

# Engendering Annual Outcome Survey

Gender-sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation  
for the Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project Cambodia (RULIP)

## A VBNK Case Study



Facilitating Learning and Capacity Development

# Engendering Annual Outcome Survey

(Gender-sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation for the Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project Cambodia)

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## 1. Introduction

The Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project (RULIP) Cambodia is an IFAD-funded livelihood security project. RULIP is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) under the supervision of the RULIP Project Support Unit (PSU) in Phnom Penh.

VBNK – facilitating learning and development, was contracted by AIT/APMAS to provide support to The RULIP project staff in planning and implementing the Annual Outcome Survey (AOS) and to ensure gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation activities were included.

This discussion paper describes how VBNK supported the RULIP team to use a results-based management approach to conduct the Engendering Annual Outcome Survey.

## 2. The Annual Outcome Survey – what and why

IFAD has developed a standard methodology – Results and Impact Management System or RIMS for measuring impact. As the term suggests, RIMS is primarily intended to document end-of-project impact. As such, it does not provide regular or timely information about results that can be used to take corrective action during project implementation.

**The Annual Outcome Survey (AOS) is a tool to monitor how well a project is doing through a systematic process of learning through doing.** More specifically, the AOS sets out to identify positive and negative changes taking place at the household level; to highlight evidence of where the project is achieving results and where the project is lagging; and to draw on the findings to inform corrective actions as required.

## 3. The need to reflect gender dimensions in the AOS

It was noted at the outset that the project needed to increase awareness and strengthen understanding of gender in the project and to draw on tools and processes that could collect data relevant to the situation of women participating in or indirectly benefiting from project activities. This should include, for example, understanding how decisions were made at the household level related to distribution of resources, how profits from the sale of crops and livestock were used, the participation of men and women in decision making and so on.

*For RULIP, the AOS is conducted annually, beginning in year two of implementation. It uses a simple household (HH) survey that project staff and extension worker staff conduct with a small but representative sample of beneficiaries. It is conducted in the first quarter of the year. This period (January–March) coincides with the off-season when farmers have more time to participate in the surveys. The HH survey focuses on quantitative data (e.g. the # of women participating in training, the % of HH that have adopted new farming techniques, the % of female-headed HHs that have increased profit, or the # of HHs that took out a loan to improve their farming practice.) The findings from the HH survey are complemented by qualitative data that provide more in-depth explanations about “meanings” why and how some outcomes were or were not achieved.*

It was also noted that the data that had been previously collected by the project staff was focused on activities and outputs and did not probe gender-specific information. Two reasons were identified for this:

- The village extension workers who were conducting the HH Surveys did not have a lot of prior experience and so they did not fully understand the survey questions. They also lacked the skills needed to ask open questions or to probe for deeper information.
- The data had been mainly collected from men as ‘heads of households’ and were thus not representative of the situation of women.

In response, it was decided we needed:

- First, to review and revise the project log-frame and add in gender-sensitive indicators.
- Second, to ensure gender was adequately reflected in the M&E plan.
- Third, to update the HH Survey tool to align it with the revised log-frame
- Fourth, to provide skills building to project staff in quantitative and qualitative data-collection methodologies (especially to cover issues that matter differently to women and men).

## 4. The processes

### 4.1. Review of log-frame

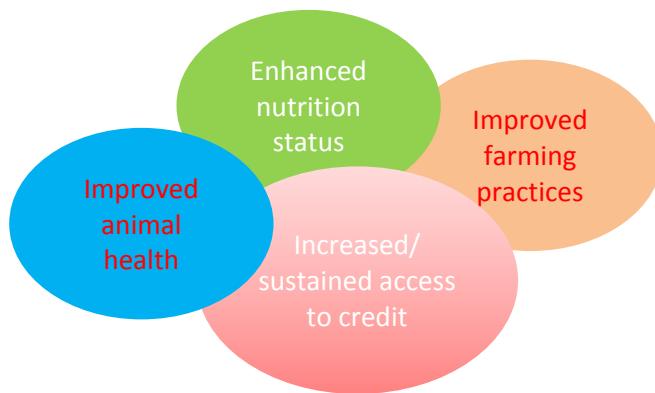
We began by working with PSU staff to review and update the log-frame with a focus on adding in more gender-specific indicators. MAFF-PSU staff was also interested in adding new indicators and also to sex-desegregate data. As we worked, on the log-frame we also began to adjust the HH Survey form. We soon realised, however, that the log-frame was becoming more complex and the HH survey form was growing in length – we were making the tool more complicated. Adding in new indicators and growing the HH Survey form was not going to help.

