaculture. Men are involved in deciding the fish species to be raised, timing for stocking, buying fingerlings, netting, and harvesting. Women are often involved in daily feeding such as gathering grass and manure and feeding fish. Pig and poultry growing is a lucrative source of additional income for women. Recently, in the upland women are generating income through sale of milk, and cheese products, from local cattle and improved goats (FAO).

According to Second Vietnam Living Standards Survey (1997-1998), female-headed household counted only 26 % of all households, with only 17% in rural areas and 37% in urban areas. 67% of female household heads do not have their spouse present in the household. Widow still makes up a majority of all female-headed household (44%) (FAO, 2002).

Gender role in macro-economic of the countries are dominantly male, in spite of the fact that more numbers of women work and spend more time in various kind of work. Women's work yet is not counted to be as economically productive as men's work. Gender bias persists in practices as well as in policies, even though women in many countries gain more opportunities to participate in work force. Domestic work and other kinds of income generating work that women took part in along with other family members are yet to be considered as equally productive as other kinds of work. Women, thus, carry the burden of working in public as well as in the household.

5.2. Gender Roles in Domestic work and Cultural Obligation

In Southeast Asia domestic work is dominantly in women's sphere where men seldom shared. Traditional roles of women persist in these countries despite of their progress in economic development. Cultural norms and belief systems are major part of maintaining cultural bias in domestic work. Women generally spend more hours in domestic work than men counterparts, while male can use those time for leisure. Some of the experiences in Thailand and Myanmar shared some similarity with other countries in the countries.

In Thailand honoring elders and returning favor of upbringing is foremost the duties of children to their parents. Daughters are expected to take care of their family welfare, while son are expected to bring honor and power to the family. Women attended to parents' welfare by working hard and provided them with material comforts. In the north and northeast of Thailand, women tend to migrate along with men, or by themselves to find better works to support their elder parents, and their own or extended families. Acknowledging they may be at a risk of exploitation and in danger of trafficking, rural women still take chance to find jobs in cities. However, in spite of being migrant labors, women's tie to village and family are much stronger and closer than that of male migrants. Male have different purposes to migrate from women. Men are more likely to migrate to earn more income for themselves and their own families. Thailand is like China and Vietnam for the fact that women play significant roles in public especially in selling home-grown products, handicrafts, and other small-scale products in market. This is quite opposite to Myanmar, that such roles are unwelcome and considered to be only for lower class.

To be considered a "good woman," Burmese women must abide by behavioral restrictions that cut across religious and cultural boundaries separating Burma's ethnic communities. Social behavior contains many day-to-day proscriptions to prevent women from polluting or diminishing men's pious (*pon*) (Belak, 2002). However, the

Government of Myanmar considered women as the *protectors of culture* (MNCWA, 2001, 1997). As cultural protectors, women are not permitted to change and develop in the same ways that men are. As found by CEDAW report, the government aims to ‘uplift women’s experience’ by holding annual meeting on culture recognizing the need to preserve culture and women’s dignity. Actions on culture proposed in the National Action Plan, include encouraging women to wear traditional clothes and perform traditional arts such as traditional music, dance, singing and verses. Women are made to believe that their place is in the home, or ‘*in charge*’ of home. Their roles are surrounded by parents, husbands, and children. Women’s lack of participation in public spheres of life, including politics, is often defended by assertion that women “control the household finance” (CEDAW, 2000)

5.3. Gender, Ethnicity, and Poverty

In most countries, ethnic minorities are stereotyped as backward, culturally conservative, and superstitious – characteristics that obstruct progress and economic growth. Information about the complexity of gender and ethnicity in Southeast Asia is limited, what is available about cultural bias on ethnic minorities does not contain gender sensitivity. Yet the issue could bring up more insight of what could be done to improve women’s participation in development or involve them in more gender responsive activities. Few examples can be found in recent reports of the United Nation Development Program (UNDP).

In Lao PDR, the ethnic minorities may also be viewed variously as: a) lacking notions of cash economy – even though the ethnic groups of northern Lao PDR have used ‘boat money,’ bars of gold or silver for centuries; b) having chaotic social structures, without proper hierarchies; c) being sexually promiscuous; d) being naïve innocents, childlike; e) practicing a kind of agriculture (slash-and-burn) that threatens the environment (UNDP, 2001: 67). Thus numbers of policies are impositions of lowland paradigms on highland societies which lead to social, cultural and economic marginalization, and a situation that tends to foster inequalities in any country, but they become highly visible in Lao PDR with its low population and high proportion of ethnic minorities. Gender role, thus, is “*highly ethnic-specific*”. Poverty in Lao PDR is new poverty, engendered by loss of socio-cultural equilibrium. In 1992, Ethnic Minority Policy of Lao PDR was authorized by the former president of the Republic, H.E. Kaysone Phomvihane, and was based upon his Hmong Policy of 1981, directed towards resolving the problems of Hmong population adversely affected by war (UNDP, 2001). The new policy was in response to multi-ethnic polity of the Constitution in 1991 which ensured fundamental rights – rights to work, rights to education and the freedom of assembly and association. However the landownership law mandated the rights to tilt the land in the name of the “male head of household,” in spite of the fact that kinship systems in the majority of the ethnic groups tend to be either bilateral, taking both side of parents for inherits. The youngest child commonly cares for parents in their old age, and regardless of their sex, they inherit the family land and home. From the gender perspective, the law (giving privilege to men) represents regression; while the traditional system manifested far more gender-sensitivity than recent laws (UNDP, 2001: 69).

Ethnic relations in countries influence on public policies and how the ethnic minority is treated. Female minority is generally at the lower rank of public recognition. Respect for their human rights and dignity, as well as concern for their livelihood, could be ignored by the publics and government alike. Therefore, they are the most vulnerable group in any nation-states to be neglected. Their atrocities could

be ignored. Poverty status of minority could even jeopardize women's situation and gender relations within the ethnic group. In areas where this problem persists, governmental policies and public awareness should be created to educate general population to respect human rights and dignity of others.

5.4. Gender Roles in Politics and Local administration

Politics and governmental administrations are the areas that women have the least access to, but they are the most important areas where influence on gender equity and equality can be made. Socialist countries like China, Vietnam, and Lao PDR were first to recognize gender equality and the importance of women in development of the countries. Each country had set up a special body in government administration to deal with women's issues such as The All China Women's Federation, The Lao Women Union, and Vietnamese Women's Union which were done quite earlier than the National Women Association of Thailand, and the Myanmar Women Association. The women's organization in China, Lao and Vietnam are highly centralized and played significant roles in women's development and launched activities that enhance women's roles as well as empowerment to bring gender equilibrium which may not necessarily bring equality. Because these organizations tend to follow the government party's policies and deal with only women issues that emphasize women as recipients. Decision-power remains at the top rank of the male dominated government. Thailand, on the other hands, adopted decentralized and democratic approach to political development. Gender issues and women empowerment were only recently emphasized. Women's roles in politics thus are varied.

Women are generally underrepresented in the political arena. In 1995, only 6.6% of Thai women represented in the parliament, while in China women seats are 21%. But Thai women hold the position in administration and management about 21.8 % while in China it is only 11.6% (UNDP, 1998). In Lao PDR, the representation of women in government functions at the national level is 6.2% higher than at the provincial (2.1) and local levels (1.5%) (LWU/GRID 2, 1999, as referred in the National Human Development Report, UNDP 2001). In Vietnam, it is very rare for women to hold positions other than the posts within the Women's Union. The Vietnamese custom does not extend women to be the leaders within the community. Women are especially poorly represented within formal institutions at village and commune levels.

In Thailand, substantial changes in local government occurred after 1982, when the Local Administration Act allowed women to take up the post of village head and sub-district head. The number of female village head had risen from 0.7% in 1986 to 1.6 % in 1996. Women also become Provincial Council members (4.9%) and Municipal Council members (6.0%) in the same year. Despite the small number of female representatives, Thailand has shown improvement in women's roles in politics. Nonetheless, numbers of issues regarding female disadvantages, discriminations, and violence remain to be taken seriously at the national policies.

