

Mongolia

RAPID ASSESSTMENT

Assuring Resiliency
of Family Farmers (ARISE-Farmers)
amidst COVID-19

IFAD'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY (RPSF)

FACILITY'S PILLARS



Inputs
& basic assets



Targeted
funds



Access
to markets



Digital
services

RPSF project: Assuring Resiliency of Family Farmers (ARISE-Farmers) amidst COVID-19 (Mongolia) ¹

Launched in April 2020, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) is IFAD's multi-donor response to COVID-19. With the overall objective of providing agile support to poor rural producers affected by key immediate challenges posed due to COVID-19, it seeks to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the context of the crisis by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. The Assuring Resiliency of Family Farmers (ARISE-Farmers) project in the context of COVID-19 in Mongolia is part of the 20% of the projects chosen to undergo a rapid assessment to report against Tier 1 'development result' indicators in the RPSF Results Measurement Framework.

Project activities

The regional project leveraged national-level farmer organization (FO) platforms and IFAD's Asia-Pacific Farmers Program (APFP). It considered an RPSF allocation of US\$ 2.0 million.

The objective of the project was to strengthen capacities of FOs to manage production support to members by expanding 4Ps partnership to address the market access challenges brought about by the pandemic. The project was implemented by AFA as the Regional Implementing Agency (RIA), which coordinated and worked through national farmers networks. Specifically, the project provided financial support through revolving funds.

RPSF funds supported FOs and their members through the provision of loan assistance at a maximum rate of 3 per cent. The loan amount was used to support the production activities of the farmers such as feeds, biologics, seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs. Meanwhile, some beneficiaries also used the fund to support the working capital of the farmers' organization to increase their capacity to purchase the raw materials produced by their farmer members.

The amount disbursed from the RIA to the national implementing agencies was utilized 156.39 per cent or 1.56 times, which indicates that the majority of the fund was revolved for two cycles. In Southeast Asia, the fund was revolved 162.83 per cent or 1.62 times the total disbursed amount. In this region, Cambodia has the highest utilization rate at 201.54 per cent followed by Laos at 174.24 per cent. Meanwhile, in East, Central and South Asia, the fund was revolved 149.88 per cent or 1.49 times. Mongolia has the highest fund utilization at 288.35 per cent followed by Pakistan at 135.02 per cent. This signifies that the funds disbursed in Mongolia is being revolved on the 3rd cycle.

Through a total of 231 FOs, more than 20,000 farmers directly received funds, more than a third of which were young, and with just under half across Southeast Asia and just over half in East, Central, and South Asia. This impacted more than 100,000 household members.

¹ This note is prepared by Vibhuti Mendiratta, Gonzalo Nunez-Chaim and Piero Massotti from the Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) division of IFAD.

Rapid assessment methodology

Self-reported information on Tier 1 'development results' indicators was collected from a representative sample of 400 beneficiary households, of which 12 percent are headed by women and 11 percent are headed by youth (aged less than 35 years). Details of each indicator were asked with the aim of capturing the potential contribution effect from i) COVID-19 and ii) the RPSF project. Interviews were conducted between the last two weeks of June 2022 and the first weeks of July 2022 using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey.

Key results ²

Contribution effect of COVID-19

- Around five out of ten households experienced a sharp decline in production, market sales and income due to COVID-19, prior to the start of project activities. Overall, households were less often affected on the number of meals consumed (given the use of livestock for own consumption), their resilience to other shocks and ownership of assets.
- There is some heterogeneity by sex and age of the household head. Women headed beneficiary households were less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to households headed by men, in terms of production, sales and total income. Contrary to this, youth headed beneficiary households were more affected compared to households headed by adults, on resilience.

Contribution effect of RPSF

- More than 9 out of 10 households were able to maintain or improve on indicators of interest. Similar benefits were observed across all indicators.
- Moreover, the project improved in a similar way the outcomes of households headed by men and women, as well as those headed by adults and youth.

Lessons learned

- Overall, the project seems to have been effective at maintaining or improving indicators of interest.
- Households headed by women were more resilient to the disruption caused by the COVID-19. Although, for that reason they may not have benefitted more than households headed by men from the project.
- Future emergency-response programs should consider i) a larger emphasis on productive activities and market linkages, compared to food security and asset accumulation; and ii) additional support needed for youth-headed households, given they were more affected by COVID-19.

² The rapid assessment does not consider a control group; thus, results are only indicative of potential contribution effects.

