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**Community-Based Tourism Development in Long Lan Village,
Luang Prabang, Laos**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Social Sciences
at
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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on research that was conducted from July to September 2014 in the village of Long Lan in Northern Laos into the potential for a community based, community operated, and community controlled ethnic-ecological-tourism enterprise.

Long Lan is a White Hmong village located in a mountainous area 40 km northeast of Luang Prabang. They were traditional shifting cultivators growing rice and corn for subsistence and opium poppies for the production of opium as a cash crop. In 1999, however, the Lao government banned both shifting cultivation and opium production, presenting Long Lan with a serious livelihood challenge. In the same year, the Centre for Ecological Studies of Highlands (CHESH), a sister organization of the Vietnamese NGO the Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI), began working with Long Lan on a programme of *Culture Based Sustainable Community Development* aimed at developing the customary forms of leadership, governance, and ownership of territory in order for Long Lan inhabitants to maintaining their own spiritual values towards nature and their own customary ways of governing their community and natural resources.

As part of the overall village development plan, the objective of the current research was to gain an understanding of potential benefits, pitfalls and challenges involved in operating a community-based ethnic tourism enterprise in Long Lan village, and to gather information useful in aiding in the possible development of an endogenous, community-based tourism venture owned and operated by the people of Long Lan. Thirty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with Long Lan residents to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of tourism activities and their possible impact. These views were analysed and fed back to the village in research feedback meetings together with recommendations by the research team.

The research is placed within the context of a critical review of ethnic tourism Thailand and Laos.

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Figure 1: Farmer Field School, Long Lan Village. Mrs Tran Thi Lanh and Laura Phillips wearing traditional Hmong attire.

By Courtesy of SPERI staff



Figure 2: Farmer Field School Students, Left Bi Xong, Oudom, Anong, Boun Young and Boun Thueng.

Photographer Laura Phillips

ABBREVIATIONS

CHESH	Centre for Human Ecology Studies of Highlands
CHESH-Lao	Centre for Human Ecology Studies of Highlands working with partners in Laos from central government to village levels
CIRUM	Cultural Identity and Resource Use Management
CODE	Consultancy on Development
MECO-ECOTRA	Mekong Community Network for Ecological Trading
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	A Non-Governmental Organization
PAFO	Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry
PRDFA	Project for Rural Development of Focus Areas
SPERI	Social Policy Ecology Research Institute
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis reports on research that was conducted from July to September 2014 in the village of Long Lan in Northern Laos into the possibilities of a community-based, community-operated and controlled ethnic-ecological-tourism enterprise. The opportunity for the research arose in 2013 while studying for a 500 level anthropology paper *Anthropology and Development*. During one session the lecturer, Dr Keith Barber, invited the Founder of the Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI), Mrs Tran Thi Lanh, to talk to the class about the work of her organization in the Mekong region of Southeast Asia. The discussion focused on Farmer Field Schools which were established by SPERI as sites at which young ethnic minority students from throughout the Mekong region can learn about ecologically sustainable development practices based on indigenous knowledge. The NGO, SPERI, has been working in the Mekong region for 25 years, and has been working with Long Lan Village for 14 years, and Dr Barber has been travelling to Laos and Vietnam since 2011 to work with SPERI as an academic advisor and research supervisor.

At this time I was working toward completing an Honours dissertation on *Ethnic Tourism in Thailand* and thought the activities and accomplishments of the NGO SPERI working with Long Lan demonstrated some remedies to the impacts of ethnic tourism that I was learning about. Through SPERI working with Long Lan, bottom-up or grassroots development was being pursued instead of top-down government interventions. I asked Dr Barber how to become involved with working alongside an ethnic group in their own community setting in Southeast Asia. Mrs Tran explained that she was the Founder of SPERI and extended an invitation to conduct research exploring the feasibility of community based tourism development in Long Lan Village. This research opportunity was made possible under the University of Waikato's MoU signed by the Vice-Chancellor of Waikato University Professor Roy Crawford and Director of the Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI) Dr Khong Dien.

The concept of community based tourism was not new to me. Community based tourism was explored as a remedy to ethnic tourism pursuits discussed in my Honours Dissertation on Ethnic Tourism in Northern Thailand. Ethnic tourism can be described as a touristic means of searching for encounters with the exotic cultural other and wanting to experience the opposite to modernity. Expectations of encountering 'hill tribe' material and performative cultures are what drive domestic and international tourism. The majority of these tourists however only receive fake experiences due to short time encounters monitored by tour agencies and the nation's government.

The Research Objectives for this project were to: Gain an understanding of potential benefits, pitfalls and challenges involved in operating a community-based ethnic tourism enterprise in Long Lan village; to gather information useful in aiding in the development of an endogenous, community-based tourism venture owned and operated by the people of Long Lan as part of their overall village development plan; and to contribute to the development of a curriculum on endogenous tourism development for the benefit of other ethnic minority villages in the region.

The research team consisted of SPERI staff member Mr Vang Sin Min, a knowledgeable Hmong man who has worked in Long Lan for more than 4 years; SPERI intern Mr Nguyen Nhu Son, the coordinator of SPERI's Social Enterprise Project and translator, and me, a University of Waikato Masters Student. Thirty-two semi-structure interviews were conducted by the research team for the purpose of answer questions posed by village elder Mr Cho Sy Zang:

1. What does Long Lan have for doing tourism?
2. What does Long Lan not have for doing tourism?
3. How could Long Lan change to receive more visitors?

Volunteer research participants were selected by the village leader. Questions were asked in Hmong and the answers were translated into Vietnamese and English for information to be recorded. When translating researchers were unavailable Anong Soukphaphone, a young Khmu key farmer at the Long Lan Farmer Field School, substituted providing both Laos and English language translations.

This thesis is organized to chronologically to describe the research process conducted by the research team. Chapter 1 summarizes the Honours Dissertation research on *Ethnic Tourism in Thailand* and extends it to include reference to Laos. This dissertation explored the problems surrounding ethnic tourism and potential remedies, including the possibility of implementing community based tourism practices in ethnic minority community developments.

Chapter 2 described the Research Proposal. SPERI and its development perspective and its connections to Long Lan village are introduced, and ethical considerations for conducting research in Long Lan are discussed. Chapter 3 provides an ethnographic description of Long Lan Village.

Chapter 4 reports on preliminary research activities in Luang Prabang, the UNESCO World Heritage city from which tourist to Long Lan are attracted. Existing tourism opportunities both in Luang Prabang town and surrounding rural areas are profiled, highlighting tourism interests in participating in rural excursions to ethnic minority villages.

Chapter 5 describes the process of conducting the research in Long Lan village. This includes a timeline of many meetings held with Long Lan leaders, elders, and Luang Prabang district council members, where research intentions were described and community and district council members provided their feedback and consent for the research in Long Lan Village to commence.

Chapter 6 provides the interview transcripts collected from 32 semi-structured interviews with village residents. Chapter 7 presents the analysis of this data in terms of the current knowledge of tourism, tourism activities, concerns, and impacts mentioned by interview participants.

Chapter 8 summarizes the analysis of the villagers' interview responses and presents the recommendations of the research team as these were presented at village research feedback meetings. This included descriptions of the different types of visitors that Long Lan could expect, and what the villagers would need to do to attract each type of visitor, regular reviewing of community tourism regulations, and the potential for SPERI's SENT Project to assist Long Lan village to investigate future tourism possibilities.

Chapter 9 reflects on the research process and relates the findings on the research back to the issues and challenges facing community based ethnic-ecological-tourism development as discussed in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 1

ETHNIC TOURISM IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

In January 2013, the Researcher spent the month in Thailand participating in both cultural and touristic activities. One location which stood out were the hill tribe villages in Chiang Rai. Due to time limitations, the Researcher opted to participate in a day tour as opposed to staying overnight in a hill tribe village setting. This tour was highly recommended above others to Chiang Rai as it enabled tourists to see six hill tribes in one day as opposed to seeing only one and staying overnight. Looking back on pamphlets for this tour, the agency had not named the location of the hill tribes visited.

The hill tribes had been resettled on the same hill top in order to make for easy tourism. Although this may appear to be of benefit to tourists who are short of time, the Researcher was disappointed by the unauthentic the experience. Although the setting appeared to match up with descriptions the Researcher had read, the living arrangements of hill tribes being intermingled did not exclaim authenticity. Also trinkets, especially the hand woven scarves, being sold to tourists had a striking resemblance to mass factory produced products sold in larger cities of both Thailand and traveller shops in New Zealand.

The Researcher's tour group were treated to some musical performances by different hill tribe representatives involving singing, dancing and playing traditional instruments, such as banging different lengths of hollowed bamboo together. The musical demonstrations received a warm reception, but the Researcher felt the performers were tiresome with the exercise. Perhaps from continuous repetition for the benefit of tourists seeking to experience traditional culture in this staged landscape. This whole experience of viewing inauthentic lifestyles and cultural practices of the hill tribes was distressing for the Researcher. When studying hill tribes at undergraduate anthropology levels a

cultural group, especially a hill tribe, was investigated in their original environment for culture to be properly understood.

Such a mishmash of groups being forced to co-exist raised many questions for the Researcher. Therefore inspiring an investigation into a brief history of events resulting in hill tribes, such as the Karen people, being resettled into community centres, and reviewing literature of ethnic tourism with a focus of northern Thailand. The Researcher examined what ethnic tourism was and provided a brief history of events. Three main themes were investigated; how did ethnic minority people in Thailand come to be exploited in this way? Is there a form of ethnic tourism from which the ethnic minorities actually benefit? What would be needed for this to happen?

Scapegoats, Deforestation and Opium Trading

Ethnic minority groups in northern Thailand consists of hill tribe ethnic groups comprising of ten linguistically distinctive groups. The tribes are scattered, mainly in the highland areas, of 20 provinces of north and northwest Thailand. The minorities are divided into tribes that either predate the Tai, such as the Lawa, Khmu and Karen, or have migrated into Thailand during the past century, such as the Akha and Lisu from Tibet and Myanmar, or the Yao and Hmong from Central China. There are approximately 0.6 million members of ethnic minorities, in comparison to 13 million Thai inhabitants in northern Thailand and 67 million total population of Thailand (Forsyth, 1995, p881). Through differing historical and environmental circumstances, these ethnic groups do not share many similarities of life with low land area ethnic Tai inhabitants (Leepreecha, 2005, p1-3). Relations between hill tribes and Thai people have not always been peaceful, and during the Vietnam War Thai people feared that hill tribe populations were aiding communists by using opiate profits to purchase guns. There are records of sporadic fighting between 1968 and 1973, known as the *Hmong War*, where hill tribes claimed land and border territories. Similar concerns still exist today as the Thailand government believes hill tribes will take strategic control of the borders of Laos and Myanmar (Forsyth, 1995, p881).

Hill tribes have a history of being scapegoated by the Thai government. In the late 1950's, marginal upland populations at the edge of the Thai nation became a concern of the Thai government. Commercial exploitation of forest resources began in the 1960s and 1970s and rapidly impacted rates of deforestation in northern Thailand. By the mid-1980s deforestation was seen as problematic by the wider public of Thailand. Hill tribes who participated in shifting agricultural practices were used as scapegoats and accused of destroying forest areas. In 1989 the Royal Forest Department imposed a nationwide ban on logging that prohibited traditional forms of shifting cultivation, as these methods were seen as destructive and harmful. In some cases hill tribes people were resettled from their homelands to prevent further deforestation occurring (Toyota, 2005, p126-127). In response to environmental impacts such as deforestation, declining soil fertility and water shortages, Thai authorities encouraged hill tribe farmers to adopt soil-conservation measures and alternative sources of income to agriculture or relocate the ethnic minorities to new land. Ethnic minorities have turned to tourism as a substitute for traditional livelihoods (Forsyth, 1995, p879).

Growing drug consumption in western countries led Thailand hill tribes to becoming important producers of opium. Since considerable profit could be derived from opium trading the Thai government did not ban the cultivation of opium until 1959. The Thai government was pressured by the United States of America to eradicate the opium production problem (Cohen, 1989, p35 and Forsyth, 1995, p884). At this time, Hill tribe development projects were introduced aiming to replace opium production with other cash crops and a series of anti-narcotic campaigns were organized by the government (Toyota 2005, p126). The suppression of opium production created considerable hardships for hill tribe minority groups, especially groups that were not self-sufficient with agricultural practices (Dearden and Harron, 1994, p83). Tourism activities were introduced as an alternative source of income to showcase highland ethnic groups and the surrounding natural resource environments, which attract both domestic and foreign tourism. These hill tribes were also encouraged to produce handmade crafts to sell to tourists (Forsyth, 1995, p881).

Classifying Hill Tribe Status

Oral histories reveal that upland populations and low land Thai have long established relations where fluid trade and relationships were essential, but these trade exchanges have been altered due to the modern nation state using western-style political mapping techniques. These mapping techniques have set territorial boundaries that previously did not exist and new identification categories such as Thai and non-Thai (Toyota, 2005, p115).

The Thai government has officially classified nine groups of hill tribe inhabitants; Karen, Meo, Lahu, Lisu, Yao, Akha, Lua, H'Tin and Khmu, with many cultural differentiations to lowland Thai inhabitants (McKinnon, 2005, p32). Thai authorities label the highlanders as *hill tribe* (*chao khao*), a term that invokes a set of stigmatising discourses of exotic nomadic tribe peoples and of a problematic non-Thai population.

The Historical Development of *Hill Tribe* Tourism in Northern Thailand

Northern Thailand was the first Southeast Asian region in which ethnic tourism made an appearance. Development of infrastructure and the introduction of material commodities into ethnic areas have “brought the modern world onto ordinary people’s doorsteps” (Cohen, 2012, p26) resulting in ethnic material cultural change, especially in costumes, craft and livelihood.

Hill tribe trekking tours began in the 1970s and were highly popular with young western tourists and backpackers. Small trekking companies which emerged in Chiang Mai during the 1970s offered three days and two nights tours in remote hill tribe villages, conducted by guides who were familiar to the area, not necessarily local people. Contacts between hosts and visitors were minimal due to cultural and linguistic dissimilarities. (Cohen, 2012, p31-33).

Opportunities for foreign travellers and trade enabled Thailand to become a popular destination for western and intra-regional tourism. As a result, two major developments have taken place. Firstly, on recovery from the 1997 financial crisis, a new class of entrepreneurs emerged in Thailand. Secondly, the removal of

travel restrictions for domestic and international tourists made hill tribes more accessible for tourist trekking destinations (Cohen 2012, p 26). By the 1990s, elephant riding and rafting were included in trekking packages, overshadowing the hill tribes people themselves. By 2007, many small trekking companies in northern Thailand cities have been replaced by package deals which promise more activities and brief motorised visitations to adventure and cultural activities.

Authenticity

The Impact of Tourism on Hill Tribes

Cohen's research provides an insight into impacts of trekking on the host community, where the inhabitants tend to play the role of *primitive natives* (cited in Dearden and Harron, 1994, P84). This performative role is a result of promotional images which hill tribes feel they must reconstruct to maximize tourism in their villages. Through the introduction of hill tribe communities to national and global markets some communities have begun buying traditional costumes as it has become more economical for hill tribe communities to import and adapt materials.

Cultural boundaries impose a separation between host communities and visiting tourists (Dogan, cited in Dearden and Harron, 1994). The spatiality of tourist and host sleeping arrangements have changed over time from tourists' staying in host households to peripheral lodgings. Cohen's concept of *front stage* and *back stage* explains these cultural boundaries. Front stage refers to the environment that tourists are encouraged to experience, including lodgings, communal gathering entertainment areas and a space for eating. Backstage, *behind the scenes*, refers to personal homes of hosts and areas of modern development, such as water pumps or electronic amenities. The separation of front and back stage are maintained by tour agencies wanting to create images of hill tribes retaining their exotic traditions and differences.

Tourism advertising, used by both tourism agencies and the hill tribes, represent artificially staged life as authentic. Tourists with minimal background knowledge are easily misled, even though they may be serious seekers of authenticity.

Despite the fact that the hill tribes have been incorporated into the Thai national ecological and administrative system, tourism advertising still depicts the tribes as being remote and primitive. Cohen suggests that tourists cannot necessarily judge the differences between staged and authentic encounters, therefore, they are obliged to believe information provided by guides. Keywords: *authentic; real; actual; primitiveness; unsophisticated; different; naturalness; remote; picturesque; colourful*; and *exotic* are seen as representing hill tribes as static destinations.

Hill Tribes Being Exploited as Human Zoos for Tourism

During the colonial era human zoos or *freak shows* were attractions that emphasized the differences of *other* cultural groups (Trupp, 2011, p141). These shows highlighted physical abnormalities or monstrous appearances, and people were displayed as objects of entertainment and pseudo-scientific investigation for western audiences. Living ethnological exhibits helped reinforce colonialist ideologies of *civilised* and *primitive* by presenting cultural differences between western and tribal livelihood practices. This phenomenon continued until the 1930s until shrinking colonial power and critical public awareness marked a decline in the presence of human zoos. Contemporary means of presenting the *other* are through documentaries and live performances for tourism. Human zoos are visible today in the northern regions of Thailand, although inhabitants are not imported but are local people and many do not have opportunities to gain Thai citizenship. In the twenty-first century human zoos are exhibiting refugees of ethnic minority groups, where the major tourist attractions are traditional costumes. The locations of human zoos are purposefully distanced from main refugee resettlements so that the latter are hidden from the tourist gaze, and in some instances human zoo inhabitants are prevented from migrating to urban areas (Grubdy-Warr, cited in Trupp, 2011, p145). Not all ethnic groups are popular tourist meccas. Ethnic groups with colourful or elaborate traditional dress, such as the long neck Padaung women refugees from Myanmar, are more visually attracting for tourism audiences (Cohen, 2012, p39). Without symbolic ethnic

traditional apparel other ethnic groups have difficulties gaining livelihood from tourism markets.

Prospects for Pro-poor Community Based Ethnic Tourism

Ethnic tourism is one strategy for people of minority cultural groups in Thailand to access the market economy, enabling the hill tribe groups to gain income without leaving their communities and re-enacting their culture to preserve traditions. Tourism is the world's biggest industry and has the ability to harness its power in the developed world to become a force for poverty reduction and aid in the development process of developing economies, while being respectful to the customs, cultures and environments of the local communities (Dornan and Kennedy, 2009, p183). Tourism has become a growth industry providing a source of overseas investment, job creation, demand for local goods and services as well as a stimulus for community and regional development. The next step in the tourism process is working towards alleviating impacts of ethnic tourism upon hill tribe communities through encouraged participation in pro-poor tourism or community based development projects.

In 2008, 12 countries accounted for 80 percent of the world's poor population and in 11 of those countries, tourism is either growing or is already significant to the economy. This conveys that the livelihoods of millions of poor people are already affected both negatively and positively by tourism (Chok et al., 2008, p148). Pro-poor tourism and community based tourism provides ethnic minorities with opportunities to participate in the planning and the decision making process of development schemes.

Pro-poor tourism advocates stress that it is not a specific product or sector of tourism but an approach to tourism development and management (Chok et al., 2008, p148). Strategies of implementing pro-poor tourism in terms of local benefits include economic, physical, social and cultural livelihood benefits (Bauer et al., 2009, p154). Pro-poor tourism arose from the belief that tourism can contribute to pro-poor economic growth, enabling poor people to actively participate in and significantly benefit from economic activities. Pro-poor tourism,

in practice, differs depending on the cultural context, time and place as there is no common blue print or widely practiced standard model (Bauer et al., 2009, p155). This approach can be defined as tourism that generates net benefits for the poor. This encompasses economic as well as environmental, social and cultural dimensions. In developing nations, with few competitive exports, tourism is believed to offer a viable development option where few others exist. Poor countries are seen to possess assets prized by the tourism industry, such as wildlife, landscape and cultural experiences, which aid in attracting both domestic and international tourists (Chok et al., 2008, p148).

In order to provide Thailand with sustainable tourism practices, the government enforced development schemes need to be pro-poor and apply bottom-up sustainable approaches. It is important to work with a local community and gain their support if tourism development are to have a sustainable future (Theerapappisit, 2012, p268). Since sustainable development was introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Economy in the Brundtland Commission report—Our Common Future—in 1987, sustainable development schemes have received wide spread acclamation and been incorporated into the policies of international organisations, and globally influenced legislations (Tao and Wall, 2009, p138). Sustainability programmes are designed to provide opportunities for minority groups in poverty, however, difficulties have emerged with extremely poor communities not being able to adopt conservation practices and long term perspectives when their next meal is not a certainty (Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007, p137).

Bottom-up development is a policy that was derived from grassroots decision making processes and local involvement. Intermediate bodies help facilitate and mediate interactions between development agents and local people. This process, beginning from the ground level and then leading up to development agents, results in an appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems and effective participation in various future alternatives centred on people and the environment of ethnic groups. The principle of bottom-up policy approaches is for local communities to set their own goals and make decisions about their resources in the future, including heritage preservation, development of buildings, parks, open

spaces and landscapes, and other conservation or development activities (Theerapappisit, 2012, p269).

Pro-poor Tourism In Laos

In the conclusion of the Researcher's honours research, pro-poor or community based tourism practices were advocated as a remedy to the negative impacts that ethnic tourism has inflicted upon ethnic minority people in Thailand. Through researching case studies of community based tourism practices of neighbouring Southeast Asian countries, the Researcher began to investigate whether or not community based tourism could be a feasible concept to remedy similar impacts of tourism in Laos. An investigation of academic literature was conducted to explore community based tourism projects operating in rural areas of Laos.

Community based tourism, where communities are directly involved in the ownership and operation of tourism products, has been one of the models most utilized in alleviating poverty and assisting rural community development through tourism. Community based tourism can improve local stewardship over tourism resources, increase the benefits of tourism for local communities and minimize its adverse impacts. Despite the good intentions of community based tourism, many traditional projects struggle to become successful, as they are often initiated by development organizations, are lacking in commercial viability and demand-led product designs. Including the private sector as developers and co-managers of these projects have proven to be an effective method to increase the success of such projects (Pio, 2011, p3).

The encouragement and facilitation of community based pro-poor tourism is one of the top priorities of the tourism development strategy of Laos. There were 56 international NGOs working on poverty reduction-related projects in rural Laos in 2000, compared with 13 in 1985. Elements of the strategy that support the pro-poor tourism agenda include the development of micro-scale tourism infrastructure, capacity building for communities, programmes to encourage the participation of ethnic minorities and women, as well as other training programmes. Laos is a low-income country which, for the past 10 years, has been

enhancing community based tourism partnership approaches with communities, development organisations, and the public and private sectors. Many community based tourism partnership pilots have now reached a level of maturity which allows them to be evaluated. Research is required to identify the characteristics, suitability and replicability of such models in order to consolidate and develop the most appropriate approaches in each situation (Pio, 2011, p3).

Viengxay, Houaphanh Province, Laos

Viengxay is a predominantly unspoiled and undeveloped remote forest region of Laos, but Laos' poorest area. The most distinguishing landscape feature of Viengxay is the limestone Karst Cave, which was used during the United States/Vietnam war between 1963-1973 functioning as underground networks of a hidden city with a hospital, school, supermarket, temples, theatre, government offices and other amenities. The caves were abandoned after the war until the 1990s and have been re-opened for visitors as a significant historical feature. The Karst Cave became a national heritage site in 2005. Tourism began slowly with many domestic and international tourists preferring to make day trips to the location, however, with the proposal of an air strip and opening a highway, the area is becoming more accessible for tourism. Despite this historical landscape resource, Bauer et al. suggest that tourism is proceeding slowly in Viengxay (Bauer et al., 2009, p163).

