

Integrated Wash and Food Security Project for Uprooted Communities in Kayah State, Union of Myanmar



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By Walter Welz

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ACRONYMS

A3B	Internal ACF acronym/nomenclature for the subject project
ACF	Action Contre La Faim (Action Against Hunger)
Ag	Agriculture
a.k.a	also known as
CDC	Community Development Council
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FS	Food Security
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
HDD	Household Dietary Diversity
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income Generating Activity
INGO	International non-Governmental Organization
ITN	Insecticide Treated Nets (mosquito nets)
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (as in “KAP Study or Survey”)
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	non-Governmental Organization
PHSH	Post Harvest Storage and Handling
SDC	Swiss Development Confederation
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
USD	United States Dollars
UTD	Unable to Determine
VDC	Village Development Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Word Usage Clarifications

“**Paddy**” is the English term for numerous varieties of short-grained rice that is produced across South Asia from India to the Philippines. Though the evaluator has attempted to use the word “rice” throughout the report, excerpted text from ACF documents may use the word “paddy.” ACF reports and documents produced by ACF throughout the project generally use the word “paddy.”

Corn = Maize, as in the typical American usage of the word “corn” as opposed to the traditional English (England) usage of “corn” which is “wheat” to much of the rest of the world.

Recommendations, Suggestions, or Ideas

In-line text boxes that are shaded in green are recommendations, suggestions, or ideas - though they are not explicitly labeled as such.

PART I
(introductory briefs)

ONE MINUTE (READ: “ONE PAGE”) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION CONSTRAINTS

PROJECT BACKGROUND HIGHLIGHTS “AT-A-GLANCE”

ONE MINUTE (READ: “ONE PAGE”) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The water systems, hygiene promotion and nutrition training, and household latrines have been extremely positive in improving the overall environment and health in the beneficiary villages. It is highly likely that these activities were instrumental in improving Household Dietary Diversity. The beneficiaries themselves enthusiastically report that these activities have led to better hygienic practices all report significantly decreased incidences of diarrhea.

ACF’s output in construction or rehabilitating water systems was remarkable. The systems, especially the gravity flow and the rain water collection systems are visually impressive, and appear to be well engineered. All visited villages reported that ACF has brought safer and cleaner water closer to the people. However, maintenance of the systems, especially the more complex gravity flow system is already problematic and these systems are still new. Some of the communities are not coordinated in their responsibilities towards maintenance. There also appears to be a lack of community confidence in their maintenance capabilities.

Participants in the project’s activities to transfer agricultural production knowledge reported satisfaction with the training and the majority mentioned that they have applied some of the practices promoted, most notably planting in rows (to facilitate easier weeding) and composting. These “graduates” of the project’s agricultural training further transfer information to community members by informal means as opposed to organized and formal trainings. The uptake and implementation of the transferred information appears to vary from village to village.

There has been an outstanding improvement in Household Dietary Diversity (HDD) for a portion of the beneficiary communities. Unfortunately, the project M&E system, especially in regards to quantitative surveying, does not allow one to identify the key or the most critical activities of this project that lead to the HDD improvement. The only thing the evaluator can confidently say is that ACF did a good job in improving food security, without being able to definitively point to the most important factors or activities contributing to that success.

The evaluator is not saying that the other very visible activity of the project, the rice banks credit schemes is not beneficial, but he has not read, seen, or heard anything that seems to justify the “level of enthusiasm” that ACF appears to exhibit towards the activity. Meanwhile, it appears that in a number of rice bank villages, many members who borrowed rice in 2013 were not able to repay so they promised to pay back what they borrowed in 2013 and 2014, after the 2014 harvest. It seems these banks and borrowers are already on a “downward spiral.”

Though the duration of the project is officially 42 months, the project was divided into two phases due to the geographic expanse of the project area, remoteness of villages, and accessibility challenges. Each phase consisted of nearly identical programming implemented sequentially to different beneficiary communities. In summary, two separate projects of relatively short duration that does not allow adequate time to increase agricultural production and reduce the food gap. Furthermore, the shorter intervention period does not advance the development of the beneficiary communities to a level that a 42-month intervention could have achieved.

METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION CONSTRAINTS

During the course of the project, ACF has produced a plethora of KAP studies and other assessments of the various components of the project. Furthermore, the evaluator finds the interim reports to the donor to be extensively detailed. An exhaustive review of documentation was conducted. The report's bibliography may be consulted.

Interviews were conducted with relative government offices. Brief key informant interviews were conducted with community leaders of villages visited followed by focus group discussions with the village participants in the various project activities. A listing of visits can be found in Annex 2.

Though ACF has produced numerous studies and assessments on the project, the evaluator noticed a few inconsistencies and differing analyses, thus he had to revert back to the quantitative surveying databases. Unfortunately, he found the use of these databases to be very challenging as they were poorly titled, labeled, and dated. Less than optimal organization of some of the databases did not invalidate the data contained within, but made it very time-consuming to "tease-out" the desired data.

The evaluator believes that the numerous databases were generally developed by the technical people in charge of project activities, but less experienced with proper data entry protocol - thus they employed personal techniques and styles that they could understand, but few others would be able to do so. They themselves could probably go into the database, find the information they needed for a report or their supervisors, but others could not. Add to that the fact that people change jobs but leave behind databases and documents that only they could fully interpret. Furthermore, for longer term employees, it also proves difficult to remember exactly what one did a few years ago in creating the database because one did not have the time, experience, or training to follow proper data entry and archiving procedures.

However, the most serious M&E gaffe was that the various logframe results were treated like completely separate project components without the realization that they were integrated and linked with other project results. Project implementation was integrated, but that integration was not captured in quantitative surveying and data, resulting in "less well-founded determinations" of factors contributing positively or negatively to project impact. This was especially true for Result 2 of the logframe - "Gain of 2 months of food security / year for at least 1200 households." There is more commentary on the challenges of the quantitative data within the discussion of Activity 6 of Result 2.

A logistical constraint was the need for ex-patriate clearance for every planned field trip from the authorities. This did not allow for flexibility in revising field schedules as field experience was gained, nor even allowing for a route deviation of a few kilometers to inspect project developed infrastructure, as such a "few minutes visit" was not envisioned in the application for clearance that had to be submitted several days in advance.

PROJECT BACKGROUND HIGHLIGHTS “AT-A-GLANCE”

Project Duration	May 2011 - October 2014
Donors	European Union and the Swiss Development Confederation for the first part of the project.
Location	Demoso and Hpruso Townships, Kayah State, Myanmar.
Beneficiaries	4,000 Households in 64 villages. The vast majority of beneficiaries are rural subsistence agriculturalists.
Unique Beneficiary Characteristics	Many communities and households were displaced at least once, some twice due to conflict and insecurity in the late 1990’s. The typical duration of displacement was \pm two years.
Unique Environmental Characteristics	Despite the tropical climate, the agricultural production scheme is unimodal as a prolonged dry season does not allow for a substantial second cropping season, except for a minority that have access to irrigation.
Core Project Activities	Village water systems, household latrines, community food (rice) credit schemes, improved agricultural practices, hygiene promotion.
Unique Implementation Challenges	Due to the low population density, the remoteness of target villages, and accessibility challenges, implementation was divided into two phases each targeting different portions of the project area. In effect, the 42-month project was really two sequential nearly identical projects.
Implementation Phases	Phase I: May 2011 - Oct 2012 Phase II: Nov 2012 - Oct 2014
<p style="text-align: center;">Local Partners</p> <p>Karuna (KMSS)</p> <p>Kayah Phu Baptist Association (KPBA-CSSDD)</p> <p>Kayah Baptist Association (KBA-CSSDD)</p> <p>Kay Htoe Boe (KHB-KSDA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Illustrative Map</p>

PART II

(discussion of project activities)

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 1 (Water)

INTIMATELY INTEGRATED
Latrines - WASH - Hygiene Promotion

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 4 (School Latrines)

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 6 (Rice Banks)

FFS & SRI (Farmer Field Schools & System of Rice Intensification)

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 8 (Livestock)

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 3 / ACTIVITY 11
(Energy Efficient Stoves)

“LOWER LEVEL” ACTIVITIES

“ACCOUNTABILITY” & LESSONS LEARNED

SOMEBODY SHOULD...

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 1

- Result 1. Full coverage in safe water and sanitation for at least 4000 households (approx. 80 villages) reached through community participation and empowerment
 - ✓ Activity 1. Construction/Rehabilitation of Water Supply Systems (10 Gravity Flow Systems, 80 Rain Water Collection Tanks, 8 Hand Dug Wells) for at least 4,000 households
 - Output Update: 14 Gravity Flow Systems, 105 Rain Water Collection Tanks, 7 Hand Dug Wells, 1 Borehole, 3 Elevated Tanks, for 4,048 households in 64 villages

ACF's output in construction or rehabilitating water systems was remarkable. The systems, especially the gravity flow and the rain water collection systems are visually impressive, and appear to be well engineered - though the caveat is that the systems are still relatively new. All visited villages reported that ACF has brought safer and cleaner water closer to the people. The ACF Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey for Phase I noted that 74% of beneficiaries can access water within 500 meters.

Due to the disconnects in the quantitative data collection scheme, the evaluator cannot opine with a high level of confidence, but he believes that the water systems were crucial for the success of hygiene and promotion activities of the project (which may be a statement of the obvious). However, in turn, hygiene and especially nutrition promotion were probably the key drivers leading to the dramatic improvement in Household Dietary Diversity that is discussed in detail in another section of the report.