Fortunately, IFAD project staff and a visiting consultant were able to step in and help out. The first thing they did was to strip back the details in the log-frame, going for fewer items, without losing the programme logic. They did this by developing four separate results chains that showed the logic for each of the four components (See: <http://asia.ifad.org/web/rulip/resources>)

VBNK had been using results chains in its work to evaluate its learning services. The results chain we use includes “use of outputs” and we applied the same concept here. The focus on “use of outputs” helped staff see the relationship between what they do in their job and its influence on the desired results. Focusing on how individuals, teams and organisations apply their learning has been of particular value in closing the gap of what is often a big jump between output and outcome, a grey area generally based on assumptions and attribution.

*The results chain is an approach to programme planning that captures the programme logic i.e., the rationale behind a programme, probing and outlining the cause-and-effect relationships between programme activities, outputs, and desired intermediate and longer term outcomes. As such it expresses how change is expected to occur, and the ways in which activities can contribute to a number of outcomes.*

In summary, the RULIP project is built around four interconnected results chains. These relate to four outcome areas as following:



One of the RULIP results chains – improved farming practice – is shown here, to illustrate the logic and causal relations:

| Increased food security  |  | Increased HH income                             |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Increased consumption of crops/ livestock  | Increased productivity of crops/ livestock | Increased profit from sales of crops/ livestock | Increased access to credit                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| Increased vaccination  | Improved livestock / farming practices     |   | Co-decision (Women & men) about future crops/ livestock |  |  |  |  |  |
| Willingness to apply new methods   |  | Gained skills/ confidence                       |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Good training delivered as FFS* tailored to individual group interests, opportunities and resources includes self-learning, farming as a business and appropriate field demonstrations |  |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Technologies screened to be simple and appropriate to each group's resources and conditions  |  |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |

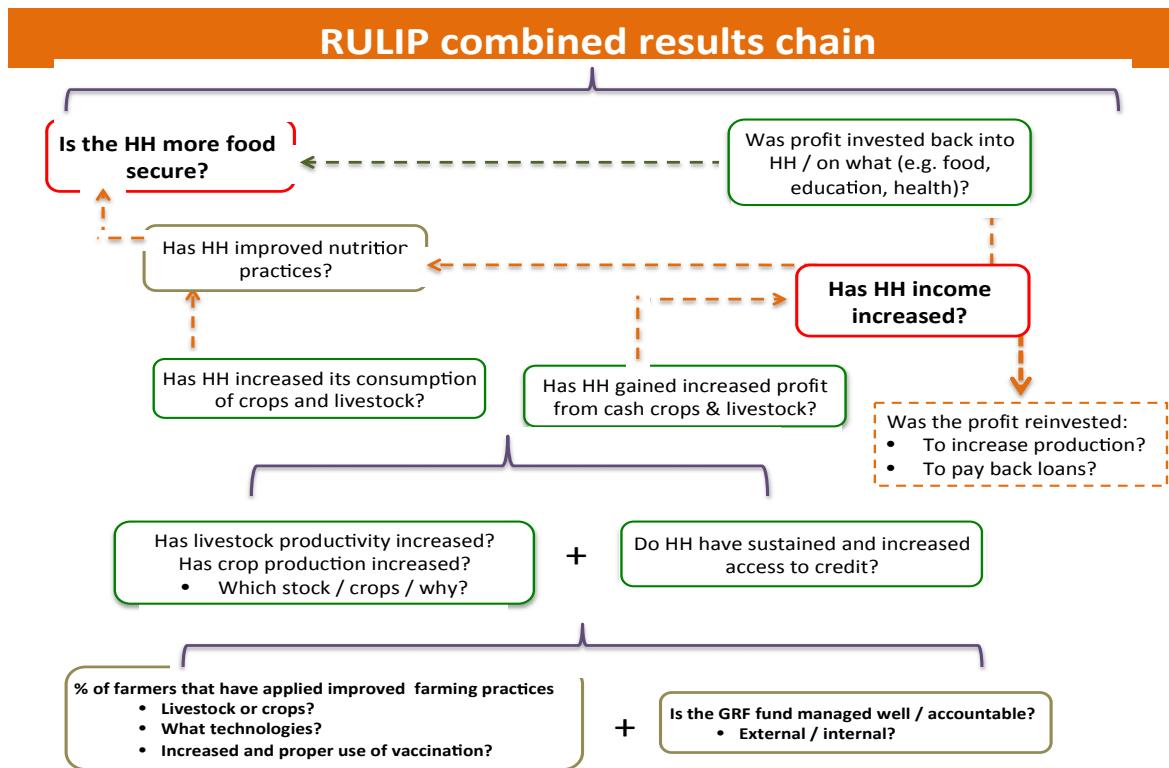
\*Farmers Field School

#### 4.2. Finalising the HH survey form and qualitative interview guidelines

Once agreement had been reached on the final results chain logic and the log-frame adjusted, we were also able to finalise the HH survey form.

The results chain allowed us to probe and to ask, “so what” question. So, what did you do after the training? Did you use the techniques introduced in the training? How? So what – has there been an increase in production? How much, and so on?

We also decided to combine the four results chains into one visual to show how the different components linked into each other and contributed to HH income and food security:



In so doing, we expressed the expected outcomes and outputs as questions e.g.

Food security:

*Is the household more food secure*

Improvements in nutrition:

*Have the women and men adopted improved nutrition practices/ how?*

Increased income:

*Has household income increased compared to last year?*

*How has the increased income been used (by women/ men)?*

These questions laid the foundation for preparing for the annual outcome survey.

#### 4.3. The M&E Plan

We then developed an M&E plan that provided guidelines for how to organise the M&E activities. In order to ensure consistency and to reinforce learning, we again used the results chain to illustrate what needed to occur.

The starting point for developing the M&E plan is to identify performance questions that are linked to the project objectives in the revised log frame and the four results chains. It was a gender sensitive M&E plan which took into consideration the differences between women and men, it was discussed how the data will be collected from women and men, who will collect data, how will we collect gender sensitive data, how the data will be analysed etc.? We prepared a gender sensitive questionnaire. It was decided that women enumerator would interview women and men enumerator would interview men. The enumerators' training included sessions on how to conduct surveys in a gender sensitive way and how to ask certain culturally sensitive questions to women, etc.

*The M&E plan is a systematic plan for collecting and analysing all data needed for proper M&E. If the project teams in each of the three target provinces use the M&E plan to systematically and consistently collect data throughout the year, then RULIP can draw conclusions about if the project is making a difference in improving household security and food security.*

*The M&E plan defines the data to be collected (and the methods and tools to be used); persons responsible for primary data collection; frequency of data collection; and persons responsible for data analysis. The plan also includes data gathering tools, record templates and survey questionnaires.*

In addition, there is a second set of performance objectives that ask:

- Has the project reached the target group? And have they benefited?
- Are the benefits being distributed in an equitable manner
  - Have women and men both participated and benefited e.g. equitable distribution of food and/or income. Are women participating in decision-making etc.?
  - Have ethnic minorities participated and benefited. Are there socio-cultural barriers that are limiting the benefits?
- Would benefits have occurred even without the project? (Attribution)
- Will the benefits be sustained beyond the life of the project?
- Are there environmental consequences? (+/-)
- Has the project had a wider policy or institutional impact?
- Are log frame assumptions valid (or risks avoided)?