Focus group interviews were conducted by researchers to investigate the potential for pro-poor tourism development in the area and the local peoples' perception of tourism. Researchers asked if people are willing to leave their current occupation to pursue tourism means, responses highlighted an agrarian lifestyle is a crucial part of culture and identity and tourism income is seen as a secondary job.

Reasons for wanting to develop tourism included; improving livelihood, gaining income, alleviating poverty, self-improvement, cultural exchange and helping to preserve local cultural heritage. Local people acknowledge tourism as a potential source of income, but do not know how they can participate as many lack capital to start up a tourism business, are too poor to qualify for loans or make investments, or do not see monetary value of the services they provide (Bauer et

al., 2009, p163). Villages understand that tourism development will bring extra income to villages and aid in the progress of poverty alleviation.

Luang Namtha Province, Laos

Luang Namtha is one of the poorest regions in Laos, however, the province has an abundance of rich natural and cultural resources. These resources enabled the establishment of the country's first ecotourism project, Nam Ha Ecotourism Project, launched in October 1999 aimed at poverty reduction, and cultural and natural resource conservation. Since commencing, local residents at the province and village level have been actively involved in planning, development and project operations. The project has gone through a series of evaluations from external reviewers and has arguably been successful due to the fact that it generates significant economic impacts and brings a lot of positive changes to rural communities (Ounmany, 2014, p68).

Luang Namtha province was chosen as a research site as it was the first province where ecotourism was introduced and promoted as a best practice for poverty reduction in Laos. Since Luang Namtha has been identified as the poorest provinces, the local government put effort into eradicating poverty by encouraging all development sectors, including tourism, to contribute to poverty reduction in the province. Community based tourism benefits within this case study include; employment, backward links such as the construction industry, direct links such as provisioning of food for hotels and restaurants and indirect links such as the construction industry, and the fact that tourism may encourage the revitalisation of cultural crafts and practices. Limitations of the community based tourism approach were; high rates of foreign ownership contributing to a loss of control over local resources, substantial overseas leakage, low multiplier and spread effects outside tourism enclaves, a reinforcement of patterns of socioeconomic inequality and spatial unevenness, and an exploitation of local cultures and loss of social control to outsiders.

3 Year Appraisal of the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project

In October 2002, three years after the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project started, external reviewers were indisputable that it had been “a tremendous success in providing a model of how tourism might be used for development in rural and largely subsistent villages and as a mechanism for promoting forest conservation”, and also claimed it “established a first-class working model for ecotourism activities in areas of great cultural and natural” assets (Harrison and Schipani, 2008, p209).

In the first three years, a total of 89 guides had been trained, 69 guides were from the town of Luang Namtha and 20 guides from the villages. The Nam Ha Ecoguide Service, a local inbound tour service created with technical assistance from the project, was operating three treks and a one-day boat trip, involving eight ethnic minority villages (with a combined population of approximately 2000), and had provided accommodation, food and other service to more than 2800 tourists from 38 countries. Over the same period, the trekking operations earned the Nam Ha Ecoguide Service a gross revenue of \$70,000 USD, of which about 18% went directly into the villages, which also earned money from selling handicrafts, massages and other services.

During the first phase, 8% of all income from treks was placed in Village Development Funds, designed to benefit the community as a whole. Over the following years, the treks continued and the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project has been recognised in Lao PDR and throughout Southeast Asia as a successful example of community-based, pro-poor tourism. It also seems that villagers assisted by the project are equally satisfied with its performance, and the reviewers of the Project’s first phase note that the Akha villagers visited “felt that the tourists dramatically improved their income” (Harrison and Schipani, 2008, p210).

From 2001 until the end of 2005, the Nam Ha Ecoguide Service operated 1331 tours, catered for 6801 tourists and brought in gross revenue of \$137,794 USD. Of this, \$9485 went into village funds, and benefits also accrued to the Provincial Tourism Office and to the central government through taxes and payments for trekking permits.

Donor support has been and continues to be considerable. From 1999, when the treks first started, until 2002, the Project received nearly \$500,000 USD and from 2005 through to 2008, it is to receive more than \$100,000 a year from NZAID. Indeed, by 2008 the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project will have received more than \$860,000 USD from international aid agencies (Harrison and Schipani, 2008, p212). Although, it has to be emphasised that the project has been extremely well resourced. The project has had at its disposal the, virtually, full time presence of 3 foreign Tourist Authorities, an additional presence of 3 part-time foreign volunteers, and the full-time secondment of 3 National Tourism Authority personnel with substantial tourism management skills. If one considers the limited number of target villages, no more than 8 in Luang Namtha, it almost equates to 1 tourism authority representative present in each village. While the project was fortunate to have this level of maintained assistance it is not likely that other potential projects will have this level of sustained supervision to ensure the success of community based tourism approaches.

CHAPTER 2

THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Institutional Framework

The institutional framework for this research project was a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Waikato and the Social Policy Research Institute (SPERI) of Vietnam. In terms of this MoU, SPERI offered an opportunity for the University of Waikato to send graduate students to take part in their on-going research and community development in the Mekong region of Southeast Asia.

What is SPERI?

The Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI) is an independent research institute whose general aim is to work toward the preservation of the cultural and biological diversity in the Mekong region of South East Asia. This area includes Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Yunnan China. The Mekong region is inhabited by approximately 60 million indigenous people and other marginalised ethnic groups whose traditional livelihood practices and social organisation are supported by its rich natural diversity (SPERI (a), 2014). To achieve their aim, SPERI works with indigenous ethnic minority communities, especially in highland forested areas. These communities and their natural environments are under increasing threat from State led and profit driven, culturally and environmentally destructive extractive development projects (SPERI (a), 2014). SPERI is dedicated to providing alternative models of ecologically-sound community-based economic and community development projects based upon ethnic communities' own customary laws.

SPERI is one member of the Livelihood Sovereignty Alliance, which consists of sister organisations; Consultancy on Development (CODE), Cultural Identity and

Resource Use Management (CIRUM) and SPERI. Under the alliance, these organisations share their methods and maximise their efforts and achievements with three common goals; 1) eco-farming education, 2) livelihood sovereignty and 3) nurturing nature interacting to nourish the civil society (SPERI (b), 2014).

In its work with indigenous communities SPERI applies a rights-based approach based on the recognition of five fundamental interrelated rights of Livelihood Sovereignty:

1. The right to Land
2. The right to practice one's own religion on one's land
3. The right to utilize one's own knowledge in daily farming
4. The right to decide what to grow on one's own land
5. The right to co-govern one's land with other affected communities and the state

SPERI calls this a “vital empowerment strategy for the Indigenous People in order to sustain and enrich their original civilized dignity and achieve their self-determination towards their own ancestral traditional value of ‘Nurturing Nature’”.

Nurturing Nature is the logo of SPERI, and they seek to do this by nurturing the indigenous ethnic minority communities whose livelihoods are dependent upon the nurturing of nature and who are therefore nature's best custodians. They do this by working with communities to ensuring that they retain the right to govern themselves and manage their own natural resources according to their own customary laws and regulations. This process is free from the *top-down* imposition of culturally and environmentally destructive profit-driven state policies.

It is important to make these points because central to SPERI's working philosophy is respect for the indigenous ethnic minorities' rights to self-determination. They apply this principle in all of their dealings with indigenous ethnic minority communities, including research activities.

As part of its activities, SPERI has been working with the people of Long Lan village in Northern Laos since 1999 in cooperation with the Provincial Authorities of Luang Prabang and they are currently involved in a development programme “Long Lan Cultural Based Community Development Strategic Framework 2014-2016”. This is the programme in which the Researcher was invited to participate, and to use this experience as a basis for a Master of Social Sciences thesis in Anthropology.

The Development Programme

The development programme with which the Researcher was involved is aimed at promoting community control by Long Lan villagers over the economic development of their village. So far SPERI has achieved the allocation of over 8000 hectares of natural forest to Long Lan village for their protection under their own traditional customary laws. They have also worked to ensure that the 13 neighbouring villages of Long Lan, which are of Khmu and mixed Hmong and Khmu ethnicities, benefit from Long Lan’s custodianship of the forest. Long Lan village, in partnership with SPERI, is in the process of setting up a Farmer Field School, a site to which young ethnic minority students from throughout the Mekong region can learn about ecologically sustainable development practices based on the Long Lan Experience.

The particular aspect of the programme with which the Researcher was involved included exploring the potential for a community-controlled, community-based eco-ethnic-tourism enterprise. This is aimed at securing economic viability of the village under conditions of an increasingly marketized national economy without the villagers having to sell their labour or natural resources to outside investors. The twin aims of economic self-sustainability and preservation of the natural environment are linked.

CHESH-Lao

CHESH-Lao is a branch of a sister organization of SPERI – the Centre for Human Ecology Studies of Highlands (CHESH) - that is operating in Laos. CHESH-Lao is working in cooperation with partners in Laos from central government to

village levels, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Laos, Project for Rural Development of Focus Areas (PRDFA) and Luang Prabang Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry (PAFO). The CHESH-Lao program has been operational since 1999 with CHESH-Lao conducting action research on culture-based natural resource management and community development projects at numerous village locations in Nam Bac and Luang Prabang districts of Luang Prabang province, Laos. (CHESH-Lao program, 2009)

Justification of Research

The general question underlying this research was the prospect for developing genuine community-based and community-controlled ethnic tourist enterprises in an economic environment where such enterprises are usually owned and operated by outsiders.

The research was centred on the village of Long Lan, a Hmong ethnic minority village located 40 km northeast of the town of Luang Prabang in northern Laos. Luang Prabang is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a magnet for tourists. It is a location from which commercial ethnic tourism activities operate. The village of Long Lan has some experience in receiving foreign, mainly Western, tourists via a tourist company operating out of Luang Prabang and it is part of Long Lan village's development plan to develop its own community-based tourist venture. The objective of the research was to investigate current tourist activity in Long Lan village, such as how it is organized; the number of tourists received; who operates it; what village-based activities are involved; what the experiences are of the tourists and their hosts, with a view to gathering information useful in aiding in the development of an endogenous, community-based tourism venture owned and operated by the Long Lan people themselves as part of their overall village development plan.

The intentions of the research outcomes were to advise on the potential for community-based tourism development in Long Lan village, and contribute to the development of a curriculum on endogenous tourism development for other ethnic minority villages in the region.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research were:

- i) To gain an understanding of the potential benefits, pitfalls and challenges involved in operating a community-based ethnic tourism enterprise in Long Lan village.
- ii) To gather information useful in aiding in the development of an endogenous, community-based tourism venture owned and operated by the people of Long Lan as part of their overall village development plan.
- iii) Contribute to the development of a curriculum on endogenous tourism development for the benefit of other ethnic minority villages in the region.

Ethical Considerations

As a New Zealand citizen, the Researcher was required to obtain a Lao working visa in order to conduct this research. The research did not commence until such a visa was obtained and was renewed as required during the course of the research. The application for the working visa contained a full description of the research project so that the Lao Government was informed of research objectives and the activities that it would involve. While in Laos the Researcher abided by the laws of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and acted in accordance with the customary laws and regulation of Long Lan while in that village. The Researcher also abided to SPERI's strict code of behaviour required to be followed by all members of its staff when they are working in ethnic minority villages. This code of behaviour is designed to protect the cultural sensitivities of the particular ethnic group. The Researcher worked as part of research team under close supervision of experienced SPERI researchers, a high level Lao local government official, and Long Lan village elders. The supervisors, both Hmong and non-Hmong, all have had very long experience of working in Luang Prabang and with the Hmong community of Long Lan. They are very familiar with the cultural sensitivities of the Long Lan community, of SPERI, and of the Lao government. The Researcher was fully instructed and mentored in the cultural taboos and community prohibitions pertaining to the Hmong community of Long Lan, the expected behaviour of SPERI

staff and associates, and of Lao culture so that they do not inadvertently offend any cultural sensitivities.

This research was conducted according to the research protocols of SPERI, the Luang Prabang Provincial Authorities, and, first and foremost, the customary laws and regulations of Long Lan village. In addition, every effort will be made to ensure that it complies with the Regulations of the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee procedures and General Principles. There was no contradiction between these two sets of regulations given that the core principle of the research methodology was the meaningful involvement of the research participants in every step of the process, ultimately taking direction from the community itself. Access to Long Lan village was facilitated by SPERI which has a long-term commitment to and involvement with Long Lan village, having been working with them for 14 years. Access to participant villagers was facilitated by village leaders who have been involved in planning for this research as part of their on-going partnership with SPERI. They were supportive of it, and saw it as of benefit to them in their future planning.

Informed consent for the research in Long Lan was obtained collectively via village meetings coordinated by village elders. Throughout the process of organising the research, all of the parties were fully informed as to the aims and methods of the research. In this way the ethical requirement of full information disclosure and informed consent was satisfied before the research commenced. The participation of individual villagers was on a willing and voluntary basis. Since semi-structured interviews were conducted in three languages to relay information from the participant back to the researchers, formal information sheets were not used. Instead each participant was verbally consulted before interviews commenced about the researchers intentions.

Likewise formal consent forms were not used in this research, since the researcher worked as part of a research team composed of SPERI staff, and it is not their practice to use Consent Forms. Nor were Consent Forms necessary in most situations given the participatory and community driven nature of the research. The research was conducted in Long Lan village, with the consent of Long Lan village,

at their request and under their overall supervision, and informed consent was obtained communally as part of the village process. All interview participants, whether they had or had not been involved in the communal process of informed consent, were individually verbally informed. Interviews only went ahead if verbal consent of participants was provided to overcome the need to translate documents into Hmong or Lao and also avoid the problem of resistance in this culture to signing unfamiliar documents.

This research was community driven. It did not involve the top-down imposition of extractive research techniques exercised by powerful outsiders with whom naïve participants might feel compelled to cooperate. It was the community's own research and if villagers were reluctant to participate in the research then they were not obliged to volunteer their names for interviews. Similarly, when conducting interviews the researchers used a semi-structured approach to encourage participant responses, however, participants had the right to choose which questions they felt comfortable to answer. The Researcher was in no position to force anyone to participate against their will and had no reason to do so. Villagers were also informed that there was no intention to pay participants.

If people in the Long Lan community had contrary views they were encouraged to express them openly, but if they were unwilling to do so, they were not forced on the matter. Controversial views have the potential of putting the researchers in a position where they must decide whether it is correct to continue with anonymity or report views to village authorities. In the first place, participants would have to express their views to Mr Vang Sin Min so that they could be translated from Hmong into Vietnamese so that Mr Nguyen Nhu Son could then translate them into English for the Researcher to record. As a result, the Researcher was not in a position where she had privileged access to the private views of Long Lan villagers. Precautions were taken in case contrary views arose. In recording the research the identity of all participants were protected and recorded by numerical pseudonyms in the order that interviews were conducted. It also must be noted that interviews of the provided list of participant names were not conducted in chronological order but instead by availability, this makes identifying the order of participants' pseudonyms unlikely.

The findings of the research formed the basis for a report to Long Lan village for their use in development planning and curriculum construction. The findings were also be used as a basis of this Master's thesis to be held by the University of Waikato and which will be available online. The findings may also form the basis for academic conference papers and journal articles. They may also appear in SPERI website publications. Participants were informed of these facts as part of the process of gaining informed consent.

There are several parties involved in this research: the Researcher; other members of the research team; the University of Waikato; SPERI; PAFO; and Long Lan village. The researcher and the University of Waikato were seeking a successful Master's thesis while SPERI, PAFO and Long Lan Village are united in exploring the possibilities for establishing a community-based ethnic tourism enterprise at Long Lan. These goals were not in conflict and are in line with the MOU signed between SPERI and the University of Waikato. None of these parties, other than Long Lan villagers have any commercial interest in the success or otherwise of any tourism development that may result from this research.

SPERI operates on the principle that any information gathered during research among ethnic minority peoples belongs to the minority peoples themselves, and that they should hold intellectual property rights over it. The researcher undertook to abide by this principle and not use any such information in any way not approved of by its owners.

Chapter 3

The following information was derived from a SPERI document authored by Mrs Tran Thi Lanh. The article is here summarised for the purpose of providing ethnographic and historical context for the proposed tourism operations in Long Lan Village.

Tran, L. 2015: Nurturing customary based wellbeing: an approach to biological human ecology theory, *SPERI CENDI: Worship nature*, series four: 1999-2015



*Map 1: Map of Long Lan showing land-use divisions. By courtesy of CHESH
LAO-SPERI (Tran, 2015, p4)*

Long Lan is a White Hmong village located at 800-1300 metres above sea level in a mountainous area 40 km northeast of Luang Prabang town in Northern Laos. The current village was established in 1975 from the consolidation of several smaller Hmong villages that had moved into the Phu Sung (high mountain) areas over several generations. In 2014 it had a population of 524 people in 73 households. Hmong cultural traditions remain strong in Long Lan and everyday life is governed by customary laws (Tran, 2015, p6). Its land area encompasses approximately 9000 hectares of which over 5000 ha is natural forest rich in biodiversity, and a large area of nearly 2000 ha is suitable for cultivation (Barber, 2012, p7). Traditional agricultural practices were shifting cultivation of rice and corn, cultivation of opium poppies for opium production, and utilization of natural forest products.



Figure 3: Long Lan Mountainous Environment. Photographer Laura Phillips

A History of Resettling

Historically, Hmong people migrated southward into Vietnam and Laos from China. The people of Long Lan have been living in the Phu Sung area for seven generations, having moved from Xieng Khoang province of Laos in the late nineteenth century, arriving in Phon Xay district neighbouring Luang Prabang in the early twentieth century and then to Phu Sung around the 1930s to 1950s. At first they made their homes high in the Phu Sung mountains, but after 1975 all Hmong groups living on Phu Sung were required by the Lao government to relocate to lower elevations, some to the base of the mountain where they integrated with Khmu villages, and some, such as those now living in Long Lan, to occupy the area of a former Khmu village at 800 metres (Tran, 2015, p6).



Figure 4 and 5: Long Lan Village. Photographer Laura Phillips

Hmong Social Organisation

The most basic forms of social organisation in Long Lan are households and clans. In 2014, Long Lan had 73 households and a population of 524 people. Similarly to other Hmong villages, Long Lan is organised into patrilineal exogamous clans, 6 of which are represented in Long Lan village. The Zang clan (31 households) is the largest and most influential in the village; Ly Clan (22 households), Tho Clan (5 households), Mua Clan (4 households), Ho Clan (3 households) and Vang Clan (1 household). Households consist of nuclear and extended families occupying traditional Hmong style wooden houses located in the designated residential area, with a tendency for clan members to cluster together. The spiritual rule of clan exogamy means Hmong men must select marriage partners from outside of their village groups from other Hmong villages (Tran, 2015, p7).

In addition to traditional kin based structures there are several state sponsored organisations with different responsibilities operating within the village. The Youth Union co-ordinates the heavy community work, such as cutting and clearing trees and road maintenance. The Women Union co-ordinates women's affairs and encourages community working groups such as cleaning and road repairing. The Fatherland Front supports the village leader to encourage solidarity and settle conflicts (Tran, 2015, p7).

The main leadership institution in Hmong society is the Clan. Within the clan, members vote democratically to elect a leader who is prestigious and knowledgeable in dealing with daily interactions within the clan, between clans,

and communicating with people outside of the village. Between clans, a traditional elder is elected to lead over all the clan leaders. This system is flexible, and whenever a clan leader's performance is not conducted appropriately, a new leader can be elected in their place. This role has traditionally been held by members of the Zang clan who are persistent in the preservation of Long Lan becoming a self-determining village (Tran, 2015, p8).

There is also a formal leadership system in Long Lan consisting of a Village Head, two Vice Heads, Chairs of the Village Women's Union and Village Youth Union, and Head, Deputy Head and six members of the Village Fatherland Front, together with the traditional village Elders Council. Decisions relating to the village as a whole are conducted by traditional clan leaders. This partnership of formal village and traditional clan leaders has aided in resolving many challenges related to maintaining the traditional values and effective management of natural resources in Long Lan (Tran, 2015, p8).

Spiritual Beliefs

There are three spiritual pillars to Long Lan society. These are spiritual beliefs in Sa Ca, Thu Ti, and Tong Xenh. Sa Ca is the ancestral spirit of the Hmong people. Every Hmong household has an altar to Sa Ca and ancestral spirits are worshiped during the Hmong New Year by offering chickens, incense, paper money, food items and beverages to the spirits. This worshiping brings protection to households and their livestock. To serve Sa Ca, Hmong people cannot marry within the same clan, even if the couple are separated by a hundred generations. Not abiding by this custom is considered taboo in Hmong societies (Tran, 2015, p8).

The second spiritual pillar is Tong Xenh, a localised community spirit. Tong Xenh provides protection of the village and is represented through the natural landscape such as large trees, mountains and special rock formations. Tong Xenh offers protection, good health and protects the peace and sustainability of village life. A Tong Xenh tree will be considered an elder to safeguard the souls or spirits of the village. Vow ceremonies are carried out whenever a villager has broken a vow to

Tong Xenh, or to Sa Ca, with regard to natural resources or when villagers behave wrongly toward others according to vows taken at a previous vow ceremony (Tran, 2015, p8).

The third spiritual pillar, Thu Ti, is a very powerful spirit that is worshiped at the individual level, families and households. Thu Ti observes people's behaviour wherever they are, in every moment of their life. Thu Ti is a universal spirit that helps people whenever something is wished or prayed for. For example, good weather when building or repairing a house, before preparing land for planting and harvesting, for good health, no accidents when cutting trees, and protection against poisonous creatures (Tran, 2015, p8).



Figure 6 (left): Tong Xenh Husband and Wife rock spirits. Photographer Dr Barber.



Figure 7 (above): Ritual performed by Mr Xay Khu Zang giving thanks to Tong Xenh spirits for return of missing cattle. Photographer Laura Phillips.

Contemporary Situation in Long Lan Village

From 1975 to 1999, Long Lan villages lived peacefully in their forest surroundings without any intervention from outsiders of the Phu Sung area. Then in 1999, the Lao Government intervened through three policies that negatively impacted the livelihoods of Northern ethnic minority communities: 1) discontinuation of shifting cultivation; 2) prohibition of opium production; and 3) resettlement and merger of small villages, often of different ethnic identities, into larger villages. These three interventions were implemented without any consideration or understanding of the ethnic minority peoples' point of view towards the advantages and disadvantages of shifting cultivation and opium production. There was also no practical solution offered to relieve the affected

groups of the impending livelihood crises resulting from eradicating traditional livelihood practices (Tran, 2015, p9).

As with many other indigenous ethnic minority groups in Northern Laos, these policies presented Long Lan with a serious challenge of quickly having to find an alternative form of food production and cash income. Other challenges arose from pressure upon forest and land resources from encroaching neighbouring villages and outside commercial interests. Realising that some adjustments were necessary to the new conditions of village life, CHESH became involved with Long Lan village in 1999, and this involvement in village development projects remains today (Tran, 2015, p10)

In seeking the origin of these problems and learning alongside ethnic minorities how to respond to them, CHESH developed their plan for “culture based sustainable community development” - an approach thoroughly different from the poverty alleviation projects proposed by local authorities. For CHESH, Long Lan represented a village rich in traditional knowledge and wisdom in community governance and natural resource management. CHESH has worked in conjunction with members of Long Lan village from 1999 to present, creating ground work for developing three key concepts: traditional leadership; traditional governance; and traditional ownership of territory. This allows Long Lan inhabitants to continue maintaining their own sovereignty and wellbeing through enacting their own spiritual views towards nature (Tran, 2015, p10).

