

Overseas Field School on Sustainable Development in Laos (FS program)
(Tentative schedule as of 12 Mar 2019)

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1. Duration: 4 Aug (Sun) – 13 Aug (Tue) 2019
2. Location: Vientiane (VTE), Xiang Khouang (XK), Khammouane (KM)
3. Participants: 5 students (min) to 15 students (max) and one professor from Hosei University (Japan)
4. General Aims of FS program: 1) to develop deeper expertise of liberal arts and research methods on the ground, 2) to analyze development-related issues logically, 3) to foster self-directive and altruistic human resources through creative or research-oriented activities in different cultures.
5. Preparatory studies: A couple lectures and reading assignments will be imposed: Sustainable development and SDGs, PADETC and its activities, two villages to visit, participatory development, history and development challenges in Laos (please provide relevant documents by May 2019)
6. Schedule (tentative)

Day	Activities	Stay
Day 1 4Aug(Sun)	Arrival in Vientiane in the evening Dinner and orientation	Hotel in VTE
Day 2 5Aug(Mon)	Opening Workshop Evening: preparation for field research	Hotel in VTE
Day 3 6Aug(Tue)	AM: move to two provinces (XK and KM) PM: meeting with villagers, farm stay	Farm stay in XK or KM
Day 4 7Aug(Wed)	Field Research 1 (field visit, interview with local government / villagers / NGOs...)	Farm stay or Hotel
Day 5 8Aug(Thu)	Field Research 2 (field visit, interview with local government / villagers / NGOs...)	Farm stay or Hotel
Day 6 9Aug(Fri)	AM: move to Vientiane PM: Free time or visit	Hotel in VTE
Day 7 10Aug(Sat)	Consolidating information (field research and literature review) to prepare for presentation	Hotel in VTE
Day 8 11Aug(Sun)	AM: Presentation and discussion PM: Sightseeing in Vientiane	Hotel in VTE
Day 9 12Aug(Mon)	Additional activities in Vientiane or free time for sightseeing to Nam Ngum / Tha Nalaeng and shopping Leave for Japan (VN at 19:40 or TG at 20:30?)	Overnight flight
Day 10 13 Aug(Tue)	Arrival in Narita	

7. Opening Workshop on 5 August

Although the World Bank eliminated the term of “developing countries” from the World Development Indicators in 2016, Laos is still categorized by the United Nations as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the world. It indicates that economic and social data recognize Laos as a country in poverty. UN mentions that LDCs are low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development including highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and low levels of human assets. The FS program in Laos will argue the poverty and sustainable development in this context narrated among the international organizations—“What is poverty?” “What is Sustainable Development?” “What are human assets?”

We will have 5 modules for interactive lectures and discussion as followings. Ideally, each module spends less than an hour in order for Japanese students to keep concentrating on them. Hand-out materials in English would be very helpful for them to understand the lectures.

1) Module1: Subsistence economy and organic farming

Subsistence economy is often interpreted as “self-sufficiency”, which might imply backwardness or recall ancient times when monetary economy did not prevail in the society. Meanwhile, organic farming with no or little input of chemicals or pesticides represent the post-modern agriculture respecting safety of foods based on bitter experiences of pollution and health diseases. In Laos, both are co-existing. It is commonly recognized that chemical fertilizers and pesticides will increase agriculture productivity so that experts might suggest Lao farmers to modernize their farming to eradicate poverty. This topic will cover interesting interaction among subsistence economy and organic farming in a “poor country”.

- Subsistence economy in Laos: livelihoods in each season, typical daily works, dependency on natural resources, rich (harn) and affluent (oudom-somboune)...
- Organic farming in Laos: materials in use, agriculture products grown by villagers, biomedicines...

2) Module 2: Actors involving in development

Knowledge about the political and social structure including decision-making process and the power at the village level is indispensable to understand the development. For example, “village” in Laos is not official administration but there is a village committee for public objectives. While the head of a district and of a province is appointed by the government, a village leader is elected among the villagers. Also, it might be difficult for Japanese students to understand the difference among administration, the People’s Revolutionary Party and mass organizations. At the same time, they may have no clear images about the modality of involvement of international actors like CORD and GEF. This topic will clarify the role of each actor in development at a village level.

3) Module 3: Ethnicities in Laos

It is said that there are 68 ethnic groups in Laos. Cultural diversity is also crucial to understand development challenges of Laos. The Japanese students need advance knowledge about cultural and social characteristics of the ethnic groups to whom they are going to visit in Xiang Khouane and Khammouane provinces. Not only general information about each ethnic group but also its implication for development should be provided in advance.

4) Module 4: Village information in two provinces

The basic information about the villages to visit, their specific development challenges and on-going projects there would be important for the Japanese students to discuss their research questions and what they would like to ask stakeholders in two provinces. While such information is requested to provide in advance for preparatory studies in Japan, the lecture and question/answer session in Vientiane would remind them of it.

5) Module 5: Training workshop for village research

This should be a first time for most of the Japanese students to conduct a field-based interview research in abroad by using English. They have no experiences to build rapport with interviewees. This module aims to let the Japanese students to understand the local context to facilitate interviews with villagers and governmental officials in Laos and exercise the practices with staff and volunteers of PADETC.

6) Module 6: preparation for field research

After module 1-5, the Japanese students recur to a series of lectures and discussion to crystalize their research questions and initial questionnaires prepared in advance. The outcomes of the field research in each province rely on this module. The students will share their ideas on research questions and questionnaires with the Lao counterparts who will go to each province together in the evening of 5 August or in the morning of 6 August before moving to the provinces.

8. Field Research

We need more discussion about how we can manage the field research. It would be appreciated if PADECT design a first draft plan of each field research. It should be at least flexible in order the final questionnaires developed at the Module 6 to be incorporated into the schedule in each province.

9. Flights (for reference)

- 1) TG/ NRT12:00-16:30BKK, BKK18:35-19:45VTE
/ VTE20:30-21:35BKK, BKK23:50-08:10NRT
- 2) VN/ NRT10:00-13:10HAN, HAN16:40-17:50VTE
/ VTE19:40-20:50HAN, HAN00:30-0735NRT

10. Cost (tentative): 150,000 yen to 200,000 yen

11. Remarks: We carry out two prior learning sessions. The schedule will be decided with the participants.

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