UN Thematic Group on Gender put together a Myanmar Gender Profile 2000 record that women's empowerment is a new thinking and unknown to numbers of government officials. Assessing women in position of power and influence, the UN thematic group on gender found that between 1993-1994 only 0.11 % of the total female employed in departments of the ministries and state agencies. They are disproportionately under-represent from Deputy Director level and above (12.7 % of senior level position), which represent only 0.04% of total workforce in the high level

posts. However women comprise a substantial proportion (40%) of those employed in the departments of the ministries and state agencies

5.5. Gender Role in Opium Cultivation

Gender role in agriculture in general basis on the nature of division of labor of agrarian society where male are more likely to control the land and means of production. Women play important roles in tending and harvesting the crops, while men make decision on selecting the types of plants to be grown, deciding the site and methods of agriculture. Through accumulation of knowledge passing down from generations, women can define quality of the products, storage of seeds to be grown next years and taking care of seedling. Social orders determine the property right that is handed down from generation to generation. A society that adopts matrilineal system, where property transfer from mother to daughter, women have better control of agriculture and some power within a family. A patriarchal society, however, determines the power and authority structure which is controlled primarily by men and transfer of power is carried from father to son. Social organization of nomad population is mixed between two systems or dominated by one of the systems which depends on influences of civilizations they came in contact with, but normally they are found in patriarchal or egalitarian (equal distribution of power between male and female) social types.

The cultivation of opium poppy is associated with a number of highland ethnic minorities living in this region, in particular the Hmong, Yao, Lisu, Laho, Wa, Shan and Akha. In Thailand, opium poppy is cultivated in the highland ethnic minority areas of the northern region, similar to Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. Hmong gender roles are strongly differentiated. Women are responsible for all household chores, including cooking, grinding corn, husking rice, and childcare. Agriculture tasks are the responsibility of both men and women, with some specialization by gender. Only men fell trees in the swidden and clearing operation, although both sexes clear the grass and smaller brush; men are involved in the burning operation. During planting, men make the holes, followed by women who place and cover the seeds. Both men and women are involved in the weeding, but it appears that women do more of this task. Women harvest and carry the products back to the village. Threshing is done by men. Women often raise small animal chickens and pigs for household food and for ceremonies. Men are in charge of large animals such as buffaloes, oxen, and horses, or machinery tools (UNDP).

These practices are similar to other tribes, but matriarchal practices and patriarchal ones differed. Yao and Lahu practice a matrilineal system of property transfer which gives women some degree of independence if she becomes widow or divorces. However changes of social order have been influenced by more patriarchal practices of the country which enforce rules and regulations to have male as heads of household who have rights over the registered land. Women's traditional rights over the land based on matrilineal system was replaced, thus, put women into worsen situation and limited women's independent. Gender bias causes women to have less opportunity to make decision and participation in development which, in return, affects the livelihood of women and the family members. Thus women's role in alternative development could be undermined, and some activities put more burdens on women without giving recognition.

6. Gender and Alternative Development Activities:

6.1. Income generating activities

There are numbers of income generating activities in the target countries of this study, particularly in areas where the alternative development are needed. Some programs are initiated for national economic development that did not necessarily aim for alternative development. It is quite a challenge to find gender-specific programs, since data on gender issues was not disaggregated from over all picture of the project except a few cases where women's organization run the projects such as in Vietnam and China.

According to UNDP report (2002), gender differences in labor supply in Vietnam was quite significant. Men and women record similar amounts of hours spent in income-generation work, but women spend almost twice as much time as men on housework. As a result, women consistently work significantly more hours than men at each point in the life cycle. Their leisure hours therefore are substantially less than those of men. Between 1997-1998 women contributed more on economic growth as they are found to spend more time for income-generation compared to men. In rural areas, 80% of women work more than two to three jobs, and 90% of all household income come from self-employment. Only 60% of men in rural areas are self-employed. The same occurs in urban areas where 60% of women and 40% of men generated income from self-employment.

In non-farm enterprise, in both rural and urban areas of Vietnam, women are much more likely to engage in retail sales, to operate hotels and restaurants, and to produce textiles and garments. Men mainly run enterprises to produce or process goods (other than textile). Women's businesses are predominantly involved in sales and tend to have a fixed location, thus revenues and profits of female-operated enterprises are lower than male-operation enterprises. In farming income generation, female cultivate less land than male-operated farms, particularly in female headed households. Limited access to land implies that less diversified economic activities in agriculture, with important negative consequences for food security and agricultural development. In rural area, almost 84% of households raise some type of animal as an income generating activity. Women contribute on average 71% of a household's livestock maintenance resources (UNDP, 2002).

Waged labor in Vietnam reflects independent control over income allocation. Comparing 5 years period from 1992 to 1997, wage labor of all adult increase from 26 to 32 percent. The proportion of women who engage in waged work is only about half of men. The real wage women received are only 78% of the hourly wage which is earned by men. Women also concentrated in lower skills professions such as teachers and manual workers, and less likely than men to be found in senior management positions. Similar situation could be found in other countries in this region.

Vietnam's Women Union (VWU) carries out numbers of activities for improving lives of women and creating favorable conditions for women to take part in income generation. In 1989, the VWU ran a movement of "*Mutual family economic help for women*" which included programs such as employment, improvement, and retraining. The project began by encouraging women to help each other through capital, sharing experiences, especially for the poor families, and rotating loans in the projects which was carried out in some provinces, sponsored by SIDA (Sweden), UNFPA, and UNICEF since 1993. Today all the provinces and cities have already carried out *the Poverty Elimination Program and the Employment Program for*

Women. By the first half of 1994, 9500 groups of “frugal living” women’s groups have been found. About 30-50% of poor women in the projects received loans and were assisted in building their own production project through credit management and through experience with new production techniques.

Alternative Socio-economic Development Project to Replace Opium Poppy Cultivation – Ky Son Pilot Scheme, UNDCP, 1996-1999, included women development into the project as part of community development which aimed to reinforce the capacity of local officials and the ethnic population to improve health care, women’s development education and community leadership, and to reduce the demand for illicit drugs. The community development study has identified weakness in the Women’s Union and priority needs for assistance. This weakness includes a) unawareness of opportunities to increase income and improve living conditions, and b) the need for training programs which are designed to enable them to take advantage of new opportunities. In July 2000, an adult literacy-training course for women was opened in Pha Sac Village in Houi Tu commune. Women have been supported with income generation possibilities through training, workshops and handicraft development programs in collaboration with Craft Link as well as involvement in livestock, bee, and other cropping programs. The project has supported women from Ky Son to participate in three Craft Link Handicraft Bazaars. Sales of Ky Son handicraft products have brought in more than double income of other handicraft groups. Training has been carried out to produce high quality silk and Hmong appliqué handicraft products that are quite unique in Vietnam. (UNODC, 2000)

In China, **All China Women’s Federation (ACWF)** recognizes from the very beginning of their reform that women are no longer ‘household servants.’ Traditional models of division of labor with man in charge have changed. A great number of women started up business or become industrial workers and rural women are now important contributors to family income. To some extent, The One Child Policy has reduced women’s burden on domestic and child. ***The Skills-based Literacy Program for Women in Xuan Wei, Yunnan province*** aimed to improve women in four areas that is fundamental for progress, these are self-reliance, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-improvement. Income-generation was a means of self-reliance. Women were provided with training in agro-technology classes to improve their skills in fish farming, craft business, chicken care, mushroom growing etc. The women were trained to be literate about the activities based on scientific knowledge. The program was seen as instrumental in raising awareness and changed attitudes of women into being aware of their power as active income earners. The benefits must be looked at the long-term results. Under the skills-based literacy program for women, the Xuan Wei county authority runs some seventy five skills training classes that allow women to choose a course they want and advise them on those courses which best suit their situation. According to ACWF, many couples now share in the decision making process when it comes to money and other important family matters such as children’s schooling (UNICEF and UNESCO’s Innovative series).

The Lao Women’s Union (LWU) played primary roles in promoting better understanding of gender issues and assisting rural women in achieving empowerment which aimed at alleviating poverty and contributing to food security. The strategies to pursue the empowerment of rural women in the Lao PDR are: 1) to recognize and elaborate the role of rural women in the national agricultural development strategies; 2) to respond to grassroots needs of rural women; 3) to transfer the skills in preservation and agro-processing to rural women; 4) to allow greater access to rural

credit, 5) to develop markets with involvement of rural women (Choulamany-Khamphoui, 2002).

LWU's Gender Resources Information Development (GRID), did a survey on the situation of women in 1999 which found that the registration of land is made in such a way as it would require much improvement in favor of women. The survey shows that in 58% of the cases only husband's name appears on the land-related documents, even though only 18% of the lands belong to them; as for women's lands, only 16% are registered in their name; which are common property (52 % of the total lands), and only 7 % carries both the husband's and wife's name. This means that the remaining of the lands is almost surely registered in the husbands' name.