Participatory Learning and Action

In October 1999, CHESH began a program of cooperation with the Lao Government’s Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry with the aim of providing ministry staff with *Participatory Training* in working with elders and farmers in two villages, Long Lan (Hmong) and Xiang Da (Lao Lum). The purpose of such training was to enable the Lao government staff to experience working alongside village elders, village leaders and ordinary village inhabitants of different ethnic groups to identify development needs, problems and solutions from the personal cultural perspectives of villagers.

When the government staff training programme concluded, CHESH was invited by the Lao Government to continue working in Laos, and on the basis of the *Participatory Learning and Action Research* findings, pilot projects were prepared for *Culture-based Sustainable Community Development* in Long Lan and Xieng Da villages. A variety of activities based on the villager's earlier self-assessments of their development needs were used to design programme activities to meet village needs, taking into account their specific social, economic, and ecological characteristics. A particular emphasis was on developments consistent with the strengthening of cultural identity. The first initial challenge was for CHESH, village elders, leaders and farmers to generate alternative sustainable forms of agriculture that would enable the villages to overcome difficulties caused by the prohibition of shifting cultivation and opium production. At the same time CHESH needed to allow the maintenance and strengthening of the villages' own cultural identity (Tran, 2015, p10).

Study Tours

In 2003, in pursuit of solutions for Long Lan cultural based community development, CHESH organised a number of study tours to Vietnam and to other parts of Laos, where similar problems were being experienced by ethnic minority groups. The purpose of these study tours were to stimulate new ideas for development and practical training was provided to assist the villagers to establish interest groups of farmers or households focusing on a particular development activity (Tran, 2015, p11). The study tours resulted in the formation of many interest groups: cultural preservation; forest protection; vegetable cropping; environment and hygiene; animal husbandry; veterinary services; and savings and credit. Regulations were developed to govern each of the groups according to local customary laws (Tran, 2015, p12).

One study tours was to Sa Pa district in Lao Cai Province, Northwest of Vietnam, where Long Lan traditional elders, village leaders, key farmers and local authorities were shocked to witness first-hand the situation of Hmong people in the Sa Pa tourist area where ethnic groups have lost the majority of traditional forest and land, and are dependent upon selling their traditional valuables, such as

crafts and tour services in traditional attire, to gain livelihood. Long Lan people and Luang Prabang Authorities realised if Long Lan was to avoid this fate they would have to preserve the forest of the Phu Sung area, and if this was to be preserved then official land rights were needed. (See Customary law Land Allocation below)

Vegetable Farming

The traditional form of agriculture for Long Lan village was rotational slope-land cultivation of rice and corn, and opium poppy cultivation. After the discontinuation of shifting agriculture and the prohibition of opium production, many families, in addition to maintaining rotational slope-land cultivation of rice and corn, began cultivating a variety of vegetables in abandoned poppy fields. This soon proved more efficient than the older system of shifting cultivation.

To assist in vegetable marketing, CHESH negotiated successfully with the Luang Prabang People's Committee to offer Long Lan a space inside the People's Committee compound for a shop, called *Fresh Organic Vegetables of Long Lan*. Although this event was successful, villagers found it was more efficient to sell vegetables directly from their own village with different traders organised to arrive in trucks every day directly buying from individual growers. A schedule and conditions of sale were controlled by Long Lan village (Tran, 2015, p13).

Today outsider traders come to buy vegetables in Long Lan, but before arriving orders via phone or motorbike messenger are places for villagers harvest vegetables catering to order quantities. Crops are sold in Long Lan for 3000kip per kilogram and in Luang Prabang town markets they are sold for 6000kip. These vegetables are then sold onto customers for 8000kip. Villagers keep up to date on fair market prices by visiting Luang Prabang markets or by delivering vegetables directly to the markets themselves (Tran, 2015, p13). The market advantage of Long Lan vegetables is their organic quality, and to maintain this advantage the village has an agreement among growers that they do not use chemicals or mix their vegetables (Tran, 2015, p13).



Figure 8: Zau Zua (Cabbage with yellow flowers) indigenous Long Lan vegetables. Photographer Dr Barber



Figure 9: Luang Prabang vegetable buyers travelling to Long Lan village for trade. Photographer Dr Barber

Self-Governing Eco-Vegetables

At the first stage of vegetable marketing, 2003 to 2005, free traders had control over the price of Long Lan's vegetables, the time of harvest and the quantity that the buyer could purchase per day. In two years, Long Lan villagers had turned this arrangement around and took steps to assert their own control over traders. By 2006 Long Lan village had asserted control over all traders and co-operation between traders and villagers has continued with positive interactions (Tran, 2015, p13).

Vegetable growing has brought a stable income to households in Long Lan, and also it does not require any more forest areas to be cleared. These economic developments improved food security in Long Lan. By 2008, out of 67 households, 10 (15 percent) had excess food, 52 (77 percent) households had enough food, and only 5 (7 percent) households faced annual food shortages.

Customary Law in Land Allocation 2004

Shortly after the Sa Pa study tour, Long Lan villagers submitted a handwritten letter to Luang Prabang District and Province requesting the allocation of land to Long Lan village, requesting CHESH to help them ensure that this allocation could be obtained according to Long Lan's customary laws. CHESH was approved by the authorities to act in an advisory role for the allocation. After a short period of training, provided by CHESH, in methods of *Customary and Community-based Land Allocation*, professional staff from the Province council

carried out land allocation fieldwork in collaboration with Long Lan villagers (Tran, 2015, p12). The villagers were the main decision makers in determining land uses and land use boundaries, and the professional staff provided only technical services of transferring data received onto maps and calculating the size of the various designated areas (Tran, 2015, p14).



*Figure 10: Growing SuSu (Choko).
Photographer Laura Phillips*



*Figure 11: Weighing and Selling
Vegetables. Photographer Laura
Phillips*

Legalised Customary Law, 2005

The next objective was to build a set of community regulations based on customary law to govern the use of land and forest in the designated areas, operating in a carefully considered step by step process designed to ensure the inclusion of the neighbouring 13 villages of Khmu, Lao and Hmong. This was the first time in Lao that land use regulations produced by a village, based on their own customary law, have been certified by District authorities (Tran, 2015, p17). As a result of the implementation of customary regulations on natural resource management, the solidarity and commitment of the people to protecting the Phu Sung forest was strengthened among Khmu, Lao Lum, and Hmong. With the collaboration of neighbouring villages the Long Lan forest protection team was able to taken a number of independent actions to protect the forest. If forest areas are cultivation by outsiders or herbs are collected for trade purposes, appropriate fines have been established (Tran, 2015, p17).

No Song Vow Ceremony

In response to the changing circumstances of Hmong livelihoods in the Phu Sung area a traditional No Song ceremony was sought by the people of Long Lan. No Song is a Hmong ceremony where representatives of Hmong society assemble to discuss and amend their customary laws governing issues such as cultural identity, community governance and natural resource management. This vow ceremony is requested whenever serious problems arise that negatively impact cultural, social and ecological norms of Hmong society or violate Sa Ca , Thu Ti and Tong Seng Hmong beliefs (Tran, 2015, p21). No Song is a customary Hmong ceremony for unifying commitment among Hmong to follow a common set of customary regulations applying to marriages, funerals, forest protection, village boundaries, cultivation, livestock, security, social norms, and mutual assistance. Hmong from a particular geographical area, this is the case the Phu Sung area, assemble to review, revise and update customary regulations to persevere with changing circumstances. In the modern political context of Lao PDR (people's democratic republic), a Hmong vow ceremony could not be freely organized, and Long Lan village required permission from the Luang Prabang authorities to hold a No Song ceremony. No Song ceremonies have not been held in the Luang Prabang area since 1975 (Tran, 2015, p21).

On March 31st 2009, with authorised permission, Long Lan Village held a No Song ceremony, attended by 74 representatives of the 22 Hmong villages in Luang Prabang district, all inhabitants of Long Lan village, 55 representatives of provincial government departments, 9 representatives of research institutions (Institute of Social Studies, Chiang Mai University) and networks of ethnic minorities in Thailand, 30 delegates representing the Vietnamese government, and the network of ethnic minority in Vietnam. All were called by CHESH to witness the event. After the ceremony, representatives of the 22 Hmong villages in Luang Prabang district met to discuss unified commitments to implement customary law regulations governing funerals, weddings, New Year celebrations, and the customary terms of management and use of forests and agricultural land, and the customary laws of Long Lan that were legalized by Luang Prabang province in 2007 (Tran, 2015, p22).

The No Song ceremony confirmed the commitment of the Long Lan people to maintaining traditional customs as well as effectively implementing natural resource management on the basis of the customary law. Through No Song, this commitment was spread to 690 other Hmong households, over 10,000 people, in 22 villages in Luang Prabang district. An achievement of this vow ceremony was government authorities at provincial and district levels recognising the importance of Hmong customary laws, this gave the community confidence to follow their commitments. For CHESH, the ceremony was an indicator of their success of ten years of working with Long Lan village on community development based and cultural identity programs. The ceremony established, socially and politically, the status of Long Lan customary law as the governing instrument of cultural based sustainable community development and forest protection in Long Lan, which had been the aim of CHESH since 1999 (Tran, 2015, p22).

Long Lan Farmer Field School

Following a the No Song ceremony in 2009, the idea was generated for Long Lan could become a Farmer Field School in which all families in the village could become teachers to provide a vast variety of different and flexible curriculums on maintaining livelihood identity. These curriculums of the Hmong people could inspire young farmers of Lao Lum, Khmu and Hmong from different villages in Laos to travel to Long Lan village for learning educational purposes (Tran, 2015, p24). Nine strategies worked out at the 2009 No Song ceremony aiming to remedy social-ecological, inter-identity, and inter-locality conflicts through establishing 9 practical strategic curriculums (Tran, 2015, p24).

Long Lan Farmer Field School based on 9 practical strategic curriculums already implemented in Long Lan society: 1) Local knowledge in community animal raising; 2) Eco-vegetable growing and marketing; 3) Herbal wisdom in community health care and biodiversity preservation; 4) Eco-farming in land use planning and sustainable livelihoods; 5) Tong Seng belief in traditional cultural preservation; 6) Thu Ti belief and watershed management for water security; 7) Customary law legalization; 8) Customary based community governance; and 9) Customary based forest land allocation (Tran, 2015, p24).



Figure 12: Collection of photographs of Farmer Field School and Long Lan Village English Students. By Courtesy of SPERI and Dr Barber

Farmer Field School Opening

The Long Lan Farmer Field School, consisting of two substantial conference and meeting houses, kitchen, toilet and washing facilities, a guesthouse and 2 hectare of gardens, officially opened on December 2nd 2013. The 9 curriculums for teaching focused on three main strategic areas: 1) Eco-farming in land use planning and livelihood sovereignty; 2) Herbal medicinal knowledge in community health care and biodiversity preservations; and 3) Customary law and forest protection. Long Lan traditional elders announced plans at the opening ceremony for Long Lan in cooperation with CHESH and Luang Prabang officials to set up a three level teaching structure: 1) A foundation level of 63 families in Long Lan acting as 63 homestays for young Khmu, Lao and Hmong farmers visiting from other districts; 2) An advanced level for workshops and conferences for community development practitioners from other districts, provinces and countries; and 3) A leadership level for seminars and conferences for local, national and international political leaders.



Figure 13: Farmer Field School Students Making Bamboo Chopsticks. Photographer Laura Phillips



Figure 14: Preparing Duck Dinner Outside Shower Block. Photographer Laura Phillips

Developing Community Based Tourism

In 2014 Long Lan village, assisted by SPERI and CHESH-Lao began investigating the possibilities of setting up community based tourism projects in Long Lan village. A research team consisting of SPERI staff and the Researcher, a Masters student from the University of Waikato was appointed to conduct surveys with inhabitants of Long Lan village to determine which areas of village life could generate the basis of tourism activities. Proposed tourism activities would be solely operated by the people of Long Lan village without the influence and corruption of outsiders. Community based tourism programme activities would be designed around the local knowledge and needs of Long Lan village, taking into account their specific social, economic, and ecological characteristics, with an emphasis on developments consistent with the strengthening of their *cultural identity* (Barber, 2012, p7)

CHAPTER 4

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH IN LUANG PRABANG

Before going to commence the research in Long Lan, the Researcher conducted library research about Laos and the town of Luang Prabang, minimal information is available about Long Lan village in English. Luang Prabang was showcased as a popular tourism destination that shared a balance of colonial French and traditional Laotian cultural landmarks, dress, cuisine and perspectives. The Researcher was interested to learn if Long Lan's physical distance from larger settlements or towns would have an impact on local knowledge of tourism and whether this might influence the type of tourism activities or processes the villagers would like to develop.

On July 27th, in Luang Prabang Town, Laos, the research team began reading through academic articles to develop a profile of tourism in Luang Prabang and an indication of income earning opportunities for rural villages from Luang Prabang tourism. Useful resources were: Ashley, C. 2006: Participation by the poor in Luang Prabang tourism economy: Current earnings and opportunities for expansion, *Overseas Development Institute*. London: UK;

Bauer, T., Song, H., and Suntikul, W. 2009: Towards tourism: A Laotian perspective, *International journal of tourism research*, 12, 449-461.

Dearborne, L. and Stallmeyer, J. 2010: Re-visiting Luang Prabang: transformations under the influence of world heritage designation, *Journal of tourism and cultural change*. 7:4, 247-269;

Harrison, D. and Schipani, S. 2007: Lao tourism and poverty alleviation: Community-based tourism and the private sector, *Current issues in tourism*, 10: 2-3, 194-230;

Suntikul, W. 2008: The impact of tourism on the monks of Luang Prabang, *Institute for Tourism Studies, China*;

Profile of Tourism in Luang Prabang, Laos

Luang Prabang town is a UNESCO recognised World Heritage Site. The town is the main urban centre of the Northern provinces and also a major tourism destinations in Laos. Tourism activities started developing in Luang Prabang around 1995 and took off after 1998 and has grown rapidly in recent years (Ashley, 2006, p4). In 2006, Luang Prabang received 151,703 domestic and international tourists, in comparison to 51,207 in 2001. This shows a 200 per cent increase of tourism activity within 5 years. The Provincial Tourism Office estimates the annual tourist arrivals to be approximately 135,000 per year. Luang Prabang has continued to experience sustained growth in the tourism economy with arrivals more than doubling between the years 2000 to 2005 (Ashley, 2006, p4). This increase of yearly tourist arrivals has also resulted in accommodation growth. The number of guest housing in Luang Prabang has increase from 45 in 1998 to 120 guest houses in 2004. With an influx of larger tourism arrival numbers also came a trend for grander accommodation and 5 star establishments needing to be developed to meet changes in tourism demands from traditional back packers to up market holiday tourists.

Tourism operators in Luang Prabang refer to flows of tourist arrivals as operating in two seasons, a high and a low season. The months October to April are considered to be the high season and May to September as the low season. The Provincial Tourism Operators suggest that arrivals during the high season statistically double the low season. The busiest four months are January, February, March and August, and these four months account for 45 per cent of all tourist arrivals (Ashley, 2006, p4).

Approximately half of all tourist arrivals fly in to Luang Prabang airport, of those arrivals 50 percent are domestic flights and 50 percent are internationals. The remaining half of tourist arrivals are travelling via boat or bus. Many over lander travellers come from the Golden Triangle travelling from Thailand into northern

Laos, then travel by boat or by bus to Luang Namtha, and further on to Luang Prabang (Ashley, 2006, p4). In 2002, the Netherlands Development Organisation survey suggested the three main reasons why tourists want to visit Luang Prabang (Dearborn and Stallmeyer, 2010, p252) were to experience the culture of Luang Prabang, to encounter the local peoples' livelihood and to visit religious sights in the town. Along with a vibrant night market, cultural fusion of French and Laos cuisine, and being half surrounded by waterways, Luang Prabang also encompasses 34 temples accessible for tourism (Suntikul, 2008, p2). Essentially all tourists are leisure based and visit Luang Prabang for the purpose of holiday or visiting family and friends. A small workshop/conference market at the upmarket hotels is becoming a popular reason for travel in the low season. The average length of staying in Luang Prabang for the majority of tourists is 3 days, with only a minority staying in the town for longer. (Ashley, 2006, p4).

Luang Prabang is a tourism magnet for a variety of different nationalities. Data collected from between 2005 and 2006 highlights approximately 72 percent of Luang Prabang tourist arrivals are western with European ethnicities accounting for 50 percent of all arrivals. 28 percent of these tourist arrivals are from Asian ethnicities, the majority are Thai, who account for 12 to 22 percent of tourists arriving in Luang Prabang (Ashley, 2006, p4). These tourist arrivals can further be separated into types of travellers. The majority of tourists in Luang Prabang are independent travellers, however, package groups are dominant among the minority of up-market tourists, especially with Thai nationalities. Package groups account for 7-10 percent of travellers in various tourism surveys, but this may be a reflection of selective survey samples rather than the actual reality of the tourism market (Ashley, 2006, p4).

There are two very broad types of tourist in Luang Prabang, budget tourists and up-market tourists. Budget tourists typically stay in cheap guest houses that cost less than \$10 per room per night. The majority of budget tourists are western, they travel between destinations by bus or boat, they are under 40 years of age, and are on trip durations away from home for several weeks or months (Ashley, 2006, p4). Up-market tourists typically stay in hotels costing over \$40 per room per night. They generally fly in and out of their destinations, and are over 40 years of age. Up-market tourists include Westerners on holiday, Thai and other

Asian tourists who travel for the purpose of short holidays, shopping breaks, visiting family and friends, or to attend workshops. This group are most likely to book through tour operators or travel agents, and to go on organised out of town excursions. (Ashley, 2006, p4).

Categories of up-market, mid-market and budget were used to analysis 2006 accommodation data to determine the percentage of tourists in each group. Category 1, up-market, refers to tourists staying in rooms that cost over \$40 per night. This group was estimated as 25 percent of tourists. Category 2, mid-market, refers to tourists staying in rooms that cost \$11-40 per night, estimated as 17 percent of tourists. Category 3, budget, refers to tourists staying in rooms that cost \$10 or less per night, estimated as 58 percent of tourists. Despite the difference in accommodation choices, the majority of these tourists travelled as backpackers (Ashley, 2006, p5).

The focus of tourism products in Luang Prabang is on the world heritage Buddhist temples and old town architecture. These activities are accompanied by relaxation facilities on and around the Mekong River, the calm pace of life in Luang Prabang town, visiting nearby ethnic minority villages or specialist villages, shopping in craft shops and the night markets. There are also opportunities for out of town excursions to visit nearby natural assets, such as the Kuangsi Waterfalls (Ashley, 2006, p6).

Tourism in Luang Prabang is operated by a gathering of small locally owned businesses. Luang Prabang is internationally recognised for large numbers of small family operated businesses and individual entrepreneurs providing goods and services. The growth of new businesses is noticeable, mainly in volume and diversity with many internet cafes and massage parlours opening in recent years (Ashley, 2006, p6). These businesses in Luang Prabang can be categorised into four broad groups based on the type of products supplied for tourism; accommodation, food and drink, transport and excursions, and crafts and shopping items. Business categories are not static but overlap such as a guest house including a restaurant for food and drink services (Ashley, 2006, p6).

The net tourist expenditure into the Luang Prabang economy is estimated as \$40 per person per day, with an average of about \$177 per visit. Average spending

totals do not differentiate between budget and high-end tourists, as trip expenditures can vary from \$118 to \$344. For budget tourists, purchases of food and drink account for approximately 40 percent of expenditure. Spending costs for accommodation, crafts, and excursions each account for around 15-20 percent. For up-market tourist, accommodation is by far the largest percentage of expenditure. Data is incomplete but it is estimated at over 60 percent. This leaves food, drink and crafts, each totalling around 16 percent of spending (Ashley, 2006, p14).

Expenditure estimates per year in Luang Prabang reveal approximately \$8.6 million is spent on accommodation by tourists and \$6 million on food and drink combined. \$4 million is spent on crafts, and nearly \$2 million goes towards transport, excursions and guides. Of the total \$23 million spent in Luang Prabang per year, budget tourists groups and up-market tourists appear to be contributing approximately the same amount at \$9-10 million per year (Ashley, 2006, p14).

Income Opportunities for Rural Villages from Luang Prabang Tourism

The most popular sites to visit are temples and museums directly inside Luang Prabang heritage town, however, a portion of tourists also take short distance excursions to visit natural and cultural attractions. Popular destinations are the Kuangsi Waterfalls and Tam Ting (Pak Ou) caves. Both excursions are easily explored in a half day car or boat trip and can be combined with village stop offs that showcase specialised trades of textiles, whisky and paper making. Guided soft adventure trips for kayaking, rafting, cycling or rock climbing can be added to standard excursions itineraries. Bicycles also can be hired by tourists to explore independently as the majority of these excursions are not far from Luang Prabang town. Tourists' spend around \$1.8 million per year on transport and excursions both within Luang Prabang town and outside in rural areas. (Ashley, 2006, p28).

Although tourists often stop in villages as part of excursion, only a small minority of trips stay overnight in rural villages. There are two or three day soft adventure trips available that feature village treks. The main ways rural residents can earn income from visiting tourists are through entrance fees to a village managed site,

tourist expenditure during their visit such as food, drink and shopping, and payments by tour operators of village fees or payment for a service such as Baci ceremonies or portering (Ashley, 2006, p32). Payments at village level are low, often only 2 percent of revenue. These proportions have the potential to increase 12 to 20 percent when there are payments for village fees, food and water, and up to 34 percent with a scheduled overnight stop for tourists. These considerations suggest a number of possible action points. It is important to note that tour operator excursions are just a minority of trips.

Many changes could be made such as helping villagers to develop more interactive value adding activities for guests that can attract both independent and excursion tourists, as selling processed drinks and packaged food (Ashley, 2006, p33). At Tam Ting caves, foreign tourists pay a \$1 entry fee, and Lao tourists pay 50 cents, these fees although seemingly small to tourists go directly to the village to be spent as the village directs. This is not the case for many other tourism locations. At other tourist locations villages may not receive any entrance seems or in the case of attractions such as the Kuangsi waterfalls, entrance fees are paid but the income goes directly to the government (Ashley, 2006, p32).

Alternatively, if tourists stay overnight in a village homestay, a range of earnings fees become available for villagers to generate potential tourism income, such as homestay accommodation, Baci ceremonies, dinner/breakfast and cultural performances. For example, on a two day trek including Tam Ting caves, one adventure tour operator could pay \$1 per tourist for accommodation, \$0.50 per person as village fees, \$4.50 per tourist for village dinner, breakfast and lunch, \$7 per group for Baci and \$1 each to four cultural performers, however, majority of the villages currently operating tourist excursions have no formal accommodation facilities to develop tourism opportunities (Ashley, 2006, p34).

The villages outside Luang Prabang are earning a relatively small share of total tourism revenue. For those that are earning, it is evident they are doing very well from tourism and are reported to be better off than other villages. If there are 70,000 tourists travelling to Tam Ting caves and Kuangsi Waterfalls per year, around 100,000 visits travel outside of the Luang Prabang town into rural areas. Some craft income is taking place in villages, perhaps around \$50,000 to

\$100,000. Sales of water and snacks could possibly amount to a further \$50,000. Payments by tour operators are somewhere over \$8,000 and possibly around \$20,000 or \$30,000. A small number of tourists stay overnight in villages, but when they do, revenue per tourist into the village economy is noticeably higher (Ashley, 2006, p34).