For the sake of transparency, it must be conveyed that the rainwater collected is not enough to get most of the villages through the dry season, after which time they have to revert to traditional sources, usually dug (shallow) wells or nearby rivers or other water bodies. Furthermore, the gravity flow system whose sources are upland springs, experience decreased flow in the dry season. Most villages restrict the cleaner water from the project's systems to be used only for consumption and food preparation, while water from other sources is used for clothes washing, general cleaning, and bathing.

Gravity Flow Systems - Mineral Deposit Build Up

There appears to be a chronic problem with the gravity flow systems and that is mineral build-up on the inside of the pipes that leads to partial to total blockages of water flow. All villages visited with a gravity flow system reported this to the evaluator, and ACF mentions it also in reports to the donor. Since there is relative widespread reporting of the very same problem, then it has to be assumed that the source of the problem is the mineral content of the mountain spring water itself, and not the fault of the design, maintenance plan, or the community management of the system.

Maintenance

Despite the above assertion that the maintenance plan is not the cause of the mineral deposits, the fact is that the mineral deposit build-up requires an elevated level of community maintenance and possibly expertise in order to keep the water flowing. Unfortunately, there seems to be some "leaks" in maintenance, especially of the gravity flow system.

One gravity flow system visited that served two adjoining villages had been inoperable for two days. Though there is a water committee that consists of five representatives from each village, they admitted that perhaps they had some maintenance coordination issues, as both communities were unsure whose turn or responsibility it was to climb the mountain,

determine the problem, and then repair it. Thus, no one has done anything. In other villages, it was conveyed that they needed “refresher” maintenance training. It should be noticed that the bulk of the villages visited by the evaluator were Phase I villages, thus the project activities ended in many cases more than two years ago, thus the request and need for refresher training is not unreasonable.

ACF was not prescriptive - leaving the management and regulation of the water systems to the villages. Though only a qualitative bit of information, each village answered differently when question if they had a water maintenance fee. One had a one-time fee, another no fees at all. Some collected a small amount yearly, while another a token amount monthly. However, the inconsistency of the answers gave the evaluator the impression that many of the communities will not have available funds to do any significant maintenance on the water systems. But, the more critical question is if the community needs money to fix the water system, will they be able to collect it from the households, or does it just remain “unfixed?”

“Working Cross-Visits” (Practical Training)

Despite the need for refresher maintenance training, and renewed efforts to motivate some village water committees, the evaluator realizes that if ACF is able to acquire funds for a new project, there probably will not be enough resources to return to villages served in previous projects - it usually does not work that way considering the level of overall need. However, “working cross visits” may be able to serve both new and old. Cross visits are a common and often effective project training and learning activity.

Maintenance training is a learning exercise, but since those being trained usually have a new water system that has no serious problems, the training is more “text book” than practical. What if a water committee from a recently installed new gravity flow system is taken to a similar system of a previous project, and that visiting committee alongside the host committee work and learn side-by-side, renovate, or at least repair the major problems of the older system. The committee of the new project gains practical training and experience, while the committee of the previous project has their training refreshed, and the older system receives the repairs that it most likely needs in order to properly function.

Inoperable 4-Year Old Gravity Flow Water System

The ToR calls for the evaluator to “*randomly assess the use and working conditions of facilities implemented during previous projects (2007-2010).*” It was impossible to visit old project activities, because the evaluator was told very few were near travel routes to activity sites of the project being evaluated. Furthermore, all ex-patriate travel has to receive clearance from the proper authorities, and the application for clearance is required several days in advance. In short, there was not the flexibility to just “take-off” in an unplanned direction because there may be some previous project infrastructure down this road or that to inspect. However, the ACF team was able to make it to a gravity flow system that served three adjoining villages and the inscription on a distribution tank read “2010.”

The ACF team had difficulty in finding the site - as can be imagined there are no street signs, maps, or even paved roads. The tank was empty except for stagnant water collected at the bottom. It was attempted to locate another distribution tank and a passing villager was questioned. He pointed the team in a direction but added that the vehicle would not pass, and added that the tank was in the same state as the tank just inspected. He continued by saying

that “a few years ago” (he was unsure of how many) the pipes completely blocked and the feeder tank at the source became unusable (unspecified reason). One of the villages was able to run a line directly from the source to their village completely bypassing the project installed piping and storage.

The evaluator does not know if the observation at this one previous project site was the exception or the rule. Regardless, it reinforces the need for a greater level of maintenance for the gravity flow systems, refresher training and reinvigorated community commitment.

FINAL REPORT

INTIMATELY INTEGRATED
Latrines - WASH - Hygiene Promotion

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 3

- **Result 1. Full coverage in safe water and sanitation for at least 4000 households (approx. 80 villages) reached through community participation and empowerment**
 - ✓ **Activity 3. Construction of Safe Latrines for at least 4000 households**
 - **Output Update: 4,033 Household Latrines in 64 villages**

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 5

- **Result 1. Full coverage in safe water and sanitation for at least 4000 households (approx. 80 villages) reached through community participation and empowerment**
 - ✓ **Activity 5. WASH Training for Management Committees**
 - **Output Update: Trainings conducted in 64 villages**

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 4 / ACTIVITY 12

- **Result 4. Improved hygiene and nutrition practices for at least 4000 households**
 - ✓ **Activity 12. Participatory Hygiene, Nutrition and Health Promotion (drama show, child to child, games, role play ...) including Diarrhea, Malaria Prevention & Control and Awareness on HIV & AIDS**
 - **Output Update: 1,038 Promotion Sessions conducted across numerous topics with a total participation of 46,054 beneficiaries.**

The evaluator chooses to discuss the above three project activities under one heading as he believes that they are intimately integrated or linked in any development intervention (along with water provisioning, though mentioned in a separate section of this report).

The evaluator opines that the hygiene promotion, the associated nutrition training and the clean water provisioning were critical factors in the significant HDD improvement detailed in another section of this report. Unfortunately, as also mentioned in other sections of this report, the quantitative data component of the project's M&E does not provide the data to allow more definitive analysis on which project components and activities may have been more critical factors contributing to the HDD improvement. (Conversely, if the results had been negative or stagnate, the data would also not allow an informed determination of which projects components or activities were "underachieving" in helping to reduce food insecurity).

The hygiene and household latrine activities may be the "unexpected hit" of the evaluation. To be frank, most communities do not get overly excited about latrines and only slightly more about hygiene training, thus this evaluator only "minimally probes" the topics in FGDs. In fact, the evaluator often did not probe in the question portion of the FGDs. However, in the open discussion of the FGDs, all villages enthusiastically brought up household latrines and hygiene training as being vitally important for their communities.

The beneficiaries report that the household latrines and better hygienic practices have led to decreased incidences of diarrhea. The pour flush ("fly proof" as labeled by ACF) latrines are the cleanest the evaluator has ever seen (albeit the household latrines are still relatively new). Unfortunately, he has seen a significant number of latrines in rural areas of developing nations, and refugee and IDP camps.

Illustrative data from the Phase I KAP endline include fly proof latrines increasing from 6% household coverage to 90%; 34% of people washing their hands at key times; knowledge of water-borne illnesses increasing from 47% to 81%; and, 87% reporting knowledge of ORS Therapy for diarrhea. ACF has expressed some concern over the “less than desirable” reported usage of the latrines, with significant numbers reporting that they still relieve themselves in the nearby bush.

Village Development Committees (VDCs)

The formation, reactivation, and training of the VDCs most closely corresponds with the above “Result 1. Activity 5” and the Rice Bank activity covered in another section of this report. VDCs were deemed critical to mobilize community participation and contribution of available materials (i.e. sand, gravel, bamboo, wood) and labor in the construction of the water systems and the rice bank warehouses.

As can be expected, the evaluator encountered some VDCs that seem as moribund as the project found them, while others still meet on a regular schedule and at the very least discuss important community issues including the maintenance and operation of project infrastructure and activities (namely the water systems aforementioned and rice banks). It appears that in active VDC villages there is limited use of “issue specific” sub committees - and given the small size of many villages, sub-committees may not be needed.

A frequent and unsolicited comment in the FGDs is that the project taught them the importance of organization and working together. One can never tell if that practice will continue, however it is one of the often over-looked but critical principles for self-driven community development.

Though ACF may not want to involve itself with “development related governance type advocacy,” many developing nations have statutorily mandated the formation and functioning of VDCs (often labeled as “Community Development Councils” [CDC]). These CDCs have all the same constraints as project supported VDCs (i.e. no to little funding, no to poor training, no to little monitoring and motivation, etc.). But, it appears to this evaluator that the formalization and legalization of such bodies results in a higher level of seriousness and commitment to them at the local level. Perhaps Myanmar or even Kayah State already has regulations that mandates or encourages CDCs and what may be required is some project assistance in regards to facilitation.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 4

- Result 1. Full coverage in safe water and sanitation for at least 4000 households (approx. 80 villages) reached through community participation and empowerment
 - ✓ Activity 4. Construction of 72 Units of School Latrines including Handwashing Facilities
 - Output Update: 68 Drop Holes at 30 schools

Of the four units inspected by the evaluator, all were located to offer an adequate level of protection, but none were optimal. All were placed to the short side of the rectangular school building which had two shutters that open to provide visibility. Furthermore, at least one of the latrines was surrounded by dense vegetation - the evaluator is not sure if that vegetation gets cut when school is in session.

Placement for Protection (the Door is for Privacy)

The evaluator strongly believes that the number one factor in the placement of latrines is protection - especially for schools (and refugee camps, IDP camps, health facilities). Though as mentioned above the placement was adequate and most likely mandated by authorities or determined by property layout.

