Understanding livelihood dynamics and land use optimization for greater impact: The case of Yali Reservoir, Vietnam

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Session: Emerging TWG: Livelihoods or Basin Stories

DRAWDOWN AREA OF THE YALI RESERVOIR PROJECT CULTIVATED WITH CASSAVA IN YALI COMMUNE, SATHAY DISTRICT, KOM TUM PROVINCE, VIETNAM (PHOTO COURTESY OF O.JOFFRE, JULY 2011)
Summary

The recent development of the Yali Reservoir in the Central Highlands of Vietnam has resulted in modifications to local livelihoods due to the submergence of rice land by the reservoir and the creation of a new drawdown area used for recession agriculture. Concomitantly, expansion of cassava cropping has caused deforestation, soil erosion and reduced water availability during the dry season. Communities resettled around the reservoir have been compelled to adapt to these new socio-ecological conditions.

Through surveys covering 250 households in the resettled villages around the reservoir, we analyzed the current livelihood patterns. The drivers of past and future development changes as well as household aspirations are explored in order to understand the dynamic(s) and factor(s) affecting local livelihoods. The suitability of the different (existing) farming systems is assessed through an analytical model using farm resources, soil, water, land and terrain characteristics.

Preliminary results show that the expansion of cassava cultivation and access to drawdown agriculture does not benefit all the resettled households around the reservoir and that modelisation can be used to optimize recession agriculture and the productivity of the drawdown area.

A combination of both approaches will provide adequate support for developing livelihood pilots that match the local dynamics of changes, constraints, needs, investment capacity and agro-ecological characteristics. These methods and study experiences can further be used for developing strategic planning in other hydropower development impacted areas.