Gender Issues in Fisheries and Aquaculture in Lao PDR

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National Policy on Gender Equality

- Lao PDR highly committed to promotion of equality between men and women and has articulated goals and priorities in the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES)

- Government of Lao PDR has promoted gender equity as a priority and established the National Commission for Advancement of Women (NCAW) in 2003

- BUT we know nothing about gender equality in fisheries and aquaculture in Laos PDR
Strategy

- MRC funded workshop to understand issues and develop study objectives and methodology

- Focus group engagement with District Fisheries Departments
  - Pakse District and Phonthong District

- Testing of study questionnaire

- Interviews with fisheries agencies and fishing community groups

- Analysis of results
Objectives of the study

- Identify gender roles in capture fisheries and aquaculture;
- Identify participation in decision making by men and women in capture fisheries and aquaculture;
- Study the gender situation and issues in community-based fisher organizations;
- Identify problems or constraints related to gender in fisheries and aquaculture development;
- Build capacity of Lao Network for Gender Promotion in Fisheries Development (NGF) to conduct studies on gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture.
Discussion with District Fisheries Staff

- Pakse District of Agriculture and Forestry Office has Advance Gender Master Plan at district level
  - Plan promotes gender equality and higher position for women at decision maker level (one head of section, one deputy head of section, two are project focus points)

- Phonthong district has same system
  - Few women staff and no woman yet promoted
## Discussions with village head

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Name</th>
<th>Main activity</th>
<th>Total household</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Female head of HH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ban Khonelai (Pakse)</td>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ban Nonsavang (Pakse)</td>
<td>Fisheries and aquaculture</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>1136</td>
<td>1156</td>
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<td>Ban Kang (Pakse)</td>
<td>Aquaculture</td>
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<td>Ban Salao (Phonthong)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Capture fisheries households

Sample frame: 59 households with 353 people: 179 male and 174 female

- Only 10% of households fish as main job
- 66% of women involved with agriculture, 13.5% selling fish, 10% teachers
- Most men go fishing alone (5% with wife and 18% with child)
- Fish 7 days per week
- Most catch fish for household and for sale – women sell fish to trader
- Income from selling fish - max US$ 2,500
Aquaculture households

Sample frame: 20 households with 148 people: 81 male, 67 female

- Main income agriculture (45%), cage culture (30%) and fish culture (20%)
- 70% work on fish farm but not full time (52% are women)
- Farm management decisions mostly by men (55%) but shared in other households (45%)
- Women share property ownership of house, land, car and motorbike
- Average annual household income 40,000 US$ (does not account for deductions)
Fish processors Group

- Only two families are fish processors in Ban Nonsavang village
  - Dry and ferment fish
  - 14 years experience
  - no technical training.
  - sell their product in Pakse market and some transported to Vientiane by middle trader

- Can produce:
  - 100 kg dry fish per week
  - 300 kg fermented fish per week.
Fish Trader Group

- Women from cage culture households sell fish through women on markets through middle women.
- Only one fish trader in Ban Nonsavang village.
- Buy fish from fishers and sell in Daoheung Market in Pakse District.
- Most traders are women.
- Income from selling fish: US$ 4000-US$ 45,000 annually.
Issue in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Participation of men and women
in fisheries and aquaculture

- Men do most of the fishing
- Women mostly do processing and marketing
- Women have little knowledge of fish farming, men responsible for planning, design, construction and water management
- Women responsible for feeding fish, selling produce and finances.
Issue in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Major Gender Issues

- NCAW lacks the capacity to provide assistance to sector ministries and district levels to integrate these goals into sector strategies and plans.

- No funds.
Recommendations

- Continue strengthening capacity of the gender staff to implement strategy at provincial level
- Promote gender staff by allocating bigger quota for civil service in gender office/organization
- Implement of gender action plan at community/village level
- Building capacity of local staff who work with gender related activities
- Gender mainstream in fisheries and aquaculture and provide chance for them for their participation in the national/community event