



## Innovative Community Working Methods: Anoulack Association used in the Sustainable Livelihood Community Project in Nakai National Park, Khammouan Province

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** The Lao PDR is a less developed country that utilizes natural resources to reduce poverty in rural areas. The various organizations are interested in helping people in the local area to increase their income to survive. Anoulak Association (AA) is a successful organization that applied the innovation methods in the CRCB projects (Community Resilience and Biodiversity Conservation project) to assist local communities in improving their livelihood while natural resources and forests are protected, which can be achieved in the National Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, this study explored the innovation methods that the Anoulak Association has applied in their work, including factors contributing to its positive success, and explored the benefits of this project that contributed to the local community.

**Materials and Methods:** A qualitative method was applied in the research by using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as a tool for collecting data. A purposive sampling technique was used for selecting samples and considering gender equality and ethnic minorities. A total of 23 participants were selected to be key informants for in-depth interviews (IDIs), and 4 groups of villagers from 4 villages were invited to join the focus group discussion (FGDs). Content and thematic analysis were used for data analysis by summarising key informants' and FGDs' responses.

**Results:** The innovative work of the Association Anoulack (AA) is identified as the procedure of implementing, which can be seen that the association has taken seriously management via the 7 aspects, such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. The association uses research evidence and bottom-up planning principles in participatory planning tasks and focuses on the management of facilitators as a key innovation to reach a successful project. However, the communities could get the benefit of Economic, Social, and Environmental protection.

**Conclusion:** The CRCB project was perceived as a good project because it contributes to the improvement of the livelihood of local people in four villages, along with the preservation of forests and biodiversity. However, in order to make the administration and encourage people to participate in the production of crafts more and better, selecting the village facilitators should consider these relevant characteristics, such as experiences, leadership skills, and dedication, because it is related to the common interests of the village. If facilitators who are not enthusiastic were chosen, the handicraft production, including the trade chain, would not be carried out well.

**Keywords:** Innovative Methods; Anoulack Association; Sustainable Livelihood Community

### Introduction

To achieving sustainable development goals, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), focused on work innovative community with the Goal 13 (Climate action), No Poverty (1); Zero Hungers (2); Good Health and Well-being (3); Life below Water (14); and Life on Land (15); Due to the majority of Lao people living in rural areas and relying on natural resources such as depend largely on harvesting wild plant and animal products for their livelihood and income, more than 50% of GDP results from agriculture, forestry, livestock, and fisheries. Thus, the Lao Government's decree on Protected Areas (No. 134/LG) in 2015 was issued. This decree not only aimed to make the protected areas abundant and sustainable by focusing on environmental protection, watershed protection, prevention from erosion, protection of soil quality, protection of strategic zones for national defense & security, adaptation, and reduction of climate changes, global warming mitigation measures, but it also emphasized to make protected areas be able to contribute its benefit to improve the living conditions





for people of all ethnic groups who live in or surrounding the protected area. Moreover, it also aims to contribute to the development of the national socio-economic status (Lao PDR, 2015).

The implementation of Decree 34/G will achieve its purposes when all classes of people in society help and participate in the action. Thus, there are many associations and international and local organizations that have participated in implementation alongside LG, namely, FLOURISH of RECOFTC, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS Lao PDR), WWF Lao: Community-based Forest Restoration and Management for Livelihood, Anoulak Association, etc. These associations, as well as international and local organizations, have employed various innovation methods in their projects to support local people in enhancing their livelihoods while protecting natural resources and forests. Of course, some projects were successful, and some projects might not be very successful. An empirical study shown that factors that influenced the project success involve the use of tools and methods to achieve its objectives during the execution phase (MPI, 2017) while the study of Durmic, (2020) claimed that project team and project control have the highest influence on the project success, project planning has a medium impact, project customer and project execution factor have lower impact on the project success. However, project planning is also one of the crucial parts of any project; it should be properly planned because it is extremely important in order to execute successful projects (Durmic, 2020). Yeong, (2010) argued that knowledge management and project management factors could have a significant influence on project success, an efficient communication is a key element in a project as it aids in providing relevant information to all project participants, which, is mandatory for the delivery of a successful project (Yeong, 2010).

