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**Farmers' Associations in Cambodia:  
Internal Functions and External Relations**

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**Presentation Outline**

1. Rationale of the Study
2. Research Questions
3. Conceptual Framework
4. Research Methodology
5. Key Research Findings
6. Conclusion

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## 1. Rationale of the Study

- Agriculture accounts for 34% of GDP and employs 70% of labor force.
- 35% of populace live in poverty and most of them are farmers in rural areas.
- Organization by farmers can overcome hindrances to agricultural development through self-help and collective power against external institutions.
- Farmers lack capacity to internally manage their organizations and to externally deal with other development agencies in an effectual and sustainable manner.

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## 2. Research Questions

- What internal organizational factors attribute to success of Cambodian FAs?
- What external environmental factors attribute to success of Cambodian FAs?

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### **3. Conceptual Framework**

- 3.1. Success indicators
- 3.2. Internal organizational factors
- 3.3. External environmental factors

*Source: Based upon Crowley et al. (2005)*

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### **3.1. Success indicators**

- Achieving organizational objectives
- Retaining or expanding membership
- Presenting progress towards financial and managerial self-reliance in terms of members' resources and capacities
- Improving self-esteem, economic and social status, or well-being of members

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### **3.2. Internal organizational factors**

- Objectives and improvement in well-being
- Composition of membership
- Development of governance structure (equity stake, size and structure, leadership, internal rules or by-laws, codes of moral conduct)
- Scope and diversity of organizational activities (building capacities, increasing financial or other security, building influence and negotiation power, accommodating emerging needs through new activities)
- Scaling up and linking with other institutions

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### **3.3. External environmental factors**

- Absence of formal safety nets and pro-poor government or private initiatives
- Absence of informal safety nets
- Explicit government policies to deliver greater access to basic services
- Traditional socio-economic 'suppressing mechanisms'
- Open apprehension by dominant political groups
- Lack of policies and legislative and regulatory frameworks corroborating rights of association, assembly and freedom of expression

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## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1. Data collection methods:

#### 4.1.1. Primary data: Semi-structured Interviews

**Table 4.1: Number of Participants Interviewed**

Participants	Male	Female	Total
1. FA leaders and committee members	15	8	23
2. FA members/farmers	18	87	105
3. FA specialist of FNN	1	0	1
4. Program officer of CEDAC	1	0	1
5. Representatives of Sre Khmer	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>132</b>

### 4.1.2. Secondary data:

- FAs' saving records and meeting minutes
- Project documents (proposals and progress reports), evaluation reports, training manuals, farmers' magazines
- Government policies and regulations
- Previous studies on farmers' organizations in Cambodia and other countries

### 4.2. Data analysis methods:

- Qualitative description
- Quantitative comparison (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations)

## 5. Key Research Findings

### 5.1. Success Indicators (Kusakabe, 2004; Johnsen & Prom, 2005):

- *Economic impact:* Increased income from farming (SRI) and saving/credit
- *Social impact:* Emerging leadership; increased standing of women; reduced youth problems; increased recognition by local government; improved living conditions of poorest; enlarged social networks
- *Environmental impact:* Reduced chemical load in environment; increased biodiversity and soil fertility; increased wild fish stock; increased reforestation

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### 5.2. Internal Organizational Factors:

#### 5.2.1. Composition of Membership:

- Members were generally poor.
- 70% of FAs had a 'poorest group'.

#### 5.2.2. Equity Stake:

- Members paid 'monthly saving', 'emergency' and 'supporting' fees.
- Members were passive in monthly meetings.
- Leaders were influential.

#### 5.2.3. Size and Structure:

- Membership size was small.
- Majority of members were women.
- Common groups were 'saving group', 'women's group' and 'organic rice group'.
- Leaders did almost all work despite a management committee.

#### 5.2.4. Leadership:

- Leaders and committee members were elected by members and recognized by village and commune authorities.
- Leaders were well-known and better-off economically and educationally.
- Many leaders had other jobs, including village authority.
- Leaders had limited 'strategic capacity'.

