

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

Author: *Siengxay Sengkham*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Summary.....	3
Methodology.....	3
Background/Introduction.....	4
Housing and Compensation for the resettled villagers:.....	7
Amalgamation, cultural identity and representation in the resettlements....	10
Conclusion.....	11
Recommendations.....	13
References.....	14

Acknowledgements.

I would like to first of all thank Earth Rights International Organization (ERI) for selecting me as a workshop participant to attend the 2006 Mekong School, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. I would also like to thank The Global Association for People and the Environment (GAPE), in Lao PDR. They connected me with ERI and supported me during my internship, while I gathered information about the Nam Ngum 2 project, and learnt about the traditional cultures within Phuong district. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Xaisomboun district and Vientiane province government staff, who contributed their time to assist in this project. Finally, I would like to thank Sabrina Gyrovary, from ERI, who helped me write the following report.

Summary.

The resettlement of people for Nam Ngum 2, a 615-megawatt hydroelectric dam planned for construction in central Lao PDR, is fraught with problems. Local officials' incomplete understanding of government policies protecting human rights and a lack of support for these policies from project implementers are the primary causes of these difficulties.

Resettlement plans are being finalized for relocating communities located along the Nam Ngum river, in the former Phuong district, an area just North of the current Nam Ngum reservoir. Relocation of these communities was set to start in the beginning of 2007, and is to be completed by the end of 2009. In total, 17 villages will be moved, comprising 6,100 people of different ethnicities, including Phuan, Tai Dam, Tai Deng, Khmu and Hmong. According to the plans, the villages will be moved into Fuang district, and, for ease of management, will be merged together into 'focal sites' of at least 200 families.

I identified several human and environmental rights abuses related to housing, freedom of movement, and respect for cultural and linguistic sustainability. Religious injustice was the most acute of these problems, as the project planners have not put into place any safeguards against the loss of non-Buddhist belief systems. The different ethnic groups in Phuong district have spiritual beliefs that belong to their

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

cultural heritage. Each of these groups has evolved systems to ensure that they live in happiness and harmony within their society and in nature. This diversity should be a source of pride and a foundation for Lao nationalism. But the conditions that have nurtured and cultivated this diversity need to be protected. Unfortunately, the relocation and cultural amalgamation of these peoples does not respect the boon with which we've been given. It is part of a general trend towards the breakdown of our rich culture and a severe loss to the nation of Laos.

Methodology.

Data was gathered in 4 ways:

1. I used semi-structured interviews to obtain data from three different sample groups: government staff in the Vientiane provincial office and the Muang Phuan district office, and affected villagers within the communities to be relocated. My goal was to get a sense about how these different groups felt about development and how well they understood government policy and the potential effects of development-induced displacement.
2. Participatory Research: The villagers participated in the assessment of the cultural risks involved in the relocation.
3. Ethnographic Research: By spending time and participating in the villagers' activities, I was able to observe and thereby understand the differences between the various ethnic groups and their religious practices. This allowed me to gain a richer grasp of the potential effects of relocation on religion.
4. A literature review of the technical aspects of resettlement in Laos in general and for Nam Ngum 2 in specific.

Data was collected in notebooks and through photography and was subsequently analyzed to identify emerging themes.

Introduction.

Lao PDR is a country with an extremely rich natural environment. Natural resources provide the basis of livelihood for the Lao people, the majority of whom live in rural areas. Due to the social and economic pressures of development, Lao PDR's natural resources are coming under increasing pressure from national activities, such as logging, mining and the building of dams and roads; to an extent, pressures associated with local livelihoods, such as wood use, agriculture and hunting have also affected this resource base (UNEP, 2001).

Hydroelectricity: Lao PDR's economic development strategy.

After the Lao government announced that it would begin opening up its economy, hydroelectric projects have become the major component of their development policy. The Lao government has accepted the metaphor that Lao PDR, with its plethora of wide rivers, is fated to become the 'battery' of peninsular Southeast Asia (Perrin, 2005). Consequently, the state has signed deals to export 5000 megawatts of electricity to Thailand by the year 2015 (Vietnam News Agency, 2006). This lofty goal requires the building of at least seven power stations, which, other than Nam Ngum 2, are all still in various phases of negotiation (Praiwan, 2007).