Example of performance questions used to analyse the HH survey data in 2012

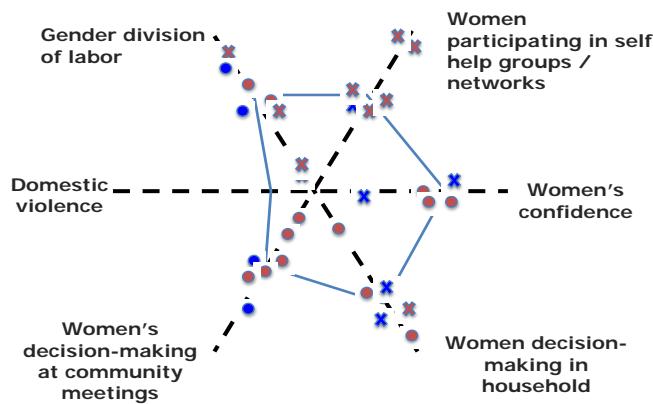
|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Project-level Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the HH more food secure?</li> <li>▪ Have there been profitable investment in HH livelihood (desegregate by gender) and/or reinvestment in production? Has the loan been repaid?</li> <li>▪ Has HH income increased?</li> </ul>   | <p>What data do you have to support your conclusions?</p> <p>Are there any variations between direct + non-direct beneficiaries?</p> <p>Are men + women's getting equitable benefits?</p> <p>Are there any differences in responses from men and women and why?</p> <p>Are there any variations between Khmer and ethnic minority?</p> |
| Outcomes             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have women/ men adopted improved nutrition practices (change in volume of food and/or type of food, food supplements for children etc.)? Why?</li> <li>▪ Has HH increased consumption of the crops and livestock they produced?</li> <li>▪ Has HH increased profitability from cash crops &amp; livestock?</li> <li>▪ Has livestock or crop productivity increased? Which stock / crops / why?</li> <li>▪ Do HH have sustained and increased access to credit?</li> </ul> |  |
| Use of outputs       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have women/ men farmers have applied improved farming practices (what livestock or crops; what technologies; increased/ proper use of vaccination?)</li> <li>▪ Are women and men farmers making use of extension services?</li> <li>▪ Is the GRF fund managed well/ strong external accountability/ strong internal management? Does it benefit equally to women &amp; men?</li> </ul>  |  |
| Outputs              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What linkages can you make between services provided/ training etc. and the results?</li> </ul>   |  |
| Activities           |  |  |
| Inputs               |  |  |

#### 4.4. Qualitative research tools (the spider web methodology)

The research questions (above) were then used to develop qualitative research tools to augment the HH survey. We used the “spider web” approach to collect qualitative data. This is simple and participatory approach that can be used with small groups of people with similar interests (e.g. a farmer’s vegetable cooperative. Female headed HH in a minority community).

The spider web allows us to evaluate perceptions about what is working/ not working and why. It also allows us to distinguish differing perceptions (where people agree/ where they do not agree and why).