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Table 5.1: Self-Evaluation of Organizational Strength by FA Leaders (n = 23)

<i>Capacity Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Strategic capacity	3.56	1.53
2. Capacity to organize and implement action	4.00	1.20
3. Capacity to mobilize and manage human resources	3.06	1.44
4. Financial and accounting capacity	4.70	1.33
5. Capacity to negotiate and manage relationships with other stakeholders	4.09	1.41

Note: Values indicate average scores of capacity items measured by a 5-point (1-5) scale.

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**Table 5.2: Capacity Areas FA Leaders Wanted to Improve Further (n = 23)**

<b>Capacity Area</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. Agricultural techniques	3.50	1.83
2. Entrepreneurship/doing business	4.83	1.64
3. Management/leadership	4.55	.97
4. Financial planning and management	4.23	1.29
5. Communication	3.33	1.52
6. Facilitation	3.66	1.42
7. Resource mobilization	4.27	1.20
8. Community development	3.45	1.20
9. Natural resource management	3.06	1.70
10. Democracy/human rights	2.85	1.63

Note: Values indicate average scores of improvement levels measured by a 5-point (1-5) scale.

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**Table 5.3: Capacity Areas FA Members Wanted their FA Management to Improve (n = 105)**

<b>Capacity Area</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Management/leadership	76	72.38
2. Decision-making	32	30.47
3. Communication	37	35.23
4. Facilitation	41	39.04
5. Resource mobilization	71	67.61
6. Entrepreneurship/doing business	68	64.76

Note: Values indicate frequencies and percentages of capacity areas wanted to be improved.

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**Table 5.4: Training Areas Received by FA Leaders (n = 23)**

<i>Training Area</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Agricultural techniques	23	100.00
2. Entrepreneurship/doing business	20	86.95
3. Management/leadership	21	91.30
4. Financial planning and management	20	86.95
5. Communication	18	78.26
6. Facilitation	18	78.26
7. Resource mobilization	17	73.91
8. Community development	15	65.21
9. Natural resource management	12	52.17
10. Democracy/human rights	12	52.17

**Note: Values indicate frequencies and percentages of received training areas.**

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#### *5.2.5. Internal Rules or By-Laws:*

- Internal rules or by-laws were formulated by initial members.
- Rule enforcement was weak.

#### *5.2.6. Capacity Building:*

- Capacity building was limited to leaders and committee members.
- Leadership nurturing/mentoring was absent.

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**Table 5.5: FA Activities Participated in by FA Members (n = 105)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Meeting with leader/committee members	101	96.00
2. Training	66	63.00
3. Study tour/exchange of visit	31	29.50
4. Market fair	60	57.00
5. Local development	88	83.80

**Note: Values indicate frequencies and percentages of participated activities.**

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**Table 5.6: Training Areas Received by FA Members (n = 66)**

<b>Training Area</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Agricultural techniques	66	100.00
2. Entrepreneurship/doing business	35	53.00
3. Community development	23	34.84
4. Natural resource management	16	24.00
5. Democracy/human rights	15	22.72

**Note: Values indicate frequencies and percentages of received training areas.**

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### 5.2.7. Increasing Financial or Other Security:

- Many FAs experienced capital growth.
- Members were able to borrow back with low interest.
- Members gained or improved farming know-how.
- Unmet needs included: agricultural infrastructure (restoration of canals and irrigation system), raw materials (rice and vegetable seeds), and common rice storage.