However, the evaluator would have preferred a placement that offers visibility to “more eyes” from the classrooms to help monitor “traffic,” around the latrine area, even just out of the corner of many eyes. Furthermore, the vegetation around the latrine should be kept manicured (a relative term) and short - though grass is much more preferable than mud in the rainy season and dust in the dry. A latrine door that locks from the inside is for privacy, while protection should determine the placement. (The evaluator realizes that latrines should be close to water and hand washing facilities. But when both latrines and water must be installed a new or renovated then protection should be the determining factor for placement - even when the water piping must be run a few extra meters).

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 6

- Result 2. Gain of 2 months of food security / year for at least 1200 households
 - ✓ Activity 6. Creation of and Support to 18 Community Banks for at least 1,200 households
 - Output Update: 23 rice banks formed for 1,277 households

TABLE:I

DOCUMENT REVIEW QUOTES ON RICE (PADDY) BANKS

Quote	Source
<p>“4.6.1 Rice Bank According to Focus Group Discussion seasonal food insecurity and debt with high interest rate had been reduced in this season. ...The most important for them is, it reduced food gap during lean season. Therefore they could invest their time and labour more on their farm.”</p>	<p>Internal Review. ACF, August 2102.</p>
<p>“...the visited village was 4,000,000 Kyat (including the infrastructure and the stock of rice). This would mean that this type of investment would be justified over a period of 20 years! Based on this calculation, this investment seems unjustifiable.”</p>	<p>Undated donor visit written comment by donor representative.</p>
<p>“The average input cost of a paddy bank being is on average 4,000,000 MMK, therefore, the investment will be justified in 7 years.”</p>	<p>Undated donor visit written response by ACF representative to the above donor representative comment.</p>
<p>“With this annual benefit from the paddy interest rate, each bank would take a maximum sixteen (16) years to compensate the initial cost on the investment.”</p>	<p>Community paddy banks: Providing access to food and reducing debts, an experience from ACF in Kayah State, Republic of the Union of Myanmar (Burma). ACF, March 2014.</p>
<p>“According to the 2013 impact monitoring done to 20 households benefitting for at least one year from a functioning bank (A3B project) and including beneficiaries of banks developed in the previous project, the results are as follows:</p> <p>-70% of interviewed households could cover around 3.5 months of rice needs during lean season against the baseline data collected in 2008 - 2011.</p> <p>-8% of interviewed beneficiary households from banks functioning for two to three years mentioned that they could totally solve their food gap problem during the year through paddy bank activity participation.</p> <p>-28% mentioned that they have enough food after the development of a paddy bank...</p> <p>-21% mentioned that they could easily borrow necessary paddy from paddy banks.”</p>	

Repayment of Investment or Food Security Tool?

An oft-popular assessment methodology for activities such as the subject rice banks is to look at “repayment of investment” which some equate with cost efficiency. A review of the above

table notes three project documents which touch upon repayment of investment. One says the repayment will take seven (7) years, another up to sixteen (16) years, and a third noting twenty (20) years.¹ It became readily obvious to the evaluator that he was not going to enter a potentially contentious fray by performing yet another repayment of investment calculation that could lead to a fourth and equally argumentative number.

The evaluator cautions against alarm when one sees a “lot of zeros” (as in “millions”) when a cost is denoted in local currency. The above noted cost of investment per rice bank in

TABLE: II

FOOD (HUNGER) GAP		
	Baseline Food Gap	Endline Food Gap
FS/Ag Communities, Phase I	2.71mts	2.36mts
FFS Communities, Phase II	UTD	2.32mts
Rice Bank Communities, Phase II	1.64mts	1.95mts

Source: Baseline and Endline Surveys' Databases

Myanmar Kyat is four million (4,000,000), which translates into USD \$4,000 - a much more “palatable” number to digest. The project’s Interim Narrative Report to the donor for the period of

1st May 2013 to 30th April 2014, notes that the project has developed 23 community rice (paddy) banks that target 1,277 households. If one does the math, the per household cost of the rice bank is about USD \$72 (not including ACF staff salaries and the other various costs of program delivery). Admittedly, this is a relatively high “per household cost,” but not one that is unheard of, nor unjustifiable if the investment has shown significant and critical impact.

One of the impacts which the rice bank activity seeks is to reduce is the food (hunger) gap. The data suggests that the rice bank activity has no obvious impact in addressing the food (hunger) gap. Participatory input during this evaluation and several assessments/reports that ACF has conducted during the project cite other benefits of the rice banks. These benefits include a decrease of the household debt load, community confidence and capacity strengthening, and the ability to dedicate more time and labor to one’s own farm due to the “freeing up” of time and labor that was previously required to service the debt. Though such benefits may assist in improving the food security status of a household or a community, their impacts and correlation to food security are rarely more than qualitative at best.

However, before “diminishing” the utility of

Original Baseline, October 2011

“4.7 Food Gap

*The baseline data revealed that **only 33%** of the household surveyed generally do not face difficulties to cover their food needs. Therefore, **the majority, 67%**, face problems accessing food during **an average of 4.5 months.**”*

Evaluator’s Note: When determining food gap for a beneficiary population, one cannot just simply leave out of the equation those households who experience no or minimal food gaps. In environments where the status of a minority may result in an average that is not truly representative of the bulk of the beneficiaries, then a “median” calculation may be employed to provide a more accurate description of the beneficiary population. However, in this case, applying a median calculation to the raw baseline data shows a median food gap of two (2) months, which may suggest that a minority of households experience an extraordinary high food gap resulting in an average that is slightly elevated than a more accurate depiction.

¹ These calculations are based in part on the ACF experiences with the rice banks established before the subject project of this evaluation, as well as those formed in the subject project.

the rice banks activity, additional food security analysis should be brought to bear in the form of the Household Dietary Diversity which has been validated as a reliable indicator of food security.

Household Dietary Diversity (HDD)

As one can deduce from the copious notes in the following table, the evaluator would have liked to have seen a more rigorous survey administration in regards to consistency between baseline and endline HDD surveying and timing. Baseline surveying was conducted on representative samples of the total project household population, while endline surveying was conducted only on samples of FFS and Rice Bank beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the evaluator believes there is merit in the results which show outstanding HDD progress in Phase II. However, the inconsistent sampling methodologies do not assist in the assessment of which project activities may have been the most critical in improving HDD.

TABLE: III				
HOUSEHOLD DIETARY DIVERSITY				
	Phase I Baseline	Phase I Endline	Phase II Baseline	Phase II Endline
Survey administration	August 2011	Jan 2013 ¹	July/Aug 2013 ²	Aug/Sept 2014 ³
FS/Ag Beneficiaries	3.58	4.75 ¹	4.03 ⁴	5.94 ⁵
➤ Rice bank	-	➤ 4.75 ¹	-	➤ 5.87 ⁶
➤ FFS	-	-	-	➤ 6.01 ⁶
Note: Household Dietary Diversity surveying should always be conducted at the same time(s) of the year to mitigate seasonal differences. However, the evaluator realizes that this is not always possible from a “cost-efficiency” perspective. Nevertheless, the evaluator would have preferred to see a “narrowing” of the survey administration range.				
1 Phase I endline data is not useful due to the significant difference in surveying dates from the baseline.				
2 Raw data presented to consultant was incomplete in regards to the dates of administering the HDD survey. However, from data that was available, it appears that the bulk of the surveying was conducted in July and August 2012.				
3 A minor number of surveys were administered outside this range.				
4 It is assumed that the HDD survey was administered to the FS/Ag beneficiaries of the project, but database is not explicitly clear in these regards.				
5 This score is derived from the accumulation of the below activity specific scores.				
6 Though there is significant overlap of Rice Bank and FFS project beneficiaries, it is not a 100% overlap. The evaluator is confident that ACF took sufficient data oversight care to ensure that survey respondents who participated in both the Rice Bank and FFS activities were not entered in both categories.				
Source: Baseline and Endline Surveys’ Databases				

In this evaluator’s opinion ACF has published some of the best Food Security information in the international development arena. What is surprising to the evaluator was that the “interconnectivity” of the many factors of food security (or inversely “food insecurity”) did not flow down to the M&E implementation of the project. M&E appears to have treated the various logframe results as individual components, rather than an integrated approach to tackling food insecurity.

So, what can be said about the factors that lead to an increase in HDD;

... Additional rice production would not lead to an increase in the HDD score, because HDD measures diversity not quantity. **But, perhaps**, additional rice production resulted in the ability to sell more and with that extra revenue households purchased different types of food.

... The Rice Bank activity would not lead to an increase in the HDD score for the same reason as additional rice production. **But, perhaps**, the households had less debt which allowed them to purchase different types of food.

... **Or, perhaps**, the vegetable production training of the FFS meant that people planted and consumed more vegetables which would help improve HDD.

... **Or, perhaps**, the nutrition training under the WASH component of the project, led to the fact that women prepared more nutritious meals which would also help improve HDD.

... **Or, perhaps**, the additional water brought to communities by various project water activities meant that women were able to more easily wash and prepare vegetables, fruits, and other foods, which would help improve HDD.

... **Or, perhaps**, the additional and cleaner water, combined with hygiene training and project supported household latrine construction, led to the fact that people were sick less often allowing their appetites to remain strong, as it is well known that sickness depresses an individual's appetite.

There may have been several project activities and factors that helped in improving Household Dietary Diversity. Unfortunately, the M&E system, especially in regards to quantitative surveying, does not allow one to identify the key or the most critical activities of this project that led to the HDD improvement. The only thing the evaluator can confidently say is that ACF did a good job in improving food security, without being able to definitively point to the most important factors or activities contributing to that success.

