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Laos/Field Staff Reports

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LUANG PRABANG TRIPS REPORT
9-14 June & 8-16 July 1982

by Bob Eaton
Quaker Service -
Laos & Viet Nam

American Friends Service Committee
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U.S.A.

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- Wednesday 9 June 1982 Luang Prabang City
- 4:30 pm Arrive at Luang Prabang after a 40 minute flight. Accompanied by Vanlop SISOPHA of the National Committee for Social Welfare and Veterans. The flight was originally scheduled for the previous Monday but bad weather in Luang Prabang forced a two day delay. Met at the airport by Sanvandy PHOMMALY, President of the Province Committee and Secretary of the Province People's Revolutionary Party.
- 5:30 pm Meeting with Khamphou KAUTISEN, head of the Province Social Welfare Committee, and Souk RASMY, Member of Province Committee and Head of Tourism and Protocol Service, to discuss the agenda for the visit.
- 6:30 pm Dinner and overnight at Hotel Mitaphab, Luang Prabang City
- Thursday 10 June 1982 En route to Ban Muong Seun
- 7:00 am Breakfast at Hotel Mitaphab
- 8:00 am Depart by boat north on Mekong for Ban Muong Seun
- 10:00 am Arrive at Ban Pak Ou on the mouth of the Nam Ou River.
- 12:30 pm Lunch on bank of the Nam Ou. This section of the Nam Ou between its mouth on the Mekong and Ban Muong Seun is more clearly cut into mountainous areas than the more rolling banks of the Mekong from Luang Prabang to Ban Pak Ou.
- 2:30 pm Arrive at Ban Muong Seun, Tasseng Pon Hong, Muong Ngoi District. Ban Muong Seun, the headquarters of Tasseng Pon Hong, is a small, poor village of about 250 people on the east bank of the Nam Ou. It is visually distinguished from the river by the sheet metal roof on the village Wat which is on a bluff over-looking the river.
- 3:30 pm Welcomed in the home of the head of the village committee, Titjan. Review agenda for visit. It turns out that many people from

Thursday 10 June 1982 (Cont.) Ban Muong Seun

3:30 the two districts had been waiting since Tuesday to welcome us. We were three days late because of the plane delays. There is no communication system between the province capitol and Ban Muong Seun. After waiting with no word, district representatives had left that morning for their homes.

5:00 pm Bathe in the Nam Ou.

6:00 pm Dinner in one of the homes in the village which had been set aside for our visit. This bamboo house on stilts was to be our dormitory and dining hall. Overnight at Ban Muong Seun.

Friday 11 June 1982 Ban Muong Seun

7:00 am Breakfast at Ban Muong Seun.

8:00 am Walking tour of village and fields around the village where bombies are to be found. This involves trying to slip up a muddy creek cum trail on a mountain side to some slash and burn fields where a 250 pound bomb is lodged. Certain dilemma in that we went bare footed to increase traction on the mud path, but this increased tractable areas of the foot for leeches to lodge. Alas. Many stoppages to collectively examine each other's feet for the little critters. Four at one time on my foot was the record. Also observed a rocket and guava bomb - all presumably live.

10:00 am Village meeting at the Wat. Titjan, Head of the village committee, Khamphan PHUMVILAY, representative of the province Agriculture Committee who lives near by, welcome us. Brief presentation on life at the village. No school since 1975. People afraid to open up new fields because of bombie problem. Last year grew only seven months supply of rice.

12:00 noon Farewell Lunch. Goat is slaughtered for the occasion. Raw lap from goat and uncooked blood pudding are the highlights. Many kind words are spoken and apologies given because

Friday 11 June 1982 (Cont.) Ban Muong Seun
of the delay in the trip which prevented authorities from further north from meeting with us.

1:00 pm Leave in the boats for the trip back to Luang Prabang.

3:00 pm Arrive back at the Mekong and take a break to visit the cave at Pak Ou. On the west bank of the Mekong, these caves are a point of veneration for Buddhists who visit them and leave statuettes.

4:00 pm Arrive back at Luang Prabang City.

6:00 pm Dinner at the Mitaphab and overnight at Luang Prabang City.

Saturday 12 June 1982 Luang Prabang City

7:00 am Breakfast

8:00 am Three hours meeting with Province officials to review the trip and discuss shovel distribution and rural development project.

12:00 noon Lunch

2:00 pm
to 4:00 pm Meeting with Provincial agriculture officials. Visit storeroom where all Quaker Service donated tools are kept.

4:30 pm Visit the national museum by special appointment. This is the former King's palace. With the exception of the reception room, it is very simple and unpretentious.

6:00 pm Dinner and overnight at Mitaphab.

Sunday 13 June 1982 Luang Prabang City

7:00 am Breakfast

8:00 am
to 9:15 am Formal reception with President of Province, Sanvandy PHOMMALY, at the government reception building, formerly the French residence.

10:00 am All day picnic north of Luang Prabang with Khamphou, Souk and Vanlop. We visit village

Friday

13 June 1982 (Cont.)

Luang Prabang

where relatives of Souk and Khamphou live and eat a large lunch with large amounts of Lao whiskey, Lau Lao.

:00 pm

Formal farewell dinner at the Mataphab. Hosted by Sanvandy PHOMMALY, the Province President and attended by Vanlop, Khamphou, Souk, Manijan MANOTAM, (she is head of the Province Agriculture Committee and a member of the Province Committee), and Bob Eaton, Quaker Service Representative. A very informal affair. The province president agrees with Bob that a trip would be planned soon which will allow enough time for him to get to the district headquarters of Muong Ngoi and Muong Oudamsay.

Friday

14 June 1982

Return to Vientiane

:00 am

Breakfast at Mitaphab.

:00 am

Brief tour of temples of Luang Prabang. The style of building is different than the Vientiane plain or northeast Thailand. The low, multiroofed buildings are well cared for and are "working buildings" in that monks and novices live, pray, teach and learn in them.

:00 am

Airflight back to Vientiane.

Thursday

8 July 1982

Luang Prabang City

11:30 am Arrive and review schedule. Flight originally scheduled for Monday, July 5 but bad landing conditions at Luang Prabang meant a three day wait at the airport.

12:30 pm Lunch at local Phu Shop.

3:00 pm Formal reception by Souvandy PHOMMALY, President of Province Administrative Committee and Secretary of the Province People's Revolutionary Party Committee.

Friday

9 July 1982

En Route

9:00 am Leave Luang Prabang, north on Mekong, in company of Province President, Chief of Province Social Affairs Committee and Chief of Province Tourism and Protocol.

