



# FACTORS MOTIVATING AND HINDERING PROMOTION OF SOCIAL RESOURCES AMONG MNONG PEOPLE IN RESETTLEMENT AREAS AFFECTED BY BUONTUASRAH HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT, DAKLAK PROVINCE

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**Abstract.** While human resources are considered as key factors, social resources are breakthroughs for sustainable poverty reduction and famine elimination. For the Mnong in the area of BuonTuaSrah Hydropower Plant (HP), Daklak province, the establishment of a social network is very important. Through this network, the locals have opportunities and benefits to stick together in the pursuit of developing sustainable livelihoods and improving the quality of life. Although there are significant signs of motivating factors such as good family relationships and clans, decline of the out-of-date traditional customs, good relationship between the people and the government, Mnong people are still facing the obstacles such as the lack of knowledge and working skills, the ineffective activities of social organizations, and the low effectiveness of training courses. This study identifies factors motivating and hindering social resources in the livelihood development for Mnong people in resettlement areas affected by BuonTuaSrah HP.

**Keywords:** social resource, livelihood, Daklak, BuonTuaSrah, Hydroelectric power

Social resources play a very important role in sustainable development among ethnic minority groups, in general, and among the Mnong people, in particular. Social resources can be defined as social networks and organizations and social relationships. These relationships are equal or hierarchical. They create trust and cooperation between individuals and society as well as political organizations. Moreover, social resources include the connection between human beings and the benefits derived from their relationships.

When people are linked to each other by common rules and agreements, they can be organized in such a way that they can achieve the benefits and overcome the shocks or difficulties of life through these links. This plays an important role in the economic status of Mnong people.

The social resources of the Mnong people in the resettlement areas and affected areas in BuonTuaSrah HP are facing many challenges for sustainable development. Therefore, this article focuses on several concepts about motivating factors and hindering factors regarding the social

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resources of the Mnong ethnic minority in Lak District, BuonTuaSrah HP. The social capital is considered the relations of family, clans, and villages; local customs and culture; the role of social and political organizations as well as the involvement of people in the activities of organizations; the ability of people to access and enrich their production and life knowledge. The ethnographic method, the sociological survey method, and the comparison method are used in this study.

## 1. Some relevant concepts

The notion of resources or capital is complex with many definitions. Today, the most widespread is DFID's (Department for International Development) view in which human resources and capabilities are considered as human capital, natural capital, financial capital, physical capital, and social capital. In a narrow sense, resource capitals are material resources for development, such as natural resources, assets, and capital in money. In a broad sense, it includes all material and non-material advantages, potentialities for a certain development purpose.

The concept of livelihood originates from the research and problem-solving of African refugees from the 1960s. This concept relates to various economic comprehensions such as economic activity, livelihood activities, and production activities. At present, there are several approaches and definitions of livelihoods, but the concept of DFID is the most common: "*A livelihood can be described as a collection of resources and human capacities which are associated with the decisions and activities they pursue to earn a living as well as to achieve their goals and aspirations*"[1, p. 1].

The livelihoods of the Mnong people are their economic activities or modes of production. These economic activities originated in the past under the influence of numerous factors such as environment, natural conditions, and natural resources in the locality. A change is the process of mobilization and development of all societies. Historically, every society is undergoing transformation with intertwining continuity. Migration is the movement of people, voluntarily or affected, from one territorial unit to another or from one place of residence to another, to set up a new residence for a certain time. Resettlement is movement and integration. It is also the changing of the place for living and doing a job. Restoration is integration into the community of a new place. These are two closely related processes, creating a continuous process, connecting, and not necessarily being considered as having two periods. This is because, sometimes for success, the process of life stabilization can take place before the relocation process occurs. The "affected area" is the geographic area around the BuonTuaSrahHP. This hydropower plant affects the Mnong people in terms of social, economic, political, cultural, and human contexts.

## **2. Mnong people in Lak district and BuonTuaSrah HP**

### **2.1. An overview of Mnong people and Lak District**

Mnong or M'ngong (Cambodian called Pnong, Peonong) refers to a large ethnic tribe in the Central Highlands. The Mnong language is one of the South Mon-Khmer languages. Their main habitats situate in Lak and KrongBong districts, DakLak province and KrongNo, DakMil, DakRlap, and DakSong districts, DakNong province. Some live in the western districts of LamDong, such as Cat Tien, BaoLoc, Lam Ha, and Lac Duong. In addition, Mnong groups inhabit across the Cambodian border in Mondukiri province. According to the Population and Housing Census in 2009, the Mnong in Vietnam have a population of 102,741, ranking the seventh among the ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands and the 20th in the 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam.

