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Front cover photograph: Elder ethnic Ngkriang man making a fish trap on the banks of the Xekong River in Kalum District, Xekong Province.

Back cover photograph: The circular ethnic Katu village of Laipo in Kalum District, Xekong Province.

People, Livelihoods and Development in the Xekong River Basin of Laos is a wide-ranging study that provides an overview of the area's history and geography as well as the cultures and local livelihood systems of the multi-ethnic people living there. Central to the study is a detailed description of the acute social, cultural, economic and ecological challenges locals are facing as a result of the rapid changes now taking place in the region. While these changes are being made in the name of 'development', in reality they often involve conflicts between outsiders and local communities over the use of the area's natural resources. Taking a critical political ecology approach, the authors examine the complicated links between livelihoods and development. The book provides a sobering picture of the potential vulnerability of local cultures, livelihood systems and the natural environment to be negatively impacted, were uncontrolled globalization and outside market forces to continue to radically transform the Xekong River Basin.



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**Ian G. Baird and
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Ian G. Baird



Bruce Shoemaker

Ian G. Baird is a Canadian who has resided in southern Laos for most of the last 15 years. He recently graduated with a PhD in Geography from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He is also the co-founder and executive director of the Canadian non-government organization, the Global Association for People and the Environment (GAPE). He has authored a large number of academic articles and books. In 2007, he co-edited *Fishers' Knowledge in Fisheries Science and Management* (UNESCO). His research interests are presently focused on the social and spatial organization of ethnic Brao people in southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia.

Bruce Shoemaker is a Minneapolis (USA) based researcher who has focused on Laos and the Mekong region since the late 1980s. During the 1990s he lived in Laos for more than eight years while working for a number of international non-governmental organizations. His recent research interests have focused on conflicts surrounding natural resource use and management, hydropower and river-based livelihoods, and land rights and resettlement for indigenous communities. He currently works as an independent consultant for the Southeast Asia Grants Program of the McKnight Foundation while also engaging in other research and consulting work. He holds a Masters degree in International Nutrition and Southeast Asia Studies from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, USA.