



Final Report

Australian Development Research Awards Scheme

2012 Funding Round

Purpose: The aim of this template is to provide the Australian Government and research teams with a systematic way to collect data on the outcomes of individual ADRAS research projects. Reporting includes a mix of metrics, case studies and narrative and can be tailored to suit individual projects.

The final report, as opposed to the progress reports, should emphasise the project's achievements as outcomes and/or policy impacts and contain at least one case study of where policy/practice/thinking has been influenced. Tables should include an update on data provided in progress reports.

Agreement Number	66458
Project Title Please restate the working title as specified on the Australian Aid website at: http://aid.dfat.gov.au/research/Pages/adras-awards-2012.aspx	Do policy makers understand the economic and social issues affecting low-income women in four Mekong countries? (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam) ¹
Administering Organisation	Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand
Principal Investigator	Dr. Philippe Doneys and Dr. Donna L. Doane, Gender and Development Studies, AIT
Total Australian Aid funding received during reporting year (AUD\$)	118,000

¹ As noted in our earlier reports, the original title for this project was, *'What is Essential is Invisible': Empowerment and Security in Economic Projects for Low-Income Women in Four Mekong Countries*. The new title given to us was, *Do policy makers understand the economic and social issues affecting low income women in four Mekong countries?* When our country team in Viet Nam went to discuss the project with the Vietnam Women's Union, they realized that the VWU would object to the new title since the organization includes top policymakers who would not like the implication that they do not understand these issues, and thus might not be receptive to the research project or its findings. After discussing with the other country teams and hearing similar responses, we went back to the original title of the project for our website, brochure, name cards and other 'externally-oriented' documents, but kept the new title for our internal documents since our ultimate goal has been, in fact, to help bridge the gap between policymakers and project/initiative participants and beneficiaries.

1. What are the aims and objectives of the research? *Limit 150 words.*

Our aims for the research include all of the objectives noted in earlier reports: to contribute new **knowledge and understanding to the meaning, achievement and sustainability of economic ‘empowerment’ and ‘security’** for low-income women in four Mekong countries with diverse gender dynamics and institutional structures; to contribute to **better policies and project design and implementation** for women’s empowerment and security/social protection; to help with **gender researchers’ capacity-building** in the four countries; and to **communicate research findings and engage in ongoing discussions** with policymakers, defined as government, non-government, academic, international organization and other types of groups who influence policy in substantial ways. We are particularly interested in helping bridge the gap between policymakers’ and local women’s conceptions and priorities regarding ‘empowerment’ and ‘security’ when policies/projects are designed, and helping identify how to ensure that positive results are sustainable while avoiding negative outcomes (such as increased conflict within the household or community).

2. Please outline what has been achieved in relation to the research objectives and throughout the project? *Limit 500 words.*

By comparing diverse cases across the four Mekong countries, we have been able to begin to identify what ‘works’ or ‘doesn’t work as well’ regarding these efforts, which we have found to depend very fundamentally on the local context, including such factors as local gender hierarchies, forms of institutional support (or lack thereof), and the full engagement of local men as well as women. We found that it is common practice for projects/initiatives to focus on immediate accomplishments and not look back later on to see what the eventual outcome was, but in all too many cases we found that the benefits associated with increased ‘empowerment’ and ‘security’ faded away or disappeared entirely as the funding ended and the project or implementing agencies turned away. We have thus been focusing not only on the *meaning* and *achievement* of improved economic empowerment and security, how empowerment and security are related, and what this means for women’s status in their families and communities, but also on the crucial issue of *sustainability* of benefits. These findings are perhaps our most important contributions regarding **knowledge and understanding** of the issues (the first objective noted above), together with implications for **policies and the design and implementation of projects and initiatives** for low-income women and their families, including pitfalls to avoid (the second objective noted above).

While developing the questions and research tools, as well as in carrying out both qualitative and quantitative phases of research, we also contributed to **increasing the capacity** of gender-oriented researchers in the four countries as well as associated institutions (the third objective noted above). Their work will influence both practices and policies in the coming years.² Moreover, through our **consultative workshops and other forms of communication and engagement** (the fourth objective), we have not only presented findings but also learned from the viewpoints and experiences of policymakers of different types, including those who facilitated the research and participated in the workshops. We will continue to discuss ‘gaps’ in perceptions and priorities through ongoing discussions with different types of policymakers, as well as through future workshops, publications and other forms of communication about these key issues.

² **[Case study:]** As an example, in Vietnam we have been working throughout with the Vietnam Women’s Union, particularly in Ninh Binh Province and elsewhere. They helped us identify vulnerable groups of low-income women in different project areas, and directed us toward other GOs (e.g., the Farmers’ Union) and INGOs working on relevant projects. As noted previously, we were worried that we could not get a full picture of all the positives and negatives associated with projects in these very low-income locations; however, the VWU and other facilitators made it clear that we are trying to help improve on projects in the future, and we were happy with the depth and sincerity of the answers received from local women and their families. The tie-up with the VWU also led to a collaboration with the Vietnam Women’s Academy (both tie-ups were 100% due to this research project); this not only helps build the capacity of gender-oriented practitioners and researchers, but it also allows for further research and policy dialogues extending into the future. Since our intent has been to work over time – and not simply through a one-time event – with policymakers and project designers and implementers, these ongoing discussions are very important to us, and the full impact of our research will only be apparent in the future as we continue to disseminate our integrated findings (quantitative and qualitative, with lessons from all four countries). Through this research we developed the relationships and laid the groundwork to continue this work over time; to change policies and practices in a country like Vietnam is a slow process, but we find that large organizations and networks such as the VWU, the VWA and their affiliates (GOs, INGOs and others) are very receptive to research findings, and through such institutions changes in attitudes and practices can be made.

