

“ Productive activities, for home consumption or for income generation, are the most important factor for food security. Households & communities with diverse sources of food are better prepared to deal with potential incidences of food insecurity. The project provides a “menu” of options for households, allowing them to fill gaps in their diet and increase production to a level that ensures marketable surpluses in good years and food self-sufficiency in lean years. ”



THE PERSPECTIVES

The health and livelihoods of rural men and women in Lao PDR are affected by the isolation of the rural setting, the relative availability of financial, human, natural, social and infrastructure resources, and the beliefs and traditional systems of communities.

While Lao PDR has made substantial progress on many MDGs, such as maternal health, universal primary education and child mortality, progress on eradicating hunger and malnutrition has remained largely unchanged for more than a decade, particularly in remote rural communities.

The “Integrated Upland Development in Nonghet (UDIN)” project is designed to meet the food security needs identified by the target communities through an integrated approach and sustainable use of resources, taking into account vulnerable groups of people such as women, children and poorer households.



QUICK FACTS

Location:
Nonghet district
Xiengkhouang Province, Lao PDR

Project Start:
1 January 2010

Current Phase:
2010-2014

Budget for Current Phase:
887,834 Euro (EU Contribution
€710,267)

Main partners:
-National Leading Committee for Rural -
Development and Poverty Eradication
(NLCRDPE) – National Level
-Integrated Rural Development (IRD) –
district & provincial level
-Local government line agencies
-Comité de Cooperation avec le Laos
(CCL)
-Local organizations

Major Donors:
European Union (EU)
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

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UDIN



“Integrated Upland Development in Nonghet”

“ If development depends on mobilizing people, then people’s participation is an essential element within a process which seeks to bring a better standard of living and quality of life to its people. ”

WORKING AREA

The project aims to promote food security in a remote and ethnically diverse mountainous area, in the far Northeast of Xiengkhouang province.

To ensure adequate supplies of high quality foods, target villages will be supported in three key areas:

- Sustainable upland agriculture and improved management of forest and aquatic resources.
- Reduced household vulnerability to food insecurity through improved and diversified livelihood options and a decrease of key shock- and stress incidences.
- Increased human, social and physical capital needed to improve and maintain food security status of households.

The project's approach recognizes a broad range of participatory methods as well as building mechanisms to ensure active involvement of target beneficiaries, local and community based organizations, and local government institutions.



THE CONTEXT

Nonghet is one of the 47 poorest districts of Lao PDR, with livelihood options are being undermined by population growth, unsustainable forestry, poor health and isolation. While the project will improve the food security of all villagers, interventions will have a special focus on women, children and vulnerable households.

Levels of chronic malnutrition and vulnerability to food insecurity are high in target villages with many children showing clear signs of nutritional deficiencies. Seeking solutions to the complex causes of food insecurity in target villages requires an integrated approach that moves beyond rice sufficiency as the key measure of food security. Nonghet district was designated by GoL as one of the Special Economic Zones in Xiengkhouang province, serving as a crucial trading hub for its neighboring country Vietnam. Infrastructure development is currently at full speed to open up road connection

THE PROJECT

The UDIN project is 80% funded by the European Union and 20% by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. UDIN is implemented in close cooperation with local government counterparts & non-government partners.

This project is planned over a 5 year period, ending in December 2014.

The selected 30 target villages are ethnically diverse and the most isolated and underdeveloped in Nonghet district, dominated by minority ethnic groups (Pong, Hmong, Lao Loum and Khmu).

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

Rural infrastructure

- **Completed construction of 10.9 kilometres of road, 26 km of trail road and one 57 meters suspension bridge.**
- **Completed construction of Gravity-Fed Water supply in 13 villages and over 400 household latrine construction.**
- **Support construction of small-scale irrigation system to irrigate 28 ha of new paddy fields for 34 families.**

Nutrition and hygiene

- **Village nutrition training** using LANN approach (Linking Agriculture, Natural Resource Management & Nutrition) in over 30 villages motivated over 200 families to establish home gardens.
- **Monitoring nutritional status of children under-five** to allow strong needs for nutrition-focused outreach to families.
- **Over 40 Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) received training including TBA kits** in over 20 villages.
- **Promotion household water treatment systems (HWTS) using participatory approaches** in over 15 villages with over 200 households received Terra Clear Ceramic Filters at non-subsidy payment.
- **Promotion of Improved Cook Stove for demonstration** in 4 villages for 6 interested families at subsidized cost. The objective is to reduce firewood use and labor for women and for better health

Agriculture and Natural Resources Management

- **Pesticides training and awareness raising** in over 20 villages.
- **Support improved rice variety for paddy and upland field** with over 40 farmers in 9 villages.
- **Promotion of cash crops (i.e. cardamom, galangal, cayman)** with over 60 households in over 10 villages.
- **Promotion of green manure/cover crops** in over with over 250 families in 15 villages.
- **Promotion/livestock vaccination** and establishment of **Village Vaccination Fund** and hands-on training on basic bookkeeping in over 15 villages.
- **35 Village Veterinary Volunteers were trained** on improved small animal raising techniques including vaccination (chicken, pigs, and fish raising).
- **Promotion/support growing of forage grass** of different varieties in over 10 villages.
- **Training on management of community natural resources**, management plans for NTFP collection and sustainable forest resource management in 6 villages.
- **19 fish conservation zones** is established in 9 villages, with management system in place.
- **In partnership with a local organization, Community-based Learning Center (CLC)** is established in 4 villages. The CLC is resourced with various extension materials (printed/videos) based on villagers topic/theme selection.
- **Value Chains/Small business development/Marketing**
 - **In collaboration with a private enterprise and LEAP**, mulberry silk production and weaving group is established in 4 villages.
 - **Mud drier construction** to improve the drying of NTFP for better market value in 3 villages.
 - **Village market information system** is established in 10 villages.