10:30 am Fifteen miles to Ban Pak Ou, enter Nam Ou River, northeast.

12:30 pm Lunch en route.

2:30 pm Twenty-five miles to Ban Muong Seun, Tasseng Pon Hong, Muong Ngoi District.

5:50 pm Twenty-four miles to Ban Pak Bac, mouth of the Nam Bac.

6:05 pm Three miles to arrive Ban Nohng Kiao, District capital of Muong Ngoi District. Total trip is 82 miles in 9 hours.

8:00 pm Dinner and overnight at Ban Nohng Kiao.

Saturday

10 July 1982

Ban Nohng Kiao
and Pon Sa At

7:00 am Breakfast.

8:00 am to 11:00 am Meeting with Muong Ngoi District Committee President, Administrative Committee Representatives, Province Party Representative, and District Police Chief at Ban Nohng Kiao.

11 am to 12:00 Visit Lao Theung village, Ban Nong Ian, and Village for War Wounded, Ban Pa Tok.

12:30 pm Lunch with District Muong Ngoi representatives at Ban Nohng Kiao.

Friday 10 July 1982 (Cont.)

Ban Nohng Kiao
and Ban Pon Sa At

pm Travel to Ban Pon Sa At, capital of District
:30 pm Muong Oudamsay.
pm Reception by District Representatives.
pm Meeting with District President, Administra-
 tive Committee Representatives, Health and
 Education Chiefs.
pm Dinner with Province and District Presidents
pm
2:30 am Play cards with Province President and over-
 night at Ban Pon Sa At.

Saturday 11 July 1982

Muong Oudomsay

am Breakfast, Ban Pon Sa At, Muong Oudomsay.
am
0:00 am Walk six km. to Ban Hoeui Nyin where two peo-
 ple were killed by bombie a week before.
am
:30 am Meet with people of Ban Hoeui Nyin, Tasseng
 Na Nyang.
am
00 pm Walk back to Ban Pon Sa At.
pm Lunch at Ban Pon Sa At.
pm
:30 pm Second meeting with district officials.
pm
:00 pm Visit District and Village Schools and
 Dispensaries in Ban Pon Sa At and Ban Fa.
pm
30 pm Dinner at Ban Pon Sa At.
pm
:30 pm Meeting with District President and over-
 night at Ban Pon Sa At.

Sunday 12 July 1982 Muong Oudomsay and Muong Ngoi

am Breakfast Ban Pon Sa At.
am
00 am Travel by car to Village for War Wounded
 Number Nineteen at Ban Nohng Bia.

<u>Monday</u>	<u>12 July 1982 (Cont.)</u>	<u>Muong Oudomsay and Muong Ngoi</u>
9:00 am to 10:30 am	Meeting with Ban Nohng Bia representatives.	
10:30 am to 11:00 am	Travel by foot three Km to Ban Nohng Kiao, Tasseng Muong Ngoi.	
11:30 am to 1:00 pm	Lunch and rest.	
1:00 pm	Visit Ban Sup Hun, Pathet Lao headquarters for Luang Prabang Province during the war.	
2:00 pm	Travel by boat up the Nam Ou, 1½ hours, (11 miles), to Ban Muong Ngoi, Tasseng Vong Sai, District Muong Ngoi.	
4:00 pm	Reception by District Muong Ngoi President and Committee.	
6:00 pm	Dinner with Province President, District Pres- ident and various officials. Overnight at Ban Muong Ngoi.	
<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>13 July 1982</u>	<u>Muong Ngoi</u>
7:00 am	Breakfast at Ban Muong Ngoi.	
8:00 am	Walk 3 Km east of Ban Muong Ngoi to visit caves of the resistance, Tham Kang and Tham Keo, on the Nam Ngoi River.	
10:00 am	Return to Ban Muong Ngoi.	
10:30 am	Visit Dispensary for three Tassengs of the district.	
11:30 am	Lunch and rest at Ban Muong Ngoi.	
3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	Meeting with District President and Tasseng President, Health and Education Representatives.	
6:00 pm	Baci in honor of Province President and Qua- ker Representative.	
7:00 pm	Farewell Dinner, Ban Muong Ngoi.	
9:00 pm to 11:00 pm	Dancing (Traditional) and overnight at Ban Muong Ngoi.	

<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>14 July 1982</u>	<u>En Route</u>
7:00 am	Breakfast at Ban Muong Ngoi.	
8:30 am	Travel by boat down the Nam Ou and Mekong Rivers to Luang Prabang, 94 miles in 6 hours and 10 minutes.	
2:40 pm	Arrive Luang Prabang.	
3:00 pm to 6:30 pm	Write reports.	
6:30 pm	Dinner at Hotel Mitaphab, Luang Prabang.	
7:30 pm to 10:30 pm	Write reports. Overnight at Luang Prabang City.	
<u>Thursday</u>	<u>15 July 1982</u>	<u>Luang Prabang City</u>
7:00 am	Breakfast at Luang Prabang City.	
8:30 am to 12:00	Meeting with Province Officials to discuss trip and make project proposals.	
12:30 pm	Lunch and rest.	
3:00 pm	Write reports.	
5:00 pm	Visit homes of Social Welfare Chief, Khamphou and Province Committee Member, Souk.	
7:00 pm	Visit home of Province President for farewell dinner and overnight at Luang Prabang.	
<u>Friday</u>	<u>16 July 1982</u>	<u>Return</u>
7:00 am	Breakfast at Luang Prabang City.	
8:00 am	Shop in market.	
11:00 am to 12:30 pm	Informal farewell lunch with Province Social Welfare Chief and Protocol Chief, at province-run Phu shop.	
2:30 pm	Return to Vientiane by Antonov-26, 35-minute flight time.	

by Bob Eaton

Quaker Service Laos & Viet Nam

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Background

This was the first trip for Quaker Service to this region of Laos. The purpose was to explore the situation regarding unexploded bombs (UXBs) and the possibilities for a project to assist local efforts in building schools, dispensaries, public buildings, and wats (buddhist temples).

The trip was originally arranged to allow David Elder, Asia Desk Director for the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia, to participate. However, last minute travel schedule conflicts did not permit this. Overall planning was done by the National Committee for Social Welfare and Veterans in Vientiane. Mr. Vanlop SISOPHA of the National Committee was directly responsible and accompanied me on both trips.