Anoulak is the association that has been working in Nakai District since September 2014, with its dedication to the conservation of biodiversity for a long time, and monitoring the livelihood of people living in the community. The mission of the association is to develop and implement innovative approaches, using various principles and sustainable ideas in the conservation of biodiversity and the ecosystem to sustain and build the resilience of the minority communities in 4 villages of the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park. The main activities of the Anoulak Association include research and monitoring activities for biodiversity conservation, community anti-poaching patrol activities, community outreach and awareness activities, capacity building activities, and promoting sustainable living of the community. The Anoulak Association is an association that works on the conservation of forests and biodiversity, as well as promoting the improvement of the living conditions of the local people, along with the conservation of the environment that was carried out before the promulgation of Decree 134/G ( Anoulak, 2018 ).

Throughout the period of almost 20 years, the association has successfully implemented many activities and has applied various working methods in association activities. That success has made the association a model in working with the community, along with conserving forests and biodiversity to this day. A part of the success of the association is because of its team, who are skilled, enthusiastic, and dedicated to innovative work for the community. Apart from having a good team, what is still hidden behind of success that pushed the association to achieve in many activities is needed to discover to share with other project operators, particularly those who are working on forest conservation and biodiversity and improving the livelihood of local people might be interested in applying this lesson learn into their works. Therefore, this study is interested in any innovation method that the Anoulak Association has applied in their work, what factors contribute to its positive success, and what good lesson learned would be good to share with other people operators that can help them to work better with the community and can bring more benefits to the community than before while able to conserve forests and biodiversity.

## Objectives

1. To determine the innovative methods and critical success factors behind the Anoulak Association's progress.
2. To identify the benefits accrued by local communities through the CRBC project.



## Literature review

### ***Community Development (CD)***

The concept and theory of community development (CD) originated in England. In 1944, the United Nations and various countries applied the philosophy of community development based on the belief in the capacity of people, providing opportunities, developing capacities, and providing equal justice to people in the community (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1984). The CD consists of various components, Norman J. Glickman & Lisa J. Servon (1998) stated that components of CD included resource, organizational, programmatic, network, and political components (Norman J. Glickman & Lisa J. Servon, 1998). Baker 1989 cited in Rahim & Abu-Samah, (2010) claimed that CD usually consists of major elements: (1) community members' well-being or welfare involving both material sufficiency and non-economic aspects of living such as health and education; (2) resource development, involving increased production and efficiency; and (3) organizational development, involving the maintenance and creation of social and economic structures through which members of the community may channel their energies for the betterment of community living (Baker 1989 cited in Rahim M. Sail & Asnarulkhadi Abu-Samah, 2010). Thus, this study will be based on the CD principle to be indicators for the success of Association Anoulack, which includes 7 aspects: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting.

### ***Sustainable Livelihood***

A livelihood covers the assets, capabilities, and activities required for a means of living. A sustainable livelihood means an ability to cope with and recover from stresses and difficulties and be able to maintain its capabilities and assets at the present and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Serrat, O, 2017). Livelihood assets can be both tangible and intangible; they were categorized into 5 groups, such as human, social, natural, physical, financial, and political capital. Human capital includes skills, knowledge, health, and the ability to work. Social capital consists of informal networks, membership in formalized groups, and relationships of trust that facilitate cooperation and economic opportunities. Natural capital contains land, soil, water, forests, and fisheries. Physical capital comprises basic infrastructure (roads, water & sanitation, schools, ICT, and goods (tools, livestock, and equipment), and financial capital consists of savings, credit, and income from employment, trade, and remittances (UNDP, (u.d)).

### ***Community Participation***

Participation means leaders allow their followers to participate in decision-making as much as they can, the process of allowing people to be involved in development work, sharing ideas, making decisions, and solving their problems (William, E. , 1976). The basis of activities that will result in a wide-ranging management. This is one way to make participation extend to the operations at the lower level of the organization (Putti, J.M, 1987). Besides, the World Bank Learning Group defines participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them (World Bank, 1995). Moreover, Cohen & Uphoff (1980) theory illustrate that there are 4 aspect of participants, namely: 1) participation in deciding what to do and how to do it, 2) participation in implementation, 3) participation in receiving benefits arising from operations, and 4) participation in project evaluation (Cohen, J. and Uphoff, N, 1980)