Potential implications and areas for intervention could be transport, guides and rural income. Transport, such as tuktuks and boats, are an essential connection for increasing tourist visits to rural areas. The development of a quality guide group is important for the destination and important for keeping both the flavour of the trip and the skills involved at a local level. Guides are an important interface between the guest and local people, therefore training is needed to educate guides to be sympathetic and knowledgeable about village and cultural tourism. There is considerable potential to boost rural tourism income, although there is no single or easy action to take. Current constraints on village income include minimal tourist overnight stays in village areas and entrance fees not being paid directly to villages. In most villages where boats, tuktuks or tour operators stop, the tourism product is just seeing the village, and perhaps shopping. Often there is no village based activity or interpretation for which tourists would pay. Items for sale are very limited with repetition between villages of the same souvenirs, drinks and food. While some tour operators pay village fees, the fee system has not yet been standardised (Ashley, 2006, p35 and 36).

The main opportunities for increasing income in rural villages could include encouraging more tourists to spend nights in the rural areas, for example promoting village overnight stays in marketing and pre-departure information. Identifying entrepreneurs to work with villagers on upgrading and developing products and services, who in turn could support villagers to understand tourist tastes and to offer a wider range of quality food, drinks and shopping items. Assistance for villagers to develop fee paying activities that enable tourists to participate in and learn about local livelihood practices. Assist villagers to meet health and safety requirements so food for tour groups can be purchased locally and not be transported from Luang Prabang town. The system of entry fees could be reviewed to be standardised across attractions and develop consensus within government and villages on a fair distribution between residents, government, and

maintenance. Invest in basic village infrastructure, such as toilets and transport access, which facilitate stop offs by tourists and attract other enterprise development and assess whether and where there is opportunities to assist villages to establish simple accommodation facilities. Lastly, setting up programs to train quality guides as knowledgeable and sympathetic conversers between tourists and rural villagers to maintain standards and through recruiting people from the villages maintain a local flavour to excursions (Ashley, 2006, p viii, table 2).

Survey of Tourism activities in Luang Prabang

During the analysis of profiling tourism in Luang Prabang, tourism was described as a fixture of modern life for much of the world's population. With Laos's past of French colonialism, the town celebrates both Laos and French heritage tourism and through the process of packaging and promoting heritage, important sites become tourist destinations. (Dearborn and Stallmeyer, 2010, p251) This was evident walking around Luang Prabang town through the multicultural combination of French style architecture and cuisine merging with Laotian culture. The Researcher was interested to discover that even with a mix of cultural heritage, tourism activities centred on Laos features and French tourism activities were not advertised by tour operators. Luang Prabang town is comprised of many distinct villages, 29 of which are located inside the UNESCO Heritage Preservation Zone. These villages exist in an interdependent relationship where each village historically produced a specialty item such as rice crackers, woven textiles, or pottery, which was supplied to surrounding villages, some of these specialty items are demonstrated and sold to tourists during rural excursions.

On July 29th the research team conducted a random survey of tourism operators, where the research team walked around the central business district of Luang Prabang town and collected brochures advertising various types of activities tourists could partake in. A total of 139 tourism activities were collected from brochures, which were then sorted into 11 categories.

The majority of tourism operator stores displayed colourful signage advertising with photographs visual depictions of the types of activities tourists would

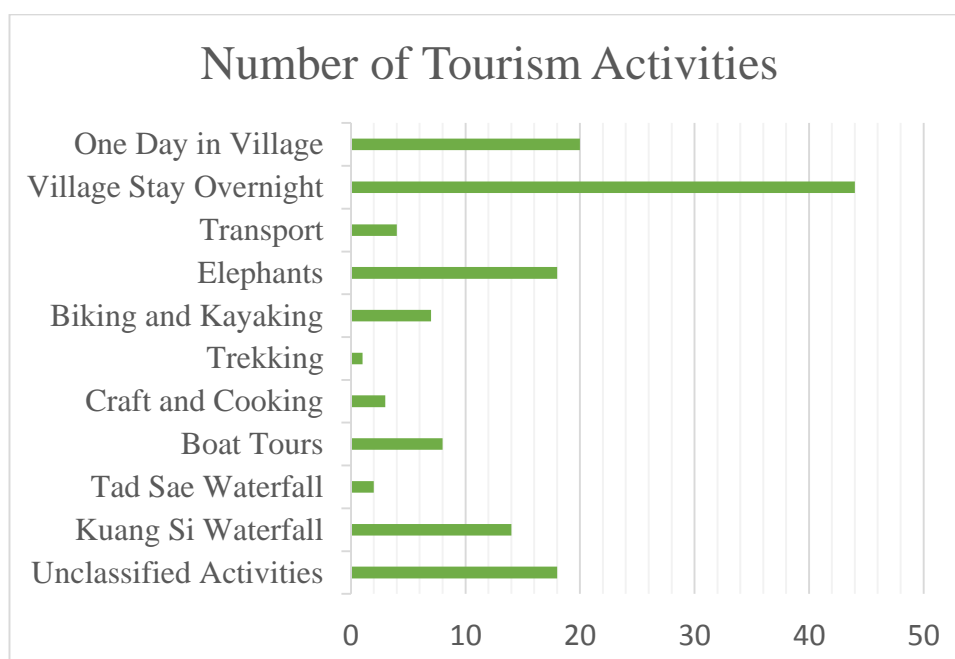
participate in on selected tours. A large variety of tours could be chosen from, whether based in Luang Prabang town touring temples or cooking, or in rural areas via road or boat to visit natural, human or animal related attractions. Time duration of tours ranged from half a day village tours to 3 day trekking tours.



Figure 15- Tourism advertising.
Photographer
Laura Phillips

The following table is a simplified visual display of information collected from the tourist brochures that were obtained from tourism operators within the Luang Prabang central business district. The majority of brochures contained activities for tourists to spend time in villages and to travel outside of Luang Prabang town into rural areas. This information provided basic findings to further profile tourism in Luang Prabang and highlight that there is a large number of opportunities for tourists wanting to participate in rural village excursions.

Table 1- A sample of tourism activities advertised by tourism operators in Luang Prabang central business district



Luang Prabang District Council

On July 31st, the research team met with the Chairman of the Luang Prabang District, Mr Soukanh Bounnhong, to explain the purpose of their research in Long Lan. Since Mr Bounnhong was to be absent from the District meeting between the research team, district council and representatives of Long Lan Village scheduled for the following day, an outline of the research project was briefly explained to him.

On August 1st, the research team met the Luang Prabang District Council at the Luang Prabang Province Urban Development and Administration Authority Office. There were 7 heads of the district departments, 4 people from Long Lan and the 5 people connected to the research team. The two PowerPoint presentations based on the preliminary research outlined above were discussed and content information was translated from English to Vietnamese and then into Laos. To ensure thorough audience understanding hard copies of the presentations notes were prepared in Lao for the heads of departments. Feedback and interest from both the district councillors and village representatives were expressed to

determine how the research would progress in Long Lan Village and permission to commence community based tourism research in the region was obtained.



*Figure 16 and 17: Luang Prabang District Council Meeting.
By Courtesy of SPERI*

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH IN LONG LAN

Preparation for Research in Long Lan

On August 2nd, the research team travelled to Long Lan village for a day of introductions. Mr Sonvang (Vice-head of Kok Van sub-district of Luang Prabang District), Mr Cho Sy Zang (Long Lan elder) and Mr Thangvan (Head of Kok Van sub-district) outlined the previous day's presentation at the District Office in Hmong for the community, introduced the research group and emphasised this group is for research not development activities. In total there were 25 villagers, 5 elders, 8 male village youths, 9 female youths, 2 older females, 4 farmer field school students and 2 district council authorities present. They welcomed the research group into Long Lan village to stay and hoped all villagers and management board would support the team to get the best research information. The research team met the village leader Mr Xong Chily, elders and key farmers students of the farmer field school. Mr Cho Sy encouraged the researchers to stay in Long Lan for a number of months and hoped that the team would participate in some traditional festivals, learn Hmong culture, local ways of life and some language. Mr Thangvan expressed that the research was good news for the region and hoped that it would contribute to the global project of poverty elimination by the year 2020.



Figure 18: First meeting to discuss research in Long Lan village. Photographer Dr Barber

On August 5th the research team relocated from Luang Prabang to Long Lan village to begin research. A meeting was held with Mr Chily, elders: Mr Cho Sy, Mr Chu Hor, Mr Chong Tua Ly, Mr Kong Minh Yang; the research team, Dr Keith, Mrs Phuong, and 5 villagers to find the most appropriate methods for going about the research in the village. The research objectives were shared again and a fuller description summarising Luang Prabang and rural excursion tourism was discussed as the research team's knowledge starting point for this research. A preference for tourists being referred to as visitors was also conveyed by Long Lan members.

On August 8th the research team had a meeting with Mr Chu Hor (Vice leader), where he shared his own thoughts for the research process conveying that Long Lan village wants more visitors but the villagers do not know how to make them stay for longer. When visitors come to Long Lan the villagers would like them to make financial contributions. He stated, before the war, Hmong people kept their culture to themselves, but after the war ended and open trade marketing progressed he feels there are now opportunities for Hmong people to share and exchange cultural uniqueness. He hopes that opening Hmong culture to outsiders will make it more valuable for ethnic minority groups. Future generations of Long Lan village want to develop the economy by encouraging visitors who can exchange knowledge such as crop planting and raising animal practices. Although, in encouraging more visitors to Long Lan village, there is a need to provide food and accommodation services. Mr Cho Hor suggested that a study tour to travel to Na Lan in Luang Namtha would be beneficial to learn ecotourism operations.

Mrs Phoung, an experienced SPERI staff member, attended an evening meeting with the villagers to gain perspectives of how villagers would like the research to be conducted. She met with the research team on August 9th to debrief what occurred during this meeting. 70 people from Long Lan village were present to share their views on the topic of tourism. Mr Chily made the decision to select a group of people to be interviewed by the research team and provided a list of 32 volunteered names. Mr Chu Sy asked for the research team to respond to three questions; 1) What does Long Lan have in terms of doing community tourism? 2)

What does Long Lan not have to operate community tourism? 3) How should Long Lan adjust or change to welcome more visitors?

Villagers expressed that the researchers needed background knowledge of what has previously been occurring in Long Lan in regards to tourism, before being able to answer questions. Villagers want the research team to feedback after each of Mr Cho Sy's questions are answered. In the past selected villages went on a study tour to Sa Pa in Vietnam and saw ethnic minorities participating in tourism and living well on tourism income. Many hoped that with having the research team staying in the village, strengths and weaknesses of areas for tourism could be evaluated. Concerns were expressed of the potential for Long Lan to become another overcrowded market area liken to the Luang Prabang night markets. Although that many Hmong people sell products at the night markets, villagers hope that Long Lan village will remain independent. The research team created a list of interview questions in response to Mr Cho Sy's questions and the village leader, Mr Chily, was asked to evaluate and approve these questions.

Three potential research methods were discussed between the research team and village leaders; focus groups, snowball effect and semi-structured interviews. Focus groups could be useful to group together village members with similar interests towards tourism in Long Lan, or by types of livelihood, age or existing community groups. In past experiences, the village leaders found in focus groups, a few people shared a lot of information and others remained quiet or did not attend multiple focus group sessions. Another method was the snowball effect, which describes contacting a small group of people who are interested in the research and they in turn contact more people interested in being involved. This technique is useful for receiving participants with genuine interest but cannot guarantee the number of participants or a demographic variety. Lastly, semi-structured interviews were discussed as a means of participants being able to express their knowledge about tourism with only minimal input from the research team interrupting thought processes. The research team would be able to establish a flexible interview guide and systematically work through the list of interested volunteered names supplied by the village leader.

On August 13th the research team meet with the village leader Mr Chily and vice leader Mr Nhia Chua Ly. A working timetable was created for scheduling 32 interviews around teaching English classes for 70 students from Long Lan village. Proposed days for interviewing participants were Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. Mr Nhia Chua Ly also suggested that the research team included questions in case participants felt they could not offer any information as they seldom left the village and do not know about tourism in other places. Mr Chily states that there are about 70 households in Long Lan and he would provide the research team with a list of names from 22 different households. Mr Nhia Chua Ly wants to provide participants from a mix of ages as elders and youths in the village may have different perspectives. The village leaders suggested that participants should be interviewed in their homes as many have not been to the farmer field school.

August 14th, the Researcher was provided with a list of articles about Long Lan village by Dr Barber to create a profile of Long Lan village. Useful articles included;

Luang Prabang province council. 2009: Long Lan village nature and culture, *Workshop on customary law base NRM and community development*;

Barber, K. 2011: Long Lan visit 12/08/2011, *Interview notes*;

Barber, K. ND: Long Lan land allocation: Reconciling statutory and customary law;

SPERI. 2012: Long Lan: BHE Ethnobotany- notes from data collection in September and October 2012, *Bio-Human ecology and ethnobotany in Long Lan*.

An article ‘No Song’ was also translated from Vietnamese to English by Mr Son outlining Long Lan’s village rules and regulations.

On August 16th, the research team began conducting interviews, working in order of participant availability. Interviews were conducted both in mornings and evenings. Questions were asked in Hmong and then answers were translated into Vietnamese and English for information to make written recordings. All

interviews were written up in word documents and collated in an excel table of categorised themes. This process was ongoing throughout the duration of interviewing. When translating researchers were unavailable Mr Anong Soukphaphone, a key farmer at the farmer field school, substituted providing both Laos and English language translations.

Verbal consent was gained before any semi-structured interview commenced and participants were made aware of their rights to withdraw their answers from this research. Information and data collected by myself for the purposes of thesis writing will be kept until its analysis has been completed and the thesis has been written. Thereafter, the Researcher will store whatever data (e.g. photographs of fieldwork experience; personal diary) that is not of a personal or confidential nature for the Researcher's personal use, and will destroy any data that is of a personal or confidential nature (fieldwork transcripts) once this thesis has been completed.

During the interviewing process, changes to the original participants list occurred. Since many male villagers stayed overnight in their fields as opposed to returning to their village residence, a few names were changed to meet the end of interviewing deadline. With the permission of Mr Chily, the research team in these situations approached the wives of participants to do the interview in their place. This proved to be beneficial especially in the case of interviewing village shop operators as although the men of the family own the shop, the women are left in the village to operate the business and observe tourism activities, while the men work in the fields and gardens. Although many participants did not know statistics for tourism activities in Long Lan village, a large amount of data was gained through daily observations of tourism movements, local and tourist behaviours and products bought from the village such as handicrafts and shop products or from Luang Prabang town such as day tour food packages. The interviewing process of the research finished on September 4th with a total of 32 participants.

Between September 5th to 7th, a report was written using the interview transcripts and categorised excel spreadsheet summarising the participants' response to

current and future tourism activities in Long Lan Village (see Chapter 6 for full report).

On September 13th, the research team participated in a 9 hour trek guided by Mr Cho Sy and Mr Xy khu Zang, witnessing a ceremony giving thanks to husband and wife rock spirits, the gardens on a mountain and observed salt being fed to cows. The purpose of this trek was to experience Long Lan trekking pathways that could potentially be future areas for developing community based tourism activities. Also the occasion allowed the research team to experience a Hmong spiritual ceremony.

On September 14th a visual presentation version of the written report was created in English to provide feedback to the community and answer Mr Cho Sy's three questions of tourism in Long Lan. 5 potential future options and researcher recommendations for tourism were suggested. The proposed presentation feedback script was translated into Vietnamese by Mr Chau and on September 18th the visual presentation slides were translated into Lao by Mr Phontip. The research team presented the visual presentation report to Long Lan village in the evening. This information was visually presented in Lao with commentary in English, Vietnamese and Hmong for full audience comprehension.

On September 21st the research team presented visual presentation script to Long Lan elder Mr Xy Khu Zang and village leaders Mr Chily and Mr Nhia Chua Ly. This smaller meeting allowed leaders to discuss their views of how the research progressed and their expectations of the research outcomes.



*Figure 19: Rice Paddies.
Figure 20: Mr Xay Khu's home.
Photographer Laura Phillips*

Figure 21: Research outcomes meeting with village leaders and elders. Courtesy of SPERI

September 22nd to 23rd, the final research report was written for translation into Lao language and the research project in Long Lan village finished.

After the completion of the fieldwork research in Long Lan, the research team travelled to Hanoi, Vietnam. On September 29th the Researcher presented the research process and community based tourism research visual presentations at the head SPERI office to SPERI and CIRUM staff, and international volunteers.

Table 2: Interview Guide

	<u>Interview Guide</u>
1	What is your name?
2	What is your age?
3	What is your gender
	What has been happening up to now in Long Lan Village:
4	When did Long Lan start receiving visitors in the village?
5	Who brings visitors to the village?
6	Is there a process of getting permission for bringing visitors to Long Lan? Explain your answer.
7	How do visitors learn about Long Lan village?
8	What do the visitors do when they come here?
9	How long do visitors stay in Long Lan?
10	What are the benefits of having visitors come to Long Lan?
11	What are the disadvantages of having visitors in Long Lan?
	What Long Lan villagers would like for the future:
12	How many people would you like to have coming to Long Lan; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. per day b. per week c. per month d. per year

13	<p>Would you like visitors to come as a group or as individuals?</p> <p>a) How many in a group?</p>
14	<p>Would you like visitors to stay overnight? If so where should they sleep?</p> <p>a) Individual guest house b) In households</p>
15	<p>Would you like the visitors to visit the gardens and the forest? What places would you like them to see?</p>
16	<p>What other places would you like visitors to see? For example, the airstrip used during the war</p>
17	<p>What type of village activities could visitors to be involved in? For example, helping in the garden, planting or harvesting crops, horse riding, feeding the animals, raising animals (pigs, cows, buffalos, dogs, ducks), herbal networking, learning Hmong language and learning about culture, New Year ceremony.</p>
18	<p>What activities would you not like the visitors to be involved in? Which ceremonies should tourists not participate in?</p>

CHAPTER 6

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Name: **Participant 1**

Age: 83

Gender: Male

All roads into Long Lan have been here since 1987, Participant 1 said tourists began arriving in 1975. The main nationalities of tourists to visit Long Lan are French and Japanese. The Main things to do are sightseeing around the village and forest. Japanese and Korean nationalities make up the majority of homestays. Participant 1 does not know who is giving permission for tourists to come to Long Lan but permission is a requirement.

Other than scenery, another reason tourists come to Long Lan is to learn about the village's 'hero status', given to them after the Indo-china war. Xenh Chu Ta (Laos) or Seuh Trupo (Hmong) was a local hero in the war, after his death his house was kept as a spirit house. This village hero status made other people want to move into the Long Lan area. Tourists are also interested in seeing the 'hero house', how Seuh Trupo lived and to look around the Hmong village.

Long Lan has no marketing channel relationship with LPB tourism operators, the tourism network operates by word of mouth as tourists share their experiences with friends in LPB and family. Participant 1 believes the villagers are happy with tourism in Long Lan as locals (Hmong) and international tourists can exchange cultural information.

Mentions German man who worked with SPERI. Happy that this man learnt Hmong language, cultural ceremonies but stated only culture could be exchanged. Participant 1 was responsible for teaching the German man about Hmong culture, this man also stayed in the 'hero house'.

Participant 1 only remembers information from long ago about tourism. Tourists only come in the dry season and the majority of them do not stay overnight, he suggests this is because of 'bad' conditions in Long Lan village. There is not enough water, food or electricity to supply both the local people and tourists. He suggests that Long Lan village could be more like a refreshments bus stop for tourism. But he gives his full support for having tourists stay overnight. He says in the dry season, the time for harvesting farmer fields, tourists arrive but there are no facilities for them to spend their cash. Tourist food comes from LPB not locally.

CHESH-Laos has been working with Long Lan village for 10 years, this village has not changed, on the economic side. Participant 1 is sad about this and hopes in the future Long Lan will grow economically. He acknowledges the most important thing is so sort out the water sources. Around the forest areas there are 12 villages all sharing the same water sources, some of these villages exploit the jungle/ forest this impacts the water source, if this continues then Long Lan village will not be able to stay in the area.

He hopes the young generation will go places to learn and share knowledge. He hopes more internationals will come and share their knowledge to make a more sustainable village.



Name: **Participant 2**

Age: N/ A

Gender: Female

When the road was finished in the 1970s tourists began arriving in Long Lan village. People from the area were still hostile after the end of the war, carrying guns and robbing people on the roads.

The majority of tourism in the area is sightseeing, tourists always come to Long Lan with tour guides from LPB, some are Laos and some are Hmong from other regions. Since Long Lan people are isolated from the majority of outside contact,

Participant 2 feels the village has no control or knowledge to set up tourism. All tourism activities come from LPB.

Participant 2 says tourists come for day trips only and do not stay overnight. Main attractions for tourists are to learn singing, culture and daily life of Hmong people. Two main kinds of tourists in Long Lan are sightseers and very few overnight stays. Those tourists who stay in the village are accommodated for by village elders or leaders. No villagers are involved in this tourism. Tourists do not make contributions to the villagers and vice versa. Villagers do not know what tourists want to do in the village as tourists only leave feedback about the scenery of the area. She does not know how many tourists come to Long Lan but feels there is more valuable scenery to share with tourists if they stay overnight. She wants tourists to learn the values behind what they see, such as symbols on door ways to warn of illness and ceremonies.

Long Lan village is open to making positive changes to customs and regulations that best suit the interests of the villagers. There are no barriers between local people and tourists so it is easy to gain access to local customs and knowledge. Participant 2 believes the living conditions of Long Lan village are getting better, in the past the villagers would have to walk 1 km to the herbal forest to collect water, now they only walk 4 metres. She wants tourists in the village but this should only happen when there are better conditions. At the moment there is only enough water, food and electricity to cater for the villagers. She wants the government to help with the facilities so villagers can provide for tourists.

She wants children to learn English so they can talk to the tourists. Children could do outside of the village training so that they can bring skills back to the village and help the community.



Name: **Participant 3**

Age: 68

Gender: Male

Originally Long Lan village was in a higher location with even more beautiful scenery. This area was involved in the Vietnam/USA war.

Before 1999 outsiders have been coming to Long Lan not for tourism intentions but for drugs. Many also took photos and film of drugs in the area.

After 1999 the government took steps to ban drug grown but this practice continued until 2005. After 1999 transport networks to Long Lan village improved. Tourists began arriving with or without guides from LPB; those without guides were asked to leave by the village.

The main trend of tourists is they come to Long Lan wanting to look at Hmong houses, farms, raising animal practices, taking pictures and films of surrounding landscapes. The majority of these tourists only stay or half a day, not many stay overnight in the village. Tourists only ask permission in LPB district not from the village for arranging visits. In the past tour guides were bring tourists without any form of permission, this practice has no stopped. When they arrive they wander wherever they want and villagers do not know what or where the tourists are going. Participant 3 suggests if tourists arrived unannounced in a different village they are likely to come to harm or be robbed, Long Lan is not happy about tourists turning up without permission but will still respect them.

Participant 3 is not certain on exact activities or main reasons of attracting tourists, his guess is drugs and the natural scenery. The majority of tourists come without many village contribution. It is free for tourists to arrive/ enter the village.

Main nationalities of tourists are western and Korean. These tourists arrive in Long Lan in the dry season, the majority in groups.

He wants more tourists in the future but also knows village has not got the facilities to keep them and also knows the tourists want to buy gifts. He is not sure how to get tourists to spend money e.g. 2,000kip. He realised the situation but not too sure how to attract more tourists to spend longer periods of time. There is a problem with food and water as currently the village has not got enough resources for both villagers and tourists.

In the future he would like to see more investment in facilities and supportive government policies to invest in Long Lan village to open any kind of service to keep tourists. There are areas outside of Long Lan village with beautiful scenery, if tourist numbers increase then there is potential to create more trekking pathways to the top of the surrounding mountains to see fields, raising animal practices.

