
Evaluation of the Government of Lao PDR's and NTPC's Concession Agreement Obligations Related to Gender for the Nam Theun 2 Project

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Background

The Nam Theun 2 hydroelectric power project, operated by a French, Thai and Lao consortium, is governed by a Concession Agreement (CA) between the consortium and the Government of Lao PDR (GOL). The CA sets out, among other things, social safeguards to mitigate the potential negative social impacts of the project including gender-specific actions to guarantee increased gender equity and expanded opportunities for women and girls.

The hydropower project construction required the relocation of more than 6000 people living in 17 communities on the Nakai Plateau. Resettled households were provided with a compensation package that included housing, agricultural land, water supply, electricity, roads, schools, fishing boats and rights, and cash compensation for lost resources including rice paddy and fruit trees. Resettled households have also been offered training and start-up opportunities to develop their abilities to make a living off of the available livelihood base including fishing, forestry, agriculture and off-farm employment. Vulnerable households have been offered special support and assistance.

ETHNICITY

The 1996 socio-economic and cultural study of the Nakai Plateau identified 28 ethnic groups that were grouped into five broader language groups. These groups were then more generally divided into two categories of 'old' and 'new' villages (Chamberlain *et al.* 1996). The old villages were comprised of the traditional inhabitants of the area, while the new villages housed more recent migrants, although there is considerable mingling and mixing of groups in some villages. Akhanik (2009) notes how the differences between the different ethnic groups in the watershed area are much less significant than those between the groups that have traditionally inhabited the area ('old' villages) and the lowland groups that are more recent inhabitants ('new' villages). The newer arrivals to the plateau were found to be better educated and more prepared to adapt to new livelihoods in the 1996 study. Newer villages also earned more cash income than old villages, which were focused more heavily on subsistence living.

LIVELIHOODS

Most of the communities of the Nakai Plateau cultivated rice, hunted animals and gathered non-timber forest products (NTFP). Livestock were raised as a source of wealth that could be liquidated as needed, especially to buy rice, clothing or medicine (Chamberlain *et al.* 1996). Women and men had distinct spheres of activity and divisions of labor that assigned to men tasks around fishing, large

livestock, heavy agricultural labor and formal positions of authority. Women were in charge of collecting NTFPs, small livestock, and household work including rice threshing, water collecting, cooking and childcare. Women and men were both involved in agricultural tasks including clearing fields, weeding, planting and harvesting (Esser 2005).

A Quick Look At Gender By Sector on the Nakai Plateau	
Political power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Males overwhelmingly dominate formal decision-making positions. Village leadership has traditionally been a male domain.
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional land ownership patterns vary by ethnic group with some following female and others following male or mixed lines. For many groups, formal land ownership is a new concept.
Agriculture and livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women perform at least 50% of the agriculture and livestock work on the Nakai Plateau. Women take care of pigs, chickens and ducks while men herd larger livestock.
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and men have different uses and priorities for forest resources. Men focus on logging and timber while women focus on NTFP and foods from the forest.
Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish harvested from the Nam Theun River is the main source of protein on the Nakai Plateau. Men do most of the fishing with nets; women gather small aquatic species near the edges.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most women and many men in the project area are illiterate. 63% of adults have had no formal schooling. Men/boys have had more schooling than women/girls.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average life expectancy of women in the provinces covered by the project is three years shorter than the average male life expectancy. This is in direct contrast to the pattern for the country as a whole, which shows women living an average of two years longer than men, and points to the need to focus on women's particular health risks.

Esser 2005, "Gender Briefing Paper, Nakai Plateau"

The context identified above of social and gender inequalities – including high illiteracy, low education, poor participation and representation of women in decision-making - hinders the potential benefits that women may garner from the project.¹ Entering into a context of gender differences and inequalities, the project needed to take strategic steps to foster gender equality or run the risk of exacerbating or reinforcing existing inequalities.

The political context in Lao PDR offered an increasingly enabling environment to support gender-equitable interventions over the course of the project. Women and men were afforded equal rights under the 1991 Constitution, strengthened by amendments made in 2003 to provide support for protecting women's rights and promoting their development. Lao PDR is a signatory to all key human rights

¹ This is, in fact, a common contextual pattern in Lao PDR. See, for example, Daley *et al.* (2013) study

instruments including the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Work is on-going within the country to enable government agencies to mainstream gender in their work, but further resources and institutional support are required to fully realize gender commitments (Daley *et al.* 2013).

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The NTPC Concession Agreement (CA) specifies that the GOL and the Company shall ensure that at all times during the Resettlement Implementation Period (RIP), the gender resettlement strategy (GRS) and gender plans are implemented to provide increased gender equity and opportunities for women and girls. With the Resettlement Period scheduled to end December 2015, NTPC is preparing a compliance report for the resettlement objectives and provisions. This evaluation was commissioned to feed into a larger compliance report for the resettlement objectives and provisions in line with the impending close of the resettlement period in December 2015. The review is designed to offer a comprehensive gender review and assessment of the level of compliance with the CA, Volume 2A, Sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 and the level of application of the strategic gender action plan within the Nakai Plateau Resettlement Program.

The 28 gender-focused obligations included in the CA were drawn from the Social Development Plan (2005). These items were then restructured in late 2005 into the Seven Strategic Gender Actions (7SGA), which functioned as the Gender Resettlement Strategy (GRS) for the project. The 7SGA included seven over-arching change areas targeted by the project to bring about greater gender equality and improved opportunities for women and girls in particular. The framework also outlined areas of responsibility across project, community and GOL staff. See Annex A for a full outline of the 7SGA and the CA.

The evaluation relied on secondary research, key informant interviews with NTPC and GOL staff, and community level research in three villages (one 'old', one 'new' and one that has not been resettled). The community research included key informant interviews with village officials and participatory focus group discussions with women and men in separate groups to better understand the gender-specific dimensions of the resettlement process. Ethnic groups included Makong, Ahoe and Lao Loum. Key areas of inquiry included gender and labor, gender and decision-making, and gender-specific changes by age. See Annex B for full details.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation reports against each of the seven indicators and sub-indicators laid out in the 7SGA as per below. The paper also includes recommendations and a

more in-depth assessment of emerging or under-explored gender issues (family violence, land and gender, gender and access/control over resources) as annexes.

1. Collect and analyze gender disaggregated data
2. Improve women's health
3. Increase women and girls' levels of education and literacy
4. Reduce women's workloads
5. Increase women's access to and control over productive resources
6. Operationalize gender strategies at the village level
7. Operationalize gender strategies at the institutional level

1. COLLECT AND ANALYSE GENDER DISAGGREGATED DATA

Partly achieved. There was a dearth of gender sensitive data at the start of the project. Key background documents including the Socio-Economic and Cultural Survey (1996) and the SDP (2005) were notable for limited recognition of women and men as distinct groups.² Early monitoring missions were similar, with, for example, not a single mention of gender in the Panel of Social and Environmental Experts (POE) reports between 1997 and 2010 apart from one comment that a gender advisor had been recruited in 2006. The POE focus on women up until 2010 was sporadic, and tended to concentrate on the Lao Women's Union, observance of male/female representation in groups, and (most commonly) women's fertility. Post-2010, the POE began to take note of institutional issues with gender mainstreaming as well as deficiencies in the women's credit program and problems with divorce and inheritance.

There were solid efforts from the start of the resettlement process to take note of process-oriented indicators of gender change. Process indicators monitor the way in which the project is implemented to ensure that women have full opportunities for advancement in program activities. For example, a process indicator may measure how many women and men participated in a training to ensure women had access to new skills and information. Most project staff routinely took note of the number of participants at any project-led event followed by the number of women participants.

The project lacked an initial understanding of outcome indicators to assess whether the program had the desired impact in terms of building gender equality. An outcome indicator goes beyond a sheer headcount to look more deeply into whether, for example, women were able to translate new skills and information into successful livelihood strategies, increased confidence and decision-making power. This 'gap' in understanding can be attributed in part to the way in which the gender-focused interventions in the SDP and the Concession Agreement were laid out,

² See, for example, "SDP Volume 3, Chapter 5, Description of Social Impacts" which offers only one mention of women and men as distinct groups.

essentially as long list of desired actions without an overarching framework. This issue was addressed with the development of the 'Seven Strategic Gender Actions' (7SGA) in 2005, and outcomes were reported against this framework until 2008. There is no evidence that outcomes were reported against the framework post-2008, though it continued to serve as the guiding document.

In general, some gender-specific data was collected (especially process indicators), but it was not consistently or meaningfully analysed. This pattern was shaped in large part by the project focus on household level determinants of well-being (e.g. income, consumption) that governed broader monitoring. Key survey instruments did capture some important gender information and include some analysis, but capture and/or analysis often was not complete or in-depth. Data has not always been well utilized to spot trends or address issues.³ Rote data gathering in the absence of analysis does not help address gender inequalities.

1.1 Ensure that all staff and technical experts understand the requirement for collecting and analyzing gender disaggregated data.

Partly achieved. Efforts were made up front to mainstream gender across all project areas by forming a GMT that included GOL and NTPC representatives across sectors including community development, forestry, agriculture and livestock, and infrastructure. The GMT functioned from 2005-2009 to gather and monitor sex-disaggregated data on participation across project activities, and representation across governing and oversight bodies. A gender briefing paper was also developed in 2005 and translated into Lao to brief incoming staff and technical experts on baseline and targets, though there is no evidence that this paper was widely circulated or utilized.

Units working on resettlement were periodically required to submit sex-disaggregated data to the GMT so that it could be collated and discussed. Gender advisors worked across sectors during 2005-2009 to identify weak areas in meeting GBTs, and to discuss with key personnel the implications and the need for better targeting where warranted. While data continued to be gathered, it was not routinely analyzed, and this evaluation uncovered a number of examples of interesting findings that should have helped shaped program interventions or led to further inquiries, but they were simply not 'caught' by anyone applying a focused gender lens.

1.2 Collect and analyze an indicative gender labor profile for each village and ensure action plans and GBTs correspond accordingly.

³ Issues with the design and utilization of monitoring data were broad and extend beyond gender-specific concerns. The first five rounds of the LSMS, for example, were not analyzed until 2010.

Partially achieved. The GMT did not undertake this activity, though there were plans in place 2006-2007. There were efforts made to disaggregate data in monitoring instruments (e.g. LSMS, QSEM), but the data falls short of proper tracking of intra-household labor patterns. While there was a general understanding within the project of gender divisions of labor and the importance of considering this in targeting, there was never comprehensive monitoring, nor a clear understanding of how resettlement was impacting on gender divisions of labor. This evaluation includes a retrospective examination based on limited available data and new research to add to the body of knowledge (see Annex C).

1.3 Ensure the system for monitoring and evaluating the project includes gender sensitive, sex-disaggregated data including disaggregated data on labor inputs and access and control over productive resources.

Partly achieved. Concerted efforts were made during the design and implementation of key monitoring tools (notably LSMS and QSEM) to ensure data could be disaggregated by sex. Enumerators were trained on gender and ethnic sensitivity, though a targeted shift in conceptual thinking away from a single head of household toward joint heads of household was not achieved. Monitoring tools such as the household book, QSEM and the LSMS generally used the household as the unit of analysis, rather than the individual. This bias was inherent in project design targets up front, which centered on household income and household consumption. Therefore, only select data has been analyzed in a gender sensitive manner.

