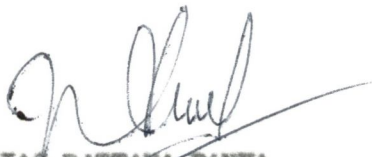


FOREWORD

This briefing outline will acquaint our distinguished visitors with a brief history of the Khet Phatanakane Project in Muong Phieng, a brief rundown of its accomplishments, projects-in-progress, and planned activities.

To all our distinguished visitors we say:

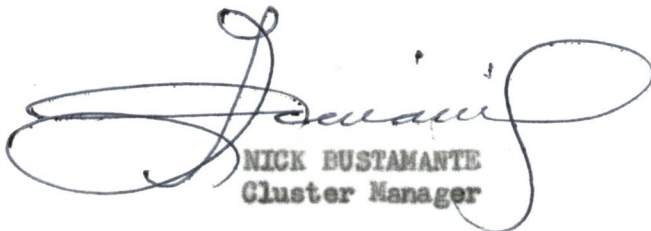
"Welcome to Muong Phieng, Sayaboury, Laos. Your short visit with us will always remain a treasured memory."



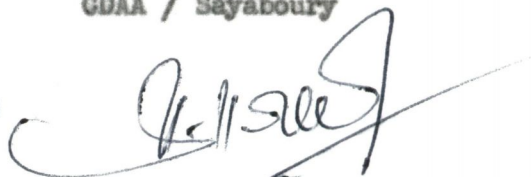
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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

History

The Muong Phiang Cluster (Khet Phatanakane) Project started on March 8, 1964.

Prior to this date, frequent consultations were held between RLG officials led by Governor Tiab Rattana Panya and USAID technicians headed by Dr. Howard E. Thomas and Silas J. Smucker. Exploratory surveys of the area were made and initial planning sessions were held as a result of which evolved the Preliminary Cluster Plan which included road-building, irrigation, medical, agriculture, home economics, and other activities as may be found feasible and responsive to the felt needs of the people.

To officially launch the project, the Chaokhoueng held a two-day orientation in Sayaboury which was attended by high-ranking RLG and USAID officials. The orientation explained the concept, philosophy, scope, and limitations of the Khet Phatanakane project. In a nutshell, it was explained that the Khet Phatanakane project was to be jointly implemented by the Royal Lao Government and the US Government on the concept of helping the people help themselves.

The OB-IVS team, later joined by the RLG counterparts, moved to Muong Phiang in early March, 1964. Command tents were put up; the small clinic was used as dispensary and quarters while the team excitedly worked on a makeshift

bamboo-and-grass shelter which later leaked profusely when the rains came.

The Area

The Muong Phieng cluster comprises 14 villages with an aggregate population of 13,345 people. The area has one Groupe Scolaire in Muong Phieng and 11 primary schools. The Royal Lao Government has 17 teachers in the area and a total of 700 students, more or less, every year.

The province, in general, has a strong and respected provincial government headed by S.A.R. Tiao Rattana Panya. The Khet Phatanakane area is a political subdivision headed by a naidan who is the resident representative of the Chao-khoueng and the Chaomuong. Under the naidan are 2 tassengs and 14 naibans. While they are primarily the political leaders in their community, their leadership is likewise felt in social, cultural, economic, and religious affairs. Through them the villagers deal with their provincial government.

Agriculture is the principal livelihood in the cluster villages. Man-land relationship is strong. The principal crop is rice and all members of the family help in rice production. Corn and vegetables are the chief supplementary crops. The forests in and surrounding the valley are sources of wood for construction and fuel, grass for roofing, and other edible wild products. They are also a fertile ground for hunting deer, wild pigs, and wild fowls which are still abundant in the area.

Agricultural tools and techniques can still be developed. Tools consist of ploughs, harrow, posthole diggers (siyan), a matchete, and an axe or spade. There are also locally made weeders.

During the rainy season, rice paddies abound in mudfish, catfish, and snails. The fish caught, however, does not enter trade. Fishing is done mostly by nets, bamboo traps, and hook and lines. During the summer months, the rivers are the principal sources of fish.

Except for 450 Meo Christians and roughly 400 animists, the 13,345 people of the cluster area are Buddhists. There are 14 wats in the cluster area. The villagers' religious beliefs are still very strong motivational factors as reflected in their daily behavior. A villager would still be subdued in the presence of monks, would still remove his hat whenever he passes the wat compound. The average villager has either a wooden or bronze image of the Lord Buddha in a corner of his house or worn around his neck as an amulet.