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

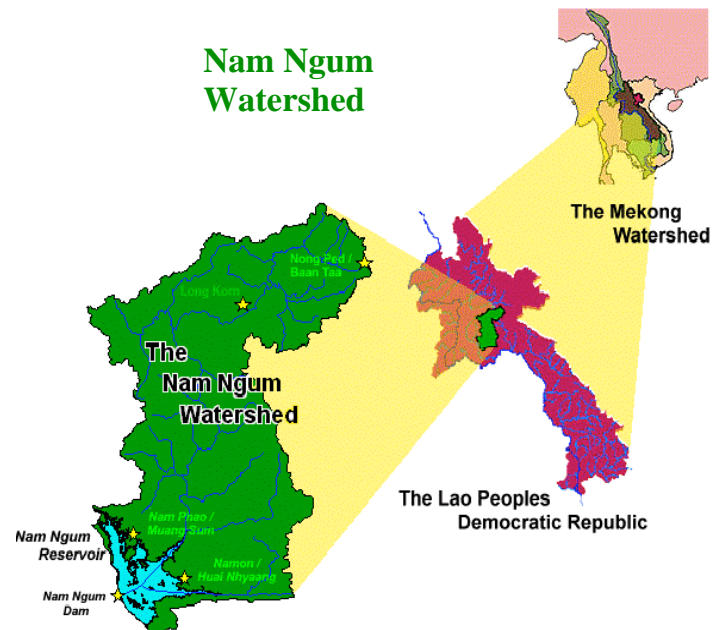
Run-of-river dams on the Mekong river are also undergoing feasibility studies in Sayabouli and Champasak provinces (Vientiane Times, 2007; The Economist, 2007). Ninety-five percent of the electricity generated by the Nam Ngum 2 project is destined for export to the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAD). The remainder is planned for domestic rural infrastructure.

In total, the Lao government intends to have at least 29 hydroelectric power development schemes in place by 2020, with a total installed capacity of 8,657 megawatts. The other principle buyers will be Vietnam, and to a lesser extent, Cambodia and China (Lao National Committee for Energy, 2007).

The Nam Ngum 2 hydropower project is located on the Nam Ngum, immediately upstream from the existing Nam Ngum 1 reservoir. The project is a joint venture between the Lao PDR government (25 %) the private investors (75%). According to the Lao government website, www.poweringprogress.org, the private investors included Shlapak Group (4%), C. Kanchang (28.5%), PT Construction and Irrigation (4%), Ratchabury (25%), Bangkok Expressway PCL (12.5%) and TEAM Consulting, Engineering and Management Co., Ltd. (1%). It is being built under a “build, own, operate and transfer,” or BOOT agreement. The hydropower plant will cost about US \$832 million, will have an installed capacity of 615 MW, and is expected to be completed by 2011 (Lao News Agency, 2006).

There are approximately 200 village communities in the Nam Ngum watershed, many of which are in the former Xaisomboun ‘special zone,’ which is now a district in Vientiane province (International Development Research Centre, 2007). Several different ethnic groups live in the area, including Lao Lum (Phuan, Tai Deng and Tai Dam), Hmong and Khamu (61, 28 and 11% respectively, ADB, 2000). These groups have different rice production systems (such as wet rice and swidden cultivation) and various ways of managing resources to minimize competition. The complementarity of different practices by various ethnic groups can be compared to flowers in a garden: each of them uses a different localized niche, allowing them to mutually co-exist.

A power station at its base generates electricity by the head created by the dam. The developer prepared a study of the site using a FSL of 375 masl. At this capacity the reservoir would inundate 122 km², creating a large branching reservoir, and requiring the resettlement of large numbers of local inhabitants (Maunsell and Lahmeyer International, 2004). There is not enough land in this area for would-be



Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

resettlers, so most villagers will be relocated to Feuang district. The deputy governor of Xaisomboun district has partially recognized the difficulties that this will create. When asked about the social and environmental impact assessments, he replied: “we apologize that we cannot give a clear answer about that. We tried to ask the development project to respond. We are also worried about the traditional culture of the ethnic people that will be lost in the future” (personal communications, 2006).

Villagers have been living in Phuon district for several hundred years. Up until 1963, most of the ethnic people living here were Khamu. Since then, some other ethnic people have relocated from Vang Vieng district to live there. Many of these people lived in Ban Sone, which has increased considerably from migration from other villages and districts.