Poorly Chosen Food Security Indicator

The food security indicator for this project (Result 2) is "*Gain of 2 months of food security for 1,200 households.*" If the project's food security component was judged solely on that indicator then ... (*see above Table X and make your own determination*). The evaluator believes that this was an inappropriate indicator for the design of the food security component of the project. Or alternatively, the activity design was not appropriate for the chosen indicator.

Reducing the food or hunger gap is one of the key objectives of most food security programming. However, it is the evaluator's experience and strong opinion that unless those tropical climate subsistence agriculturalists with a unimodal cropping system can find a way to produce a second crop during the year (bimodal), it will be very challenging to achieve the objective of significantly reducing the food gap. Subsistence agriculturalists in temperate climates, who generally have unimodal systems, prepare for the winter by conserving/preserving and improved storage of the excess crop production.

Though some of the food security activities of the project directly lead to an increase in crop yield or total crop production, such were not indicators of the project nor “higher level” results. Furthermore, post-harvest, storage, and handling (PHSH) must be a major core activity of any project that seeks to reduce the food gap in unimodal systems - not just one of many training modules. The conservation/preservation of food stuffs (i.e. fruits, vegetable) can also be of significant assistance in providing nutrients and diversity in the lean season.

The evaluator fully realizes the extraordinary challenges of tropical climates in the storage of crops and preservation/conservation of food stuffs. Nevertheless, if subsistence agriculture is the only viable livelihood opportunity for the majority of the households, then the food gap cannot be significantly reduced unless they produce more food and can store it longer in one form or another, or find a way to develop a second cropping season.

Of course, the modern method is to sell the crop and make the money last until the next crop. Unfortunately, which this evaluator and ACF knows well, cash in the hands of subsistence agriculturist households often flies away inordinately quickly - health problems, school fees, funerals, weddings, urgent household/domestic needs, inappropriate spending decisions, and so forth.

Phases too Short to Impact Food Gap

Perhaps most critically, it is very challenging to decrease the food gap in short duration agricultural interventions that seek to increase crop production and improve the PHSH. A project of this duration (42 months) can result in a decrease of the food gap with the appropriate activities - but this project was not truly of 42 months. The project was divided into two sequential phases due to the vast geographic area and accessibility of the beneficiary communities. Thus, there was never “42 months of project activity” for any community. This project can be rightfully view as two nearly identical projects implemented sequentially, each targeting different communities and geographic areas within the over-arching project area within a 42-month time-frame.

It is easy to “criticize in retrospect.” However, if ACF ever again fines itself in a similar situation where they have to divide the project area into sequential implementation phases, it is hoped that they would devise a strategy for those project’ objectives that would take longer to demonstrate impact (i.e. agricultural production, reduced food gap), and that the appropriate activities for those objectives span across the two phases of the project for the communities that are targeted for that component(s).

Credit and Debt

Though perhaps counter-intuitive, the rice bank loans are not truly a method to reduce the food gap. The rice bank loans just replace traditionally available more expensive credit (of rice or cash to purchase rice) with less expensive credit in the form of rice from the community paddy banks. Various ACF reports cite numerous examples of the resulting savings of borrowing from the paddy banks rather than the locally available sources of credit.

However, the evaluator does not always share the typical NGO concern of excessive debt and endless debt cycles. Yes - too much debt is bad for households, communities, and entire nations. But, the availability of credit, even when that credit comes in the form of food or other critical necessities (i.e. water) and is relatively expensive, may be the only safety net mechanism available for impoverished communities. Furthermore, healthy levels of credit

and debt help stimulate the economy, even at the local and micro levels. Additionally, it is the evaluator's experience that most "debt holders" further enhance the economy by providing services and/or goods to the larger community, or investment, which might not be available otherwise. Any NGO project that seeks to reduce household debt loads should conduct a thorough unbiased study of both sides of the equation in order to develop informed decisions on levels of healthy and detrimental debt.

The baseline conducted for Phase II rice bank communities shows that 17% of the rice crop was used to repay debt. However the Phase I baseline for beneficiaries of the agricultural (food security) component showed 5% of the rice crop was required for repayment. There could be valid reasons for the significant difference (i.e. socio-economic status of communities, most recent crop yield), or perhaps inconsistencies in data collection techniques. Nevertheless, the evaluator opines that it underscores the need to better understand the credit/debt situation and its ramifications before designing and implementing activities which have an objective of reducing debt loads - as the oft-professed simplistic claim of "excessive debt and endless debt cycles" carries little weight without in-depth analysis.

Field Visit Findings and Client Perspectives

The Paddy Bank beneficiary communities are very satisfied with the paddy bank activity. Ease of borrowing and lower interest rates were the most regularly cited advantages of the banks. The managing committee members report that all, or nearly all of the households borrow from the paddy bank. In those communities where a very small number do not borrow from the bank, the reason why they did not was because they had no need.

From the perspectives of sustainability and viability, there should be no surprises for implementer, donor, or evaluator. As what can be reasonably expected from project initiated and community managed credit schemes, the results will cover the spectrum. A few communities reported 100% repayment in 2013 (2014 loans are due in January 2015). Whereas one community reported that virtually all of their borrowers "defaulted" in repayment of the 2013 loan - but have promised to repay both the 2013 and 2014 loans after the upcoming harvest. In the evaluator's opinion, if they actually do pay back two years of loans with one harvest, it may "save the bank," but it will only result in the borrowers returning to the bank for a loan earlier than they would have otherwise - in short, a downward spiral. Or for those concerned with "endless debt cycles" - one endless debt cycle replaced with another endless debt cycle. Albeit, one hopes permanent indebtedness to a community organization may be more "benevolent" than that to an external entity. Of course, if the borrowers do not pay back a significant portion of what they owe from 2013 and 2014, the bank may not survive to loan paddy rice again.

Relevant ACF Yangon and Loikaw staff are "very keen" on the paddy banks and have even included the activity in pending proposal(s) to donor(s). The project only created 23 paddy banks in this current project - it should not be too difficult to make an assessment visit to each and gather quantitative data (i.e. amount loaned, repayment experiences, stock, etc.) for analysis, as it seems too much of the justification for the paddy bank activity is purely qualitative backed with a few potentially "cherry-picked" case studies. However, returning to the subject of "return on investment" which began this section of the report - the evaluator does not believe the costs of the structure and the initial capital (rice), should be included in any viability or sustainability determination

FFS & SRI
(Farmer Field Schools & System of Rice Intensification)

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 7

- **Result 2. Gain of 2 months of food security / year for at least 1200 households**
 - ✓ **Activity 7. Provision of Technical Trainings on Agriculture including Farmers to Farmers Exchanges (Farmers Field Schools) and Referent Farmers for at least 1,200 households**
 - **Output Update: Technical Training, Demonstration Plots, and Weekly Follow-Up Sessions for 436 farmers in 39 communities, Internal Cross Visits for 399 FFS participants, External Cross Visits for 399 FFS participants**

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 9

- **Result 2. Gain of 2 months of food security / year for at least 1200 households**
 - ✓ **Activity 9. Development of a Pilot Farmer Field School Project on System of Rice Intensification (SRI) for 30 households**
 - **Output Update: 37 SRI Plots Developed for 37 households**

FFS participants reported satisfied with the training and the majority mentioned that they have applied some of the practices promoted in the trainings, most notably planting in rows (to facilitate easier weeding) and composting. It appears that “FFS graduates” generally transfer information to community members by informal means as opposed to organized and formal trainings. The uptake and implementation of the transferred information appears to vary from village to village.

System of Rice Intensification (SRI)

SRI participants are overwhelmingly satisfied with the training and the results. However, uptake of the demonstrated practices is limited. But, one village reported that two SRI farmers has led to five others adopting the techniques, while another credits two young women “SRI graduates” of helping 12 other village farmers to adopt the SRI practices. In those villages where uptake of SRI practices was low, the most common response was that it requires a little extra effort than the traditional manner of producing rice.

The extra effort claim seems to be validated by ACF reporting to the donor that labor required for transplantation of the rice seedlings was 19% higher with SRI method and the labor requirement for weeding SRI plots was 196% greater. However, the measured yields of representative SRI plots was 55% higher than conventional rice plots. The factor limiting greater uptake of the SRI practices may be attributed to the “opportunity cost” of dedicating the required time for SRI.

February 2014 ACF Impact Survey of FFS participants;

- 91% shared agriculture knowledge acquired with other farmers
- 40% of them shared knowledge and practices
- 72% of the interviewed FFS participants experienced improved plant growth
- main topics share include natural pesticide making (75% of FFS participants), compost making (59%), liquid fertilizer making (37%) and soil conservation techniques (21%)
- 76% of the interviewed FFS participants applied knowledge and practices learned in their own fields

Improved Rice Seeds?

Though not intimately knowledgeable with the precise wordings and definitions of ACF's philosophies and policies regarding GMOs and hybrid seeds, the evaluator is aware that ACF is restrictive to prohibitive in their application as many INGOs are. The evaluator is also aware that the Government of Myanmar is generally supportive of GMOs and hybrids as technologies to improve crop production and reduce food insecurity. However, the evaluator was a bit surprised of the fact that there seemed to be little attention paid to the application of improved rice seeds that would meet ACF's corporate standards.

Admittedly, the evaluator is not familiar with the naturally occurring or man-induced movement of rice seeds in the project area and beyond. However, "generational deterioration" (a.k.a. "generation loss," "generational decay") should always be a concern when it is believed or known that traditionally used seeds (rice or other crops) are confined in a relatively closed geographic area, year, after year, after year. To mitigate the consequences of generational deterioration of seeds in a closed environment, outside seeds - even if they are the exact same variety and are identical in almost every way - must be naturally, or assisted by man, introduced into the closed environment.

