ALS Freiburg University builds capacity in Souphanovong University Luang Prabang

Prof. Benno Pokorny set out for Luang Prabang to strengthen the capacity of local researchers from Souphanovong University in terms of sustainable local development. He and his associate Steffen Entenmann, with the help of representatives of SU, organized an intensive field course for staff from all Laotian partner universities entitled *Collaboration Research in Laos*. The course provided a conceptual understanding of local development from a community perspective, as well as options for influencing the processes, highlighting the role of academia in them. Seventeen staff members from Lao partner universities participated in the course, which spanned from November 12 until November 16, 2018. The course was divided into three parts: theoretical background, field work, and reflections and synthesis of gathered information.

Researchers connect with local communities to focus on sustainable rural development

A good portion of prof. Pokorny's course was focused on field work, directly approaching the local communities. The course benefited from participants' good practical knowledge on the matter, they were able to reflect on the situation of Lao rural communities and the context of their development. The community people were interested in sharing information with the participants, for many of whom it was the first time conducting this type of research. Overall, the course was a great learning opportunity for the Lao partners.

The need to persist with the activities is clearly visible

From the start, it was evident that there is a thirst for knowledge in the course participants. The course contents and format was well liked. However, the participants have shown a clear interest for a longer course, which would they expressed in the feedback forms. Capacities of Lao researchers need to be further improved in terms of abstract thinking and theoretical background. A second CBA from Freiburg will address this need, though systematic approach would be even more beneficial.