

## Livelihoods Approaches - Capacity-building and Analysis

This Better-Practice Guideline outlines a process for building capacity in participatory livelihoods approaches and carrying out livelihoods analysis. The process is about a way of working - an approach - which enables development practitioners to better understand how people live and to learn how others understand their own livelihoods. This particular process emerged - through a series of workshops involving six countries - from experiences of working with government agencies and non-governmental organizations who themselves work with agricultural communities whose members have limited resources, in other words, poor rural fishers and farmers.

### Building Capacities

The purpose of the process is the building of capacity in agencies and organizations to carry out livelihoods analysis using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools.

Building capacities can be understood in two ways, each derived from different meanings of capacity. The first relates to capacity as commonly understood as capabilities or skills, i.e., creating opportunities for participants to learn the skills necessary to do livelihoods analysis in a participatory way. The second comes from an understanding of capacity as role, i.e., the capacities in which a person works.

The introduction of a participatory livelihoods approach means that participants will have to fulfill new roles in their work context which may not have existed before. Examples include learning how to be a facilitator of groups, how to adapt materials and how to collaborate with new stakeholders.

### A Week-long Workshop

The workshop design depends on the asking of questions. It relies on participants responding on the basis of their own experiences of working with fishing and farming communities.

With one session leading into the next, by the end of the workshop week, participants have opportunities to:

- Understand issues of interest to people whose livelihoods include aquatic resources management, especially those with limited resources
- Build “livelihoods teams” to do livelihoods analyses and training, and share their experiences with communities and other stakeholders
- Share understandings of livelihoods approaches and analysis using participatory methods
- Review, adapt and supplement existing livelihoods approaches and analysis documentation
- Experience the use of participatory tools for livelihoods analysis
- Plan activities for carrying out livelihoods analyses

## Sessions and Questions

What are your experiences of livelihoods work?  
What are your expectations of this workshop?

### Experiences and Expectations



At first when the group started discussing livelihoods, I thought it was just a word with eleven letters, but as discussions went on, I realized it was much more complex. There is a proverb which says, "Many saints, many opinions." This is a wide subject with limited time to discuss it. I hope we would go deep into the matter so that we could help ourselves and others to understand to be able to serve people in a better way. (India)

### Sharing Understandings



What are your shared understandings of these terms?

Livelihoods  
Livelihoods approaches  
Livelihoods analysis

### Teams and Stakeholders



- How would you use livelihoods analysis in your work and who would you consult and work with?
- What would "livelihoods teams" look like?
- What are "stakeholders" and what groups would they represent?
- What do we want to achieve through livelihoods analysis?

### Learning about and Understanding Livelihoods - Livelihoods Frameworks and Approaches



In the beginning, I thought that livelihoods in general is the daily life of people. Now I understand that it is an outcome of the interrelations among people, resources and policy.

Also I realize that understanding the real livelihoods of people could lead to proper planning for further development of a community. (Myanmar)

### Livelihoods Analysis - Processes and Practices



- What do we need to learn about to understand how people live?

- How is existing livelihoods approaches and analysis documentation relevant to our work?

I used to approach things in a technical and scientific manner. Exposure to communities and community workers made me realize that things could be looked at from the perspective of the fishermen - based on their experience, local knowledge, relationships, ways of working and thinking. And this is what matters! (Philippines)

- What is the purpose of the community visit?
- How will discussions with the community be run?
- What tools will be used?
- Which people will do which tasks?

## Community Visit Preparation - Roles and Tools for Learning and Communicating about Livelihoods



Before I only knew about livelihoods but I did not know how to collect and analyze data. Now I have an experience of working with villagers and I can know the real situation of their livelihoods.

I have made better relationships and have more friends in the village. (Lao PDR)



- What did you learn?
- How did you work?
- To what extent did the work meet the purpose?
- What would you do differently?

## Community Visit Reportback



Wider exposure and sharing experiences made me think of more than I was thinking of before. Previously, livelihood was simple: income-generating activities are a means of living; but now it has really become a complex issue. It is a significant change in me that I could understand its meaning, approaches and analysis.

This understanding (capacity built in me) will certainly lead me to use livelihoods approaches and analysis in my real job in the field. (Nepal)



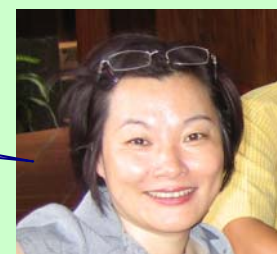
## Language(s), Power and Relationships



- What makes people comfortable enough to talk?

- What lessons have you learned from the workshop?
- What follow-up actions can be identified to undertake livelihoods analysis?

## Planning Activities for Livelihoods Analysis



Livelihoods approaches and analysis is like adding a pair of wings to a tiger. (Yunnan, China)



I used to think about livelihoods in a narrow way and now my thinking is much broader and more comprehensive... I have a better understanding and capacity to understand the rural situation. We just learnt as students the natural sciences, but this holistic approach also incorporates social science, which is good and will help me to work better in rural areas. (Yunnan, China)

## Role of the Facilitator

Working in a participatory experiential way potentially means that a facilitator needs to function in a new capacity as an “asker of questions” and a “maker of connections”, not a “giver of answers” or a “provider of directions”.

Facilitators need to be able to:

- acknowledge where participants are coming from, where they are starting from, and to see how to build from there

- highlight with participants how they themselves can work with communities in more participatory, experiential ways

- shape the ideas of participants into a common framework that makes sense to the group, and makes sense of what they are saying

- place an understanding of people’s livelihoods within broader societal and policy contexts

- look ahead with participants at further opportunities to build capacity and relationships

## Useful Contacts

### Other Better-Practice Guidelines

There are more Better-Practice Guidelines in this series. These include:

- Information Access Surveys
- The Consensus Building Process

You can get more copies of this and other Better-Practice Guidelines from your STREAM National Office, from STREAM Regional Office or from the STREAM Website.

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