Transportation

The only means of transportation for a foreigner from Vientiane to Luang Prabang is by air. Bad roads and government regulation dictate this. Because the city of Luang Prabang is ringed by mountains, landing a plane is tricky under the best of circumstances. The rainy season is not the best of circumstances and delays are typical. Both my flights to Luang Prabang were scheduled for a Monday morning departure. In both cases the plane left Vientiane, circled Luang Prabang looking without success for a break in the clouds and then returned to Vientiane. In one case there was a two day delay waiting for decent landing weather in Luang Prabang and in the other case, a three day wait.

From Luang Prabang north the preferred means of travel is by boat. With the exception of Route 13 and the four "Friendship" roads built by the Chinese, this area of Laos is virtually without all weather roads. The Nam Ou River is navigable at least as far as Ban Muong Ngoi all year round. There is not a great deal of commerce in general in the northern districts but what there is travels by water. At Ban Nohng Kiao Route One crosses the Nam Ou. Route One begins at the capital of Oudamsay Province to the west and crosses Luang Prabang Province on its way to Sam Neua. However, the withdrawal of Chinese workers in 1979 left only about 100 kilometers completed past Ban Nohng Kiao. It is, nevertheless, an important artery for taking goods from the river into the hinterlands. The number of trucks and cars is very limited in this area so the route is generally deserted of vehicular traffic and used instead by those on foot and bicycle.

Small rice barges, narrow boats of about 35 feet in length with inboard motors, provide the general means of transportation on the rivers. These vessels make about 10 to 12 miles per hour. This speed is increased or decreased directly by

the flow of the river which was about five miles per hour at this time of the year. Generally these boats are entirely covered by a flat metal roof which makes them cozy in a rain storm and very cool while under way as a breeze continually flushes out hot air from under the roof.

We carried with us extra fuel, blankets, mosquito nets, food, and the obligatory five litre can of lau lao. This lau lao was for consumption on the long boat trip. Lau lao is "corn licker" made from rice. It is distilled once. There is nothing mellow about it. From departure to arrival there would be a five-handed game of gin rummy raging in the main cockpit with the two losers of each game required to down a shot of lau lao. Inattentive losers thus became more so, plunging ever deeper into a spiral of loses from which it was difficult to recover. But a good time was had by all.

On both boat trips up the Nam Ou we were accompanied by two cooks, the manager of the Mitaphab Hotel, a nurse and several soldiers. The soldiers' function seemed to vary between sleeping and eating, the nurse and manager kibitzed or played at cards and the cooks cooked. All in all a very low key entourage.

Province Administration During both trips to Luang Prabang I was impressed by the warm reception and thorough preparations on the part of the province officials. My primary contacts were Khamphou KAUTISEN, Chief of Social Welfare and Veterans for the province and Souk RASMY, Chief of Tourism and Protocol Services. On arrival I was given a typed itinerary for review. We kept to our time schedules and had good working sessions at the end of each trip to review our work and discuss projects.

Although detailed, the itineraries were not iron clad. Thus, when we heard that two villagers had recently been killed by a bombie, we quickly rearranged our schedule to permit a half day visit to the village involved.

Souvandy PHOMMALY, the President of the Province Committee and Secretary of the Province People's Revolutionary Party, generously welcomed our visits. He accompanied us on the second trip and invited us to his home for dinner. His personal interest in our efforts contributed to the success of the mission. It was pointed out by a Lao friend that this high level of interest in an aid mission was not typical.

Officials at the district (muong), sub-district (tasseng), and village (ban) levels varied a great deal, but were generally competent and concerned about the welfare of the people of the province. It is clear that the northern area of the pro-

vince has had to make do without a great deal of assistance from the province government. It is indicative of this situation that this was the first trip by the province president to this area since he had lived in these districts before 1975 during the war. Our trip was an effort by the authorities to rectify this problem and to begin to make resources available to areas far from the capital city.

Economy

The economy of Luang Prabang City seems similar to that of Vientiane. Many small merchants and vendors make a little money selling produce, handicrafts and items from Thailand such as rubber sandals, sarong cloth, and soap powder. It is very different in the northern districts where I saw no sign of organized market activity. Families produce for themselves or barter on an individual basis. Few Thai goods, with the exception of rubber sandals and some textiles have penetrated up river.

Most of the province cooperatives are located in Muong Ngoi and Muong Oudamsay districts. This is not too surprising given the early liberation of these areas. Ban Nam Bac (see map, front page) was first declared liberated in 1952. Fourteen percent of the families of these two districts belong to cooperatives and this probably is a high water mark for the near future given the recent decision of the People's Revolutionary Party to ease up on the creation of cooperatives.

Production everywhere is targeted to rice and little else. Families raise their own chickens, ducks, and goats as well as vegetables for food. The province ranks number ten in buffalo ownership among the 13 provinces of Laos. Villagers produced enough rice last year to feed the population if meals were stretched with some root crops with some left over to trade with the province government for fuel, salt, cloth and other essentials. Some rice was also traded to Phong Saly Province.

Climate, Terrain Etc.

Our travels these two trips were confined to the basin of the Nam Ou River. At no time did we exceed 500 feet above sea level. Dense tropical forest lines the banks of the Nam Ou. Two and three story high bamboo thickets of light green and deep green hardwood trees crowd the slopes of the riverbank. The banks of the Nam Ou are gentle and rolling in the section around Ban Muong Seun. But more typically, the river cuts into mountain formations. Some of these mountains rise as much as a thousand meters. At the time of the first trip in early June the river level was about nine feet below mean high. A month later it seemed to be about six feet below mean high. With the rate of

about five miles per hour, hand paddled craft have a hard time of it going upstream. There were several rapids which our boat handled with ease. During the dry season some of these rapids are serious enough to require passengers to get out and walk around them while the lightened boat navigates them on its own. .

Towns and Villages

The villages we visited varied within the general pattern for poor northern villages in this part of Laos. The majority of homes are constructed of bamboo and thatch on stilts. River bank villages tend to be laid out along one major path, paralleling the river.

Two recently created villages of Ban Nohng Kiao and Ban Hoelui Nyin exist on cleared land and are depressingly short of shade tress. Older villages are nicely shaded and comfortable.

Animals roam freely but don't seem to foul the under house areas as much as they do in many villages in the Vientiane plain. On the other hand villages are not as hygenically clean as villages we have reported on in Houa Phan Province.

Lao Teung villages (mid-land Lao) tend to be on less level ground and more clustered together than the more linear Lao Lum villages (low-land Lao) nearer the rivers. In this part of Laos most of the villages have striking backdrops of steep rising mountains. For many hours in the morning the clouds and mists partially obscure portions of these outcroppings giving one the sense of being at a far higher elevation than is the case.