Mnong people have different local groups. The groups living in DakLak and DakNong comprise two subgroups. The northern part of KrongNo includes Gar, Kuenh, Rlam, BuDang, and Chil. The southern section of KrongNo includes Nong, Preh, Prang, and BuNor. They are the first ethnic groups in the area to explore the Central Highlands, build and imprint culture on this land. The Mnong are a gentle ethnic, outspoken, hard-working, having a special culture with many customs, rituals, and festivals.

Lak is a poor district with a history of nearly 100 years, where Mnong and Ede people have resided for a long time. Currently, Lak district has 22 ethnic groups living together with a population of 70,425 people, and the average population density is over 55 people per square kilometer. Meanwhile, the ethnic minorities are 44,525 people, accounting for over 64.58% of the district population [4, p. 2]. Lak is considered to be the land associated with the origin of the two groups of Mnong community: MnongGar and MnongRlam. Currently, the Mnong have 8,217 households with 35,909 people, accounting for more than 50% of the population in Lak District [4, p. 9]. Lak district is considered as an area most affected by BuonTuaSrah HP. The most affected communes are NamKa, BuonTriet, EaRbin and KrongNo. There are 224 households with 1091 people in NamKa, 104 households with 427 people in BuonTriet, 151 households with 517 households in EaRbin, and 1080 households with 5805 people in KrongNo.

### **2.2. An overview of BuonTuaSrah HP**

DakLak is a central province in the Central Highlands with a large hydropower potential. Currently, DakLak has eight HPs that have been built and exploited (Table 1). The construction of HPs has had a profound impact on the livelihoods of ethnic minorities in the province.

BuonTuaSrah HP is built on the KrongKno River – the main tributary of the Srepok River in NamKa commune, Lak district, DakLak province. Hydropower plants were built under the Government permission No. 1229/CP-CN dated August 30, 2004; Vietnam Electricity Corporation approved the Technical Study Report in decision document No. 321/QD-EVN-HDQT dated 7 September 2004. The construction of the project took place from 2004 to 2011. The main tasks of the project were supplying the national power system with an installed capacity of 86 MW. It supplies water for irrigation in the dry season and controls floods for downstream areas. The plant also creates environmental landscapes, develops tourism and aquaculture, regulates the climate in the area, reduces the level of harsh weather and fosters infrastructure improvement.

**Table 1.**Hydropower Plants in DakLak

Numbers	Plant's name	Capacity (MW)
1	BuonTuaSrah	86
2	BuonKuop	280
3	ĐrayH'Linh 1	12
4	ĐrayH'Linh 2	16
5	Serepok 3	220
6	Serepok 4	80
7	Serepok 4A	64
8	Duc Xuyen	58
<b>Total</b>		<b>816</b>

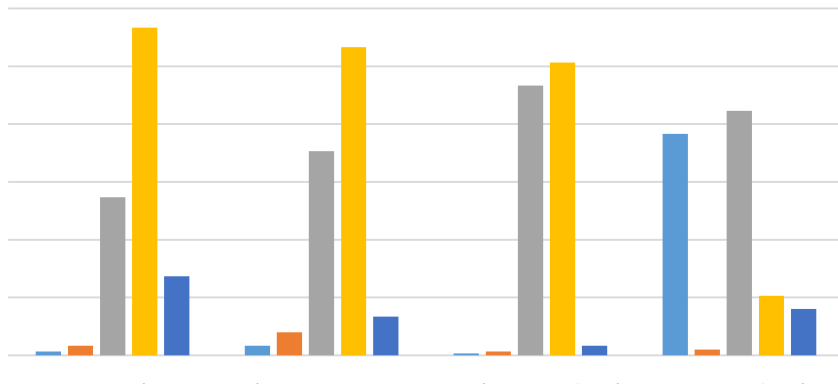
Source: EVNHPC Buon Kuop 2018

### 3. Factors motivating and hindering social resources

#### 3.1. Motivating factors

*Factor 1: The strong influence of family relationship, family clans, village, and religion of local people*

Family relationships, clans, villages, and religions help to increase trust and cooperation and to expand access to political, economic, and civil institutions. This cohesion creates the strength of solidarity in the prevention of natural disasters, diseases, and crop protection. It creates the trust of each household and each member in the Mnong community in Lak district.