In response to these pressures, local initiatives in resource management were developed. This included the demarcation of resource boundaries, for example, in the form of community forests. Traditional management of forests and other resources is therefore longstanding, and is particularly prevalent in the more stable communities in the upper part of the watershed, such as in Xieng Khouang Province. National policy is supportive of local management initiatives (Hirsch, Phanvilay and Tubtim, 1999).

These villages still have strong and cohesive communities that are threatened by this relocation. By understanding the complexities of these communities and their cultures, we can make recommendations on how to minimize the damage caused by this abrupt change in their livelihood. This paper identifies some of the different ways in which these communities, comprising many different ethnic groups, could protect their traditional culture in the face of imposed change.

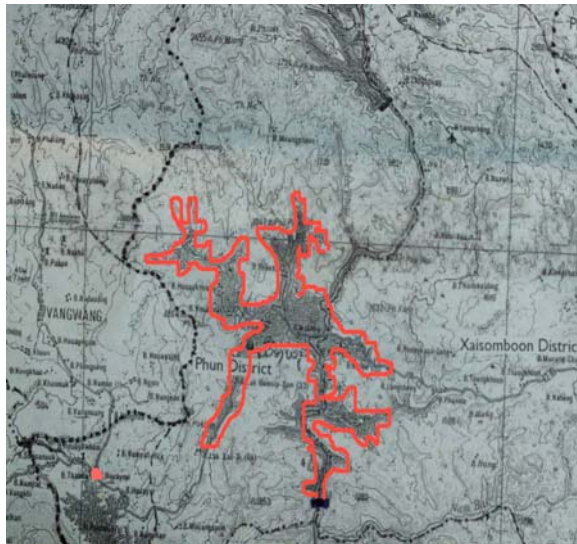


Figure 2: 17 villages will be flooded after the Nam Ngum 2 hydroelectric dam is constructed: Na Tu, Na Luong, Ko Mi, Khueo Lak, Phon Xay Nua, Phon Xay Kang, Phon Xay Tai, Hom Xay, Pa Ngieng Tai, Pa Ngieng Nua Vieng keo, Huoy Xai kham, Phonthong, Phonkeo, Phonkham, Lak 37 and Lak 33 villages.

Resettlement

In total, an estimated 6,000 people could be moved from 16 villages in Phuon district (ADB, 2007). These people make up many different ethnicities, including Phuan, Tai Dam, Tai Deng, Khamu and Hmong. Villagers will be moved to two areas. A large group will move to an area of about 350 hectares, between

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

Khounluang and Naxaeng villages in Feuang district, about 100 Km away from the project site . A small percentage will live in Xaisomboun district, about 20 Km away from the project site in the area between Namtei and Na-nhao villages. According to the resettlement plans, the villages will be merged together into ‘focal sites’ of at least 200 families. The relocation will take place between January 2007 and December 2009. Locals do not have any legal means to refuse resettlement because Article 15 of the constitution states that all ‘land within the Lao PDR is owned by the national community and that the State ensures the right to use, transfers, and inherit it in accordance with the Law’ (Lao PDR, 1991)

Lao PDR’s National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy

State officials justify that resettlement is part of a national strategy to ‘eradicate’ poverty. As Mr. Onneua Phomachanh, a minister in the prime minister’s office, said during the project’s discussion meeting: “these people are poor and their income currently depends on the seasons. They will be relocated to a new area, which will make their lives better. If we don’t put them somewhere better, we will not be helping reduce anyone’s poverty” (Vientiane Times, 2006).

Prior to the resettlement, project developers emphasized the benefits of the project for local, and in particular, ethnic people. Once the villagers are convinced by the stakeholder arguments and make written assents of admission, they are no longer eligible to claim compensation beyond that which had been contractually agreed upon. Then, under the binding terms of the contract, locals may be denied compensation in cases where they refuse to behave in the ways that they have been outlined to do. Illiteracy and unfamiliarity with legal documents and language prevents the villagers from understanding the consequences of these agreements.



Figure 3 Villagers who will relocated to Fuang District

Housing and Compensation in the Resettled Villages

Under contract terms, the project is responsible for locating, designing and building the houses, and financially compensating, the resettled villagers. Villagers

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

will be awarded money based on the size and yield of the rice fields that they would be losing. For example, a one-hectare rice paddy, yielding about 2000 kg, would be compensated with 2,000,000 kip per year, for the duration of ten years, which comes to about \$2,000 USD. In addition to this, there is limited compensation for equipment and materials that villagers may lose during the move.