The area is very safe and secure. Two years ago, there were sporadic Pathet Lao activities. This has been brought under control by the troops of the 6th Military region under the command of General Houmphou Norasing. During the last six months, there had been no report of encounters between the RLG troops and PL guerillas.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After 18 months of cooperative effort between the Royal Lao Government and US AID, The Muong Phiang Cluster has accomplished the following:

A. Medical

1. Dispensaries: Establishment of 4 self-help dispensaries located strategically so as to be able to service other adjacent villages. These villages are in Muong Phiang, Nam Hia, Nasom Nhai, and Nakheme and are being maintained by 4 OB and 2 RLG medics. Since the establishment of the cluster, about 15,000 cases have been treated.
2. Maternal and Child Care: Prenatal and postnatal care as well as health education and nutrition during pregnancy are being conducted in five villages. During the first year of cluster operations, 50 deliveries have been attended to and about 100 mothers have attended the "Mothers' Class."
3. School Health Program: All school children in the area are given annual medical and dental examinations, with the assistance of OB doctors from the OB Team in Sayaboury. The PH Nurse reported 840 school children given examinations during schoolyears 1963-64 and 1964-65. On the side, the medics conduct deworming campaigns in schools to reduce the incidence of paratitism. During the two school years, 487 children were given deworming drugs and 388, or 85%, passed out ascaris worms.

4. Mobile Clinical Service: Villages where there are no clinics are visited by medics and/or doctors at least once a month, depending upon the availability of medicine.
5. 10-Bed Hospital: The building being utilized as quarters will be converted into a 10-bed hospital by the Royal Lao government as soon as technicians are phased out from the area.

B. Sanitation

1. Toilets: 183 French-style water-seal toilets have been made and installed in 4 villages - Nakheme, Muong Phieng, Natan, and Nam Hia. Villagers are trained to make their own toilets. This project is being implemented by RLG Fundamental Educators backstopped by UN and USAID.
2. Wells: Three drilled wells are being completed in the area. Fourteen (14) dug wells have been provided with well rings in 4 villages. Eight have been completed and 6 are in the process of being completed.
3. Home Sanitation: Home Economics Agents of the RLG are campaigning for digging of drainage, garbage pits, and clean surroundings. So far, they have been successful in "breaking through the barrier" in one village.
4. House Spraying: Fundamental Educators and medics have sprayed 180 houses with insecticides to eliminate bedbugs, ants, and other house pests. However, the medics emphasize the fact that cleaning the house regularly is better than spraying it with insecticide.

5. Crematorium: A crematorium has been made by the monks and the people of Muong Phieng. Four other villages will soon have their crematorium. This project has been designed to further promote health and sanitary conditions in villages.

C. Agriculture

1. Irrigation System: An irrigation dam and irrigation canal with a total length of 11.916 kilometers were completed last March. The system was constructed with part free and part paid labor. The canal and the dam insure that there is enough water in the ricefields even if the rainfall is low. Last year, it is estimated, as gleaned from testimonies of farmers, that the irrigation system has increased production of rice by 40-50%.

To further utilize the irrigation water, double cropping will be experimented on this year. Last year, the trial planting of garlic-after-rice was successful only insofar as the native garlic was concerned. The California garlic did not fare very well.

2. Rice Seed Multiplication Project: This is a campaign to produce better rice and seed varieties. The project which involved 30 farmers last year was found successful. It is now being continued this year with success in 10 villages with 95 farmers participating.

Other rice production projects are the experiments in the use of fertilizer and a demonstration lot of one hectare using different available rice varieties.

3. Vegetable Production: About 500 families were provided with vegetable seeds for their home gardens last year. There was, last year, a considerable increase of vegetables both for home consumption and the market. Schools were also provided with different varieties of seeds.

In Ban Nam Hia, a refugee village, the people planted plenty of cabbage, but the market was not big enough to absorb the produce, hence the price of cabbage became low and resulted to an almost unprofitable affair for the farmer. Despite the lack of market, however, the refugees were happy to have an additional income for that year.

Eight farmers also experimented on planting California garlic provided by USAID. This was not very successful, because the cloves did not grow as big as the original stock. However, they are again willing to try local varieties this year.