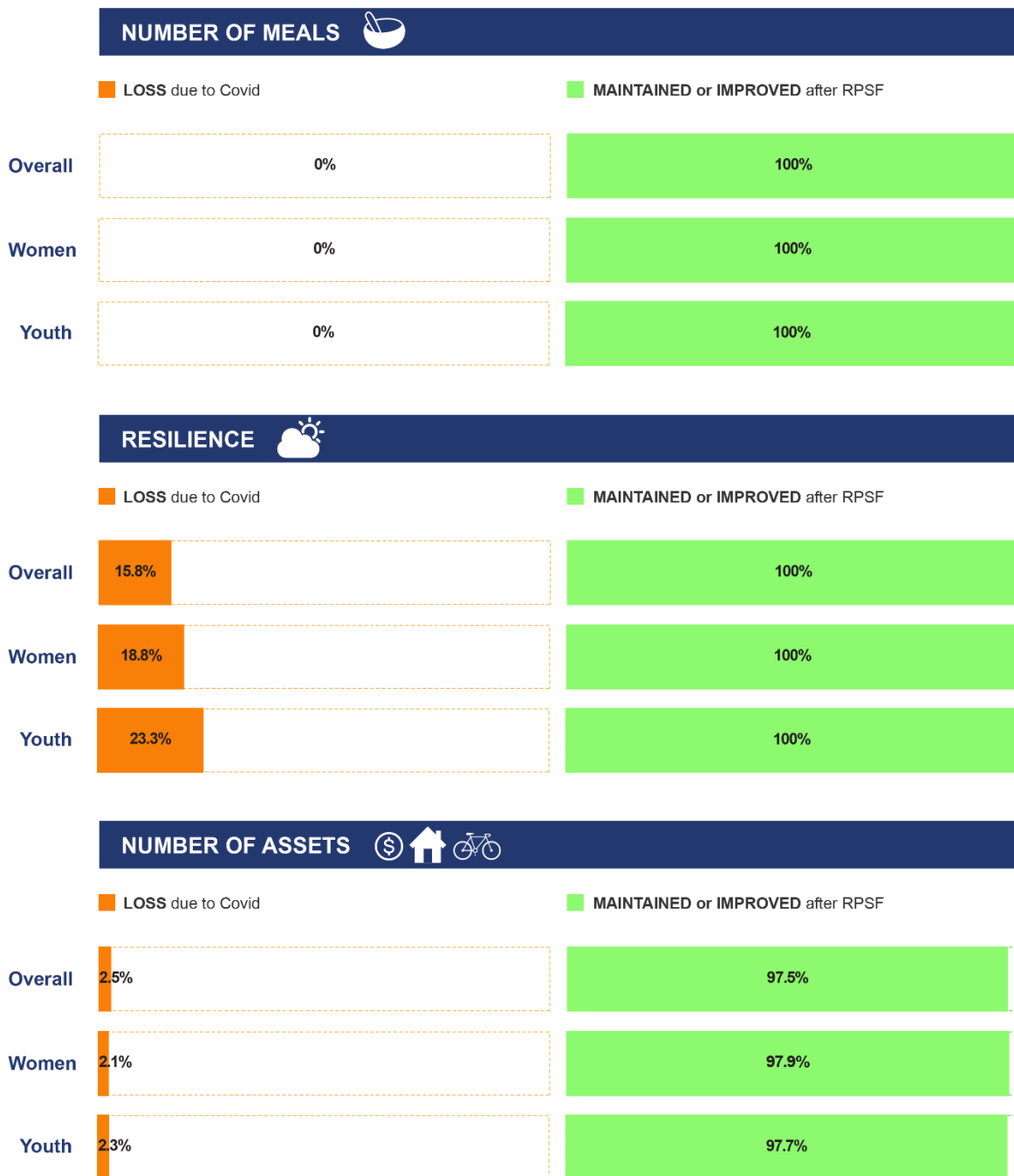
Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



NOTE: RPSF activities were rolled out starting in February 2021.

Two separate questions were asked for each indicator. The first question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between March 2020 and February 2021: i) a total loss; ii) reduced; iii) stayed the same; or iv) increased. The **orange bar** shows the percentage of households that responded i) or ii) to this question, that is, those which experienced a total loss or reduction in the indicator. The second question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator since February 2021: i) reduced further; ii) stayed the same; iii) increased but still below the level before COVID-19; iv) returned to level before COVID-19; or v) increased above the level before COVID-19. The **green bar** shows the percentage of households that responded ii), iii) iv) or v) to this question, that is, those which maintained or improved each indicator relative to pre-RPSF levels.

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