Data on labor inputs was captured to a limited extent by monitoring systems, but data on access to and control over productive resources was not. Working with the GMT, the Gender Advisors did conduct qualitative research over a three-year period with families to track gender specific changes in time use and access and control over resources between 2006 and 2008. Data and analysis was submitted in trip reports, but there is no evidence that this data was ever utilized by the project to target interventions or to inform further lines of inquiry.

1.4 Ensure that land and assets surveys and registration, particularly the compensation cases recognize the rights of original single owners, regardless of sex.

Achieved. All new assets were issued jointly in the name of the husband and wife, and required the attendance of both for distribution. Special training workshops were held in all resettlement villages in 2011 to explain the importance and implications of joint land titles. Women comprised 55 percent of the 1353 villagers who attended the training on gender issues and land titles. Despite the meticulous efforts made by the project to shift from informal male control of land to formal joint male-female control, available data shows that resettler families commonly revert to traditional customs of patrilineal land ownership in the event of divorce or

death. Further efforts are required to mitigate this pattern in the final phase of the project. See Annex D for more details.

2. IMPROVE WOMEN'S HEALTH

Achieved. Women (and men) are healthier as measured by key indicators. A significant shift occurred over the course of the project whereby men comprised the majority of health facility users in the early years of the project (2005-2010). By 2011, male and female usage rates were almost equal based on out-patient data from district hospitals and dispensaries, but from 2012 on, women were the majority of health facilities users (MOH and HPMU 2013). This shift is likely linked to better roads and transportation as well as interventions around maternal health and increased hospital deliveries for women. The finding may also be linked to better record-keeping at the health centers.

Access to health services and improved health were identified as one of the most important improvements in people's lives post-resettlement in the LSMS (2013), although the data was not disaggregated by sex of respondents. This finding was echoed specifically for women of reproductive age during primary research conducted for this evaluation. QSEM data also demonstrates progressively improving health of resettlers as measured by declining percentages of the population missing one day of normal activity due to ill health over the two week period before the survey was implemented. QSEM (2013:16) data suggests that women are more likely than men to lose productive time due to illness (an average over five reporting periods of 8.7 percent female and only 6.2 percent male). Data provided by the health team in the form of health surveys (FHS 2013), however, did not echo this finding, so the meaning or validity remains obscure.

2.1 Provide family planning information and services in all resettlement villages in conjunction with LWU. Information must reach men as well as women.

Achieved. Before resettlement, the population in the areas was in a pre-demographic transition phase characterized by high rates of fertility and infant mortality. Life expectancy was low and infant mortality rates were high, although comprehensive data is not available (Chamberlain *et al.* 1996). The quick impact of family planning services is evidenced in the changing population structure of the resettled villages. The proportion of children under the age of ten shows a declining trend by 2013, and a declining dependency ratio from 80.5 percent to 78.2 percent between 2008 and 2013 (FHS 2013). QSEM (2013:13) data corroborates this trend, showing a decrease of the mean dependency ratio from 0.75 in round 1 to 0.65 in round 6.

Monthly Mother and Child Health clinics for women of reproductive age were an important tool to improve maternal health services and family planning. Data over

the five-year period between 2008 and 2013 shows a trend toward a higher age at first pregnancy and fewer pregnancies. The contraceptive prevalence rate for the resettlement area has risen from 43 percent in 2008 to 57 percent in 2013 (FHS 2013). It is not clear how strongly efforts were made to reach men as well as women with family planning information, but very few men used any form of contraception, and surveyed men were more likely than women to be unable to provide an answer as to why they were not using contraception as a couple (FHS 2013). Further, no surveyed males have had vasectomies, suggesting that an unmet need exists to ensure men have full access to family planning information.

Women, in particular benefited from greater family planning information and services. Interviews with women from resettled villages highlighted a significant shift in women's control over their fertility over the life of the project (Akhanik 2009). Women described the positive impact family planning services had on their ability to work and on their health. This finding was echoed in open-ended questions about the most significant positive change for resettled women during community research conducted for this evaluation. Improvements in reproductive health services in the form of clinics and health centers topped the list of notable improvements for rich and poor women alike of reproductive age.

2.2 Provide interventions aimed at reducing the MMR including reducing harmful practices related to post-partum care.

Achieved. MMR data pre-project is not available. Only one maternal death has been documented in the resettled villages post-resettlement. The SDP (2005) documented risky birth and postpartum recovery practices whereby women gave birth away from the house in a birthing hut, and were confined for a period of 7-15 days post-partum. Women drank medicinal water and sweated impurities during this period, slowly re-introducing foods to their diet. Akhanik (2009) documented a shift in Makong birthing practices away from birthing huts toward assisted home births and hospital births in resettled villages. Solitary births in birthing huts still continue in villages that have not been resettled.

Project data shows an increase in percentage of births in the resettlement areas assisted by health professionals from 27 percent in 2008 to 57 percent in 2013 with a commensurate decline in births without trained personnel from 29 percent down to 14 percent over the same period (MOH and HPMU 2013). Working with the district health authorities, the project supported a comprehensive antenatal program that included training for health workers and traditional birth attendants on managing the major complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

2.3 Pay special attention to HIV-AIDS, STIs and other infectious diseases as well as alcoholism, smoking and violence against women – men and women must both receive information.

Achieved. Information on HIV/AIDS and STIs has been disseminated, and efforts are on-going to deal with smoking, family violence and alcohol abuse through the Community Living Well Program (CLWP). Smoking shows a declining trend for women and men according to health surveys between 2008 and 2013, but more than 50 percent of men and 10 percent of women continue to smoke (FHS 2013). This issue warrants targeted IEC at males in particular.

With changes and increases to drinking practices in resettled villages due in part to more disposable income, there is anecdotal evidence that family conflict and violence may be on the rise, but it remains very hard to break the culture of silence around this issue on all fronts: village, government and project staff alike. The most commonly presented scenario is that domestic violence is rare, and generally limited to verbal arguments. Documented cases of physical abuse and death in the resettled villages do exist, however, and there is the perception by some key officials that violence is on the rise largely due to increasing accessibility of alcohol. CLWP data identified fourteen households in three pilot villages that required interventions to deal with violence, suggesting a prevalence rate of at least five percent. Scant data available on the issue warrants deeper inquiry. See Annex E for more background.

2.4 Collect and analyze sex disaggregated health data to decide if health interventions need to have a special focus on women/girls beyond the issues noted above to extend women's life expectancy.

Achieved. Health data was generally disaggregated, and included a special focus on women's reproductive health as well as children's health. Review of disaggregated data does not reveal unusual gender-specific patterns that cannot be attributed to normal physiological differences between women and men (girls and boys). This evaluation did, however, raise some questions about rapidly growing trends toward obesity for women in particular that had yet to be addressed by the project. Comparison of 2008 and 2013 data shows that fewer men and women in resettled villages are normal weight. While fewer people are underweight, rates of overweight and obesity are climbing rapidly, and in fact have nearly doubled for both women and men over a short five-year period. Rates of overweight/obesity stood at 23.2 percent for women and 14.3 percent of men in 2013 (FHS 2013:42).⁴ This trend will have grave implications for women's and men's health in the coming years.

⁴ Women were twice as likely as men to be either underweight or overweight. Only 64.3 percent of women in the resettled villages were classified as normal weight compared to 79 percent of men (FHS 2013:42).

3. INCREASE WOMEN AND GIRLS' LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Achieved. Schooling rates were abysmal before resettlement. Only seven of the 24 villages to be relocated had schools and two of those were not operational, so only five had working schools (Chamberlain *et al.* 1996). Boys education was prioritized over girls, though few children of either sex were able to attend school. All villages have operating primary schools today, and it is a source of pride and a recognized change that is valued for young women and girls (as well as boys). Project investments in school infrastructure, materials and teacher training were critical inputs to lay the foundation for primary education. Net primary school enrolment in resettled villages has increased from 20 percent in 2006 to 83 percent in 2013, which compares well to the national average of 85 percent reported in the Laos Social Indicator Survey (LSMS 2013). Though answers were not disaggregated, education was noted as one of the most significant improvements in people's lives post-resettlement (LSMS 2013).

3.1 Gender disaggregated data on rates of school enrolment and attendance must be monitored carefully and reviewed regularly. Awareness raising and counseling must be provided for families who do not send children (especially girls) to school.

Partially achieved. Combined and disaggregated school data was monitored throughout the project, but seemingly without thoughtful gender analysis. The data generally showed increasing rates of school enrolment for both boys and girls, but efforts were not made to understand the data trends beyond a general level. Special efforts were not made to address girls' (or boys') educational issues during the course of the project.

Data from LSMS shows that girls may have shifted from being the minority of those in primary school during early years (rounds 1-3) to being the majority of pupils in rounds 4-7 (LSMS 2013). QSEM (2013) data also echoes this pattern with 91.4 percent of girls enrolled in primary school compared to 89.5 percent of boys. Reasons for this pattern are not well understood by the project, and may be linked to the location of the schools nearby the resettled villages. LSMS and QSEM figures are disputed by GOL figures that show girls comprise only 46% of the 1674 students in resettled villages (MOE spreadsheet 2013). Furthermore, MOE data shows that girls comprise 45 percent or less of students in six villages, including some of the least successful resettled villages, and that boys are dropping out of primary school at a much higher rate than girls in resettled villages.⁵

⁵ Project spreadsheet "Examination Result for Primary School of Nakai Resettlement Villages Fiscal Years 2012-2013". Girl pupils comprise the following by village: Nongbouakham – 43%, Sopma –

Girls education is a critical strategy to increase gender equality for the next generation of resettlers due to the multiplier effects of education for family well-being. Gender-specific data patterns and discrepancies highlighted above were uncovered during the course of this evaluation. Differential rates of male/female school enrolment by village or differential rates of male/female drop out require further investigation to understand more fully whether differences noted are due to natural variations in the population or gender-specific issues. Analysis of the available data suggests that schooling patterns vary by village, and more comprehensive success with education may require village- and sex-specific interventions in the final phase of the project.

3.2 Make special provisions in adult literacy and numeracy programs to encourage and enable female attendance. Data should be gender disaggregated and closely monitored so that lack of female participation can be addressed quickly.

Not achieved. Adult literacy varies with age and gender as well as social class - with women, poor and older people being least likely to read. Project data on literacy levels is not consistent across instruments. LSMS data (2006-2013) shows that literacy levels have improved over the project period rising from 51% to 81%. FHS (2013) data, however, shows that only 61 percent of the population can read based on the administering of a simple test, so it is possible that the LSMS data is unreliable if it relies purely on self-report due to social stigma attached to illiteracy.

Closer look at the disaggregated LSMS data (2006-2013) suggests a slight close in the gender gap with men rising 26 percentage points over the time period from 64 to 90 percent while women rose 33 percentage points from 40 to 73 percent. This may be linked to girls higher rates of enrolment in primary school or to informal exposure via training/information and mass media. It does not appear to be linked to any successful efforts to close gender gaps in literacy with non-formal education (NFE). District-led NFE courses in 2007 and 2008 were mostly for women, but it is not clear how many participants were targeted, and key informants suggested that some women may not have completed the course and/or become re-illiterate following the course (Gender Trip Report, Annex B, May 2008). The government target age groups for literacy training are 15-45 years. FHS (2013) data shows that less than five percent of either women or men in the resettled villages have had NFE, and men were more than twice as likely to have had NFE than women. NFE rates did not show improvement over the life of the project.