He agrees with the concept of having more tourists in Long Lan as this would increase income opportunities. However, he does not want tourist behaviour such as wearing clothing above the knee to be seen by younger generations. Currently water resources are enough for day visitors to wash hands, faces and feet, but if they stay overnight there will not be enough water and power for both villagers and tourists to use.

Customary Laws need to be upheld even with tourists arriving in the village. Houses with ‘longleaf’ on door means only family can enter the household and only villagers can pass through the main gate. In this situation there will be one or two days where tourists will not be able to enter the village through the main gate. On this occasion the villagers will create an alternative gate so tourists can still enter the village without breaking customary laws.



Name: **Participant 4**

Age: N/A

Gender: Male

Participant 4 is one of the village leaders.

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan since 1993-1994 mainly in groups or individually without tour guides. The main nationalities of tourists are Dutch and French, mostly white tourists. These tourists either stay half a day or overnight (approx. 8-10 people in this group). There is not much contribution made by tourists to Long Lan village, some contributions are made in the form of school stationary supplies but not money form. Only a small number of tourists provide

contributions in the form of money, small gifts, lollies or household wares for families hosting homestays.

Tourists are mostly interested in photographing or filming the daily life of Hmong people e.g. morning, afternoon or evening activities/ routines. They also want to see the natural scenery. These resources are controlled by 70 households maintaining 11,000 hectares. Participant 4 wants to share knowledge and information between cultures, but he is concerned about the intentions of taking photos of the 'mess' of everyday life, e.g. inside households and places where Hmong people hand their washing. He is worried that such photos will depict the Hmong people as looking stupid or backwards.

In the future he would like to see more tourists coming to Long Lan to increase income opportunities. Participant 4 would like Long Lan villagers to make traditional items to market and sell such as knives, handcraft and food.

If more tourists arrive the village could create new trekking pathways of a scale of difficulty levels, some could go high up into the forest. Other treks could go in between Long Lan and other villagers.

Customary laws provide household and community regulations for cultural ceremonies, such as the longleaves marking an illness in the household. There will be notices and signage so tourists know what is occurring. If tourists ignore the signs then they will be fined by the village. Alternative gate will be created for tourists so they can still enter the village at this time.

Participant 4 identified three difficulties for having increased tourists in Long Lan village; food services, accommodation and water systems. The village will need more support and training workshops from the government to help build up facilities so they can cater for tourism.



Name: **Participant 5**

Age: 80

Gender: Male

Tourists began arriving in Long Lan after 1977. They are attracted to the area to learn about the village's 'hero status', a local villager who shot down an aeroplane during the war.

After the war finished many Americans came back to Long Lan to visit the area and look for landmines. As a result tourists began learning about Long Lan village and wanted to come to experience the village. Long Lan had two main attractions; the 'hero' village and drugs (known for being some of the best in Laos).

Long Lan receives many tourists in the dry season but the village has no formal accommodation services for tourists to stay overnight, thus the majority of tourists only stay for half a day. Tourists come in groups or as couples accompanied by tour guides. Some stay overnight and do activities such as seeing farms and animal raising which are further from the village. To arrange sleeping accommodation all tourists are gathered together at an elder's house and then are split into groups depending on which households have space to cater for them, these tourists leave early the next day for LPB.

Tourists take films and photos about Hmong household life, farming and raising animals.

Participant 5 hopes in the future that Long Lan will receive more tourists, the village could set up longer treks to force tourists into staying overnight in village accommodation and eating local food. One thing the village already has is natural scenery, with the main type of tourism being leisure based. He believes for Long Lan to make more interesting activities the community needs the support of the government. Future tourism could include learning about how Long Lan vegetables are grown with no pesticides or chemicals. Since not many of the tourists like basic foods such as rice and corn, the village could provide a selection of locally grown fruit.

Participant 5 would like to see tourists sharing their experiences and knowledge with local people. He is also worried that negative behaviour of tourists will be presented to younger generations of Long Lan villagers.

Members of the herbal medicine network could share their knowledge about herbal medicinal and healing practices. He hopes to exchange knowledge and

ideas with tourists. Part of this service could be the herbal medicine people using their services to dry herbal medicines to sell to tourists. Sell traditional herbal remedies to tourists such as cures for stomach bile.

Customary laws state that different clans have different laws that both villagers and tourists must abide to. For example is tourists stay overnight in a household they cannot sit or lie down under the house alter, this will cause cultural offense.

Also with accommodating international tourists hosts need to ensure that beds are long enough. Traditional clothes could be marketed to sell to tourists but need once again to be made in western sizes.



Name: **Participant 6**

Age: 40

Gender: Female

Member of the village women's group. Cannot remember when tourism in Long Lan began but it has been operating for a long time. The majority of tourists come in groups, only a few come as individual tours. The guides of these our groups are Laos people from LPB, not Hmong. The majority of tourists are western, not many are from Asia.

Main activities for tourists are taking photos of traditional singing and leaf whistling, filming fields, raising animals or vegetable fields on top of the mountains. Only a small amount of these tourists stay overnight. Accommodation prices are organised and set by village elders and leaders, the tourists are split up between households of elders. Households thus cannot charge tourists extra for staying overnight.

Participant 6 would like to have more tourists in Long Lan and understands that she and other women might have to make craft products to sell so tourists can do more than just looking at the scenery. She also wants tourists to report to village elders instead of only getting permission from LPB district. Long Lan could also make its own transport service for taking tourists to and from Long Lan village,

this service could also take tourists to other neighbouring villages. For this idea to work Long Lan will need support from the government.

She thinks the village needs to build a guest house as an alternative to tourists staying in households although she realised villagers are still poor and it will be difficult to build facilities without assistance. Currently tourists staying in village houses can be problematic as this is a private family space. It is important for tourists to learn and understand customary laws of the village, especially involving the household and community e.g. do not sit or lie down under the household altar, do not enter a house with long leaves at front door. The village also needs to manage water facilities. If a hotel was built for tourists it would still share the same water supply as the village and other households might not get a fair share of water. This could split village unity!

She sees tourism as being positive as Long Lan village will have more opportunities for product trading. Although, she is concerned that younger generations will copy bad western behaviours such as wearing short clothing or doing drugs.



Name: **Participant 7**

Age: 60

Gender: Male

Participant 7 is a village elder, he cannot remember when tourists began coming to Long Lan but tourism started a long time ago. The majority of tourists are western with only a few Asians. Most of these tourists contribute school stationary instead of money to the village.

Main ways tourists learn about Long Lan is through friends and other tourists in LPB. Originally Long Lan villagers were afraid of tourists as they thought outsiders were coming to start another war in the area. Now the villagers are welcoming and open to tourism. Mr Tong Paly suggests that the village has a lack of transport, this needs to be addressed if the village wants more tourists.

Only a small number of tourists stay overnight in Long Lan, the majority only spend 4-5 hours in the village. The majority take photos of families, way of life, scenery and vegetables. A small amount of tourists go up to the top of the mountains to see the farming fields. Participant 7 states there are other places for tourists to see that are not just in Long Lan. Shortcut treks could be set up between Long Lan and other villagers. This would make tourists spend longer in the area.

He suggests that Long Lan should build a guest house for tourists, the government could be asked to help fund this project. This could attract even more tourists to the area. Villagers will have more international friends and have chances to learn about the outside world. Children could also have more opportunities to learn and practice speaking English. Tourists could also be included in community work to understand Hmong lifestyle.

In the future Participant 7 would love to have more tourists come to Long Lan, this will give villagers opportunities to learn about the outside world and to also gain more income, especially if tourists are staying with households. Currently Long Lan has no services for tourism such as goods or food to sell. He suggests that families could prepare items to sell to tourists such as traditional clothes and items. However, he suggests this is hard to do without traditional training.

Participant 7 also highlighted some negative impacts of tourism in Long Lan village;

- Environment sanitation could decrease
- There could be more robberies with increased numbers of tourists
- Younger generations might learn bad behaviour from seeing tourism behaviour of relationships
- Younger generations might be impacted by western culture.

Customary Laws of the household and community such as the long leaves on the doors symbolising sickness and no entry to outsiders need to be taught and understood by tourists before entering the village. Each family clan has different customary laws, some can seem complicated but still need to be learned and understood by both villagers and tourists.



Name: **Participant 8**

Age: 65

Gender: Male

Tourists began arriving in Long Lan a long time ago. Tourist numbers increased in the year 2000. Tourists arrive with guide translators and have permission from the Luang Prabang district and tourism companies. Tourists arrive by road in groups of 2-8, no individuals come to Long Lan.

Tourism activities include; walking around the village, taking photos, visiting pig raising areas and going to the herbal forest. A few groups go into the mountains and go to a lookout spot on top of the mountains.

When tourists visit Long Lan they are unable to contribute to the village as there are no services to buy products or spend money. Tourists only pay if they are planning to stay overnight. The majority of tourists stay only a few hours in Long Lan before returning to LPB. Not many tourists stay overnight in the village. Those that stay are divided between village leaders and elder's households. Participant 8 said some tourists understand that the village is poor so contribute stationary for the local school.

In the future he hopes Long Lan will have more tourists but he says he does not understand the reasons for why tourists want to visit Long Lan. He states that he unsure what are 'good' or 'bad' attractions for tourists to see when visiting in the village.

He suggests that if Long Lan village wants to cater for more tourists then a restaurant or guesthouse could be built. If there are food services and accommodation then he believes that Long Lan can welcome bigger groups of tourists.

More activities could be set up for tourism such as longer treks to the herbal forests, mountain look out places and to visit farmer fields.

He also states there will be advantages and disadvantages to increased numbers of tourist arrivals:

- ☒ Villagers will be able to learn and gain knowledge from tourists
- ☒ Tourists and local people can exchange cultures.
- ☒ Tourists can learn about Long Lan village
- ☒ Western clothing styles/ length, hair dying practices and behaviour could influence younger generations. Western relationships (public display of affection) could influence behaviour of younger generations.
- ☒ Lack of water- there are two places to get water but there is not enough of the supply for both tourists and villagers. Tourists come in the dry season when water levels are at the lowest. When villagers go to fields they must carry water with them.
- ☒ Villagers have many ideas to share but do not have the experience to decide on facilities for tourists. He suggests that the government could help fund services for Long Lan village.

Customary Laws:

- Long leaves means there is an illness in a household and outsider tourists cannot enter the village.
- When women have children- tourists cannot go into the household until the child is one month old.
- If visitors want to stay in village they will be accommodate with village elders and leader.



Name: **Participant 9**

Age: 55

Gender: Female

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan for a long time. The majority of tourists come in the dry season and a few come in the rainy season. Tourists come by bus with guides. The majority of tourists are western, not many Asian nationalities. When tourists arrive they are required to have permission from the community, village elders and leaders. Village elders and leaders will instruct tourists what they can visit and what they are allowed to do in Long Lan.

She is not sure why tourists want to go to Long Lan village, ‘what is interesting or not about the village?’ The majority of tourists walk around the village, visit the

herbal forests and vegetable fields. Young tourists climb up the mountains to look out over Long Lan area.

Few groups of tourist stay overnight, the majority only stay in Long Lan for 5-6 hours then return to LPB. Tourists who do stay in the village are accommodated by village elders and leaders households. Tourists pay money towards food and accommodation. Some tourists give gifts of stationary for school teachers to educate students and games for the children to play. She hopes in the future that a guest house will be built for tourists so they do not need to stay in family households. She said there are problems with privacy and not having enough resources for both tourists and villagers. If some visitors wish to live with the villagers then they will be welcome.

In the future she hopes more tourists will come to Long Lan and that younger generations will continue to develop the village and make services for tourists. Long Lan families will improve how they welcome tourists to the village.

If tourists coming to Long Lan are female she is interested in showing the women how to do Hmong sewing, making clothing and share her Hmong style cooking.

There is more to see than just Long Lan village. Tourists can go on walks to mountains or alternatively do horse trekking. However, some tourists can be too tall or heavy for the local horses to carry.

Long Lan has lots of festivals, some tourists are welcome to participate and learn about Hmong culture such as the Hmong New Year celebrations. Tourists will also be encouraged to help in fields, dig and plant cabbages. Some ceremonies such as the 'longleaves' tourists will not be allowed to participate and will have to follow local customary law regulations on how to act.

Participant 9 sees some disadvantages with increased tourism in Long Lan village;

- Long Lan is very high and far in distance from LPB. Locally there are no services to provide food for tourists, thus the tourists bring all food with them from LPB.
- There is issues with the local water systems not are a large enough supply to cater for both tourists and local people. In the future she would like to see government support in improving this situation.



Name: **Participant 10**

Age: 28

Gender: Male

Participant 10 is a member of the Farmer Field School. He states that most of the Hmong people cannot protect and maintain the natural resources but although Long Lan is a small community the people maintain 11,000 hectares of sustainable natural resources.

Tourists have been arriving in Long Lan since 1999 in small groups. In the year 2000 tourist arrivals began increasing. Tourists come to Long Lan with Lao Leum, Hmong and Khmu guides of tourism companies. Some groups have 2-3 tourists or 10 plus people, there are almost no individual tourists. The majority of tourists coming to Long Lan are white, few are Asian.

Tourist activities in Long Lan include taking photographs of livelihood, horses returning from farms, raising animal places, small vegetable farms and the herbal medicine forest.

Only a small amount of tourists stay overnight, the maximum length of stay is 2 days. The majority of tourists only visit Long Lan for half a day. Those tourists who do stay are accommodated by village elders and leaders. Tourists are required to leave comments about their Long Lan experience in a community guest book.

Currently Long Lan has no food services and 100% of food is brought from LPB and other places outside of Long Lan by the tourism companies.

Participant 10 states life in Long Lan is tough and the local people do not have good living conditions. Tourists do not contribute money to the community but donate school stationary, this is only a small amount.

He wishes the village will be a community based tourism community to receive more tourists. Women could make textile crafts to sell to the tourists. He also

wants to create shortcut treks to scenery such as the Chai Caves and the Sua Ya look out.

He wants the tourists to be able to stay in a guesthouse and spend money in Long Lan buying from local producers. Adults in the village could help build the guest house, trek pathways and stores/ shops for tourism. However not everyone in the village shares the same point of view. A small group of people don't want to help with developing issues.

One of the research team asked Participant 10 two questions; (1) why are the people not supporting tourism? (2) Which matters do they not want to support?

- (1) Many of the village people have not been to school and lack knowledge, social awareness and have a lack of outside world information. As a result village services do not seem important.
- (2) Once again through a lack of knowledge some villagers do not want to create trekking pathways and do not want to support this idea as they do not know what the trekking will be used for.

In the future he would like to see;

- A market place in Long Lan where villagers can sell their traditional textiles, vegetables and food for tourists. If tourists go to Long Lan there will be three main products to sell; vegetables, animals and herbal medicines.
- If tourists come to Long Lan village a lot then the villagers will not have to take products to LPB but could just buy and sell to tourists.
- Tourists could take village products back to LPB and help with place and culture marketing.
- An increase in tourism income.
- Younger generations learning more languages and leaning about the outside world.

He is concerned that there might be an increase of bad people in Long Lan both villagers and tourists, he is worried what effect this will have on the village if bad people from both sides meet.

He also sees there are difficulties with tourism;

- Lack of host tourism experience

- Belief that each household is meant to have a working toilet
- Water issue, since tourists arrive in dry season these are limited water resources. Dry season starts in September, there are two main sources of water that form into one line before arriving in Long Lan.



Name: **Participant 11**

Age: 38

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan village for many years. All groups come with tour guides. The majority of tourists arriving in Long Lan are white, very few Asian tourists. The main contributions made by tourists is children's school books and other school based stationary.

The main activities for tourists is taking photographs of vegetable farms, raising animals and the herbal medicine forest. Villagers do not have goods to sell or give to tourists. A small amount of tourists go to mountain areas, areas for raising animals and vegetable farms.

Only a few groups of tourists stay overnight in the village, they are accommodated by village elders and leaders' households. The tourists are split up between different households depending on the number to tourists in the group and room available in households. He wants a guesthouse in the village instead of tourists staying in households.

New trekking trails could be created for tourists depending on demand such as going to the high mountain lookout, forest walks to site see.

Participant 11 would like to have more tourists coming to the village so that locals and tourists can exchange cultural knowledge. However he has seen that there are both strengths and weaknesses with tourism;

- ☒ He would like 1-2 households to run a guesthouse as a model for the villager to see working and follow.
- ☒ He would life the village youth to learn new languages.

- ☒ He has not had a lot of education and has not previously considered tourism but he would like tourists to come to Long Lan and share their experiences and knowledge with the community.
- ☒ He does not know how to make tourists stay longer in the village. For example he would like some to be interested in staying for a few weeks or even months.
- ☒ Long Lan people do not drink alcohol, if tourists drink alcohol in the village they will have negative impacts on younger generations.
- ☒ Lack of transport to and from village for tourism.
- ☒ Minimal water supplies in the dry season- there is another water source 2kms on lower hill but this must be manually collected in the dry season, it is not enough for local people let alone tourists.
- ☒ He is worried that in 5-10 years with increased numbers of family households and proposed guesthouses that village water supplies will be exploited and village families will suffer.



Name: **Participant 12**

Age: 54

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan for over 10 years. Main activity is it seeing around the village. Some tourists go to Caxia village in the morning, visit Long Lan in the afternoon and return to LPB in the evening. There is not just site to see in the village but also outside such as raising animal areas, forests, mountain landscapes and lookout points over the whole Long Lan area.

In the dry season tourists could be encouraged to go and stay in the mountains. It is possible to sleep there as there are no mosquitos or insects in this season, however safety for tourists and their belongings cannot be assured. Tourists who want to stay in jungle or forests must be prepared for the change of climate as it becomes cold at night time.

The majority of tourists come in groups accompanied by guides and bring all food with them from LPB, food is not supplied locally in Long Lan for tourists.

Three main contributions are made by tourists; food such as candy, accommodation costs and money. There is no regulations about compulsory contributions, thus tourists only provide gifts to the village if they feel inclined.

Participant 12 wants Long Lan to host more tourists, he feels this will create more job opportunities and provide villagers with a chance to share experiences and knowledge in planting and trading with tourists.

Long Lan is surrounded by beautiful natural scenery but lacks facilities, which makes hosting tourism difficult. At present the community has not got any facilities for tourists so he hopes that just small groups will come to the village for now.

Participant 12 wants a guesthouse for tourists to stay in but if there are too many tourists then they could be split into groups and hosted by households. To encourage tourists to stay longer in Long Lan village he suggests men share knowledge about house and road building, women could teach craft activities, elders could explain importance of herbal medicines grown in herbal forests and younger women could cook food suitable for western palates.

Participant 12 is concerned about the village water resources, levels of usage need to be managed. If lots of tourists come to Long Lan, he suggests that bottled water could be sold as part of a food service.

He hopes that in the future younger generations could become local tourism guides instead of tourists arriving with people from LPB tourism companies. He emphasises that tourists should be taught and understand village customary laws before entering Long Lan. Tourists should also ask permission before entering village households. For example, the 'long leaves' at the front of a household means tourists are not welcome to enter.



Name: **Participant 13**

Age: 47

Gender: Female

Participant 13 is a mother of 10 children, she states since she is female she does not travel much and cannot remember when tourists first began arriving in Long Lan.

The majority of tourists arrive in the dry season, accompanied by Laos guides from LPB and participate in activities such as site seeing, climbing some of the surrounding mountains, trekking in the jungle, raising animal areas and taking photographs of natural scenery and Hmong livelihood.

There are many short trekking pathways to the forest and also to other villages such as Naim Bo and Ong Pau. Tourists interested in these activities travel to other villagers as well as Long Lan, go up to the mountains and the jungle look outs of the whole Long Lan area.

Participant 13 states since she is female she does not have a chance to express her opinions in village involvement and does not know much about tourist contributions. She personally would like to see more tourists coming to Long Lan village. Women could make more handcrafts and textiles to sell to tourists. Her husband is a member of the herbal medicine network, she believes herbal medicine could be dried, packaged and sold to tourists.

Current accommodation services in Long Lan allows tourists to stay with village leaders and elder's households. She would like a guesthouse for tourists to stay in but if there is not enough accommodation for growing tourist numbers they could alternatively stay in households. She explains that many Hmong households are not considered to be clean by western standards and the tourists can be shocked by this experience.

She hopes with an increase of tourists coming to Long Lan that children could learn English to be able to converse with tourists and welcome tourists to the village. She hopes having English classes in Long Lan will reward the village.

She would like government and CHESH-Lao support to build up accommodation and water services for tourism. Currently there are limited water resources, she suggests in the rainy season the village could use their concrete water tanks to store water to use in the dry season.

There are both strengths and weaknesses for increased tourist numbers in Long Lan;

- ☑ Good for younger generation to learn English and increase opportunities to interact with international peoples.
- ☑ Cultural exchange- concerned that the western style of clothing will influence villagers and they will stop wearing traditional clothing.
- ☑ Customary law- only wants tourists to participate in a select few Hmong ceremonies such as the 'new rise' harvest ceremony. Does not want tourists to be involved in all aspects of Hmong festivities and cultural ceremonies.



Name: **Participant 14**

Age: 35

Gender: Male

Tourists began coming to Long Lan in 2010, 1 or 2 groups per day, not many individuals. Majority of tourists arrive with tour guides, the guide will gain permission from village leaders before bringing tourists to the area. When looking at natural scenery the guide will get a local person to accompany the group. All tour company guides are from LPB, not local people. Many local people do not know where tourists are from. Villagers dislike tourists who arrive without tour guides as they are unable to communicate with each other and there is no cultural exchange.

Main reasons tourists are attracted to Long Lan village;

- Tourists want to see minority people's livelihoods,
- Tourists want to travel for adventure e.g. experiencing natural scenery and high landscapes
- Long Lan's fields and raising animal area are on top of mountains, this makes the village different from others who have their fields by the road side.

Main tourist activities in Long Lan include site seeing, taking photographs of livelihood and traditional clothing and mountain top lookouts of the area, the majority of tourists return to LPB after doing these activities.

Most overnight staying tourists want to learn about Hmong livelihood such as child rearing and teaching practices. To accommodate groups of tourists, the village elders and leaders split up the groups for sleeping arrangements. Tourists only pay for accommodation in the village.

Participant 14 wants to know what some advantages are for Long Lan village as there are no craft or food services to gain income from tourists. He is not happy with current tourism in Long Lan as there are no services or accommodation to provide for tourists. He states having tourists in the village is an economic advantage but there are no available services to take full opportunity of this situation. He would like more tourists to come to Long Lan and for villagers to open more services of craft and textiles for tourism income opportunities. The majority of tourist contributions are candy and stationary for the local school.

He would ideally like to have 1 to 2 groups per day, 3 to 4 groups in a week and about 10 groups visit Long Lan per month. He would like to have groups with 10 or more people in them. He states as soon as Long Lan has guest accommodation and services, the villagers would like even more tourists to provide opportunities for villagers to increase income. Villagers would prefer tourists to stay in guesthouse as opposed to households as many households have a lack of facilities. Tourists will be provided with unlimited time to stay in Long Lan.

In future hopes local guides could be used and paid to show tourists around Long Lan's attractions such as mountains and raising animal areas. Local guides could take tourists to stay overnight in the forest or mountains. Hmong people have no prohibited areas in Long Lan and are willing to take tourists anywhere of interest, this is not the same for other ethnic groups such as the Khmu who have many restrictions of areas tourists cannot go. In Long Lan although areas are unrestricted tourists must abide by customary laws such as the significance of 'long leaves' on households and use an alternative gate for entry.

Participant 14 is interested in involving tourists in community work such as raising animals and planting crops, tourists will always be welcome to take part but he is concerned that many tourists are afraid of getting dirty.



