

## SLA framework: components, principles, potentials and constraints

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### SLA framework

The livelihoods framework is a tool to improve our understanding of livelihoods, particularly the livelihoods of the poor.

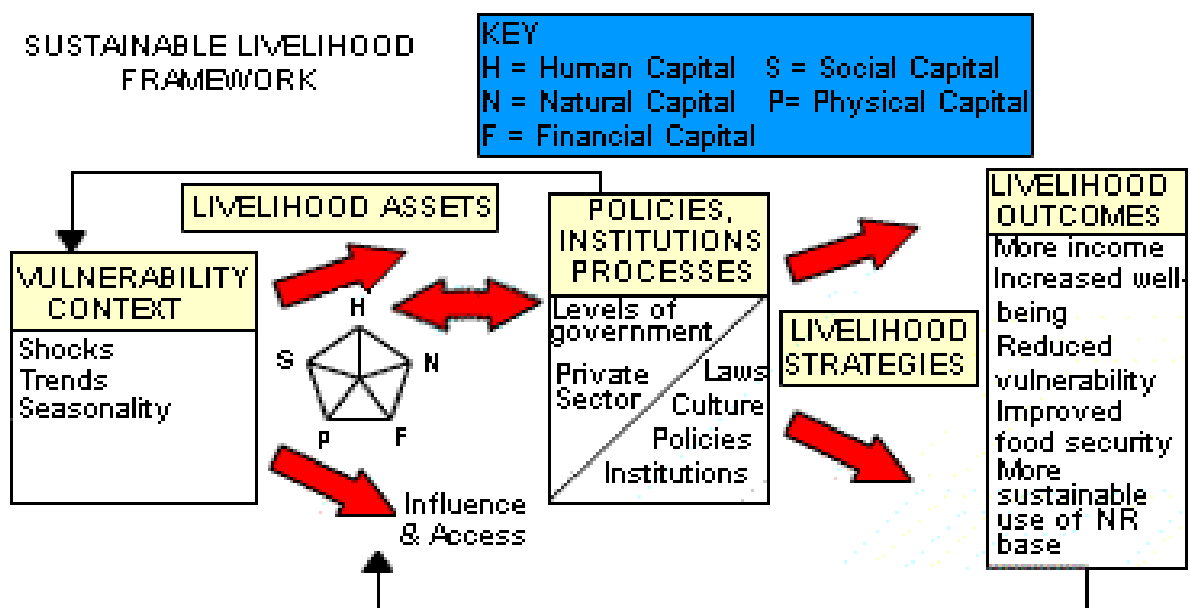
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The sustainable livelihoods approach is broad and encompassing. It can, however, be distilled to six core objectives. Its aim is to increase the sustainability of poor people's livelihoods through promoting:

- Improved access to high-quality education, information, technologies and training and better nutrition and health (*Human capital*)
- A more supportive and cohesive social environment; (*Social capital*)
- More secure access to, and better management of, natural resources; (*Natural capital*)
- Better access to basic and facilitating infrastructure; (*Physical capital*)
- More secure access to financial resources; (*Financial capital*) and
- A policy and institutional environment that supports multiple livelihood strategies and promotes equitable access to competitive markets for all.

### Components of the SLA framework:

Vulnerability context; livelihood assets; transforming structures and process; livelihood strategies; and livelihood outcomes



## **Why SLA framework?**

The sustainable livelihoods framework presents the main factors that affect people's livelihoods, and typical relationships between these. It can be used in both planning new development activities and assessing the contribution to livelihood sustainability made by existing activities. In particular, the framework:

- provides a checklist of important issues and sketches out the way these link to each other;
- draws attention to core influences and processes; and
- emphasises the multiple interactions between the various factors which affect livelihoods.

## **Principles of SLA**

*People-centered:* sustainable poverty elimination will be achieved only if the external support focuses on what matters to people, understands the differences between groups of people and works with them in a way that is congruent with their current livelihood strategies, social environment and ability to adopt.

*Responsive and participatory:* poor people themselves must be key actors in identifying and addressing livelihood priorities. Outsiders need processes that enable them to listen and response to the poor.

*Multi-level:* poverty elimination is an enormous challenge that will only be overcome by working at multi levels, ensuring that micro-level activity informs the development of policy and an effective enabling environment, and that macro-level structures and processes support people to build upon their own strengths.

*Conducted in participation:* with both the public and the private sector.

*Sustainable:* there are four key dimensions to sustainability-economic, institutional, social and environmental sustainability. All are important – a balance must be found between them.

*Dynamic:* external support must recognize the dynamic nature of livelihood strategies, respond flexibly to changes in people's situation, and develop longer-term commitments.

## **Poverty and Fisheries**

- Over exploitation of the fisheries resources are greatly affecting the livelihood of fishermen.
- Common property and open access nature of the fisheries allows more and more people to enter the fishing sector, such lead to the economic overexploitation of the resources. Common property nature leads the fishermen to the low income.
- Further the fact that the most profitable gears are most expensive to purchase and to operate, and the most productive fishing spots are usually either privatized or their access required high bribes or fees.
- Poverty of fishermen also could be the result of the lack of experience and skills in particular domain.

- Other factors such as lack of proper harvesting, processing and marketing of the small-scale fishermen are the main cause of their poverty.

### **Importance of SLA in the Context of Fisheries Research and Development**

- Improve the livelihoods of poor fishers and fish farmers
- The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) as a framework for collecting comprehensive information about rural and coastal fisher communities, institutions, resources, and livelihood needs and aspirations

### **SLA and participatory development**

- The livelihoods approach will not be effective unless operationalised in a participatory manner by people who are skilled in social analysis.
- It promotes people's achievement of their own livelihood objectives. There is no prejudgment about what these are – they must be 'established' through participatory activities.
- Participatory methodologies are used to establish who has access to which types of capital and how this is affected by the institutional, social and organizational environment.
- It seeks to understand, through participatory analysis, the effects of macro policies upon livelihoods.

### **Why use the SLA to study poverty?**

- People-centered and participatory
- Responsive to changing circumstances
- Reflects the range of assets and activities on which livelihoods depend
- Recognizes the importance to poor people of assets which they do not own
- Addresses a range of policy issues e.g. access to credit, markets, and personal security as well as health and education
- Facilitator analysis at multiple levels from national to local, and highlights macro-micro linkages and interactions
- Emphasizes sustainability and the need for structural changes in the long term

### **Barriers to the adoption of the SLA**

- Habits of thinking about poverty principally in terms of income
- Reluctance to acknowledge or address systemic inequalities
- Preference for single sector approaches
- Over use of 'projects' for poverty intervention, neglecting systemic alternatives
- Popularity of short term hand-outs which address symptoms not causes