Women's role in food production, women farmers are responsible for over half of agricultural activities and make up 54% of farming workforce. The most important agricultural activities are rice cultivation either on paddy fields in lowland areas, or as shifting cultivation (slash and burn) in mountainous areas. Women are almost totally responsible for the selection of seeds for planting, and it is women who form a network for seed exchange in the village. Other surplus of agricultural products such as vegetables, livestock and fishery are marketed by women (85-90% of the product). Women could play vital role in market development at the same time.

In Thailand, a numbers of in-come generation for women were introduced since 1980s but are not concentrated by any single agency. Some of the activities were organized by the Department of Rural Development and by the Department of social welfare, Ministry of Interior, while some of them were run by the Department of Agricultural promotion, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operation, and by the Ministry of Industry. Income generation activities for women through government schemes are generally endorsed traditional roles of women such as training for cooking class, food preservation, handicrafts, and weaving. Among the highland population, numbers of departments involve in income-generating activities for men and women including projects which are run by Border patrol soldier, the Ministry of Defense. More aggregated activities for income generating activities for the highland population which targeted for alternative development are activities operated by the Royal project, Doi Tung Development Project –Mae Fah Luang Foundation, Occupational Training and Promotion Centers –Sai Jai Thai Foundation, and recently the Phufa project. All of these projects provide new income generations for both men and women in the areas of particularly alternative crops such as coffee, macadamia, avocado, cold-climate vegetables, flowers, and other manufacture of agricultural products that give higher income to the people. Gender issues are not specified in these projects, except handicraft and weaving projects of Sai Jai Thai foundation that have more concentration of women training and support of women product to the market. However the Royal Project was a pioneer project in generating income from various types of activities that benefited and enhanced women's role in economic development. Off-farm activities such as handicrafts, food manufacturing, and tourism became increasingly women-oriented work. Tourism is integrated in Doi Tung Development project that brings income to the areas. In a smaller scale, women participate in presenting their cultural icons for tourism. Women can bring their traditional creativity for handicrafts, dress making, and other activities to attract tourism along with a purpose of selling their products at the same time.

Gender Sensitive Venture Capital (GSVC) projects is a gender specific income generation program which could be used as one of the examples in Thailand. The project was started in 1993, with a support of UNIFEM, to test a new financial

instrument (commercial loan and equity financing that is venture capital) by targeting *small-scale women entrepreneurs*. The project promotes women's ownership of business and financial assets, and trains women in entrepreneurial skills. The objectives of the program are to provide women in disadvantaged rural areas of Thailand with access to capital for enterprise development activities, to increase women's opportunities to own assets and establish linkages with mainstreamed financial institutions, to invest in businesses that are at least 50% owned by women, and to enable the women to increase and retain control over their incomes. The program was implemented in Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok in Northeastern Thailand. It has funded on small enterprises in areas that women requested such as bread making and sandwich making, silk flower production from silk cocoons, vegetable growing and marketing, basket weaving and marketing, textile waving and marketing, making and marketing, and fish selling. Women in this project have been empowered by their participation in decision-making which was related to their businesses.
<http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/Projects/GSVC.html>.

In 1990 Myanmar Labor Force Survey reported that when it is compared between sex and employment by industry, women (42.07%) work much more than men (2.73) in service sectors such as restaurants, hotel retail trades. Men's work are in much higher rate in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing (62.89%), comparing to women (41.69%). Women (15.64%) also work more in manufacturing industry (mainly textile) than men (9.52%). This pattern of employment confirms stereotype of male-female roles in public and type of work which limit choices for women in different sectors. Lacking of national comprehensive plan for reducing poverty and development programs for women, UNDP-Myanmar suggested the government to conduct the first integration of household's living conditions assessment which will help to make decisions to improve living condition of the poor. *A Household Income and Expenditure Survey*, thus, were conducted in 1997 and revealed that nearly one in four households had expenditures below the minimum. Poverty rates are high particularly among diverse population groups in remote areas. Programs which encourage women to participate in income generating do not yet exist which may be a result of gender stereotyping and bias on gender capacity in handling the tasks as income earners.

6.2. Community-based Development

Community-based development in the target areas of alternative development are significant in domain of gender relations. Particularly it is true with the projects which set a goal for gender sensitive issues. Only a few community-based development programs spell-out the gender issues as the following example.

Thai-German Highland Development Project (TG-HDP) started in 1981, was a successful AD project to reduce opium poppy cultivation and drug abuse among highland communities. Like The Royal Project (1969-present) and Doi Tung Development Project (1988-present), TG-HDP pursued a multisectoral and integrated rural development concept, emphasizing a sustained livelihood strategy. Its strategies place people at the center of development, and promoting individual and community participation in planning, management and sustainable use of local resources. The strategies emphasized diversity and flexibility of development, equity and gender issues, drug abused problems, community development, local institution building and networking, land tenure and user rights, marketing and rural financial services,

involvement of NGOs and the private sector. Even though a result of poppy cultivation reduction has been fluctuated from time to time, other areas of their work have been quite successful such as Community-Based Drug Abuse Control (CB-DAC) which focused on human resources and knowledge for community to draw upon their strength and lesson into practices. TG-HDP also facilitated establishment of local health stations, community centers, and educational facilities. Regarding to gender orientation, TG-HDP emphasized the roles of women in decision-making and planning. Women groups were assisted to become more actively involved in the entire development process. Women participated in and benefited from the implementation of almost all project activities, notably in areas of health and education, subsistence agriculture, and non-agricultural enterprises. Women engaged in and became responsive to alternative activities to help increase family income and to enhance women status in the community. Women involvement in drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation work shows effectiveness of the success. The participatory process contributed to greater self-determination and empowerment of men and women in the projects.

Northern Development Foundation (Thailand) in cooperation with Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), analyzed the gender differences and the roles of ethnic women in agriculture whose knowledge of the traditional agricultural system of rotational cultivation was most important knowledge they possess. Women and men have different roles in rotate cultivation which is compromising each other. To improve their life situation, both men and women must participate in the development. The project on *community-based biodiversity conservation* thus increased participation of women and men in sustainable development, policy, organizing and strengthening the network of women organization, support for exchange of local rice varieties between and among communities; support women leaders as they network with male counterparts in other villages, and participate in the development of state law and policies through advocacy. The program enhanced overall situation of gender relations and development.

According to Thailand Human Development Report 2003, UNDP, community empowerment was a major success in Thailand human capacity building. Various ethnic groups shared their experience and provided assessment of the past development how it effected their livelihood, and further eroding environment which was their main source of lives. People are able to express their needs and calls for new mechanism and recognition of people's power. Thai communities articulate their view of empowerment as the revival or recovery of something that has been lost, whether local knowledge, wisdom, and ways of doing things. Communities see empowerment as a process of learning. They pursue three strategies which build on one another in succession: 1) building their community's power to solve problems independently (or toward self-reliance meaning recovering and re-valuation of local knowledge), 2) building their community power to negotiate cooperation with outside agencies (through expanding networks), and 3) building their community power and networks to claim and protect community rights (especially rights of access to natural resources).

In Thailand trends in gender bias have been mixed. It was expected that community empowerment could contribute to gender equality by improving women's access to credit, income-earning opportunities and social protection in community partnership. This depends on women gaining a voice in community management, both within the official structure of Tambon authority office (TAOs) and in informal gatherings. There are still important gender issues in the areas of family law, safety in

the workplace, and access to technical and vocational training that had to be dealt with.

In January 2002, UNDCP and Norwegian Church AID granted a ***Rural Development Project*** to Bokeo Province, Lao PDR, which laid out strategies to participatory community-based development, human resources and institutional development, community-based drug control, gender issue, and networking. Regarding gender, this project tries to make development more sustainable and more cost-effective by paying greater attention to gender relations and the situation of women. Supporting women in any activities contributes to the *building of their self-esteem and confidence*. The project is aware of failure in treating gender as women economic activities detached from important issues such as women's involvement in decision making. The efforts of this project are made to empower women by strengthening the existing women's groups as well as setting up women's groups, notably by developing income generation activities as a start. Women's roles in village development management are being emphasized through village development committee improvement and raising gender sensitivity for project staff, government officers and villagers (both men and women) will be prioritized. The project will introduce the gender and empowerment impact assessment manual to monitor gender empowerment in on-going activities. This program is an on-going project. The outcome of the project is not yet guaranteed.