### ***Working Innovation***

Innovation can be identified with the creation of a new product or service or with an improvement of an existing product or service (Taylor, 2017). However, an innovative community is the method that helps to work efficiently; the organization can unlock new ideas, identify opportunities, and share perspectives (Henike, 2025). It is both an internal and external stakeholders' group that works together to generate and implement new ideas to succeed, which includes innovation departments, customers, partners, and other stakeholders (Henike, 2025). Social innovations are novel and creative approaches designed to address social needs. They often begin as ideas aimed at solving specific social problems, which may evolve into stable initiatives. Over time, these innovations can scale up and lead to broader systemic change, often without the social innovators themselves fully realizing the extent of their impact (Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA), 2020). Social innovation is the new technique that working with community more quickly successful by follow 7 steps such as: 1) getting ready, 2) do your research, 3) setting up your social innovation, 4) finding initial and sustainable

resource, 5) Monitoring: moving forward, pushing through while keeping track, 6) organic growth of your social innovation and 7) evaluation, revitalization and renewal of your social innovation (Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA), 2020).

#### ***Factors influencing the project's success.***

Different projects would have different influential success factors, which depend on the project types. Jeffrey Pinto and Dennis Slevin (1987) identified ten success factors, such as project mission, top management support, schedule and plans, client consultation, personnel, technical tasks, client acceptance, monitoring and feedback, communication, and troubleshooting (Slevin, 1987). Davis used 9 items from the study of Pinto and Slevin to describe the success of project namely: cooperation and communication, timing, identifying objectives, stakeholder satisfaction, acceptance and use of final products, cost-budget aspects, competencies of the project manager, strategic benefits of the project and top management support (Davis, 2014). Houston suggested that project success is significantly influenced by project and change management capabilities, leader and team member competencies, collaboration, communication, relationships, participant attitudes, and teamwork-related activities (Houston, 2015). Zakarya Hodyan and Agnieszka Misztal (2022) reported that influential factors such as personnel, project schedule and plan, troubleshooting and technical tasks, and technological advancement have a statistically significant relationship with project success (Misztal, 2022). Today, Koontz and O'Donnell are widely recognized for their contributions to the understanding of the management process. In their seminal 1972 book *Principles of Management: An Analysis of Managerial Functions*, they outlined a framework consisting of five closely interrelated functions: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, and Controlling (Koontz, H. and O'Donnell, C., 1972).

The above literature review revealed that determining the factors that affect the success of the project is different depending on the type of project, the success of a project depends on many factors such as project mission, top management support, schedule and plans, client consultation, personnel, technical tasks, client acceptance, monitoring and feedback, communication, and troubleshooting. Throughout this review, factors of project planning, project scope, financial management, resources management, and communication will be applied in the study as factors of project success of Anoulak Association.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

The study adopts a framework integrating community development principles, sustainable livelihood components, and innovation stages. Success indicators include economic outcomes (income generation), social benefits (skill acquisition, empowerment), and environmental impacts (resource conservation) as shown in the diagram below.

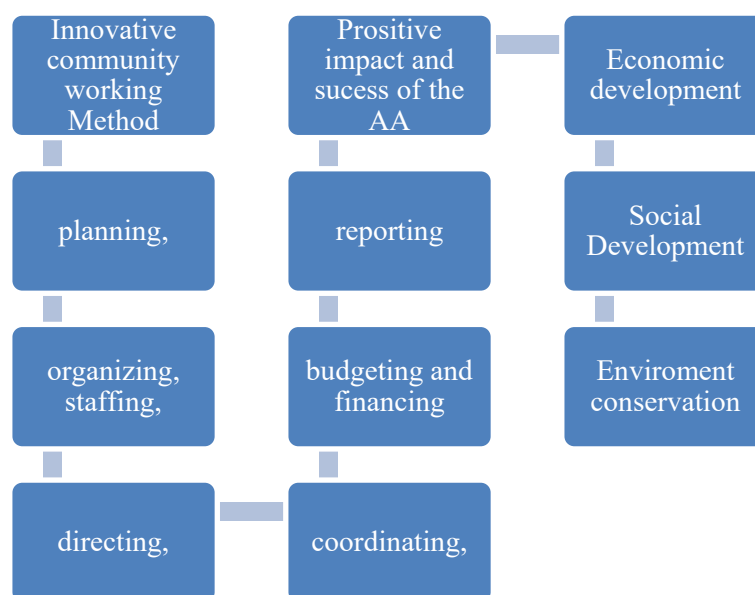


Figure 1: Conceptual framework





## Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed using purposive sampling. 76 key informants in total: Twenty-three in-depth interviews from the public organization, fifty-three from the village, and seven from the Anoulak Association. Moreover, four focus group discussions were conducted across four villages. The selection of the sample also considered gender equality and ethnic minorities to be a criterion of selection as well. The semi-structured questions were used as a tool for collecting data. Thematic analysis was applied to identify common patterns, supported by triangulated evidence from multiple stakeholders.

