



ANALYZING DEVELOPMENT ISSUES CENTRE (ADIC) Land Use Change and Food Security in Two Bunong Communes of Mondulkiri Province

Context and objectives

Land use issues particularly affect vulnerable populations, especially indigenous people, and cover a wide spectrum including agriculture, forests, and the fishery sector. Agricultural land use in Cambodia has expanded considerably during recent years, as the population has expanded. The rapid change resulting from a growing population in particular and economic growth in general, has changed land use patterns and have exerted pressure on natural resources. Meanwhile economic land concessions and mining concessions continue to pose a threat to community land holdings, food security and foster an uncertain land tenure environment.

CIDSE Cambodia conducted a study in Dak Dam and Srae Preah communes of Mondulkiri Province in 2002/03 which revealed that Bunong indigenous residents of the two communes remained largely dependent on forest resources for their subsistence despite the destruction of forest resources through forest concessions, illegal logging, and unregulated hunting. The households in the study villages were well integrated into the market economy. Large numbers of the households bought and sold cash crops, livestock, forest products and wildlife. These transactions and the sale of labor provided them with income to buy rice in periods of annual shortfalls and purchase manufactured goods for everyday use. While indigenous groups in the study areas had embraced many opportunities brought about by the market economy, their lack of tenure security over land and forest resources made them more vulnerable to other impacts of that economy.

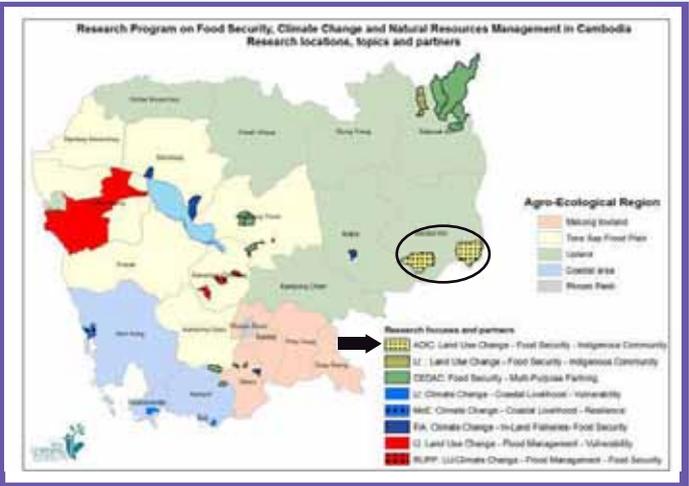
The ADIC in this proposed research project takes the CIDSE 2002/03 study as its baseline and seeks to compare how land use change has affected food security in Dak Dam and Srae Preah communes over the intervening years. A main focus of the research is placed on the adaptations of the indigenous Bunong households to the changes that have been taking place over the last 10 years.

The research aims to primarily target local community and local NGO audiences and more generally will reach out to development practitioners and policy makers at provincial and national levels. The research will likewise provide further opportunities for local communities to actively participate in discussions about land use change and food security issues affecting their lives.

Methodology

The conceptual framework explores the links between the notions of food security and land use change and maintains that respect for indigenous peoples' rights and participation of indigenous groups in natural resource governance is crucial to ensuring household food security.

The research will employ a mixed quantitative and qualitative data collection strategy. These include a household survey questionnaire, participatory rural assessments (PRAs), key informant interviews, in-depth interviews with selected households, women focus group discussions, field observation and the use of secondary sources. The household survey questionnaire will primarily address the research questions related to food security and market participation, while the PRAs, key informants,



women focus group discussions and secondary sources will mainly investigate the research questions related to land use change.

Contribution to the program

The research makes an original contribution to the research program by analyzing the following issues:

- Land use changes in the area reflect an important dimension of the agrarian transformation in Cambodia: the expansion of the agricultural frontier into forested peripheral areas, which is associated with permanent lowland-upland migration by ethnic Khmer people. These transformations result in an increased assimilation of ethnic minority group living at the periphery of Zomia, which have not yet been fully understood in Mondulkiri province.
- The institutions governing the access, use and control of land, which accompany these changes, are also being changed. The new rules for State land

management, which serve as reference to secure large-scale land holdings, i.e. Economic land or mineral concessions often result in land encroachment. Land rights are being challenged and the land right ethnography proposed in the research will shed new light on the relationships between current land use dynamics and land tenure security, especially as they relate to ethnic minority groups.

- The intensification of the market economy is upsetting the social relations of production in Bunong communities. The originality of the research will be to look at these changes with a time perspective in order to understand the dynamics of socio-economic differentiation between households within the same community.

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