Name: **Participant 15**

Age: 60

Gender: Male

Participant 15 cannot remember when tourists first began arriving but they have been coming to Long Lan for more than 10 years. The majority of tourists arrive in groups, few individuals. Guides are Khmu or Hmong but all are from LPB. Most tourists stay for half a day, some stay overnight in the village and pay for accommodation.

Main attractions tourists want to see are the cultural differences between countries, cultural uniqueness, discover the daily life activities, scenery and customary laws of villagers. Tourists are also interested in taking photographs and films of people returning from vegetable farms carrying produce, scenery, looking around the village and traditional hand crafts. Tourists also want to make comparisons of rural and urban livelihoods.

Outside of the village there are many more places for tourists to experience such as the glass caves and mountain lookouts over the Long Lan area. However, pathways to these areas are no longer maintained, he wants villagers to maintain these pathways so they are ready and accessible. Other attractions for tourists to see are cutting vegetables, feeding animals and traditional leaf whistling. Tourists need to be taught customary laws of the community and different clans.

Villagers feel happy to welcome tourists and new opportunities but are unhappy as the village currently do not have any tourist services. Many villagers feel they cannot provide for the tourists such as tourists wanting to purchase handcrafts as souvenirs or traditional food to eat. Some of the services the village are currently lacking are accommodation, food and water system services.

Water resources come from the Tro Cau Mountains which is 6 to 7 kms away from Long Lan village. He suggests during the rainy season rain water could be collected in tanks to be used in the dry season. He hopes for a village fund to have a more stable resource for the village.

In future Participant 15 would like Long Lan to host at least 1 group of tourists per day. He has observed that Asian tourists arrive in groups of 8-10 people but western tourists arrive in groups of 2 or 3 people, he would like to see more balanced tourist group numbers. If more people tourists want to stay overnight he wants groups to be split fairly between households so that accommodation fees can be share equally. If households receive the same amount of opportunities then village unity will not be impacted.



Name: **Participant 16**

Age: 46

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan village since 1982. First groups were Vietnamese, who left their vehicles at the farmer field and walked up to the village, since French, Australian and Russian tourists have been arriving in Long Lan. The majority of tourists come with tour guides with permission from the LPB district.

When villagers ask tourists why they wanted to go to Long Lan they discovered that the majority of tourists learnt about the area from advertising seen from tourism companies. These tourists want to see the forest, mountains and the big trees which are not found in their countries.

Main tourist attractions are sightseeing, taking photographs of the village daily life, going to mountains, raising animal areas and some go to Caxia village. The majority of tourist only spend 1 to 2 hours in Long Lan before returning to LPB, few tourists stay overnight. In 2010 Long Lan had their first group of Korean tourists stay in the village.

Tourists contribute not only accommodation fees but also school stationary. Since Long Lan is currently lacking in services the villagers are uncertain how to keep tourists staying in the village. In the past both tourists and the tour company drivers had to pay fees, drivers were unhappy about this.

Some disadvantages of tourism are;

- Tourists taking photographs without telling villagers of their intentions, he is worried what the photographs will in other countries.
- Small number of tourists arriving without any permission and spend half an hour to 1 hour in village. Unhappy as intentions are unidentified.

Participant 16 would like Long Lan to host 1 to 2 groups of tourists per day and would like to show more attractions than just the village. He would like larger group numbers of 10 to 12 people, if groups are too large there will not be enough accommodation facilities for them to stay overnight.

In future if tourists want to visit areas outside of Long Lan village local people will be happy to be guides to show tourists around and suggest photograph opportunities. However if tourists arrive without permission villagers will not share any information with them.

Participant 16 is concerned that increased numbers of tourists that bad behaviour will influence villagers such as short clothing and drinking alcohol activities. Apart from behaviour he wants to encourage tourists to participate in daily activities such as household activities and farming practices.

Tourists need to be aware of customary laws as the regulations differ between clans in the community;

- 'Long leaves' - tourists cannot enter a household for 2-3 days and must enter the village through an alternative gate.
- Households with new born babies- tourists cannot enter the household until the child is 30 days old. If people wear a hat into the household during this time they must leave it there until the 30 days have passed.



Name: **Participant 17**

Age: 32

Gender: Male

Tourists began arriving in Long Lan since 1998-1999, at this time Participant 17 was in primary school. Majority of tourists arrive with tour guides of Laos, Hmong and Khmu nationalities. He is unsure of the process for tourists gain permission to enter Long Lan but there are officers who always check tourists have the correct permission.

Main activities are site seeing around the village and natural scenery. Majority of tourists stay half a day in the village, few stay overnight.

All food is brought with tourists and guides from LPB and they only stay in village until they finish their food supplies.

Contributions from tourists are minimal and consist mostly of school stationary and clothing for children. He is pleased tourists want to come to Long Lan but would like more monetary contributions. The village also has no services but could sell traditional products for trade such as sticky rice baskets, knives and clothing.

Participant 17 would like to have 1 to 2 groups of 4 to 5 people arriving in Long Lan per day to provide villagers with opportunities to increase their productivity and income from tourism.

In future he would like overnight tourists to be accommodated in guesthouses as village households are private spaces and many do not have facilities which tourists expect such as toilets.

He suggests some new potential tourism services;

- Opening food services
- Training and researching symbols for wood carvings to be sold to tourists
- Creating new trekking pathways up to mountains and other villagers. If tourist numbers increase he will help to maintain these pathways but if numbers are low maintenance will not be worth the effort.
- Would like to include tourists in community work such as going up to mountain farming and raising animal areas. Villagers are happy for tourists to observe and participate.

Customary laws, tourists need to understand regulations differ between community and households. ‘Longleaves’ people outside the family clan, not just tourists, are prohibited in entering the household.



Name: **Participant 18**

Age: 28

Gender: Female

Participant 18 is a local store operator in Long Lan village.

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan for more than 10 years in guides accompanied by tour guides, the majority of guides are Hmong but do not have permission to enter the village.

Main attractions are site seeing, walking around the village and visiting the herbal and coffee forests. Majority of tourists only stay for the day, few stay overnight. 1 group of Japanese tourists stayed in the village for 5 days and 3 nights.

Main contributions by tourists is stationary for the local school. Income from tourism is minimal as guides bring food from LPB, this makes it difficult to sell products from the local store to tourists.

In the future, Participant 18 would like 2 to 3 groups of tourists with 10 people per week arriving in Long Lan village. These tourists could be accommodated in households. She states there are difficulties corresponding with tourists as a result of language barriers. Many tourists and villagers want to exchange their knowledge and culture but are unable to due to language barriers. This is also a difficulty for villagers wanting to involve tourists in community work.

Depending on tourism interests, the villagers could create new trekking pathways between mountains, other villagers and areas for raising animals.

Customary laws need to be explained to tourists. ‘Long leaves’ on households, if outsiders enter the household then the ceremony will need to be repeated. Outsiders cannot enter the household where there is a new born baby for 30 days,

if villagers visit the household during this time then they can only wear their clothing. If they wear a hat or carry bags into the house then those items must remain in the household until the child is 30 days old.



Name: **Participant 19**

Age: 40

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan for more than 10 years. Guides bring tourists to the village with permission from LPB district, but many do not meet with the village leader to ask permission to enter Long Lan.

Main tourist attractions are the mountains nature, walking around Long Lan village. The majority of tourists only spend the day in Long Lan before returning to LPB. Tourists are interested in climbing up the Htru Mountain (Elephant Mountain) to a lookout area. Participant 19 states there are more places to show tourists instead of only walking around the village.

Tourists who choose to stay usually spend 1 or 2 nights in the village and see the herbal medicine forest. These people pay for accommodation. He would like 1 or 2 groups of 4 to 5 people to arrive on Long Lan per day.

Participant 19 is happy that tourists are arriving as they want to support water systems and learn the process of producing coffee.

In the future he wants a centre to support and prepare roads to make Long Lan more accessible. Currently roads to the village are difficult to use if it rains.

Customary law- if snakes come to the household the Hmong people perform a ceremony to prevent family problems from occurring. After this ceremony tourists cannot enter the household for 3 days. When villagers perform the Long Mong Cong (Laos) ceremony, tourists are welcome to participate but afterwards cannot enter the household again for 2 days.



Name: **Participant 20**

Age: 59

Gender: Male

Tourists began arriving in Long Lan in the year 2000, tourist arrival numbers have been increasing since this time. Before entering the village tourists must talk to the village leader, but some are arriving without any permission.

Most tourists want to see the natural landscape as the village protects their forests, mountains and the air is unpolluted. When tourists arrive villagers are happy and welcoming. The majority of tourists walk around the village before returning to LPB. Some travel up the mountains to Caxia village and use local guides to look around.

There are no tourist contribution to the Long Lan villagers, but Participant 20 is unsure whether tourists pay the village leaders. As a result in the future he will not show places too far from the village as he will not receive any income. He is unsure of what the village can do in the future as there are no services to sell products to tourists.

In the future, Participant 20 would like 2 to 3 groups of 4 to 5 tourists arriving per day and hopes for 4 to 5 groups to visit within a week, if lots of tourists arrive in Long Lan then the village will have more opportunities for earn income. If these visitors want to stay 1 or 2 nights the tourists could choose whether they want to be accommodated by Hmong households or guesthouses.

Tourists who stay overnight eat local food prepared by the accommodating household, day tourists bring all food with them from LPB.

Participant 20 personally prefers tourists to stay in households as he can receive income. If visitors stay with Hmong families they can be included in activities such as Hmong sewing, gardening, visiting mountains or forest areas and planting crops. The villagers are willing to share their knowledge with tourists but tourists need guides to translate conversations. Without guides there are language barriers between the host community and tourists.

Customary law- 'long leaves' ceremony, tourists are welcome to enter household and watch this ceremony but afterwards tourists are prohibited from re-entering the household for 3 to 7 days. Tourists are welcome to go to forests and any places around the Long Lan area accompanied by a villager. Baci and Long Mon Cong ceremonies tourists are welcome to participate in the activities.

He is concerned that western behaviour could have a negative influence on younger generations as many tourists wear short clothing. He is interested in children having opportunities to learn English from tourists, he would like to learn too, but believes he is too old.

He hopes the village will create services for tourism such as sewing Hmong clothing, traditional knives and basket weaving. If there are lots of products then tourists will be able to choose what they want to buy. He could make different sized baskets to sell. A small basket could be sold for 20, 000 kip and a big basket of 60cms for 150,000 kip. Traditional clothing of Hmong skirts and shirts could be sold together for between 1 million to 3 million kip as men's clothing takes 1 month to produce and women's clothing takes 1 whole year.



Name: **Participant 21**

Age: 27

Gender: Female

Participant 21 is an operator of a village store, she has lived in the village for 6 years and is uncertain about when tourists began arriving in Long Lan village. Majority of tourists are European and Asian and arrive with tour guides of Hmong or Lao Lum nationalities. Tourists must talk to the village leaders to gain permission before entering the village.

Participant 21 does not know how tourists learn about the village or why they want to visit the area.

Main tourist attractions are photographing the beautiful forests and mountains, tourists also walk around the village taking photographs of Hmong livelihoods.

Currently Long Lan has very few services for tourists to spend money, some tourists buy food and water from her store but the majority of tourists food comes from LPB. In the future she and other women could sew small bags to sell to tourists for 20,000 kip as souvenirs.

In the future she wants 2 to 3 groups of tourists arriving in Long Lan per day and suggests that the road will need to be maintained so tourists can travel to the village every day.



Name: **Participant 22**

Age: 27

Gender: Male

Tourists have been arriving in Long Lan village for more than 10 years. Tourists come with guides who obtain permission from the LPB district and then talk to the village leaders. Main contributions are school stationary and small cakes for village children. Majority of tourists are western (Canada, Spain, German, and American).

Participant 22 wants to take tourists to the fields as his job is to work with soil and wants to share his knowledge with tourists of how soil is needed for growing food. He also want to guide tourists to animal raising areas if they are interested and also to mountain pathways and caves that tourists have not seen before. Long Lan village has many places for tourists to see.

In the past a group of American students came to Long Lan and wanted to climb the mountain to see the raising cow areas. The American students found walking up the steep mountain path very difficult as the trek took a long time and the students were physically unfit.

In the future he wants to have 4 to 5 groups of tourists per day with 6 to 8 people in each group. If the tourists wish to stay 1 or 2 nights they will have a choice of staying with family households or a guesthouse. He prefers tourists to stay with households as Hmong people will be able to welcome tourists to the village and

share knowledge of Hmong people. Tourists who stay with Hmong families can participate in household activities such as morning routines, feeding pigs, collecting grass for horses and exchanging cultural experiences.

When tourists stay overnight in the village, households cook local food but if they are only in Long Lan for the day the guides bring all food from LPB. Some of the local food cooked for tourists includes Choko (Susu), cabbage and local fruit. Since Long Lan is far from the markets the majority of meats are vegetarian. Villagers talk about food between households to improve their cooking to suit western tastes.

Participant 22 had a German man stay in his household for 1 year, this man participated in morning and afternoon community work with his family. The German man learnt to speak and write in Hmong language and still contacts through phone calls and emails with Participant 22's family.

In the future he hopes Long Lan will become a travel destination and suggests that local people could make traditional clothing to sell. Participant 22 states that his wife is a celebrated seamstress and people from LPB come to their household to buy her handcrafts. Last month his family had an American woman in her early 20s visit and his wife gave the woman a set of Hmong clothing as she was interesting in the sewing process of producing traditional clothing.

Customary laws- Baci ceremony conductor decides who is allowed to attend and who is excluded from participating, the majority of outsiders are welcome but must realise they may not be welcome the following day. This ceremony is usually performed at night time after tourists have been divided into their accommodating households.



Name: **Participant 23**

Age: 76

Gender: Male

Tourists have been arriving in Long Lan village before 1999. Some tourists arrive with no guides and just want to look around the village before returning to LPB. The majority have permission from the LPB district and talk to the village leader before entering the village.

Early tourists used to park their cars at the base of the mountain and walk up to the village as the road is inaccessible after it has been raining. Participant 23 believes tourists found village on google maps and read the advertising of beautiful scenery and traditional Hmong livelihoods.

Roads up to Long Lan village were established in 1986-88, at this time Hmong people made their farms all over the area until elders and village leaders allocated land for different purposed area such as village residents, farming and raising animals. In the village trees were also planted to provide shade in summer and be sustainable for future generations.

Participant 23 does not know the tourists' intentions or what they are looking for in Long Lan. Are they interested in daily life or going to see the forests?

Main tourist attractions are site seeing, going to vegetable gardens, the raising animal areas, herbal medicine forests and seeing Hmong livelihood.

The majority of tourists visit Long Lan for one day, few stay overnight. In the future he would like 1 to 2 tourists arriving per day, if they have permission then tourists will be welcome to stay the night. Groups without permission only stay in Long Lan for a few hours.

Strengths and weaknesses of tourism in Long Lan;

Tourists are coming to the village wanting to learn and share village knowledge.

- ☒ Bad people are pretending to be tourists and taking opportunity to steal from both tourists in village and local people's animals from the mountains. Their actions are disturbing the village, the village army is working to prevent these people from arriving.
- ☒ In future wants all tourists to come to Long Lan with permission so villagers will know who is really a tourist and who is a stranger.

In the future, participant 23 would like 1 group of tourists to arrive per day, he is aware there is a lack of services and facilities and currently the village cannot provide products for tourists to spend money.

Depending on tourism demand villagers could make trekking pathways and supply some local food for tourists to eat. He wants government support to build up village facilities for tourism.

He would like to encourage tourists to participate in community work and household activities but is concerned that the language barriers will prevent interaction and the sharing of cultural knowledge.

When tourists want to go to the mountains local people are unsure of what level of difficulty for which pathway to take as there is a language barrier. Some routes are too long for tourists only staying a few hours, other pathways are too tough to travel both ways to and from the mountains.

Customary laws, he wants tourists to be taught and understand the differences of community and clan customary laws before entering Long Lan village to be culturally respectful.



Name: **Participant 24**

Age: 48

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan village for over 30 years. The majority come in tour groups, some arrive with permission while others do not have any permission. The majority of tourists spend 2 to 3 hours in the village, only a few stay overnight.

Participant 24 does not know the purpose of tourists coming to Long Lan, what they want to see or do. Villagers lack knowledge about how to provide services for tourists and many tourists do not stay overnight in the village. He is unhappy that villages have no products to sell to tourists. He suggest villagers could produce swing, craft, traditional clothing and weave baskets to sell. He said he

could make small baskets to sell for 10-20,000kip and big baskets to sell for 50-70,000 kip.

In the future Participant 24 would like 1 to 2 groups of tourists with 4 to 5 people arriving every day. Tourists can choose whether they will stay with family households or in a guesthouse. Staying with family households provides opportunities for cultural exchange and also income for hosting families. If tourists stay in village guesthouse, households will miss out on opportunities for cultural learning and exchange.

Depending on tourism demand, villagers could take tourists to raising animal areas, field and vegetable gardens. He would like tourists to participate in community work of planting crops, feeding animals and harvesting vegetables.

Customary Law, tourists staying in households must sleep with their heads facing north, lying in any other direction will cause cultural offense. This is similar to mong burial practices where the person's head is to the north and eyes are to the south.



Name: **Participant 25**

Age: 35

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan village since 2005. The majority of tourists come with guides, he is unsure if they have permission for the LPB district or the village leaders. Majority of tourists are Japanese and American.

Participant 25 is uncertain how tourists know about Long Lan village.

Main attractions are going to see the forest, Hmong peoples' livelihood and walking around the village and only stay for a few hours. Guides bring food for tourists from LPB.

Villagers cannot provide many services for tourists but could supply products of traditional clothing, wooden chairs and woven sticky rice baskets, but do not sell much to tourists.

In the future he would like the village to create services for tourism but he is unable to make baskets or knives to sell to tourists, his wife can only produce simple sewing such as pants.

Participant 25 is happy to have tourists in Long Lan and wants them to travel around area to see outside of the village. He is not worried about tourist behaviour or dress style having an impact on younger generations.

In the future he wants more tourists of 2 to 3 groups with 1 to 5 people per day, if they want to stay 1 or 2 nights tourists are welcome in the village. He wants tourists to stay with households not guesthouses and hosting families will be able to earn tourism income. Tourists could participate in household activities and community work.

He could take tourists on treks to beautiful places. A group of 1 to 5 people could do a 2 hour trek for 30,000kip to forest areas or could do a 2 day trek through mountains to the Huoi Dai street and then go down to Naim Bo village.

In the future he would like more English classes in Long Lan for younger generations to learn and use English language with tourists. He believes learning English will also help the community to develop for tourism.

Customary laws, 'Long Mon Chong or long leaves' ceremony means tourists cannot enter households. Tourists are prohibited from going to the Hmong cemeteries.



Name: **Participant 26**

Age: 45

Gender: Male

Tourists began coming to Long Lan for more than 10 years. Majority of nationalities are white and Asian tourists, many tourists come with guides to the village with permission from LPB district and talk to village leaders. Tourists only stay a few hours, some stay overnight. Last year a group of Korean people stayed in Long Lan for 2 nights. This group slept in the village meeting house and paid the village leader 10,000kip and 10,000kip from a village group to protect them.

Participant 26 is uncertain how tourists learn about Long Lan village, he guesses tourists must get information off the internet.

Main activities are playing with children, taking photographs and films of Hmong livelihood, walking around the village and going to the forest.

Participant 26 is happy that the village is receiving more tourists but is unhappy that Long Lan is lacking in services for tourism to earn income.

In the future he wants to have lots of tourists coming to Long Lan. In 1 day wants 10 groups of tourists. He wants to have 10 or more people, if they choose to stay overnight then tourists can choose between staying with households or a guesthouse. He is concerned that some families do not have enough blankets for tourists.

Overnight tourists could be taken to activities by local people and could participate in community work, but this is difficult because of the language barrier making activities hard to explain and share knowledge.

If the village has lots of products to sell then the local people will receive tourism income, but this is difficult without first having money and support to buy the materials to make products such as tools and metal to make knives.

Tourist behaviour and clothing styles are not seen to have a negative impact on the villagers. Participant 26 hopes younger generations will study English and during holiday tourists could help teach English classes for children. He wants children to speak with tourists to practice and learn quickly and hopes children and tourists will play together every day.

Customary laws, visitors can go to all places around the Long Lan area. 'Long leaves' ceremony tourists can visit during and after this ceremony. Tourists will

be invited to watch the ceremony but must not help or touch any of the ceremonial objects or walk in front of people conducting the ceremony.



Name: **Participant 27**

Age: 48

Gender: Male

Tourists have been arriving in Long Lan since 1989, the majority of tourists come with guides. Permission is received from LPB district and when tourists arrive they also speak with the village leader. Main tourist nationalities are Japanese and American. The majority of tourists stay 1 day in Long Lan before returning to LPB, the Japanese group stayed a few nights in a village elder's household.

There are no tourist contributions as the village has no services for tourists to spend money.

If tourists stay in the village households local food is provided such as soup made from chicken, cabbage and Choko (Susu).

Tourists want to learn how the villagers protect their forest and learn about the daily life of Hmong people.

Participant 27 is happy tourists are coming to Long Lan and all villagers are welcoming. In the future if more tourists arrive he would like to make improvements on village services. Would like help from SPERI or CHESH-Lao to build a restaurant, guesthouse and market than tourists will have local products to sell.

In the future he wants 2 or 3 groups of tourists arriving in Long Lan per day, overnight tourists can choose to stay in a household or a guesthouse. He prefers tourists to stay with households but the language barrier makes talking and sharing cultures difficult.

He could take tourists on a 3-4 hour trek up the mountains to Caxia village and back to Long Lan. He said this trek could be longer if tourists are physically unfit.

He would also like to take tourists to a mountain lookout and will discuss with villagers to find new places to share with tourists.

Participant 27 wants tourists to participate in community work. He want tourists to share their culture and knowledge of differences between countries. He suggests using a computer to write and translate conversations.

Customary laws, Long Mon Chong or Baci tourists are welcome to join in the ceremony on the first day but afterwards cannot enter the household again for 3 days.

He wants to encourage tourists to teach English and play with the children in the village. In the future he wants children to study and learn different languages and knowledge from the tourists. Tourist clothing and social behaviours are not seen as a problem.

Tourist contributions for Long Lan are mostly children's toys, cakes and school books. All overnight tourists pay for accommodation, 15,000 kip per person. Participant 27 states if villagers are welcoming and polite tourist sometimes give donations of 50,000-100,000 kip to the village.

Current tourism services include selling traditional Hmong pants, 50-70,000 kip and woven baskets, 100-150,000 kip. He suggests 2000 of these products are sold per year.



Name: **Participant 28**

Age: 30

Gender: Male

Tourists began arriving in Long Lan more than 5 years ago. The first group of tourists were Vietnamese, since French and Americans have also come to Long Lan. All tourists come with guides and have permission from LPB and talk with the village leader before entering the village.

Tourists only stay 1 day. Main tourist contribution is paying for accommodation.

Most tourists want to know about the coffee forest and how the Hmong people protect their forests and natural landscapes. They also walk around the village.

Overnight tourists stay with Hmong households. Food for overnight tourists is a combination of food brought from LPB and local foods such as Choko (Susu) and cabbage. Villagers count how much tourists eat and how long they eat to charge for cooking service. He prefers tourists to stay in guesthouses as language barriers make communications difficult and having young children in the households could disrupt sleep.

Participant 28 is happy that tourists are coming to Long Lan and has no problems with tourist clothing as he understands that tourists live different lifestyles and their cultures are different to Hmong culture.