In one respect, projects can organize seed swaps or promote seed fairs that incorporate one side of the project area with the other. The challenge is to work with farmers and farmer groups to ensure the seeds they offer in a swap or for commercial transaction at a seed fair are high quality seeds - not the ones they would generally consume. Please note that generational deterioration does not just apply to hybrid or improved seeds - it is just as much an issue with traditional or indigenous seeds that "are trapped" in a relatively closed environment.

Maize and Other Cash Crops

The evaluator visited one village where no one produced rice and all produced maize for market. In other villages, maize as a cash crop was generally the second most important crop produced, and virtually all mentioned that they are increasingly producing more maize. Furthermore, there is a growing need for farm use of maize (feed for livestock and poultry). Future projects in similar environments should place a greater emphasis on maize or whatever important cash crops there are in the area. The emphasis does not only apply to improving rates of production, but also marketing, possibly group marketing, as well as the potential for value-added.

PHSH

Post Harvest Storage and Handling (PHSH) is covered in another section of this report. However, to reiterate, PHSH must be a higher level activity within any project that seeks to improve the food security status of subsistence agriculturalists.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 8

- Result 2. Gain of 2 months of food security / year for at least 1200 households
 - ✓ Activity 8. Provision of Small Livestock for Farmers Field School Attendants
 - Output Update: 199 Piglets Distributed to 199 FFS participant households

TABLE: IV

PIG MORTALITY (of project villages visited)				
Village & Township	Phase	Piglets Distributed	Pigs Died	Mortality Rate
Lae Le, Demoso	I	3	1	33%
Si Lin, Demoso*	I	2	0	0%
Do Fu, Demoso	I	5	2	40%
Dou Pe Du, Demoso	I	9	4	44%
Do Ku Li, Hpruso	I	11	7	64%
Law Pya Le, Hpruso	I	7	2	29%
Htee Dee Kuu, Hpruso	II	1	0	0%
Pa Dou Du, Demoso**	I	4	1	25%
TOTAL		42	17	40%
*This village successfully reproduced the pigs and three other households were supplied with piglets. **One of the pigs has reproduced and the female offspring were distributed to other community members. The male offspring were eaten by the dogs.				

Even those not familiar with animal husbandry would probably realize that the noted mortality rates are very dramatic - while those with an animal husbandry background would describe it as “catastrophic.” The evaluator’s “qualitative surveying” of pig mortality is validated by project endline

surveying for Phase II of the project which shows a 35% mortality rate. Beneficiary reports to both the evaluator and ACF that the cause of death for virtually all was “improper care and feeding.” It is probably a question not worth asking, and worth even less to report - yet, probably totally correct (“improper care”).

Of all the domestic farm animals (cows/bovines, goats, sheep, pigs, buffalo in this context, and horses and donkeys in other contexts), pigs are the most susceptible to disease and improper feeding, resulting in potentially high levels of mortality. The only worse “biological” for NGO distribution schemes is fowl/poultry, which unfortunately is perhaps the most widely chosen creature for NGO distribution schemes. The evaluator realizes why NGOs chose fowl/poultry, and pigs in this environment, because the cost per head or per beneficiary recipient is relatively low, and these animals/birds theoretically occupy less space. But with mortality rates as above, the “opportunity cost” of the activity is much higher than budgeted.

- Most farm animals will consume non-organic garbage (i.e. paper, plastic bags, small pieces of metal) that they encounter in the village, grazing areas, or around the homestead. They do not naturally eat these things, but rather these items have been generally containers or packaging for food. Thus the animal smells and tastes the food, and they incidentally ingest the garbage item. Remarkably, the digestive system of cows, sheep and goats, allow them to survive many accidental ingestions. However, the pig’s digestive system is most like that of a human, so this ingestion can be deadly.
- In a significant portion of this project area there are feral pigs in the surrounding forests. Even if these feral pigs do not come close to the village or homestead, birds do. Birds can be often found around animal feces. They generally do not feed on the feces but rather

the insects that swarm around fresh feces, and sometimes the parasites in the feces. Feral pigs have built up resistances to many viruses over the millennia, but the domestic pig's resistance to such is much lower. So the birds help transport these viruses from the resistant feral pig population to the much less resistant domestic pigs. Furthermore, though the beneficiaries visited say that the feral pigs do not come close to the villages, in the few villages the evaluator visited, the forest did come near to the villages. Thus, the evaluator is not overly confident in that report as who knows what happens in the wild when the human population is deep in dreams.

- Perhaps the most serious threat to pig health is human food contaminated by human viruses or bacteria - namely “table scraps.” Pigs can generally and safely eat most human food as long as that food goes directly from the cooking pot to the pig’s trough. When a household scrapes its “contaminated” table scraps into a bowl or bucket and then feed it to the pigs - that transmission of human viruses and bacteria is often deadly to the pig. The “human flu” is much more deadly to pigs than the swine flu is to humans - it is just that we humans have better PR strategies.

Livestock Distribution/Restocking Schemes Challenging

The vast majority of livestock distribution schemes are always challenging. The potential problems are numerous, but the most troublesome is when the female reproduces and “the mother” (in the form of the “self-perceived” owner) can find it difficult to part with the offspring - regardless of the agreements, formal and informal, with the community, activity group, or the project implementer.

For the evaluator, it does not seem that there is a compelling need for any type of livestock distribution or restocking scheme in projects area similar to the subject project. The population has suffered insecurity and displacement over the decades, and displacement usually means the loss of your livestock. Livestock ownership is a critical factor in a household’s food security strategy as livestock is usually the only possession that can be sold almost everywhere, usually within a few hours, if not minutes, to generate cash. Livestock is usually the only safety net mechanism that impoverished rural household have.

Regardless, though most of the beneficiary households could strengthen their tenuous food security safety net by possessing a few extra head, it is not a population that is devoid of livestock. The October 2011 baseline report states that 91% of the households have pigs, 54% have cows or oxen, and 18% have buffalo. The evaluator prefers draft livestock schemes to enable farmers to till more land for increased crop production. However, there appears to be sufficient availability of owned, borrowed, or rented tillage opportunities (oxen, buffalo, and small tractors that are quite ubiquitous in the project areas). The piglets were awarded only to FFS participants, perhaps as an incentive or reward for being a participant in the activity.

Original Baseline, October 2011

“Finally, baseline survey highlights that 91% of interview household raised pig for own consumption and generation. This is quite contrary with the assumption of ACF Kayah FSL opinion on pig distribution with the purposes of increasing household income and diversify food intake. However, it has been learnt that households took long time (2 years minimum) of breeding pigs before it is ready either for consumption or generation. In stead of providing pig animals to households, it would be suitable to support pig breeding awareness sessions and or providing animal fodders to household.”

Perhaps incentives or awards for participation in FFS trainings that focused primarily on crop production should be items that are directly related to crop production (i.e. tools, seeds, grain storage receptacles).

As can be seen from the excerpted text from the 2011 baseline, “a caution” was raised about piglet distribution at that time, which ACF had the right to ignore - which they did. Hopefully a lesson has been learned (the hard way), with a poor experience and a second skeptical opinion about piglet distribution.

FINAL REPORT

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 3 / ACTIVITY 11

- **Result 3. Increase of the forest preservation around the selected villages**
 - ✓ **Activity 11. Promotion of Fuel Efficient Cooking Stoves for at Least 4,000 Households**
 - **Output Update: 1,181 Stoves Constructed in 64 villages, 64 Forest Preservation Awareness Sessions conducted in 64 villages for 3,237 households**

ACF became cognizant to the fact that the energy-efficient stoves were “not a hit” with the beneficiaries and decided not to cover the entire beneficiary household population with stoves. The most common issues conveyed to the evaluator by beneficiaries is that they are hard to light (maybe an oxygen flow issue), not big enough for their frequent use of large cooking pans, and unlike a fire they do not emit heat to the surrounding area on cold days.

Most admit that the stoves require much less wood. ACF reports mention up to a 4:1 ratio of wood used by traditional cooking methods to the stove. But, even those that use the stoves regularly may not do so on a daily basis as it depends greatly on who is doing the cooking in the household that day (i.e. grandmother, older daughters).

Community Based Forest Management and Self-Regulation

It is suggested that forestry management training, with real forest demonstration plots, would be an activity that better serves an environmental stewardship component. Furthermore, the evaluator would like to see forest management taken a step further and have communities begin to adopt self-regulation measures.

Much of the project area is highly forested. “Ownership” is customary and tribal/communal, especially in areas that are distant from more heavily populated areas (Kayah State is one of the least densely populated states in Myanmar thus “more heavily populated” is a relative descriptor). It was explained to the evaluator that when a member of the tribe wishes to start or expand his farmland he can go into the forest that is owned by the tribe and do it. The evaluator is experienced enough to realize that when it comes to issues of land, even within families, clans, and tribes, it is never “just that easy” as described to outsiders (who would not be eligible, of course).

Nevertheless, despite the potential internal machinations of the tribe, there is enough evidence to suggest that it is not too difficult to fell the trees, slash and burn the underbrush, and begin to cultivate. Though the hillsides are generally tree covered, one can easily see patches of open area where crops are being grown. There is plenty of forest land still - but it will not be that way forever, even if groups of strongly affiliated or related members are able to maintain customary ownership traditions. The population growth alone within their groups will push more and more of their own people into the forested areas “to tame.” And though it would seem unlikely, there is always the possibility that a member of the tribe who has emigrated and has returned with significant capital might invest (directly or through a proxy) in intensive modern agriculture or timber harvesting, the likes of which the tribe has not seen or imagined.