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**Table 5.7: Assessment of Characteristics of Current FA Functions/Objectives by FA Members**

Objective/Function	Responsiveness		Effectiveness		Quality		Reliability	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Provision of production facilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2. Provision of equipment for production	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3. Provision of technical information/advising (n = 103)	4.80	1.05	4.76	1.26	4.83	.96	4.65	1.09
4. Provision of inputs	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5. Provision of access to market (n = 81)	4.61	1.56	4.05	1.13	4.33	1.76	4.05	1.23
6. Provision of storage and processing	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
7. Provision of financial means (n = 105)	4.93	.98	4.88	1.55	4.67	1.23	4.80	1.15
8. Provision of social services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9. Provision of subsidies	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10. Representation of farmers' interests (n = 96)	4.63	1.23	4.00	1.86	4.09	1.74	4.85	1.37
11. Local development (n = 68)	3.66	1.84	3.89	1.53	4.00	1.33	3.81	1.67
12. Natural resource management (n = 46)	4.00	1.36	3.85	1.85	3.68	1.67	3.83	1.55

**Notes:** Values indicate average scores of characteristic levels measured by a 5-point (125) scale.

**Table 5.8: Levels of Importance of FA Functions/Services Rated by FA Leaders (n = 23) and FA Members (n = 105)**

<i>Function/Service</i>	<i>FA Leaders</i>		<i>FA Members</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Access to production facilities	4.94	1.20	4.90	1.10
2. Access to equipment for production	4.90	1.45	4.90	1.40
3. Access to technical information/advising	3.65	1.33	3.55	1.33
4. Access to inputs	4.85	1.05	4.83	1.65
5. Access to market	4.55	1.65	4.00	1.70
6. Access to storage and processing	4.65	1.70	4.75	1.70
7. Access to financial means	4.88	1.34	4.87	1.63
8. Provision of social services	4.12	1.23	3.65	1.55
9. Access to subsidies	4.85	1.15	4.80	1.20
10. Representation of farmers' interests	4.70	1.09	3.70	1.45
11. Local development	4.22	1.57	3.42	1.55
12. Natural resource management	3.65	1.78	3.75	1.36

Note: Values indicate average scores of importance levels measured by a 5-point (1-5) scale.

### *5.2.8. Building Influence and Negotiation Power:*

- Working rapport with village and commune authorities
- Commune and district clusters and provincial and national federations with other FAs
- Collective market power in organic rice and poultry

**Table 5.9: Assessment of Levels of Cooperation of Other Organizations by FA Leaders (n = 23)**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. Village authority	4.85	.89
2. Commune council	4.70	1.34
3. Provincial agencies (DAFF and DRD)	3.02	1.87
4. Other FAs in the commune	4.12	1.25
5. Other FAs outside the commune	4.07	1.32
6. Other CBOs in the commune	2.67	1.65
7. CEDAC	4.89	1.22
8. Other local NGOs in the commune	2.70	1.55
9. INGOs in the commune	2.67	1.05

Note: Values indicate average scores of cooperation levels measured by a 5-point (1-5) scale.

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#### *5.2.9. Accommodating Emerging Needs:*

- FAs were insufficiently capacitated to meet emerging needs of members.
- Chief function/objective of most FAs was saving/credit.
- FAs did not provide social services.

#### *5.2.10. Scaling up and Linking with Other Institutions:*

- Many FAs experienced increase in groups and membership.
- FAs expanded influence to local government through clusters and federations.
- FAs' contribution to local development attracted politicians.
- FAs had less relationships with provincial agencies, other CBOs and NGOs.

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### **5.3. External Environmental Factors:**

- Liberal constitution
- Supportive government policies and regulations
- Favorable donor support
- Competition with other FAs

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## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Organizational Strengths of FAs:**

- Usefulness of saving/loans
- Members' know-how of agriculture
- Commitment and satisfaction of leaders and members
- Rapport with local government
- Networking with other FAs
- Conducive regulatory and legal environment

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## **6.2. Organizational Challenges of FAs:**

- Weak organizational structure (paternalistic leadership)
- Weak organizational capacity (management/ leadership, financial planning and management, entrepreneurship, strategic capacity, and mobilization and management of human resources)
- Weak organizational relationships with other development actors (provincial agencies, other CBOs and NGOs)

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**Thank you for your attention!**

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