Only one village in the north that we visited, Ban Muong Ngoi, had electricity. And this system was for only two to three hours after sun set every night. In other villages, evening life settles down in the village as subtly and quickly as the setting sun. During the day, much of the activity of the villagers takes place in the open or under the houses. Cooking, drawing water, weaving cloth and baskets, bathing and playing with children are the major non-rice growing activities.

The province capital of Luang Prabang is unique in all of Laos. The former capital of the Kingdom of Luang Prabang, this city on the Mekong River is foremost a city of wats. The roofs of the wats of Lunag Prabang sweep in multitiered grace almost to the ground compared to the high walled wats of Vientiane. The government has provided subsidies to increase the resources available to the wats for repair and maintenance, the result is telling. The wats are in good repair. All the ones I saw were inhabited by monks and novices. The official royal funeral barge is even being repaired and given a coat of gold paint.

Luang Prabang City is larger than any other province capital we have visited in the northern provinces. There are many paved streets, several hotels and movie houses and a large thriving market.

Ethnography

The statistics section of the appendix gives the figures for the three broad ethnic groupings of the two districts I visited. Lao Teung predominate with 52% of the population followed by Lao Lum with 37%. Lao Sung make up the remainder. On my next visit to the province I will visit two Lao Sung villages which are relatively hard to reach in the mountain top areas. I was not able to get detailed information on the Lao Teung sub-groups in the area. At times I felt this lack of information resulted from ignorance on the part of province authorities. Another possibility, however, was that the government has decided to simplify the ethnic complexities of Laos by limiting ethnic classification to Lao Sung, Teung, and Lum. The complexities remain, of course, but the statistics are simple. And erstwhile, albeit amateur, ethnographers are frustrated.

It seems apparent that Lao Lum dominate the administrative bodies at the province and district level. On later trips, it will be interesting to explore ethnic representation on the tasseng and village level.

Background

One major purpose of the trips to Luang Prabang was to explore the unexploded (UXB) situation in the Northern districts of the province. The National Committee for Social Welfare and Veterans in Vientiane had received a request for shovels from the Province authorities in May 1982.

Mr. Vanlop of the National Committee suggested that Quaker Service Laos make an exploratory visit to the area to determine the extent of the UXB problem. Through a grant from NORAD (Norwegian Agency for International Development), Kvekerhjelp and the American Friends Service Committee, Quaker Service Laos agreed to provide shovels for agricultural areas in Laos where the incidence of UXB's was particularly high. Quaker Service leapt at the chance to travel to the northern districts.

General Impressions

In the course of two trips totaling 13 days in Luang Prabang Province, I was impressed by the extent of the bombing damage. Xieng Khouang and Hua Phan Provinces usually receive most of the publicity regarding the American air war in Laos. However, the northern districts of Luang Prabang, particularly the districts I visited, Muong Oudamsay and Muong Ngoi, also suffered severely. Bombing in Northern Laos (roughly the Provinces of Phong Saly, Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang and Hua Phan) was heaviest from 1968 to 1972. In all, the United States dropped almost one half a million tons on this northern area. (In comparison, this is about one quarter of all the bombs dropped by the U.S. in all the theaters of World War II. If the over 1.3 million tons of bombs dropped on the more extensively hit "Ho Chi Minh Trail" areas of southern Laos are added to the northern figure, then Laos, one of the smallest countries in the world, has suffered almost as much bombing from the U.S. as all the theaters of World War II.) Source: "The Air War in Indochina" by the Center for International Studies of Cornell University, November 1971.

Reports from the Districts of Muong Oudamsay and Muong Ngoi indicate that over 4,000 people were killed by the bombing during the war. Another 1,800 people have died since because of UXB's. Figures on wounded are not available. The current population of these districts is about 56,000 people. There is no way to provide collaboration for these figures. However, on my arrival at the headquarters of district Muong Oudamsay, Ban Pon Sa At, I was informed that one week prior two men in a village six kilometers away had been killed by a CBU "guava" bomb left over from the war. One man was wounded. I asked to visit the village; permission was granted.

Ban Hoeui Yin The village of Ban Hoeui Yin (Tasseng Na Nyang, Muong Oudamsay) is set back from Highway Number One so we walked for one and a half hours to reach it. It is approximately six kilometers northeast of Ban Pon Sa At. Ban Hoeui Yin is a new village of about 192 Lao Theung people who have resettled here from a more mountainous village about one days walk away. The people have been in this village for only five months. Indeed, all fifty of their buffalo still remain with about ten families in their old village, although plans have been made to bring them to the new site shortly.

Two men of the village, Tao Buontohng and Tao Khut, were killed while working in a forest near the village. They were collecting traditional medicine fruits from a tree. At the base of the tree where they worked lay a bombie covered up by leaves. One of the men stepped on the bomb and it exploded. A third man, Tao Hai, working with them was wounded by the explosion. Twenty-five year old Tao Buontohng was single, but 38 year old Tao Khut was married with two children, three-year-old Ohn and six-year-old Jut. I met Tao Bountohng's twenty-five year old widow, Nang Peng Ah Ut. Words failed at this encounter. I promised to make sure that photos I took of her children would get back to her.

Tao Saen, Village Chief, informed us that the village currently grows 26 hectares of upland rice. After this year's wet season crop, however, the village hopes to clear 80 hectares of currently overgrown lowland fields. Clearing new fields has proven to be a most serious problem for farmers. Bombies often lie just under the soil and the blows from the traditional hoe used to break new ground is often sufficient to explode them. There has been no case on record of anyone detonating a bombie with the gentler action of the western style shovel. We agreed that the village of Ban Hoeui Yin would be on the top of the priority list for distribution of QSL shovels.

Shovel Style There was a gratifying concurrence of opinion between farmers and officials in the two districts regarding the preferred style of shovel. All interviewed indicated that the long handle, round point, turned step shovel was ideal, if the angle between the blade and the handle could be 180 degrees.

The only opinion which runs counter to this was expressed in the village of Ban Muong Seun on the June trip. Villagers there preferred long blade "irrigator" shovels and short stock "D" handles.

Distribution The following, tentative distribution plan was drawn up by Khamphou KAUTISEN, Chief of Social Welfare for Luang Prabang Province; Souk RASMY, Chief of Tourism and Protocol for Luang Prabang Province; Vanlop SISOPHA, Representative of the National Committee for Social Welfare and Veterans; and Bob EATON, Representative of Quaker Service Laos and Viet Nam. The conclusions are tentative and must be reviewed in Vientiane by National Committee and Quaker Service staff.