As regards the specific house designs, a different house template has been produced for each of the major ethnic groups. The architects have currently designed three styles of houses, in the fashion of what they perceive as 'Hmong,' 'Khamu' and 'Lao'. Distinct housing for the lowland Lao subgroups, Tai Dam and Tai Deng, have not been considered despite their being historically and culturally unique from the dominant Lao traditions.

The villagers have been compensated in ways that are inconsistent with claims presented in the state newspapers, by project staff and by local government officials. For example, in the *Vientiane Times*, it is stated that 'the construction of new houses will be discussed again between the people and project managers. *The project will build the style of house they like or they can do it themselves with the money they get in compensation*' [emphasis added]. However, the villagers concerned did not participate in the design of these so-called 'traditional' models and many expressed unhappiness at their inability to be able to contribute to what they see as being so personal an issue. Many therefore asked why they were not allowed to participate.

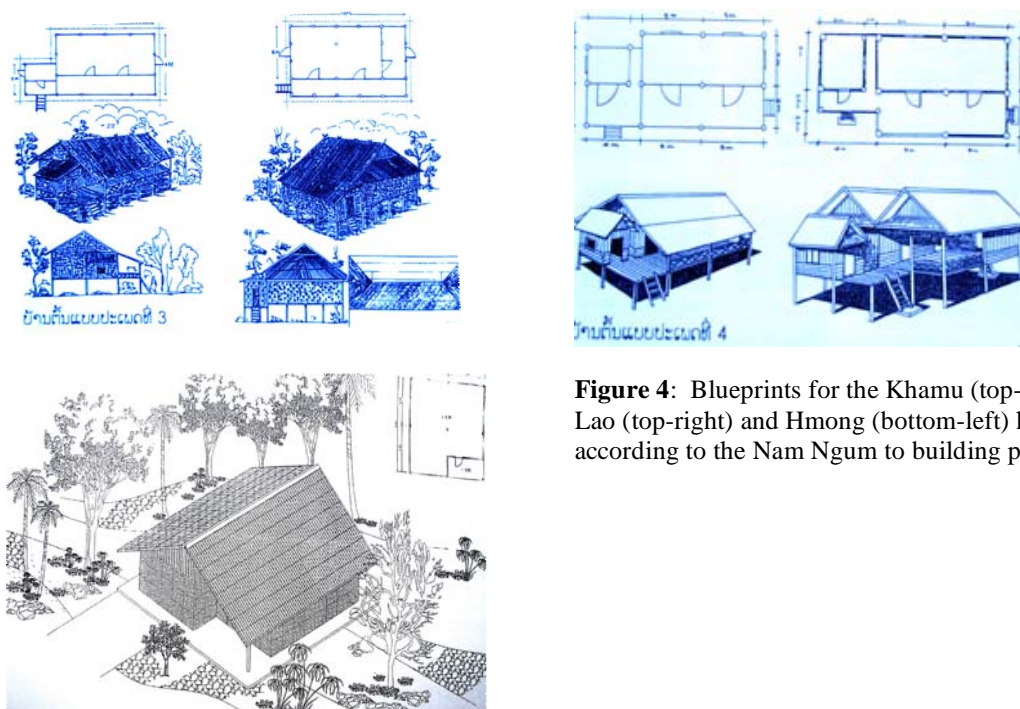


Figure 4: Blueprints for the Khamu (top-left), Lao (top-right) and Hmong (bottom-left) houses according to the Nam Ngum to building plans.

In the context of this resettlement, villagers feel that they no longer have the freedom to direct their own lives. Even the village chiefs could not do anything to help their villagers. When questioned, the project authorities merely refer to the unassailable discourse that they are simply executing the development policy of the state government. When the villagers talk about the resettlement, their faces were

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

troubled and quiet. They acquiesced, accepted that they are powerless and simply tried to follow the words of the project authority.

The issue of house styles came up repeatedly. At least ten villagers of Ban Pa Ngieng Tai pointed out that they have no chance to participate in decision making of how to design the house styles. As they explained, when they asked to join the developers in designing the houses, the project authorities refused them, stating that they already had an engineer who is well-known for creating house styles for ethnic people. According to the villagers, project staff dismissed their concerns, stating nonchalantly: 'Don't worry about that, we can do it for you all' (personal communication, 2006).