6.3. Education

The Skills-based Literacy Programme for Women, (UNESCO/PROAP 1990) under organization of All China Women's Federation, plays key roles in empowering women through training and informal-education by using "*Educate to Empower*" approach. The illiteracy rate and semi-illiterate in China counted for 22.2% of the population aged 15 years and over. Of all women aged 15 years and over, illiterates and semi-illiterates constitute about 32%, compared to 13% of men (ESCAP, 1997). The approach to literacy training is continually strengthened by the successful integration of topics adjusted to women's needs. Curriculum and materials are created with local concerns to make it relevant to the needs of the women. The program also generates awareness of the community and public concern for the need to educate women. The program implementation in Xuan Wei County shows that it has improved women literacy rate to 66%. Evening literacy class assisted women with a wide range of materials from basic education to specific practical skills such as pig raising, farming, tofu making, family matter, etc. Videotapes, slides, posters and supplementary learning materials were exposed to the women. Media are used to promote women's status, and to develop publicity of materials and to link project activities to other ventures. Training also covered gender sensitivity in women education, thus required male participation and understanding. Men showed that they could play significant role in the education of their children, and the family could have a chance to progress as men become more responsible in sharing women's work, such as household chores and child caring.

UNESCO's Innovations for Youth Project "*Education to Fight Exclusion*" was created to combat problems facing youth in marginalized circumstances and addressed their need. The project created alternative forms of education such as learning through video and radio, night and street schools, youth camps, house construction programs, schemes for the upgrading of slums. Its initiatives took young people's knowledge and their will for change since its standing point uses local

creativity and informal economy as the impetus for income-generating activities. The project implemented over 30 countries worldwide. The Lao PDR government, the UNESCO, Norway aid, and Ecoles Sans Frontieres (Schools without Frontiers) together launched *The Women's Literacy and Basic Skills Training Projects* in 1994. The project dealt with girls and women belonging to ethnic minority groups who have shown the least advantage for education in the countries. Literacy rates for minorities fall well below 72.9% of Tai-kadai people, including ethnic Lao: 36.9% for Austroasiatic groups, 26.5% for Hmong-Mien, and only 0.17% of Tibeto-Burmans. The female figures plummet –for example 8.1% and 0.7% for Hmong and Akha women, respectively (ADB 2000). The program thus provided basic education, “functional literacy,” and other skills that engaged women in participation in economic function. The non-formal education took place in learning center where women have opportunity to exchange ideas and obtain information. The learning center was integrated in local environment that allows other villagers and members of community to participate and hear what was concerned with women participating in the project. The language problem was eased by the ethnic mix of pupils and the trainers who were members of the local ethnic minority. An evaluation after four-year of operation found that 3,200 girls and women enrolled voluntarily in the project's 23 centers. The percentages were 34 % Lao Loum, 42 % Lao Theung, and 24 % Lao Soung. The result was in line with the objective that women from ethnic minorities got in fact benefits from the project. The average dropout rate was only 12 %. On the qualitative measurement, it was found that women appreciated the program and gained more knowledge in basic skills, and became able to help their children's school lessons. Some of the participants in the project were able to use the skills they learned from the project to improve their family's livelihood. (UNESCO 1999)

Common factors which contribute to the low school participation rates of girls in ethnic minority communities in Lao PDR include lack of access to schools, long distance to existing schools, poverty, cost of school-related expenses, lack of ethnic minority teachers the community can relate to, and the heavy involvement of girls in household reproductive and maintenance activities. In 1998, ADB funded “*The Basic Education for Girls Projects*” which attempted to address some of the constraints facing ethnic minority girls by providing 375 villages with new multigrade schools that located near their homes. 300 ethnic minority teachers were trained. Combined with school construction, the project provided supplementary materials, curricula which adapted more relevant to ethnic minority communities. To increase enrolment and improve retention, the project designed to include promoting community participation in school management through the involvement of village committee, the Lao Women's Union, and NGOs provide access to education for ethnic minority girls in Lao PDR. The project thus aimed to directly solve gender inequality in education of female minority children.

6.4. Health

Throughout their life cycle, women experience differential treatment and inequalities that have a negative impact on their health and development because girls are raised to accept gender-based inequalities as part of their identity. There is little awareness on such inequalities negatively in their reproductive health (UNICEF, 1995). Ethnicity posted a further problem dealing with health issues of women and men in the region. Gender relations play significant roles in women access to health care. Women are often reluctant to ask their spouse about the sexual conducts and

hygiene which could affect their reproductive systems and create unwanted pregnancy. There is no clear information of ethnic minority health in all the areas, particularly the health of female minorities.

Lao PDR's Primary Health care Project (1994) established 70 health posts in underserved areas to deliver family planning and other medical service to rural women. The *Lao Women's Union* is delivering health education to village women, and promoting and facilitating community participation project. The project is having a substantial impact on women's welfare by reducing deaths due to tuberculosis and malaria, improving access to maternal health workers, and reducing amount of time women need to spend by providing curative health care for their children. However, statistic for public health is generally not disaggregated by ethnicity and gender. ADB report shows that in Xieng Khuang and Oudomxay, the under-5 mortality rate is 141.3 per 1,000 live births for Tai-Kadai groups, 146.3 for Hmong-Mien and Tibeto-Burman combined. In some provinces, immunization rate for children between 12-23 months are 22.8% for Tai-Kadai, 19.2 for Khmou, and 4.08% for Hmong. For the same groups in these provinces, HIV/AIDS awareness stands at 53%, 34.8%, 9.7% respectively (ABD, 2000). Women under circumstances of this minority status are facing a serious matter in health care and unawareness of their specific health needs such as reproductive health, sexuality, and family planning.

In Myanmar, majority of women lack the knowledge and negotiating skills and need to reduce vulnerability in their sexual and reproductive lives. This vulnerability increased the estimated 50% of women who are unable to be economically independent. The existing data suggests that women's health in Myanmar has not improved at the same rate as other countries in the region. Empowerment of women to control their reproductive health and nutritional needs are recognized as an essential step in enabling women to participate in their own development, as well as that of their children and families (UNICEF-Yangon, 1995). The preliminary results of the Myanmar Maternal Mortality Survey conducted with UNFPA indicate that maternal mortality could be as high as 232 per 100,000 live births while the government report was only 140 per 100,000 live births. The data is quite inconsistency. Lower birth-weight persisted particularly with the poor maternal nutrition. Little is known about minority women's health.

UNDP reports that nutritional status of adult men and women in Vietnam has been improved between 1992-1993 and 1997-1998, with improvement being greatest among men. Adult women are still more likely to suffer from chronic energy deficiency than men. Gender gap in adult nutritional status is greater in rural areas. Women are also reported to have greater incidence of illness than men, and they usually return to work sooner than men when they are ill. Yet utilization of health services by women (40% of women) is considered higher than utilization by men (30% of men). Three-quarters of both men and women treat themselves with the purchase of medicines from pharmacies without prescriptions.

The Population and Family Health Project (1994) in Vietnam is an example for health program. To ensure of women members of ethnic minority in remote mountainous areas eables to access to the improved health and family planning services provided under the project. Under the outreach programs, village-level health posts are being established, together with a hamlet-based 'collaborator' network. Locally selected collaborators are provided with bicycles to ensure that links can be made between settlements and the nearest health post when health care is needed. Paramedic staffs, trained from within the ethnic communities, are supplementing the collaborators. Improved clinical training is also being provided to

women health and families planning workers, with more women being trained as health workers, nurses, midwives, and doctors' assistants.

In Thailand, *The King's Mother Srinarkarindh's Mobile Doctor Unit* (Por-or-sor-wo) is one of major programs that enabled to provide services to people in remote areas around the country. Doctors and medical staffs are volunteered to participate in occasional mobile services to remote areas. General physical check up is conducted on the attendances and serious cases are transferred to near by hospital, or being accepted under the patronage of the foundation. Women and children are given attention particularly for mother and child health. Elderly women are being checked for cataract and other aging problems. Dental health and hygiene are provided to those who visited the unit when the doctor is available. Though it may be said as a temporal help, the project raise an awareness of people of their health status which could bring them further utilization of health services. Thailand now implements universal health coverage and accessibility to health services become a less problem in the countries. (Only problem with minorities for not being able to access health services is their legal status in Thailand. If the person is not yet registered as Thai citizen and resided in Thailand, they are not likely to have access to the health services. The provision of services, in this case, depend on humanitarian consideration of health provider in their locality.) Village health volunteers also played important roles in keeping community inform about health matters and helping in surveillance system of any emerging diseases whether it is communicable or non-communicable. A community health post is available in most villages.