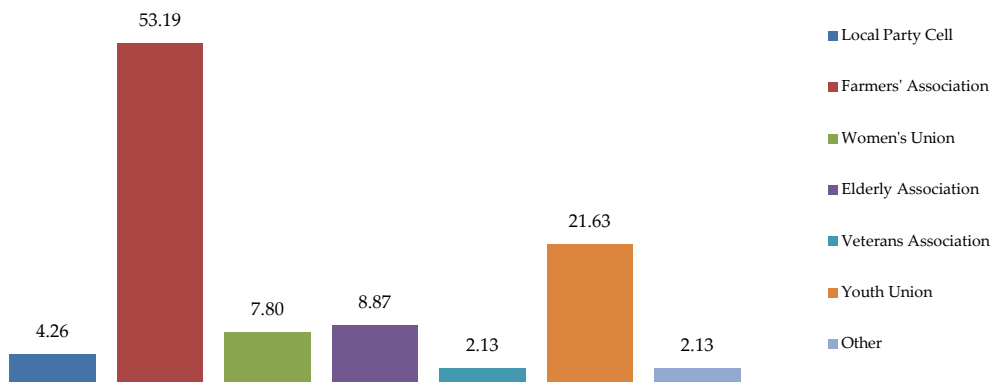


**Figure 1.** Family relationship, clans, village, and religion of Mnong people  
 Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

The survey shows good relationships within families, clans, villages, and the religious and non-religious in the Mnong community of Lak district. Figure 1 shows that 70.34% of households have a close and stable family relationship, while only 27.33% of them show a normal relationship. Similarly, 60% of surveyed households say that they have a good relationship in the family: 35.5% of them have a normal relationship; 52.34% of them say they have good relations in the village, and 46.67% of them have normal relations (Figure 1).

In general, family ties, clans, villages, and religions of the Mnong are intimate and good. Therefore, in terms of social networks, this is the factor that motivates Mnong people to invest in long-term production, improve their livelihoods, and sustainably develop their livelihoods.

**Factor 2: The participation of Mnong people in local organizations and the maintenance of their good social relationships**

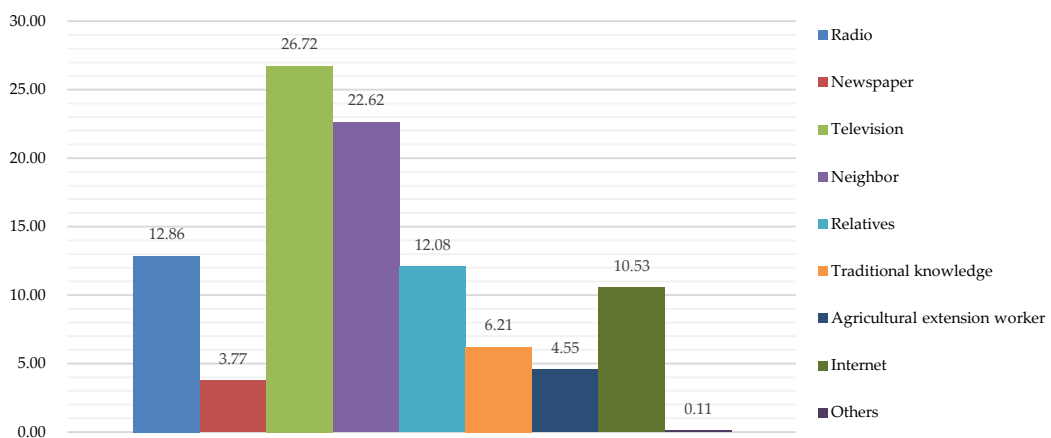


**Figure 2.** Local organizations that Mnong people join  
 Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

The government has a policy of developing mass organizations and attracting members. This, therefore, promotes production and strengthens community links to help each other and simultaneously to ensure security. On the other hand, mass organizations have been entrusted by many other organizations such as banks, credit institutions, investment funds, and national and international organizations to help people develop their products and reduce poverty. Participating in corporate activities helps Mnong people to substantially benefit from expanding relationships within the community, catching up on timely information, and increasing income for the households. The main mass organizations include Farmers' Association, Youth Union, and Women's Union. Among them, the Farmers' Association attracts 53.19% of the respondents, and the Youth Union 21.36% (Figure 2). The Farmers' Association, Women's Union, Veterans' Association, and Youth Union are a useful support for the livelihood activities of the Mnong. Therefore, joining the local mass organizations is one of the motivating factors for the Mnong household to have favorable conditions in their livelihoods.