Staying with this case study, a further example of how these research findings can be applied is seen in the current work of one of the leaders of our Vietnam team, Phuong Pham. She has recently been hired as a regional gender consultant by ADB (Bangkok office) and is applying what she learned in our research to the project design and M&E of a women’s economic empowerment project in several countries in the Mekong region (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam) dealing with organic farming. Through this research project, she has learned what to look for in terms of women’s ‘empowerment’ and ‘security’ (both tangible and intangible aspects of each), and knows how to suggest changes that are most likely to result in positive and sustainable outcomes and help the project avoid negative and unsustainable outcomes. She has also proposed M&E guidelines to ensure that the gender dimension is explicitly and carefully addressed. In this way, the ‘spinoffs’ from this research will reach all four countries and beyond as the researchers involved in this project go out and apply the findings as part of their work throughout the region, and as we continue to discuss the key issues at conferences and workshops, in meetings with policymakers, and through publications in upcoming months and years.

3. How have key stakeholders been engaged in the research?

Table 1: Engagement of external individual / groups / networks

External Individuals / Groups / Networks per Theme			
External Individual / Group / Network engaged ³	Duration of engagement ⁴	What / how did engaged group contribute? ⁵	Changes to relationships/networks ⁶
<p><u>Viet Nam:</u></p> <p>Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) in Ninh Binh Province, Hoa Binh Province, and Thanh Hoa Province</p> <p>The projects have been carried out by the Ninh Binh Women's Union (Ninh Binh Province), the Farmer's Union and ADDA (Hoa Binh Province), and Paz y Desarrollo (Thanh Hoa Province), but they are done in conjunction with the Vietnam Women's Union because they are primarily women-oriented. The VWU are not only policymakers themselves, but they will be able to continue to facilitate future ongoing discussions with policymakers in different capacities in the country.</p>	2014, 2015, 2016 (new)	The VWU and its affiliates have been very good partners throughout in providing key informants and access to case studies in different provinces in both the qualitative and, more recently, the survey phase of the research project. They also facilitated discussions with VWU and other policymakers at local, provincial and national levels.	Formalized through MoAs
<p>Vietnam Women's Academy</p> <p>The VWA is a relatively new academic institution focusing on Gender and Development, and is associated with the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU, above) as a parent organization.</p>	2016 (new)	The Vietnam Women's Academy has been collaborating with us in preparing for and facilitating the policy forum/consultative workshop that was held on 1 December 2016. They would like to continue to collaborate in the future, given that we may be able to help with capacity-building, joint research and other collaborative efforts.	Formalized through MoAs
<p>CARE International</p> <p>LIGHT (Light Institute of Social Health)</p>	2016 (new) 2016 (new)	Both CARE International and LIGHT were very helpful in facilitating access to projects on women's empowerment and security in Dien Bien Province (CARE) and in Hanoi (city), focusing on ethnic minority women and migrant women workers, respectively, for the survey phase of the research project.	<p>Apart from formal MoAs with country-based researchers, no other MoAs were needed.</p> <p>Permission was given by the organizations involved in relevant</p>

³ *Engaged:* State the name of the organisation / institution / group / network and any relevant individual or key contact personnel involved

⁴ *Duration of engagement:* State whether the engagement is 'new' i.e. commenced during the ADRAS project or 'existing' and include the years of engagement e.g. 2009, 2010, 2011

⁵ *Contribution of engaged group:* Classify the contribution according to which stage in your research project the engagement has occurred. For example: Design; Implementation/fieldwork; report writing; review. Consideration of findings/recommendations; Communication / dissemination

⁶ *Change:* Outcomes in terms of changes in engagement – relationships / structures, networks including creation of new networks; formalizing relationships e.g. through MoU's;