Even the various public and private stakeholders have differing conceptions as to how the issue of housing and compensation will be played out. For example, during interviews with different district level officials, there was a considerable variance in understanding. Some of the officials insisted that the resettlement of ethnic people would be based on where they themselves would like to move and that the compensation would be equal regardless of where the villagers chose. Other officials denied this, maintaining that only half the funds would be provided to individuals who chose not to live according to the project development plan. Since the district government itself is confused about the specific resettlement conditions, it obviously follows that the villagers will be totally perplexed. However, out of fear of speaking against authority, they do not attempt to resolve the uncertainty clouding their future.



Figure 5 Phuong district's hospital will also flooded

However, some villagers were more concerned with the loss of their religious identity than house designs. Most villagers would like the freedom to move wherever they choose but without land or capital they feel forced into accepting the project relocation. While the villagers worry about losing their culture and would like to live with their relatives in other villages, they also worry about being landless. With their original land taken away, they don't see any choices under the circumstances and therefore accept the amalgamation insisted upon by the project developers. For example, about fifteen villagers from Ban Na Luong and Ban Pa Ngieng Nua explained that they were distressed by the fact that the project was not building a church to accommodate their Christian faith, in spite of having detailed plans for the

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

construction of a temple in the relocated village for Buddhists. They said that they didn't care about house styles but that they just wanted to live with their relatives in another village, where they could protect their religion. However, this option was seen as financially impossible. Their understanding is that if they don't accept the resettlement conditions then they will only receive half the compensation, which they see as insufficient to subsist.



Figure 6 Known as Ban Sone, people been have settling here since 1963.

Amalgamation, cultural identity and representation in the resettled villages.

Each of the five effected ethnic groups have unique religious beliefs and customs. It is beyond the scope of this paper to compare these differences in detail, but I would like to familiarize the reader with some of the practices that I came across during my research.

The Phuan, unlike the Hmong or Khamu, practice Buddhism. They often pray at the temple, and offer food to the Buddhist monks every morning. Every eight days and every fifteen days, during the waxing and waning transitions of the moon, the villagers go to the temple to pray and listen to the monk explain the teachings of the Buddha. On these days, the Phuan people cease their activities and instead help clean or maintain the temples. However, during the Buddhist New Year in May, they have a practice common to other Lao Loum groups: they pour water on the Buddhist statues in the temple in order to ask their ancestors for forgiveness. All of these activities give meaning to the lives of the Phuan people.



Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

The Khamu people also have traditional cultural activities, such as the celebration of the Kherrer festival, which takes place every December after harvest. During the festival, the rice spirits are thanked, as are the household spirits. In addition, they ask the spirits for protection from poverty. Beside this, the Khamu people believe in a village spirit. At the head of the Khamu village, the villagers erect a special dwelling for the village spirit, and worship the area as a sacred and mysterious place. If someone commits a sin in this vicinity, it is believed that misfortune will befall him or her.

Hmong people also have special beliefs, such as the Kin Chieng festival. During this time, Hmong people do not enter into other peoples' houses or villages. According to this tradition, doing so would surely result in some ill-fate.

While the other ethnic people, the Tai Dam and Tai Deng, also have specific beliefs, it is not the purpose of this paper to explain in detail the activities of each ethnic group. However, I can provide a sample so that the reader may understand a little bit about the cultural traditions of Tai Deng ethnic people. When a household member dies, it is sacrilegious to move the body out through a door. Instead, they break a wall on the side of the house to make an appropriate exit.

According to the resettlement plan, the villagers will not be separated according to ethnic group after relocation. Unfortunately, the potential consequences of this decision have not been carefully considered.

In fact, most of the ethnic people in the former Phuong district have been living together for a long time in this area. The interesting relationship between the ethnic groups in this area was expressed to me by several people living in Ban Na Luong and Ban Na Tu. They have never attacked one another because they lived in different, geographically distinct, villages. But, they still respect each other. When people of one ethnic group celebrate their traditional festivals, people from the other groups also come, join in the festivities, and support the livelihood and cultural heritage of that ethnic group.

