

Which of the core concepts of the SLA does this project best illustrate?

Core concept

People centred

Holistic

Dynamic

Building on strengths

Macro-micro links

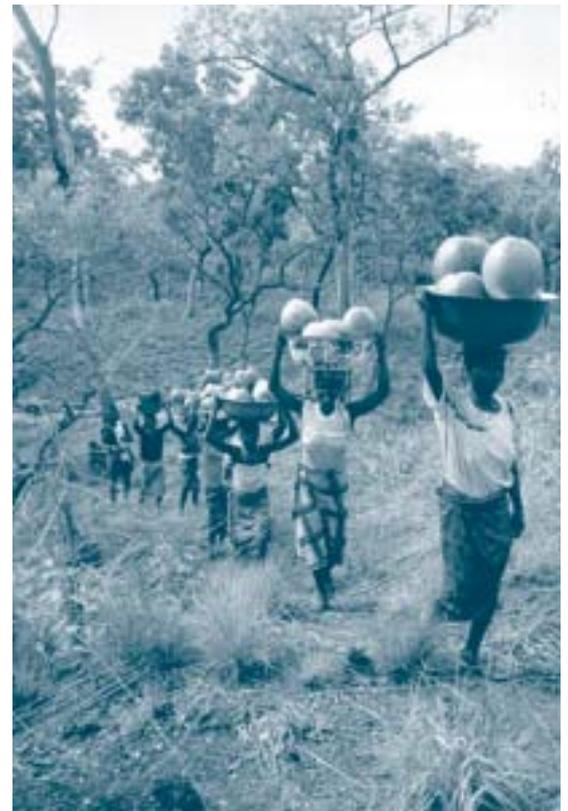
Sustainability



The British Geological Survey predicts that shifting the focus to the role of water in people's livelihoods will have a positive impact on how future projects on drought and water security are planned and implemented.

Adopting a sustainable livelihoods perspective on drought and water security results in a fundamental shift in focus away from the resource itself to people, the role of water in their livelihood strategies, and resource conditions. The ramifications of this shift are considerable: projects tackling drought mitigation and water security become 'problem-led' rather than 'discipline-led'; non-physical barriers to water access rise in prominence; access to water is seen in the context of people's livelihood security, and so on. The experience of the British Geological Survey (BGS), which has been gradually adopting a livelihoods perspective in its projects since the mid-1990s, suggests that such a shift in perspective is likely to have far reaching implications for the way in which projects on drought and water security are planned and implemented.

In 1994, BGS began work on a DFID Knowledge and Research (KAR) project on 'Groundwater management in drought prone areas of Africa'. The impetus for this project was the 1991–92 drought that affected much of Southern Africa, and which left many rural communities without ready access to water. This initial project was resource-focused, highlighting groundwater management policies and interventions that might increase access to water during drought and, by implication, protect rural livelihoods. A second KAR project, 'Groundwater drought early warning for vulnerable areas' followed in 1997. Working with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and partners in Ethiopia, the project aims to develop guidelines for identifying areas where groundwater is less reliable and, within these areas, for identifying the most water-insecure communities. This project, which ended in October 2000, followed a more livelihoods-based approach in terms of problem definition, methodology and recommendations, although *both* projects have reflected concern that drought policy has been too narrowly focused on humanitarian food relief.



Evolving a livelihoods approach

BGS had already begun to move towards a more holistic appreciation of drought and its water security, rather than water resource, implications. The following developments facilitated BGS's adoption of a sustainable livelihoods approach as its advantages became apparent.

- A greater understanding of the multiple dimensions of drought vulnerability, especially of the factors influencing access to, and availability of, food and water has developed within the organisation. This is the result of interdisciplinary team working, engagement with a range of government and civil society stakeholders at different levels – although the project partner is a government water bureau – and field work that has sought the views of rural people on water–livelihood–drought links, rather than just 'drought and water availability', or 'drought and food'.
- A consequence of the above was a growing frustration with sectoral approaches to both the study of drought/drought impact – climate; agriculture; food – and with the narrow focus of most early warning systems and policy responses. For many countries, the management of

drought has focused almost entirely on the question of availability and access to food; other aspects of vulnerability, including water security and its links with food security, have received much less attention. This reflects the organisation and remit of government and donor bureaucracies – often geared towards distribution of food relief – rather than livelihood realities.

- The broader skills base of the project team – hydrogeology; water policy and economics; institutions and social development – led to a re-think about the **nature of water scarcity and barriers to access** across the 'asset pentagon', about the range of interventions needed to protect livelihoods before lives are threatened – moving away from food relief – and about the information requirements needed to trigger them, i.e. removing vulnerabilities.

What has this meant in practice for BGS? One change, seen on this and other overseas development projects, has been the formation of multi-disciplinary project teams – across sciences; and between sciences and social sciences – and the forging of partnerships with external collaborators such as WaterAid and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) which can offer new insights, and complementary skills. This reflects a problem-led, rather than discipline-led, approach to projects. So, while BGS can provide scientific insights into how drought affects groundwater availability, for example, collaboration across the disciplines, and with those working at community level, is needed to assess impacts on access to groundwater and its livelihood implications.

While this has been broadly welcomed within BGS, there are concerns. First, advocating an holistic approach, even on sector-based projects, can surprise overseas partners more used to dealing with technical specialists. Secondly, and following on from this, partner institutions – e.g. government ministries – are, and will continue to be, organised along sectoral lines. This raises difficult questions about the 'fit' between the outputs of SL-shaped projects and the institutions charged with uptake and implementation.

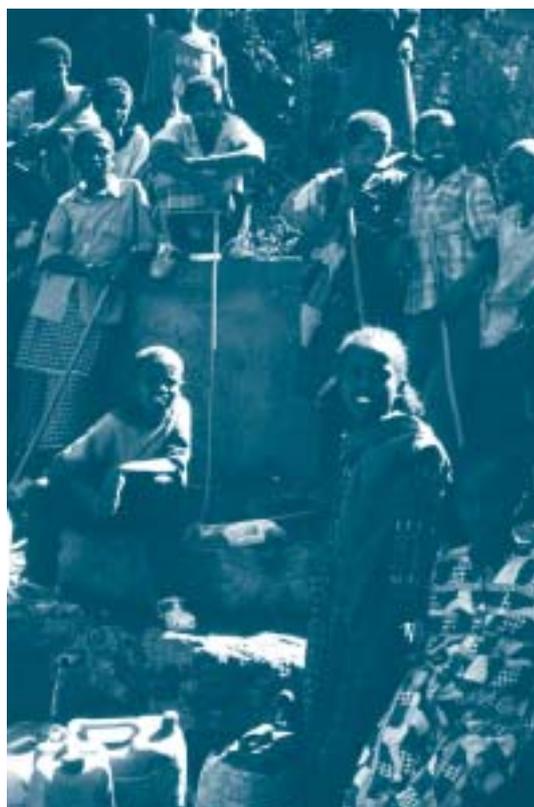
What is the added value of a sustainable livelihoods approach?