The distribution will be in two categories. Category one is a straight grant and category two is shovels for work. The locations chosen have serious problems with unexploded bombs as well as a relatively high potential for developing old and currently overgrown paddy fields for rice production.

	<u>I Grant</u>	<u>II Shovels for Work</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>District</u>			
Muong Ngoi			
Tassend Vong Sai	350	850	1,200
Tasseng Pon Hong	700	-	700
Muong Oudamsay	<u>2,860</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>3,100</u>
	3,910	1,090	5,000

Under the grant arrangement, the shovels are apportioned on the assumption of one shovel per family in the distribution areas. In areas where there are cooperatives, the shovels will be given to the cooperative which will be responsible for assigning a shovel to each family of the cooperative. The shovels will not be warehoused by the cooperative but will stay with the responsible family. This arrangement is to maximize the collective and private use and care for the shovels.

In the Shovel for Work category, Tasseng Vong Sai will use 850 shovels to recompense workers who will be building primary school buildings in eight villages. In District Muong Oudamsay, 240 shovels have been set aside for the construction of one junior high school and one dispensary.

A meeting was held with Luang Prabang province agricultural officials on Saturday 12 June 1982 from 2:45pm to 4 pm.

Present: Province Agriculture Committee,
Buon Jan My (Committee member),
Kham Pan (Head of Provincial Workshop), and Boun Jan
(Agricultural Repair Shop); National Committee for Social
Welfare and Veterans, Vanlop SISOPHA; and Quaker Service,
Bob Eaton.

Discussion The primary purpose of the meeting was to observe the tools supplied to the province workshop by Quaker Service through a grant from NORAD and Kverkerjhelp of Norway. More generally, the purpose of the meeting was to assess future needs. Mr. Kham Pan gave a briefing from which I include the following information.

The province Department for Agricultural Mechanization has 43 vehicles including bulldozers, tractors, and trucks. Lack of spare parts poses a serious, ongoing problem. Currently, only one of three bulldozers, two of seven small tractors, one of three big tractors and just nine out of 73 motorcycles function. Of the province's water pumps, only half operate.

The department is responsible for clearing new land for paddy. Normally the province has been able to clear 150 to 200 hectares of new land each year. Incapacitation of equipment from lack of spare parts, however, has reduced to 50 hectares the amount of land cleared last year. The province development plan calls for clearing 400 hectares each year.

Since 1975 Luang Prabang Province received no foreign aid until this year when various tools arrived from the national department of mechanization. I asked for a list of these items and found them to be the exact list of Quaker-donated items. I inspected the items in the warehouse where they are being kept pending completion of a workshop building. At the present time, the repairs are being done at the much larger Public Works Workshop.

The staff of the Agricultural Mechanization Workshop gave me a list of items which they still need. I gave this list to the National Department of Mechanization in Vientiane and will review it with them when we discuss Phase Three of the NORAD grant for provincial workshops

BE, Bangkok
30 July 1982

Background

Muong Ngoi and Muong Oudamsay, the two northern districts of Luang Prabang Province (see map, Appendix A), border on Viet Nam. Due to their strategic location, both districts were subject to intense bombing during the recent war. The destruction of permanent buildings, mostly schools, dispensaries and wats (Buddhist temples), was nearly complete by the close of the war. As Laos is one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income estimated by the U.N. to be \$US 90 per year, rebuilding has been a torturously slow process at best. A major purpose of my two trips to the province of Luang Prabang was to investigate in what ways Quaker Service could assist the people of northern Luang Prabang in rebuilding their villages and districts.

The Problem: Schools

Many villages simply have no schools for their children. Of the 280 villages in the two districts, 180 have primary schools offering three years of education. The rest have nothing.

Ban Muong Seun, a subdistrict headquarters of about 250 people has had no functioning school since 1975. The villagers put up a bamboo and thatch building and the province sent a school teacher for the primary grades. The teacher, depressed by the poor, bleakly furnished school building and lack of personal living quarters, refused to remain. A second teacher sent out from the province capital felt no better and left as the first had done.

Without exception, every school I visited in the two northern districts was constructed of bamboo and thatch. The floors were of dirt. Furniture, if available, was of very poor quality and in disrepair. The thatch roofs require yearly replacement, a tiresome and time consuming task. These buildings are nothing more than open air pavillions with walls that reach a bare three feet from the ground. During summer vacation when the building is not occupied, freely grazing buffalo quite often simply walk through the flimsy walls to seek shelter from the sun.

The province has made a priority of training teachers for the rural areas. With assistance from UNICEF, the provincial training facility in Luang Prabang is being upgraded. However, the enlargement of the pool of teachers creates a demand for school buildings and housing for teachers assigned to rural areas. As the example of Ban Muong Seun indicates, the government is not applying coercion to keep teachers in the rural areas. The province, therefore, must provide better facilities as an incentive to keep teachers where they are needed.

The Problem: Dispensaries The situation regarding dispensaries is less serious only because, given the poverty of the region, people hold fewer expectations regarding health care. The training of assistant doctors, nurses, mid-wives and health workers is less advanced than in the area of education. Staffing of provincial health facilities will remain primitive at best for a long time, given the poor level of health care in Laos. However, there is a clear need for the construction of health facilities at the district and sub-district level. The plan drawn up by province officials for the development of backwoods dispensaries seems reasonable and appropriate to the general conditions.

I observed that where the dispensary was constructed of thatch and bamboo with dirt floors, the government did little to staff the facility and villagers did not come to the facility. Most of these structures were in bad repair and underutilized. The two wooden units I visited at Ban Muong Ngoi (UNICEF assisted) and Ban Pon Sa At, in contrast, were relatively well staffed and utilized by the local people. Without overdrawing the point, one is tempted to conclude that better structures encourage more government financial commitment and popular confidence.

In the field of education, the creation of more trained teachers has led to the demand for better school facilities. In the case of health, it is to be hoped that better facilities will lead to a demand for the training of more health workers.

The Problem: Wats and government offices When discussing the need to replace destroyed buildings, province officials emphasized that schools and clinics were their first priority. Many villages I visited also hoped to someday repair their local wats (buddhist temples), most of which had been either completely destroyed or severely damaged. The destruction of wats has not only denied villagers a religious center, it has meant going without the traditional gathering place for community meetings, the division of rice at the end of the harvest and the dispensing of traditional medicinal herbs. Also needed are simple wooden buildings to serve as government offices and housing for government workers.

