

Positive and negative impacts within village boundary

Positive impacts:

Villagers utilize their land more effectively than before.

- Villagers grow permanent upland rice rather than maintaining shifting cultivation.
- Some areas that have been left uncultivated for many years are now used more effectively.
- Villagers gain greater negotiation skills and they endeavor to earn more income through selling their labor.

Negative impacts:

- Reduction of non-timber forestry products
- Decrease in available agricultural area
- Destruction of some village forest areas
- Changes to local ecosystem, including deforestation of protected areas, which can lead to drought.
- Modification to village traditions and culture



Recommendations

1. If the company has already cleared some of the villagers' land, it should allow the villagers to plant and take care of a Jatropha plantation and then sell the products to them. In this way, the villagers would be able to grow rice on their land in the first two years. If the company grows the Jatropha itself, it would have to pay 600,000 Kip annually per hectare to the landowners.
2. The company should hire those families who have lost their land to the concessions as laborers and pay them appropriate wages.
3. The company should pay a concession fee to the village.
4. District officials should allocate agricultural land to the 12 new families who recently moved out from their parents' homes.
5. District, village authorities and other relevant parties should disseminate information regarding positive and negative outcomes and legal aspects of land concessions to villagers.



“ Land Concession and Changes to the Pajudone Community, Taoi District, Salavan Province ”

CASE STUDY



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Background

In the past couple of years, problems associated with land and natural resources have been increasing rapidly, especially those problems relating to land and forest use including forest destruction and inappropriate land use practices. This brings about social and environmental impacts within communities, for instance reduced availability of agricultural land, unfair wages for local people, conflicts between local people and companies. It has been observed that the greater the foreign investment in relation to agriculture and forest sectors, the heavier the problems experienced.

In order to minimize the above problems, three fundamental factors need to be considered: 1. Encourage the participation of villagers in the process of land use planning and land allocation and natural resources management in local areas; 2. Strengthen local authorities through awareness raising on laws and policies of the government; and, 3. Improve the coordination system between various stakeholders whose work relates to natural resource management by both government and NGOs. This will lead to effective collaboration efforts across the country.

Therefore, National Land Management Authority (NLMA) and Village Focus International (VFI) together have conducted a study into the possibilities and opportunities of the program called "Rights Link Laos". This program aims to improve the decision making processes regarding natural resource management and land use planning of the local people by improving the dissemination system in different levels as well as developing the collaboration mechanism among relevant parties.

Objectives:

- To provide greater understanding about the impacts of land concessions to the government sector, NGOs, investors and communities.
- To create opportunities for villagers to share their opinions on the impacts of land concessions to their livelihoods.
- To find solutions to the conflicts that have already occurred and could occur in the future.

Information sources

Interview 10 key people from different villages:

Ban Pajudone
Ban Pajutai
Ban Pajumai
Ban Pajuern

Problems

District Authority

- The follow up budget of the District is limited
- The district lacks technical staff and requires assistance from NGOs to develop villages



Villagers

- Agricultural land is not appropriate
- Insufficient agricultural land
- Villagers lack technical skill and knowledge
- Villagers do not understand details of the concession process.
- Villagers experience a rice shortage every year
- The village conservation forest was destroyed
- Coordination efforts and discussions between the district and company were limited
- There is no land available for 12 families new to the village



Plantation company

- Requires fertile soil
- Requires one large area (1000Ha)
- Labor costs are low
- Does not need to pay concession fee to the village
- No participation of villagers; only discussions between the village authority and plantation company
- Destruction of protected forest without discussions with villagers