



The Bridging Bonds: Technology-enhanced, citizen-led effective monitoring of public policy interventions focused on hydropower plant operation at grassroots level

Unwanted consequences have emerged when people's participation in monitoring public policy interventions and investment is missing or of low quality. In the eyes of policy makers, people have limited capacity to participate. According to those targeted by such policies, it is difficult to access policies, policy language is often too complex and there is yet an effective feedback mechanism.

In the hydropower sector, the lack of an effective feedback mechanism between affected communities and policy makers or investors on diverse types of

impacts by hydropower operation persists while such impacts continue to put a heavy burden on people in all aspects, from livelihood, culture-society, and environment to the implementation of policies related to compensation, land clearance and resettlement.

On the one hand, this means decision makers have fewer opportunities to timely respond to the multifaceted impacts of hydropower. On the other hand, it delays the resolution of unwanted consequences and potential prolonged conflicts between parties involved, which might lead to socio-economic instability.

OBJECTIVE

Through building research and technology application capacity, ethnic minority communities in Son La, Bac Kan, and Dak Lak are able to proactively and effectively participate in monitoring the impacts of hydropower plant operation on their livelihood, environment, cultural-social life, and the implementation of relevant policies and legal regulations.

Participants

Over 400 households of E De, Thai, Nung, Tay, H'Mong, and M'Nong

Locations

23 villages in 9 communes in:
Sơn La: Mai Sơn, Yên Châu, Quỳnh Nhai districts
Đắk Lắk: Buôn Đôn district
Bắc Kạn: Ba Bể district

Co-implementers

CARE in Vietnam
CIRUM
GFD Co. Ltd.
Bac Kan Women's Union
WARECOD

Timeline | Budget | Donor

10/2018 -12/2019 | 100,000USD | CARE Denmark



KEY OUTCOMES

01 mobile phone Android application that allows individuals to collect and enter data indicating various impacts of the hydropower plant at grassroots level.

01 practical training manual for the learning companion of adult learners on participatory action research.

25 community researchers (13 female) improved their participatory action research capacity via self-experiencing and learning companion method.

05 cycles of monitoring with community researchers using a smartphone application to collect data on impacts at grassroots level by a mega size (Son La 2,400 MW), a medium size (Serepok 4, 64MW), and a small size (Ta Loong 4.5 MW) hydropower plants.

01 monitoring framework with 15 comprehensive impact indicators with 50 sub-indicators, covering 4 areas: livelihood, environment, socio-economy; and the implementation of relevant policies.

01 data processing and analysing software that allows user to extract significant findings for advocacy purposes in the form of descriptive analytical reports.

01 handbook on practical tools for data collection and researching using by community researchers in the field of hydropower.

412 households representing nearly 20,900 others in the areas directly affected by the hydropower plant operation voluntarily shared information on impacts that they have experienced.

OUR APPROACH

Participatory action research: A self-experiencing and learning companion method was used to build community representatives' capacity to explore, understand, identify possible solutions and to jointly work to improve their situation together.

Nurturing the process of decentralized democracy governance at the grassroots level in governing multifaceted impacts of the hydropower plants via enabling affected communities to monitor and give feedback about the impacts of hydropower on all aspects of their lives.

"[I got] invited to meetings all the time, then [they said they] did not have the authority to answer. Many times like that."

~ A resident affected by hydropower in Đắk Lắk ~

"It didn't matter much in the new place; there was land, but eroded land. The locals had used it so long before selling it to the [hydropower] project which then sold it to resettled people."

~ A resident affected by hydropower in Sơn La ~

"I question why the hydropower [plant] releases water not according to our working time... When we work in the field, there is no water for ploughing; water is always insufficient, [resulting in people's] fighting each other for water."

~ A resident affected by hydropower in Bắc Kạn ~