Proposed Solution Quaker Service proposes to work in cooperation with the people of the two northern districts of Luang Prabang Province, with province officials and with the staff of the National Committee for Social Welfare and Veterans to assist the people of Muong Ngoi and Muong Oudamsay to build new or to rehabilitate permanent structures for use as schools, dispensaries, wats and public buildings. After discussion with involved Laotians, Quaker Service has concluded that the provision of a small,

mobile sawmill capable of producing semi-finished lumber for construction purposes would be very useful in the development of these two districts.

The Plan

Province officials have worked out a time frame for the construction of the following buildings within the first year of the project:

- o two junior high schools
- o three primary schools
- o one dormitory school for the sub-district level
- o one dispensary
- o two wats
- o four administrative offices or housing for government workers

(See Appendix B)

In addition, one senior high school would be rebuilt, two dispensaries would be enlarged and three wats would be repaired. Because the labor for all this must come from the villagers during the non-growing season of December through February, it is not certain that all these projects will be completed within the twelve month period. The commitment on the part of the province, district and village officials is that the wood needed for these projects would be prepared within that period and that substantial work on actual construction begun.

The Method

First, a province representative will visit the areas designated by the work schedule to arrange for the cutting and transport of logs to the construction center. This representative will supply the villagers with the hand saws, axes and other materials necessary for the job. The villagers will be instructed in what types of trees to cut. The representative will tell the villagers when the sawmill will arrive at their location so that they can plan to have logs ready for milling. The logs will be sawed green, stacked and dried. The representative will supply the villagers with black sheet plastic and instructions to build a simple roofing arrangement to protect the cut lumber from the sun while it dries.

Second, the sawmill will arrive at the village with the operators. The first year of the plan will involve carrying the mill by boat along the Nam Ou river or along routes one and thirteen. The equipment is small enough that its component parts can be lifted by one person. It comes with its own trailer which can be hitched to a car or ox cart.

Standardized plans for rural schools have been drawn up by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in Vientiane. Similar work will be done regarding dispensaries. The sawmill operator will thus be able to pre-cut all the necessary wood for the required buildings in that village and then move the mill to the next location where more cut logs will be waiting.

Lumber will be specially stacked under the bamboo and plastic roofing constructed by the villagers and allowed to dry. This will take from four to nine months depending on the weather.

Third, the villagers will begin construction of the buildings.

This plan will require the maximum of coordination to insure that the down time of the sawmill is minimized and that when it arrives at a location, the wood is ready to cut. The province has some experience in scheduling in rural areas because they have an active travelling projection team for movies. The sawmill scheduling will be more complex and the timing critical, but I was impressed by the realistic approach taken by province authorities when we discussed this aspect of the program.

Local Commitment

Quaker Service has the assurance of the province authorities that personnel will be made available to operate the mill and to schedule its travels throughout the two districts. The province, to the best of its ability, will also supply other needed materials like nails, hinges, cement and roofing. Traditional bamboo (not thatch) roofing, which lasts for up to ten years will be used where sheet roofing is not available.

The village to benefit will commit their labor to fell trees, to transport the logs to the chosen milling site and to construct the building. Past experience has demonstrated that when the province can make available hard to get materials, villagers have eagerly provided the necessary labor to complete any beneficial community project. My own conversations with these northern peasants uncovered a deep commitment to the rebuilding of their villages.

Quaker Service Commitment

Quaker Service Laos & Viet Nam will provide a portable sawmill and hand tools necessary for the logging operation. We will undertake to insure proper training for the operators. Quaker Service will also seek to mobilize other international agencies to provide supplemental assistance in the areas of health and education. The cost to Quaker Service Laos is estimated to be about \$US 26,450. (see Budget, Appendix C).

Why Quaker Service

In 1974, Quaker Service donated three small, portable sawmills for the use of the Pathet Lao in reconstructing homes in areas which had been destroyed by bombing. The same mill is proposed for this project. It operates on a standard Volkswagon engine which is easy to operate and maintain. These machines are very rugged. The three machines donated in 1974 were initially used in the province of Houa Phan,

one of the most remote and mountainous regions of Laos. In 1977, two of the three mills were moved by truck over very poor roads to the province of Xieng Khouang where they are now used by the province construction company to build homes, schools and clinics.

Quaker Service staff produced an operators and repairs manual in the Lao language for this particular machine. Quaker Service staff also trained the first crew to operate the mills. Lao officials thus approached Quaker Service in an area where valuable experience has been accumulated.

Relation to Other
Assistance Projects

As indicated earlier, the national Ministry of Education and UNICEF have made a major commitment to upgrade the training of school teachers for Luang Prabang province. This is of critical importance in terms of plans to build more schools in rural areas. The Ministry and UNICEF also have budgeted assistance for rehabilitation of school buildings through the provision of carpenter's tools at the sub-district level. In conversations with UNICEF officials in Vientiane, Quaker Service staff is encouraged to believe that if Quaker Service provides the capacity to produce lumber then UNICEF will endeavor to put the two northern districts on the top of its priority list for distribution of already committed building materials. This would complement Quaker Service efforts substantially.

The situation regarding health is not so clear. Currently, there are no other agencies committed to medical assistance in the two districts. Until recently, a variety of problems made it difficult for international organizations located in Vientiane to visit remote areas. New changes in government regulations regarding travel outside the few urban areas of Laos, however, should enable other agencies easier access to areas such as northern Luang Prabang province. Quaker Service will try to interest other organizations in investigating aid and development possibilities in the region.