Adopting a livelihoods approach **has changed the definition of 'the problem'**. The shift from resource to people has provided deeper insights into the nature of water insecurity across seasons, between good and bad years, between different agro-ecological zones and between households. In the Amhara region of Ethiopia, for example, community surveys along a highland-lowland transect revealed how access to – and use of – water is influenced by access to a range of household assets – e.g. access to labour and animals for collecting water; money for water purchase; social capital for securing customary rights to non-communal sources, or small irrigation schemes; knowledge of alternative sources – as well as by physical access barriers to the water itself. The latter are related to resource characteristics – e.g. groundwater reliability; quality; yield – and source – well; spring; borehole etc – characteristics – e.g. number and type of access points and their mechanical reliability – as well as by factors such as terrain, distance to water points and queuing time. Those households with limited assets, and with limited physical access to reliable water sources and resources, are the most water insecure.

Secondly, a livelihoods perspective **has provided insights into asset 'management' at the household level, helping to draw out relationships between water and food security**. For example, understanding patterns

Adopting a livelihoods perspective has led the BGS to adopt a 'problem-led' rather than 'discipline-led' approach and has resulted in the formation of multidisciplinary project teams.

Investigating patterns of water use help us to understand how water insecurity can affect production and income



The 'shift' to a more holistic view of drought encouraged the project team to consider a broader range of water security indicators and the potential policy and management options it had.

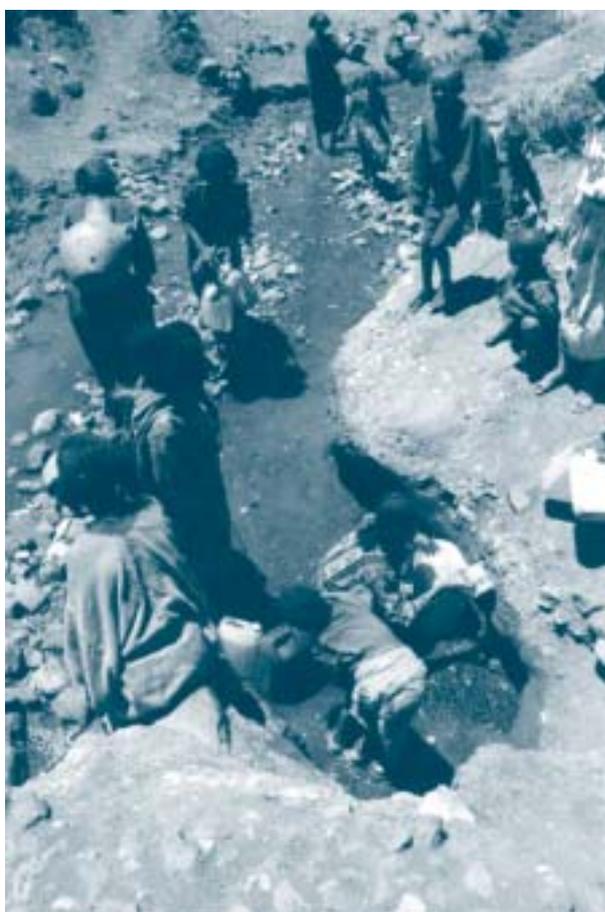
of water use, and how water is combined with other assets to generate income – e.g. watering of livestock; small-scale irrigation – helps us to understand how water insecurity, e.g. during drought, can affect production and income, as well as direct consumption. Similarly, time spent finding and collecting water may carry a high opportunity cost at certain times of the year, and during drought, because of lost production, income and food gathering through reduced labour time, and missed education for children.

Finally, a livelihoods approach **has influenced the range of policy and management options considered by the project team** in terms of its early warning and response remit. In this respect, attention has focused on how a broader range of water security indicators, focusing on both water availability and household access to it, might be combined with existing vulnerability mapping/profiling exercises – which focus on food security – to gain a clearer picture of livelihood security, and of the interventions needed to support it. For example, in protecting the livelihood assets of households in the early stages of drought, or rebuilding them in the aftermath of a bad year, the key variable may be access to water, both in – for example – increasing labour time availability, and in protecting and increasing livestock production. This may indicate the need for targeted water supply interventions, coordinated and carefully sequenced with food security/asset rebuilding efforts.

The project aims to develop guidelines for identifying areas where groundwater is less reliable and, within these areas, for identifying the most water-insecure communities

Constraints of a livelihoods approach

There are several limitations to the approach, particularly in relation to the 'fit' between livelihoods approaches, emerging policy recommendations, and the sector-focused institutions charged with take up.



One key recommendation of the project is that a broader approach to drought mitigation than currently exists is needed, at least in those areas where access to perennial water is limited. This implies use of a wider range of livelihood indicators and interventions to warn of drought-related problems, and to trigger timely and appropriate responses. This scenario, however, does not sit very well with existing government and donor bureaucracies which separate famine from other drought impacts, and emergencies from more general developmental activities.

A DFID Technical Cooperation programme may be able to add extra sub-projects over time to reflect livelihood realities as, for example, a clinic-based health project might expand into rural water supply and sanitation. However, changing the way government and donor agencies operate, and the power relations between them, is much more difficult. While a small research-based project such as this can advocate change in the way drought planning and mitigation is conceived and implemented, and ensure findings are widely disseminated, it must be realistic about end-of-project outcomes. Drought early warning and response is much more than a technical matter related to the collection of 'good' information on the right 'indicators'. It is a deeply political issue for governments and donors, which raises all sorts of questions about the interests and objectives of different actors, about the ownership, control and objectivity of information, and about the factors which control how information is used, and to what ends. Arguably, the timing and scale of drought

response – thought not the appropriateness of interventions – is still governed more by donor-government relations and media profile than by the severity of crisis or quality of early warning information collected.

Interdisciplinary projects such as this, which attempt to understand complex livelihood relationships, and which engage with a range of different stakeholders at a variety of levels, can be more expensive and difficult to manage. This is especially so when disciplines are first exposed to one another, in part because of the attitudes and beliefs that participants in the project bring to the table. This may result in unrealistic or uninformed expectations by participants; unrecognised problems in data and measurement; and a tendency for one field or discipline to dominate the process of identifying problems and framing questions. Avoiding these pitfalls requires joint definition of problems – and therefore logical frameworks – from the outset, and enough time for participants to learn to work together.

Interdisciplinary projects call for a new working style and sufficient time must be made available of participants to learn it.

Wider implications

Lessons learned have implications for:

- the **planning and development of water projects generally**, in terms of the need to incorporate understanding of the household water economy, and how this is affected by changes in access to different livelihood assets, as well as by changes in the physical availability of water;
- the **planning and development of rural projects across sectors**, recognising links between the household water economy and livelihood strategies. For example, an understanding of the dynamics of how water is used and combined with other assets, and how changes in water availability/access can impact on production and income, has implications for non-water projects. Water supply interventions, for example, may release scarce labour for agricultural activities, and increase school attendance rates;
- **project/programme balance**. Moving away from resource-focused projects does not mean that an understanding of resource conditions and trends is no longer important. There are resource-centred projects which have performed poorly because of their technical bias; there are also people-centred projects that perform poorly because of their superficial consideration of important resource issues. Clearly a balance is needed, avoiding the tendency for one field or discipline to dominate unduly, particularly at the stage of problem conceptualisation and project planning.

