

# Livelihoods

**Livelihoods comprise the capabilities, assets (natural, material and social) and activities required for survival and future well-being.**

During emergencies women and children are particularly vulnerable, often making life changing decisions (often including child labour, child marriage or transactional sex) to secure income for the family to address their basic needs.



## Impact of disasters on livelihood security

### Direct – physical damage

- injuries or loss of human life
- death or involuntary slaughter of livestock
- contamination of food or water sources
- epidemic or endemic human and livestock disease
- destruction of natural environment and essential assets (homes, businesses)

### Indirect - loss of potential production

- disruption to traditional production systems, shifts in gender roles and loss of indigenous knowledge
- loss of access and rights to land
- displacement, migration, urbanisation
- impact on local markets
- destruction of roads, bridges, communications, markets etc.
- break down in social support structures

### Interventions to

#### strengthen livelihood security

- Training and improved technologies for small holder farmers, especially women
- Measures to protect land tenure rights e.g. tree planting
- Strengthen markets, inputs and services (improved seed, fertiliser, transport, road rehabilitation)
- Diversified cropping, minimal labour and fertiliser inputs
- Processing e.g. sun-drying, dairy and honey products
- Alternative energy and rainwater harvesting and storage
- Protecting or restocking livestock
- Cash based assistance
- Community-based disaster risk management
- HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention

## Assessing livelihood security

Effective assessment of livelihood security requires an understanding of:

- **Activities, assets, needs and capabilities** at the household level that provides an income to adequately address their economic needs.
- **Natural environment** e.g. what land, water, livestock or forest resources are used, what are they used for and what are the terms of ownership.
- **Market systems and supporting services** which complement livelihoods needs e.g. access to farm inputs, financial services, infrastructure and communications.
- **Institutional environment** e.g. formal policies, laws, standards, regulations, as well as informal institutions such as cultural norms, forms of local and state governance.

A detailed and contextual analysis is required to develop a set of responses that links emergency intervention to early recovery and longer-term, sustainable development.

### Areas of analysis

**Vulnerability context:** economic, environmental, political, historical, social, cultural – trends, shocks, and seasonality

**Livelihood assets:** human, social, financial, natural, physical capital

**Transforming structures and processes:** government, private sector, laws, policies, culture, and institutions

**Livelihood strategies:** production, financing, processing, exchange, marketing, trade-offs

**Livelihood outcomes:** reduced vulnerability through improved income, economic resilience, sustainability, well-being, food and economic security, use of natural resource base

### Tools for analysis

- Review of government documents, baseline data, statistics, research, evaluations
- Wealth ranking, household surveys, interviews, transects walks, proportional piling (i.e. get people to express different importance of issues to their community)
- Venn diagrams, stakeholder mapping and analysis, matrix scoring
- Calendars, focus group discussions, flow diagrams, market analysis
- Surveys, baseline data, ranking, evaluation reports and participatory monitoring

*Also refer to 'Sphere Standards' and 'Cash Based Assistance' pages.*

### Additional resources on All In Diary web site

Livelihoods, conflict and recovery, Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, 2017

A conceptual analysis of livelihoods and resilience © ODI 2012  
Gender and Livelihoods in Emergencies, © IASC 2006

### Web links for further information

IFRC library: <http://www.livelihoodscentre.org>  
[www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org);  
[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org);  
<http://www.seepnetwork.org/>