## Results

### ***Factors and innovative methods that contribute to the positive progress and success of Anoulak Association.***

Craftmanship activity under the CBCR project (Community Resilience and Biodiversity Conservation project) is an activity that belongs to the community sustainable livelihoods program of the Association aims to provide alternative and sustainable livelihoods and income to local communities to reduce their reliance on natural resources. It was applied as a project driver. The conservation association operates the project according to the same general management principles as other projects, such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting.

The result of interviews with the 76 key informants who participated in the interview was that the score was between 70%-85%, although it did not reach 100%, this success is quite impressive. Some key informants from the public sector said that what made the association organize the CRBC project successfully is that it is a small project, with a relatively good plan, while some of them said it is because of its working system, and many of them stated it is because of coordination although they still complain that in the early stages of the project, the association's coordination with the government sector, it is not so good. Later, the Association has been more cooperative with the public sector gradually, resulting in greater mutual understanding.

**Planning:** After identifying bamboo handicrafts as a high-potential product for local villagers, the Anoulak Association engaged with local authorities and community members to design the project collaboratively. They applied a participatory approach, using a value chain simulation game to gather villagers' ideas, needs, and capacities. This input was then analyzed to determine community goals, identify gaps, and define the support required from the association. The planning process was grounded in bottom-up and community-based planning principles, integrating research evidence and local knowledge from Association staff, Provincial Partners (PPs), and Village Authorities (VAs). This approach ensured the project was aligned with the villagers' aspirations and capabilities.

**Organizing:** Initiate CBCR projects from small groups of people who are interested first (AA & PPs), That means the scope of the project is small and starts from what the villagers are truly interested in, and what actual capacity they have could be one factor that contributed to the success of the CBCR project.

The Anoulak Association sets the construction organization in two 2 parts: 1) the Association team consist of one director, one community program manager, one community program local leader, three community program officers, one wildlife research fieldwork and community program officer, one wildlife fieldwork officer, three wildlife research fieldwork officers, and one accountant. 2) The local community includes 4 village clusters, which have 8 village facilitators who deal with local members of craft groups on weaving and selling, and the group members. There are also have the stakeholders from government officers according to the agreement on the appointment a committee responsible for *Community Resilience and biodiversity conservation in Nakai District* with the Anoulak Association including 11 offices all over district that include a Deputy Party Secretary of Meung Nakai District, a chief, 2 staff of Nakai district, a Director, a deputy director and a head of rural development unit of the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, a Head of Women Union of Nakai District, culture and tourism office, a head of employment sector of the Nakai District Labor and social welfare office, a head of ethnic sector of the Lao Front for National Development of Nakai District, a technical staff of Nakai District Agriculture and forestry office, a staff from the Industry and Commerce office and a staff of Nakai District Labor and social welfare office a head of Nakai District Administration





Office. However, there are private business sectors that support and buy local productions, and they have to communicate and make connections for marketing processes.

**Staffing:** The Association's staff must be the first model for the village facilitators and the local people, which is considered an actual difficult task, but the association can overcome this issue. This makes the local people accept it.

The role of village facilitators is to coordinate between the local villagers and the Anoulack Association; their main tasks include purchasing and delivering craft products, village planning, summarizing the report of the work, and managing the finances of the handicraft fund.

A director, a project manager, and all staff of the Association Anoulack will go to the village to collect the product for sale in the city. They are very strict with the regulations of forest and biodiversity conservation they become models for local villagers, and they have the knowledge, patience, and sincerity to develop remote areas.

The role of the public sector is supporting the documents related to Association implementation, such as permission documents, support technical staff for training, and evaluate the project.

Moreover, the researchers' viewpoint found that the village authority, village facilitator, and villagers not only participated in the planning, but they also participated in the 4 aspects of the participation process of Cohen & Uphoff (1980) including 1) participation in deciding what to do and how to do it, 2) participation in implementation, 3) participation in receiving benefits arising from operations, and 4) participation in project evaluation because, in every annual meeting, Association works with members to discuss on what project activities they achieved, what obstacles and challenges they faced, and what action plan would they will do in the next year activities.

