

## **Report of the Strategic Review & Planning “CNFSC - FOOD RIGHTS THEMATIC WORK ”**

*(Nov 29 – Dec 5, 2010)*

### **A. INTRODUCTION:**

The strategic review and planning activity was conducted to understand the strength and weaknesses of the Action Aid Cambodia Food Rights Thematic Programme work (FR) in terms of the activities, achievements and forward planning. This was in reference to some of the significant activities such as the community projects and policy engagements of Development Area (DA) partners, Non Development Area (Non DA) partners and the IFSN global project of Action Aid International implemented in Cambodia since end of 2006.



This review helped to assess, reflect and analyse the Action Aid efforts, existing strategy and actions in order to further strengthen the strategy, operational guidelines and future implementation of the Food Rights work in Cambodia.

This exercise helped to check the current direction and trend of the draft FR guideline developed over the last 3 years and will also provide valuable insights and input into the midterm review of the Cambodia Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and scope of work. It is hoped that the gaps and weaknesses determined will be plugged and improvements will be adopted to ensure a clear and common focus/direction to achieve the common goals of the “Right to Food” strategic objectives which are to:

1. To address the immediate and pressing poverty needs of the most poor and marginalised people, individuals, women and children

2. To strengthen the organisation and alliance of the poor and marginalised people with equal representation of all excluded groups, primarily women, to work collectively to claim and use rights
3. To ensure enforcement of rights particularly of women and girls to enable them to enjoy equal position and rights in the society
4. To strengthen pro-poor policies in favour of the poor and excluded communities, particularly the women to claim and enjoy rights
5. To diversify resources through civil society engagements and ethical international partnership



## B. OBJECTIVES:

1. To conduct a strategic review of the FR work in terms of the activities, the strategy, implementation, achievements, strengths and weaknesses among the programme partners and staff team of Action Aid.
2. To carry out a deep and critical reflection on the current status of the FR work through carefully selected field visits and in class focused discussions to determine lessons to improve future strategy, planning and implementation of the project.
3. To brainstorm and explore appropriate approaches and initiatives to further enhance the efforts of the FR work partners to strengthen their economic activities on the ground levels.
4. To review and recommend revisions (if necessary) to the strategy and efforts to integrate the FR work within the Action Aid programme in Cambodia and its global strategy both at the ground and national level (short, medium and long term projections).



## C. METHODOLOGY & APPROACH

### i. Different steps of the review exercise

The strategic review exercise was conducted through several steps as follows:

No.	Dates	Activity	Notes
1.	Nov 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrival of consultants</li> <li>Preparations &amp; finalisation of workshop plans &amp; modules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultants work with AA project team</li> </ul>
2.	Nov 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and workshop session with AA project staff team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In AA office in Phnom Penh</li> </ul>
3.	Dec 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit to SAMAKY in Kg. Cham &amp; HRDCSO &amp; Preah Vihear *</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out by Consultant Mr Suarnatha</li> </ul>
4.	Dec 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> part workshop to review CO frame &amp; FR perspective &amp; work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out by consultant Mr Jo Hann Tan in Kg Cham simultaneous with item * (No3)</li> </ul>
5.	Dec 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2<sup>nd</sup> part workshop to chart future direction &amp; strategy of FR work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out by both consultants</li> </ul>
6.	Dec 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation meeting of workshop &amp; reporting by consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be conducted in Phnom Penh with AA project team</li> </ul>
7.	Dec 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departure of consultants</li> </ul>	

### ii. Key Questions for the review

This review was based on a few key questions as listed below:

- In our Food Rights programme work, what are my community group's achievements and weaknesses? Analyse why?** *(Are the current strategic priorities, operational guideline and implementation of our Food Rights work in line with Action Aid Cambodia mission and vision? Are we in the right direction?)*
- Any ideas, suggestions on how your work in the food rights network can be linked to other existing initiatives such as community organising, women's network, health, community cooperatives and others?** *(How to ensure the link to our other existing initiatives such as CO, Community Cooperative, FR policy advocacy and a wider national FR strategy? What are the best ways /approaches to ensure the*



smooth implementation of that strategy?)