44%, Namnein – 43%, Phonphanphek – 40%, Nongboua – 44% and Phonsavang – 45%. Boys were 73% of the dropouts.

4. REDUCE WOMEN'S WORKLOADS

Achieved. Reductions in women's workloads was one of the most common unsolicited responses heard during community research conducted as part of this evaluation on positive changes for women/men. This finding is confirmed by illustrative research into changes in male/female time use tracked over a three-year period (Gender Field Trip Report, May 2008) and comparisons between women's perceptions of workloads in a resettled village and a non-resettled village in the project area (Akhanik 2009). Women in the traditional village felt that their workload had not changed significantly over the project timeframe while women in the resettled village noted their workload was lighter.

Reductions in women's workloads were brought about by infrastructure improvements, most notably roads, water and electricity. The rapid attainment of certain durable goods has had a positive impact on women's time use as identified during primary research conducted for this evaluation. In particular, the local stove and rice cooker were noted as time-savers for women. Women also benefited from new transportation options including motorbikes and hand-held tractors that allowed them to move materials more easily than in the past.

According to a study that asked resettled women in one village to compare the level of help they received from their husbands before and after resettlement, husbands provided less household labor after resettlement. This pattern was not evident in the village that remained stationary (Akhanik 2009). This finding would require further research to understand the implication and the generalizability of the finding. It may be linked to the changes in productive work patterns in resettled villages whereby men are increasingly identified as primary earners due to their involvement in fishing and logging. It may also be linked to women's reduced workloads in other spheres that offers them more time to complete household tasks without help from their husbands.

4.1 Develop domestic water supply systems and ensure that women have significant representation on Water User Groups and Water Maintenance Groups by meeting GBTs.

Achieved. Prior to resettlement, women and girls generally hand-carried water from the river to the house. The task was repeated multiple times throughout the day, taking between 10 and 30 minutes each trip depending on proximity (SDP 2005). Resettlers today express a high level of satisfaction with the supply and quality of water available to them via borehole pump and rainwater (FHS 2013), and women and girls spend less time collecting water for drinking and washing (Akhanik 2009). LSMS data showed no significant changes to sources of drinking water between 2011 and 2013, and there was no significant difference in use of water resources between wealth groups, suggesting that the situation is equitable and stable.

WUGs in villages are governed by a coordinating body, and divided into units comprised of those households who share a single water source. The units are coordinated by a WUG head and deputy head. Leadership positions on WUGs are held by men in all villages with the exception of Nongbouakham, where women hold the top two positions. WUG units are listed by head of household and spouse jointly. In most cases men are the head of household, but in some cases, the woman takes the lead position. Single women or men can also be listed solely as head of household.

4.2 Establish crèches in full consultation with mothers to ensure that they are appropriate to the local setting and can be utilized.

Partially achieved. Crèches were established in the early years of the project to alleviate women's workload as well as to provide supplementary feeding for children. There were concerns voiced early on about the suitability and sustainability of the crèches (Gender Trip Report, May 2007), as they were not linked formally into the education system or other government structures, and there did not appear to be enough support within the community to self-fund. The crèches are no longer operational.

The provision of crèches may be best viewed as a pilot initiative that was not successful. The goals were admirable, but the crèches never had the government or community support required to ensure sustainability. Crèches may have declined in importance over time as birth rates declined. Reductions in women's workloads also allowed women more time for childcare. Elderly family members (especially grandmothers) in good health also provided important childcare support. Though no longer operational in resettled villages, crèches may have served an important purpose during the earliest stages of resettlement to allow women to more actively participate in community activities.

4.3 Provide rice mills.

Achieved. Rice mills were provided at the start of the project in 2005/6 (Gender Trip Report, May 2006). Rice mills were seen initially as an important means of alleviating women's labor-intensive work of hulling rice by hand. Project-supported rice mills have become of declining importance, as resettled villages are tending to grow less of their own rice. Villagers purchase rice and/or are able to make arrangements for rice to be machine-hulled as needed. Women in the resettled villages no longer undertake hand hulling.

4.4 Assist women in obtaining pushcarts and other inexpensive carrying methods

Irrelevant. There is vague institutional memory that pushcarts were provided early in the project in some villages (2005/6), but it was not a meaningful intervention as it was quickly usurped by the provision of roads and the attainment of vehicles such as hand tractors and motorbikes. Widespread accessibility of vehicles allowed both women and men to transport goods with relative ease. This intervention, therefore, has been rendered obsolete. By 2013, most households had a motorboat and motorbike, and nearly 20 percent had another vehicle such as a hand tractor or truck (LSMS 2013:126).

5. INCREASE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

Achieved. It is difficult to quantify this indicator in the absence of detailed information on women's and men's access to and control over resources. The Nakai Plateau was in the midst of a gradual shift away from a subsistence economy toward a cash economy at the start of the project. Population growth, in-migration and unsustainable resource use had exceeded the carrying capacity of the land on the plateau. Villagers began selling some vegetables, fish, forest products and livestock at local markets since the late 1980s (Chamberlain *et al.* 1996). Pre-project sources of cash income were ascertained by Chamberlain *et al.* (1996) as follows: forest plant products (47%), livestock (34%), wildlife (10%), fish (9%).

The advent of the hydropower project essentially accelerated the shift to the market economy while at the same time changing the relative value and accessibility of certain resources. Logging and fishing have emerged as the key earners (male-driven resources) while livestock and NTFP have become less important (women-driven resources). Women have also been left as the primary farmers in many families thereby shifting the traditional farming family model to some extent so that women are primary farmers and men play support roles for key tasks. See Annex C for more details.

Changes to household livelihood systems resulted in net gains or losses for women and men depending on the existing gender divisions of labor and patterns of access to and control over resources. Women and men have more access to productive resources than they did prior to resettlement simply because there are more productive resources available. However, it is less certain if women have greater access to and control over resources relative to men, and it is likely they have lost ground in terms of access, as male-driven resources have increased in value.

Shifts in production identified above ran a high risk of resulting in a net loss in women's control over resources, but this does not seem to be the case due to several

factors. Women have retained their traditional control over small household finances, allowing them to make autonomous choices for family welfare. Most families increasingly practice a joint model of household decision-making over key resources. This model has been further reinforced by project efforts to foster joint ownership of assets and joint participation of women and men in all activities. The project also worked actively to ensure that women were involved as members and leaders in key village-level institutions that govern access to natural resources such as fishing, forestry, agriculture and livestock associations.

5.1 Implement savings and loan program ensuring that poor and vulnerable women are able to participate.

Achieved. Various in-cash and in-kind credit schemes were established during the first years of the resettlement program for different purposes (hand tractors, small animal raising, fishery and small manufacturing, rice banks). However, by 2009 most of the schemes, including the women's savings and credit program set up by the LWU, had severe repayment problems, leading the district government to freeze the funds with the exception of the Nakai Neua Savings and Loan Fund.

The Village Credit Fund (VCF) was established with NTPC assistance in 2012 by merging the capital from the preceding schemes and adding compensation payments. Each household was given a single share in the VCF (Behrle and Lorbanlith 2013). The VCF does not expressly reserve funds for women, but women and men have equal access rights according to VCF by-laws. Share and credit documents must be in both husband and wife's names, and distribution should be joint.

Women have participated in the VCF in line with GBTs. Men and women have attended informational meetings in roughly equal numbers. Though men hold all of the top positions in each village, women comprise 31 percent of the VCF committees in 2012 and 36 percent in 2013, and have been proportionally represented in committee trainings in 2012 (Behrle and Lorbanlith 2013). The VCF has amended its rules to offer special consideration for vulnerable households (majority female) to facilitate access to VCF resources.

A significant shift in the purpose of loans is revealed by the LSMS data that may be viewed through a gender lens. Three-quarters of the loans taken in 2006-2009 were for agricultural purposes. However, by 2013, very few loans were for agriculture. Instead, consumables, fishing, durable goods and other (cars, motorbikes) topped the list, suggesting a possible growing trend toward male-focused lending based on focus group interviews conducted as part of this evaluation. That being said, a joint decision-making model at the household level was put forth strongly in community research with rich and poor households alike, so there is no evidence to suggest that women are not involved in credit choices.

The loan disbursement in 2012 and 2013 from the VCF showed that the majority of the loans from this source went for fishery-related purchases, a male-dominated activity. The next most common activities were micro-business followed by emergency (sickness) and livestock raising. It is not easy to discern whether there are gender implications within these categories. Micro-business may be for male- or female-led small businesses. Sickness may be for any family member. Large livestock would tend to be male-driven; small livestock would be female-driven. It is notable, however, that the dominant activity, accounting for 48 and 41 percent of total borrowers in 2012 to 2013 respectively, suggesting that the VCF may be meeting men's loan needs more than women's in its early years of operations. Alternatively, it may be that family livelihood strategies have centered on male activities simply because they have been the most lucrative.

The project has paid special attention to vulnerable households including female-headed households, in line with the CA requirements. Vulnerable households have been carefully monitored, and special measures have been made to allow for extra support including expanded credit and livelihood opportunities. Of the 21 households classified as vulnerable, nine are women living alone and two are men living alone. Women comprise 20 of the 28 persons within marginalized households deemed vulnerable. Noted gender differences are linked to women's longer life expectancy so that female widows are more common than male as well as women's lower rates of remarriage following divorce.

5.2 Ensure that formal land titles include both the wife and husband's name. Titles should be distributed when both spouses are present.

Achieved. Both women and men had to sign concession forms, and titles were only distributed when husband and wife were both present. The Nakai land disbursement was able to learn from the experiences of the Downstream and Project Lands components in pioneering the land compensation packages in a gender sensitive manner that facilitated joint involvement of both spouses. The project conducted village-level training on gender and land rights in 2011 to help ensure that all villagers understood the reasons for joint ownership as well as the legal ramifications. Despite admirable efforts in full compliance with the CA, findings reveal that customary patrilineal land ownership practices are still at play in the event of divorce or widowhood, and further interventions may be required. See Annex D for more details.

5.3 Ensure that women have opportunities for skills development and income generation based upon gender needs and divisions of labor.

Achieved. Efforts have been made over the course of the project to provide off-farm skills training for women and men. Training programs were selected through an intensive participatory process whereby resettlers expressed their interests in

particular programs. Project teams interviewed interested women and men to see if they were suitable candidates and were motivated to follow through with business development following the training. Off-farm training programs had a tendency to be gender-specific based on traditional gender divisions of labor. Only men attended boat engine repair training and electrician training; only women attended training for food processing and cooking, hairdressing and beauty, candy-making, tailoring, weaving and handicraft. Women comprised the majority of those trained by the off-farm program in compliance with the CA and 7SGA.

Despite careful efforts made to select the right participants and to provide participants with business skills as part of the training, few of the programs have resulted in viable businesses. This has been especially so for women. The failure to translate new skills and knowledge into a viable business has been attributed primarily to reluctance on the part of women to make the initial investments to start their businesses and a general lack of confidence. Extra support may be required to help jump-start female-led businesses.

5.4 Develop women's handicraft skills and other marketable activities with strict attention paid to ensuring that markets are secure and accessible.