**Direction or Monitoring system:** working with the local community is harder to raise awareness among them for understanding the aims of the project, so Anoulak Association used a game to assess the needs of local villager and their capacities and lead them in the implementation until they see the results. Follow up system and used feedback to improve and create suitable activities constantly (Based on the concept of learning by doing). Therefore, the monitoring system of the Association is regularly implemented, there is an annual meeting to report achievements, outstanding issues, and problems that are obstacles and challenges, using this discussion results of the meeting to determine the solution and improve activities for the next work plan. The Association also has meetings with the village facilitator in the village regularly. In this meeting, the association brings feedback from customers to exchange with village facilitators to improve the quality of products, check the minutes of previous meetings and working timesheets, and plan the next task for their village on handicraft activities and other tasks like attending handicraft exhibitions, study tours, etc.

Villagers have continued to be members, and village facilitators have continued to facilitate villagers in producing handicraft products for the Anoulack Association from the beginning until now because they believe in the sincerity of the association's staff and transparency in the financial management. The village authorities appreciate the association's direction and guidance of villagers to implement the CRBC project with a sincere spirit, and their willingness to assist villagers to have a better life, with good planning by allowing the local authority and villagers to participate in planning. In addition, they used the collective craft activity to promote the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of production among the elderly, youth, and women.

**Coordinating:** Apart from cooperation with Nakia-Namtheun National Park and the Nakai district administration office, Anouluck Association did not cooperate with other public partners at that time because the association intended to set up the working system at the local level first like building village facilitators and strengthening their capacity to assist the association in proceeding the project smoothly.

After the project operation system was set, the Association began cooperating with more partners from both the private business sectors and public sectors. In which the relationship with these partners, according to the agreement on the appointment of a committee responsible for *Community Resilience and biodiversity conservation in Nakai District*, with the Anoulack Association, including 11 offices all over the district, as mentioned above. The administration Office of Nagai District and the Nakai-Namtheun National Park are the main offices that the Anoulack Association has to contact every time if a project activity is held in the target villages. While other offices will be involved in some activities



of the project when activities related to their responsibility. Until now, the association is still confused about the coordination that this activity must be coordinated to which office or unit is responsible, and this is causing difficulty in coordination. Furthermore, shifting the leader of the office also makes the association more difficult because they must learn to work with new people who come to replace the old ones who already understand the work of the project. For the private sector, they cooperate with entrepreneurs and local villagers. The entrepreneurs are the local and other provinces' handicraft businesses, especially in Vientiane. They also exhibit local products in the ITEC for the Lao handicraft exhibition. Since 2022, the Anoulack Association has cooperated with many public partners and entrepreneurs to operate the project tangibly. (AA, AVs). Furthermore, because of Association received cooperation and support from the government sector, such as understanding, acceptance, and allowing implementation of the project according to the idea of the Association, Anoulack, and facilitating various documents for the project, which made the project a success.

Moreover, the local people are the main coordinators of Anoulack Association, particularly the village facilitators who are selected by the manager of the association. They are the main person who are responsible for village management for handicrafts weaving, and dealing with marketing and financing, and also the training program.

**Budgeting and financing:** The appropriate budgeting for the tasks is key to the financial management of the Anoulack Association, and being a model for financial transparency of the staff and village facilitators is the heart of working with the local people. There is an accumulation of money to create a fund in order to facilitate the village facilitators to purchase products from the villagers, and there is transparency in the purchase and sale of handicraft products.

**Reporting:** The report system that Anulak Association uses is not only a document but also be group discussion report. It is the annual meeting within the association team meeting, the village facilitators meeting, and the government meeting. Therefore, the feedback from the customers and stakeholders is considered very important to them to improve the quality of products and continually generate income for the local village. In the meeting, they reported the achievements, outstanding issues, difficulties, and challenges. They discussed the result of the meeting to determine the solution and activities improvement for the next work plan. They also used field visits to stimulate self and community development needs.