6.5. Infrastructure

The National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), Lao PDR, has a central role in remodeling the agricultural and forestry sector. Its effort has emerged from the Long Term Strategic Research Plan for Natural Resource Management in Lao PDR. Its mandated research efforts are a) livelihood studies on strategies for different ethnic groups, taking gender and indigenous knowledge in natural resources management into consideration; and b) research to improve land use planning and land allocation procedures (UNDP, 2001).

The Southern Yunnan Road Development Project – initial social development, including the gender analysis – indicates that a potentially adverse impact of the project could be the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. The influx of a large number of male construction workers unaccompanied by their families could lead to an increase in the incidences of sexually transmitted disease. Thus this project will include an information and education campaign on STDs and HIV/AIDS directed at construction and service workers, training for high-risk groups. (ADB, 1999)

The Zhejiang-Shanxi Water Conservation Project (1997) mainstreams gender through engendering resettlement. This project required resettlement of 10,000 families to make ways for dams that will augment city water supplies. Gender analysis clearly showed that in almost all the households to be resettled, one or more women worked outside the home in service, commercial, or industrial occupations. The resettlement action plan includes measures to ensure that the equitable compensation is provided to both men and women, and that women are given opportunity to regain or exceed their pre-project income. It also addressed the needs of the women resettlers including the full participation of women in the *Resettler Training program*, which emphasizes the creation of income-generating activities. The *All China Women's Federation*, with branches in all urban centers and links to

the village level, engaged to provide support to the women's training program. When the land is allocated, resettlement households headed by women received the same entitlements and land assignments as households headed by men. The *Shanxi Economic Development Company*, the project implementing agency, ensured that women make up 50 percent of the new employees, and that they are given equal pay and advancement opportunity.

ADB's Forestry Sector Project (1997: Vietnam is rehabilitating degraded forests and bare lands in three watersheds, and creating employment and income-generating opportunities for women in forestry-based activities. The *Vietnam Women's Union*, with its widespread grassroots network, offered training to women in land-use planning for sustainable agriculture and livestock production, together with other improved agriculture and forestry techniques. Under the project, some women trained by the Union become land-use planning officials, working with village communities. Women leaders, heads of households, and members of ethnic minorities were particularly targeted to participate in demonstration farming. Because the project focused on ethnic minority groups with limited access to services, training would also be provided on basic health, family planning, nutrition, and literacy. The training program included evening sessions to enable women to participate after completing their daily work. Women were encouraged to participate in other aspects of project planning and decision making to ensure they were given equitable access to project resources. The Vietnam Women's Union played roles in promoting credit and saving activities.

Women's access to land could be strengthened through joint use and individual rights. While under traditional lawmen and women in Vietnam have equal rights to land ownership. It was important to ensure that the names of both husband and wife appeared on land use certificate provided with the project. The result of the project is not yet known that all of the mentioned above are guaranteed.

6.6. Drug treatment

Like most of the countries, although majority of addicts in Lao (80%) are men, women are the ones who suffer the most. Women compensate for their husbands' reduced productivity and selling their labor for opium supply. UNDP reports that the rural livelihood system in Lao PDR are sensitive to a) the declining productivity in swidden-based upland farming systems; b) the declining productivity of no-timber forest resources; and c) the failure of alternative income resources to transform rural economy (UNDP, 2001: 79). Thus the poverty could be experience in the household livelihood system as: food insecurity, low income, and insufficient saving and investment. In some areas, the present situation tends to increase opium addiction, in which some young people are taking refuge in increasing numbers. Opium addiction accelerates the regression towards chronic poverty (UNDP, 2001: 81).

The "***Drug Supply and Demand Reduction in Border Areas of North Western Laos – Implementation Phase II***," Lao PDR, UNDCP, 2000, aimed to a) strengthen communities and better organized to solve their drug abuse and opium production problems; b) diversify district economy and less dependent on opium cultivation; c) improve social situation; and d) strengthen socio-economic development framework. An evaluation of the project shows that the program can only satisfy two objectives that diversify economy and improve social situation.

Women comprise of 30% of the total number of participants in project training activities. The new indicators of an improved village organization and gender integration output are a) the number of active village women groups increased to 15

groups; b) the number of women participating in training increased to at least 40%; c) at least 15 women performed an income generating activity. The evaluation team of this project suggested that more sustainable farming systems had to be introduced to reduce dependence on opium production; all villages should have the awareness and organization capacity to participate in the establishment and expansion of social development and use social services such as health and education; and women's participation should be expanded in all sectors (AD/LAO/99/C97, UNDCP).

According to *Myanmar Opium Survey 2003*, UNODC, shows the pattern of opium addiction in Shan State as male phenomenon (1.2% male versus 0.1% among women) similar to the survey in 2002 that the proportion of opium addicts was 90% male, against 10% female addicts. Another pattern of opium addiction in Shan State is that opium smoking is more widespread in villages cultivating opium poppy (1.2%), compared to villages that are not involved in opium poppy cultivation (0.4%). Opium addiction in the Shan state is a phenomenon associated with older adults. The highest proportion of addicts was found for the age group 50-60, exceeding 20% of the total number of addicts. UNDCP-Myanmar's evaluation of WADP – Wa Alternative Development Project, in Eastern Shan State, found that women's burden doubles in many households where male head of household was addicts. Women perform the majority of work, including in agricultural production, almost solely responsible for collecting water and firewood for livelihood of the family. The WADP project's mobilization of village women proved to be effective in the area of drug demand reduction and addict detoxification. Women are aware of the relationship between opium production, men's addiction, and their family poverty. They are highly motivated and supportive of their addict partners before, during, and after the community-based detoxification process. Thus in both cases, it is obvious that women play a vital role for drug treatment and to some extent in demand reduction.

6.7. Micro-finance and Revolving Fund

Asia Women in Cooperative Development Forum (AWCF) is one of the prime movers to respond to Gender and Development agenda since 1990. It uses coops as a mechanism and a means for women's income generation as well as for empowerment. The forum realized that women are normally lack of substantial participation in the decision-making process and many conventional coops put women in a disadvantage position and often fail to recognize women needs. Coops may restrict membership only to the head of household. Gender inequality occurs as a reflection of the milieu where coops operate; a social context where women's subordinate position invariably renders them 'invisible' in the development process. AWCF works with genuine co-operatives, that autonomous, democratic, member-based, and member-controlled. These coops aimed to build the capacity to initiate *gender-sensitive* and *gender-responsive*. Gender-sensitive coops are aware of gender issues; gender-responsive coops address or do something about the issues that result in change.

These kinds of cooperatives can be found in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. In Thailand, *The Credit Union League of Thailand* (CULT) provides its affiliate – credit unions with services and programs in education and training, bookkeeping and auditing, financing, loan protection, life savings, bonding program, cremation, mutual fund, women and youth development, business/enterprise development, and research and publication. CULT also actively promotes and organizes credit unions in both rural and urban areas in Thailand. Since 1988, CULT

has been taking note of the role and participation of women in coops. In fact, part of its organizational structure is a *Gender and Credit Union Committee* (GCUC) composed of women and men leaders and staff, elected by the general assembly. The Committee coordinates and sets the direction for all women's activities. Every region has also its own GCUC that helps the national GCUC encourage women members to actively participate in the development of credit unions in Thailand. CULT is also trying to produce a manual on gender and co-operatives in Thailand that can be used by credit unions and other co-op types.