In short, the evaluator believes that now is the time for “communal” forest land owners to begin to develop philosophies, policies, and procedures to self-regulate the use of their land to ensure proper and sustainable resource management and availability for future generations.

“LOWER LEVEL” ACTIVITIES

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 1 / ACTIVITY 2

- Result 1. Full coverage in safe water and sanitation for at least 4000 households (approx. 80 villages) reached through community participation and empowerment
 - ✓ Activity 2. Water Quality Surveillance
 - Output Update: 2 Rounds of Inspections for 64 villages

The evaluator was impressed by the fact that of the Phase I villages visited, all reported regular monitoring visits by ACF or partner staff since the end of the Phase (\pm 21 months). Villages report that they receive a monitoring visit about every two months.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 2 / ACTIVITY 10

- Result 2. Gain of 2 months of food security / year for at least 1200 households
 - ✓ Activity 10. Food Security and Livelihoods Surveillance and Context Analysis
 - Output Update: 7 Bulletins Issued

The evaluator did not research this activity. In areas of good cell coverage, there have been many programs that convey important agricultural, market, health, DRR/DRM (etc.) messaging through texts. Unfortunately, there is very limited cell coverage in the project area. Though, admittedly a bit more complex and expensive, radio messaging has been effective in many environments in transmitting important information to rural remote villages.

Furthermore, as mentioned in another section of this report, with maize increasingly becoming a critical cash crop, and producers generally having at least two marketing opportunities (i.e. Loikaw, Demoso), radio conveyed, or cell where there is coverage, market information could be helpful to a livelihoods activities of a FSL project or component.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - RESULT 4 / ACTIVITY 13

- Result 4. Improved hygiene and nutrition practices for at least 4000 households
 - ✓ Activity 13. Provision of Insecticide Treated Bednets for at least 4,000 households
 - Output Update: 7,433 Bednets Distributed in 53 villages

When conducting FGDs, the evaluator will leave adequate time for what he terms as “open discussion” when participants can bring forward anything they wish about the project, its activities, and the community in general. Often the evaluator will not touch upon certain project activities during the previous probing in order to see if the participants mention those activities during open session. With the exception of the activity immediately above, participants always noted all other “unprobed project activities” during the open session, except for the distribution of bednets.

The evaluator does not wish to offer any “uninformed opinion” on why not a sole mentioned the bednet distribution activity. However, the Phase I KAP study notes an extremely high awareness of the causes of malaria at both baseline (73%) and endline (95%). Furthermore, many of the FGDs were conducted in private residences and the evaluator could incidentally observe through open doors and passages the use of bednets. Perhaps the reported use of bednets should have been a survey question. The evaluator will assume, without any additional questioning, that the nets distributed were ITNs.

“ACCOUNTABILITY” & LESSONS LEARNED

The ToR for the evaluation calls for the evaluator to comment on the project’s “accountability” to the beneficiary and the donor. The challenge is that “accountability” can mean different things to different people and in the context of a development project accountability to the beneficiary may take a different form than accountability to the donor. In this evaluator’s opinion, “mutual responsibility” between implementer and recipient, perhaps more accurately demonstrates accountability, while “answerability” may be a better descriptor of accountability from implementer to a donor. Furthermore, when using such words for the relationship between donor and implementer, “fiscal accountability” is often a route a discussion may take.

BENEFICIARY - IMPLEMENTER “ACCOUNTABILITY”	
Positive (Beneficiaries)	Positive (Beneficiaries)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good community donation of labor and locally available materials to “infrastructure” activities (water systems, rice bank warehouses). • Exemplary community adoption of water usage practices. • Many communities have continued with functioning VDCs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though Phase I activities ended more ±21 months ago, ACF or partner staff do regular monitoring and “keep in touch” visits to Phase I villages. • Sincere application of a participatory community development modality.
Lacking or Yet to be Accomplished	Lacking or Yet to be Accomplished
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water systems maintenance not well coordinated/conducted in some communities. • Agricultural training activities (FFS, SRI) were often pushed onto younger members of the household under the “guise of literacy,” which results in the primary decision makers being absent from the discussion and many of whom will not be willing to take advice from the youth. • Some community rice banks made irresponsible loan and repayment decisions which will negatively impact viability and sustainability. • Individuals who believe they held the “water rights” to a water source were not always purely motivated by an attitude for the “greater good of the community.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger emphasis/training and monitoring of fiscally responsible management of rice banks (see below). • A better knowledge of the area challenges faced by gravity flow water systems, thus enabling more relevant and robust maintenance training (see below).

Accountability - Implementer to Donor

An implementer’s accountability to its donor(s) generally takes three forms - reporting, fiscal, and results. In terms of reporting, the evaluator has never seen such a plethora of KAPs and assessments for one project - though the evaluator is unsure how many of these KAPs and assessments “made it up” to the donor. However, even if they did not, the interim reports to

the donor were extremely detailed and comprehensive, incorporating significant information emanating from the KAPs and assessments.

The impact of the project has been immediate and substantial as mentioned throughout this report (i.e. dramatic improvement in HDD, access to clean water, increased knowledge and adoption of hygiene practices). However, there is a point where the desired development objective of sustainability interfaces with fiscal accountability. Two of the project's core activities that may be the most problematic in regards to sustainability, are also two of the most expensive activities of the project.

The project's largest budgeted line-item was the gravity flow water systems (GFS) for a total of Euro €298,977, followed at a distance by the household latrines and sanitary kits (€104,930), and "Intrants"² for community banks at €97,200.^{3,4} *(Note: There was a staff salary budgeted line item of €169,750. However, the evaluator feels that it is never appropriate for a project evaluation to comment on staff salaries.)*

Water/WASH

The evaluator does not wish to be too repetitive, but as mentioned in other sections of this report the water activity, combined with the over-arching WASH component have been very successful at bringing clean water much closer to the people, increasing knowledge of water borne-illnesses, and treatment of and a decrease in diarrhea. More importantly, there appears to be a general consensus amongst the beneficiaries that the various activities under the WASH component of the project were the most relevant and appreciated. Thus one, if taken to hyperbole, can say that the project's "accountability" to the beneficiaries has been "beyond measure."

However, there was enough expressed concern by the visited communities, and a small bit of observational evidence, about the gravity flow water systems, that leads the evaluator to opine that "accountability" is still a work in progress. As mentioned in other sections of the reports, maintenance of these systems seems to be very problematic - perhaps troublesome to the extent that the various GFSs installed will have a relatively "short shelf-life" (a.k.a. "sustainability").

The evaluator does not want his comments misinterpreted. These water systems are critically essential for the communities - regardless of the cost. The evaluator understands that in many communities less expensive forms of improved water sources (i.e. shallow wells, boreholes, nearby protected springs) were not possible or feasible. In the project area, bringing water "down from distant mountain springs" was the only way to provide safe water to the people, despite the relative high cost of such systems. Thus, it does not become a question of dire need (which there is), or costs (relatively high), but rather sustainability - how long are these

² The evaluator is unfamiliar with the word "intrants," but it is understood to be the initial capital infusion (a.k.a. "grant") by the project into the community rice bank scheme.

³ "Budgeted" does not necessarily mean that was the total "expenditure" on a line item. However, the evaluator is well aware of donor and implementer "rigor" to ensure that expenditures do not vary significantly from budgeted amounts, unless proposed by the implementer and approved by the donor. Thus the mentioned budgeted line item amounts well serve for relative comparison purposes.

⁴ The mentioned budget line items only include "direct" or "material" costs of that line item activity, they do not include all the other costs of activity implementation (i.e. staff salaries and benefits, transport costs, consumables, etc.)

GFSs designed to last, and does the reality on the ground, both environmental and human, belie their “expiry date”

In this project there were fourteen (14) GFSs installed. Furthermore, though the evaluator did not probe the amount of GFSs installed in previous projects, the evaluator is under the impression that there were only a handful or two. The evaluator recommends an in-depth study/inventory on the GFSs, at least the 14 in this project, and possibly including those installed in previous projects. This would not be an assessment of the need for and benefits of such systems, because the needs and benefits are beyond discussion. But rather, what has physically happened to these systems. Lines of research could include, amongst many other questions;

- When was the system completed?
- How many of the systems still totally or partially function as designed?
- How many of the systems do not function at all?
- For non-functioning systems, how long did they last before becoming inoperable?
- Is there a correlation between function and age of the system?
- What have been the key physical maintenance challenges? Tubing? Mineral Deposits? Distribution point storage tanks? Source protection and installations? Landslides, falling trees, or flashfloods damaging the infrastructure?
- What have been the key community (human) maintenance challenges? Expertise? Training? Repair tools? Funds? Community organization? Collective or individual responsibility? Unreasonable demands of those that control the “water rights”?

The most responsible, in the evaluator’s opinion, demonstration of accountability to both the donor and beneficiaries is not one of proposing and implementing vitally important water infrastructure, but to determine the state and challenges of similar or identical infrastructure just installed a few years ago, given the relative expense - so that the “next generation” of water systems will be more sustainable. And... as also recommended in another section of this report, repairing/maintenance of the water systems already constructed under a previous project, could be justified as a “maintenance training exercise” if the beneficiaries of the new project are trained and given practical experience by rehabilitating previous project systems.

