SAEMAUL INITIATIVE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE NEW COMMUNITIES (ISNC)

About the project
Rising inequalities in Lao PDR are a major development challenge that must be addressed if the country is to achieve the level of sustainable and equitable development needed to lift out of poverty and graduate from Least Developed Country status by the mid 2020s.

The Saemaul Initiative Towards Sustainable and Inclusive New Communities (ISNC) project in Lao PDR is part of a global initiative launched by UNDP in 2015. The project aims to improve the livelihoods of over 5,000 men and women through inclusive, community-led and local development. The project team will work closely with Lao government including many related ministries, provincial and district government, the Lao Women’s Union and, most importantly, villagers themselves to bring better results for village livelihoods.

The project is based on a successful rural development initiative, the Sae-ma-ul Movement, developed by the Republic of Korea. This initiative was instrumental in helping to bridge the urban-rural gap and place a hold on rising inequalities during Korea’s industrialisation period in the 1970s and 80s. With the fast increasing number of educated citizens contributing to Korea’s industrial development, informed and motivated farmers helped to fast-forward national development. For this reason, the Sae-ma-ul Movement was recognised by many during pivotal global aid effectiveness forums in Paris and Busan as an example of a country’s people using aid to spark and stimulate national development.

The ISNC project links closely with Lao PDR’s national decentralisation, economic development and nutrition policy. Working with the Lao Women’s Union, UNDP will support and promote national policies with district, provincial and central governments to improve rural livelihoods.

Villagers’ active participation in shaping their future depends heavily on their level of access to public services and information. This is why UNDP is working closely with local government to build closer linkage and usage of existing public policies. As a first step, the ISNC project team, together with Lao Government, is helping to build

Project Summary
- Duration: July 2015 – Dec 2017
- Geographic coverage: 10 Villages in Lao-ngam, Va-phi and Ta-oy Districts, Saravan Province
- Focus area: Poverty reduction
- Responsible partner: Lao Women’s Union
- Website: http://bit.ly/29AmlO1
awareness among multi-ethnic villagers and rural population about public services provided to the people in Lao PDR.

**Outcomes and Activities**

The project’s founding principles of success - diligence, self-help collaboration and localised solutions, means it relies heavily on active involvement and commitment by the leadership and members of the 10 villages involved. During the village selection phase of the project, villagers were asked to share their local development needs and prioritise them. The villagers will implement the thus identified actions according to their own schedule. Participatory development planning techniques such as 3D modelling of villages and before/after visualisation through drawings will help to bridge differences in ethnicity, gender, age and education and enable inclusive participation.

The project is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

- Enhanced knowledge and capacities of Lao Women’s Union and project teams on improving village livelihoods
- Improved access to income for villagers in the 10 project villages
- Enhanced understanding and exchange of knowledge for improving livelihoods

In the initial stage of the project, UNDP will build the project team’s planning, implementation, management and facilitation skills, and seek partnerships with various development projects and agencies already working in Saravan Province. These skills will be helpful to engage more villagers in livelihood and capacity building activities that will take place throughout the duration of the project.

The project will also extract local knowledge and skills for income generation and promoting cultural diversity from other villages in Lao PDR and across the region through South-South Cooperation and UNDP networks.

**Expected Impacts**

By 2017, participating villagers will have improved knowledge and skills in alternative income generation. They will also have better access to resources, facilities and tools for improving their income and fostering a more harmonious and inclusive society.

**For more information**

Ms. Souphalack Bounpadith, Planning and Reporting Officer, UNDP Lao PDR;

E-mail: souphalack.bounpadith@undp.org; Tel: (+856 21) 267746

---

**Funding**

- Project budget: USD 1 million
- Project Funding Source: Republic of Korea

Ten typical rural communities, like Tchouak Village in Ta-oy District, Saravan Province, pictured here, are taking part in this community-led development project.

Specific project activities will include capacity building for the project team at the Lao Women’s Union and in the villages. The Women’s Union will support the project using their experience in championing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Lao PDR, as well as their experience in working with local communities on nutrition issues.