Ask each person to rank the different domains



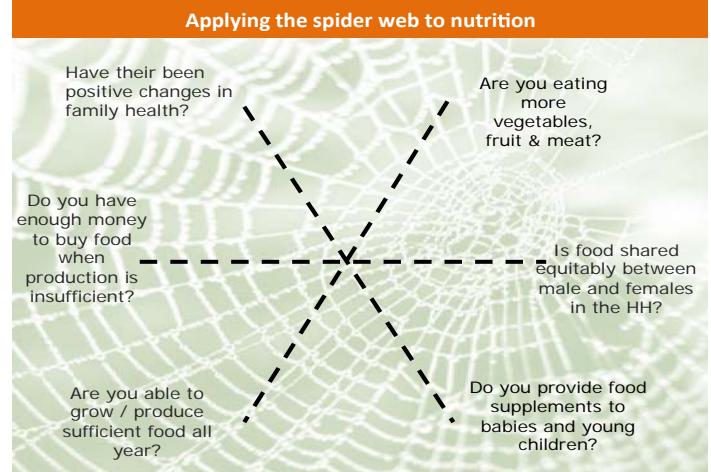
## 5. Conclusion

Use results chain throughout the whole process – from design of HH survey form to developing change domains for use with qualitative tools like the ‘spider web’ – helped the project staff understand, grasp the complexity and to see the interconnectedness of the components of the RULIP in Cambodia. This in turn increased their understanding of the questions in the quantitative HH survey and qualitative research formats and when to probe.

The results chain also guided how we were able to analyse the data generated and to organise the findings into the annual outcome survey report.

The first example (left) shows how the web can be used to map how well the project is doing in different areas (domains of change). In this case the question is: *how well do you believe the project is doing in terms of these domains related to gender?* The second example (below) shows how performance questions are used to learn more about gender and nutrition.

### Applying the spider web to nutrition



## 6. Lesson learned

- A key learning for the project staff has been that rich gender data can be gained through the qualitative interviews.
- The AOS 2012 has shown the project is able to demonstrate outcome-level results, but that the linkages across the different levels of the results chains are not always explicit (particularly at the higher levels). This is due in part to the limitations of the HH survey methodology and the lack of precision in the HH survey questionnaire. Cultural factors are also significant. For example, respondents may give answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear (“saving face”) or not want to report on something that frames them in a negative way. More qualitative data are needed to offset these shortcomings.

## References

1. The RULIP project in Cambodia: <http://asia.ifad.org/web/rulip/about>
2. The IFAD's RIMS impact survey: <http://www.ifad.org/operations/rims/index.htm> for further information about the RIMS impact surveys.
3. Rising to the Challenge: Monitoring and evaluating capacity development. Intrac 7<sup>th</sup> Evaluation Conference, *Monitoring and evaluation: new developments and challenges*, the Netherlands (14th---16th June 2011): [Intrac ME conference papers 2011 VBNK](#)
4. Guidelines for FULIP for conducting Annual Outcome Survey, by Dr. Graeme Storer and Mr. Mour Menghong from VBNK (September 2012)
5. For descriptions of how spider webs (sometimes called spider-grams) are used, please see:
  - Save the Children Norway (2008): *A Kit Of Tools for Participatory Research and Evaluation with Children, Young People and Adults, A compilation of tools used during a Thematic Evaluation and Documentation on Children's Participation in Armed Conflict, Post Conflict and Peace Building 2006-2008*: <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/kit-of-tools.pdf>
  - Kristen Evans, Wil de Jong et al., (2006) *Guide to Participatory Tools for Forest Communities*, Jakarta: Center for International Forestry Research (ISBN 979-24-4656-7), available at: [http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf\\_files/Books/BKristen0601.pdf](http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/Books/BKristen0601.pdf)
  - A simplified Spider Web tool at APMAS website at <http://apmasnetwork.org/tools/spiderweb>

## Author Information

Mr. Vanly Virya, Executive Director of VBNK (facilitating learning and capacity development)

Virya has eighteen years experience in the social development sector in Cambodia. He has degree in Master of Business Administration and he is an accredited member (for professionalism and integrity in brokering multi-sector partnership for sustainable development) of the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme, UK. He has also been involved in a UNDP/CDC Government-donor partnership initiative. He is known for his ability to think strategically and for analysing local trends; for the design and facilitation of participatory learning forums; for supporting monitoring and evaluation studies; and for his commitment to developing high performance teams.

Virya provided oversight and management support on the design and delivery of the recently completed Implementation of Consultancy and Coaching Programme on Gender Process Monitoring & Annual Outcome Survey for RULIP Project.

Virya experienced partnering with international consultants conducting evaluations of Paris Declaration (PD) and the victim support unit of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. He has been a key person leading the VBNK annually impact assessment study.

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