			projects/initiatives after we outlined the research project and discussed our intentions.
<p><u>Lao PDR:</u></p> <p>Provincial/district officials, and offices of the district- and village-level Lao Women's Union (e.g., Sangthong District officials and LWU officers in Sangthong District, Vientiane Capital, and five villages in the District as well as sites in Oudomxay and Bokeo Provinces). In addition, for the survey phase the Ministry of Agriculture helped facilitate our research in new areas as well as earlier sites; the survey sites included Oudomxay, Phongsaly, Sekong, Attapeu and Vientiane Provinces.</p> <p>The projects examined included those sponsored by UN organizations, international aid agencies, and INGOs among others working with Lao GO counterparts.</p>	2014, 2015, 2016 (new)	<p><i>[Previously reported:</i> The district officials were actually very helpful in our research by facilitating entry into the villages studied. They were also helpful in introducing us to both project and non-project participants. Women from both the provincial and district level branches of the LWU provided useful information, and the village level women members of the LWU provided interesting insights into gender dynamics, gender trainings and gender concerns on the local level.]</p> <p>Regarding the recent survey phase of the project, many of the sites were rural so that in addition to the LWU (who helped particularly in Sangthong District during the survey phase), the Ministry of Agriculture was helpful in accessing additional areas in which the survey was conducted, totalling 400 interviewees over different sites (in Oudomxay, Phongsaly, Sekong, Attapeu and Vientiane Provinces). Both organizations have been important in accessing government-related policymakers, as well as some in non-governmental positions who have an interest in women's economic empowerment and security.</p>	<p>Apart from formal MoAs with country-based researchers, no other MoAs were needed.</p> <p>Permission was given by the organizations involved in relevant projects/initiatives after we outlined the research project and discussed our intentions.</p>
<p><u>Myanmar:</u></p> <p>Socio-Economic and Gender Research Institute (SEGRI) in Yangon, Myanmar – this group of gender specialists directed research by working closely with local groups of researchers in Mon State, the Dry Zone, Kachin State and Rakhine State. They also provided connections with CARE, UNDP, the Kachin Women Peace Network, the Gender Equality Network, and other networks and organizations working on women's economic empowerment and security. In addition, they facilitated and conducted discussions with policymakers as they are well placed to do so. (Ours was one of the first projects they worked on together as a group, helping to establish SEGRI as a research group.)</p>	2014, 2015, 2016 (new)	<p>Worked, for both the qualitative and survey phases of the research, on (i) a consortium project of several organizations dealing with HIV (CARE and others), particularly in groups facing social exclusion in Mon State; (ii) UNDP-assisted self-reliance groups in the very poor rural parts of the Dry Zone; (iii) selected IDP camps in Kachin State (both government- and non government-administered); and (iv) a consortium project focusing on gender-based violence in Rakhine State (Muslim IDP and Buddhist IDP sites). SEGRI contacts provided access to key informants, project sites and local organizations working there; they also facilitated access to discussions with policymakers concerned with social protection and economic projects.</p>	Formalized through MoAs

Kachin Women Peace Network (KWPN)	2014, 2015, 2016 (new)	The KWPN was very helpful in allowing us to conduct our research in Kachin State, focusing on the security and empowerment programs and related activities for internally displaced women and their families.	Formalized through MoAs
<p><u>Cambodia:</u></p> <p>The country-based researchers did very extensive interviews and, in the second phase, surveys with low-income urban and peri-urban/semi-rural home-based women workers who have been members of HomeNet Cambodia (located in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Poipet). They also studied an ADDA (Agricultural Development Denmark Asia) project in Siem Reap focusing on low-income women farmers; the women's economic empowerment projects of the Cambodian NTFP Development Organization (Cando) in an indigenous/minority area of Ratanakiri; the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap dealing with violence against women and security concerns; and a community-based project of Urban Poor Women Development (UPWD), again dealing with violence against women and security concerns in urban slum communities in Phnom Penh. These sites were covered in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research.</p>	<p>2014, 2015, 2016 (new)</p> <p>(HomeNet Cambodia was an existing engagement while all the others are new)</p>	<p>Contacts through these organizations provided access to key informants and the projects and policies we wanted to examine in more detail. They have also provided access to relevant policy makers, e.g., in the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and other government organizations on the local and national levels, together with other Cambodian NGOs, INGOs and international organizations (e.g., UNDP) working on gender-related concerns.</p>	<p>Apart from formal MoAs with country-based researchers, no other MoAs were needed.</p> <p>Permission was given by the organizations involved in relevant projects/initiatives after we outlined the research project and discussed our intentions.</p>

- Where appropriate, include case studies to illustrate in more detail specific successes/innovations/challenges in meeting one or more of the research objectives (see Q2. for more detail on the focus of these case studies). *←Included in the narrative above (Q2)*

4. What knowledge outputs or research communications have resulted from the project? How have these been used to achieve the research objectives?

Please provide the Australian Government with copies of these outputs with this progress report.

Type of output	Title/description of output	Published Y/N?	Source	
Literature review / scoping study	<p><i>[Previously reported:</i> In this research we have been building on and thinking more about an earlier review of literature and scoping study that we carried out regarding the concept of <i>women's economic 'empowerment'</i>. (This earlier literature review and scoping study was published in 2015 as part of a book chapter; the questions first addressed in this publication served as an entry into this research project.⁷) In recent months we have benefited from the review of literature conducted by another AIT team (K. Jongjarb) on both <i>formal and informal social protection initiatives and practices</i> – i.e., those provided by GOs, NGOs, INGOs, religious organizations and local informal groups in all four countries.]</p> <p>In recent months this background information, not published but used internally, has informed and will continue to inform our analyses and discussions even after the formal conclusion of the research project.</p>	No (for internal use)	Project staff (Kanokphan Jongjarb)	
Tool / guide / testing of tool	We developed, tested and used an ambitious set of qualitative followed by separate survey questionnaires that covered perceptions (a wide range of intangible factors) of women participants and their husbands/partners. The challenge was to deal not only with tangible factors that can be easily discussed qualitatively, and surveyed in a quick quantitative way, but also to go more deeply into perceptions and	No (but we can write much about the use of this survey method using iPads – both successes and challenges regarding conducting surveys using this survey tool)	<i>[Previously reported:</i> Questionnaires and guidelines used for the qualitative phase of research were completed and fully employed in the qualitative interview phase of the research. We also provided guidelines and trainings in qualitative interview techniques in the four countries. On average, the country-based teams conducted 150 extended interviews per country, resulting in thousands of pages of transcripts.]	Set of five qualitative questionnaires --> three designed for in-depth interviews: - women and some men participants (empowerment focus)

⁷ Donna L. Doane and Philippe Doney, 'Lost in Translation? Gender and Economic Empowerment in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region' in Ragnhild Lund, Philippe Doney and Bernadette Resurreccion (eds.), *Gender Entanglements: Revisiting Gender in a Rapidly Changing Asia*, Copenhagen: NIAS press, 2015.