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SL APPROACHES IN PRACTICE

ROADS: BUILDING IN A POVERTY FOCUS

7.2

Which of the core concepts of the SLA does this project best illustrate?

- Core concept
- People centred ✓
- Holistic ✓
- Dynamic ✓
- Building on strengths
- Macro-micro links
- Sustainability ✓

Sustainability depended not only on factors affecting the availability of physical infrastructure, but on broader issues affecting people's ability to use and maintain roads.

This example shows how, with flexible management and on-going analysis, a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach can be adopted whilst a project is being implemented. In this case, a SL perspective at review stage resulted in making the project more poverty focused and sustainable.

The Feeder Road Project (FRP) began in 1995 as an innovative project to rehabilitate feeder roads in an area of Mozambique still suffering the consequences of long-term conflict. An important objective was to increase local interest within the public and private sectors and in civil society for sustainably improving physical access for people in rural Zambezia. Measures to achieve this included using provincial rehabilitation priorities which opted for labour-based methods of road building rather than the more usual mechanical building methods; training and employing a workforce comprising provincially-based contractors and indigenous workers.

By 1998 it was apparent that these aspects of sustainability were not just dependent upon factors affecting the availability of physical infrastructure, but on broader issues affecting people's ability to use and maintain roads. For example:

- roadside communities faced the threat of land grabbing by logging and other companies;
- people recently displaced by the war faced insecurity of land tenure;
- women were not sufficiently represented in road gangs although the project aimed for an equitable distribution of earnings;
- a question over the need for roads passable by motor vehicles above those passable year round by foot or bicycle;
- the threat of HIV infection to members of road gangs and road camp supporters.



Roads built to provide year-round bicycle access are of more use to the poor than roads built for use by motor vehicles

The approach of the project was sufficiently process-orientated to enable a closer look at these factors and complementary activities to be approved following an Output-to-Purpose Review in 1998. These innovations amounted to:

- 1998: adding a component to address land insecurity among roadside communities;
- 1999: introducing measures to redress gender imbalance in recruitment to road gangs—men are now recruited for work gangs only after a target figure for women recruits has been reached;
- 1999: piloting of women-only maintenance gangs; commissioning a study of other barriers to employment for women;
- 1999: raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and setting up mitigation activities – e.g. introducing theatre groups, condom distribution and health workers in camps;
- 1999: strengthening the socio-economic impact analysis and the selection of roads for rehabilitation;
- 1999: commissioning an environmental impact study;
- 1999: providing emergent contractors with assistance in business development;
- 1999: commissioning a study into 'Barriers to Access' in Zambezia and holding a stakeholder workshop to discuss the findings;
- 2000: adopting a revised logframe – this refers to added ORAM component and to previous modifications of Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs), especially the adding of qualitative indicators;
- 2000: reviewing the findings of these initiatives and the scope for further support to enhance livelihoods through access improvements.

In shifting from a focus on the 'product the roads' to 'how roads and road building affect the people who live nearby and who might eventually use them as part of their livelihoods strategies', the project exemplified a key characteristic of sustainable livelihoods approaches, the fact that they are **people centred**.

Poverty focus

As originally conceived, the project would have opened up feeder roads but it was not certain that the benefits would have accrued to local people. Applications for land accessible by the newly-rehabilitated roads has grown rapidly, specifically from companies whose indigenous and developmental interests in the area were questionable and whose interest threatened the unofficial tenure of roadside populations. A local NGO, ORAM, has been contracted by the project to work with populations to raise awareness about issues connected with land tenure, and to help them apply for it.



An important objective was to increase local interest within the public and private sectors for sustainably improving physical access for people in rural Zambezia. Measures to achieve this included opting for labour-based methods of road building

The original project 'end' of building a road to provide physical access has become the 'means' to build assets and to limit the negative effects that rehabilitated roads have on poor people.

The development of the socio-economic component is another positive result of adopting a livelihoods perspective. Initially this element was introduced merely to monitor the impact on the livelihoods of people working on the roads. The project now views this research component rather differently; where findings directly touch on people's livelihood concerns and strategies, they have formed the basis for action. An example is the raft of health awareness activities implemented as a result of socio-economic studies on the health of road gang workers. This dynamic response is characteristic of SL approaches, which seek to understand and learn from change, and to mitigate negative patterns of change.

The evolution of these developments has not changed the overall outputs but has significantly changed the approach and underlying 'raison d'être' of the project; today it focuses on answering the question: which stakeholders will be most affected by the road and how will the road affect their livelihoods? Thus the original project 'end' of building a road to provide physical access has become the 'means' to both build up further assets (physical, financial) and to limit potential negative effects (HIV spread, environmental degradation, eviction) caused by rehabilitated roads on poor people.

Building partnerships

This project has followed a similar pattern in its involvement at the institutional level as it has with activities. Starting with its link to the NGO ORAM, it has created a cross-sectoral, inter-Institution and multi-level connection by which ORAM and DEP could liaise. This is similar for links with other sectors. For example, the link with the natural resources sector has been facilitated by a DFID Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Field Manager, who now provides a mutually reinforcing link between the two DFID projects in the area. Thus where the Zambezia Agricultural Development Project

(ZADP) is active, the Feeder Roads Project has built three bridges. More recently the implementers of the ZADP have been supporting some research on Barriers to Access with data and analysis.



Getting goods to and from local markets was a high priority for local people

An important question for project implementers must have been: where does a sector-based project draw the line and refuse to involve itself with constraints outside its sector? FRP decided to address land tenure because to ignore the issue would have significantly limited the value of the roads to the livelihoods of roadside communities, which the project wished to target. How close a potential activity is to the original entry point is an important criterion in deciding whether the project should include or exclude it.

In the case of the FRP and ZADP, although the same donor is funding the two projects in the same geographical area, in allied sectors, an attempt to combine the projects would probably not have led to success. One project would have been unmanageable and may have resulted in loss of ownership. Significantly, a mutually supportive and creative tension between two projects of this nature has been created by using SL approaches during reviews, by making sure that there are common team members on reviews and in identifying constraints and practicable actions.

The approach taken to working with government and private organisations has been one of capacity building – as opposed to working with the NGO, which has been a service provider to the project. The capacity-building element has been at two levels: through building appropriate skills and attitudes for sustainable, high quality entrepreneurs and support staff; and through building a positive local policy environment (more fair employment possibilities, quality-control in the DEP) in which the entrepreneurs can work in the future.

The added value of a SL approach?

By building on initial strengths, the project personnel looked to see where its activities could further and more equally develop especially the human (health, business capacity) and social (status) asset bases of different stakeholders. The project has also attempted to deal with factors that would limit the impact of the roads on the livelihoods of target communities; for example, barriers to accessing the new feeder roads and insecurity of land tenure. These have knock-on effects for scaling up agricultural enterprise and improving the markets and marketing activities in the area, and hence demand for and use of transport. Bolstering the assets of the roadside communities and taking the first steps to tackle the insecurity of land tenure has served to reduce their vulnerability. A key characteristic of SL approaches is their emphasis on sustainability. Although this project was not designed as an SL project, it does prioritise **sustainability**. Encouraging the business development of contractors, employing local health workers and sociologists and fostering grass-roots connections with NGOs all contribute to sustainability by helping to build local expertise and confidence.