Achieved. The off-farm training has provided opportunities for women to develop their skills in handicrafts and other marketable activities. Handicrafts have not been particularly successful in villages that did not have a tradition of production prior to resettlement. Women were not comfortable with weaving or making fermented fish or other new skills introduced by the project if they had not done these things in the past (Akhanik 2009). Namnian village had a history of weaving and women there continue this tradition, selling their goods to traders who come to the village. Wealthier women have opened small shops in the villages, carving out a new niche area as traders. This remains a narrow field that seems to be the domain of wealthy women. The majority of women, especially poorer women, stick to agricultural and natural resource based activities to secure livelihoods as needed. Lucrative incomes earned from fishing and logging in recent years have generally offered families sufficient income, and have not spurred a strong demand for off-farm income sources.

6. OPERATIONALIZE GENDER STRATEGIES AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL

Achieved. There is a palpable shift in thinking at the village level away from an old model that cast men as leaders and conduits between the village and the larger world toward a more gender equal model that puts women and men at the center of village development processes. The recent village development planning process showcased well this shift from traditional norms. The 2013 VDPs represent an important transition toward coordinated, community-led initiatives in full cooperation with the GOL in resettled villages as NTPC phases out. Not only did

women participate on an equal footing with men in the VDP process, but each village included gender as one of the 12 action areas in their VDPs. Gender-focused activities included gender training for men and women, training for women to work in the village authority and targeted interventions to improve nutrition and social welfare. While gender activities were generally not seen as a top priority, they were not the lowest priority either, falling somewhere around the top of the bottom one-third in most cases.

6.1 Meet or exceed the GBT of 30% women in the VRC/VDC and other leadership positions.

Achieved. The VDCs are the authorities that oversee the village level development. Each VDC is comprised of 3 members. The composition of VDCs changes every three years with the change of the village headman. 2013 data showed that resettled villages achieved on average about 20 percent female representation in VDCs. The range was from 10 – 36 percent female. While this is short of the GBT of 30 percent female representation in decision-making bodies, it represents a significant improvement over traditional patterns of leadership, which tended to exclude women entirely. This compares well with earlier configurations of the VDCs in 2007 where three villages continued to exclude women entirely from leadership (Gender Trip Report, Annex A, May 2007).

Women have been actively involved in all new village institutions including at leadership levels. Even if GBTs for women's leadership have not always been reached, women are significantly more active in leadership than before resettlement. NTPC has provided assistance to support the District Promotion of Progressive Women (DPP) to further promote women's role in leadership and encourage greater involvement of women in local organizations. The national targets for women's participation in the Village Authority is 15 percent, demonstration how progressive the NTPC targets of 30 percent were. Training was in progress in the resettled villages during the course of this evaluation to disseminate the new government policies to promote and protect women. At the time of the evaluation, only one village (Ban Done) had met the target of 15 percent women in the Village Authority.

6.2 Meet or exceed the GBT of 40% women's participation in training and other activities.

Achieved. It was recognized early on that special measures would be required to facilitate women's full participation in project consultations and activities. The SDP (2005) notes that women in the project area were less educated than men, and have had less exposure to the outside world, and that men tended to dominate discussions. Efforts were made early on since 1997 to include women by having separate women's groups facilitated by the LWU. Early and active inclusion of the

LWU on the Resettlement Management Unit (RMU) helped to facilitate greater female participation throughout the project. In the second phase of community consultations in 2004, segregated discussion groups led by female facilitators helped to ensure women's voices were heard in the consultation process (SDP 2005).

The GMT routinely gathered disaggregated data on rates of participation in project activities across sectors from 2005-2009 to monitor women's participation rates. The Gender Advisor(s) regularly collated the data and included it in trip reports. The picture was generally good, with strong rates of female participation in most sectors. Specific issues that emerged were addressed with the GMT during field trips. After 2009, sectors continued to gather disaggregated data, but few efforts were made to analyze and utilize the data to help fine-tune project targets. Nevertheless, the data reveals that GBTs were generally met, with women dominating many sectors.⁶ Resettlers quickly adjusted their traditional views about meetings and information, and came to see the importance of both female and male participation. Women and men across classes and ethnicities came to see information (meetings, training) as the joint domain of males and females in stark contrast to traditional village structures. This shift in thinking was articulated by both women and men in focus group discussions conducted for this evaluation.

6.3 Provide leadership and confidence-building training for village women, especially vulnerable women and women who are new to positions of leadership.

Achieved. Training on women's leadership was conducted in 2008 in the resettled villages. LWU also disseminated to women and men the model of the three women's virtues (good family, development and person), and all of the resettled villages are model villages. The DPP is also very active in Nakai, working on programs to promote and support women in leadership with project support. The Nakai District will be the model district for the DPP in Khammouane Province based on women's participation levels in leadership. The Nakai District organizational chart documents that women comprise 310 of the 850 staff.

In addition to the formal work done to improve women's confidence and leadership skills, the female leaders of Nakai likely gained some of their best skills through hands-on learning. Women went from being almost completely absent in leadership to being present on most leadership bodies, and to being active participants at meetings and training. Women who stepped up as new leaders served as role models to younger women, thereby helping to perpetuate change toward greater

⁶ Between 2005 and 2013, women comprised 73 percent of the 3,673 people trained in health at the community level, and women were 56.5 percent of those 224,017 people who attended awareness and health education programs (MOH and HPMU 2014). Women were the majority of participants for the 2013 VDP planning process held in each village that included 1,872 people/995 women ("Summary Participants to Village planning" spreadsheet).

gender equality. Despite considerable gains, there remains an unmet demand for women's leadership training that emerged as an action item in three villages VDP spreadsheets, so this is an area that would benefit from further attention.

6.4 Provide a participatory program at the village level that encourages discussion and awareness raising about issues of gender inequality

Achieved. All villages had a gender awareness-raising puppet show in 2007, which was well received. Community level gender training (TOT and dissemination) was also conducted in 2008/9. Subject-specific meetings on gender issues relevant to the resettlers were also held as well throughout the course of the project. Meetings were held to disseminate information on the gender issue and land titling in 2010. A campaign across villages was conducted in 2011 to promote the need for women to be involved in the leadership of the Village Credit Fund. In 2014, training was underway in all villages on gender equality in the household, family law and family planning - designed in part to address the growing issue of lack of recognition of women's legal rights in the event of divorce or death of spouse.

The VDP process revealed an unmet demand for more targeted gender training in the resettled villages. Planned activities in the 2013 VDPs include gender training for men, gender training for youth, and training on family law to mitigate problems around drinking, family conflict, divorce and drug abuse. Continued training and information dissemination is an important component of the change process, but training is ultimately theoretical. Apart from training, women and men in resettled villagers have been engaged in an on-going process of on-the-job learning, as they set new examples for their neighbors, their daughters/sons and themselves by participating in all fields of community development.

6.5 Make special efforts to meet GBTs for female technicians especially in forestry and agriculture/livestock. In the absence of female technicians, make special efforts to sensitize male technicians to carry out gender mainstreaming.

Achieved. Women were recognized and encouraged early on in the project as critical to the success of the agriculture and livestock programs in particular due to an understanding of gender divisions of labor. In 2006, six of the 36 village livestock agents were female, and eight out of 18 village farmer leaders were female (Gender Trip Report, Annex A, May 2006). Although the farmer leader and livestock agent model is no longer functioning in villages, village DAFO extension staff included six out of ten women in 2014.

6.6 Mobilize and train village level LWU representatives to participate actively and encourage women's involvement at the village level.

Achieved. The village and district level LWU was actively involved from the start of the project in mobilizing women and facilitating their participation. Through the project did not explicitly 'train' the LWU to perform their role, representatives were provided support to facilitate their role. The LWU was relied on heavily for their community connections. District- and village-level representatives were well respected for their capabilities to mobilize and to offer guidance to the project on women's participation.

6.7 Tailor training materials and methods across all program areas for illiterate and innumerate participants to ensure that information can reach women as well as men who have not had education.

Achieved. The project placed a strong emphasis on practical experience in its training modules. It was recognized early on that district-level events resulted in reduced female rates of participation, so most events were held at village level to facilitate women's involvement. Women's only groups were sometimes used to encourage greater levels of participation in-group. IEC materials were designed for those with limited literacy. IEC materials were generally developed in-house by the project working with consultants, staff members and counterpart government agencies.

7. OPERATIONALIZE GENDER STRATEGIES AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Achieved. It was recognized in the SDP (2005) that the project institutions (especially NRO and RMU) would quickly become the most influential development institutions in Nakai. It was therefore of utmost importance that these institutions served as models for the types of gender-balanced changes they would promote at the village level. Beginning as a heavily male-dominated institution, the face of NTPC changed over the course of the project to represent a more gender-balanced organization.

Gender mainstreaming in the project was guided by a combination of external advisors and internal staff members. An international gender advisor was employed for twice-yearly inputs from 2005-2008. A national gender advisor worked together with the international advisor providing bi-annual inputs from 2006-2009. In addition, one staff member had gender responsibilities included in their title and job description over the life of the project as follows:

2005-2008	Community Development and Gender
2008-2013	Gender and Education
2013-present	Gender, Education and CLWP

In addition, a growing number of staff members joined the project over time who offered gender-specific expertise and served as catalysts within their spheres of operation to push for gender sensitivity above and beyond their terms of reference.

7.1 Establish a Gender Monitoring Team (GMT) with representation across sectors to monitor and facilitate progress with gender mainstreaming.

Achieved, and then dropped. The GMT functioned actively and effectively for approximately four years from 2005 to 2009. It was an ever-evolving group that pulled in government counterparts and engaged all sectors including the infrastructure team. While the GMT was headed by RMU and NRO staff, it was overseen and guided by the national and international gender advisors during their periodic missions. The GMT ceased to function when the gender advisor missions concluded, leaving a gap in an institutional coordination mechanism for gender mainstreaming that was not effectively filled by the designated officer. Designated officers tended to work on gender within their own spheres, but were not able to effectively work across sectors (McDowell *et al.* 2010).

7.2 Give institutions and activities a GBT and ensure that all technicians, advisors and RMU/RO staff are instructed about the GBTs.

Achieved. GBTs, originally set at 50 percent across the board, were restructured in 2005 to be realistic and achievable. Targets were at least 30 percent female participation at the decision-making level and at least 40 percent participation at a more general level. Targets were widely disseminated to management and all staff via the GMT as well as at all gender training and workshops in the early years of the project. Gender targets and strategies were also made available to all via the “Gender Briefing Paper” though there is no evidence to suggest that this tool was widely utilized.