In Vietnam, *The Center for Agricultural Extension Volunteers* (CAEV) is a non-government, non-profit organization, set up in 1990 by officers and staff of the National Institute for Agricultural Planning and Projection (NIAPP), an agency under the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) which oversees and regulates the agricultural co-operatives in Vietnam. CAEV addresses the needs of agricultural communities with a special focus on agricultural extension and rural development. Women in the agricultural sector in Vietnam are involved in the following activities: setting up mutual help groups, pilot field demonstration, creation of revolving funds to address the lack of production capital, and publication of magazines on agriculture. CAEV has organized eight co-ops that have become models of genuine co-operatives in Vietnam. The coops success can be seen that its activities led to "***A Declaration and Platform of Action for Enhancing Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making in Co-operatives***" supported by the Vietnamese Women's Union commissioned. At the same time, a key woman officer of CAEV was appointed in February 1999 as Deputy Head from 1999-2000 of the Women's Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

Another gender responsive credit program in Vietnam is ***Tau Yeu Mai micro-credit program (TYM)*** which was advocated by Oxfam, America as a successful credit and saving program which enable hundreds of poor women to earn income by raising pigs, and chicken and by growing staple food crop. The program was implemented by the National Vietnam Women's Union, in collaboration with its local chapters. Tau Yeu Mai (TYM) offers credit to improve family livelihoods within a broader program of community unification, learning and empowerment. Women organize themselves into groups of five and agree to take responsibility for repaying each other's loans if anyone defaulted. Eight groups from a local center hold weekly meetings of all its members. At the meetings, the women apply for, receive, and make payments on their loans. They are also obliged to make weekly savings deposits and pay a levy of 5% of each loan amount into an emergency fund. The weekly meetings have a strong social function and provide a vehicle for women's solidarity which previously had no focus. Shared experiences of TYM's members offer an important platform for social exchange, enhancing commitment within entire communities to realize financial goals and providing learning opportunities.

At the same time TYM provides some self-esteem, confidence and empowerment to women for being able to speak in the public, managing the credit, becoming an elected member of the management, which are all gradual process. Experiences with TYM help women improve their family relations, as said by one of the members, "my husband likes what I am doing, and we are happy all the time. When I have more money, he will not have to go far to work, and he can take my place as head of the family. Right now, I am the manager of the family and I would love to share some of his responsibilities with him" (<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/advocacy/art692.html>).

Lao PDR has a system of rural finance –*Village Revolving Funds* (VRFs), which financed by donors or NGOs, which covers 15% of all Lao villages. They operate in the informal financial sector, neither oblige to pay tax nor under regulation. These funds assist community development, and some of the funds show potential as permanent local savings and credit institutions –as banks. The Agricultural Promotion Bank (APB) set up in 1993 provides the bulk of rural finance, using a group loan methodology with a group guarantee as collateral.

7. Analysis of Gender and Development

7.1. Analysis of gender role

Gender role in the target areas of alternative development in Maekong region –Southern China, Northern part of Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam is still influenced by traditional culture of ethnic heritages. Traditional preference for male children persists in today's society and division of labor remains in line with the cultural perception of gender ability. Gender stereotyping between private and public responsibility reflected in the division of household chores from economically productive activities. In spite of the fact that some traditions of the ethnic minority could render to matrilineal practices, public sphere is practically male dominant. In the past few decades, culture of the ethnic minorities was influenced by national development programs and government ethnic relation policies.

Government policies on ethnic minorities have changed over period of time, from being indifferent to ethnic existence, to more rigorous policy to control their mobility which is related to narcotic and drug control programs, and later to integrate them into national policies. These policies are quite varied by countries. In order to control opium cultivation, shift and rotation of cultivation are replaced with settlement program. Along with settlement programs, a number of mechanisms are used to maintain these ethnic minorities in one place and continue their livelihood in national boundaries through provision of citizenship. Education from central governments assisted them to assimilate to the mainstream society. Medium languages of the majority were taught and new social values were adopted. From gender perspectives, these mechanisms brought a number of changes in gender roles. Regardless of what these ethnic minorities used to practice, they adopted cultural values and gender roles from the mainstream society which predominantly patriarchy. For example registration of citizenship have changed matriarchal relations of a culture to a patriarchal one, by using male (father) family name as their children's last name, and transference of property and inheritance from matrilineal to patrilineal one due to the fact that the government laws only allow men to be heads of households and have whole right over the land. Women who used to enjoy rights of land ownerships and control some degree of independence now depended on their spouses to perform any kind of legal transaction. Such program may have good intention but neglect the preexisting gender relations, some of the traditional rights could be violated.

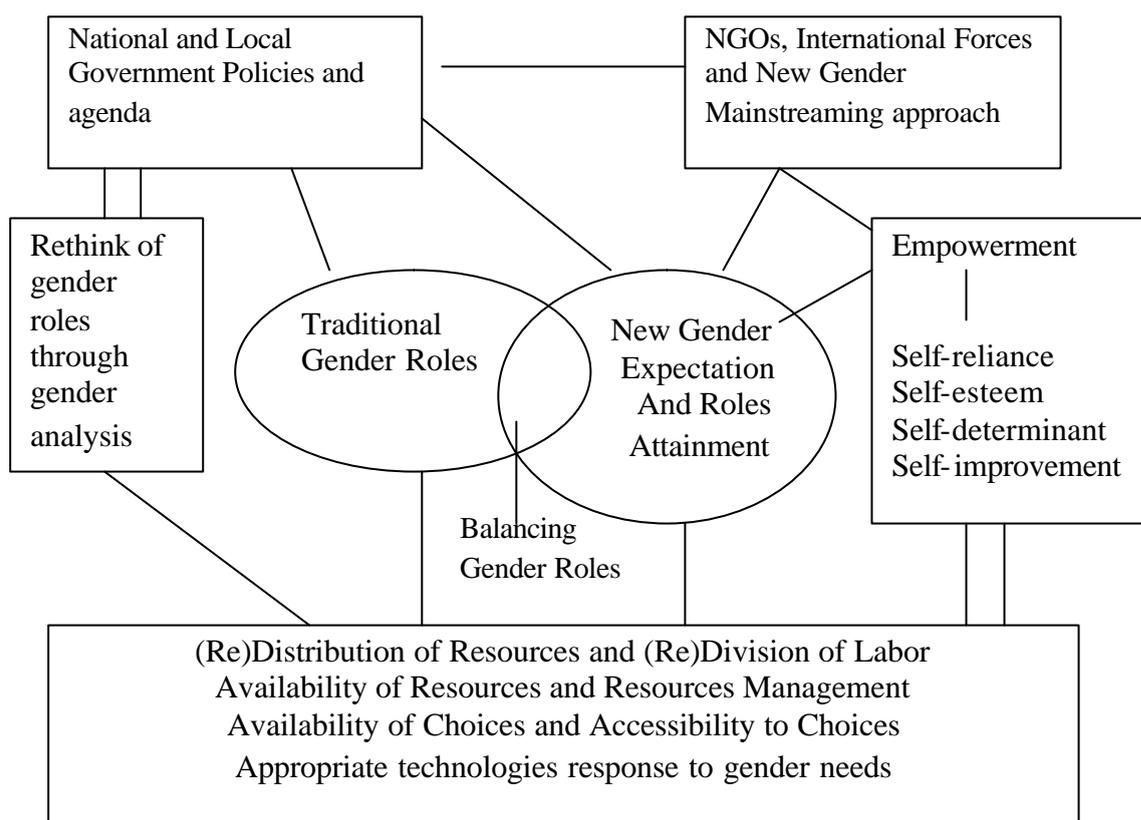
Development programs that existed prior to the 1990s are seldom sensitive to gender issues. Economic development tends to give higher attention to male productivity in income-generating schemes. Productive work was considered limitedly to non-domestic work that will provide monetary benefits or monetary exchange. Female role in income-generation was only to subsidize their family rather than working toward self-sufficient and thus self-determinant of women. Women are provided with skills that already traditionally accepted such as in weaving,

handicrafts, cooking, etc. The kind of job trained to women often in a low pay or low skilled works. Women have little chance to participate in more advanced high technological or appropriate training from these kinds of income-generation. Gender needs are not taken into consideration. Women often face with double standard to be an active member of the society taking employment as well as fully function in the domestic work. Gender development does little to encourage male participation in domestic and other kind of works that dominantly female. Equality of gender roles is difficult to emerge out of the old paradigm of income-generation and economic development program.

Education as part of development projects tended to reeducate ethnic minorities into a mainstream society and adopt the main language of the majority. Education can post benefit and limit women's roles in public and private sphere of their life. On one hand, informal education for women could help them improve their livelihood as well as their family, on the other hands, formal education to younger generation could create a generation gap. Intergeneration relationship is changed and new cultural values (of the main stream) are installed to local/traditional society where women have little roles to contribute to younger generation learning since women of parent's generation do not obtain any formal education or learn any of the cultural values being taught in school. Following the top-down development, ethnic minority is slowly lost their heritages. Generation and gender gap are widening. Women in ethnic minorities are easily ignored by the mainstream. With new participatory approach to development, people's self-determination to development and perhaps bring empowerment to women and gender equality can be achieved. Gender empowerment is an important tool to reduce discrimination and exclusion which would leave women in the most vulnerable situation. Marginalized mother and child would likely to post a threat to well being of community as a whole.

