

Tai Baan Research

Local knowledge-based research
by local communities

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Mekong
Community
Institute

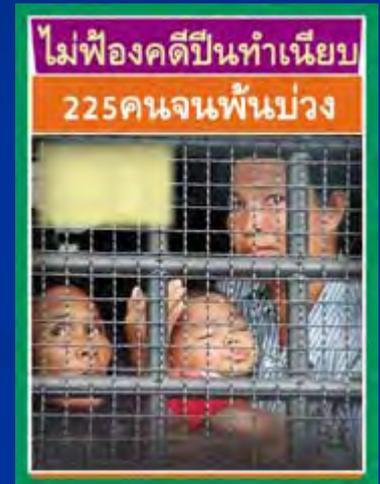
Content

- Tai Baan Research (TBR)
- Adoption in Thailand and in Mekong Basin
- Importance of TBR
- Challenges



The First TB Research

- Over 10 year fight against the dam
- 2001 Thai government open Pak Mun's dam gates
- Villagers mistrust state-funded research
- They and NGOs try to find their own evidence
- Over 200 researchers participated



The First TB Research

- **Subjects:** 1) fisheries, 2) river ecosystem, 3) plant and vegetation, 4) fishing gear, 5) river bank garden and, 6) social, economic and cultural issues
- **Findings:**
 - 75 types of fishing gears
 - 342 plant species



The First TBR

Findings:

- 265 fish species found
- 156 fish species have returned after the opening the gates

พันธุ์ปลาแม่โขง

ปลาอพยพจากแม่น้ำโขง

ปลาประจำถิ่น

ปลาต่างถิ่น

ปลาประจำถิ่น

จำนวนพันธุ์ปลา / ชนิด

ประเภทปลา	ชนิด	จำนวน	ชนิด	จำนวน	ชนิด	จำนวน	ชนิด	จำนวน
ปลาที่อพยพจากแม่น้ำโขง	ชนิด	156	ชนิด	109	ชนิด	10	ชนิด	109
ปลาประจำถิ่น	ชนิด	109	ชนิด	109	ชนิด	10	ชนิด	109

What is TBR?

- Thai/Tai Baan = villager (Tai, also means liberation)
- Villager ≠ participant, but = researcher
- Simple meaning = searching for knowledge in a local community by villagers, with local methodology/approaches, for community's benefit
 - *Find the evidences & organize the existing knowledge*
 - *Find new knowledge*



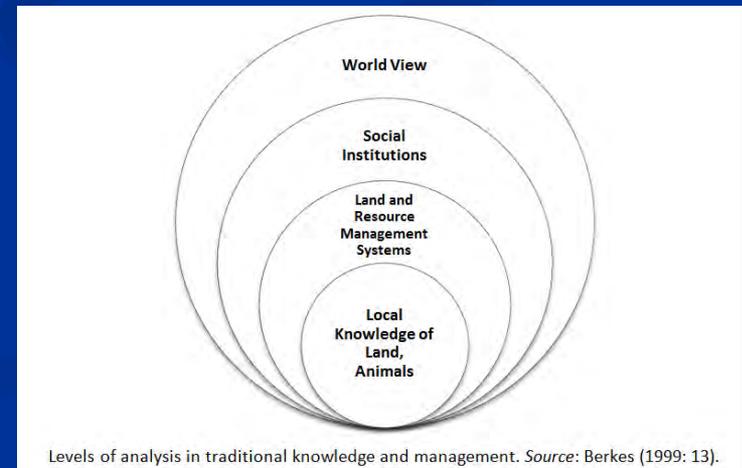
What is TBR?

- **The differences** with general researches
 - Researcher
 - Local knowledge > question to ask
 - Ownerships: make it belongs to villagers
- **Objectives :**
 1. Local knowledge is recorded
 2. Communities is strengthened
 3. Community's knowledge and rights is recognized

Main Approaches

■ Local Knowledge:

1. **Human and Nature:** learning about nature and adaptation, such as preservation, seasons, herbs
2. **Human and Human:** sharing, gender, trade
3. **Human and Supernatural:** offering ,



Levels of analysis in traditional knowledge and management. Source: Berkes (1999: 13).

