

# Long-term consequences of economic land concessions for local households in rural Cambodia:

An assessment of household incomes, livelihood strategies and well-being in the Tum Ring commune



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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis was twofold. First, the thematic gap in the literature on land concession impacts was aimed to be addressed by assessing long-term consequences for local households 20 years after the start of economic land concessions in the Tum Ring commune, Cambodia. Second, the methodological limitations of existing studies were aimed to be overcome by employing a mixed-methods approach. Changes in absolute and relative household incomes, main livelihood strategies and well-being were quantified based on panel data. The results of those quantifications were triangulated with information from focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and participatory observation. Multiple regression analysis was employed to assess whether ecosystem services and environmental reliance represented a potential pathway through which land concessions affected household incomes or well-being. The significant decrease in ecosystems' benefits to local households in the form of forest resources, land, and soil quality between 2012 and 2019 represented potential long-term consequences of land concessions. Forest product incomes, relative environmental wage incomes, relative farm incomes, and absolute crop and livestock incomes decreased significantly. Households increasingly engaged in labour work and cash crop cultivation which appeared to have increased dependency on food purchases and vulnerability to fluctuations in cash crop prices. Regression results showed a significant association between topsoil loss and farm and non-farm income and significant village-level effects when predicting household incomes and well-being.