Gender roles of male and female are being reconstructed and juxtaposed between the traditional roles and new gender expectation. While men are expecting to share more on earlier female-only kind of job, women are expected to be more active in participation in public arena. This does not mean that one group would take over another but more balancing approach is needed.

Chart 1: Current Gender situation of Targeted Areas.



7.2. Analysis of good practices on gender and alternative development

Most of the activities in alternative development programs in the target areas hardly make gender visible in the projects. Most of the project reports do not use gender segregated data to show how differences of gender roles would have an impact on their project implementation. General goals of most of the projects are not directly response to gender needs, or being gender sensitive. This could be a limitation of documentation research that unreported involvement of women in activities could not be use in comparison and analysis.

Good Practices on gender and alternative development are generated by the following framework of this study (Table 1). The project should have a gender specific goal that respond to issues of gender inequality and attempt to reduce the gap of gender inequality. It should be sensitive to gender issues, although the main objectives may not have direct impact on changing gender relations. Numbers of activities must be presented to show the evidence of the program’s gender responsiveness. If possible, both men and women should be the beneficiaries. From the material available, it is difficult to find the complete outcome of all projects. Some projects such as in LaoPDR gender responsive program has just being implemented, the goal was set in line with gender and development but outcome of implementation is not available therefore it can not be used as example of good practices. Similar incident is true with many other projects that may have numbers of activities for women but not yet put forth in further progress to make women a decision-making entities in the program. Four programs shown below could reveal some aspects of gender in alternative development activities.

- 1) The Skills-based Literacy Program for Women in Xuan Wei, Yunnan Provinces, operated by All China Women's Federation
- 2) The Zhejian-Shanxi Water Conservation Project, All China Women's Federation and ADB
- 3) Asia Women in Cooperative Development Forum (AWCF)
 - The Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT)
 - The Center for Agricultural Extension volunteers (CAEV)
- 4) Thai-German Highland Development Project (TG-HDP)

From all the cases appeared in this study, areas of alternative development that contributed far in areas of gender are income-generation and micro-finance or revolving fund. Income generating, however, often makes women passive recipients to the program, except the examples shown above, and reinforces the same gender roles that could not contribute to equitable development. The weakest area of alternative development and gender is in areas of health where women have no participation in making health available or accessible in the areas. Although, All China's Women Federation had made great efforts to women's health, but in the areas of ethnic minorities, health care for women and gender specific program are limited. This is quite general that women health is neglected in almost all development projects. Health care by nature are not easily influenced or participated by people who do not have adequate knowledge and power to address health problem. Health status reveals a result of social inequality and inequity of development.

Program	Development Objectives	Purpose of the Program	Activities	Output
The Skills-Based Literacy Program for Women, China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aimed at reducing gender gap and inequality - has a strong gender specific goals (no information on how the goal was set) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide gender responsive objectives to improve women in 4 areas of self-reliance, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-improvement - multi-purposes to solve illiteracy, generate income, and bring gender equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women are participated as trainees and trainers, raising awareness and changing attitude - informal education for women help generate income along with literacy - man participated in learning process to understand situation of women and share responsibility - use videotapes, slides and other media for learning materials as well as promoting gender sensitivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - both men and women are benefit, as well as their family members, as women being able to participate in their children's education - women become trainers and advocacy
The Zhejian-Shanxi Water Conservation Project, China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The objectives of development was setting through gender analysis - Engendering resettlement goal as to response to gender needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - address gender needs to ensure equitable compensation to both men and women - support of women's training program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide opportunities for both men and women to regain or exceed preproject income - create income-generating activities - land is allocated and give equal rights to entitlement for both men and women - coordinate with company to ensure employment of women with equal pay and advancement opportunity 	Both men and women are benefits from the project
Asia Women in Cooperative Development Forum (AWCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - primary goal was to create gender equality in co-ops - gender sensitivity and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making gender visible in development and be an equal partner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CULT in Thailand implement and ensure women and men have equal share to take leadership in co-ops. 	Increase in number of Co-ops where women can exercise their ability.

	gender responsive co-ops directly address gender issues.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CULT create Democratic practices of committee and assembly in co-ops - in CULT women become both participants and change agents - CAEV, women setup mutual help groups and revolving fund. - CAEV, women participation in leadership are ensured. 	
Thai-German Highland Development Projects	- Primarily goal was to create a sustainable development, using a strategy addressing equity and gender issues, building network, addressing land tenure and rights issues, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community-base drug abuse control, and recognize roles of women - roles of women in decision-making and planning. - women engagement as tools to generate self-determination and empowerment for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individual and community participation in planning, management and implementation - women engage in and responsive to alternative activities, helping increase income, preventing drug abuse, participating in treating drug abused, and rehabilitation work. 	- women are participated in and benefit from the program

Non-gender specific program could integrate gender sensitivity by being aware of gender differences and roles involved in the process. People participation is a good way to show a degree and a level of involvement between sexes. Equal participation by gender in decision making process could educate those who have gender bias to see the true potential of both sexes, and thereby may reduce gender stereotypes and change negative norms that imposed on disadvantage of one sex. Gender analysis before the activities are put into the community can help improve the outcome of the project. Inclusive approach could be used in order to avoid reaching the target population. Developmental agency must see women as highly active participants and changing agents as men. In gender perspective women development can bring more sustainable outcome due to the fact that women play important roles in installing new found values to their children and family members. They could be active agents to bring awareness and change in the community from policy to behavioral level.

7.3. Key attributes to success of gender in alternative development

Practicing gender and alternative development, *gender segregated data* must be made visible to see the manifestation of structural inequality and social relations that unequally distributed. Gender is not a natural state of being but a social construction one which could be changed in order that society can achieve in a more efficient and effective progress where no one is excluded. *Gender visibility* is needed to identify major problems and gender analysis could help in finding different kinds of needs each social groups need. Gender cannot be taken as a single entity by itself, but a crosscutting matter between age, marital status, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. Combining gender with social class and ethnicity tells numbers of neglecting issues, like in numbers of programs in alternative development, the problem of ethnic minority women in poor community can not be solved with universal practices of other general community development or income-generation. To have successful programs, it must be sensitive to *crosscutting issues of gender*, class, ethnicity, and other attributes especially culture uniqueness of each locality.

Gender empowerment must be taken into serious consideration to bring changes and make the program sustainable. Once both men and women are empowered and realized their capacity, when resources and other external attributes are not factors, people often find innovative way to solve their problems. External attributes must be granted for good environment for good practices such as legal matter that allow people to exercise their new found capacity and respect to human rights, especially right to self-determination, right to development, and other kind of rights that will enhance their livelihood.

Having women participate in a program is not efficient attribute for success, the level of participation and women's contribution in the *decision-making process* counted for higher effect to success of programs. Women's potential and capacity could not be undermined to a lower skill only. Numbers of incidents shows that when given opportunity women could rise above and beyond expectation. Women therefore should not be only passive beneficiaries of the program but also actively involve in the program and can act as agents of change.

From a micro perspectives, attributes of success of gender in alternative development could be considered from the project in itself whether the project meet the criteria of having gender sensitivity, concern, responsiveness, awareness; whether the program promote and initiate empowerment, participatory approach to reach a gender equality and equitable goals. Influence of gender norms and expectation could

lead the program to different direction. Insight understanding could help in finding innovative practices to cope with negative influence of norms that discourage equity.

To ensure engendering of alternative development, approaches to take must be at a large scale such as having *multi-sectoral cooperation* between international agencies, government, non-governmental organization, people social groups or organization and mass media. Funding agencies should initiate gender mainstreaming in their policies and program developments and while dealing with government agencies to ensure that government can provide *gender-friendly environment* for the programs, such as create laws and legislatures that could positively bring gender equilibrium and reduce discrimination. *Gender analysis and gender impact assessment* should be built in from the beginning, throughout and at the end of the projects. Non-government organization, both in profit and non-profit organizations, could bring another insurance to gender initiative projects (such as income generation for women and insurance for their employment), particularly when the organization have interest in gender issues. *Creating a network of people* can be an attribute to a success since the network of people and people organization could further empowerment through sharing of experiences and exchange their knowledge and lesson learned from other projects. People in co-operation and micro-credit is good examples of network of people at an individual level as well as organizational or group levels that brought more self-esteem to people who could share their experiences with others, and feel better when they can find solutions from other people's experiences.

