



Winner of UN Development Research Award's 8 Million Kip prize is announced

2 June 2006, Vientiane – The winner of the prestigious United Nations Development Research Award 2005 (UNDRA) was officially announced today at the Faculty of Economics and Business Management, National University of Lao PDR.

“I am delighted to report that we received over 60 articles from across the country. It was very difficult process to select winners as the articles were very interesting and relevant to development in Lao PDR today,” said Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Deputy Resident Representative. She continued, “I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voluntary panel of reviewers for their precious time and valuable opinions in selecting the winners. The panel comprised of distinguished representatives from the National University of Laos, the National Economic Research Institute, Lao Journalists Association and UNDP.”

The winning article that carries with it an eight million kip award was presented to Mr. Phengxiong, for his research work entitled, *Open-book tests should be allowed for students*. Mr. Phengxiong is the Head of Teacher Development in the former Special Zone and examines through his research the effectiveness of open-book tests as compared to close-booked tests.

“Open-book exams needs to be allowed for students as it will encourage the development of independent thinkers,” said Mr. Phengxiong. Through his research, Mr. Phengxiong demonstrates that in closed book examinations students tend to value the test score much more than the process of studying and acquiring new knowledge. He believes that by having access to books as reference material during examinations, students would be encouraged to look for solutions beyond their textbooks. Additional, he believes that teachers will also be more creative in finding appropriate test questions and teaching methods. “Open-book examinations,” he asserts, “is a better form of education!”

The two runner-ups winners that submitted high quality research articles were awarded five million kips each. The runner-ups included, Dr Maytry Senchanthixay, Acting Director of Planning, Ministry of Health and Mr. Houmphanh Rattanavong, a well-known and respected academic.

Dr. Senchanthixay won a prize for his submission entitled, *Community-Based Health Insurance Scheme: the New Hope in Lao Healthcare*, where he examines the feasibility and benefits of community health insurance scheme. While Mr. Rattanavong, in his article *Poverty Reduction in Mountainous Areas*, identifies several factors that can contribute towards successful poverty alleviation by focusing on village development rather than resettlement.

All three winning articles will be published in the *Juth Pakai UNDRA Edition*, to be released in Lao and English. The UNDRA, an initiative of the United Nations Country Team in the Lao PDR, was established in 2005 to provide an open forum for authors to express their views on development issues. It also aims to encourage participation and contribution from Lao researchers for *Juth Pakai*, Lao PDR's first development journal.

The UNDRA 2006 is now open and you are welcome to submit your research articles. This year a special youth category has been initiated to highlight young people's views on development. The deadline for submission for this year's award is **August 15**. "It is a great opportunity for everyone to share and express their perspective on Lao development" said one of this year's winners.

For more information on *Juth Pakai*, all past issues and for details of the UNDRA, please log on to www.undplao.org or contact *Juth Pakai* secretariat at the office of UNDP. Box 345, Vientiane, Lao PDR. Ph: (856 21) 213390 or 213391. Email: laodevelopment.journal@undp.org.

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