Bolstering the assets of the roadside communities and taking the first steps to tackle the insecurity of land tenure has served to reduce their vulnerability.



By 1999, the project had begun an awareness-raising programme to prevent HIV/AIDS in road camps

Weaknesses of a SL approach in this project

- Links across sectors and institutions grew slowly. The greatest strides have been made in the last two years. However, it should be noted that carrying out the early FRP already represented a considerable institutional learning process – at both provincial and national levels – over previous roads projects. This was due to its emphasis on unconventional labour-based techniques, local contractor development, gender and supervision issues, and looking at how to make more

Encouraging the business development of contractors, employing local health workers and sociologists and fostering grass-roots connections with NGOs all contribute to sustainability by helping to build local expertise and confidence

cost-effective works (spot improvements, etc). So the slower pace of linking has to be seen as relative to the capacity existing at the beginning of the project. Institutions vary in the degree of change they can accommodate at one time; the priority at the beginning of FRP was to gain competence in all these new areas of working practice.

- The above illustrates a difficulty in pacing such a project. For instance, did the project 'grow' at the optimum rate? In fact it seems that the FRP took account of national and local priorities. To have worked across sectors immediately on the above issues would have been to ignore questions of local capacity and inclination. It is only now that the District Administrations are being stretched with new planning and decentralising initiatives. The FRP has managed to move in tandem with this change. This is a really good point but what does it mean for intersectoral work? Should we add that it's rare that projects will be designed as SL from scratch?
- Conflicts within the project have centred on who has benefited most from the improvements to date. Whilst it has not necessarily been poor communities at distance from the roads, the research on barriers to access has now identified the issues to be addressed. A question remains about whether it would have been more cost effective to carry out this research earlier – possibly with a view to selecting specific feeder roads and associated activities.

Wider lessons

- Improved projects can grow out of a sector but still remain sectorally based.
- The degree to which linkages are adopted, encouraged, and finally take place, at the level of local government and other institutions, depends upon local capacity at the beginning of the programme.
- It is important to have the right Goal, Purpose and OVs in the logframe and the flexibility to amend them and add interventions over time using a broad and intersectoral analysis of the current situation – i.e. to be able to use the logframe flexibly.

Original Logframe (July 1998)		Present Logframe (January 2000) ¹	
Narrative Summary	OVI	Narrative Summary	OVI
<p>Goal: To improve the economic and social prosperity of Zambezia province.</p> <p>Purpose: Sustainable improvement in access for rural population.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 840 km of roads built to all weather standard. Seven viable locally based contracting firms established. Increased availability of cash in local economy. Road maintenance capability established in local population. 	<p>Increased economic and social activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 vehicles per day in year following construction on rebuilt roads; thereafter 25% increase in traffic p.a. 20% increase in schools, clinics and shops in areas influenced by target roads. <p>Completion of 56km by end year 1 Completion of 231 km by end year 2 Completion of 490km by end year 3 Completion of 749 km by end year 4 Completion of 840km by end year 4.5</p> <p>Contracting firms have sufficient equipment, money, skilled staff and business plan by end of project to remain viable.</p> <p>About 85,000 person-months of employment provided by end of project.</p> <p>Road satisfactorily maintained.</p>	<p>Goal: To improve the economic and social prosperity of Zambezia province.</p> <p>Purpose: Sustainable improvement in access for rural population.</p> <p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 840 km of roads built to all weather standard within project budget. Seven viable locally based contracting firms established. Increased availability of cash in local economy. Road maintenance capability established in local population. Improved land security for smallholders in communities surrounding feeder road rehabilitation. 	<p>Increased economic and social activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movement of persons and goods (motorised and non-motorised) increase by 25% p.a. based on flows in year following rehabilitation. 20% increase in attendance at schools, clinics and markets in project areas by communities previously disadvantaged by poor access. <p>Completion of 65km by end year 1 within budget Completion of 231km by end year 2 within budget Completion of 490km by end year 3 within budget Completion of 749km by end year 4 within budget Completion of 840km by end year 4.5 within budget</p> <p>Contracting firms have sufficient equipment, money, skilled staff and business plan by end of project to remain viable.</p> <p>About 85,000 person – months of employment provided by end of project. Percentage of women employed on project rises to around 20% by end of year 4.</p> <p>Roads satisfactorily maintained. Institutional capacity within DEP to plan and supervise road/bridge maintenance in Zambezia and local contractor capacity to implement works is satisfactory.</p> <p>At least 20 community groups assisted to legalise their associations. 20 associations apply for legal title to their land recognising land rights of women and men.</p>

¹ Changes in the present logframe are in blue bold

Which of the core concepts of the SLA does this project best illustrate?

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The AWF methodology focuses heavily on assessing livelihood impacts, and combines this with stakeholder analysis, financial analysis, and commercial analysis.

The SL framework was used at the beginning and end, but not in the actual field research.

Sustainable Livelihoods approaches may have much to offer in the monitoring and evaluation of projects, even for those not planned as SL projects. In this example, SL concepts were used to assess the impact on livelihoods of a wildlife enterprise project in East Africa.

In attempting to assess the effectiveness of wildlife enterprises as tools for conservation and development, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) commissioned researchers to develop a common methodology for assessing their 'economic and livelihood impacts.' The methodology was developed for use in half a dozen East African projects, but is also useful for demonstrating the importance and difficulties of livelihood impact analysis. The material in this example focuses on The Kipepeo Project, one of two enterprises described in a working paper on developing methodologies for livelihood impact assessment by Caroline Ashley and Karim Hussein of the Overseas Development Institute. The Kipepeo Project is a butterfly-farming enterprise in the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Conservation Project, near the Kenyan coast.

The rationale for a new methodology for impact assessment emerged from three perceived shortcomings of existing methods:

- In 'conservation and development' projects, local development is usually assessed in rather narrow terms of the generation of cash, increased production or jobs. Wider social issues and livelihoods concerns are often ignored.
- Projects are usually assessed in terms of how many of their outputs have been achieved; the intended and unintended consequences for people's livelihoods may not be revealed. Impact assessments should go beyond target beneficiaries to consider all stakeholders.
- Enterprises should be assessed both for their commercial viability and for their contribution to local incomes. The latter feeds into an assessment of impact on livelihoods. The former is quite different, though also necessary.

To address these, the AWF methodology focuses heavily on assessing livelihood impacts, and combines this with stakeholder analysis, financial analysis, and commercial analysis.

Methodology

Livelihoods impact assessment was found to be the key to assessing the contribution of the enterprise as a means of achieving conservation and local development. Three themes were explored:

- people's livelihood strategies and priorities;
- the impacts of the project on livelihoods;
- how impacts varied according to stakeholder group.

The SL framework was used at the beginning and end, but not in the actual field research. It helped in identifying important questions such as:

- what are people's livelihood priorities, does the project address them and, if so, what is the impact of the project on people's livelihoods?
- how do policies, institutions and processes affect, or become influenced by, project activities?
- how do people's livelihood strategies affect their participation in project activities?

