



Lecture Series of the Department of Development Studies

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University of Sydney

Walking the Ridge:
Local Experiences of Nation-Building and
Development in Upland Northern Laos

Wednesday, 20 June 2018, 4.15-5.45 pm

Seminar room, IE, Department of African Studies
Spitalgasse 2, Courtyard 5, 1090 Vienna

Chair:

Judith Ehlert

(Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna)

This ie.talk comes hot on the heels of a year-long field study in an ethnic Khmu hamlet in the uplands of northern Laos. The hamlet will be presented as a microcosm/case-study on how the Lao developmentalist state "touches down" in a specific locality. How have state demands for development and national integration been perceived and processed by local residents? The talk will seek to address this question by introducing the hamlet's history and the multifaceted ways in which its residents have experienced and engaged with war, revolution, nation-building, development and globalization. It is hoped that this intimate bottom-up view may help shed further light on some of the ambivalences and contradictions - but also synergies - that arise as upland peasants in Laos (and elsewhere) seek to find their place in a rapidly changing world.