	<p>intangible/invisible sides of empowerment, security and sustainability.</p> <p>We should also note that this was an innovative approach to both studies of empowerment and security in that we were trying, particularly in the early qualitative phase of research, to understand these conceptions without relying on predetermined definitions, given that the ‘fixed’ definitions used by most measurement tools do not take the local contexts into consideration. This stands in contrast to most studies that define the subject of analysis (and thus what is to be ‘measured’) even before learning what local conceptions, perceptions and priorities are. For this reason, we find that many predetermined definitions are not appropriate for local contexts and do not give us the understanding we need (they may be asking the ‘wrong’ questions that cannot be understood or answered in any appropriate way).</p> <p>A major challenge was to use QuickTap software with this ambitious and long questionnaire developed for the survey phase. We felt that QuickTap would give us more accuracy and increase the speed by which the survey could be done – it can also be done offline, necessary in our case because of our use in remote areas that have no internet access. It was also supposed to be able to handle a complicated questionnaire such as ours. However, the software is new and we ran into ongoing challenges that needed to be worked out step-by-step. This caused headaches and delays, but we were able to complete the survey in all four countries, and it appears to have increased the survey’s accuracy as compared with previous methods of conducting surveys on paper. It also increased the speed of analysis, given that the encoding phase for data entry was not needed (data could be entered directly from the devices – in this case, iPads).</p> <p>Finally, given the huge quantity of qualitative interview results, we used NVIVO software to try to organize the results by country and by theme. This experiment (new for us) produced some useful data for all four countries.</p>		<p>In recent months the main findings of the qualitative phase have been analysed by country-based and AIT teams through adherence to ‘Write-up Guidelines’ (common questions to be answered for each case study), in order to allow findings to be compared (i) on a <i>country basis</i> for policy briefs keeping in mind local institutions and priorities, and (ii) <i>thematically across countries</i> with policymakers, academics, CSOs, INGOs, and project designers and implementers as the ‘target audience’.</p> <p>Survey (quantitative) phase: We first conducted initial weeklong quantitative (survey-related) workshops with the country teams in order to decide on the structure of the survey, the general content, and methods of approaching intangible as well as tangible concerns in a way that is relevant to each of the four countries. Two expert consultants – one proficient in research design and analysis (M. Voelker) and another who assisted in implementation and training (H. Lim) – helped us design, train, test, implement, report and analyse the quantitative findings from this phase of the research.</p> <p>The initial findings of cases included in the survey phase that were not included in the qualitative phase were also analysed based on the ‘Write-up Guidelines’ – i.e., the questions common to all case study write-ups.</p> <p>NVIVO results became available over the past year after all translations were finalized and the submitted interviews were checked by the country-based teams.</p>	<p>- women and some men participants (security focus) - the women’s husbands); --> one for key informant interviews; and --> one for focus group discussions.</p> <p>One common survey questionnaire in format for use with QuickTap software.</p> <p>‘Write-up Guidelines’ produced for analysis of both the case studies included in the qualitative phase and initial impressions from the new case studies added in the survey phase. (Examples of initial forms of these ‘write-ups’ are available; we will add to these write-ups and turn them into ‘chapters’ or other types of publications as additional data and analyses become available.)</p>
Conference paper/poster/presentation	* Presentations (made by P. Doneys, D. Doane and D. Buranajaroenkij) at the Southeast Asian Studies in Asia Conference 2015 (SEAS 2015), 12-13 December 2015 at Kyoto	No (not as yet – we are working to incorporate these ideas into monograph/book	Co-P.I.s (Philippe Doneys and Donna Doane) and staff member/Ph.D. student in Gender and Development Studies (Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij)	Six formal conference presentations (in the form of ppt slides)