The framework also helped in analysing and structuring the mass of field data: for example, impacts on assets were considered, as were impacts on other activities.

In addition to reviewing existing literature, conducting interviews with individuals, conducting household surveys, reviewing financial records and observing people's daily activities, the review team developed a set of workshop activities called 'participatory assessment of livelihoods issues and impacts (PALI)'. PALI comprises a mix of PRA tools which are used to explore livelihood issues within a group setting.

From financial to livelihood impacts; from the aggregate to the detail

An earlier assessment of the Kipepeo Project, conducted in 1997, relied on information gathered from household surveys. That review focused on earnings from butterfly farming, concluding that they were equivalent to 87 per cent of agricultural income for participating households. This was welcomed as a very positive impact.

However, the SL impact review conducted in 1998–99 produced a much more detailed picture and drew significantly different conclusions in two key ways:

- it analysed incomes per person and found substantial differences between earnings of the dozen or so large-scale producers, and the majority of small and medium-scale producers;
- it looked beyond the scale of earnings to their significance, other advantages and disadvantages of butterfly farming and the overall 'fit' with people's livelihoods.

Livelihood 'fit' and impacts

The significance of earnings to household security was assessed. For the dozen or so top earners, butterfly farming was a significant boost that could partially substitute for other work. But for the majority of participants, butterfly farming was a minor, though useful, coping strategy. The extra earnings enabled women and the members of poorer households to spend more on food, school fees and health than they would normally.

As a minor income-earner, it has both advantages and disadvantages. The fact that it could be done at home, that the work could be shared between family members, had a short harvest time and required very little investment all enhanced its fit with broader livelihood strategies. There were other positive impacts, too. Poor families had a greater chance to obtain credit by borrowing from group funds; people had increased access to external institutions and sources of funding and their status was raised in the eyes of outsiders.

The SL impact assessment also highlighted certain disadvantages which, although they may have been recognised by earlier studies, were perhaps glossed over or unexpressed. For example, diseases, pests and rejected pupae make the enterprise risky; the delay between sales and earnings can be too large; pupae must be marketed within two days and farmers are dependent on Group Representatives for supply of caterpillars and sale of pupae, which concentrates power in a few hands. Reviewers believed that factors such as these could explain why certain farmers participated and others chose not to. The approach gave them more confidence in suggesting interventions that might improve the impact of the project on a larger number of people.

The larger goal

The holistic perspective adopted in livelihoods analysis resulted in a deeper understanding and greater insight into the factors affecting people's livelihoods choices. It enabled the reviewers to form more complex, but more realistic conclusions about the Project's likelihood of achieving its purpose of successfully marrying conservation and local sustainable development. They concluded that the development impact was small but nevertheless significant to families struggling to make ends meet in a very poor area. The limited development impacts in turn limited the conservation

A set of PRA-type tools for participatory assessment of livelihoods issues and impacts (PALI) were developed to explore livelihood issues within a group setting.

The SL impact assessment differed from previous analysis by focusing on the difference between large and small earnings, significance of earnings and overall fit with livelihoods.

Identifying disadvantages for poor people's livelihoods helped explain why some do not participate – and what could be done about this.

impacts. Livelihood contributions were too small to directly change the costs and benefits of forest conservation for a substantial number of users. It did not provide sufficient financial incentives to prevent more destructive forest uses. But indirectly, the project still had a significant impact on conservation, by influencing attitudes within a heated debate on degazettement. People outside the area perceived that several villages were benefiting from the gazetted forest; this altered their perceptions and attitudes towards degazettement in the area. The analysis concluded that the development and conservation objectives of the project were causing it to operate at a loss, but could justify a top-up from donors to reach break-even point.

Clearly, reviewers using other approaches to analysis would similarly have appreciated that farmers cannot be lumped together as one homogeneous group and would have identified a range of strengths and weaknesses; SLAs however, suggest a methodology and structure with which to probe the complexity of livelihood strategies.

What were the weaknesses of a SL approach?

The conclusions of the reviewers of the Kipepeo Project centred on the difficulties in obtaining, analysing, quantifying and comparing data from SL analyses. It is possible, they suggest, that SL analyses result in a "mass of grey 'pros and cons'" rather than clear conclusions. Because of the participatory methods demanded by a livelihoods focus, results are unlikely to be comparable and replicable.

The SL framework itself was found to be incomplete. Although aspects of empowerment are found in, for example, social or human capital and their ability to exert pressures on structures and processes, empowerment issues are at risk of becoming lost during livelihoods analyses.

The handbook that documents the methodology is too large and complex to be readily adopted by staff in AWF and its partners. The methodology has been more use in promoting a SL approach to conservation and development, and providing a menu of tools, than as a step-by-step guide.

Practical implications

Livelihoods analyses demand employment of a range of analytical tools and methods. This, in turn, requires more time and an experienced team of analysts who are able to adapt tools and methods to suit the needs of the moment. Overall, the exercise is likely to cost more than conventional impact assessments.

Because of the volume of data generated by analysing a range of livelihood components and activities, there is a risk of the results being too complex for use by policy makers. Skilful synthesis is required.

What was the added value of a SL approach?

Researchers found that an SL approach to impact assessment provided them with:

- a more realistic, comprehensive and people-centred picture of the Project's positive and negative impacts on the livelihoods of its participants;
- a deeper insight into why some people participated in the project and others did not;
- an opportunity to develop ideas on how to reshape the Project to improve on its successes and reduce its negative impacts.

SL analysis can result in a mass of grey pros and cons rather than clear conclusions.

Livelihoods impact analysis requires substantial time, experience at adaptation methods and most importantly skill in synthesizing findings and interpreting implications.

The authors of the working paper felt that the methodology 'highlighted the importance of focusing on livelihood priorities within development and conservation projects.' More specifically, they stress its importance in helping to move away from narrow project evaluation criteria and its usefulness in determining whether a project intervention demonstrates a true or close fit with livelihoods.

Which of the core concepts of the SLA does this project best illustrate?

- Core concept
- People centred ✓
- Holistic
- Dynamic
- Building on strengths ✓
- Macro-micro links ✓
- Sustainability ✓

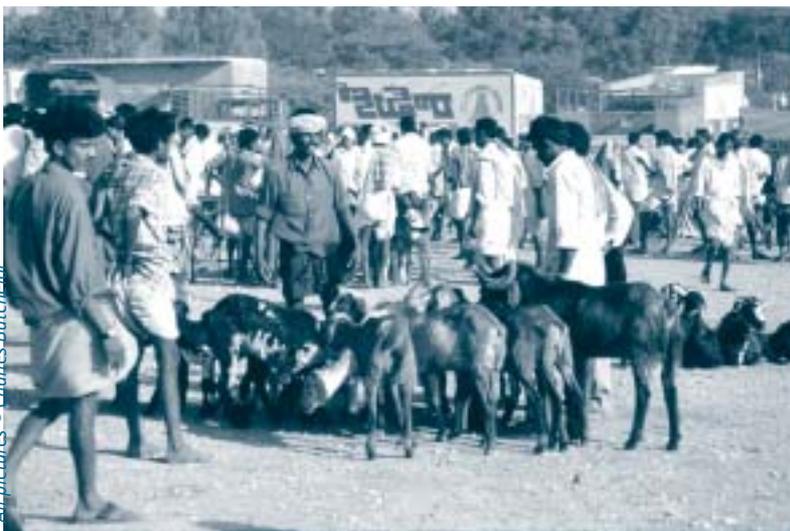
The Indian 'watershed-plus' projects are good examples of how the scope of a project broadens when the focus shifts from resources to people.