In the future, he would like more tourists and hopes that they will share their knowledge with the community such as teaching English and providing school study resources. He wants 2 tourist groups per day with 10 people in each group.

Other activities which he wants tourists to experience are going to the fields, mountains, forests and raising animal areas. For these treks he wants to charge groups 50-60,000 kip per trip. If tourists want to stay in the village for a long time he want them to participate in community work such as harvesting vegetables and preparing soil for sowing seeds. He wants to work with tourists to share cultural knowledge.

Customary Law ceremonies such as Baci he states tourists are welcome to join in the ceremony. Long Mon Chong ceremony tourists are welcome to join in the first day but cannot re-enter the household for 3 days. Families will decide who is allowed to participate in ceremonies.

Currently the villagers sell traditional pants and skirts to tourists, but few items are sold. In the future he wants more services in Long Lan and hopes to sell boy's, men's and women's clothing for 500,000 kip.

In future, Participant 28 wants SPERI or CHESH-Lao to do research and help the village build up services such as restaurants and toilets to be more suitable for tourism.



Name: **Participant 29**

Age: 29

Gender: Male

Tourists began arriving 3 years ago to Long Lan. Majority of tourists are French and are accompanied by tour guides to translate conversations for them. Guides have permission from LPB and talk to village elders and leaders before entering the village.

Participant 29 is unsure how tourists know about Long Lan village.

Main attractions are going to the forest, livelihoods of Hmong people and learning how Hmong people protect their forests.

Majority of tourists stay 2 to 3 hours in the village before returning to LPB. There are no tourist contributions to the village a local people have no products to sell.

Participant 29 is happy tourists are arriving in Long Lan. He is unconcerned about tourists' behaviour or clothing having an impact on younger generations.

Language barriers make conversing difficult and sharing knowledge. He would like younger generations to learn English and in the future become local guides for the village.

In the future he would like 2 to 3 tourist groups per day. He wants each group to have 3 people and prefers tourists to stay in the village leaders households. If there are lots of tourists then the groups will be divided between the village households. He is concerned that in Long Lan there are only a few places to show tourists. If tourists want to do treks around the area he will guide them to Huoi Xala village which takes 3 hours. He wishes to charge up to 100,000 kip per trip for his services.

If tourists stay the night villagers will encourage tourists to participate in community work. In the past this has not been successful, instead of helping in the fields tourists took photographs and films, ate local food and then went back to

the village. He hopes future tourists will be interesting in working together with villagers and sharing knowledge.

Customary law ceremonies such as the Baci tourists will be encouraged to attend. In his household he wants to welcome tourists to participate in every ceremony.



Name: **Participant 30**

Age: 27

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan since 2004. Majority of tourists come as individuals accompanied by tour guides. All tour guides are Laos. Day tourists coming to the village have no permission, tourists only have permission if they are going to stay overnight. Long Lan is the last village on the mountain route, as a result the majority of tourists only come to the village for a few hours before returning to LPB.

Participant 30 does not know why tourists are attracted to Long Lan village or what the nationalities of tourists are. He is happy to welcome tourists to Long Lan and states there is not much impact from tourist behaviour or clothing as they only stay in the village for a few hours, the majority are prepared for Hmong customs and dress respectfully.

Main activities are going to the forests and the Glass Caves. Overnight tourists go on treks guided by villagers to the herbal forests and vegetable gardens and pay 20,000kip each. Treks and accommodation costs are the only money contributions to the village as Long Lan has no other tourism services.

In the future he wants 1 to 2 groups of tourists arriving in Long Lan per day and states villagers can provide knowledge of what tourists can see, items to sell and show them new places round Long Lan area and ceremonies. He hopes if more tourists come to Long Lan then villagers can diversify their tourism services. Currently day tourists bring all food from LPB. Overnight tourists, depending on the household they stay in, eat traditional Hmong food.

In the future he wants tourists to choose between staying in Hmong households or a guesthouse. He prefers tourists to stay in households as there are some facilities but states small children and private family spaces can make sleeping arrangements difficult.

He wants to guide tourists on treks around the Long Lan area, to Caxia Village, activities of planting vegetables, raising animal areas and mountain trekking pathways. He wants to charge an average of 50,000kip for his guide services. He hopes tourists will participate in community work and household activities but sharing knowledge and cultural exchange is difficult with language barriers.

In the future, he hopes individual tourists will teach English. Younger generations could learn English from tourists and become local tour guides instead of guides coming from LPB.

In the future he wants Long Lan to create services for tourism such as sewing traditional clothing for males to sell for 200-300,000 kip and females for 1 million kip. Males clothing takes 1 or 2 months to produce, while females clothing can take between 6 to 12 months to produce.

Customary Law ceremonies such as Long Mon Chong tourists are invited to participate on the first day of the ceremony but cannot re-enter the household for 3 days afterwards.



Name: **Participant 31**

Age: 61

Gender: Female

Tourists have been arriving in Long Lan since 1969, the first tourists the village received were Japanese. All tourists are accompanied by guides. The majority of tourists have permission from LPB district but some do not. If tourists want to visit areas outside of the village they must talk with the village leader and he will organise a local guide to show them to locations.

Participant 31 does not know how tourists learn about Long Lan.

Main activities tourists want to see are the forests and make comparisons of landscapes between countries. Tourists walk around the village and go to mountains even if the village leader does not give them permission.

Most groups only arrive for the day and then return to LPB. Some groups like the Japanese stay 2 nights in Long Lan. When tourists stay in households, some families sell their Hmong bags and blanket covers to them. One blanket cover is 300,000kip. She is interested in selling her sewing to tourists but found tourists we not always interested in buying. She instead stopped sewing and returned to the fields to sell vegetables.

Currently tourists arriving on day trips bring food from LBP. Overnight tourists eat local food.

In the future if tourists stay in the village she wants them to be accommodated by a guesthouse. This service will have all tourist needs and people to take care of them. She is concerned that if tourists stay in households, young children being noisy could prevent tourists from sleeping.

In the future she wants 2 to 3 groups with 5-8 tourists per day. She wants to talk to tourists and see what products they want to buy, then she will sew lots of products. She is concerned that if the community built a restaurant and only 1 or 2 tourists arrived then the community still would not make any money.

She hopes some tourists will want to participate in community work and learn knowledge of growing fruit, rice and vegetables. If a guide is present she can share information with the tourists as she can speak Laos.

Customary Law, Participant 31 wants any tourist to participate in Long Mon Chong ceremonies during the first day. Tourists can also participate in New Year celebrations but can only speak Hmong language.

She has no problems with tourist clothing and behaviour. In the future she wants younger generations to learn English with tourists. She wants to talk to tourists but cannot share her knowledge due to language barriers.



Name: **Participant 32**

Age: 35

Gender: Male

Tourists have been coming to Long Lan for more than 6 years. The majority of tourists are American and are accompanied by Hmong and Lao Laum guides. Guides do not always have permission from the LPB district before coming to Long Lan. There are no tourist contributions as the village has no services to sell products. Tourists pay for food and accommodation services. 1 meal is 40,000kip.

Participant 32 is unsure how tourists learn about Long Lan and suggests tourists see the map at the bottom of the mountain in Bo Hear village and become interested.

Main activities are forest trekking, mountains and breathing in unpolluted air. Some groups stay 1 night and sleep in the village leaders' households and return to LPB at 10:00am the next morning. In the future he wants 2 to 3 groups of tourists arriving in Long Lan per week. He is concerned that if only 1 or 2 tourists arrive then it is not worth village time preparing food and hand products.

He is happy tourists are coming to Long Lan but disagrees with village leader that villagers cannot make their own trekking pathways. He believes more trekking pathways will increase tourism. In the future he wants to take tourists to the fields or gardens. 1 trip will cost 30,000kip. Other places such as the Huoi Stream has beautiful scenery in the dry season.

He wants tourists to participate in community work so that villagers and tourists can share and learn from each other such as their names of different vegetables. In the future if there are lots of tourists coming to Long Lan he states he could produce coffee for tourists to taste and purchase.

Customary law, tourists can participate in the Long Mong Chong and Baci ceremonies. He believes that there are only good impacts from having tourists in Long Lan. He hopes children will learn English and talk with the tourists so there will no longer be a language barrier.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Mr Cho Sy Zang's Questions

At a village meeting on August 9th 2014, village elder Mr Cho Sy Zang proposed three questions which he thought Long Lan village would like answered concerning the prospects of developing tourism in Long Lan village. These questioning were:

4. What does Long Lan have for doing tourism?
5. What does Long Lan not have for doing tourism?
6. How could Long Lan change to receive more visitors?

A set of interview questions was formulated to collect villagers' views on these questions, and interviews were conducted with 32 village members selected by the village leaders as most likely to have an understanding of the issues concerned. The interviewing process began on August 16th 2014 and finished on September 4th 2014. Interviews were conducted by the research team; Nhu Son, Laura Phillips and Sin Min. Questions were asked in Hmong and then answers were translated into Vietnamese and English for information to be recorded. When translating researchers were unavailable Anong Soukphaphone, a key farmer at the farmer field school, substituted providing both Laos and English language translations. 7 participants were female and 25 were male. Participants' ages ranged from 27 to 83. Information from all 32 interviews were collated based on tourism activities, concerns and impacts mentioned by participants. Participants are referred to by numerical pseudonyms from the order they were interviewed.

Current Knowledge of Visitors, Accommodation and Attractions

Participants' current knowledge of tourism development has visitors arriving in Long Lan from the early 1980s. Main nationalities of visitors are: Vietnamese, French, Japanese, Koreans, Dutch, Americans, Australians, Russians, Germans,

Canadians and Spanish. Participants who did not distinguish specific nationalities referred to visitors as being mostly white or western and few being Asian. Tour guides accompanying visitors to Long Lan were identified as Hmong, Khmu, Lao Lum or Lao. Guides are not from Long Lan village. All participants interviewed want to welcome visitors to Long Lan for opportunities of sharing cultural knowledge and increasing tourism income. Participants raised questions such as “how to get visitors to spend more time in Long Lan?”, “What is interesting or not about Long Lan?”, “What are good or bad attractions for visitors to see when coming to the village?”, and “How do visitors know or learn about Long Lan village?” Many attribute a lack of education as to why tourism intentions are not understood by villagers. Participants are aware the village has no services to provide for visitors and many expressed hopes for more facilities to be built.

Current visitor contributions are minimal and consist of school stationary, children’s clothing, sweets and accommodation fees. Participant 12 believes visitors are not obliged to contribute and only provide gifts if they want to. Villagers hope if there were more services then visitors will spend more money in Long Lan and provide tourism income. Likewise, participants want visitors to receive permission to enter the village from village leaders. The majority of tour guides come with permission from the Luang Prabang District council but have not got permission from the village leader. Concerns were expressed that many day visitors are arriving without any form of permission, in the past these people were asked to go back to Luang Prabang. Instead villagers could demand visitors pay entry fees. Many participants do not know the process of gaining permission but believe it is important to count arriving visitor numbers per day. Participant 3 suggests if visitors arrived without permission in a different village they are likely to come to harm or be robbed, but Long Lan will still respect visitors with or without permission. Participant 23 is concerned bad people are pretending to be visitors and are taking opportunity to steal from visitors and villagers. In future participant 23 wants all visitors to come to Long Lan with permission so villagers will know who is a visitor and who is a stranger.

The majority of visitors arriving in Long Lan only stay 2 to 7 hours before returning to Luang Prabang town. Very few visitors choose to stay overnight. One group of Japanese visitors stayed in the village for 5 days and 3 nights. Visitors

pay between 10,000 kip (\$1.70 NZD) and 40,000kip (\$6.97 NZD) for accommodation. Currently all overnight visitors are accommodated in the households of village elders and leaders. Participants feel this is preventing other village households from having a share of accommodation fees. Out of the 32 participants; 11 prefer visitors to stay in a guesthouse, 14 prefer visitors to stay with households, and 7 did not express any preference. Participants who want visitors to stay in households hope they will experience Hmong livelihoods, share knowledge and exchange cultures. Participants who prefer visitors to stay in guesthouses worry that language barriers would prevent cultural exchange, and considered households as private spaces and young children could disrupt sleep. Participant 13 suggests that Hmong households are not seen as clean by visitor standards.

Visitors travel to Long Lan to experience a number of different attractions. Visitors want to sightsee, walk around the village taking photographs and films of Hmong daily activities and livelihoods, look at Hmong houses, traditional clothing, rearing of children, traditional singing, leaf whistling, the herbal medicine forest and natural scenery. Participant 1 and participant 5 identified Long Lan's post-war hero status as an attraction. Seuh Trupo was a local hero who shot down an aeroplane during the war and after death his house was kept as a spirit house. Villagers believe this status interests visitors in learning about Hmong culture.

Long Lan is unique as most other Hmong people cannot protect and maintain their natural resources. Participant 10 stated that Long Lan is a small community but villagers maintain 11,000 hectares of sustainable natural resources. Fields are distinct as they are high in the mountains not on the road side. Young visitors are interested in climbing surrounding mountains to lookout points, animal raising areas, the glass and Chai caves, or travelling to other villages such as Caxia Village, Naim Bo village and Ong Pau village. Others go to fields or gardens where they can watch or participate in gardening work. During the dry season visitors can have opportunities to sleep in the jungle and mountains.

Customary Laws

Customary laws regulate all aspects of Hmong communities and households. 26 participants want visitors to be taught customary laws before entering Long Lan. Village ceremonies are regulated by customary laws; Long Mon Chong, long leaves ceremony, is performed during family illnesses or bad luck. Participant 20 states after this ceremony long leaves are attached to the front doors of households. This warns and restricts outsiders from entering the household for 2 to 7 days. Participants would like visitors to attend the ceremony on the first day but they are not allowed to touch ceremony items or walk in front of the ceremony conductor. Visitors cannot enter the household the next day. Participant 16 states visitors cannot enter the household of a new born child for 30 days. If visitors or villagers arrive during this period they must only wear their clothing. Bags or hats worn in the household must remain in the home until 30 days have passed. Snakes entering households require villagers to perform a ceremony to prevent illness and bad luck. Participant 19 states visitors can attend but cannot enter the household again for 3 days afterwards or the ceremony must be performed again. Baci ceremonies are usually done in the evening with overnight visitors. Participant 22 states the Baci ceremony conductor decides who can attend and who cannot. Participant 30 wants visitors to participate in Hmong New Year ceremonies but during this time visitors can only speak in Hmong.

Customary laws also determine where visitors can sit and sleep in households. Sitting or lying under the household altar will cause offense and visitors need permission to enter households. Participant 24 states visitors must sleep with their heads facing north. This is similar to Hmong funeral practices where the deceased's head points to the north and eyes to the south. Although many laws are based on traditional practices, Long Lan villagers are open to making positive changes to customary laws to encourage tourism development.

Potential New Attractions for Tourism

21 participants want to create new trekking pathways for tourism. Participant 5 believes longer treks could force visitors to stay overnight. Local guides could be

used and paid to take visitors on treks or to stay overnight in the forest and mountains. Participant 23 states villagers making treks to the mountains are unsure how difficult to make pathways for visitors. Some routes are too long for visitors only staying a few hours, other pathways are too steep. Participant 25 wants to charge 30,000kip (\$5.23 NZD) for a group of 1 to 5 people for a 2 hour trek in forest areas or a 2 day trek to Huoi Dai stream and Naim Bo village. Villagers realise if they want to operate trekking tourism activities pathways must be maintained for use when visitors arrive.

Villagers realise visitors want to buy souvenirs of village produced textiles and crafts. Participant 20 could teach overnight visitors to sew traditional handcrafts, make traditional knives and weave baskets. Small basket could sell for 20, 000 kip (\$3.50 NZD) and big basket of 60cms for 150,000 kip (\$26.50 NZD). Traditional clothing of Hmong skirts and shirts could sell for between 1 million to 3 million kip. Participant 10 wants a market in Long Lan for villagers to sell traditional textiles, vegetables and food to visitors. If visitors arrive regularly products could be sold locally instead of in the Luang Prabang markets. Participant 17 suggests villagers could research symbols for new designs on wood carvings to sell. Participant 25 states currently villagers supply products of traditional clothing, wooden chairs and sticky rice baskets but visitors are not buying many products. Participant 26 is concerned that it is difficult to produce knives without first having money and support to buy metal materials and trade tools.

5 participants considered villagers could be taught the value of the herbal forests. The majority of visitors going on treks to the herbal medicine forests stay overnight. Participant 5 hopes members of the herbal medicine network could share knowledge about herbal medicine and healing practices, which could be culturally exchanged with visitors. Part of this service could include herbal medicine network members marketing traditional herbal remedies to visitors such as cures for stomach bile. Participant 13's husband is a member of the herbal medicine network, this herbal medicine from the forest could be dried, packaged and sold to visitors.

Tourism Impacts

15 participants considered learning English is a positive result of tourism. Participant 13 wants to encourage visitors to converse with young people, teach welcoming phrases and increase opportunities for villagers to interact with international people. Participant 20 wants to learn English but believes he is too old and younger generations would make better students. Participant 25 would like more English classes in Long Lan for younger generations to learn and use English language with visitors. He believes learning English will help the community to develop for future tourism. Participant 26 wants visitors to teach English classes to young people during school holidays as young people are fast learners and visitors can play with children every day. Participant 32 believes children with the ability to speak English will solve language barrier problems, in the future this participant hopes villagers and visitors could talk to each other without translators. Participants 29 and 30 hope younger generations will become local tour guides instead of relying on guides from Luang Prabang tour operators.

20 participants want visitors to learn about Hmong culture; livelihood; language; community work practices; and exchange culture with one another. Participant 8 wants to include visitors in Long Lan festivals such as the Hmong New Year celebrations, following customary law regulations. Community work can allow villagers and visitors to work together while learning differences in crop planting practices and raising animals. Participant 14 suggests including visitors can be difficult as many are afraid of getting dirty. Participant 29 recounted a situation where visitors were invited to do community work, but instead of helping the visitors took photographs and films, ate the villagers' food and returned to the village. In the future villagers hope situations such as described by participant 29 could be avoided if villagers can find a way to prevent language barriers. 6 participants regarded sharing knowledge to be difficult without a guide to translate conversations. Participant 27 suggests a solution for this language barrier difficulty of using computers to write and translate conversations. In this way names of crops in the fields and activities can be described to villagers and visitors without using guides.

19 participants made comments about behaviour. 6 participants were unconcerned about visitor behaviour as many visitors are only in Long Lan for a short amount of time. 13 participants were concerned about the problems visitor behaviour presented for Long Lan village. Three main issues were short clothing, drinking alcohol and visitor relationships. Villagers in Long Lan wear clothing that is conservative covering shoulders, chests and knees. Participant 8 is concerned about visitors' clothing, hair dying practices and behaviour negatively impacting younger generations. Participant 11 is concerned visitors drinking alcohol daily will teach younger generations culturally damaging behaviour as Long Lan villagers only drink alcohol during ceremonies. Participant 7 is concerned that younger generations might learn bad relationships from visitors as western relationships usually involve public displays of affection. This sort of behaviour is not seen as acceptable in Hmong culture.

Tourism Concerns

21 Participants gave opinions about current and future food services. Many are concerned there are no services and food available for visitors. Participant 21 operates one of the village stores and said that visitors only buy small snacks and water. Participant 30 states day visitors bring food from Luang Prabang town with them to Long Lan village. Overnight visitors eat Hmong food prepared by households. Participant 22 conveyed local food cooked for visitors includes susu (choko), cabbage and local fruits. Long Lan is far from the markets so the majority of meals are vegetarian. Villagers have made suggestions about households adapting Hmong and Lao styles of cooking to suit western tastes. Participant 32 believes villagers could charge 40,000kip (\$6.97 NZD) for food and accommodation services. Hmong women could also teach visitors traditional Hmong cooking.

Major concerns are water and electricity resources. Villagers fear there are not enough resources for both villagers and visitors in the dry season. Participant 1 states 12 villages share the same water resources. The village might be forced to relocate in the future if water resources are not maintained. Participant 2 stated in the past the villagers walked 1 kilometre to the herbal forest to collect water, now

they only walk 4 metres to a village tap. Although, if guesthouse facilities share the same water supply as households then village unity will be negatively impacted. Participant 3 believes in the dry season day visitors can wash their hands, faces and feet, but there is not enough water for overnight visitors. Participant 11 is concerned that in 5 to 10 years water supplies could be exploited by guesthouses, leaving village families to suffer. Three participants suggested solutions for the highlighted water resource concerns. Participant 12 suggests bottled water could be sold as part of a food service. Participant 13 and 15 suggest concrete water tanks could collect and store rain water in the rainy season to use in the dry season. Participant 15 also wants a village fund to research new ways of making the water resources more sustainable for the village and tourism practices.

Villagers want many different services to increase tourism income, but many feel they lack the knowledge or the finances to make changes without the support of outsiders. Participant 8 knows villagers have many ideas to share but do not have the experience to decide on development projects for tourism, while Participant 6 suggests Long Lan villagers are poor and building facilities without assistance will be difficult. SPERI, CHESH-Lao and the Lao Government were named as three potential supporters for funding future Long Lan village tourism. Participant 1 states CHESH-Lao has been working with Long Lan village for over 10 years, but hopes in the future that CHESH-Lao could increase economic growth. Participant 4 hopes the village will participate in training workshops funded by the Lao government to learn which tourism services will be profitable. Participants 13, 27 and 28 would like help from SPERI or CHESH-Lao to do sustainable tourism research and build services for villagers to sell local products.

9 participants gave opinions about the lack of transport services and the state of the current road to Long Lan, established in the 1980s. Participant 9 suggests Long Lan is very high and far in distance from Luang Prabang town, this could impact the number of visitor arrivals. Participant 19 hopes in the future SPERI, CHESH-Lao or the Lao government will support and prepare roads to make Long Lan more accessible. Currently roads to the village are difficult to use in raining conditions. Participant 21 suggests that the road will need to be maintained for visitors to arrive daily. Participant 6 wants villagers to create transport services and networks for taking visitors to and from Long Lan and neighbouring villages.

Analysis of information to answer Mr Cho Sy's Questions

1. What does Long Lan have in terms of doing tourism?

From villagers responses of the interviews, observations by the research team, and other information received from conversations with villagers, the following features were described to answer Mr Cho Sy Zang's first question.

Long Lan has the following attractions for visitors: traditional village life; hero status; natural scenery; vegetable gardens; animal raising areas; caves; forest treks; trails to other villages; New Year ceremony; unique culture; history and traditions; knowledge and expertise in ecological farming; herbal medicine; marketing of organic vegetables; community governance; and natural resource management.

Long Lan has the potential to provide the following activities for visitors: photography; sightseeing; trekking; overnight forest camping; visiting gardens and animal raising areas; visiting herbal forest and learning about herbal medicine; baci ceremony; learning leaf whistling; sewing and embroidery; basket weaving and other crafts; language exchange and learning; learning about history and culture of Long Lan; learning about ecological farming; marketing of organic vegetables; community governance; and natural resource management.

Long Lan has the following facilities for visitors: road access; houses for homestay accommodation; meeting house for group meals and evening activities; shops for purchasing small items; sports field; forest walking trails; Farmer Field School facilities; clean water for drinking and bathing; electricity for evening activities; cell phone coverage

2. What does Long Lan not have for doing tourism?

In answer to this question, interview responses, observations and conversations revealed the follow:

- Advertising so visitors can learn about Long Lan
- Guesthouse for group accommodation
- Well supplied shops for supplying visitors daily needs (e.g. snacks and bottle water)
- A market for small inexpensive craft products as souvenirs of Long Lan

- Sufficient water in the dry season for both visitors and villagers
- Its own village-based tourism enterprise
- Its own transport for bringing visitor to the village
- Its own trained, English speaking tour guides
- Ability to provide activities for visitors during the wet season
- Organized activities for long-stay visitors during the day and early evening

With regard to the last point, the following types of Activities Could Be Organized for Visitors:

A village tour- with explanations of village organization (kinship, clan and political structure); history of the village; housing style; household gardens; animal raising area; horse stables; food processing equipment; landscape features; fruit trees; herbal forest; school; Farmer Field School.

