

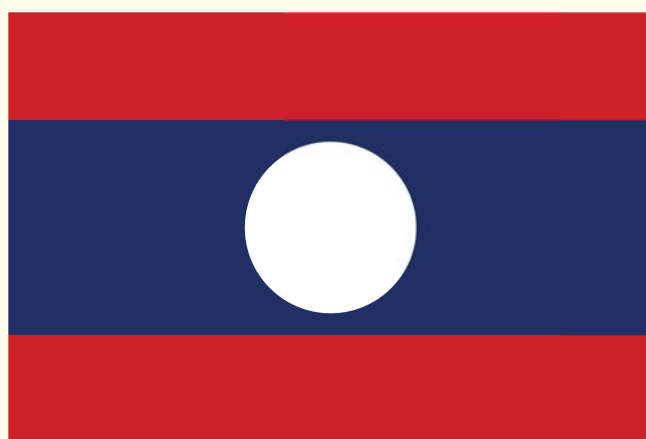
PRAM KSN - The PRAM Knowledge Sharing Network

WWW-based Capacity Building and Peer-to-peer Learning for Agricultural Extension in Laos



Poverty Reduction in Laos

- Lao PDR is one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC)
- Big challenge for Lao government and international community to reduce poverty
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) in Lao PDR is currently working to develop and refine its strategies for rural agricultural development
 - achieve food security for the country
 - assist communities to develop agricultural production
 - stabilize shifting cultivation to alleviate poverty
- Local level staff lack the needed breadth of knowledge and skills



The PRAM Program

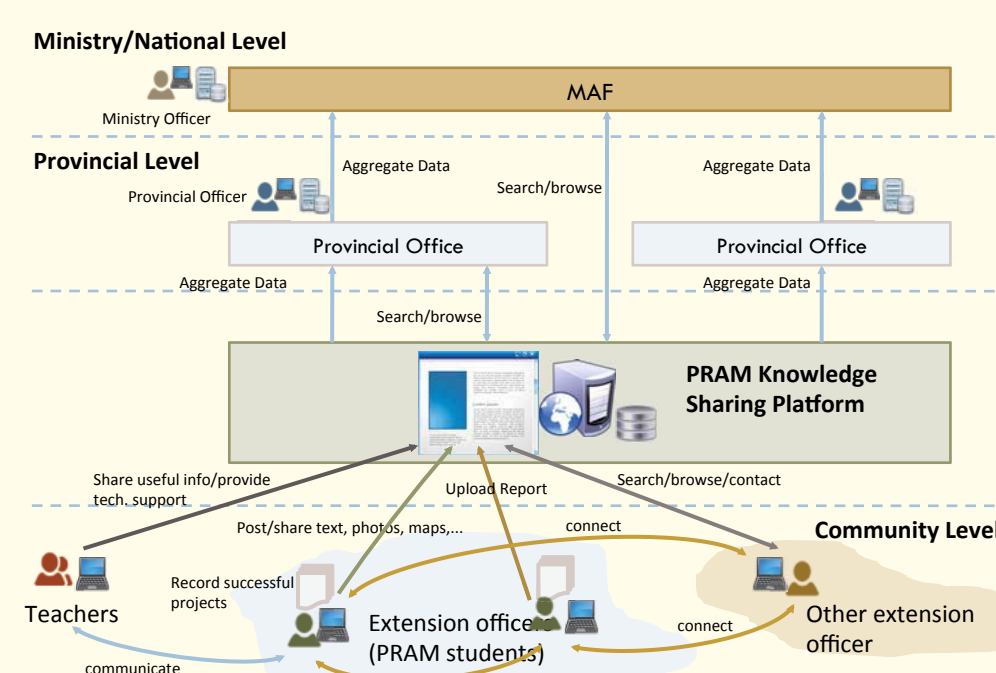
- Bachelor degree program in „Poverty Reduction and Agricultural Management“ (PRAM)
- Embarked in 2007 by MAF with support from the Wetlands Alliance
- Professional development of extension officers through hands-on training
- The PRAM curriculum
 - developed as a collaborative process with development professionals, government officers, and extension workers
 - taught by a consortium of universities and agricultural colleges in Laos and NE Thailand
 - emphasizes problem- and project-based learning, with projects proposed by the students and carried out in the field
- How to scale up the PRAM to 5,000 extension workers?

The PRAM Knowledge Sharing Network (PRAM KSN)

- Strategic partnership of MAF with United Nations University International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST) and University of Bremen
- WWW platform to unlock the capacity of this rich infrastructure so that it fits into local contexts
- Capacity building in ICT itself for local communities to take ownership of the technology
- Participatory design with full participation of national, provincial, and district level staff, and PRAM students/teachers
- Platform to record and communicate local-level knowledge
- Provides internet services in Lao language
- Platform enables extension officers to share knowledge and professionally network
- Goal: broad peer-to-peer learning community
- System allows to ask questions to experts in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Information gathered at the local level to be aggregated



Multimedia Information Aggregation



Technological Advances

- Private sector development provides a viable ICT infrastructure in rural areas, including 3G Internet connectivity
- Most current students in the PRAM program purchased their own laptop computers (used market in Thailand)



Recent Development

- PRAM KSN prototype running since January 2012
- Computers donated by Elsevier Singapore placed in Poverty Reduction Focal Areas (Jut Sum) in Laos
- PRAM KSN has been introduced in 12 districts in Lao PDR, onsite training is provided to staff

Future Challenges

- Exploit possibilities of mobile client use of PRAM KSN
- Investigate structured input methods to raise quality of project reports
- Include micro-mapping and VGI techniques to enable rapid acquisition of geo-data and statistical data
- Assistance tools to provide teaching material based on provided content
- Strengthen personal communication and synergies between system users
- Social networking - connect users with similar interests, challenges, and experiences