Mass media and other kinds of media material are good tools to generate common *gender awareness* to people in a larger complex society. Both man and women can benefit from voluntary learning or obtain information from mass media that bring positive conscious to gender equality and equity. Media can be a good initial and reinforcement for gender sensitization.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

For the past thirty years of experience for opium and drug control programs in Southeast Asia, issues of gender was seldom been made visible. Women participation in cultivation had been sporadically mentioned. Numbers of existing programs in the region, whether government, non-profit organization, or international funded programs, hardly emphasized gender in the program. Women were to some extent considered as beneficiaries of the programs, especially in areas of income-generation, credits and education. Earlier paradigm of development that concentrated on economic growth and productivities was a leading reason for minimal focus on gender differences. Women and men were part of the development without distinctions, neither their contributions nor advantages. Paradigm shift of development, from economic-oriented to human-centered development, have changed the way programs were practiced for the past decade. Human-capacity building became important mechanism for human development. Although many programs already worked in the areas of human development, most of the activities were very much like social welfare programs which do not engage people in the process of decision-making to determine the direction of change they preferred. If people developed their full potential, they must be able to enjoy self-reliance and self-determination. However, identity of the people in human development paradigm is not visible. Demographic differences in terms of age, sex, social status (class) do not reveal social construction

of identity of people particularly gender, ethnicity, and other forms of social identities.

The most recent paradigm of 'gender' and development, and 'engendering' development have put a new concern on the social construction of gender and its relations which could be a root of gender inequality. Using gender lens, we can see different picture of benefits of the development, and understand how inequality and inequity became significant matters of unsustainable success in the past. Gender analysis provides new insight magnitude of the inequality and the nature of gender disparities that exist. Gender relations, where women have the least power, showed a disproportionate advantage of the development.

In the areas being studied, gender matter is even more complex because concerned groups of people are differed in terms of ethnicity, minority status, and economic circumstances. Each ethnic group has its own cultural specifics of practices in division of labor, gender relations, gender roles and expectation which are not captured by earlier research. Even in anthropological research, detail descriptions of target population in the concerned areas are rarely being discussed, especially in relations to their roles in opium cultivation and drug control programs. Each respected country being studied showed differences in political orientation and policies toward ethnic minority. Most of the national programs are more concerned with controlling and managing their national security, which in turn, limit the power of ethnic minority. Activities in developmental programs were provided with different agenda, whether for integrate and/or control the population for the benefit of the majority, or for the sake of humanitarian. Therefore, some programs do not make any linkage of their contribution for human development in this area with drug control program, particularly in providing education.

Alternative development programs in this area have limited achievement in gender mainstreaming. Only a few programs can be used as examples of gender practices as their activities have shown gender responsiveness, concerned over gender disparities, and attempted to create gender equality. Countries that have done well in a respect of gender empowerment are the former socialist communist countries where male and female are regarded as equal partners for national development from the very beginning of their reform. From the documentation, they showed considerable efforts to promote gender equality and even equity. National women organizations play key roles in uniting and coordinating the programs. Success also comes with multisectoral cooperation to sustain the equality. Women participation in planning and decision making of the projects' design and activities are important to for their empowerment which would guarantee the continuity of the projects. Men participation in a number of activities also increase appreciation and recognition of women's situation, needs, and abilities, that bring more willingness to shared the burdens and cooperation with one another. However there are not many documents available in terms of evaluation of the program from the people and stakeholders, or responses of the minorities who should equally share the benefits of the programs.

To apply gender and development (GAD) approach, or engendering approach to alternative development, the following issues should be considered:

- 1) The program should be planned through *gender perspectives*.
- 2) In area of alternative development, *sensitivity* to different *identity of ethnic minorities* and their relationship to the state must take into account.

- 3) Co-ordination with state government could be necessary to bring *gender-friendly* policies and legislation that created disadvantage to the target population.
- 4) Prior to the program initiative *social assessment and gender analysis* could be used as tools to identify the deep root of the problems. Participation Action Research could be used to bring out the insight of gender sensitive issues.
- 5) Implementation should be responsive to gender needs and continuously monitored.
- 6) Participatory process and empowerment are necessary for sustainability of the projects.
- 7) Multisectoral coordination and cooperation could become useful.

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Seminar participants

Recommendations

1. Recommendations at the Project Level

- Cross-cutting food products (plantation, livestock, and fisheries) could be used both for livelihood and income-generation for the local market and outside market that will enhance women's roles and increase men's participation.
- Initiate projects that benefit for both men and women and increase responsibility, such as irrigation and water supply projects.
- Suggest income-generating alternatives.
- Provide micro-credit that responds to the gender needs.
- Perform initial, mid-term and final situational analysis: Monitoring and Evaluation (Base-line survey & outcome evaluation).

2. Recommendations at the National Level

- Provide some autonomy to local level authorities/projects, determined according to the specific needs of different ethnic groups.
- Evaluate the feasibility of the activities.
- Seek for other innovative off-farm activities for men to generate supplemental income.
- Provide project management skills for both women and men.
- Encourage networking among the villagers to build self-esteem, including the women's participation in the local politics and social services.
- Strengthen existing structure of women's organization to AD.
- Increase overall market access.
- Facilitate multi-sectoral cooperation at the national level as well as the local level.
- Provide training to encourage gender awareness and gender analysis.
- Mainstream gender aspect into government organizations.
- Increase women's opportunity to participate in AD activities.

Appendices

**A REGIONAL SEMINAR ON
ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT: INFORMATION NETWORKING AND SHARING
GOOD PRACTICES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

**DOI TUNG DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, CHIANG RAI, THAILAND
29-31 October 2003**

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 28 October

Arrival of participants

Wednesday, 29 October

9:00-10:00

Opening of the regional seminar

- Opening remarks by Dr. Sandro Calvani,
Representative of UNODC Regional Centre for East
Asia and the Pacific
- Welcoming and keynote address by M.R. Disnadda
Diskul, Secretary General of Mae Fah Luang
Foundation

10:00-10:30

Coffee break

10:30-11:00

Introduction to the regional seminar and programme

10:30-12:00

Presentation and discussion on data base development for
alternative development and information networking under
ACCORD Plan of Action by Mr. John Dolye, Project Coordinator
and Mr. Tun Nay Soe, Data Analyst.

12:00-13:30

Lunch break

13:30-14:30

Presentation and discussion on opium assessment and monitoring
technology and database development by Thailand's Northern
Narcotics Control Centre.

14:30-15:00

Coffee break

15:00-16:00

Presentation and discussion on Agricultural information
networking: Sharing good practices from an agro-industry of the
private sector by an agro-industry company (to be confirmed)

16:00-18:00 Optional visits to the Mae Fah Luang Garden or the Royal Villa

Thursday, 30 October

08:00-17:00 Field study visits to the Opium Exhibition Hall in Chiang Saen and community-based development activities by women groups in Chiang Rai. Possible additional visits to the cottage industries at the Doi Tung Development Projects upon early return from the field study.

Friday 31 October

09:00-10:00 Presentation and discussion on " Gender Sensitive Technology Framework for Poverty Alleviation." by Dr. Angkarb Korsieporn, Chulalongkorn University

10:00-10:45 Presentation and discussion on a study "The Changing Role of Women in Rural Development in Northeastern Thailand" by Ms. Chigusa Ikeuchi, UNODC Regional Centre

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:00 Presentation and discussion on a regional study "Engendering women in alternative development: an emerging strategy for sustainable practice" by Dr. Suvajee Good, UNODC Consultant.

12:00-13:30 Lunch break

13:30-14:30 Group discussion on lessons learned and recommendations

- Information sharing and networking for alternative development
- Gender and alternative development

14:30-14:45 Coffee break

14:45-15:45 Presentation on results of group discussion

15:45-16:15 Conclusion and evaluation of the seminar

16:15-16:30 Closing of the seminar

17:00 Departure for Chiang Rai Airport

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific
Project: AD/RAS/00/C96
A Regional Seminar on
Alternative Development: Information Networking and Sharing Good
Practices on Gender and Development
Doi Tung Development Project, Chiang Rai, Thailand
29-31 October 2003

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