	<p>University, Kyoto, Japan, <i>including the following presentations:</i></p> <p>→ Presentation by P. Doney: <i>Gender and ‘Development’: What do ‘empowerment’ and ‘security’ mean to women beneficiaries of economic development projects in Mekong countries? (Focus on Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam)</i>. This was derived from our findings coming from all four countries.</p> <p>→ Presentation by D. Doane and D. Buranajaroenkij: <i>Gender, Development and Social Protection: How can women’s organizations respond to inter-community conflict in Mekong countries? (Focus on Myanmar and Thailand)</i> This involved a comparison of our findings from Kachin and Rakhine States in Myanmar with the experience of women’s organizations in Southern Thailand.</p> <p>D. Buranajaroenkij is not only one of our PhD students who has been helping particularly with the analysis of Lao PDR and Myanmar data for this project, but she is also on the faculty of the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, working on gender and conflict in Buddhist-Muslim communities. (Update: she was granted her PhD in December 2017.)</p> <p><i>[Previously reported presentations include the following:]</i></p> <p>* Presentation (made by D. Doane) on women’s empowerment in the context of this study, at the Inaugural Symposium of the Women’s International Study Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA on 15-16 August 2014 (http://wisc-amh.org/symposia/view/2-risk-reinvention-how-women-are-changing-the-world).</p> <p>* Presentation (made by P. Doney and D. Doane) on the concepts of empowerment and security as part of a panel discussion (<i>Rethinking Gender and Development in Southeast Asia</i>) at the 28th ASEASUK Conference, University of Brighton, UK (Association of South-East Asian Studies in the UK) on 12-14 September 2014 (http://aseasuk.org.uk/3/28th-aseasuk-conference-university-brighton-uk). (Pl. see Table 2 below)</p> <p>* Presentation (made by D. Doane) at the Second AMNEP Forum, Hanoi on 27-28 August 2014 on</p>	<p>form based on the integrated qualitative and quantitative findings, along with journal articles)</p>		<p>(Several more <i>informal</i> presentations and discussions were made as well – at meetings, conferences and in classroom settings)</p>
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	<p><i>Women's Empowerment in the Mekong Countries: Definitions and Methodologies</i>. Also spoke at DFAT's Asia Regional Gender Focal Point (GFP) workshop on the second day of that workshop (26 August 2014).</p> <p>* Presentation (made by D. Doane), on <i>Gender and Economic Empowerment in Four Mekong Countries: Findings from Field Research</i> (discussed this project as well as the study that led into this project); this was a 'Tonyo Lecture' at the Kyoto University Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS, 25 October 2013)</p> <p>[*Please note: scheduled upcoming presentations include the following, already confirmed:]</p> <p>(1) Panel on 'Gender, Insecurity and Social Protection: Evidence from Five Mekong Countries' for the FES/Mahidol/Chulalongkorn/Chiang Mai/Mae Fah Luang/Thammasat University-sponsored Fifth International Conference on International Relations and Development (ICIRD 2017), at Thammasat University, 23-24 June 2017. Our panel will talk primarily about our research together with one other associated study from 1-4 p.m. on 23 June; presenters will include Philippe Doneys, Marc Voelker, Farid Safi, Norm Sina, Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij, Kanokphan Jongjarb and Donna Doane – all members of our research team for this study.</p> <p>(2) P. Doneys will be presenting findings from this study during a public lecture at Laval University, Quebec, Canada (Sociology Department) in March 2017 entitled, '<i>Empowerment and Security in Economic Projects for Low-income Women in Four Mekong Countries</i>'.</p> <p>(3) D. Doane will be presenting findings from this research project in a three-hour lecture focusing on 'Gender and Development', for a course at Thammasat University on 28 March 2017; the course is on International Development Paradigms for the Social Policy Development International Program.</p>			
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Academic paper (journal article/working paper/book chapter/monograph)	<p>We have completed both the qualitative and quantitative phases of our project and will continue to integrate the two sources of data (survey and qualitative interviews) for publications, as discussed below. We also want to use the data to go further, beyond descriptive statistics, to look at other more complex relationships based on multivariate regression analysis (e.g., the relationship between women beginning paid work and increasing their social status on the one hand and the rise in intra-household conflict in different parts of the four Mekong countries, depending on local gender hierarchies, male unemployment, and other variables – the intention is to head off conflict through improved project design and trainings where there is a potential for such conflicts as a woman takes on new roles and statuses).</p> <p>The country-based and AIT teams have been coordinating to write up their analyses in a way that we intend to compile into a monograph/book based on the key research themes. In addition, P. Doneys, D. Doane, D. Buranajaroenkij and M. Voelker will be writing journal papers based on specific aspects of the research that are in line with each person's interests. (Dr. Doneys will be on sabbatical for Spring Semester 2017 – January to May – in order to focus on publications; these will be detailed in the upcoming C&E Report.)</p>	No (not as yet, but moving steadily toward a range of publications. Some of the survey data came in late, and we want to compare across all four countries as well as integrate all of the most important qualitative and quantitative data into a number of publications. These will be detailed in the upcoming C&E Report.)	Co-P.I.s (P. Doneys, D. Doane), country-based team leaders, D. Buranajaroenkij, M. Voelker (head statistician for this project)	
Policy document (Policy brief/research brief /recommendations /seminar)	We have conducted two of the four consultative workshops (policy dialogues) scheduled for the four Mekong countries; the remaining two (the Laos and Myanmar workshops) will be held in February.	Printed (for our own use in workshops and elsewhere)	Project staff	Two Policy Briefs (a basic format was set allowing modifications for each country – the