7.3 Monitor compliance of the GBTs and devise strategies to overcome problems with compliance.

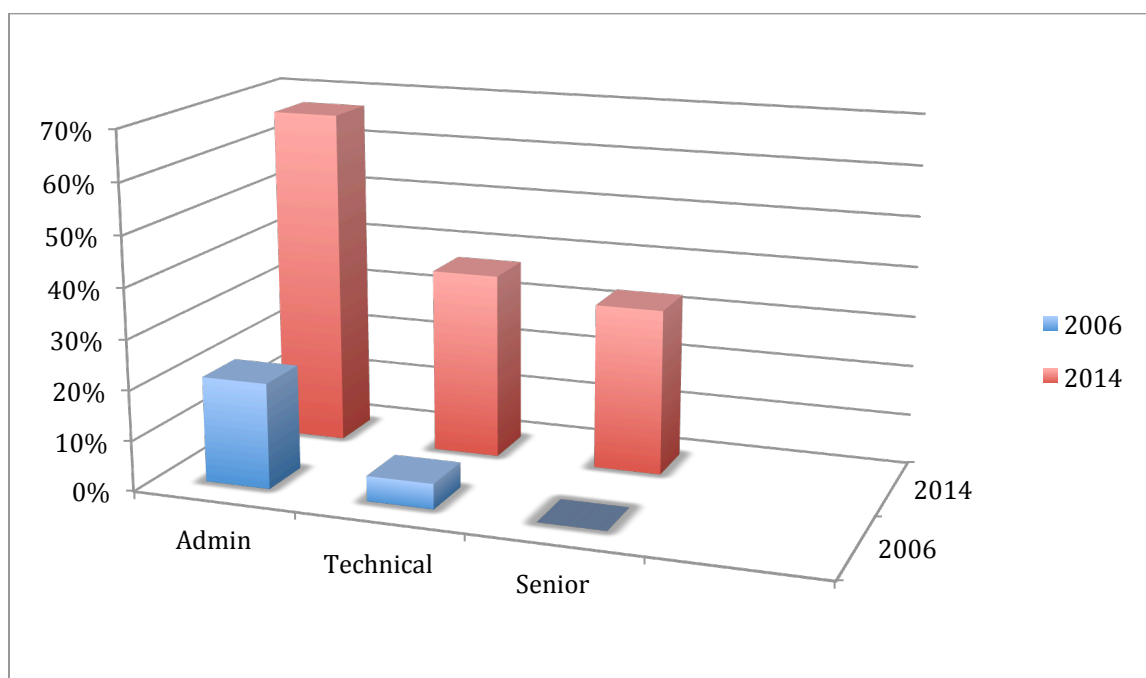
Achieved. GBT compliance was most closely monitored during the early years of the project from 2005-2009 when Gender Advisors visited the project regularly and the GMT was fully operational. The importance of leading by example and creating a gender-balanced institution was repeatedly stressed by Gender Advisors and monitoring missions during this time period.

There were significant problems meeting GBTs internally in the early days of staffing the resettlement offices on Nakai. The RMU had reasonable gender balance in line with GBTs, but the NRO was highly imbalanced with men in all of the top positions as well as most of the technical and administrative posts. There were only

two women out of 43 technical positions, and 4 women out of 19 administrative positions in the NRO in 2006 (Gender Advisor Field Trip Report, May 2006, Annex A). Reasons influencing the initial gender imbalance included a lack of full awareness/understanding of GBTs and difficulties in finding female staff willing to live in a remote site. Management units responded to recommendations to become more proactive in recruiting women. Taglines stating that “women are especially encouraged to apply” were put on all job notices, and this practice continues today.

The NRO staff in 2014 includes 35 people, 18 of who are female (51 percent). More women have joined NRO over time as infrastructure (roads and housing) has improved and a primary school has been offered at the RNT operator’s village, allowing families to more comfortably move to the area. Children of staff are now transported to and from the school each day from Nakai. Management has made efforts to find jobs for accompanying male or female spouses wherever possible. Furthermore, some of the most capable female staff members from Downstream and Project Lands have been offered jobs on Nakai as those programs have phased out. Despite vast improvements on gender balance within NRO, men have continued to hold all of the top leadership positions since the start of the project and there may be a bias toward providing men permanent staff positions while leaving some women in less secure long-term ‘consulting’ arrangements⁷.

Gender Imbalance and Balance at Nakai Resettlement Office 2006 and 2014



⁷ There were four staff members in NRO in 2014 categorized as full-time consultants. These staff had held their positions for years, contrary to standard consultancy arrangements, and lacking standard benefits offered with full-time jobs. Three out of four long-term consultants were female.

7.4 Provide gender awareness and analysis training for staff.

Achieved partially. The resettlement project on Nakai is complex and ever evolving as it goes through stages that require different types of staff. Efforts have been made to train staff on gender awareness and analysis, but the reality of high rates of staff turnover and insufficient overall oversight for the gender program have stymied efforts to a degree. Annual staff gender training was targeted, and this was never realized. Nevertheless, documented staff gender training included the following:

- 2005 gender training for NRO and District Working Group (DWG)
- 2006 gender training for NRO and DWG
- 2006 gender training for DCDs and site engineers in resettled villages
- 2010 ethnic minority and women's issues training for NTPC and district extension workers

The POE identified lack of training on community development, gender and social issues for RMU, DWG and VRC in their 2010 monitoring mission, pointing out the CA (schedule 4, part 1, 11.2.1) requirement to ensure organizational capacity is developed along these lines. Deeming the provided training 'inadequate', the POE cited rapid staff turnover as one of the influencing factors, and recommended training programs targeting these groups as well as extension workers. Direct follow-up to this recommendation was not evident in the AIP nor through key informant interviews.

Conclusion

The GOL and NRO have met the gender obligations under the Concession Agreement. Most of the commitments have been fully met; some have been partially met. Key factors influencing project success in meeting gender obligations included the following:

- Early recognition of barriers to female participation → success with GBTs
- Integrated involvement of LWU, DPP
- Cross-sectoral GMT in early stage of project
- Improved NRO gender balance over time with greater staff gender expertise
- Targeted interventions (e.g. vulnerable household, mother child health, community living well program)

The project was limited by a lack of comprehensive gender baseline data and Insufficient monitoring and analysis of some gender data leading to missed opportunities for better targeting. The project also suffered from a weak institutional gender mainstreaming mechanism and a lack of broad oversight from 2009 on. While addressing weaknesses would have led to better fine-tuning of

some project components, weaknesses did not stymie overall achievements across the seven strategic gender action areas in compliance with the CA.

The rapid changes brought about by the project were effectively used to bring about greater gender equality by improving women's health, increasing girls education, reducing women's workloads and facilitating women's access to and control over resources. Measurable changes have occurred at the village level to create new spaces for women's active participation in local development processes including at the leadership level. These changes are now entrenched in local operations and should foster greater gender equality at the household and community level for generations to come.

Recommendations

Recommendations are drawn from evaluation findings. Background or justification for recommendations is cross-referenced against the relevant strategic gender area and/or annex. Recommendations bear in mind the short time remaining on the project during the current phase-out period until the end of 2015.

1. Deepen law dissemination centering on property and inheritance rights. Include a local case study on gender and land rights that demonstrates fair and legal property distribution following divorce under the law. Train the Village Authority and other key decision-makers on how to settle property disputes under the law in cases of divorce or widowhood. Consider using a model village or model family to set a local example.
Reference: Strategic Gender Action #5 Access/Control over Resources; Annex C and D.
2. Deepen the support provided for women who have been trained in off-farm skills to build confidence and facilitate business start rather than continue with more off-farm training that may not yield results. This will establish more successful female role models in small businesses for future generations.
Reference: Strategic Gender Action #5 Access/Control over Resources and Annex C
3. Ensure before the close of the project that poor women are adequately supported in small livestock development in recognition of the critical role that this resource continues to play in buffering families against poverty.
Reference: Strategic Gender Action #5 Access/Control over Resources; Annex C
4. Incorporate awareness-raising and guidelines of portion control and healthy eating into nutrition programs through CLWP or GOL health programs

especially targeting women (23 percent of whom are now overweight or obese).

Reference: Strategic Gender Action #2 Women's Health

5. Analyze the available disaggregated data on school enrolment as presented in this evaluation and address girls and/or boys attendance with targeted programs by village. Specifically, address low rates of girls school enrolment in specific villages and higher rates of boys' drop-outs.

Reference: Strategic Gender Action #3 Girls Education

6. Incorporate modules designed especially for children and youth to encourage progressive gender thinking via school or youth programs. This may be done through teacher training initiatives with GOL or through the CLWP youth initiatives or other suitable mechanisms.

Reference: Strategic Gender Action #6 Operationalize Village Strategies

7. Work with the CLWP and government agencies to address the 'silent' issue of family violence. Interventions may include: rights-based awareness raising for youth and others on laws and policies as well as procedures for reporting domestic violence; targeted work with community leaders to effectively intervene in domestic violence cases; and campaigns around alcohol abuse and violence at key venues including festivals and other celebrations.

Reference: Strategic Gender Action #2 Women's Health and Annex E

8. The number of vulnerable individuals and families may increase as the population grows, second generation marriages occur, family conflict and divorce ensue, and available resources decline. Longer life expectancy and more divorces may lead to more elderly in need of care, especially elderly women. The project must recognize the gender-specific dimensions of vulnerability and continue to work with government agencies to design appropriate mechanisms to buffer vulnerable households in the post-project era.

Reference: Annex D and E

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Annex A – Guiding Frameworks

Seven Strategic Action Areas to Mainstream Gender in the Nakai Plateau Resettlement Project

Action Area and Activities	Responsibility	Progress and Problems
1. Collect and Analyze Gender Disaggregated Data		
1.1 Ensure that all staff and technical experts understand the requirement for collecting and analysing gender disaggregated data.	International/national gender specialist NRO/RMU management All sector team leaders	
1.2 Collect and analyse an indicative gender labour profile for each village and ensure action plans and GBTs correspond accordingly.	Gender Mainstreaming Team (GMT) Community Development (CD) Team International/national gender specialist	
1.3 Ensure the system for monitoring and evaluating the project includes gender sensitive, sex-disaggregated data including disaggregated data on labor inputs and access and control over productive resources.	GMT NRO/RMU management International/national gender specialist	
1.4 Ensure that land and assets surveys and registration, particularly the compensation cases recognize the rights of original single owners, regardless of sex.	Public consultation team	
2. Improve Women's Health		
2.1 Provide family planning information and services in all resettlement villages in conjunction with LWU. Information must reach men as well as women.	Health team	
2.2 Provide interventions aimed at reducing the MMR including reducing harmful practices related to post-partum care.	Health team	
2.3 Pay special attention to HIV-AIDS, STIs and other infectious diseases as well as alcoholism, smoking and violence against women – men and women must both receive information.	Health team VDC	
2.4 Collect and analyze sex disaggregated health data to decide if health interventions need to have a special focus on	Health team	

women/girls beyond the issues noted above to extend women's life expectancy.		
3. Increase Women and Girls' Levels of Education and Literacy		
3.1 Gender disaggregated data on rates of school enrolment and attendance must be monitored carefully and reviewed regularly. Awareness raising and counselling must be provided for families who do not send children (especially girls) to school.	CD team Education team VDC	
3.2 Make special provisions in adult literacy and numeracy programs to encourage and enable female attendance. Data should be gender disaggregated and closely monitored so that lack of female participation can be addressed quickly.	CD team Education team Lao Women's Union (LWU) VDC	
4. Reduce Women's Workloads		
4.1 Develop domestic water supply systems and ensure that women have significant representation on Water User Groups and Water Maintenance Groups by meeting GBTs.	Infrastructure team, CD Team	
4.2 Establish crèches in full consultation with mothers to ensure that they are appropriate to the local setting and can be utilized.	CD team Education team Infrastructure team LWU VDC	
4.3 Provide rice mills.	Infrastructure team	
4.4 Assist women in obtaining pushcarts and other inexpensive carrying methods	GMT LWU	
5. Increase Women's Access to and Control over Productive Resources		
5.1 Implement S&L program ensuring that poor and vulnerable women are able to participate.	CD team Livelihood team LWU	
5.2 Ensure that formal land titles include both the wife and husband's name.	Project lands team RMU	
5.3 Ensure that women have opportunities for skills development and income generation based upon gender needs and divisions of labor.	GMT – CD team, Agriculture/livestock team, Forestry team	
5.4 Develop women's handicraft skills and other marketable activities with strict attention paid to ensuring that markets are secure and accessible.	Livelihood team District trading	