3. **Based on the analysis, what we should do more to improve the quality of our Food Rights work? What should be our main focus for the next step?** (*In our Food Rights programme and policy work both at local and national level, what has worked well and what has not and why? What we should do more to improve the quality of our Food Rights work? What should be our main focus for the next step? Why and how?*)

#### D. MODULE DESIGN

Day	Activity	Notes
<b>Day 1 (Nov 30)</b>	<b>REVIEW SESSION WITH AA PROJECT TEAM</b> ( <i>2 consultants conduct with 10 participants of AA project team</i> )	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed questionnaire responses by project team members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questionnaires responses was reviewed by consultants before arriving in Cambodia to pick out the key points before the review session.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysed &amp; identified key points to determine the strength &amp; weaknesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultants reviewed with the project team to analyse the important points revealed in the questionnaires which could be categorised into 3 main topics ie. Organisational Management-coordination and communications; programme activities-results, impact and gaps; linkages and networking.</li> </ul>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compiled recommendations from the project team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings collected from the project team was compiled and identify and agree on a common understanding of the status and situation of the FR work and make recommendations for the forward phase of the project. (<i>These will be used as a comparison and reference for the workshop with the partners</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Day 2-3 (Dec 1-2)</b>	<b>FIELD VISITS</b> ( <i>Conducted by consultant Mr Suarnatha</i> )	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visited 3 partner communities in Kg. Cham (SAMAKY) &amp; Preah Vihear (HRDCSO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The visit enabled the consultant to see first hand the local conditions, the achievements and gaps of the FR programme activities on the ground and interact with the local team to determine their capacity, perspective and local conditions affecting the implementation of the project. The insights were fed back to the participants in the workshop for reflections and. (refer to <i>Appendix 1 “Field Visit Findings &amp; Recommendations”</i>)</li> </ul>

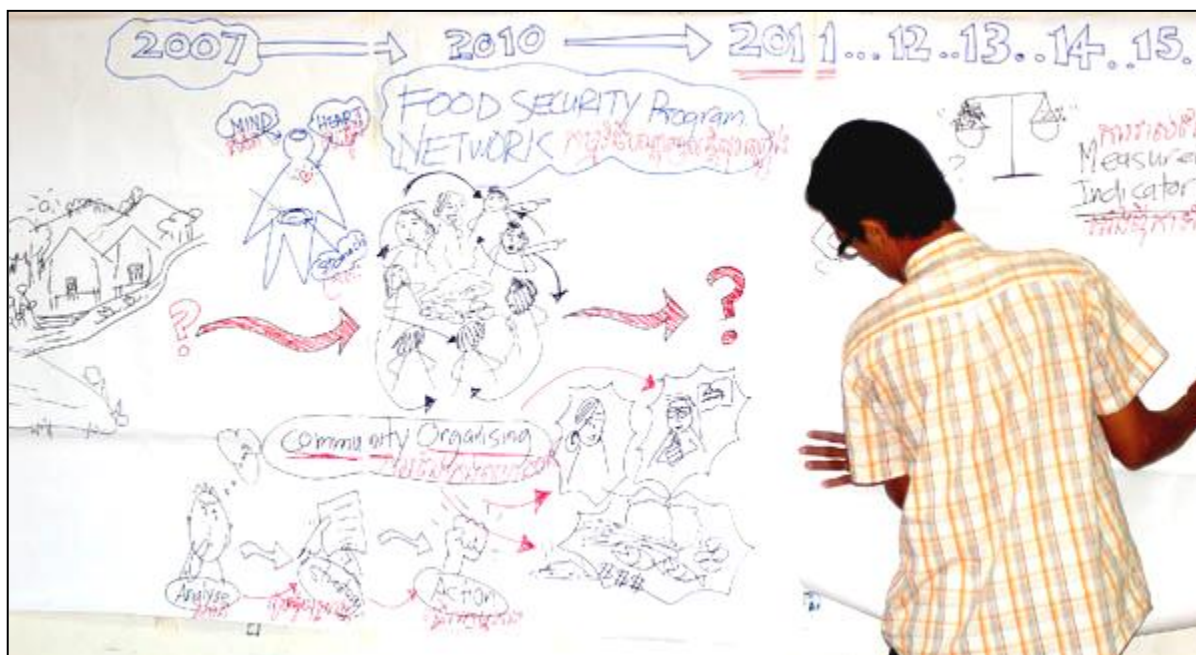
<b>Day 2 (Dec 1)</b>	<b>WORKSHOP PART I</b> <i>(Conducted with 26 participants from partners and AA project team)</i>	
• Morning	• Review Community Organising strategy & works	• The workshop established the basic frame and premises of the FR work which was strongly founded on the community organising approach and hold certain principles to ensure and uphold food security and rights of the marginalised communities.
•	• FRN vision & mission	• Review with the participants about the original purpose and aims of the FR work since 4 years ago. Establish the relationship between the FR work and CO according to the participants' experiences and views.
• Afternoon	• Workshop groups/ presentations and reflections	• All 18 partners filled up the measurements and indicators questionnaire based on previous workshop documentation and further fine tuned by the FR programme team. A grand table was tabulated based on the data from collected from the participants. This formed the basic reference to check and validate the achievements and gaps of the partner organisations and their communities.
• Night	• Screen Videos	• Viewed related topics of organic farming and farmer free schools in Indonesia and other places.
<b>Day 3 (Dec 2)</b>		
Morning	• Identify Strengths and Weaknesses	• Based on the previous day's data, each item on the table was discussed at length, trends were identified, issues discussed to understand the situation better and resolutions were explored. Based on these discovery from the field, the participants could analyse and identify the achievements and the shortcomings of the FRN partners work (including the project team)
Afternoon	• Workshop groupings	• To brainstorm on identified key strengths and weaknesses. Conclusion will be a list of things that they have achieved and also list for further strengthening & improvement.