The design of the Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project

Shifting the focus of development efforts from resources and products to people and their livelihood outcomes lies at the heart of the sustainable livelihoods approach. This 'people-centredness' reflects the thinking of development practitioners world-wide over the past two decades. In the case of DFID support to Indian watershed programmes, this shift has changed the way in which watershed development is perceived and implemented in at least two Indian States. This is a brief account of how the Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (APRLP) has managed to draw on both the SL approach and Government of India watershed programme guidelines to make watershed development more people-centred.

The major differences are that APRLP:

- does not confine itself to land-based development issues. In adopting a livelihoods perspective, the project positively encourages the flexibility required for local people to prioritise interventions. Activities may include viable non-agrarian activities;
- positively builds upon, and strengthens, existing self-help initiatives, such as the State-wide women's self-help movement, in order to develop novel non-land-based livelihood interventions;
- emphasises the importance of capacity building of primary and secondary stakeholders – even those outside DFID-funded watersheds – in conferring greater control of the development process and providing funding for this;
- addresses macro-level constraints, such as the land-based development focus of the programme and associated bias in budgetary provision, through advocacy for pro-poor approaches and policy changes. Strengthening the sectoral policy environment in Andhra Pradesh was recognised during the project appraisal stage as essential if rural development programmes were to be made more effective;
- has been flexible enough to satisfy both GoAP's and DFID's pro-poor focus, conferring a greater potential for sustainability on the project.



All pictures © Charles Batchelor

Social, economic and political factors all help to determine how these farmers can benefit from their local cattle market

The present form of the APRLP owes its existence to two strands of development thinking that ran in parallel: watershed development and sustainable livelihoods approaches.

The genesis of watershed development in India

India looked to watershed development in the 1970s as a way of redressing the degradation of the natural resource base and of increasing land productivity. Two decades later, it became apparent that technical and physical works alone would not lead to the desired objectives, and watershed development must also take into account the social, financial and institutional aspects of rural development. The Government of India accepted that technical and organisational know-how was inadequately adapted to local circumstances;

this and the delivery of conflicting approaches to watershed development were seen to be preventing the realisation of the full benefits of watershed work.

In 1994, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) of the GoI produced a set of Guidelines for implementing its watershed programmes which aimed to tackle these concerns. This progressive policy was essentially people-centred. It incorporated good practice from NGO and government policy, such as awareness raising, bottom-up planning, partnerships with NGOs, and community participation.

The 1990s also witnessed the development of ideas on sustainable livelihoods approaches. These grew from an awareness that rural development approaches based purely on agricultural production were insufficient to meet the livelihood needs of the poor. Agricultural land and livestock frequently generate only a portion of rural livelihoods, they are *not* primarily agrarian or land-based. Other forms of income generation, perhaps derived from migration, part-time trade or handicraft production, may make a large contribution to an individual's or a household's livelihood. Thus if one takes a livelihoods approach, *people* displace *natural resources* as the focus of development efforts. One thinks, for example, about people's objectives, their scope and *their* priorities for development. This is challenging for land-based development projects, such as the watershed development programme. Instead of considering land and/or water and its potential for development, attention is given instead to people and their rights and obligations to the various resources (which may or may not be land-based) by which they construct livelihoods.

Birth of the watershed-plus concept

In 1997, a catalyst brought these two strands together, in the form of a request to DFID from the then Secretary of the MoRD (at that time called the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment) for support in reviewing the impact of the GoI Watershed Guidelines. Following a comparison of pre- and post-Guideline watersheds in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, a national-level workshop in 1998 was convened to discuss the findings and further revisions to the Guidelines. Soon after, the government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) suggested collaboration with DFID on an innovative watershed-based project in Andhra Pradesh.

The term 'watershed-plus' emerged in 1998 to describe 'new-look' watershed projects that would step beyond their usual remit in order to address the needs of marginalised groups of people, such as those with no land, women and the poorest of the community. This was to be achieved through activities not normally associated with watershed development projects, such as improved water management, minor irrigation works, the provision of drinking water and sanitation, forestry and interventions to address the specific needs of the poorest, including provision of credit, collection and processing of non-timber forest products, aquaculture and crafts.

The GoAP drafted the concept note for the Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project, and a series of workshops involving a wide range of stakeholders followed soon after. The final design includes four interdependent components whose main thrusts are:

- **Watershed and watershed-plus sustainable rural livelihoods initiatives.** This will finance soil and water conservation works that have been prioritised in the community microplans of 500 watersheds;
- **Capacity building for primary and secondary stakeholders.** GoAP is currently constrained by limited institutional capacity – both within and outside its departments – to rapidly scale up the State-level watershed programme. This component seeks to build capacity within communities, GoAP and NGOs in 2500 watersheds across the five districts covered by the Project;

The livelihoods approach had a head start in that key people in the Government of India were already seeking innovative ways of making its watershed development programme focus more on the needs of poor people.

- **Innovation to enhance the impact of watershed work.** Both MoRD and GoAP are keen to identify issues that might inform revisions of the Watershed Guidelines. This component will pilot innovative approaches to enhancing overall impact, ensuring equitable benefit sharing and improving sustainability in 50 watersheds;
- **Lesson learning and policy influence.** The appraisal phase of APRLP prioritised the need to strengthen the sectoral policy environment in AP in order to enhance the effectiveness of rural development programmes. This component seeks to support a think tank for the Department for Rural Development. The unit is to analyse key policy areas which impact on the poorest of the communities supported by APRLP.

Is it accurate to call APRLP a livelihoods project?

The short answer is 'probably not'. It is fair, however, to say that APRLP has a very different outlook compared to that of a conventional participatory watershed management project. The project has built in components aimed at addressing issues of equity, it supports the development and funding of non-land-based activities, and it seeks to tackle policy constraints identified by local people as obstacles preventing them from realising their livelihood objectives. The focus on building human and social capital through capacity building and support for group formation and development would also set it apart from earlier watershed development projects.

There are serious concerns, however, that the worthy aim of being 'people-centred' might be subverted by the weight of past practices. Turton asks: "is watershed-plus just a convenient way of catering to the needs of the poor rather than placing them as central actors in the development process?" Indeed, as once consultant observed during the design of a similar watershed-plus project in Orissa, should we not be calling it 'plus-watershed' if we really mean to prioritise the poor and their livelihoods?'



SL approaches focus on people

A second concern is the scope of the project. Should a true livelihoods project be more daring in the issues it is willing to tackle? The design team was tempted to suggest many such areas of concern to the very poor. There was discussion, for example, on providing water and sanitation schemes, literacy and numeracy classes, crèches and business development.