### **Factor 3: Strong information share among the Mnong community**

The spreading and sharing of information within the community and the households play an important role in raising the social capital of the Mnong people. They get timely information and therefore understand production, market trends, social understanding, confidence, and improve their production.



**Figure 3.** Source of information shared among Mnong community

Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

Mnong people receive and share information in the community in numerous ways. The information comes to them mostly through television (26.73%), neighbors (22.62%), radio (12.86%), and relatives (12.08%) (Figure 3). The object they exchange information later is quite diverse. The information that Mnong people obtain has a significant impact on the decision-

making and selection of production options. Therefore, the sharing of information on the economic and social situation is considered a factor promoting the livelihood of the Mnong.

**Factor 4: Support from local organizations**

**Table 2.**Types support from local organizations

Type of support	Proportion of Households supported, (%)
Production techniques	75,6
Capital/loans	71,1
Vocational training	6,1
Market access	19,7
Other support	5,0

Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

Mnong households have access to various kinds of support from organizations such as production techniques, capital or loan support, vocational training support, and market access at different levels (Table 2). Meanwhile, around three-fourths of the respondents receive technical assistance production and 71.1% receive investment capital or loans, they receive moderate support from vocational training, market access, and others.

**Factor 5: Intensive investment of government in training professional skills for Mnong people**

Besides the efforts of the Mnong people, the professional skills training courses are a reasonable support. This support enables the Mnong farmers to grasp the market, the technique, and the new product standards. These training courses help the Mnong to organize production and business, ensuring stable development. Fifty-five percent of people are very

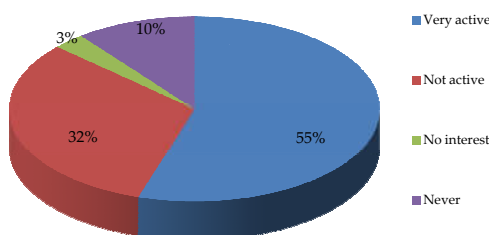


Figure 4. Attitude of people with training courses  
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

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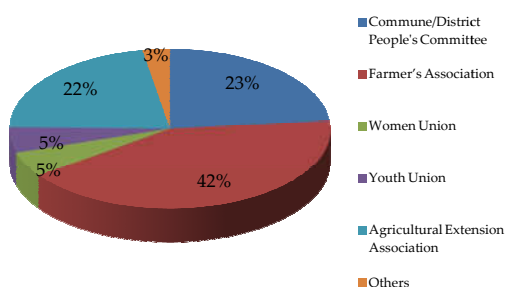


Figure 5. Organizer of the training  
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

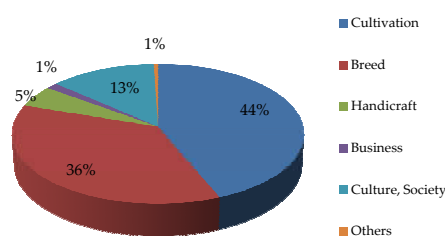


Figure 6. Training content  
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

active in attending training courses, fostering knowledge and professional skills (Figure 4).

All the organizations organize courses for the farmers. Farmers' Association, Commune People's Committee, and Agriculture Extension account for 87% of the courses (Figure 5). Most of the training courses focuses on cultivation (44%), breeding (36%), and social culture (13%) (Figure 6). The remaining 7% constitutes handicraft, business, culture and society, and others.

**Factor 6: Reduction of outdated customs and traditions**

Nowadays, many traditional customs of the Mngong people seem to be blurred. Some of the customs are abandoned, while others are ritually held in simpler forms (Figure 7).

Traditional ceremonies such as funerals and weddings are organized more simply, with a shorter duration and lower cost. Agricultural rituals are held occasionally with a smaller scale. This is because an increasing number of Mngong families change their religion to Protestantism and therefore abandoned most of the traditional customs.