Trekking- short treks, day treks, and overnight treks to forest, vegetable gardens, animal raising areas, caves, sacred areas, historical locations, viewing points, and other villages

Cultural exchange for evening activities- language exchange (Hmong/English: greetings and polite phrases); teaching about history and customs of Long Lan; baci ceremony; demonstration of flute playing, leave whistling, traditional clothing; telling of folk stories

Craft activities (day or evening)- sewing and embroidery, basket weaving, knife making, etc.

3. How could Long Lan change to attract more visitors?

To help answer the question what Long Lan could do to attract more visitors, it is useful to distinguish different types of visitor. From earlier research, the researchers had identified five types of visitor:

- 1) Short-stay holiday visitors- These are people (mostly Western) who are on holiday, and who come to Laos out of personal interest and for the enjoyment of seeing and experiencing a different culture and landscape. The average stay of visitors in Luang Prabang is 5 days, with the majority

staying less than 3 days). There are broadly two very different types of holiday visitors to Luang Prabang:

- Budget visitors, who stay in cheap guesthouses costing less than \$10 per room. They are nearly all Western and under 40 years of age. These are the type of visitor most likely to want to visit ethnic minority villages, stay overnight, and go on forest treks;
- Up-market visitors, who stay in hotels costing over \$40 per room per night. They are usually over 40 and include Westerners, Thai and other Asian visitors. They are not likely to visit ethnic minority villages and stay overnight.

- 2) Long-stay (overnight) holiday visitors- These are most likely to be Budget visitors and to be interested in forest trekking.
- 3) Long-stay educational visitors- These could be senior (postgraduate) students and researchers from Universities in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand who are interested in learning about ethnic minority cultures, tropical agriculture and forestry during a one or two week field trip.
- 4) Long-stay special interest visitors- These are farmers from other parts of Laos or the wider Mekong region, or independent scholars and practitioners from other countries who are interested in learning and exchanging knowledge on specific topics such as herbal medicine, women's textile handicrafts, organic vegetable production, Hmong language and culture, customary natural resource management, community governance, who would like to stay in household of specialists for learning and knowledge exchange.
- 5) Long-stay volunteer workers- These are people from other countries who are seeking opportunities to stay with farming households and work alongside them to learn about ecological farming

Some important things to know about visitors:

Western visitors want to travel to villages like Long Lan as they want to see traditional village ways of life. They are disappointed if they see modern, non-traditional house styles and concrete buildings and when the people of the village are dressed in modern non-traditional clothing. Visitors are dissatisfied when the only products available from village shops are commercially produced packaged food and souvenir items that they could have bought at the Luang Prabang night market. What visitors would like to experience is something that appears to be culturally unique and genuinely traditional.

Visitors can bring trouble to the village:

Budget visitors, particularly young people from Europe and North America, can have a bad influence on the village. Some of their ways of behaving and dressing can be very offensive to villagers and set very bad examples for village children and youth. Many young foreigners travel as unmarried couples and they often expect to be allowed to sleep together and they often behave in ways that would be seen as morally incorrect by villagers. They may also want to smoke and drink alcohol and have noisy parties, and behave in other ways that might disturb villagers. They may bring plastic bottles and packages foods from the city and create a rubbish problem. Long Lan needs to be aware of these potential problems and ensure that visitors are clearly instructed about how not to behave while in the village. And they need to set up a system for dealing with the unacceptable behaviour of visitors.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After finishing the analysis of the interviews, the research team had some questions and recommendations to further stimulate Long Lan villagers to think about how tourism development in Long Lan could operate according to local customs. The research team described different types of tourists who would want to come to Long Lan. Intentions were to discover which type of tourists Long Lan villagers would like to receive, and for what purpose; 1) Should Long Lan receive short- and long-stay fee-paying holiday tourists for income earning? 2) Should Long Lan receive long-stay fee-paying educational tourists for knowledge exchange and income earning? 3) Should Long Lan welcome non-fee-paying long-stay special interest visitors and volunteer workers for knowledge exchange and social network building?

It was advised that Long Lan would need to consider the cost and benefits of receiving different types of visitors, as each type of visitor would have different requirements, would bring different benefits for the community, and involve different costs. To help Long Lan with these considerations the research team discussed what Long Lan would need to do to attract each type of visitor.

Visitor Types

The first type of visitors are short stay tourists. Short stay visitors are fee-paying holiday visitors who only spend a few hours within Long Lan village. To benefit financially from these visitors Long Lan would need to continue to allow Luang Prabang tourism operators to bring short-stay holiday visitors to Long Lan. Nonetheless, the village could set up a system of control to minimise the number of visitors arriving without permission and a regulated system for collecting fees from tour operators before entering Long Lan village.

The second type of visitors are long stay tourists. Long-stay visitors are fee-paying holiday visitors who stay at least one night in Long Lan village. To cater for these visitors and benefit financially Long Lan would need to set up an activity program for during the day and evenings to entertain visitors. Instructions of correct behaviour and dress could be taught to visitors of what is culturally appropriate while in the village. Long Lan could set up a register of households who are willing and able to accommodate overnight visitors. These households would need to provide clean and comfortable sleeping arrangements, and toilet and washing facilities for visitors. Also menus of tasty nourishing food could be created to suit the pallets of visitors. Village shops could be stocked with bottled water and snack foods and a village market could potentially be set up for small inexpensive craft products to be sold as souvenirs of Long Lan village. There is also potential to train young villagers as English speaking tour guides. A system could then be set up for informing Luang Prabang tour operators of Long Lan as a destination for overnight stays.

With tourism development potentially making changes to Long Lan village livelihoods, community regulations governing tourism may need to be revised.

Some potential organisational options could include:

- (a) Setting up a system for collecting fees from private tour operators; or
- (b) Setting up a business partnership with a Luang Prabang tour operator to share benefits; or
- (c) Setting up an independent Long Lan owned and operated enterprise to operate through an agent located in Luang Prabang

For the latter option, advertising Long Lan village in Tour Guide Books and Internet Webpages as a destination for overnight stays would be necessary to attract visitors.

The third type of visitors are educational tourists. These are long-stay fee-paying visitors seeking educational experiences from Long Lan village, such as agricultural or university students. To appeal to these visitors Long Lan would need to develop curriculums for teaching visitors about spiritual beliefs, herbal medicine, traditional ecological farming, customary based forest and land allocation, legalization of customary law, marketing of organic vegetables, women's wisdom and textile handicrafts, community governance and natural resource management. The SPERI website could be used to advertise these opportunities and set up connections with educational institutions. Similarly, CHESH-Lao could be used as a contact point for inquiries and as a facilitator of connections between interested parties. In order for this to be possible Long Lan village would need to train English speaking instructors and translators. The current guest lodging facilities at the Farmer Field School could be used for group accommodation. To accommodate this type of tourist, village regulations would need to be revised or customary laws for governing educational tourism in Long Lan devised.

The fourth and fifth type of visitors are 'special interest' visitors and 'volunteer workers'. These two types of visitors are generally non-fee-paying but can offer opportunities for Long Lan to exchange knowledge and build social networks. To attract this type of visitor and benefit from them, Long Lan would need to set up a register of specialists' households willing to receive visitors for knowledge exchange, and a register of households willing to accommodate volunteer workers. Long Lan would need to set up community regulations for governing and teaching Hmong expectations to special interest visitors and volunteer workers. Systems for advertising Long Lan as a destination for special interest visitors would need to be established and CHESH-Lao could act as a contact point for inquiries and as the facilitator of connections. Another means of advertising Long Lan is for the village to register with the Global Ecovillage Network. An ecovillage is an intentional or traditional community using local participatory processes to holistically integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability in order to regenerate social and natural environments. (GEN- Global Ecovillage Network, 2014)

Recommendations

Community Tourism Regulations would need to be regularly reviewed to encompass all new tourism developments. The research suggested that if Long Lan village chooses to proceed with community based tourism planning there are various courses of actions. These community based tourism options include: 1) setting up a village Tourism Working Group with the purpose of considering the above mentioned options and planning for future tourism and visitor developments; 2) The Tourism Working Group could participate in a Study Tour to Luang Namtha Province to learn about the Man Ho Ecotourism Project and learn from the experiences of Khmu villagers who have been involved in the tourism development process; 3) They could also co-ordinate with SPERI's Social Entrepreneurship Project (SENT), which could work as a consultant for Long Lan's Tourism Working Group.

SPERI's SENT Project could proceed by investigating the legal/institutional basis for each of the visitor tourism development options described above. That is for: 1) charging fees for private commercial tour operators accessing Long Lan village and the environment; 2) forming a business partnership with a Luang Prabang tourism operator; or 3) establishing an independent Long Lan owned and operated tourism enterprise with an agent in Luang Prabang. SENT could also investigate the likely demand among local-regional and international tertiary education institutions for educational fieldtrips to Long Lan village, as well as investigating the likely demand among local-regional farmer networks and international eco- and organic-farming networks for knowledge exchange visits to Long Lan village.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

Reflection of Research Process

Every researcher brings cultural understanding of their own background with them into the field. The Researcher was the first female researcher from the University of Waikato to work with the Vietnamese NGO SPERI under the MoU and with the support of language assistance from the research team translators and the farmer field school students the Researcher was able to integrate into the community and learn local perspectives. During her time in Long Lan village, the Researcher's habits, styles of dress and broad Kiwi New Zealand accent were seen as strange and at times difficult for the farmer field school students, villagers and translators to understand. The Researcher made efforts to change her clothing and speed of speech to be more comprehensible.



*Figure 22: Welcome to Vang Vieng.
Photographer Laura Phillips*

the Luang Prabang area and other towns, the majority of European tourists were observed wearing western beach style clothing such as small shorts, bikinis or removed their shirts oblivious to the cultural offense they were causing. The Researcher wanted to avoid obvious cultural differences through dressing in a similar attire as local women. This involved wearing Laos and Hmong style

The style of ones dress was very important in Laos. The Researcher observed many signs that express Lao peoples' perspectives and encourage modesty from tourists while travelling from Vientiane to Luang Prabang. Although the temperature and humidity in Laos is high, local people wear respectfully covered clothing, not showing their chests, shoulders or wearing pants above the knee. On tourist ventures around

clothing on formal occasions, council and village meetings, and when teaching students in Long Lan village.

In light of the Researcher's experiences of conducting research in Long Lan village, the process was well received and generated a great deal of community interest. A list of interested participants was generated from a village meeting. This meant that all people interviewed wanted to share their thoughts of tourism and future development. All participants were verbally informed of the researchers' intentions and given a brief outline of the research objectives before any interview commenced. In this research the team was fortunate that all participants interviewed were willing to share their personal experiences and there were no withdrawals from the research.

Language barriers slowed the research process as the research team had to pass information across three languages to ask and reply to questions and write down responses. As a result this process of exchanging knowledge was drawn out. Although the research team reviewed the interview guide questions to ensure understanding, there was still potential for the content of questions and answers to be miscommunicated crossing between languages. When research team member Mr Vang Sin Min was unavailable, Mr Anong Soukphaphone substituted with Lao and English language translations. Although this accelerated the interview process through only needing two researchers, language barrier difficulties arose as not all participants spoke Lao language, only Hmong. In this situation, participants on the list were interviewed if they could speak Lao and others were interviewed when Mr Vang Sin Min's Hmong translation assistance was available. Language barriers also prevented the Researcher from engaging in casual conversations with villagers without the aid of the research team or a Farmer Field School students.

Time constraints of the research project could have impacted what information was gathered as the research team proposed to finish the interview process by

September. As a result Mr Vang Sin Min, providing language assistance of Hmong and Vietnamese languages, was not always available due to other SPERI projects and family commitments. This impacted which participants could be interviewed based on Lao language abilities in his absence. Also the tendency for villagers to stay overnight in their fields as opposed to returning in the evening to their village resident provoked the research team to make changes to their original participant list. If more time was possible the research team may have been able to chronologically follow the participant list, which could have generated different interview responses.

The Researcher would have liked more female participants or a more balanced gender ratio of Long Lan village participants. 7 participants were female and 25 were male, this was possibly due to Hmong men residing in their village of birth and marrying women from other Hmong villages. Often female participants expressed a lack of knowledge of tourism practices as they considered themselves to be new comers or outsiders of the village. Two research participants were the wives of village shop owners, interviewed in lieu of their husbands who originally wanted to be research participants but stayed in their fields at night. Although these women did not necessarily know the history of tourism in Long Lan, they provided extensive information about what tourists wanted to do or which places they wanted to see in Long Lan village, and what food or drinks were purchased in the village or alternatively brought from Luang Prabang town.

A few controversial views arose during interviewing. In these situations the research team has protected the identities of the participants through numerical pseudonyms to allow participants to freely express their opinions. These views were: disparity between younger generations and village elders in regards to tourism income; effects of 'isolation' on the community's understandings of tourism development opportunities; minimal understandings of types of tourists who can share agricultural cultural knowledge with villagers; barriers of customary laws and conservation of natural resources preventing certain types of tourism activity development in Long Lan; and wanting SPERI/ CHESH-Lao to

generate tourism income for the village. It would have been interesting to also gauge the number of villagers who are opposed or have no interest in tourism developments occurring in Long Lan. Unfortunately, since the research team did not attend the initial village meeting discussing how the research should take place there are no statistics of dissatisfaction or disinterest.

The Researcher felt the semi-structured interviews were successfully implemented for this research project. Through this research method, the research team were able to conduct the exploration of perspectives and opinions of participants. Semi-structured interviews also enable probing for more information and clarification of answers. Also, for participants deviating too far from the topic of tourism the research team were able to use the interview guide to prompt more specific responses.

Questions focused on gathering demographic information about participants gave the research team detailed information to compare to interview responses and enhanced the validity and reliability of the research findings. These demographic profiles helped the Researcher to understand some of the controversial views expressed by younger and older generations of villagers. They also maximised the potential for interactive opportunities between the participant and the research team helping to establish a sense of rapport and reduce the risk of socially desirable answers.

Post-Research Developments

The following is a very brief summary of post-research events provided in an email from Nguyen Nhu Son. This research has motivated action from the people of Long Lan village. Since the Researcher finished her scheduled time in Long Lan village and working for SPERI, the community of Long Lan have been taking steps to peruse community based development projects. The remainder of the research team continued to visit Long Lan village and recorded the process of

villagers working towards hosting visitors in Long Lan's Farmer Field School. The property of the Farmer Field School has been recalculated to account for all the lands, tools and building facilities, which has been put into a managing system for using and maintaining the property of the Farmer Field School. This includes the construction of a gate on the main road to the village. This symbolically defines Long Lan's boarder and payment fees from tourists and tourism operators can now be regulated. This resolves the problem of visitors arriving without permission or contributing to Long Lan village.



Figure 23: Gates to Long Lan Village. Courtesy of SPERI

The Farmer Field School students have started a program for raising Chickens, 150 in total, in order to share animal raring experiences with local villagers in Long Lan. The Farmer Field School is planning to produce some fruit and vegetables models. Long Lan also received a contribution of a new community house, built by former members of Long Lan village who have recently re-migrated back into the village.



Figure 24 and 25: Chicken Coop. Photographer Nguyen Nhu Son

In February 2015, a new village school has been constructed on the site of the village's makeshift football grounds. The old school facilities have been demolished and is now in the process of being replaced by a guesthouse for accommodating visitors arriving in Long Lan.

A new road has also been constructed enabling villagers and visitors to travel directly from Long Lan village to Ca Xia village. Ca Xia village is a site which was used by Hmong when they migrated down from the highlands to Long Lan's current location. This village is currently abandoned but Long Lan villagers use the land for vegetable growing and animal raising practices. The road to Ca Xia provides access to the mountain top areas for both Long Lan villagers and visitors.

Long Lan village has also attracted the interest of Media-entertainment groups from the Luang Prabang government, in June 2015 these people travelled to the village and took film footage about the daily routines and livelihoods of Long Lan inhabitants. The purpose of these visits is to create a short film about Long Lan village.

Ethnic tourism or Community Based Tourism?

In chapter 1, the Researcher outlined her previous research on ethnic tourism. Although ethnic tourism has provided opportunities for many ethnic minority groups to enter the tourism market and generate income, there are more negative than positive impacts for ethnic minority populations. Domestic and international tourists are drawn to ethnic minority groups in search of the *other*, looking specifically for visual cultural differences. In cultural centres these people are emphasised as being different and are on display to tourists as living ethnological entertainment. Due to the visual attraction of tourism, ethnic groups who do not have colourful or symbolic traditional apparel can become excluded from the tourism market. Ethnic tourism operating in northern Thailand can be positive for ethnic minorities as livelihood income can be obtained without local people without having to leave their village. Ethnic minorities are able to sell their traditional crafts to visiting tourists to receive sustainable income. Although there were concerns that people were electing to buy their traditional apparel instead of using traditional methods to make their clothing.

The question of authenticity was discussed in Chapter 1 where cultural centre inhabitants were regarded as playing the role of *primitive natives*. Inhabitants feel they must re-enact the images of tourism advertising materials to ensure their villages continue to receive tourists. Tourism allows ethnic minorities to access the market economy and creates opportunities to sell local products. Many ethnic groups do not control the arrivals of tourists and in the case study of ethnic tourism in Northern Thailand, ethnic groups are encouraged to hide their modern developments from tourists to appear *backward* and *under developed*. Many ethnic minority groups in Northern Thailand have been relocated by the nation's government into cultural centres. These people suffer from the loss of traditional land, livelihood and cultural identity as a result of migrating to new countries, or resettling to new areas where land is not available for cultivation. Many of these cultural centre inhabitants do not have Thai citizenship. Some have been provided with temporary residence permits, however, with limited or no citizenship these ethnic minorities cannot move out of cultural centres to gain employment or return to their country of origin. The majority of government led projects concerning ethnic minority populations have been structured from top down policies. As a result ethnic minority groups seldom have an opinion about developments occurring in their villages or effecting their livelihoods. Although tourism has provided ethnic minorities with a means of generating income, they are still oppressed by top-down development factors. Projects of development are implemented by the government with minimal concerns for the opinions or quality of life of the resident people. As a result there is a high failure rate of projects as without the community's support many projects are not sustainable.

In light of the Researcher's research project in Long Lan village, community based tourism approaches are seen as more feasible for tourism development. Community based tourism operates from the bottom-up, meaning all development projects start from the grass roots community level and then are taken through the councils to the government level. Through implementing a bottom-up approach to tourism, all development projects use the local knowledge and expertise of ethnic minority people. The ending result of a development project directly benefits the local communities and are more likely to be sustainable as the ethnic groups see their own value in the economic, physical, social and cultural livelihood benefits.

Long Lan villagers understand through having more tourist arrivals, there are opportunities for income to be generated for both men and women, and for villagers to take control of village tourism operations possibly including: translators; transport services; trekking guides; craft services; village experts; food preparation; and accommodation services. The villagers realise without financial support many development projects would not be achievable. As discussed in chapter 3, Long Lan has been working in partnership with SPERI and CHESH NGO staff for over 14 years. This partnership has proven to be beneficial for the community's interests as they select which development schemes best suit Long Lan and will be sustainable for the future. SPERI and CHESH only provide assistance but do not make any village based decisions.

Similar to the ethnic tourism approach, community based tourism enables ethnic minorities to participate in the tourism market without leaving their villages. In this case the village inhabitants have the right to decide what activities and areas can be developed for tourism. Long Lan's customary laws strictly control the land use for all of the surrounding Long Lan area and are mirrored by neighbouring villages to ensure the forest areas are protected for future generations. Since there is no blue print or set model for conducting community based tourism practices, Long Lan village has complete freedom to develop facilities and activities to establish tourism practices that are beneficial to the community and coincide with customary laws. Customary laws in Long Lan can be reviewed and modified to keep up with the community's changes, these regulations could be discussed and altered to ensure Long Lan is protected against the impacts of tourism. In Long Lan village, ordinary villagers, elders and leaders discuss their opinions with regard to any community developments or changes. This was evident with the community based tourism research project as numerous meeting occurred before, during and after the research process to clarify research intentions, gain voluntary support and feedback information directly to the village. Although the process of applying community based tourism may seem slow as described in the multiple steps in chapter 3 to enable customary laws and forest protection, this ensured Long Lan village is involved in every step to ensure the most positive result for the community.

APPENDIX

LONG LAN REGULATIONS FOR VISITORS

The following are regulations which must be adhered to by visitors both domestic and international travelling to Long Lan village. These regulations outline what is expected of visitors, including what they are welcome to do and not do while in the Hmong village. Contributions that are directed to the village development fund are briefly outline along with village penalties for individuals or groups that are not willing to follow the customary laws.

General information

Households: 73

Population: 524

Clans: There are 7 clans: Zang, Ly, Mua, Tho, Song, Ho, Vang

Total of natural area: 8.4329,24 Ha

General regulations

- Visitors are welcome if they are prepared to follow the custom rules of Hmong people in Long Lan.
- Visitors in Long Lan have to be aware of protecting, maintaining and developing natural resources and eco-environmental system.
- Responsibility to contribute fees, which provide tangible benefits to the village development fund.

Visitors who will be welcomed

- Individuals or Groups that willing to learn and share their experiences in community development and managing sustainable natural resources.
- Groups that represent governments or belong to tourism companies.
- Groups or staff members from CHESH.

Visitors who will not be welcomed

- Individuals or groups that come to Long Lan with bad intentions, affect the unity of ethnic communities, affecting cultural identities or the customary laws.
- Individuals or groups who want to participate in deforestation or harvesting forest products without permission.

Visitors are allowed to

- Visit anywhere in Long Lan with a local person (forests, orchards, farms, caves and water resources)
- Take photos, films and records
- Share with villagers
- Organise ceremonies and events under the condition of protecting the environment
- Contribute money to the village development fund

Visitors are not allowed to

- Visitors are not allowed to propagate, affecting movement of solidarity community, cultural identity and national law
- Visitors are not allowed to cut down trees, breaking branches, picking vegetables, taking fruits without the permission of the villagers
- Visitors are not allowed to take cuttings or collect herbal plants/ trees within the permission of the herbal medicine network.
- Visitors are not allowed to dispose of plastic bags or litters in the village area.

- Visitors are not allowed to carry explosives, weapons, fertilizers or chemicals inside village.
- No smoking or drinking alcohol in the village area.

Contributions to the village development fund

- Local individuals: 20,000 Kip per person each day.
- International individuals: 50,000 per person each day
- Local Groups (more than 3 people): 100,000 each day
- International groups (more than 3 people): 200,000 each day
- Local Groups come to share and learn experiences: 500,000 KIP
- International Groups come to share and learn experiences: 800,000 KIP
- Staff members from the CHESH network are welcoming without any fees.

Penalties for violations

If Visitors violate the rules, the fine will be:

- Fine costs according to the customary laws.
- Fine costs according to the customary laws and banishment from the village.
- Fine cost according to the customary laws and trial at the national court.

Assigned specific responsibilities of villagers

- Mr Xay Khu – Responsible for forest management and natural resources
- Mr Chily – Responsible for herbal medical networking
- Mr Chia Ho – Responsible for raising animals
- Mr Chong Zia – Responsible for producing vegetables and fruits

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