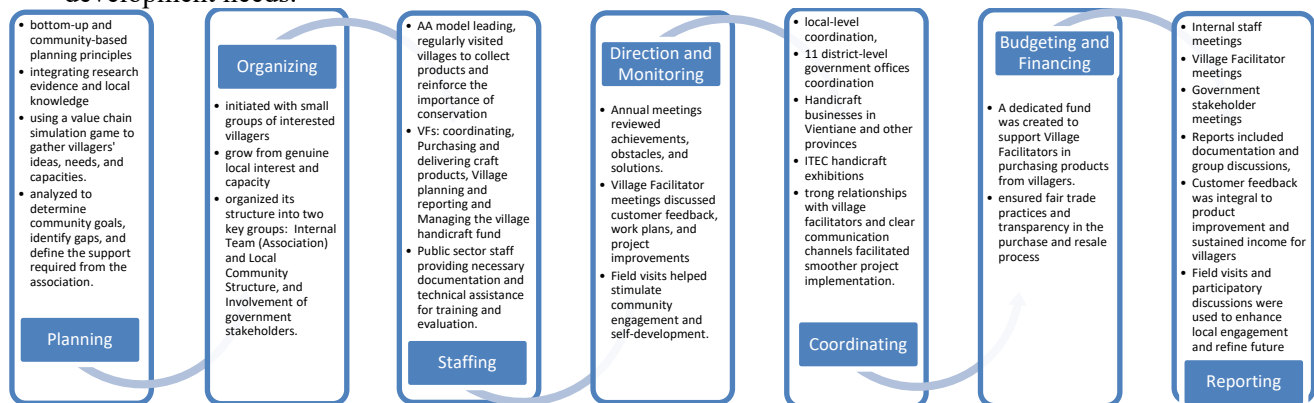


Figure 2: The summary of the innovative working procedure

### ***The local community benefits from Anoulack Association's project.***

The Community Resilience and Biodiversity Conservation (CRBC) project, spearheaded by Association Anoulack in the Nakai District of Laos, has yielded notable economic, social, and environmental benefits for local communities.

### ***Economic Benefits***

The CRBC project has provided alternative income sources through handicraft production, benefiting a diverse group including widows, divorced women, the elderly, and youth. Participants have reported monthly earnings ranging from 300,000 to over 1 million Lao kips, which they use to meet daily needs such as purchasing food, clothing, and school supplies. In December 2024, the Thaiphabanh



village cluster received official recognition as the Thaphaibanh Cluster Villages Handicraft Production Group, and in January 2025, their products were awarded the One District One Product (ODOP) label by the Lao government. This formalization has expanded market access and visibility for the artisans.

### ***Social Benefits***

Beyond economic gains, the project has fostered community cohesion and skill development. Collective handicraft activities have encouraged knowledge sharing between generations, empowering participants to learn and teach traditional crafting techniques. Village facilitators have enhanced their communication, financial management, and leadership skills, contributing to stronger social networks and community solidarity.

### ***Environmental Benefits***

The CRBC project emphasizes sustainable use of natural resources, particularly bamboo and rattan, essential for handicraft production. Villagers have been trained in sustainable harvesting techniques, leading to better resource management and reduced environmental impact. Some community members have initiated conservation efforts, such as fencing forest areas to protect regrowth. However, challenges remain, including the need for more durable fencing materials to prevent livestock from damaging young plants.

In summary, the CRBC project has significantly contributed to improving livelihoods, strengthening social structures, and promoting environmental stewardship in the Nakai District. While not all households participate due to varying interests and capacities, the initiative serves as a model for integrating economic development with cultural preservation and ecological sustainability.

***The benefit can be categorized into 3 groups as follows:***

Table 1: The benefits obtained from the CRBC project

Group of people	Benefits
Villagers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Economic benefit: Jobs and Income</li><li>- Social benefit: The elderly people can transfer their craftsmanship to the young generation, while young people have inherited those skills from the elderly people and external experts, and Market management knowledge.</li><li>- Environmental benefit: Reduce the distance and time to go to the bamboo and rattan for making handicraft products because of the forest conservation initiative in the village, and villagers know how to cut for sustainable use.</li></ul>
Public partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The CRBC Project contributes to forest conservation, which accordance with the goal of the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park.</li><li>- The CRBC Project contributes to the implementation of the three-building directive policy and green growth strategy of the Nakai district administration office.</li><li>- The CRBC project provided indirect support for the District Women's Union in promoting and empowering rural women in economic development. e.g., some divorced women can have jobs and can earn money from making handicraft products.</li><li>- The CRBC Project contributes to labour-skilled development in remote areas. This benefits the task of the Labour and Social Welfare office of the Nakai district.</li><li>- When public partners follow up with associations in the villages, they can disseminate government documents or regulations in situations where budgets are quite limited.</li></ul>
Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Able to implement the CRBC project.</li><li>- Receiving the sincerity and respect of the local villagers</li><li>- Received trust from the district authorities</li></ul>