Groundnut is still the predominant rainfed crop in this semi-arid area of Andhra Pradesh, and women remain the mainstay of agricultural enterprise

Two things ensured that APRLP did not cast its net too wide: first, the mandate of the partner Department. The Department of Rural Development in Andhra Pradesh, like its sister departments in other States, has a broad but defined remit. It is not responsible for maintaining sanitation programmes, for example. Secondly, planners were well aware of the problems of the integrated Rural Development Programmes that had attempted to engage on many fronts and to manufacture co-ordination and co-operation between vertical administrative structures.

It was therefore accepted that the 'plus' parts, the activities to specifically address the livelihood needs of the very poor, would be defined only after village-level (participatory) planning is complete. There may be a need to provide literacy classes, but if so, the challenge would be to engage at the local level with the relevant Government or NGO programme to facilitate their establishment.

Other challenges

Perhaps the most serious challenge for APRLP is to keep itself focused on poor people and their livelihoods, given the scale of the budget and its potential for 'stealing centre-stage'. Land-development projects can often spend large amounts of money quickly on infrastructure (bunds, water tanks, irrigation, and so on). They are attractive to politicians seeking to demonstrate the good they have brought to their constituencies, because the constructions are literally something to show for the money spent. In contrast, participatory development projects take longer to get off the ground, spend more slowly and their impact is often less visible. So the pressure to focus on the 'land development' aspects at the cost of the participatory process is great. The pressure to spend project money – and both the GoAP and DFID seek to meet spending targets – is already being felt by the project. This distracts from the need for careful people-centred planning.

The role of serendipity

In retrospect, it can be seen that APRLP's design relied on certain prerequisites:

- The main actors in watershed development were aware that the existing programme was failing to reach the most marginalised sectors of the community. GoAP officials were already actively seeking potential partners to fund innovative approaches that were beyond the remit of centrally

sponsored schemes. The essential factor in the design of APRLP was the presence of innovative thinkers in both the GoAP and NGOs who were seeking ways of reaching the poorest and bringing a 'professional' approach to the Programme by harnessing additional resources for the development of capacity.

- The Watershed Guidelines were under revision; the door was open to those interested in experimenting with new ways of reaching the poorest and using the results to influence the revision process. The funding of a broad range 'watershed-plus/non-land-based activities, training and capacity building' were of particular interest.
- From DFID's perspective, APRLP offered an ideal opportunity to enter into an innovative partnership with GoAP on pro-poor approaches, an interest that was stressed in DFID's new Country Strategy Paper of 1998–9. The development of DFID's sustainable livelihoods approach in 1997–8 provided the opportunity for advisers from different disciplines to think more broadly about rural development.

The flexibility demanded by the livelihoods approach precludes any possibility of creating the 'textbook' livelihoods project.

Flexibility, both on the part of the partner, but equally on the part of the donor, is essential. Whilst APRLP may not fit SL theory as neatly as donors may desire, it is important to acknowledge that the 'textbook example of an SL project' does not exist; to attempt such a project would lose the spirit of SL, which prizes flexibility. In the case of APRLP, the importance to partners in the GoAP of calling it a 'livelihoods project' should not be underestimated. There was a clear intention of highlighting the Project as different and of selling it as such; this remains as the project moves into implementation. The name, and more importantly the approach, have been useful tools with which GoAP has been able to lobby other prospective bilateral and multilateral donors to take a different approach that would offer space for innovation.

Wider implications of adopting a livelihoods approach

Experience has shown the futility of pursuing a donor-driven 'development agenda'; donors need to listen more to their partners and explore the scope for harmonisation with their development targets; this is perhaps the most pragmatic aspect of SLAs. Without a common understanding of the development context and the desire on the part of partner governments as well as donors to try a new approach, attempting new ways of working is futile and bound to fail. If the objective of the project, the reason for calling it a 'livelihoods project', is widely understood, there is some hope of that project achieving sustainability in approach. This may take some time to develop, but without such shared understanding the approach is seen as a donor's agenda and will cease when the donor goes. APRLP is perhaps atypical in that it is an example of a partner government's agenda that happens to fit in with DFID's present direction and can therefore gain DFID's support. Despite vulnerability to changes in government and NGO personnel in Andhra Pradesh, there is every possibility that the initiatives beginning now will continue once DFID leaves. The challenge is for the project to really make a difference to poor people's lives, because so much about sustainability depends on keeping the 'haves' happy and, for those in powerful positions to feel that their power is enhanced. It is a fine balance. What a donor offers at the moment is the safety net, which innovative people in government and NGOs can rely on when attempting to press for change; funds for innovation, someone to provide monitoring and evaluation support to keep things on track are examples. In the case of APRLP, this was the 'professional approach' that was sought. Partnership is about being available when you are needed, something that donors are not always able to readily judge.

If the objective of the project – the reason for calling it a 'livelihoods project' – is widely understood, there is some hope of that project achieving sustainability in approach.

¹ *Madhu Sarin, personal communication*

Which of the core concepts of the SLA does this project best illustrate?

- Core concept
- People centred ✓
- Holistic ✓
- Dynamic
- Building on strengths
- Macro-micro links ✓
- Sustainability

The Decentralisation of Livestock Services in the Eastern Regions of Indonesia, known as DELIVERI, aims to provide better livestock services to poor farmers in four pilot areas, primarily through reforming the Government of Indonesia's Directorate General of Livestock Services (DGLS) and its provincial and district divisions.

Although the project design predates the emergence of DFID's Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), it does touch on two fundamental elements of the approach: the value of focusing on people rather than on resources, and the critical importance of ensuring that policies are based on sound understanding of ground-level realities.

Background

DELIVERI is an institutional reform project. The project seeks to make livestock services more client-focused by piloting new approaches to service delivery and using the results to influence policy and regulatory changes. The project's vision is to transform the government livestock department such that it views poor farmers as its clients, and its role as joining forces with private-sector agents to respond to clients' needs.

Earlier partnerships between DFID and the DGLS had recognised that the greatest constraints to livestock development were no longer of a technical nature but were due to institutional weaknesses, including:

- poor contact between farmers and government livestock officers;
- over-centralised control of livestock services and the inaccessibility of reliable information to decision makers;
- adaptation of Government of Indonesia's extension agents – over two decades – to support green revolution technologies. Since the latter were feasible only for wealthier farmers, the government services eventually became 'blind' to resource-poor farmers.

The project was to pilot new ways of addressing these constraints. Successes would be well documented, the pilots would serve as 'living demonstrations' and the information would be used to press for changes to make government livestock services, and other livestock-related institutions, more responsive to the needs of a newly prioritised client sector, i.e. poor farmers.

Ensuring that policies and institutions are founded on ground truth

Poor contact between resource-poor farmers and the Government's livestock services resulted in policies that failed to address the problems people were facing. This recognition is itself something that might have resulted from livelihoods analyses, had DELIVERI been conceived as a SL project. The disconnection between policies and institutions governing the supply of livestock services and the constraints that people were facing, touches one of the core concepts of SL approaches; the attempt to bridge the gap between macro-level policies and institutions to the livelihood options of communities and individuals.