4. Agricultural Tools: Sprinklers, hoes, and rakes were bought from Vientiane and resold to farmers in Muong Phieng and Nam Hia at cost price. There were 130 sprinklers 60 rakes, 50 hoes, and other agricultural tools resold in the refugee village alone.
5. Farmers' Classes: Seminars and/or classes were held for farmers who were interested in the improved culture of vegetable or trees. Two such classes were held in Nam Hia and Muong Phieng.

D. Livestock

1. Distribution: 485 ducks and 46 Yorkshire/Berkshire pure-bred gilts and boars were distributed to 127 farmers in 9 villages. So far, 10 pigs have been reported dead. The Lao Veterinary Service agents in the area are attending to this project. The project envisages the return of 2 pigs for each pig distributed; and 12 ducks for every 6 ducks distributed.
2. Four fishponds have been constructed in Nam Hia and seeded with 10,000 tilapia fish. They had their first harvest last February and the tilapia fish caught were as long as 14". Of the four fishponds, however, only two are seeded. The other two are being reserved for other species of fish.

E. Education

1. School Repairs: The Muong Phieng Groupe Scolaire is being repaired by cementing the floor and providing two additional rooms.

Four other village schools have already been repaired. These are schools in the villages of Nakheme (additional room), Nason Nhai (changing of walls with lumber), and Ban Natan (general repair of roof, walls, and eaves).

3. A Boy Scout Unit is also organized in Muong Phieng. At this time, however, the standing troop of 32 Boy Scouts lacks a scoutmaster because he recently resigned to continue his studies in Vientiane.

4. The Home Agents taught sewing and food preparation in Ban Nam Hia and in Ban Natan. About 50 people in Ban Nam Hia and 12 people in Ban Natan attended these training sessions.

F. Nam Hia Refugees:

1. 122 Meo families from Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, and Vientiane province, and one Lao family were relocated in Nam Hia. The provincial government of Sayaboury have provided them with home lots and 3 hectares of ricefields for each family.

Prior to their resettlement in Nam Hia, they were provided with clothing and food by the Social Welfare Commission of the Lao Government.

2. To help further refugees to get up on their own feet, 20 buffaloes have been distributed to them. This would help in the cultivation of their ricefields. The refugees are expected to return to the Cluster Project and the Government the same number of buffaloes for further redistribution in the resettlement area.
3. Recently, a housing project plan was submitted by the Chaokhoueng to the Commission for Social Welfare. The plan is still being considered by responsible Lao officials.

G. Training

1. Civic Action: A group of 8 soldiers have recently finished their training in Civic Action. These trainee-

graduates have been assigned by General Norasingh to Xienglom Forward Area to help in the implementation of rural development projects thereat.

At present, 24 soldiers from 5 Military regions are undergoing training in Civic Action.

2. Naiban/Tasseng Training Course: The Chaokhoueng convoked and launched a training program for all naibans and tassengs in the cluster area. The first group of 20 village leaders completed their training on 20 Oct 65. The second group is now undergoing training.

This one-week training includes subjects on government, government procedures and assistance, better techniques of agriculture, livestock, sanitation, preventive medicine, and leadership.

III. P L A N S

1. Follow-up on tassengs, naibans, and assistant naibans to insure that they teach their villagers what they learned during their training and at the same time act as the "animateur" of development in their village.
2. Road construction of Route National # 1 - from Muong Phieng to Nakheme - a span of 19 kilometers.
3. Continue training civic action teams for employment in different parts of the province.

4. Housing Project for the Nam Hia refugees: Follow-up on the plans recently submitted to His Excellency, Mr Keo Viphakone. The plan is a five-year plan for the construction of housing units. It provides that after 5 years, the refugees would begin paying back the government for the housing units allotted to them.
5. Construction of a public market in Muong Phiang on a self-help basis. It is hoped that the construction will begin during the next dry season.
6. Construction of an irrigation system either in Nam Hia or in Ban Nabouam so that new ricefields could be opened to production.

IV. PROBLEMS

1. Lack of a market to absorb products in Muong Phiang if the agricultural projects become successful.
2. The road between Muong Phiang and Ban Nakhene - 19 kms - become impassable during the rainy season, and 13 villages could not be reached by vehicles, hence, continuity of projects is hampered. (This year, the road will be constructed so as to make it passable during rainy season.)