6. Operationalize Gender Strategies at the Village Level		
6.1 Meet or exceed the GBT of 30% women in the VRC/VDC and other leadership positions.	CD team District Working Group (DWG) Village leaders	
6.2 Meet or exceed the GBT of 40% women's participation in training and other activities.	GMT - CD team, Agriculture/livestock team, Forestry team, Health team	
6.3 Provide leadership and confidence-building training for village women, especially vulnerable women and women who are new to positions of leadership.	GMT LWU	
6.4 Provide a participatory program at the village level that encourages discussion and awareness raising about issues of gender inequality	GMT International and national gender specialist	
6.5 Make special efforts to meet GBTs for female technicians especially in forestry and agriculture/livestock. In the absence of female technicians, make special efforts to sensitize male technicians to carry out gender mainstreaming.	Forestry and Ag/Livestock Team Leaders RMU/NRO Management Human Resources – Vientiane District Working Group	
6.6 Mobilize and train village level LWU representatives to participate actively and encourage women's involvement at the village level.	LWU GMT CD team	
6.7 Tailor training materials and methods across all program areas for illiterate and innumerate participants to ensure that information can reach women as well as men who have not had education.	All sector teams – Agriculture/livestock, Health, Forestry, CD and Infrastructure	
7. Operationalize Gender Strategies at the Institutional Level		
7.1 Establish a Gender Monitoring Team (GMT) with representation across sectors to monitor and facilitate progress with gender mainstreaming.	International gender specialist GMT	
7.2 Give institutions and activities a GBT and ensure that all technicians, advisors and RMU/RO staff are instructed about the GBTs.	International gender specialist NRO/RMU management Team leaders in all sectors	
7.3 Monitor compliance of the GBTs and devise strategies to overcome problems with compliance.	GMT NRO/RMU management	
7.4 Provide gender awareness	International/national gender	

and analysis training for staff.	specialist GMT	
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Concession Agreement 2005 (Vol 2A, sch 4, clause 9.1.5)

The GOL and the Company shall ensure that at all times during the Resettlement Implementation Period, the gender resettlement strategy (“GRS”) and specific gender strategy plans are implemented, having due regard to the SDP, in order to provide increased gender equity and opportunities for women and girls. This will include:

- giving each activity a gender balanced target (“GBT”) within detailed plans, as appropriate for that activity;
- ensuring that all technicians, advisors and RMU/RO staff are instructed about the GBTs; and
- monitoring the implementation of the GRS and compliance of GBTs.

The GOL and the Company will use GBTs for recruitment, staff assignments, training, community and district organization, and planned interventions. Indicative GBTs for staffing of Company institutions and general selection requirements for staff recruitment will be considered and implemented, having due regard to the SDP. The purpose of the GBTs is to ensure that the male and female resettlers are assisted and trained by male and female project staff, and to increase opportunities for women to take up positions of authority and decision-making.

The institutional component of the GRS includes the following:

- setting a target number of women as members of the Resettlement Committee;
- setting a target number of women as staff of the RMU, especially for mid-level technical positions and all sub-offices;
- setting a target number of women as staff for the Resettlement Office;
- adding (at least one, preferably two) women as Cabinet members to each DRWG/DCWG; and
- setting targets for monitoring gender equity within institutions.

The GRS will also include:

- the collection and analysis of disaggregated community data by gender, ethnicity and poverty levels;
- precise recording of original ownership (husband, wife, or both) of each family’s assets;
- use of the term “heads of household” to recognise the hidden presence of the female authority;
- identification of vulnerable households, including those with only one adult

- labourer, for special interventions and follow-up;
- identification of gender divisions of labour within each village and ethnic group to foster gender sensitive development;
- gender-sensitive and participatory planning mechanisms;
- gender-sensitive monitoring and mitigation;
- promotion of gender balanced community institutions;
- gender-sensitive opportunities for income generation and skills development (based on gender divisions of labour);
- gender-balanced training, off-farm work opportunities and reduction of women's heavy labour (rice milling, water, and carrying loads);
- increased family planning and youth health and sex education;
- support for community education on Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), including HIV/AIDS, alcoholism and spouse abuse;
- increasing opportunity and facilities for women to attend non-formal education classes;
- village-based workshops to build women's confidence and leadership skills;
- provision for women technical specialists to work closely with women;
- training on setting up women's groups for micro-savings and loans;
- support for childcare facilities during resettlement.

Annex B – Research Agenda and Instruments

The research included review and analysis of secondary data to assess the level of application of the gender action plan and the compliance of gender-specific CA obligations. Secondary data was enriched with primary field data to check findings, expand the picture and fill in gaps wherever possible. Primary data include open-ended interviews with key stakeholders (GOL, NTPC and community-level key informants) as well as focus group discussions with resettled women and men (separately) to assess community perspectives on the impact of resettlement on the welfare of females and males as distinct groups. Focus groups were formulated on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity to allow for comparisons between groups.

Specific data needs as per the TOR were mapped out by source, and linked to guiding gender documents as per below.

Data Needs, Sources and Links to Gender Frameworks

Data Need per TOR	Data Source / Method	Link to CA and 7SGA
Gender Balanced Targets and actual levels of achievements within relevant organizations (RC, RMU, DWG, VDC, NRO)	Secondary Primary: KII	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 6.1, 6.2, 6.5
GOL and the Company's recruitment process, training, and application of gender policies	Secondary Primary: KII	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4
Representation of women in positions of authority and decision-making	Secondary	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 6.1, 6.3, 6.6, 4.1
Analysis of existing sex-disaggregated community data	Secondary	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
Comparison of past and current patterns of ownership of key assets from a gender perspective	Secondary: Akhanik 2009 and others Primary: community	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 1.5, 5.2
Comparison of gender divisions of labor in select communities before and after resettlement to assess changes in opportunities for income-generation and skills development	Secondary: Akhanik 2009, QSEM, LSMS, Gender Trip Reports Primary: community	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Level of female/male participation in Village Credit Fund scheme and	Secondary Primary: community and KII	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 5.1, 5.3, 5.4

other means of access to capital		
Changes to women's work loads, especially heavy labor (rice milling, water, and carrying loads) and child care	Secondary: Akhanik 09, QSEM, Gender Advisor Trip Reports Primary: community	7SGA part 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Gender analysis of access to project-led training and off-farm work opportunities for males and females	Secondary: QSEM Primary: community and KII	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 5.3, 5.4, 6.2
Changes in male/female rates of education enrolment and attainment and NFE access	Secondary: QSEM, LSMS, FHS, Government data Primary: KII	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 (NFE) 7SGA part 3.1, 3.2
Changes in health indicators from a gender perspective (e.g. nutrition, fertility, family planning, life expectancy) and access to health services and information (e.g. STI, drug/alcohol, domestic violence, trafficking)	Secondary: QSEM, LSMS, FHS	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
Degree of gender-sensitivity in participatory planning mechanisms such as PLUP and VDP	Secondary Primary: KII	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 6.1, 6.2, 6.6, 6.7
Degree of gender-sensitivity in monitoring and mitigation (LSMS, QSEM, CLWP, Activity Proposal/Report, review meetings)	Secondary	CA Vol 2A, sch. 4, clause 9.1.5 7SGA part 1.3, 1.4

Semi-Structured Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the following representatives from NTPC and GOL.

Mr. Ruedi Luthi, Director Environmental & Social Division, NTPC
 Mr. Xavier Bouan, Senior Nakai Program Manager, NTPC
 Ms. Melody Ovenden, Monitoring Team, NTPC
 Mr. Phetduangchan Chanthalangsy, Monitoring Team, NTPC
 Ms. Noutthong Alounthong, Land Use Planning, NTPC
 Mr. Bounthavy Bounmy, Village Credit Fund and Off-Farm, NTPC
 Mr. Thongsawath Keovichit, Infrastructure and Grievance, NTPC
 Mr. Phairat Phromthong, Community Development, NTPC
 Mr. Khamtanh Vatthanatham, Community Development, Northern Zone, NTPC
 Mr. Khatha Lamache, Community Development, Southern Zone, NTPC
 Dr. Aeoudom Silavong, Health Project Management Unit, NTPC

Ms. Toumkham Chanthavoy, District Lao Women's Union
Ms. Phonesouk, District Progressive Promotion of Women
Mr. Phetsamone Kounlavong, CLWP and Gender, NTPC
Dr. Jutta Krahn, CLWP Consultant, NTPC
Dr. Roselyn Paelmo, Consultant Agro-Forestry, NTPC
Mr. Sonexai Kosy, Fishery Co-management, NTPC

Field research was conducted in three villages by the following team after a one-day participatory training in methods. The lead consultant and the E&S Coordinator provided oversight.

Ms. Khamkhing Inthavong, E&S Coordinator, NTPC
Mr. Say Silatana, Deputy Head of Lao National Front
Ms. Phonesouk, Head of DPP
Mr. Nouan, Technician of Youth Union
Ms. Keoula Souliyardeth, RMU
Ms. Toumkham Chanthavoy, Technician of Lao Women's Union
Mr. Phetsamone Kounlavong, CLWP, NTPC

The community level research used two methods:
Key Informant Interviews and Participatory Focus Group Discussions

Key Informant Interviews

Research tool: interview questionnaire

Method: one-on-one interview

1. Village Authority Committee Member
2. Law Women's Union Representative
3. Lao National Front Representative

Community Key Informant Interview

Village Name:

Title of Interviewee:

M or F (circle)

1. What do you think is the biggest change since resettlement for men in this village? Why?
2. What do you think is the biggest change since resettlement for women in this village? Why?
3. What do you think is the biggest difficulty facing women in this village in the future? Why?

4. What do you think is the biggest difficulty facing men in this village in the future? Why?
5. Over the last 10 years, do you think that family violence is increasing, decreasing or no change? (If increasing or decreasing, ask why.)
What can be done to help solve this problem?
6. Over the last 10 years, do you think that drinking is increasing, decreasing or no change? (If increasing or decreasing, ask why.)
What can be done to help solve this problem?
7. Over the last 10 years, do you think drug use is increasing, decreasing or no change? (If increasing or decreasing, ask why.)
What can be done to help solve this problem?

Gather details on divorce in the village and the splitting of assets.

Participatory Focus Groups: total 3, each with 5 members

Research tool: 4 participatory exercises

Method: one person to facilitate the group; one person to take notes

1. Women, average or wealthy
2. Women, poor or vulnerable
3. Men, mixed classes

Participatory Focus Groups

Village Name:

Group Type (circle):

Female average/wealthy Female poor/vulnerable Male mixed class

Introduce yourselves and explain the purpose of the research – to understand differences in women’s and men’s ideas and experiences. Explain that we are interested in their opinions, and there are no right or wrong answers to any questions.