<b>Day 4 (Dec 3)</b>		
• Morning	• Continue with trend analysis of the data	
• Afternoon	• Session and workshop on Marketing	• Consultant Suarnatha shared about the field visit and findings and his observations with the participants and related it directly to marketing of their products in terms of the principles, the mechanisms and the preparations for this activity.
<b>Day 5 (Dec 4)</b>		
• Morning	• Strategy forward –	• Based on all the discussions and conclusions of the previous days, the participants discussed a proposed projection of 5 years direction & activities for the FR thematic programme.(refer to “5 year action plan”)
• Afternoon	• Finalisation and commitments	• The participants responded to the 5-year plan and worked out immediate tasks for the next few months
• 4pm	• Depart for PP	

## E. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Findings:

1. The partners seem to be still entrenched on the frame of community organising approach and perspective in the process of their struggle to regain control and management of their resources.



2. In general most of the partners have achieved concrete gains and progress in their issues with regards to reclamation of resources, improvement of income, expansion of their pool of model farmers and disseminating skills to their constituencies. (Refer to the data tabulation from the questionnaire to be finalised by the AA FR team).

3. The involvement of women in the implementation of activities and leadership roles are evident in the community organising process of the communities of the partner organisations.



4. There is very clear weakness in the area of management and marketing of their resources and products in terms of perspective, developing strategies, product planning, cost analysis, market research, implementation and carrying out marketing of their products.

5. There is a lack of systematic collection, documentation and usage of base line data among the partners and their communities which is crucial for their income generating activities and also for advocacy work. (This seems to be the trend also within the AA project team)

6. The initiative of developing model farmers and having them train and develop other farmers seems weak possibly due to unclear criteria and also careful selection of the model farmers (in some partners). The model farmers should be selected based on the strategy to develop not only their skills but to develop them into local community organisers with effective skills and also having rights based approach perspectives.

7. Local advocacy and engagement with the local authorities such as the commune council and district level governance is already happening at different degrees however more could be explored on policy and issue advocacy on a higher level (provincial, national) as a “network” rather than just individual communities or partners only.

8. There seems to be weakness in coordination and communications amongst the different community social groups developed on the community levels. This could be due to lack of integration on the ground level but also because on the AA level, the different thematic programme teams seem to be weak in coordination between them thus affecting the coordination and communications on the ground.



## Recommendations:

1. a) Immediate put in place a practical and feasible Monitoring and Evaluation instrument to help partners and community facilitators to review, assess, and monitor their respective community activities, progress and identify the gaps and weaknesses based on solid data and through a systematic approach. (An instrument has already been developed but has to be fine tuned and finalised before it can be used more extensively and for long term basis. However it can already be used by the partners now).

b) Base line data to be collected and compiled intensively and immediately through a simple and feasible instrument and mechanism. (A guide instrument has been proposed to the participants and project team for their usage in the coming months. This to be fine tuned and finalised by the AA team).

2. a) Basic skills and Knowledge to be imparted to develop model farmers, community facilitators and their constituency through a strategy of developing local training teams and a systematic training strategy all throughout the partners' constituency. (This to be developed by the project team with the AA Community organising team).



b) Training tools and creative media should be developed to be used by local trainers, model farmers, community facilitators and partner organisation staff members to spread the skills and knowledge within their constituencies especially in the 3 basic capacities namely facilitation, negotiation and advocacy skills. Other areas of skills and knowledge will include knowledge on fisheries, forestry, land, agricultural issues and knowledge including relevant government policies and practices affecting their reality and conditions.

3. Marketing skills and perspective has to be developed strategically through several phases, namely – collection of baseline data, product identification & agreement collectively, cost analysis, market research, first phase implementation, product diversification, and institutionalisation such as formation of cooperatives, companies, etc in later years.