Main Approaches

- **Politics of Knowledge:**
 - Knowledge is human's production
 - Justice of knowledge: power is knowledge, knowledge is power (of the producers)
 - Counter knowledge production



Example of TBR 1

TBR on the Mekong at Chiang Khong, Chiang Rai Province

- **Research topics:** 1) fisheries, 2) riverine ecosystems, 3) plant and vegetation, 4) fishing gears, 5) riverbank garden, 6) social, economic, and cultural issues
- **Findings:**
 - 96 fish species found (270 at Chiang Khan, 265 at Pak Mun)
 - 201 plants



■ Findings:

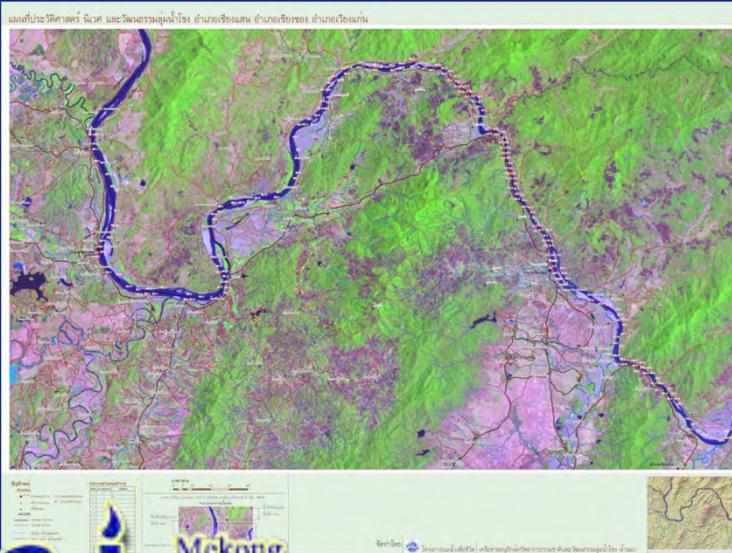
- 63 local fishing gears
- 11 important Lang /Luang (fishing ground)





ภาพลักษณะระบบนิเวศน้ำตื้นน้ำลึก 10 แบบ บริเวณคอนผีหลง

- **Findings:** 11 sub-ecosystems based on local knowledge at Khon Phi Long : such as rong (dry season water channel near river bank), kok (deep pool near river bank)



Example of TBR 2

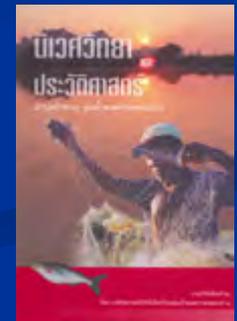
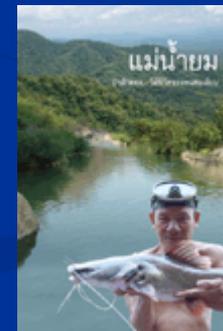
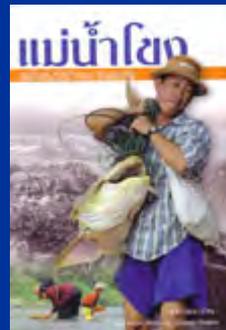
TBR on “Pak Mun Women” Ubon Ratchathani Province

- The main reason for their fighting against Pak Mun dam is food security
- When environmental change, impacts to women and their adaptation are different from men
- Men and women have different roles, so access to information and participation are different