Participants’ names (first name only) and ages:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Exercise #1 - Occupations

Materials: men or women occupation cards

Explain that we are first talking about occupations. Show participants the cards: housewife, farmer, fisher, laborer, other.

Ask participants to select the card that best shows their usual occupation and put the card in front of them. Encourage participants to answer for themselves; don't worry about others.

After everyone has selected a card, ask each participant:

1. Why did you select _____ ?
2. Tell me what you do in a normal day as a _____?
3. Do you think most women in the village are like you?
If not, what do other women do?

Older women?

Younger women?
4. What was your usual occupation before resettlement?
5. In what ways has your usual occupation changed in the last 10 years?

Exercise #2 - Decision-Making

Materials: resource cards, man/woman cards, flipchart paper (optional)

1. Explain that we are going to now talk about decision-making. Show participants the different resources on cards, one by one, asking if these are resources in their community. (If not, omit card.)

Resources: money, credit, information, house/houseplot, agricultural land, trees, NTFP, fish, chicken, pigs, cattle.

2. Put the flipchart paper on the ground with the different categories (man, woman, man/woman) ask the participants to think about each resource and discuss together. Ask them to put the resource under one of the categories depending on who they think decides about that resource. Encourage group discussion and debate.

The key question is: Who Decides About This Resource?

3. When they are finished, ask them why they placed the resources where they did. Ask for details to understand their thinking.

Take notes and record where the resources were placed and why.

Man	Woman	Woman/Man

4. Which is most important resource for women? Why?

5. For men? Why?

Exercise #3 - Durable Goods

Materials: goods cards, men/women cards, flipchart paper (optional)

1. Explain that we are going to now talk about durable goods. Show participants the different goods on cards, one by one, asking if these are goods in their community. (If not, omit card.)

Durable goods: rice cooker, refrigerator, video/dvd player, vehicle, motorboat, water dispenser, tv, cabinet, washing machine, motorbike, cd player, boat, traditional stove, sewing machine, bicycle, generator.

2. Put the flipchart paper on the ground with the different categories (man, woman, man/woman) ask the participants to think about each good and discuss together. Ask them to put the goods under one of the categories depending on who they think benefits most from that good. Encourage group discussion and debate.

The key question is: Who Benefits From This Good?

3. When they are finished, ask them why they placed the goods where they did. Ask for details to understand their thinking.

Take notes and record where the goods were placed and why.

Man	Woman	Woman/Man

4. Which is most important durable good for women? Why?

5. For men? Why?

Exercise #4 - Gender Specific Changes by Age

Materials: flipchart paper and markers

Explain that we are now going to talk about differences by age and gender. We would like them to think carefully about the different age groups. They should talk as a group to agree on an answer (can put two answers up if needed). Use the prepared flipchart paper to record answers and reasons why.

1. What is the biggest positive change since resettlement for young women (age 15-30) in this village? Why?
2. For middle aged women (age 30-50)? Why?
3. For older women (50+)? Why?
4. What is the biggest positive change since resettlement for young men (age 15-30) in this village? Why?
5. For middle aged men (age 30-50)? Why?
6. For older men (50+)? Why?
7. What is the biggest negative change since resettlement for young women (age 15-30) in this village? Why?
8. For middle aged women (age 30-50)? Why?
9. For older women (50+)? Why?
10. What is the biggest negative change since resettlement for young men (age 15-30) in this village? Why?
11. For middle aged men (age 30-50)?
12. For older men (50+)? Why?

Annex C – Gender and Access/Control over Productive Resources

Large-scale rural development schemes that involve technological change and new farming practices often negatively impact on women's access to and control over productive resources (see, for example, Daley 2011). The evidence from the Nakai resettlement suggests that this was not the case. Women, in fact, have arguably increased access to and control over productive resources with a few notable exceptions.

Women and men both have increased levels of resources post-resettlement due to the fact that there is simply more absolute income. Increases in income and consumption patterns may be attributed to a combination of project support and other local, regional and national factors including:

- direct economic stimuli to resettler household such as employment, dividends and compensation payments;
- higher rates of fishery productivity in the reservoir;
- high market demand for forest resources in the region;
- growth of incomes and consumption in Lao PDR as a whole during the resettlement period;
- provision of new roads leading to better access to markets and services;
- infrastructure provision such as schools and health centers (LSMS 2013:145).

While women have access to more resources in absolute terms, it is less clear whether women have increased access and control over resources relative to men. Comprehensive baseline or monitoring data on access and control is not available. Indicative data tracking male and female access to and control over resources was gathered over a three year period with six families from 2006-2008 (Gender Advisor Trip Report, Annex F, May 2008). This data, combined with primary research on access and control conducted as part of this evaluation and other data gathered from key informant interviews, informs the patterns outlined below by resource.

Money

Data from 2006-2008 suggested that husbands and wives having joint access to money was on the rise in the early post-resettlement period. In 2006, five of the six families perceived either the husband or the wife⁸ as having sole access to the money in the family. By 2008 all families except one perceived the husband and wife as having joint access to the family money. This change in access may be

⁸ Two families said that the husband had access to money while three families said the wife had access.

influenced by the increasing availability of money that allows for more widespread family use.

Control over money seems to vary a bit by family but generally families practice joint decision making with their money. This pattern required both spouses to agree before significant purchases may be made. Gold jewelry was included in the 2014 data set as a high-value purchase that was controlled jointly by males/females. Some families follow a pattern whereby women make decisions about small purchases while husbands and wives together make decisions about larger purchases. No changes to this model were noted over time. A model of joint male/female access to and control over household money is consistent with a vision of gender equality.

Credit

Data from this research shows that families consistently practice a joint decision-making process for credit from 2006 through to 2014. Reasons for joint control over credit centered on the high value of credit and the need to ensure cooperation between spouses for repayment. Some respondents noted that the village credit fund required spouses to jointly apply for credit, suggesting that the project has effectively reinforced this gender-balanced model for household finances. A model of joint male/female access to and control over credit is consistent with a vision of gender equality.

Information

Data from the earlier study suggests that women's access to training and information improved in the early years of resettlement. In May 2006, four of the six families said that only men had access to information and training while two families said men and women had joint access. In May 2007 and 2008, only two families reported access to information as a male domain, while four felt that both the husband and wife had access and control over information. One of the two families that perceived information as a male domain explained that the husband had finished primary school while the wife had no education, making it easier for him to understand new information. The other family that continued to perceive information as under male control was an older couple aged around 60 years. By 2014, every focus group (rich women, poor women, men) perceived information to be the domain of women and men alike.

This data highlights a pattern of change in resettled villages for male and female gender roles,. Several participants in 2006-2008 expressed an awareness that the project expected women to be at meetings, highlighting the important role the project served as change agents to foster gender equality. By 2014, the shift in thinking toward joint access to and control over information had become an entrenched part of the fabric of the community. Focus group participants did not

hesitate to demonstrate their understanding that information belonged to all members of the community, women and men alike.

House and houseplot

Before resettlement, four of the six families perceived the house and houseplot to be under female control. By 2008, all participating families saw the houseplot as being under joint control of the husband and wife, and this joint model of control was also demonstrated strongly in 2014. The data suggests that prior to resettlement, women retained almost sole responsibility for the house and were able to solely make decisions about the home and surrounding land. Since resettlement, men have claimed much great power over decision-making about the house resulting in a net loss of power for women in this arena of decision-making. The likely reason for this is that prior to resettlement, only minor decisions needed to be made about the house, and minor household decisions are typically the domain of women. With resettlement came increased land and house value, and major decisions about the home. Formal joint land titles also likely helped instill a more balanced decision-making model. A joint model of decision-making on the house and houseplot is consistent with gender equality goals.

Agricultural land

Agricultural land was perceived by all families from 2006-2014 as being under joint control of the husband and wife; they discuss and together make decisions pertaining to their agricultural land. This held constant across families and over time. No change was documented post-resettlement, however, it is notable that all focus groups identified agricultural land as one of men's more important resources. Agricultural land was not perceived as one of women's most important resources, suggesting that men are regarded as land owners regardless of joint titles.

Trees

Men have primary access to and control over trees. Reasons for this were cited as the distance to forest, difficulty of the work, and women's lack of knowledge about trees. Women are sometimes involved in logging and timber expeditions, but they generally help to carry the wood. Men's superior knowledge of logging and species selection has not changed over time although women have been included in the VFA.

NTFP

The data suggests that in 2008, all of the families saw both men and women as having access to and control over NTFPs. Many couples explained that they went together to the forest to gather NTFPs. They made decisions about whether to consume or sell NTFPs jointly. Perceived joint access and control over NTFPs seemed to have increased over the data gathering period with more couples presenting this joint model in 2008 than in 2007 and 2006. Reasons for this remain

unclear. The 2014 data suggests that NTFPs have reverted back to female control. This seems to be influenced by the lack of accessible NTFPs so that women generally gather them for household consumption only, and the increase in men's focus on other activities such as forestry and fishing.

Fish

Data collected in 2006 and 2007 showed that some families saw fishing as a male activity, but about half of the families saw fishing as a joint male/female activity. Some couples explained that they fished together or that the wife fished with small nets and the husband used larger ones or a boat. By 2008, all of the families saw fishing as a male activity and this pattern seems entrenched by 2014. The distance to the fishing grounds were cited as one of the reasons that men do this work, but this shift is also likely linked to the technological changes in fishing, moving it from subsistence to an income-earning enterprise.

A shift of labor division within fishing that favors male fishing activities over women's is not necessarily consistent with gender equality goals because it runs the risk of losing women's specialized realms of fishing/aquaculture knowledge that have helped families meet daily food needs. The project should guard against the possible loss of women's access to fish and aquaculture by ensuring their voices are heard in all village fishing associations. 2014 project data shows that the Village Fishing Groups include 49 men and 15 women, showing that women do have reasonable representation at this level.

Chickens

No changes noted over time. Generally women have primary responsibility for caring for chickens. Women usually make decisions to sell or eat chickens due to the relative small value of this resource. Chickens remain an important resource for poor women.

Pigs

The research in 2006-2008 found that men and women jointly tended to make decisions about selling or killing pigs. Pigs were seen as a valuable resource that required some discussion. By 2014, the results were mixed. Some families still practiced joint decision-making over pigs, but others left women to make the decisions. This may have been linked to the increased wealth of resettled families that made the relative wealth of pigs small compared to the wider household income. Women have primary responsibility to care for pigs, and this has not changed.

Livestock were raised traditionally as a source of wealth that could be liquidated as needed – rather than as an economic enterprise (Chamberlain et al 1996). Evidence gathered in community level research for this evaluation showed that poor women

in particular still valued livestock above other commodities (e.g. cash, gold, credit) for the safety and security of the resource. Poor women still valued pigs and other livestock over cash or gold because they knew that these resources would not be squandered, and could be translated into food or money as needed.

Gender Divisions of Labor

Understanding of changes in gender divisions of labor is stymied by a lack of comprehensive baseline or monitoring data. Available data suggest that the following gender specific trends are likely underway in the resettled villages.

Feminization of agriculture

A shift in labor patterns for agricultural activities from the joint domain of women and men to more dominantly female domain (QSEM 2013:18). This trend was evidenced soon after resettlement, and has likely increased over time as men have become more and more engaged in fishing and logging. Time use studies collected over three years tracked changes in male/female activities for six families in Khon Khen and Khaouy from 2006 before resettlement until 2008 concluded that agricultural labor may be in the early stages of a process of feminization as a result of closer field proximity and increased male opportunities for outside labor and earnings (Gender Advisor Trip Report Annex F, May 2008).