4. Identify significant policy advocacy items or issues which can be made into a national level campaign to be advocated by the partners and their communities but based on a network approach rather than individual partner or community approach. AA to support and define their role in these campaigns such as to provide information, data, facilitate access to national level government bodies, officers, ministries, etc.

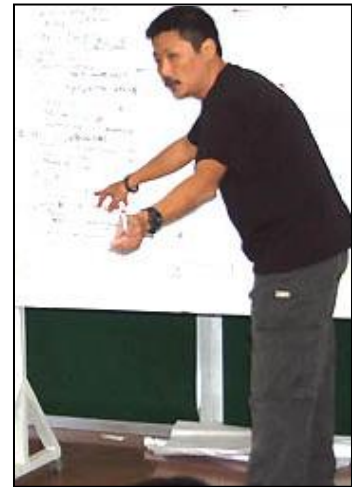
5. Organisational management issues has to be improved and clearly defined especially with regards to the roles and responsibilities, effective structures and interconnectedness of the



different Stakeholders entities such as the AA project teams (different themes namely Food rights, Women Rights, Governances, Sponsorship and possible others in the near future); Partner NGOs and the Local Communities through their community facilitators and social groups. Inter and intra coordination and communications must be well defined and clarified in order to avoid breakdown in program integration, coordination and collective

## G. CONSULTANTS

**Jo Hann Tan** was co-founder of the Southeast Asia Popular Communications Programme (SEAPCP), a network of community organising movements in the region currently based in Jakarta, Indonesia. He also established KOMAS, a Kuala Lumpur-based human rights organisation using popular communications processes to advocate grassroots human rights issues. Jo Hann is an experienced trainer and facilitator specialising in community organising, strategic planning, and popular communications media skills and production. He was hired as external trainer for Action Aid Cambodia staff, partners and community on Community Organising from 2006 – 2008. Jo Hann understands very well about Action Aid Cambodia programme work especially FR related works and initiatives.



**Mr Suarnatha I Made** is the Director and founder of the Wisnu Foundation, a Bali-based NGO facilitating several Indigenous communities focusing on Community Organising & Community Resource Management. He specialises in establishing strategies and set up community based economic enterprises/community cooperatives using community organising frame and perspectives. He used to be hired by Action Aid Cambodia as a co-facilitator with Jo Hann providing Community Organising training for Action Aid Cambodia staff, partners and community in 2006 and was an organiser for community cooperative exposure visit for Action Aid Cambodia programme team in 2009. He is knowledgeable about the cooperative initiative programme of Action Aid Cambodia.



## APPENDIX 1

### **“FIELD VISIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS”**

#### **1. Sankerong Village, Rohas Commune - Rice Barn under HRDCSO.**

a) Date: December 1, 2010

b) Meeting with:

1. Staff of HRDCSO (Bin and Sameky)
2. Chief of Rice Bank (Sri Polo)
3. Deputy chief
4. Community Facilitators (2 persons)
5. Village Facilitator

The village consists of 67 families and only 54 families have become members of the Rice Barn which was started since 2008. There is only one rice barn in the village with about 12,960 cubic meters of rice. Everyone has the right to borrow rice limited to 240 kg/family. Those who don't want to borrow the rice can have their allocation accessed by another in the village who will be charged 30% interest a year.

c) Achievements:

- i. The rice is only for consumption during the non- harvesting season, the period and amounts to be decided by the members.
- ii. The intention is more emphasize on food security.
- iii. The rice is used for seed as mixed types of rice are saved by the farmers. The farmers also take care of their own seed
- iv. The interest is 30% per year for the member and no interest charges for the poor. It helps the poor families because the regular rice lenders' interest is 100% per year.
- v. Because rice is available in the village, more farmers will remain in their villages instead of migrating out of their villages. This way more labor will be available for the farming season.
- vi. It helps to increase livelihood and prevents exploitation by rice lenders
- vii. There is better quality control in terms of moisture before the rice is saved
- viii. It is one effective medium to discuss related farming issues.

d) The real condition:

- i. Rice is only enough for the village during January to April of each year and the rest of the year it is not available so many farmers look for jobs as laborers.
- ii. Due to climate change and other disturbances in the rice fields, some members fail to pay back the rice loan. There are two term (2 years) trial for the members who failed in farming. After two times they will lose their membership.
- iii. The idea of rice bank originated from the community and the realization consists of 50% contribution from the AA and another 50% from the community.
- iv. The rice barn condition still very good

e) Suggestions:

Rice bank is just one alternative but communities need to consider other activities that support food security program in the village such as:

- i. Optimizing water usage such as using waste water for watering home gardens or they can make a model of permaculture in their back yard.
- ii. Introduce home biogas from cow dung and use the compost from the digester to home gardens especially farmers close to community forests.
- iii. To diversify the sources of food in the village such as taro, yam, conyaku, potato, cassava, corn, etc (please identify local varieties).
- iv. To make nursery demonstration plots.
- v. To introduce horticulture such as tomato, chili, vegetables, green bean, soy bean, long beans, red beans & kidney beans.
- vi. To make a success model of home gardening in order to fulfill family basic needs.
- vii. Once food production is stable cooperatives could be established to enrich the rice barn activities.
- viii. Training to make composting and vermin-composting (worm)
- ix. Thin layer of top soil can be overcome by putting composting on the back yard gardening lots.
- x. Local NGO partners need to be more creative and adaptive to the local conditions and more transparent in making proposals to the community.
- xi. Training on book keeping to prepare the people to run community cooperatives.

**2. Don Here village, Samaky partner, Kampong Cham**

a) Date: December 2, 2010

b) Activities:

1. Home gardening, started late 2009
2. Chicken raising
3. SRI (System Rice Intensification: reduce seed and water usage )
4. Cow bank
5. Vermi-compost (worms for making compost)

c) Achievements:

- i. Home gardening has fulfilled their daily needs for vegetable and farmers already managed to accumulate some surplus. This way they can save some money, time and effort in providing for their basic needs
- ii. Mainly women do home gardening while men work in the rice fields.
- iii. Chicken rearing and sale can help income generation and their eggs can be for family consumption
- iv. Cow bank helps produce manure for home bio gas and also produce compost which is very good for home gardening. Cow manure is good for making vermin-compost and the worms can be fed to the chickens and also can be used as supplement

d) Findings:

- i. Women Community Facilitators and their members have very high spirits. They plant organic vegetables such as tomatoes, eggplant, pak choy, chaisin, spinach, and others.
- ii. Plastic waste still everywhere. Lack of awareness on the carcinogenic impact of plastic and non biodegradable material.

- iii. The techniques of home gardening need to be improved by increasing the top soil thickness in the home gardens plots with minimum of 20 cm on the ground. Putting more compost into the vegetable lots will result in water retention which will be slowly released. Bamboo or wood can be used to block the soil erosion in the vegetable lots.
- iv. Lack of water during the dry seasons is still the main issue. They have wells as a back up but during dry season the well is also dry and so rainwater is the next alternative.

e) Suggestions:

- i. Stay organic and using renewable energy sources from cow dung is a wise way to ensure healthy life style for the future. Setting up an “Eco friendly house model” can be considered (House compound for organic home gardening, Renewable energy from bio gas and compost from bio gas to organic farm, Vermi-compost to organic farm too and worm for raising chicken, cows bank for live stock and using animal in the field and the dung for compost).
- ii. Some families have surplus vegetables which can be marketed through collective selling. Gradually other commodities of the community can be added such as local chickens, eggs, rice, fruits etc.
- iii. Sanitation awareness needs to be improved.
- iv. Need to explore more on dry land farming such as using mulch and SRI is another way to effectively use water and rice seeds.
- v. Put more Rain water collector and dig water wells

### **3. Ta Kot Lake by Samaky Partner, Kampong Cham**

a) Date: 3 December 2010

b) Meet:

- 1. Community Facilitator
- 2. Chief of Ta Kot Lake
- 3. Lake Patrol (Kim Chung)
- 4. Tresure
- 5. Canon (member)

c) Activities:

- 1. Community succeeded in claiming back the Ta Kot lake from a private sector
- 2. Started establishing vegetable plantation around the lake
- 3. Home gardening

d) Achievements:

- 1. Source of water for drinking and animal
- 2. Source of fish
- 3. Water for vegetables, herbal and rice
- 4. Recreation

e) Related to future program:

- i. Need to clarify Ta Kot Lake boundary
- ii. Identify Lake biodiversity (fish species, trees, herbs etc)
- iii. Need awareness from the early age to the young community around to understand that the Kot Lake is very important for their life on the future

- iv. Initiate replanting by the lake side by planting many species of bamboos and trees
- v. Farmers around the lake should stay organic and strictly impose prohibition on using chemical
- vi. Sustainable Fishing (like strictly no electric fishing, minimum mesh size, limited floating cage fishing) and use conservation practices to prohibit fishing during the spawning months of 1-2 months.
- vii. Explore ecotourism program in the near future after starting strong conservation efforts around the lake.
- viii. Empowering the community to be able to manage the lake as a place for recreation, making good regulation. Clear and Capable management body.

*Submitted by:*

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*Date: December 7, 2010*