Conclusions

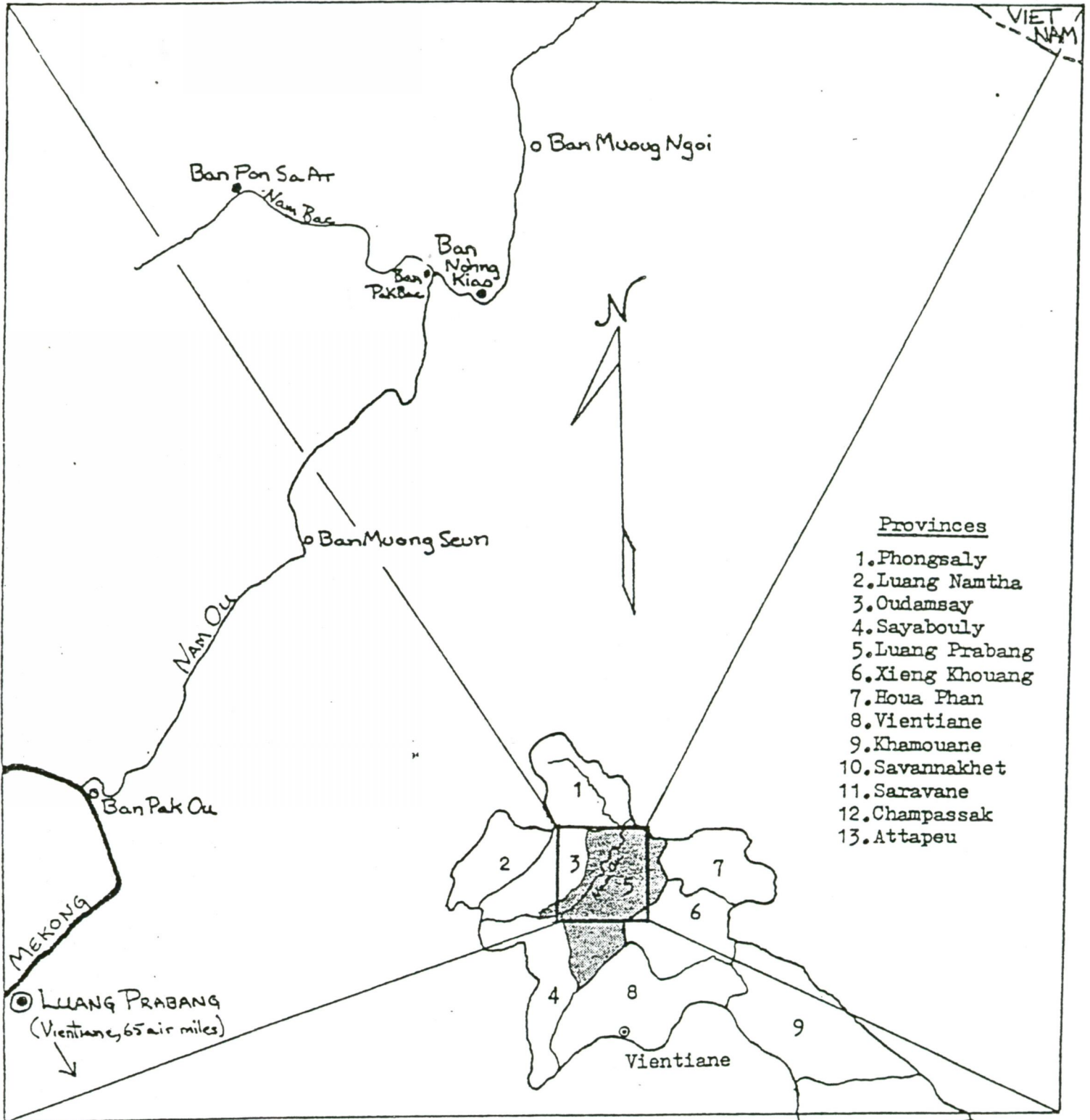
The above draft proposal is very exciting because it has come as a result of local initiative and maximizes participation by those who will benefit at the district and village level. This is not an aid project in the usual sense of the word, but more of a cooperative venture.

I was deeply impressed by the people I met in these two districts. They want better schools and clinics and are prepared to provide the necessary labor. The province administration will supply some building materials and Quaker Service is being asked to provide a sawmill and training. For a very low investment of money a great deal of labor will be mobilized to improve conditions in these remote districts.

Quaker Service has been offered a unique opportunity to be of assistance in a remote area of Laos. If the approach outlined above under "Method" proves workable, the only limit to the productivity of the project is the life of the sawmill. From our experience since 1974 the life of the machine can be projected for many years.

At the conclusion of the first year of the project, Lao and Quaker Service representatives will evaluate the project to determine modifications and the potential for replication in other regions of Laos.

Northern Luang Prabang



Provinces

1. Phongsaly
2. Luang Namtha
3. Oudamsay
4. Sayabouly
5. Luang Prabang
6. Xieng Khouang
7. Houa Phan
8. Vientiane
9. Khamouane
10. Savannakhet
11. Saravane
12. Champassak
13. Attapeu

Statute Miles



KEY

- ⊙ National or Province Capital
- District Capital
- Tasseng Capital

Scale 1:100,000

First

Location Ban Pon Sa At, Tasseng Nam Bac, Headquarters of Muong Oudamsay

Time 8 weeks

Logistics Ban Pon Sa At is located at Km 91 on Route One which runs to the Nam Ou at Ban Nohng Kiao about 25 kilometers away.

Buildings Junior High School (three rooms)
Dispensary
District Office
Apartment for district workers
General home repair

Second

Location Tasseng Nam Sat, Muong Oudamsay

Time 4 weeks

Logistics Tasseng Nam Sat is located on Route 13, 23 kilometers from Ban Pon Sa At.

Buildings Junior High School (three rooms); for two tassengs, Nam Sat and Nam Nga
Wat Nam Sat
General home repair

Third

Location Ban Hoeui Nyin, Tasseng Na Nyang, Muong Oudamsay

Time 2 weeks

Logistics Ban Hoeui Nyin is located on a fairly wide dirt path, about 4 kilometers off of Route One. An ox cart would be required to trailer the mill into the village.

Buildings Primary School (the teachers are already in the village)
General home repair

Fourth

Location Ban Nohng Kiao, Tasseng Vong Sai, Headquarters of Muong Ngoi

Time 8 weeks

Logistics Ban Nohng Kiao is on the Nam Ou River at the point where Route One crosses it.

Buildings Enlarge Dispensary
Enlarge Senior High School; for three districts of Ngoi, Oudamsay and Paksong
District Office and Apartment for workers
Wat at Ban Sup Hun, Tasseng Vong Sai, Muong Ngoi

Fifth

Location Ban Muong Ngoi, Tasseng Vong Sai, Muong Ngoi
Time 8 weeks
Logistics Ban Muong Ngoi is located on the Nam Ou River about fifteen miles upstream from Ban Nohng Kiao
Buildings Dormitory, Secondary School for Tasseng Vong Sai
Primary School for Ban Muong Ngoi
Enlarge Dispensary at Ban Muong Ngoi to serve five Tassengs of Vong Sai, Pa Tame, Pon Ngam, Gia Gan and King Kham
Repair three wats of Ban Muong Ngoi: Wat Tai, Wat Neua and Wat Gang
General home repair

Sixth

Location Ban Nuang Keo, Tasseng Pbak Seng, Muong Oudamsay
Time 4 weeks
Logistics Ban Via Keo is the center of three Lao Sung (Hmong) villages located off of Route One west of Ban Pon Sa At. the other villages are Ban Pa Tdim Pung and Ban Giow Sai. An ox cart will be required to trailer the mill up the mountain.
Buildings Two Primary Schools
General home repair

Note: This schedule is $8\frac{1}{2}$ months long. The order in which the locations will be visited by the mill will be determined by the province representative who visits these areas to set up the tree cutting.