## **Discussion**

The Community Resilience and Biodiversity Conservation (CRBC) project, implemented by Association Anoulak in Laos' Nakai District, has been recognized for its multifaceted contributions to local communities and environmental conservation. While the economic benefits have not reached every household, the project has positively impacted cultural preservation, forest conservation, and







aligns with national strategies such as the "Three Builds" directive and the Lao government's green growth strategy.

**Innovative Management Approach:** The CRBC project's management structure draws from classical organizational theories by Harold Koontz (1972), emphasizing planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. However, its innovation lies in the adaptive implementation process, which evolves through stakeholder collaboration and local context adjustments. This aligns with SIMRA's (2020) definition of innovation as the creation and implementation of new processes that significantly improve outcomes. Similarly, Anderson, Potočnik, and Zhou (2014) describe innovation as a process involving both idea generation and implementation to enhance practices. The Key Success Factors include strategic planning (informed by research and local insights, ensuring relevance and effectiveness); transparent financial management (building trust among stakeholders and facilitating accountability); resource management (efficient utilization of human, natural, and material resources) and community engagement (active participation of local communities in decision-making processes). These factors resonate with findings from other studies emphasizing the importance of good planning, transparent financial practices, and effective resource management in project success.

### Challenges and Lessons Learned

Despite its achievements, the CRBC project faces some challenges:

- **Equitable Resource Distribution:** Instances where community leaders did not support pilot initiatives, such as providing thorn steel fences, hindered broader participation.
- **Leadership Variability:** Differences in facilitators' age, experience, and leadership styles led to inconsistent implementation outcomes.
- **Gender Dynamics:** Engaging female villagers proved more effective when led by female facilitators, highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive approaches.

These insights underscore the need for inclusive leadership and adaptive strategies to ensure equitable participation and sustainability.

### Conclusion

The CRBC project by the Anoulack Association has been positively received for improving local livelihoods and supporting forest and biodiversity conservation. While not all households benefit equally, the project has brought cultural, environmental, and community-wide value. It aligns with national policies and promotes sustainable natural resource use.

Using participatory, research-based planning and transparent financial practices, the Association has applied core management principles effectively. Trust, strong leadership, and cooperation with the public and private sectors have been essential to the project's success.

Challenges remain, including varying interest in handicraft work, limited funding, market uncertainty, and inconsistent local leadership. Despite this, village authorities and facilitators show a strong commitment to continue if market demand remains.

Key lessons include the importance of bottom-up planning, modelling sustainable practices, and encouraging female leadership to increase participation. These insights can guide future community-based development efforts.

### Recommendations:

There are some recommendations for further development in this area as follows:

1. **Diversify Livelihood Activities:** Introduce alternative income-generating activities such as tea and coffee cultivation or beekeeping to accommodate villagers unable to participate in handicraft production.
2. **Apply Balanced Regional Development:** Ensure equitable distribution of project benefits by considering the diverse needs and capabilities of all community members during project design and implementation.
3. **Enhance Market Access:** Strengthen the marketing capacities of district staff and village facilitators to sustain and expand market opportunities for handicraft products.





4. **Promote Inclusive Leadership:** Encourage the involvement of female leaders to effectively engage female villagers and foster inclusive participation in project activities.
  5. **Strengthen Capacity Building:** Provide targeted training for village facilitators to enhance their leadership skills, dedication, and ability to manage project activities effectively.
  6. **Educate Community Leaders:** Disseminate knowledge on community leadership and development concepts to village authorities to align their attitudes and actions with project goals.
  7. **Implement Sustainable Resource Management:** Address environmental challenges by supporting the construction of durable fences to protect conservation areas from livestock and external threats.
  8. **Monitor and Evaluate Project Impact:** Regularly assess the project's outcomes and adapt strategies as needed to ensure long-term sustainability and community resilience.
- By implementing these recommendations, the CRBC project can enhance its effectiveness, ensure equitable benefits for all community members, and contribute to the sustainable development and conservation efforts in the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park.

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