	<p>One basic format for the policy brief was developed for use in all four countries, allowing modifications for each country.</p> <p>In addition, one research brief was developed (this will be updated following the last of the four consultative workshops, since the policymakers' inputs are an important component of the research brief, and can be provided with the C&E report).</p> <p>Recommendations have been made and will continue to be made in ongoing discussions with policymakers. (We also hope to have a consolidated regional dialogue on these issues later in the year, but this will not draw on project funds since we thought the four country-based consultative workshops were more important before holding a regional dialogue to further discuss recommendations.)</p> <p>We also produced a project brochure to use whenever discussing the Project with policymakers, CSOs, academics and others. The first page of the brochure was updated for the survey phase of the research.</p>		<p>Laos and Vietnam briefs have been completed and the Cambodia and Myanmar briefs will be developed)</p> <p>The Laos Summary Report, written initially for the Lao Ministry of Agriculture in English and translated into Lao, served as the basis for the Laos Policy Brief. The Laos Summary Report was informed by the Research Brief, together with selected findings from the Lao qualitative research and the Lao survey data. It was submitted to and was well-received by the Ministry of Agriculture, who facilitated much of the survey work in rural areas.</p> <p>One Research Brief</p> <p>Workshop documents (printed slides, etc.), for use in the workshops: the Vietnam and Cambodia workshops have already been completed, and the Laos and Myanmar workshops will be completed in February 2017)</p> <p>One project brochure as an</p>
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				introduction to the project (with contact details), for use in the workshops
Project evaluation	(Not applicable; we are not assessing projects as such – instead, we are examining dynamics within individual projects – what works, what doesn't work as well, and crucially what allows the benefits of the project to be sustained or not sustained over time. Please note that our own project will be audited in February/March 2017 by an external auditor using internationally-accepted auditing standards.)			
Website/social media/traditional media	We maintain a website that includes basic information and contact details regarding the project. We will soon be posting additional information as a means of continuing the discussions with policymakers in the four countries after the formal end of the project.	Jhazine Damaso (Project Officer) and staff members at AIT maintain the website	The website is http://espmekong.net/ and https://www.facebook.com/esp.mekong for photos.	Website 'published'
			No of total outputs:	20 (so far)

Table 2: Methods of Communication

Communication per Knowledge Output				
Target Audience	Knowledge output	Communication Method ⁸	Audience Reached ⁹	Response ¹⁰
<p>Policymakers (in government, non-government, academic, international organizations and other positions)</p> <p>Participants include representatives from all of the organizations listed above (including GOs, NGOs, INGOs, international organizations, academics, researchers, and others). As an example, for the Cambodia workshop invitees included (apart from local Australian Aid representatives): a number of representatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs</p>	<p>Presented some of the numerous findings from the qualitative and initial quantitative (survey) results, including all four countries but focusing particularly on the 'host' country; also, and importantly, learned from the policymakers' experiences and views concerning the key issues of low-income women's economic empowerment and security/social protection in the four Mekong countries</p>	<p>Consultative workshops (policy dialogues, with discussions as well as presentations)</p>	<p>Both policymakers and researchers learned from these dialogues</p>	<p>Both researchers and policymakers learned from these initial discussions and plan to continue in ongoing discussions (we also hope to organize a regional workshop later in the year, using outside funds)</p>

⁸ *Communication Method*: General statement of method e.g. publication, social media, seminar, meeting, conference, teaching, course etc.

⁹ *Audience Reached*: Specify level as well as estimate proportion of intended target audience reached, where possible. Include gender breakdown

¹⁰ *Response*: Qualitative assessment of response or sign of attention paid to the communication by the target audience E.g. expressions of interest; requests for more information; active participation and engagement; provision of comments or feedback. May include negative responses.

<p>(MoWA); the organizations listed above that facilitated research (CWCC, UPWD, World Vision, ADDA, Cando); UN Women; Women's Rights Monitoring Office; SILAKA; UNDP; EU; FAO; CKS/Center for Khmer Studies; Pannasastra University of Cambodia; World Fish Center; Life With Dignity; GIZ Cambodia; WinRock International; Banteay Srey Organization; Caritas Cambodia; and local women representatives from 27 community-based organizations and other groups (residents of very poor rural and urban communities). There will be a large number of CSOs – as well as government ministries/agencies, international organizations and others – invited for the Myanmar workshop as well, given the nature of the two countries (both Cambodia and Myanmar have substantial civil society inputs into policymaking; in Myanmar invitations are being extended to some supportive MPs as well). In Laos and Vietnam there were/are invitations being extended primarily to government officials (ministries, women's union and others) as well as academics (particularly in Vietnam), international organizations, collaborating NGOs and others.</p>				
<p>Academic: Academic programs, administrators, instructors, students</p>	<p>As part of this project, met with Vietnam Women's Academy (VWA) to discuss research and curriculum – with administrators and instructors. Also met with students on a separate occasion. In December 2016 held consultative workshop in association with the Vietnam Women's Academy, and plan to engage with them for capacity-building and providing recommendations in the future.</p>	<p>Meeting with VWA administrators and instructors (P. Doneys and D. Doane) for curriculum-building discussions (2014) and research and workshop-related discussions (2016).</p> <p>In addition, spoke at seminar on the occasion of International Women's Day, addressing students of the VWA (D. Doane, 2015).</p> <p>Workshop held on 1 December 2016 at the Vietnam Women's Academy.</p> <p>Also met with VWA representatives at AIT in</p>	<p>Administrators (including head of the VWA), instructors</p>	<p>The Vietnam Women's academy would like us to continue in collaborative efforts and capacity-building activities (theirs is a new program in Gender and Development).</p>

