

Assignment 1

“How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods”

The Lower Sesan 2 Dam, built by China in 2018, is a dam that produces water power with strong Cambodian resistance. The dam has cut off not only the environment but also the native inhabitants. The riverine ecosystem modified by dam effects, the movements of migratory fishes along the river will be blocked and local communities who live on the Mekong river system were destroyed, resulting in thousands of them losing their homes, jobs, and food also as productive cycles of wildlife.

The dam is a part of the massive "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI), an investment and infrastructure project that aims to encourage global growth and further Chinese foreign policy objectives that the Cambodian government pushes ahead.

Main source of income for Cambodia is by agricultural activities. Around 4,500 to 5,000 Cambodians live in this rural river basin area. After China's dam was built without consideration about the ecosystem of the country nearby and livelihoods, it affected nature before everything else. Vegetated land was rocky, dry, and dead – collecting forest products or farming vegetables are difficult. The native fish were blocked in their connectivity direction by the barrier and caused unfresh water and their feeding along with affecting their life cycle. Fish was the main basis of these rural areas since people consumed fish as the main foods, created their jobs by fishing and selling, and also made fishing nets for sale meaning that there was no longer a river providing – fresh water, food, jobs, income.

Whether they can catch fish or not, all of them will be small fish that will not make much money as usual. People had to resettle far from the river that counted as their homes while struggling to live in town because they have to learn new skills that would enable them to find jobs such as woodwork or electronic repairs. Thousands of them losing their jobs also lead to affected the economy by ungainly income and spending. Compensation is one of the solutions. On the other hand, communities collected the compensation for loss offered about \$6,000 and it did not compensate what they had lost. Along with the harm can be moderate by resettle, renegotiations, and compensation between Chinese and Cambodia's governments with fairness and transparency.

The Chinese government may be providing more even loans for infrastructure development, but by failing to ensure that the companies involved acknowledge the results of environmental and social impact and reasonably compensate impacted communities, it is also paving the way for widespread abuses to occur and Cambodia's government still presses forward with the project.

In conclusion, many marines and wildlife were affected by the Lower Sesan 2 construction as well as people losing jobs. Danger from human activity, dam creation, not only ruins the living things but also harms non living things such as the entire ecosystem. Apart from the Chinese government getting benefits, lots of innocent people are losing their heritage way of life. They need a habitable place where they can live like they used to be. Imagine that if the dam is still operating for a next decade what would the living things be like?