



Government and WWF Laos representatives release fingerlings in Xebanghieng River's fish reservation during the launch on Wednesday.

## WWF, fisheries dept announce community co-management for aquatic reserves

Times Reporters

World Wide Fund for Nature in Laos (WWF-Laos) in cooperation with the Department of Livestock and Fisheries on Wednesday announced community fishery co-management regulations for Xebanghieng River's 10 fish reservations of Savannakhet province, focusing on protection of threatened aquatic species.

The announcement and official launch of the administration of 10 fish reservations in 10 targeted villages are under the 'Fishery Community Co-Management in Xebanghieng River Project'.

WWF-Laos and the Department of Livestock and Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the project on March 14, 2019.

This project is as part of the government's overall plan to ensure that fish and other natural aquatic resources of the Mekong River and its tributaries are managed sustainably.

The project directly targeted 10 villages in the three districts of Thapangthong, Songkhon and Phin in Savannakhet province, which have an

estimated combined total population of 73,000 people.

The main objective of the project is to increase and improve the stock of aquatic resources through the establishment of fisheries co-management structures. This will ultimately support the improvement of local livelihoods. At the project's conclusion, the impact of the support will be assessed to provide knowledge for the improvement of future initiatives.

The activities and outcomes of the project include the demarcation of 10 fish conservation zones, the establishment of 10 fishery management committees, vocational training, and practical assistance for community enterprises as an essential part of the overall plan.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Head of Savannakhet Province's Agriculture and Forestry Department, Mr Khamchanh Sidavong, said the project aimed to help locals to use aquatic resources in a sustainable system, especially protecting fish species in the Xebanghieng River.

"Villagers have participated in sharing concepts on regulations giving them more understanding

about fishery management as well as adapting it to community conditions," Mr Khamchanh added.

WWF-Laos Fisheries Project Coordinator in Savannakhet province, Mr Sinthone Phoumkhamouane explained the establishment of fish reservations intended to reduce ongoing extinction threats to aquatic species and continue habitat protection to increase the fish population. This would ensure villagers in the 10 targeted communities have a sustainable supply of protein supporting the government's food security strategy.

Mr Sinthone pointed out expanding fish numbers would also increase the richness of biodiversity and improve locals' living conditions.

The Xebanghieng River project will conclude at the end of this year with support from the Darwin Initiative. This UK Government funding programme provides grants for projects working in developing countries with rich biodiversity.

Since 2006, WWF Laos has supported the government to establish more than 300 fish conservation reservations.

## Korea provides training on ICT, leadership for Souphanouvong University

Times Reporters

Sookmyung Women's University of Korea is continuing to support a programme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and leadership at Souphanouvong University in Luang Prabang province.

The course aims to empower and build the capacity of teachers and students in these fields.

The programme has been held every year since 2017 but this year it took place online because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The training session was organised by Souphanouvong University (SU) together with the Asia Pacific Women's Information Network Centre and Sookmyung Women's University of Korea, and supported by the Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea. The Unesco-Unitwin online training course on ICT and Leadership for Women's Empowerment took place at SU from August 31-September 4. This was the fourth workshop held at SU and was attended by 51 trainees from six faculties.

Its purpose was to direct female students' attention beyond the classroom towards learning about the needs of the surrounding community. There is also awareness of the importance of using ICT applications and leadership skills to be successful and prepare them for the future.

SU President Assoc. Prof. Vixay Chansavang and the President of the SU Women's Union Committee, Mrs Phanthamanath Phathoumvanh, welcomed the participants at the opening of the training.

Assoc. Prof. Vixay said "This programme will help to promote gender equality by focusing on female students. It relates to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and has been adopted to promote gender equality in various aspects of development such as education, health, leadership, politics and related areas."

"Women make enormous contributions to the economy, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. Recently, women have been significantly empowered," he added.

"For this reason, they advance economies and

sustainable development worldwide. This workshop aims to promote women's leadership and ICT skills as these fields are essential to empower women and give them the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve their potential and dreams. Their great and invaluable input into this workshop has resulted in a very fruitful and productive outcome."

The Asia Pacific Women's Information Network Centre was established in 1996 as an affiliated international development organisation of Sookmyung Women's University to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through ICT in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. As a global institution specialising in gender and ICT, the Centre has conducted numerous studies, surveys, trainings and workshops in collaboration with national and international organisations encompassing the private, public, and academic sectors.



Students and teachers from Souphanouvong University gather for online training on ICT and leadership.

## Bokeo police make arrests after woman held for ransom

Times Reporters

Bokeo provincial police this week arrested three men after they allegedly detained and held a woman for ransom in Huayxai district, demanding 500,000 Thai baht for her release.

An official in charge of the case, who asked not to be named, told *Vientiane Times* that on Monday police were informed that three men had detained a woman at a hotel in Huayxai district, later moving her to Tonpheung district with the intention of sending her to a neighbouring country.

Police from the provincial Public Security Headquarters

teamed up with officials from Huayxai district and Namkerng police station to hunt for a vehicle in which the alleged kidnappers and their victim were travelling.

They stopped a pick-up that was driving from Huayxai to Tonpheung past the Namkerng police station and arrested the three occupants.

Police were able to rescue the 35-year-old woman the men were holding for ransom, who came from Yaihuayxai-Neua village, Huayxai district.

The kidnappers were identified as Mr Olay, 40, a police officer from Yaihuayxai-Neua village,

Mr Sengkeo, 33, also a police officer from Namtoy village, Huayxai district, and Mr Thongdam, 38, from Chansavang village in Sikhottabong district, Vientiane. Police are making enquiries in an attempt to identify other individuals involved in the case.

A similar incident occurred in Kaysone Phomvihane city, Savannakhet province in June when someone detained a man and held him to ransom for 500,000 Thai baht.

The victim's body was subsequently found buried. Savannakhet police officials are continuing their hunt for the killers.



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