Rice Banks

Admittedly, as expressed in another section of the report, the evaluator does not share the “affinity” of the community rice bank schemes that ACF seems to possess. Nevertheless, the evaluator respects the opinion of ACF in these regards. However, the more important question of accountability, does not lie between the implementer and the donor or to the beneficiaries, but within the communities themselves - the "accountability" or responsibility of households have to each other to ensure that a collective credit scheme is sustainable and of viable long-term benefit to all. Any "revolving credit scheme" which the rice banks are despite the fact they lend rice, not cash, needs to regularly monitor its "financial status" so as to be able to take prudent actions to ensure both the survival of the bank and to preserve its utility for the community.

Annex IV provides what the evaluator has dubbed a “Rice Bank Net Value Calculation” tool. The evaluator believes it is a relatively simple tool to use, though admittedly a project implementer will have to do some training on usage, frequency, and an analysis of data. Further, literacy is required.

Lessons Learned

? No, it is not a typographical error, the evaluator does begin with a question mark. The ToR for this evaluation, as for most project evaluations, wants the evaluator to surface some “lessons learned” or “best practices” in order to improve implementation of activities in succeeding projects. It may sound like a reasonable request, other than the fact that the evaluator has only been on the ground for a few short and hurried weeks, usually after project implementation is completed, or at its tail end, while the implementer has been conducting the project for a number of years - three and one-half years for this particular project. So what can be so obvious to the evaluator in these few weeks that an entire project implementation and management team has not discovered on their own over the course of a multi-year project? As a result, the evaluator combs through the project reports and “rehashes” a few of the lessons learned and best practices already reported. No. (and that is not a typo neither).

As far as this evaluator could determine, the implementation of the project was fine, possibly exemplary. Most of the output targets were met or exceeded. ACF and partner staff appear to be well-received and respected in the project communities. The relationship between ACF and the relevant local authorities is good. The shortcomings of this project were not caused by sub-standard or inconsistent implementation, but rather a combination of project design, technical oversight and to a degree M&E gaffes, of which some of the potential “lessons learned” are yet to be learned.

A few “hard lessons” learned may result in the fact that future projects in the area will not have a piglet distribution scheme or energy efficient stoves activity. Though it is now water over the dam, the evaluator cannot help from wondering who approved a piglet distribution scheme, when pigs are the most difficult domestic farm animal to rear. It appears that decision was a technical oversight of reviewers who have limited knowledge of animal husbandry. In regards to the energy efficient stove, did anyone actually research the rural cooking practices and traditions in the project area, before committing to an output objective of having an energy efficient stove in each beneficiary household? Thankfully, the implementation team finally realized that the uptake and usage of these stoves was not going as planned so the activity was discontinued.

Continuing, there is a logframe food security higher level result indicator of decreasing the food gap by two months - a key objective of most food security programming. But baseline data already showed a food gap of only about two months, so a reduction of two months was probably unrealistic. More unfortunately, none of the project activities directly addressed the objective of reducing the food gap. Meanwhile, another key food security indicator, Household Dietary Diversity, was not even mentioned in the logframe. Thankfully, the baseline study did include HDD, and the implementation staff did measure it at various stages of the project, though not as consistently or comprehensively as one would hope. Nevertheless, if someone “on-the-ground” followed the logframe religiously, HDD might not have been measured resulting in the fact that a major component of the project had no OVI to demonstrate impact. Logframe omissions or errors are not implementation gaps but rather project design faults.

The poor state of data management diminishes a bit the positive impact of the numerous project generated KAPs and assessments. Furthermore, though the project’s various

components were well integrated and quite logical, the M&E system was not designed or conducted in a manner to capture the impact of the integration. Some consider a project's M&E as an element of implementation, others do not. For those that do not, more lessons that are hopefully learned, though not attributable to project implementation.

Finally as already mentioned above and throughout this report, sustainability of two of the projects most expensive activities is suspect. Both activities seem to be heading for reiterations in future projects, yet without a good understanding of the "sustainability experience" of these activities. This project only constructed fourteen gravity flow water systems - they are not going anywhere, all can be easily visited and inspected. The sustainability knowledge base is exponentially increased if those that were constructed prior to the current project are also inspected. There are many lessons yet to be learned for the next generation of GFSs.

There were 23 rice banks developed in the project. Admittedly, garnering data from the rice banks to determine sustainability and viability is more difficult than for the GFSs. A water system can be seen and touched, followed from its source to the ultimate distribution points. The data collection challenge for the rice bank activity is that one has to depend on somewhat precise information given by people who may not be accustomed to being asked for and providing precise information. Nevertheless, a store of lessons learned is available to help ensure improved viability and sustainability for future community rice bank schemes.

In summary a few hard lessons learned, and plenty of lessons that could be learned - but someone has to do the in depth research, as well as upgrading an M&E system that seems to not lack for enthusiasm or commitment, but rather from expert training and guidance. However, none of what is learned or yet to be learned is attributable to implementation failures.

SOMEBODY SHOULD...

Rural Health

The state of rural health in the project area appears to be severely lacking - though perhaps that fact is not surprising. Mid-Wives and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) seem to be the primary health providers, while doctors and higher level health centers are far from the rural villages.

- Somebody should do an assessment on the training, knowledge, and expertise of the TBAs, and if it is found lacking, then somebody should help facilitate training or refreshers.
- Somebody should provide Mama Kits to rural pregnant women who most likely will deliver at home.
- Somebody should do an assessment of the prevalence of respiratory illnesses in the rural areas. It seems to the evaluator that the typical indoor kitchen cooking areas that are on the same level as the living area, and the cooking with wood, may lead to respiratory illnesses especially in children.
- Somebody should explore the possibility of “motorcycle ambulances” - basically a specially designed sidecar to attach to a motor bike that is common in most areas.
- Somebody should explore a specially designed “ambulance trailer” that attaches to the common small tractors available in most villages.

DRR/DRM

- Somebody should conduct a DRR/DRM intervention with the principle risks addressed being the risk of fires from the home kitchen set-ups and wood fuel cooking, livestock handling risks, and risks from timbering and wood cutting.

Gender Programming - Rice Mills

In general, the development community and their benefactors are excellent at incorporating women in project activities in the hopes of advancing development as well as mitigating the gender biases of primarily patriarchal societies. However, in the opinion of this evaluator, the development community is not good at reducing the work-load and the time-poverty trap that most women in the developing world face. In fact, in some cases the development community actually adds to the woman’s work-load by expecting her to attend trainings, participate in activities, and adopt new techniques.

Granted - the evaluator agrees with the expected retort, especially from an organization like ACF that has an excellent reputation for developing water systems in rural communities, that improved and easier access to clean water is probably a time and work saver more for women and children than for men. However, the evaluator believes the international community

must do even more to reduce the work burden on women, especially when the expectations on them to be the key catalysts for development are so high.

At one FGD a village member (a woman) brought up the need for a rice mill. The evaluator thinks that “community rice mills” would be an excellent activity in future projects in order to reduce a women’s workloads and free up time for them to participate in trainings, and apply better child-rearing and family care practices in her household. If IGAs are part of the development package, she will have more time to learn and participate to earn revenue for herself and the family. In fact, a community rice mill can be an IGA.

In the project area and most rural areas of Southeast Asia, rice is stored and sold in its seed form as it spoils more quickly if it is milled. Thus for rural societies that eat rice virtually every day, often multiple times a day if it is available and they can afford it, rice milling becomes a tedious, arduous, time-consuming chore that falls primarily on the woman. They have these giant pestils and mortars, which look almost comical to an outsider as they are so huge, with which they have to literally pound the rice, over and over, to remove the hulls and bran layer (they prefer white rice to brown rice which retains most of the bran). A community rice mill would help reduce a woman’s workload so that she can dedicate more of her time and energy to more important endeavors for her family and community.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(please note that not all of the recommendations below are covered in the narrative of the report)

Project Activity	Evaluator's Recommendation & Reasoning	Additional Recommendation & Reasoning
Cross-Visits for Water System Maintenance Training and Refresher	There appears to be community maintenance issues with the project installed gravity flow water systems, and a general call for “refresher training.”	If following projects have a water component and are in the same general geographic area, a “cross-visit” scheme where current beneficiaries are brought to previous project water systems in need of maintenance would be valuable. The “new beneficiaries” would receive practical training while the “old beneficiaries” would have their “training refreshed.”
Capacitation of VDCs	Future projects should emphasize the formation, training and sustainability of VDCs so they become leadership bodies that focus on all areas of a village's development - not just as an implementation modality to mobilize the community around project activities (i.e. water systems, rice banks).	ACF and the INGO community at large, should understand the current “legal status” of VDCs, then advocate for an official (or “more official”) operational, leadership, and financial standing (i.e. “the base or foundation stone of decentralization”).
Placement of School Latrines for Protection	School latrines should be placed in positions where “many eyes” that can help monitor movement around the latrines.	The promotion and training of protection should be a key element of any project activity focusing on schools and the education sector (i.e. sister or body system for latrine usage).
PHSH	Post Harvest Storage and Handling (PHSH) should be a key activity of future food security projects.	Conserving and/or preserving of vegetable and fruit food items could be an invaluable activity to improve Household Dietary Diversity.
Study of the Dynamics of Credit and Debt in the Project Area	Future projects that propose cash or food credit schemes should first conduct a study of the dynamics of credit and debt in the project area.	Future projects should provide “appropriate food security investment” guidance and training to households and/or community for the “savings” realized (even if in the form of “less debt”) due to the rice banks.
Assessment of Current “Financial Position” of Community Rice Banks	Future projects should train village bank committees to determine the current net value of their bank and to monitor net value on a monthly basis. A simplified net value calculation form is found in Annex III.	A net value assessment should be conducted on the 23 rice banks established in the project to help determine the prospects of sustainability of potential similar schemes in future projects.
Seed Distribution	Future programming should introduce “new” local varieties of rice seed into the project area to mitigate the potential of generational deterioration.	Future projects should include seed fairs or other seed swap schemes.
Livestock Distribution (piglets)	The evaluator does not recommend the distribution of piglets in future programming. The difficulties in rearing swine are detailed in another section of this report. The distribution of livestock should be an activity that increases/protects the assets of households and/or to strengthen its food security safety net. There was not enough compelling evidence to suggest that the piglet distribution scheme was designed for either, but was a “reward” for those that participated in the FFS activities.	Livestock distribution schemes that assist households or communities in land tillage (draught animals) may be of value in areas where there are few tillage opportunities or the cost of such results in the inability to cultivate enough land for subsistence.