The problem, as identified by the project, can be broken down into the following:

- Policies were based on outdated information about 'who' the farmers were, and the constraints that they faced, concerning livestock management;
- Government extension agents were not in a position to set matters right as they, too, had a poor rapport with poor farmers. Even if rapports were better, the institutions were designed to deliver central mandates rather than respond to farmers.

An overarching approach was that potential solutions would be piloted and successful results used to lobby for policy change. Piloted approaches to tackle the shortcomings listed above were:

- **Community-led participatory planning.** Government field staff were trained in participatory approaches and eventually became adept enough to generate an understanding about livelihoods that was new to them. Field staff grew to appreciate the disparity between the 'new' needs they were identifying and the services the government had on offer – this, in turn, led them to challenge their previously held assumptions as to why farmers had been opting out of government programmes. Secondly, the mismatch between what the government was providing and its now deeper understanding of farmers' livelihood options led to the redesign of a range of services specifically targeted at improving those options.

So far, the project has resulted in some changes at central level. For example, DGLS directors have planned and budgeted for the replication in non-project provinces of some of the successful pilot approaches. As a direct result of the improved rapport that resulted from the participatory planning exercises, field workers were able to increase farmers' access to information and services such as private vets, paravets and private inseminators.

Policy makers built on their greater understanding to change the 'rules of the game', the institutions mentioned earlier, which became more responsive. These changes, though as yet informal, have resulted in some decentralisation of decision-making to provincial and district-level representatives of the DGLS. The organisation has begun to train paravets and more formal changes in legislation may well follow.



Paravets learnt about livestock injections

- **An integrated system of managing information.** Mechanisms for information dissemination are almost never absent in the project logframes, even if recognised only as a means of evaluating the project outputs. Rarely are they integrated into the day-to-day implementation of a project. DELIVERI, however, would seem to be an exception in that its design recognised the key role of information.

In some ways, the entire project could be seen as an information and communication exercise; the pilots being worthless unless the lessons they demonstrated could be captured and put to work. Furthermore, a prerequisite of any organisation becoming responsive to its clients is the establishment of information pathways so that issues important to clients, or those in regular contact with clients, can be voiced clearly at senior levels of the organisation, in this case, the Government of Indonesia.

For most of the project's life, a full-time communications and media specialist worked on information. But the information itself was largely provided by those implementing the project's various elements, notably the farmers and the field workers. They not only had to regularly confront important issues, but it was the perspective of the poor farmers, as the clients of the government services, that was of paramount importance.

The project was in the privileged position of being able to by-pass the organisation and take information straight to the top. Useful as this was, it could never hope to establish the information channels that were needed. For this to happen, cultural norms had to be relaxed, and two



The project prioritised training in participatory techniques

approaches were brought into play. The first was the use of fun, participatory training which drew on staff from all levels to give informal and enjoyable fora. The second was feeding back the results of other project initiatives to show the benefit of two-way information flows.

The unsurprising lesson from the project's efforts to improve and focus the flows of information was that, where people had faith that the information they produced would be well received, and somebody would respond to it, they would gather good quality information and articulate it well. When people felt their voices would be ignored, or they were afraid to speak, the information was often poorly considered, or chosen so as to reduce offence.

What was 'SL' about the DELIVERI project?

'Green revolution' thinking, had emphasised the importance of modern inputs and building technical knowledge and influenced the institutions prevalent within the Government's livestock services. DELIVERI's new approach recognised that government livestock services needed to have a much deeper and more current understanding of *who* they were supposed to be serving and the factors that might influence how livestock farmers managed their animals. For example, one critically important realisation that emerged from a more **people-centred** approach was that resource-poor farmers were not in a position to help themselves as they had no access to reliable information and, even if they had, the institutions were used to dealing with large-scale farming rather than with the very different priorities of resource-poor farmers.

The gaping distance between extension agents and the people they were ostensibly serving is a common finding in many types of projects. DELIVERI's acknowledgement of the potential of this problem to make or break the project, and its commitment to finding new ways of tackling it, is less common. This common problem cuts across three important elements of the sustainable livelihoods approach: its **people-centredness**, its **holism** and its emphasis on the importance of **macro-micro links**.



Newsletters kept stakeholder abreast of innovations

The pilot projects showed the value of training extension agents in participatory approaches. This new way of working, focusing on people's livelihoods rather than their resources (in this case livestock) produced immediate results. Based on a greatly improved understanding of the constraints under which resource-poor farmers work, field workers were able to increase farmers' access to information and services. Although formal policies remain the same, practice has already begun to change; for example, provincial and district level representatives of the DGLS have assumed more control over local budgets and administration of services. Thus, a better picture of **micro-level** issues is resulting in changed practice at a **macro level**. It is probable that formal changes in legislation to allow greater decentralisation of the livestock services may well follow.

Finally, the emphasis of the project on greater access for all to high quality information helped to achieve closer links between the various stakeholders of the project and to sustain them throughout the lifetime of the project. The establishment, or rehabilitation, of pathways of communication from field level to the centre, maintained the links between policy makers and field workers and field workers and clients. It also helped to reinforce the sense of ownership of the process, begun in the participatory planning events carried out by field workers. Improved communication between the various stakeholders helped to bind the project together and to some extent achieve the holistic appreciation of the many factors and influences acting upon resource-poor farmers, and the ways in which stakeholders of a project influence one another.

Does DELIVERI offer any 'lessons' about putting SL approaches into practice?

Although DELIVERI predates the package of tools and theory that now comprise sustainable livelihoods approaches, there are some important observations concerning SL approaches and their implementation.

Choosing an appropriate entry point. Unlike a newly designed project or programme beginning today, DELIVERI could not rely on the holistic analysis of poverty that is encouraged by SL approaches; rather the choice of livestock sector as an entry point grew out of the campaigning efforts of a few key government officials and DFID officers who had been brought together earlier by an Animal Health Project. As their understanding developed of how the delivery of livestock services constrained people's livelihoods, the idea of a project that set out to influence the way the government responds to small farmers grew increasingly attractive. A formal holistic analysis may have pointed to other interventions, perhaps in other sectors but, at the same time, it is not clear that the Government of Indonesia would have agreed to it.

This focus on livelihood options elicited from the participatory planning process has important implications for adopting an SL approach. Given that DELIVERI operates within the livestock sector (DGLS), how holistic could the government field workers afford to be while facilitating discussions with farmers on constraints to their livelihoods? In one of the villages involved in the participatory planning example referred to above, farmers identified the following issues:

- lack of irrigation, which limited dry-season productivity;
- the threat to crops by wild pigs;
- the poor nutrition of large ruminants due to land being assigned to crop production at the expense of grazing;
- inaccessibility of the village due to lack of motorable roads.

Could the project justifiably take up such issues, even though they are beyond the remit of government livestock services? And, if it did not, would the project not be failing in its promotion of holistic analysis and flexible planning? The project concluded that it should retain its focus on livestock and, in so doing, support the development of farmers groups that could then take up such issues themselves. The participatory planning training and exercise then becomes a vehicle for social organisation and a longer-term lever for change. There is some evidence for this trend already. As the project completes its final phase, the cross-sectoral District Planning Board continues to develop the institutions pioneered by DELIVERI within its own organisation, under GTZ funding.