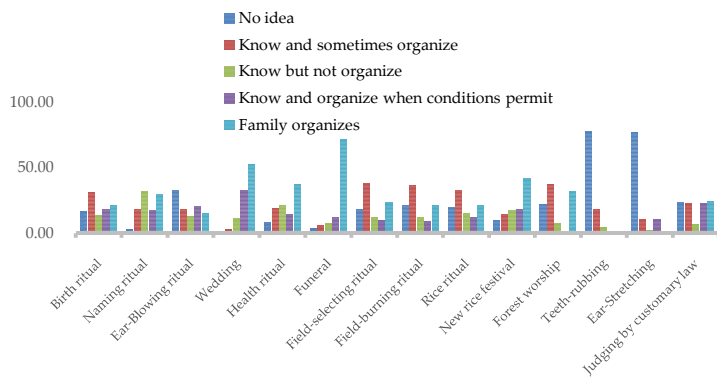


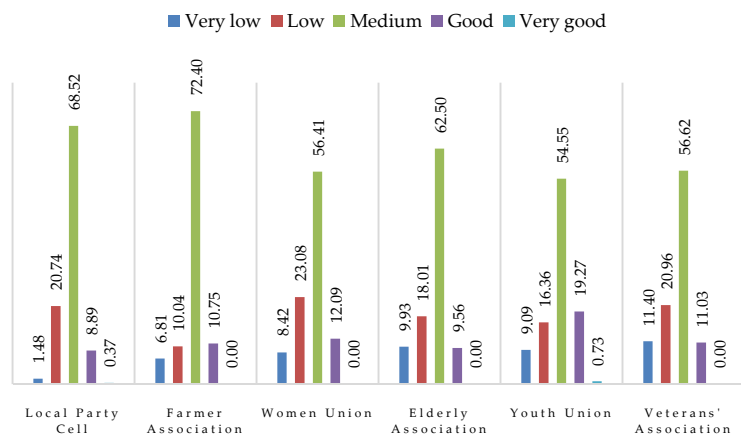
Figure 7. The level of understanding and organizing traditional rituals in Mngong community  
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mngong Community in 2018

On the whole, the reduction of conventional wisdom and the raise of Mngong people's awareness enable them to have more opportunities to receive scientific knowledge and to avoid unbeneficial activities. As a result, they are able to concentrate on stable production and living improvement.

**3.2. Hindering factors**

**Factor 1: Unclear and ineffective activities of political and social organizations**

In general, the Mngong people participate in many organizations, but the level of support and connectivity of the organizations' help is ineffective (Figure 8). This



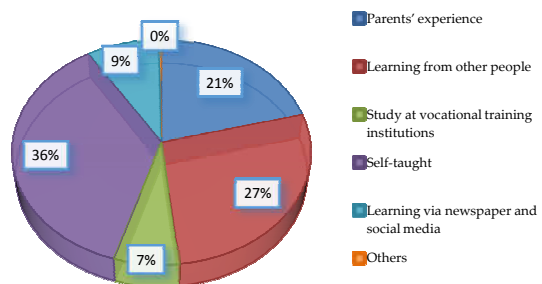
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mngong Community in 2018



limitation is caused by the overlapping, unclear, and complicated mechanism. When Mnong people need information, consultancy, and legal supports, they are very confused and do not know who to rely on. Although there exist many organizations that represent the Mnong people, when they come for help, no organization is confident enough to be responsible and supportive.

**Factor 2: Limitation of knowledge and skills**

In terms of knowledge and job skills, the majority of Mnong people claim that they receive information via self-teaching (36%), media (21%), other people (27%), parents (9%), and from training institutions (7%). The reception of scientific, technical, and professional skills in a systematically formal way is very limited. The lack of professional knowledge and skills leads Mnong people to the unreasonable use of

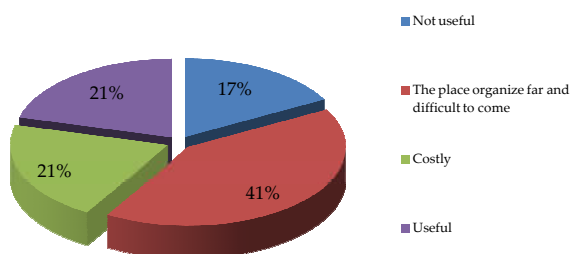


**Figure 9.** Knowledge and working skills  
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

resources, plant and animal structure, pesticides, fertilizers, plant varieties, and cultivation, which leads to expensive capital and ineffective production (Figure 9). Most of the Mnong people focus on the value of a single product and ignore chain production. This results in a product high cost because the cost accounts for the entire production process. This is considered as one of the major obstacles for the Mnong people in the resettlement areas and the areas affected by Buon Tua Srah HP.

**Factor 3: Ineffective training**

Most of the respondents assert that they are very actively involved in training courses to acquire management knowledge and professional skills. However, from their assessment, the effectiveness of the training courses, which are usually held in a couple of days, is not as useful as they expect. They were provided with mostly theoretical knowledge and instructions that are enclosed in brochures. The content of the training courses



**Figure 10.** Evaluate effectiveness of training courses  
Source: Results of Social Survey on Mnong Community in 2018

usually excludes practical guidance. Whereas, for most ethnic minority people the best way to disseminate knowledge and skills is “learning by doing”, and they need the participation of the trainers from the start of the crops until the harvest time (Figure 10).