In the 'focal sites', however, power struggles will invariably arise. Considering that the Phuan make up the majority of the population, we might expect that their influence in the amalgamated villages would be similarly disproportionate. Whereas careful planning would have taken this into account in village design, the imbalance is instead further exacerbated by the fact that it is also only the Phuan religion that is to be represented by the building of temples to the exclusion of spirit houses or other holy places of worship. Many of the other ethnic groups expressed their fears and frustrations regarding this injustice. At least twenty villagers from Ban Lak 33 and Ban Lak 37 worried that, without a place to pray to their spirits, their cultures would surely go extinct. They criticized the planners for behaving as though the villagers had no beliefs at all worth protecting.

Finally, the fact that project developers will be building temples but no other religious places may be at odds with Article 8 of the Lao constitution, which states that all ethnic groups have the right 'to protect, preserve and promote their fine customs and culture. All acts of division and discrimination among ethnic groups are prohibited' (Lao PDR National Assembly, 1991)

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

Conclusions

The resettlement plans of the Nam Ngum 2 project developers currently run against the basic principles of the Lao government and the Lao Central Party Committee, which can be summed up by their well-known motto: “The loss of traditional culture is the loss of the Lao nation.” (Phomvihane, 1996) Concern with the dissolution of culture has been prominent within party discourse ever since the nation's first president, Kaysone Phomvihane acknowledged its protection as crucial for the strength and unity of the country.

Thus, the ideal of the Lao government is not incompatible with that of human rights and ‘earth rights’, a concept promoted by the similarly-named INGO, recognizing the inseparable link between human and environmental abuse¹. While the Lao government demands national development, at the same time, it values the protection of the traditional culture of all ethnic people, all of which are tied to ecologically and socially sustainable livelihoods. Economic development alone will not ensure an improvement of the countries’ people. The protection of the traditional culture of the ethnic people is of equal importance.

The basic principle of ‘earth rights’ is that human rights, an ecologically sound environment, sustainable development and peace are all interdependent and indivisible. This means that all persons

- have the right to a secure, healthy and ecologically sound environment, be free from discrimination in decision making about effects the environment,
- have the right to sustainable development,
- have the right not to be forced from their homes or land by the decisions of society. If needed to move, people should be involved in the process and compensated,
- and that Indigenous peoples have the right to control their own lands, territories and natural resources and to maintain their traditional way of life (Earth Rights, 2006).

The beliefs of ethnic people also have environmental value essential for sustainable development. For example, all ethnic people traditionally believed that the forest *is* their livelihood. The forest kept them from danger and throughout times of hunger and disease, and helped them live together in peace. Ethnic people often believe in a mountain spirit and forest spirit, and they cannot destroy the forest without retribution from them.

However, most of the interactions between the State and the local people have been initiated to make villagers understand national development concepts. An understanding of how traditional cultures of ethnic people might in turn assist in development is absent from discourse.

The report, “Internal Resettlement and International Aid Agencies in Lao PDR” (Baird and Shoemaker, 2005), and other published papers (for example, Vandergeest, 2003) have recently been produced on internal resettlement and related

¹ For a more in depth review of this concept, see The Legal Bases of Earth Rights. *Introduction to Earth Rights Manual* (2006).

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

aspects of development policy in the uplands of Lao PDR. These include a critical examination of how resettlement and land and forest allocation initiatives have not recognized the spatial organization of upland people – through changing their agricultural practices, altering access and use of forest resources, reorganizing the spatial layout of villages along roads and even through insisting that houses be permanent and sturdy like those of the lowland Lao. This spatial reorganization is facilitating cultural integration into the dominant culture. There is another study about the nutritional implications of internal resettlement and other changes in livelihood, (Krahn 2003) such as on opium eradication projects.

Government authorities participating in the development project are powerless to implement state policy that may help local people conserve their cultural heritage. They cannot give feedback to the project owner regarding the implementation of the project.

Recommendations:

Recommendations call for keeping the same ethnic group together; not to penalize people who want to choose where they are to be resettled; and to provide room for input by effected groups. The government should be sensitive to cultural/religious needs, provide for time and means (e.g., religion sites) for them to merge with one another and adjust, allow for public feedback, be open to taking corrective actions, and encourage advisory monitoring by independent parties. Income from the sale of energy to Thailand should be enough to provide some funds to promote harmonious, peaceful, economic living conditions and environment. Genuine desire to learn from mistakes and do better and better the next time around must be present for Laos' hydropower development program to be successful. Specific initiatives might include:

- Increase the participation of resettled people in the decision making process, including choices related to housing and spatial organization.
- Study the negative experiences of other countries that have engaged in involuntary resettlement.
- Utilize indigenous knowledge and traditional culture to formulate a more integrated and sustainable development policy.
- Engage in development that supports local initiatives.
- Increase transparency regarding the potentially destructive impacts of new projects.
- Incorporate 'earthrights' principles into district and provincial level decision-making.
- Establish a strong multi-ethnic nationalism and avoid importing other countries' development strategies.