Men continue to be involved in agricultural decision-making and in providing 'hard' labor for some stages of production in some families, but women also contribute 'hard' labor in some villages or families (Akhanik 2009). The absence of men has been found as a hindrance to farming in some families, as some women do not wish to take on farming alone. Reductions in access to NTFP has been an enabling factor, because women spend less time on this activity, and have more time for agriculture. The project has recognized and responded to women's dominant role in agriculture and agro-forestry, and has structured practical training at village level to enable participation. Programs have been designed to be suitable for those with no or low literacy. The project has furthermore ensured that women were represented on village fishing and forestry groups, so that they are involved at higher levels in all aspects of resource management.

Men become key income earners

Men became the dominant earners in families in the post-resettlement period in line with traditional gender divisions of labor. In particular, fishing went from being a subsistence activity to a marketable activity, and logging for commercial enterprises became highly lucrative. Fishing and logging had traditionally been male activities, but the nature of the activities changed radically due to changes in the resource base and new marketing opportunities. Logging enterprises were enabled by new roads and transport and new technology (electric saws) that allowed wood to be easily extracted and sold to timber companies. Essentially, men's traditional gender roles

became the big money-makers after resettlement, resulting in net gains for men in terms of their contributions to household finances.

While men concentrated their efforts on fishing and logging, women have become the dominant farmers in many families as noted above. Women also continue to be active raising small livestock. Quite interestingly (and potentially disadvantageously to gender equality), women are increasingly classifying themselves as housewives in resettled villages. The percentage of women who described domestic work as their main occupation increased from 10-14 percent between 2008-2013 according to health surveys (FHS 2013). Akhanik (2009) further found that the majority of women in the resettled village classified themselves as housewives while a full 93 percent of women in the traditional village classified themselves as farmers. Research conducted for this evaluation found that women self-identified as housewives, farmers, and traders depending on individual circumstances.

The data available suggests movement toward women taking on a secondary earning role in families while men take the dominant role. This stands in contrast to traditional household livelihood strategies that were more gender balanced in terms of earning potential. Akhanik's study (2009) further documented a significant shift toward men as primary income earners. Over 80 percent of households in the resettled village studied listed husband or son as the primary family earner compared with only 40 percent of household in the traditional village. This trend is significant because status and welfare are closely linked to earnings, and because money that lands first in the hands of women is more likely to be spent on the welfare of children and the broader family than on a single individual, although household decision making models do not suggest this is a problematic issue at this point in time in resettled villages.

Annex D – Women and Land Rights

Broader research on gender and land rights in Lao PDR has found that women are generally disadvantaged with respect to land and property rights on divorce and widowhood, particularly in ethnic groups where patrilineal land tenure and inheritance is practiced (Mann & Luangkhhot 2008:24). A study of gender and land practices in five ethnic groups⁹ (Mann and Luangkhhot 2008) found that traditional land use is regulated by the spirit world, and men serve as the intermediaries between the material and spirit worlds. Spirits govern land use and inheritance, and men's control over the spirit world strengthens patriarchal structures. Women from most ethnic groups, except matrilineal groups, tend to tolerate a difficult marriage because social and economic structures make it extremely difficult for a woman to live on her own. Women are therefore highly dependent on men in patrilineal/lineal ethnic groups such as those that dominate the plateau.¹⁰

Traditional villages on the plateau did not have formal land ownership. Agricultural land was rotated, so not 'owned' in a formal sense. Houses and houseplots in most ethnic groups were passed to the son who stayed in the house with his parents. The son typically would bring his wife to the house, raise his family in the house, and care for his aging parents. The 'inheritance house' became central for the extended family, and any relatives who had nowhere to live or were divorced typically lived there (Akhanik 2009).

The project and the GOL introduced formal land titles to all resettled households in the name of both the husband and wife. This was an important and calculated intervention designed to increase women's formal control over productive resources and foster greater gender equality within the household. Under the project agreement, land and house titles cannot be sold until after 2014, so it remains to be seen whether some families may try to liquidate their assets post-2014. It will be important for the project to monitor house and property sales in the final phase of the project to understand if women and men benefit equally from sales, and to design interventions as needed in the event that women (or men's) legal rights are usurped by traditional custom.

Despite careful gender sensitive implementation that included joint distribution and training on the legal ramifications of joint land ownership, early evidence suggests that resettlers are generally reverting to patrilineal custom in the event of divorce. Rates of divorce in resettled area have not changed significantly since start of LSMS 2006-2013, hovering around 5-6% (LSMS 2013). It is possible, however, that divorce rates will rise over time based on analysis of health survey data by the POE that suggests that some men will seek out new wives as they acquire wealth. In

⁹ Hmong, Tai Dam, Khmu, Brao, Trieng.

¹⁰ Lao Loum groups are exceptions to this rule, practicing matrilineal marriage patterns.

addition, women are less likely than men to remarry in the event of divorce, leading to limited livelihood options for divorced women compared to divorce men (McDowell *et al.*, March 2013).

Divorce customs in traditional villages were dictated largely by who was deemed at fault for the divorce. The person deemed most blameless had more power to keep children and goods. This practice was still in evidence in the traditional Makong village of Makfeung visited as part of this evaluation. Key informants explained that the spouse who is deemed to be at fault usually receives less than the one who is not. If both are at fault, the split can be more equal. The same pattern was found in Thaphayban, another Makong village that was not resettled (Akhanik 2009). Homes remained in the husband's family in all examples offered. The wife generally vacates the home (with or without her children) and moves back into her brother's or parent's home.

Traditional norms around divorce and property settlements continue to strongly influence practices in resettled villages. Despite ensuring that house and land titles were issued jointly, there were documented instances where women lost their assets in divorce and widowhood. Traditional norms essentially over-rode statutory property rights. In fact, Akhanik (2009) found that divorce settlements in relocated villages may be less equitable than traditional villages, as women lost all rights to assets in some instances and did not lay claim to their share of the house or land.

Stories about divorce settlements gathered during the course of this evaluation were highly individualized, and would require deeper inquiry to understand trends more fully. Examples of general models as described by key informants included:

- the person who desires the divorce will get less, and they should be the ones who leave the house;
- whoever makes the mistake will get less property;
- the property should be divided amongst the children;
- the property should be evenly divided between the husband, wife and the children.

At the very least, it is clear that there is significant confusion and variable understanding about joint property rights in cases of divorce. All of the personal stories collected during field research involved the wife leaving the home (with or without compensation), in line with traditional norms in patrilineal/local cultures. Although comprehensive research on the issue has yet to be undertaken, preliminary data suggests that joint titling alone does not ensure equal rights for women and men in the absence of full understanding or enforcement of rights.

Patterns observed in the Nakai resettlement area are consistent with Mann *et al.* (2008) description of the following outcomes in Lao PDR when statutory land allocation overlays customary practice:

- the authority of elders to mediate conflicts is reduced or relegated to household conflict settlement;
- statutory mechanisms may not be understood by local authorities in the same way;
- the focus of land use shifts from collective and cooperative to individual and household.

Mann *et al.* (2008) further found that there was considerable confusion about gender-specific statutory rights with many implementers and local authorities unclear on why women and men should have jointly issued titles. There is evidence that the practice of issuing joint titles can lead to great gender equality but it must be clearly understood and practiced, and since the practice is contrary to custom, the uptake is uneven.

National research into gender and land conflicts revealed that only those with means and influence utilize the formal courts system. The less privileged and less educated may find the judicial system too expensive, slow, and difficult to maneuver. The majority of cases that progress to district courts are brought by those who are prepared to persevere with the case after mediation has not succeeded at the lower levels. Very few cases proceed beyond the district courts. Village mediation offers the most effective means of averting conflicts and settling disputes, and it is endorsed by officials at central, provincial and district levels as the best means of preventing conflict cases from reaching the problematic court system (Mahaphone *et al.* 2007). Project interventions, therefore, should focus on local authorities to help ensure women are able to lay claim to their assets as promised under statutory laws.

Annex E - Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a widespread global human rights issue that remains largely hidden in Lao PDR due to an absence of data and a culture of silence and acceptance. Violence, particularly sexual violence, is seen as taboo. Many people believe that violence within relationships is private, and should not be intervened with. Further, violence against women is sometimes seen as an acceptable consequence of transgressed gender roles and responsibilities (UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific n.d.).

Gender inequalities in intra-family earnings is an influencing factor in domestic violence. Research into rural domestic violence in Lao found that violence is more likely to occur in families where the woman earns less than the man. Uneducated women are also more likely to experience violence in the home than educated women (CUSO/GDG n.d.). Evidence from resettled villages that suggests that income earnings are becoming increasingly unbalanced in the family due to men's successes in fishing and logging, could be a factor that creates an enabling environment for increased domestic violence.

It remains exceptionally difficult to ascertain the prevalence of domestic violence due to the shroud of secrecy that persists around the issue in Lao PDR. Studies that have assessed attitudes toward domestic violence suggest that there is widespread agreement that spousal violence (generally aimed at women) is acceptable under certain circumstances, although study findings vary in degree. Different data sources collected by the Human Rights Resource Center (n.d.) found the following based on primary research in Lao PDR:

- 81% of girls/women think a husband is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances
- 63% of girls and 45% of boys agreed that it is all right for a man to hit his wife if she makes some mistakes
- 42% of females think husband has a right to beat wife if she disobeys him, and 67% think beating is justifiable if a wife has been unfaithful
- Only 4% of males and 7% of females would tell others to intervene if their spouse beat them

Efforts to ascertain perceptions of family violence trends in the project area from local authorities (Village Authority, Lao Women's Union and Lao National Front) were inconclusive. Some key informants felt that violence was increasing due to increased income and year-round availability of alcohol. Others felt that violence was decreasing due to improved family welfare and greater stability of family life. Still others noted no change. Key informants tended to classify family violence as a limited problem affecting only a few households and usually restricted to verbal arguments only. Project staff offered similar assessments.

Focus group discussions in 'old' and 'new' villages were more revealing. When asked open-ended questions about negative changes for males and females in distinct age groups, all three focus groups (poor women, wealthier women and mixed class men) in all three villages discussed drinking, arguments, violence in the family and divorce as negative changes for middle aged women and men aged 30-50 years. It is possible that Nakai is an exceptionally tranquil place, but it is more likely that the full extent of the issue of domestic violence is not yet understood.

The Village Authority serves as the key intermediary in cases of family violence, though it is not clear how much occurs in the open and how much occurs behind closed doors due to the shame associated with disclosure and the widespread perception nationally that some forms of violence against women are justifiable. The pilot CLWP component in three villages identified through the local authorities a total of 25 families that were deemed high risk for violence, unwise expenditures or vulnerability. Violence included both verbal and physical violence, and comprised 14 of the 25 households identified as high risk.

Work within the CLWP with the at-risk families for violence can help shed light on the need for broader focus on these issues in resettled villages. Potential interventions include: rights-based awareness raising for youth and others on laws and policies as well as procedures for reporting domestic violence; targeted work with community leaders to effectively intervene in domestic violence cases; and campaigns around alcohol abuse and violence at key venues including festivals and other celebrations.