#### Factor 4: Low access to information and social services

The Mngong people are surveyed about information services, culture, schools, clinics, and markets. The data show that 22.3% of Mngong people think that it is difficult to access market information; 3.1% of them do not have any access to information, and 67.4% think that cultural services are very inadequate. Most Mngong can take their children to school, while only a small number of households (12%) say that their children do not have sufficient books, pens, folders, and other school materials when they go to school. The access to health services of Mngong people is very modest. 77.1% of them say that when they are sick, they treat themselves with traditional methods or buy medicine by themselves. Only 10.5% of them go to commune health care services or hospitals (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Access to social services of Mngong people (%)

Type of service	Good access	Limited access	No access	Neutral
Information	65,8	22,3	3,1	8,8
Culture	2,8	67,4	19,6	10,2
Schools	81	11,9	0,2	6,9
Clinics	10,5	77,1	3,4	9,0
Markets	45,6	13,0	34,2	7,2

*Source:* Results of Social Survey on Mngong Community in 2018

Forty-five point six percent of Mngong people say that they can access small markets easily. A relatively high percentage of Mngong people say that they have difficulties to access larger markets as their home is far from them. The lack of markets and access to information, culture, and health services are major obstacles to the livelihood development of the Mngong ethnic minority in Lak district and the areas affected by BuonTuaSrah HP.

## 4. Conclusion

Social resources play a breakthrough factor for sustainable hunger eradication and poverty reduction in remote and isolated areas. In that context, Lak district, including the resettlement areas, have been substantially affected by BuonTuaSrah HP. According to the project description, the BuonTuaSrah HP was built to motivate the development of the Mngong ethnic minority by providing favorable conditions for their settlement and sustainable

development in different aspects such as economy, culture and sociology. In other words, the major tasks of the project are to train human resources, to shift the economic structure, and to create jobs for the households who donated the land for the project. However, this research shows that along with the motivating factors and the benefits that Mngong people receive from the project, there is also the maintenance of hindering factors which impede their livelihood development. To conclude, this dissertation sums up the two main factors regarding the promotion of social resources of Mngong people in the resettlement areas and affected areas by Buon Tua Srah HP as follow:

Motivating factors:

[1]. Family relationships, clans, villages, religions of the Mngong are quite strong. These relationships allow them to receive support in many aspects such as material, finance, human resources, and private consultancy in terms of livelihood development.

[2]. Most Mngong people are involved in local social organizations and have good relations with the government. Their participation in the activities of social organizations has brought many benefits to Mngong people such as expanding their relationships in the community, catching up with timely information, helping each other in difficult times, and generating income so that they can stabilize and develop livelihoods.

[3]. Information sharing within the Mngong community is strong. Sharing and actively collecting information on the socio-economic situation are considered as factors supporting the development of the livelihood of the Mngong people.

[4]. Local mass organizations have many forms of information, technical support, access to finance and other supports to help the Mngong have suitable conditions to develop their livelihoods.

[5]. The majority of Mngong people have good awareness to study techniques through local training courses and learning through practice.

[6]. Basic social services such as information centers, cultural organizations, schools, health clinics, and markets have been established in the areas to meet the initial needs for livelihood development of Mngong people.

Hindering factors:

[1]. The activities of socio-political organizations are unclear and ineffective, failing to meet the requirements and expectation of the Mngong people.

[2]. The knowledge and skills of the Mngong people are limited; the rate of training, vocational training is low; and most of the knowledge and skills are acquired just through experience.

[3]. The effectiveness of training courses is low because the content of these courses is usually theories and takes place only in very short time with the lack of practical guidance.

[4]. Access to some social services is still a limitation; particularly, there is lack of information access to markets and health care. To be more specifically, the lack of market information access reflects difficult terrains, playing as the major obstacle to the production of goods; and the lack of health care services has affected the health and well-being of Mngong people, preventing them from maintaining sustainable livelihoods.

On the whole, it can be affirmed that if there are more self-reliant effort of the Mngong people, more deepening care from the government and socio-political organizations, and more responsibility shared from the BuonTuaSrah HP, the livelihoods of the Mngong in the resettlement areas and the affected areas by Buon Tua Srah HP will be significantly improved and they will have good conditions for sustainable development.

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