Former president, Kaisone Phomvihanh, once said that the Lao government's strategy should focus on the needs of the Lao population, and this should be a central part of the development standard of the Lao government (3). These words are becoming ever more timely, as more and more large-scale development projects are invading the Lao countryside. Any project that harms the Lao people's way of life means that it will also harm our nation and our chances of developing in a just and meaningful way.

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

References

- Asian Development Bank (2000) Technical Assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the Preparing of the Nam Ngum River Basin Development Project. November, 2000. Retrieved from <http://www.adb.org/Documents/TARs/LAO/R293-00.pdf>
- Asian Development Bank (2007). Lao People's Democratic Republic: Preparing the Cumulative Impact Assessment for the Nam Ngum 3 Hydropower Project. February 2007. Retrieved from <http://209.225.62.100/Documents/TARs/LAO/40514-LAO-TAR.pdf>
- Baird, I. & Schoemaker, B. (2005). Aiding or Abetting? Internal Resettlement and International Aid Agencies in Lao PDR. Probe International.
- Earthrights International (2006). Introduction to Earthrights. Earthrights International.
- Hertz, R. (1997) Human Rights and the Environment. Presented to the Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Office in Geneva. Earthrights International.
- Hirsch, P., Phanvilay, K., Tubtim, K., (1999) Nam Ngum, Lao PDR: Community-based Natural Resource Management and Conflicts over Watershed Resources. UNPAN. Retrieved from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN022241.pdf>
- International Development Research Centre (2007). Resource Management in Nam Ngum Watershed. Retrieved from http://www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au/case_studies/nam_ngum/significance.htm
- Krahn, J. (2003) Cooking up Dietary Change in Lao Upland Kitchens. Juth Pakai – Perspectives on Lao Development. Vientiane, Lao PDR. Issue 1, December 2003.
- Lao National Committee for Energy, (2007) www.poweringprogress.org/
- Lao News Agency (2006) Nam Ngum 2 to Start End of 2006. May 25, 2006. Retrieved from http://www.vientianetimes.com/Stories/2006/05252006_nam_ngum_ii_to_start_end_of_2006.html
- Lao PDR National Assembly (1991) Constitution of the Lao PDR. Retrieved from <http://sunsite.nus.edu.sg/apcel/dbase/laos/primary/laacons.html>
- Maunsell and Lahmeyer International (2004) Nam Ngum 2B Hydropower Project. Retrieved from http://www.poweringprogress.org/energy_sector/pdf_files/power_system_dev/

Resettlement Impacts of Nam Ngum 2 Hydro-power Project on Community Culture

[Volume%20C%20-%20Project%20Catalogue%20in%20Sections/Section%202%20Project%20Profiles%2011%20to%2015.pdf](#)

- Perrin, Andrew. (2005) Options Under Water. Time Magazine, March 28, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1042503,00.html>
- Phomvihane, K (1996) The Revolution of Laos: Practice and Prospects. *Progress Publishers*, Moscow
- Praiwan, Yuthana (2007) Thailand to Buy More Electricity from Laos. May 30, 2007. Bangkok Post. Retrieved from <http://www.aseanenergy.info/News/34001214.htm>
- The Economist (2002) Big, Bad Dams Return to Southeast Asia. June 13, 2007. The Economist. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9325886
- United Nations Environmental Programme (2001) Lao PDR: State of the Environment. 2001. Retrieved from http://www.rrcap.unep.org/reports/soe/lao_biodiversity.pdf
- Vandergeest (2003) Land to Some Tillers: Development Induced Displacement in Laos. UNESCO
- Vietnam News Agency (2006) Thailand Purchased More Power From Laos. December 18, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.vnagency.com.vn/Home/EN/tabid/119/itemid/176795/Default.aspx>
- World Bank (2003). Lao PDR Strategic Impact Assessment (Annex 1). Retrieved from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAOPRD/Resources/SIAAnnex-1-Project-Descriptions.pdf>