Luang Prabang Trips Report
9-14 June & 8-16 July 1982
by Bob Eaton

ROUGH BUDGET

Quaker Service Laos & Viet Nam

Appendix C

One Mobile Dimension Sawmill with spare parts calculated at 15% of purchase price; C.I.F. Laos	\$20,000.
Assorted tools for lumbering e.g. 10 two man saws, files, gloves, axes, plastic sheeting, etc.	2,000.
Training local operators	1,000.
Quaker Service Overhead & Monitoring, calculated at 15% to cover travel by staff, office work, purchasing trip to Bangkok	3,450.
	<u>\$26,450.</u>

9-14 June & 8-16 July 1982

by Bob Eaton

Quaker Service Laos & Viet Nam

Appendix D

	Muong Ngoi District	Muong Oudamsay District
Total Population	27,317	28,470
+Women	14,926	15,207
Women as % of population	55%	53%
+Families	4,696	4,730
People/Family	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	6
+Villages	144	136
People/Village	190	210
 Total Lao Lum	 8,884	 11,895
Lao Lum as % of population	32%	42%
+Lao Lum Women	5,304	6,011
Women as % of Lao Lum pop.	60%	51%
+Families	1,481	2,050
People/Family	6	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
+Villages	44	39
People/Village	200	305
 Total Lao Theung	 15,534	 13,380
Lao Theung as % of population	57%	47%
+Lao Theung Women	8,343	7,526
Women as % of Lao Theung pop.	54%	56%
+Families	2,560	2,086
People/Family	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
+Villages	77	80
People/Village	200	170
 Total Lao Sung	 2,060	 3,204
Lao Sung as % of population	11%	11%
+Lao Sung Women	1,279	1,670
Women as % of Lao Sung pop.	43%	52%
+Families	655	594
People/Family	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
+Villages	23	17
People/Village	130	190

Luang Prabang Trips Report
9-14 June & 8-16 July 1982

Education Statistics

by Bob Eaton

Quaker Service Laos & Viet Nam

Appendix E

	Muong Ngoi District	Muong Oudamsay District
Tassengs	8	7
Primary Schools	128	52
+Years	2	2
+Students	c.1,500	3,056
Girls as % of students	n.a.	37%
+Teachers	n.a.	117
Students/Teacher	n.a.	26
Primary Boarding Schools	7	7
+Years	2	2
+Students	n.a.	n.a.
+Teachers	n.a.	n.a.
Junior High School	1	1
+Years	3	n.a.
+Students	31	48
Girls as % of students	n.a.	36%
+Teachers	n.a.	8
Students/Teacher	n.a.	6
Senior High School	1	none
+Years	3	-
+Students	60	-
Girls as % of students	n.a.	-
Children not in Primary School	2,450	n.a.

Before leaving Vientiane I spoke with representatives of UNICEF regarding UNICEF funded projects in the northern districts. I was encouraged to visit any UNICEF funded projects I could because UNICEF personnel had not visited this far north.

While visiting the village of Ban Muong Ngoi, Tasseng Vong Sai, District Muong Ngoi, I met with the chief of the UNICEF-funded dispensary, Mr. Bouasy. The dispensary provides services for the Tassengs of Vong Sai, Sing Kham, Gio Gan, Pone and Pa Tehm. The population of the five tassengs is 1000. I saw UNICEF-donated dispensary equipment such as stoves, a mid-wife delivery kit and other assorted items. I have given the list printed below of UNICEF-provided medicines.

The building itself, completed in 1981, has fourteen beds distributed among three rooms as well as an examining room and a waiting room. There are seven nurses, two of whom trained at the middle level (one in Vientiane from 1952 through 1955 and one in Viet Nam from 1963 through 1973). Five trained at the primary level (four in Luang Prabang for 1½ years and one in Viet Nam for 1½ years).

On the day of my visit there were fifteen patients, but the staff informed me that sometimes during the dry season the dispensary has as many as sixty in-patients. From June 1981 to June 1982 the dispensary served 610 in-patients and treated 16 out-patients.

The tasseng has received ten kits for sanitary workers from UNICEF. The staff was not able to specify what the kits included but did tell me that each one contained thirty-nine articles. These arrived in early 1981. I don't know if the kits are actually in use.

The district would like to enlarge the dispensary to provide more bed space. If Quaker Service is able to provide a sawmill and lumber cutting tools, enlarging this dispensary will be a District priority.

Following is a list of the medicines and supplies provided to the dispensary by UNICEF:

- | | |
|---------------|--------|
| 1. Asperine | 16,000 |
| 2. Croloquine | 15,000 |

3.	Croloquine (150 m)	15,000
4.	Biscorpan (0.01)	1,000
5.	Pomatasine (250 m)	5,000
6.	Asinoaside	4,000
7.	Nicosamide	2,000
8.	Lasatine	1,000
9.	Tiavondasone	3,000
10.	Tiavondasone (500 m)	5,000
11.	Nasalisilat	4,000
12.	Sulfacanidine	16,300
13.	Lousatan (3400 boxes)	17,000
14.	Masel (1200 boxes)	9,600
15.	Ama (4500 tablets)	9,000
16.	Multivitamins	72,000
17.	Tisulfa	12,000
18.	Fenobabitan	6,000
19.	Penicillin (1000.00)	1,000
20.	Treptomcine	1,000
21.	Distilled water	1,000
22.	Vitamine B1	100
23.	Vitamine C ampules	100
24.	Vitamine B12 ampules	100
25.	Nictamit ampules	100
26.	Adenarine ampules	100
27.	Ascomatine ampules	100
28.	Pasmathacine ampules	200
29.	Atobil	1,000
30.	Quinine	900
31.	Bongcone	275
32.	Gauze bandage 4 x 5	200
33.	Bantic 2 x 5	12
34.	Gloves No. 6/2	10
35.	Gloves No. 7	10
36.	Alcohol	5 liters
37.	Disinfectant Cleaner	5 liters
38.	Disinfectant Cleaner	5 liters
39.	Red Powder	10 ampules
40.	Delivery Room Bed	1
41.	Stretcher	1
42.	Medicine Bag	1

(translated from Lao by Phouthong Vichittavong)