Staff	As noted in previous reports, we are helping train both senior and junior researchers in the four Mekong countries in all of the competencies outlined in this table.	The research teams in the four Mekong countries are helping build up competencies in dealing with gender analysis of economic projects and social protection initiatives that impact low-income women, as well as competencies regarding qualitative and quantitative research techniques and analysis.	Several workshops were held in each of the four countries and at AIT throughout the past years. The senior staff members in each country are also helping train their junior staff members. Training materials are disseminated in workshops, country visits and through the internet.	The senior members of the research teams in the four countries are some of the top gender experts in their respective countries, and the junior researchers are getting excellent experience working with them (as well as with the GDS team from AIT).	(Not formally recognized/certified)
Students	<p>AIT students and others concerned with gender and development (both those who participate directly in the ADRAS project and those who hear about it in classes benefit from the research project).</p> <p>(Now indirectly also helping students at the Vietnam Women's Academy, as noted in the previous table.)</p> <p>Through our statistician, Marc Voelker, and one of our main researchers, Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij, we also reach students at Mahidol University in Thailand (at the Institute for Population and Social Research and the Institute for Peace Studies, respectively).</p>	Same as above	Classes and trainings given at AIT throughout the academic year	The students are likely to become the 'new generation' of gender experts in their respective countries. (As noted previously, as an example the leader of our research team in Viet Nam, Phuong Ha Pham, was both a Ph.D. student in our program and worked as a new faculty member of the Women's Academy in Hanoi to help establish a new Gender and Development program in that institution. One of the leaders of our research team in Myanmar, May Sabe Phyu, earlier received her M.A. from our program [GDS] and is now the Director of the Gender and Equality Network and one of the co-founders of the Kachin Peace Network and the Kachin Women Peace Network; she is also one of the ten worldwide recipients of the International Women of Courage Award 2015.)	Some were working on Master's and some on Ph.D. degrees in Gender and Development Studies; two of our main researchers received their Ph.D. degrees in December 2016 (Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij and Phuong Pham). Some of the Master's students were helping with translations (e.g., from Khmer to English), and others helped directly with fieldwork and analysis. Another Ph.D. student (Farid Safi) was helping Marc Voelker and Kanokphan Jongjarb with quantitative analysis. We think that this research experience has helped them develop as gifted social science scholars and gender specialists in their home countries.

Organisational	As noted in previous reports, we have been helping gender alumni from AIT and other universities establish themselves as groups (organizations) of researchers, connected across countries through networks of gender researchers in the Southeast Asian region. SEGRI in Myanmar is one such example of this.	Same as 'staff' (above)	Same as 'staff' (above)	There is great demand for these established organizations in each country, and the network connections across countries will be very useful in the future for work on gender concerns on the regional and global levels.	This depends on the circumstances in each country as far as formalizing groups of researchers (in some country contexts an informal association seems to be better); networks across countries also work very well.

6. What can we learn from challenges/issues experienced throughout the project? *Limit 500 words.*

As noted previously, we faced delays in the first year because we wanted to work with gender researchers who were already exceptionally busy in their home countries. They came up with excellent ideas and analyses throughout the entire research period, but they could not do all the work themselves and had to bring in a number of junior researchers as well. This, of course, is a benefit from our point of view because it helps in capacity building for young gender specialists in all four countries. We learned to let each of the four country teams do the best job they can in terms of timing, given their many responsibilities and the realities they face (e.g., the difficulty of doing research in conflict zones, undertaking research where permission takes a good deal of time, or where seasonal issues such as the rainy season delay the research in unexpected ways). In fact, the delays were manageable, and the outcomes made the wait entirely worthwhile. The researchers are also often well connected, which further facilitated contacts with policymakers and strengthened our desire to influence policies in useful and effective ways.

As our project involved several teams, it did take time to coordinate with all of the country-based teams. Moreover, they had to develop their individual country proposals, including planning and budgeting, prior to the signing of MoAs, which always took time. We went back and forth to develop common 'core' questions and research tools in addition to the questions, tools and procedures that are unique to each country and case study; this was done for the qualitative phase and then again in the quantitative phase because the survey required an entirely different set of questions and possible responses (informed by the qualitative findings). Finally, we provided continual feedback regarding each other's work as we developed tools, concepts and questions that are relevant to all of the countries. This also took time, but it worked.

As indicated above (in Section 4), delays were also caused by our use of QuickTap software with tablets for the survey phase. In principle, this should have made the process of collecting data much faster, less expensive and

more accurate. QuickTap was chosen because it is survey-related software that can be used offline (our surveys were generally carried out in areas without internet service). However, although we were assured that QuickTap would work easily for us, it was actually a challenge to get it to work for our long questionnaire (it kept crashing in the beginning, had skip logic problems, and many other issues). Finally we worked out all of the difficulties and the surveys were carried out effectively. We worked throughout with the software provider, but clearly this was the first time their software was used for a survey of this length, also using four local languages as well as English. (We are in a good position to make recommendations to future researchers regarding the use of this approach, including its benefits as well as potential difficulties!)

7. Was appropriate ethics approval obtained for the project? If YES then please attach evidence of approval to this report. If evidence has already been provided please state this below.

