

Who We are

Global Association for People and the Environment is a non-profit organization, established in 1999 in Lao PDR, which focuses on Food Security, Environmental Sustainability and Preserving Cultural Traditions through global and local interconnections.

Our Mission

- Assisting people in developing their own potential in an ecologically sensitive and socially just manner
- Implementing and coordinating community development and environmental conservation programs
- Facilitating people-centred learning through supporting community based education programs, with an emphasis on ecological issues

Our Vision

Rural communities live comfortably in harmony with nature and their neighbours. They have control over their resources and are able to make informed decisions so that their resources are managed sustainably and in an environmentally sensitive manner. The rights of indigenous people are observed and their cultures preserved.

Our Target Areas

Food Security

GAPE works with communities to ensure all people have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their needs for a healthy life.

The four pillars of food security are: food availability, access to food, utilization and stability.



Environmental Sustainability

GAPE works to improve the livelihoods of poor farmers and forest food gatherers through environmental management and sustainable development.

The three pillars of sustainability are: economy, society, and the environment. These principles are also informally referred to as prosperity, people and planet.



Preserving Cultural Traditions

GAPE works to enhance the capacity of communities and community groups to organize themselves and build community around issues relevant to their livelihoods and in accordance with their culture and aspirations.

Four Reasons Why Traditions Matter: Being, Belonging, Believing and Benevolence.





What We do

GAPE works to support vulnerable and poor communities for equitable and sustainable development through livelihood adaptation with improved food security, effective natural resources management and utilization.

We focus on:

- Rural Development and Poverty Reduction
- Food Security and Nutrition
- Develop and Preserve Valuable Traditional Customs and Culture
- Natural Resources Protection
- Natural Resource Sustainability
- Cross-Cutting Theme With Various Concerned Sectors and Agencies
- Promotion of Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

Ms. Thong Proves Women Can Do Anything

Ms. Thong, of Phonemanee Village, is a role model for other women and girls. She does not believe that there's "men's work" and "women's work," and is adamant that she can do anything men can do...and perhaps even better than most men. She has a sweet smile and eyes that sparkle when she speaks. At the same time, she's strong, vocal, and direct in a way that is uncommon in Laos. She's also profoundly committed to community and all that this word connotes. She has little patience for small talk and is intolerant of condescending attitudes. Her leadership qualities led to her being elected to her village's Co-Management Committee, a rarity for women, unfortunately. She takes her responsibility for the management of her village's traditional use forest very seriously.

GAPE provides Ms. Thong and her community with the tools and resources for environmental management and sustainable development to improve their livelihood.

She recounts the story of 10 Malva nut trees that were felled back in 2015, and how sad she felt about this. She spoke of the time it takes for these trees to produce the valuable Malva nuts that are so highly prized for its medicinal qualities by locals and traders alike and the importance of these trees for the local honeybees that make the wild honey that's collected by brave foresters each year.

Phonemanee Village is part of the Xe Pian National Protected Area in Champasak Province. She said, "Currently, we work hard to sustainably manage the forest resources, particularly NTFPs." The villagers survey the forest at least twice a month to monitor its condition and to prevent illegal practices and outsiders encroaching on their forest." She shared, "Now the NTFPs we rely



Ms. Thong (far right) and her village team installing information and forest protection signs.

on for our livelihood have begun increasing, including Malva nut and rattan, because of the regulations our community established and the improved management system we've developed with GAPE's help. The community is increasingly recognizing the importance of forest resources, and how vulnerable the forest is when taken for granted, so when they see illegal logging, they will report it to the Village Co-Management Committee. "Who will investigate the matter swiftly," she added.

She has no misgivings about the challenges of changing people's attitudes and behaviours to take care of the forest that takes care of them. But she and her colleagues express a commitment to tackling these challenges. With the tenacious Ms. Thong on the committee, we know that they'll succeed.