Adoption in Thailand

1. Rasi Salai River
2. Song Kham River
3. Yom River
4. Salween River
5. Mekong River at Chiang Kong
6. and more

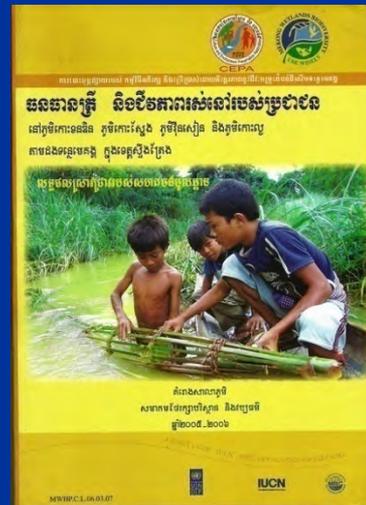


Adoption in the Mekong Basin

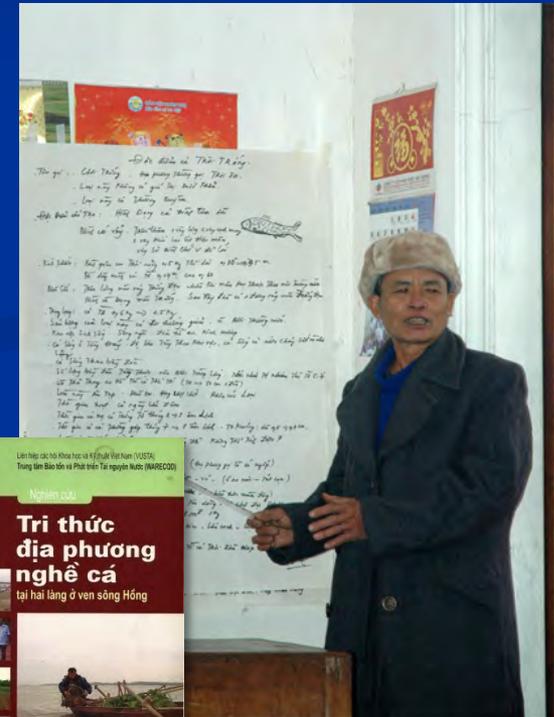
- TBR is conducted in 5 Mekong countries except for in China



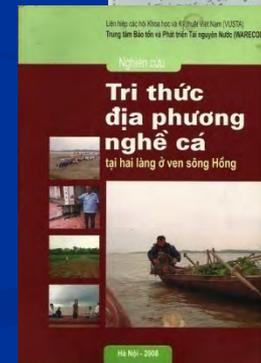
Workshop in China



Sala Phoum,
Cambodia



Red River, Vietnam



Adoption in Myanmar

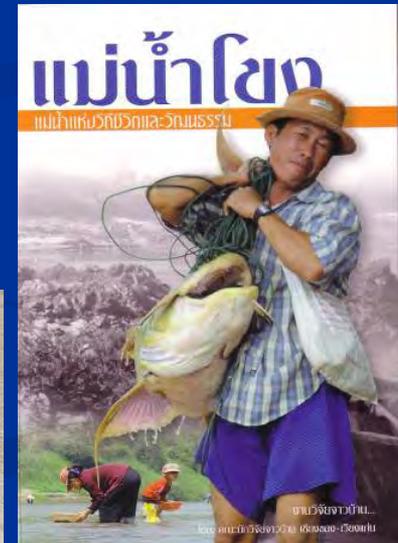
Kyae Ywa (villager) Thu Tae Tha Na (research)



Importance of TBR

1) Indigenous knowledge is documented

- Communities have their own evidence for negotiation
- More knowledge is more security



Importance

2) Mobilize and empower local communities

- Local people know the rights
- They are proud of themselves
- Develop systematic thought
- Strengthen leadership
- Confidence to voice their concern



Importance

- Strengthen community organization



Importance

3) Gain acceptance/support from outsiders

- Government and developers listen to local voices
- Community gain support from media and the public
- knowledge production is questioned
- Grassroots movement is more legitimated
- A tool for co-operative efforts, not for aiming against each other



Challenges

- Development for a better:
 - Methodology
 - Presentation such as digital map, local song
- Continuing support and promotion
- Building a network
- Cross-border environmental issue advocacy needs local/regional/international collaboration



We have
knowledge
and rights

Thank You

Photo credit: Living River Siam Association