Project Activity	Evaluator's Recommendation & Reasoning	Additional Recommendation & Reasoning
Incentives for Participation in Trainings	Incentives for participation in trainings should be appropriate for the topics of the trainings.	
DRM/DRR – Lumbering	Many project communities have significant quantities of communal forest area, which would well serve for training for proper and sustainable forestry practices.	For those communities with a forest area, a community IGA could be the responsible and sustainable harvesting and marketing of timber and timber products.
Community Based Forest Management	Lumbering safety should be a key component of any forest management training.	
Community Based Forest Regulation	In conjunction with the above-noted community based forest management, communities should be motivated and assisted to develop self-regulation for the responsible and sustainable use of their forest area.	
Communication Difficulties	Given the poor cell phone coverage in the project area, future projects should look towards local radio for the dissemination of agricultural (including marketing), nutrition, and health messaging.	In areas where farmers are ever- increasing their production of cash crops (i.e. maize), future projects should seek to facilitate and improve marketing opportunities (i.e. warehouse receipts schemes, forward contracting).
Marketing Opportunities		
Health	There are a number of unmet health needs in the project area that can be easily integrated into a food security project such as community growth monitoring, training of TBAs, and distribution of mama kits.	Future projects should experiment with “stand-alone kitchens” to mitigate the possibility of house fires and the potential of respiratory problems due to indoor cooking.
DRM/DRR - Fire	The risk of house fires is high due to the wood and bamboo construction of the homes and indoor cooking with an open fire. Fire safety and cooking accidents should be topics covered in nutrition training.	
Community Rice Mills	Future projects should “experiment” with community rice mills to determine if they alleviate the workload of women and older girls, and that the spared time encourages greater participation in project and household activities that may have a positive food security impact.	Community rice mills or the provision of rice mills and the appropriate training to an organized group in the village would be a valuable IGA.

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about the evaluator...

Walter E. Welz

Walter Welz possesses a wealth of experience in food security and food aid, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), humanitarian relief, and agriculture and agribusiness, across five continents. Career highlights include eight years with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Uganda as the food aid, food security, and humanity relief portfolio manager (Food for Peace officer), as well as a dozen years with America's largest agricultural and agribusiness advocacy organization - the Farm Bureau. Regional and country specific experiences include eastern and southern Africa (Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique), the Asia-Pacific (the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar, Malaysia, China), the Asia Sub-Continent (India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives), Central Asia (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic), the occupied Palestinian Territory, Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Russia), Latin America (the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Guatemala, Mexico), and the eastern United States (Florida, New York, Connecticut).

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ANNEXES

ANNEX: I**VISITS MADE BY EVALUATOR**

Village & Township	Phase	Date	Project Activities
Loikaw	NA	02/10/2014	Meet with project's local partners
Loikaw	NA	02/10/2014	Meet with State Agriculture Department
Loikaw	NA	02/10/2014	Meet with Water Resources Department
Loikaw	NA	02/10/2014	Meet with State Rural Development Department
Lae Le, Demoso	I	03/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Si Lin, Demoso	I	03/10/2014	Food Security, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Do Fu, Demoso	I	06/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Dou Pe Du, Demoso	I	06/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Do Ku Li, Hpruso	I	07/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Law Pya Le, Hpruso	I	07/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Htee La Thuu Kho, Hpruso	II	08/10/2014	Water, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Loi Ka Hti, Hpruso	II	08/10/2014	Water, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Htee Dee Kuu, Hpruso	II	09/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee
Hpruso Township	NA	09/10/2014	Meet with Township Administrator and Development Officer
Pa Dou Du, Demoso	I	09/10/2014	Water, Food Security, Forest, Hygiene & Nutrition, Village Development Committee

ANNEX : II - DAC MATRIX

CRITERIA	RATING					RATIONAL
	1	2	3	4	5	
Impact				✓		The water systems, hygiene promotion and nutrition training, and household latrines have been extremely positive in improving the overall environment and health in the beneficiary villages. It is highly likely that these activities were instrumental in improving HDD. The evaluator is not saying that the other very visible activity of the project, the rice banks, is not beneficial, but he has not read, seen, or heard anything that seems to justify the “level of enthusiasm” that ACF seems to exhibit towards the activity.
Sustainability		✓				The evaluator’s favorite comments about sustainability is that it is the most desired, yet most elusive of all development objectives. Though impressive visually, communities are already having difficulties in maintaining the gravity flow water systems - yet they are still relatively new. Meanwhile, it appears that in a number of rice bank villages, many members who borrowed rice in 2013 were not able to repay so they promised to pay back what they borrowed in 2013 and 2014, after the 2014 harvest. It seems these banks and borrowers are already on a “downward spiral.”
Coherence				✓		ACF and the project have exhibited an extraordinary ability to partner with the beneficiary communities to foster a participatory development environment. ACF coordinates, informs, and collaborates with the relevant government technical entities to the extent required.
Coverage				✓		The Phase I and Phase II implementation modality was required due to the low population densities across a vast and accessibility challenged project area. Nevertheless, it really resulted in two nearly identical projects implemented sequentially, as opposed to a 42-month project where communities and households would show greater development gains.
Relevance/ Appropriateness				✓		The design and implementation of the project and its core activities were extremely relevant to the community needs as well being an integrated approach to food security and improving the general well-being of rural communities. Unfortunately, the M&E system (data gathering, quality, and archiving) did not capture the integration and linkages between the various project results and activities.
Effectiveness				✓		The beneficiaries of the project villages visited all seem to be genuinely satisfied with the benefits that ACF and the project has brought. As immediately above, a more definitive statement of effectiveness is constrained by the challenges of the M&E quantitative data functions.
Efficiency			✓			It appears that project implementation was highly efficient, but if the parameter is cost efficiency, some of the activities may be questioned. The livestock (pig) distribution and energy saving stoves activities were not overly successful. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the evaluator has some concerns about the sustainability of some of the water systems, and reserves judgment on the rice banks.

ANNEX: III

RICE BANK NET VALUE CALCULATION TOOL

(see following pages)

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NAME OF RICE BANK AND COMMUNITY:

DATE OF CALCULATION:








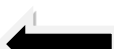




RICE BANK NET VALUE CALCULATOR			
ASSETS	AMOUNT	AMOUNT	LIABILITY
Total of current outstanding loans <u>including expected interest, less than 1-year old</u> →	A1:	L1:	← Total of current outstanding loans <u>not including expected interest, less than 1-year old</u>
Total of current outstanding loans <u>including expected interest, more than 1-year old</u> →	A2:	L2:	← Total of current outstanding loans <u>not including expected interest, more than 1-year old</u>
At current prices, the amount of rice that the cash in the treasury, or cash owed to the treasury, would buy →	A3:	L3:	← Total rice sold (monetized) by the bank
Total rice in warehouse →	A4:	L4:	← Written off debt - the total amount of loans that were not repaid, nor is repayment expected - <u>not including expected interest</u>
ACF Grant →	A5:	L5:	← Total rice given to members or others, as gifts, humanitarian purposes or community functions
TOTAL ASSETS A1+A2+A3+A4+A5 = A6 →	A6:	L6:	← TOTAL LIABILITY L1+L2+L3+L4+L5 = L6
NET VALUE (A6-L6) →			

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

- 1.) **If the NET VALUE is less than the total amount of the ACF Grant (A5), the bank is “losing money.”**
- 2.) **If the amount of loans more than 1-year old (L2) exceeds the amount of loans less than 1-year old (L1), it may signify that delayed repayment of loans has negatively impacted the amount of rice that the bank is able to lend.**
- 3.) **If total liabilities (L6) exceeds total assets (A6), the bank is “bankrupt” unless there is an external infusion of resources (i.e. grants, donations, or loans).**
- 4.) **If rice is monetized (L3), a similar net value calculation tool is used to monitor the net value and financial well-being of cash-based credit or savings and loans scheme. A sample of a VSLA calculation tool follows on the next page.**

NAME OF VSLA:

DATE OF CALCULATION:

VSLA NET VALUE CALCULATOR			
ASSETS	AMOUNT	AMOUNT	LIABILITY
Total fees and savings deposited by group members 	A1:	L1:	Total fees and savings deposited by group members 
Total of current outstanding loans <u>including interest</u> 	A2:	L2:	Total of current outstanding loans <u>not including interest</u> 
Total money earned by the group activities that was deposited 	A3:	L3:	Total money lent to the group for group activities 
Total cash on hand 	A4:	L4:	Written off debt - the total amount of loans that were not repaid - <u>not including interest</u> 
Original Capital Grant 	A5:	L5:	Total money given to members or others, as gifts, grants, profit sharing, or humanitarian purposes 
TOTAL ASSETS A1+A2+A3+A4+A5 = A6 	A6:	L6:	TOTAL LIABILITY L1+L2+L3+L4+L5 = L6 
NET VALUE (A6-L6) 