As noted in previous reports (including before starting the research project), we were not required by AIT to obtain ethics approval before conducting this research and that AIT did not have a research ethics review committee. However, we ensured strict adherence to ethical practices in social science research by having a research protocol explaining research standards that all researchers had to follow. These standards include providing project information and contact details to all, receiving full consent (and giving respondents the ability to stop or skip questions), keeping respondents anonymous and using pseudonyms (real names were not collected), ensuring privacy and the confidentiality of information, training all interviewers and data collectors with regard to gender sensitive and ethical methods of data collection, interviewing only adults, and keeping interviews private and located in a venue chosen by participants. Participants were also reimbursed for travel and related expenses as many low-income respondents would lose needed income in order to participate. All data will be kept for the time period required by Australian Aid in a safe bought specifically for this project.

We should note that our research does not involve children and is not a topic that is considered ‘sensitive’ (as, for example, would be true of certain health issues). We also work with and have the authorization from organizations in which respondents are the beneficiaries of these organizations’ interventions.

We also drafted and the AIT President signed a Child Protection Statement for the Institute (there had not been one previously for this graduate level institution – only for the AIT International School that provides education to the children of AIT staff, faculty and students). As a consequence of this process, the Vice President of Academic Affairs expressed a strong desire to move further on an AIT-wide Child Protection Policy that would go into much more detail than does the Child Protection Statement, even though both will naturally rely heavily on existing Thai laws in this regard. The Child Protection statement was also used to make everyone involved in our project sign a statement saying they would abide by Australian Aid’s Child Protection Policy.

Moreover, Dr. Doneys, recognising the need for a research ethics review committee at AIT, was the lead author of a concept note and report submitted to the AIT for the adoption of a research ethics committee. This was recently accepted by the AIT management team and a policy is currently under review for full adoption in the coming months. The ADRAS project has been pivotal in helping guide the way, both regarding Child Protection and Research Ethics measures being passed at AIT.

8. Financial Snapshot

Please provide a final financial snapshot of your budget and expenditure for the project below. This snapshot is in addition to the financial acquittal statement required with this report.

The financial acquittal statement should include your expenditure of grant monies for the reporting period and be signed by an appropriate delegate from your accounts/finance office. The financial acquittal statement should be on your institution's letterhead as there is no related DFAT template.

Budget Allocations (A\$) – As per proposal

	1 st Year*	2 nd Year	3 rd Year***	Total
Researcher/s Salary	20,600	20,600	20,600	61,800
Field Work Costs	205,000	340,000	78,000	623,000
Travel and Related Costs	15,500	25,000	15,000	55,500
Insurances	500	500	500	1,500
Knowledge Transfer Activities	500	1,000	4,000	5,500
Capacity Development Activities	10,000	10,000	0	20,000
Total Australian Aid Funds Received**	252,000	397,000	118,000	767,000
Interest Earned on Australian Aid Funds	799	1,425		
Total Income from Australian Aid	252,799	398,425		

* Exchange rate at the time the first instalment was received (23 May 2013):

29.00 ₪/A\$ (actual amount received was 7,308,000 ₪)

30.23 ₪/US\$

Exchange rate at the time the second instalment was received (16 June 2014):

30.41 ₪/A\$ (actual amount received was 12,072,770 ₪)

32.66 ₪/US\$

Exchange rate at the time the third instalment was received (24 June 2015):

25.75 ₪/A\$ (actual amount received was 3,037,598.75 ₪)

34.06 ₪/A\$

**The figures for total funds requested for each year and the total for three years were rounded down, due to the adjustment made by Mr. Tymon Kennedy (Program Officer, Research Section, AusAid) though an email dated 19 March 2013.

***The total amount received by AIT for the third instalment was only 117,965 A\$ due to a deduction from the intermediary bank in the amount of 35.00 A\$. Also, the total interest for the 3rd year has not been recorded in the financial system yet although it has been requested.

Total Expenditure (A\$)

	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	Total
Researcher/s Salary	19,848.99	20,487.84		40,336.85
Field Work Costs	104,547.64	139,508.63		244,056.27
Travel and Related Costs	14,727.86	5,275.96		20,003.82
Knowledge Transfer Activities	826.82	914.85		1,741.67
Capacity Development Activities	0	2,891.58		2,891.58
Insurances	0**	0**		0**
Total Australian Aid Funds Expensed	139,951.31	169,078.87		309,030.18

*

Total Australian Aid Funds Un-expensed:

The Final Financial Acquittal Statements will be submitted together with the Audited Financial Statements from the External Auditor on or before June 2017 for the period 1 March 2015 to 31 December 2016. Documents are now being prepared for the Auditor to review including all accrued expenses. Total actual expenditures for the final period has not been finalized yet as AIT Finance is still finishing all December 2016 transactions to be keyed-in into the financial system.

There are three Consultative Workshops/Policy Fora being held in January – February 2017 (Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar), so their receipts and supporting documents will be liquidated to AIT Finance and Auditor by the end of February 2017.

Final payments to project partners and consultants are 98% done. The last 2% of payments is being processed for disbursement.

9. Certification

I certify that all the details contained in this progress report are true and that all research partners and co-investigators agree that this report is an accurate representation of the projects progress so far.

Signed,



Dr. Donna L. Doane

Co-Principal Investigator



Dr. Philippe Doney

Co-Principal Investigator

Date 30 January 2017