

# Impacts of Hydroelectric Development on Local Communities:

## The Mun River

## Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand



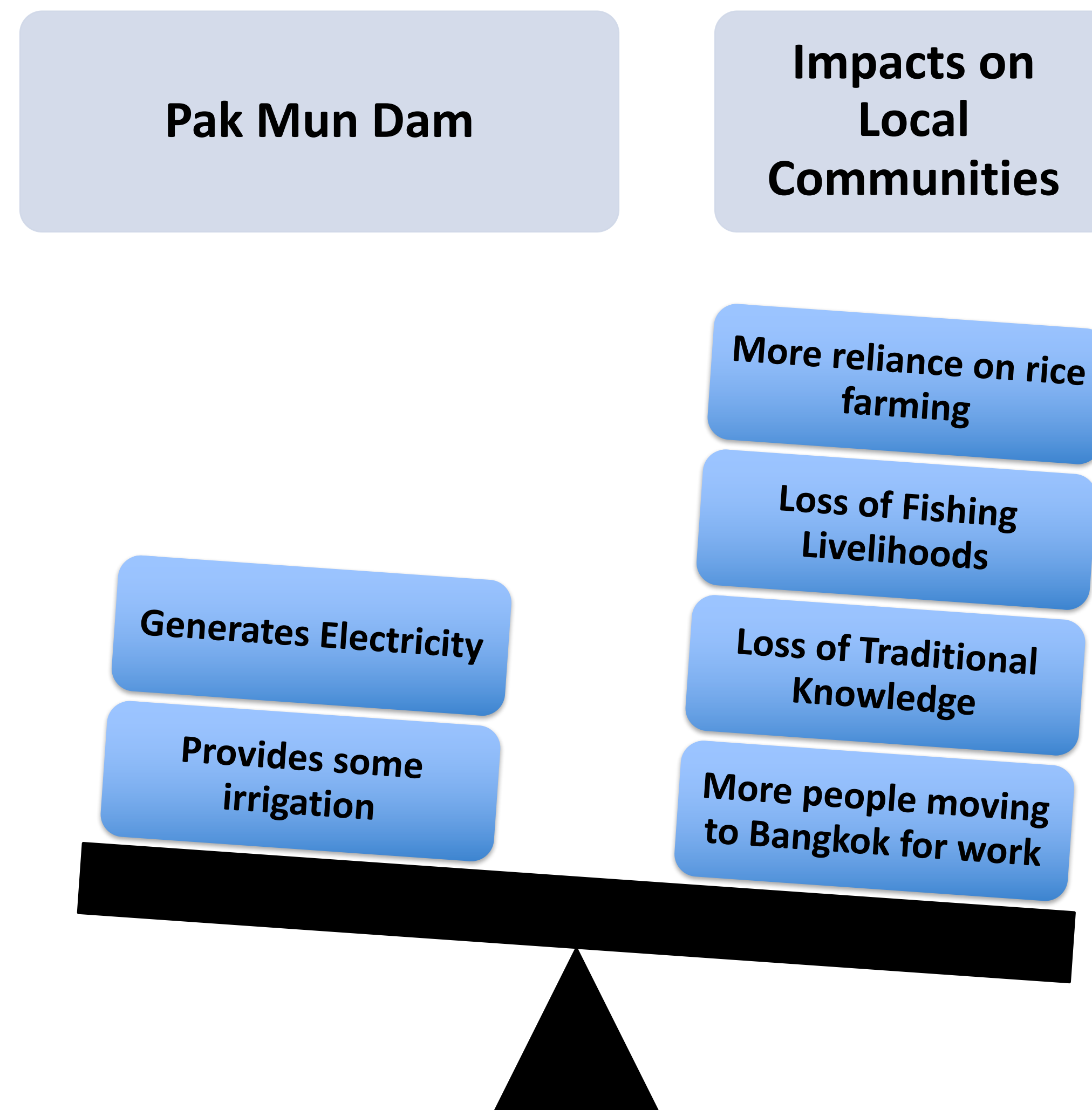
### The Project:

Hydroelectric development has had numerous impacts on local fishing communities. For those living along the Mun River the Pak Mun Dam has severely impacted their livelihoods. However as 25 years have passed, locals have adapted their knowledge to survive the changing ecology. The aim of this project is to collect and synthesize traditional knowledge from local fishing communities and document the impacts of the Pak Mun Dam. As well as this this project aims to examine the livelihood adaptations made since the commission of the Pak Mun Dam. Most of the knowledge shared may be socio-cultural and economic. It might also be ecological and include information about water flow, fish ecology etc. These socio-economic and ecological perspectives are interrelated as ecological impacts have a major effect on households and communities reliant on the river for harvesting food, water, jobs, and development.

### Isan Communities:

- ◆ Don Sumran
- ◆ Huay Mak Thai
- ◆ Thalat
- ◆ Toom Yai
- ◆ Kho Tai
- ◆ Wangsbang Tai
- ◆ Na Choom Chon
- ◆ Hua Hew Village 4
- ◆ Hua Hew Village 11

### Pak Mun Dam vs. Local People



### Methods:

#### Qualitative Research Methodology

Documenting villager's opinions and perceptions of issues related to the Pak Mun Dam, fishing, and traditional livelihoods.

#### Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews with local villagers – utilizing some premeditated questions as well as some free-flowing questions to ensure a flexible and comfortable conversation.

#### Observations and Informal Conversations/Participatory Research

### Other Local Adaptations:

- ◆ Changes in Fishing Gear and Fishing Methods
- ◆ Shift from wild capture fish to market/aquaculture fish
- ◆ Changes from common pool resources to private resources (fish ponds/aquaculture)
- ◆ Youth perception of lack of job opportunities = more likely to move to bigger cities. They are also less engaged in fishing aspects of community life.
- ◆ Fishing is no longer a main occupation and most people have multiple sources of income.
- ◆ Cattle raising has become a good source of income for those with land.
- ◆ Trading of wild catch such as Tiger Fish for private or commercial fish tanks.



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