

ASSET WHEEL

Conservation, Livelihoods and Governance Programme Tools for participatory approaches

February 2013

An asset wheel is a visual method of showing the different assets (resources) that people have access to and control over and the linkages among assets.

What is it useful for?

- Identifying the range of assets that people have access to and control over, for different groups of people, and exploring the links between different types of assets.
- Understanding how assets are used to develop and manage livelihood strategies of different social groups.
- Identifying opportunities for and constraints to people / households increasing their asset base.
- Exploring the potential impacts of climate change, or a specific intervention, on the asset bases of different social groups and thus their vulnerability.
- Exploring the adaptive capacity of different social groups.
- Informing an understanding of the value or importance of ecosystem services to local people, in comparison to other assets or resources and across different social groups.
- Providing a baseline of asset holdings and/or monitoring changes in people's assets over time, including during the course of a project.

Suggested steps

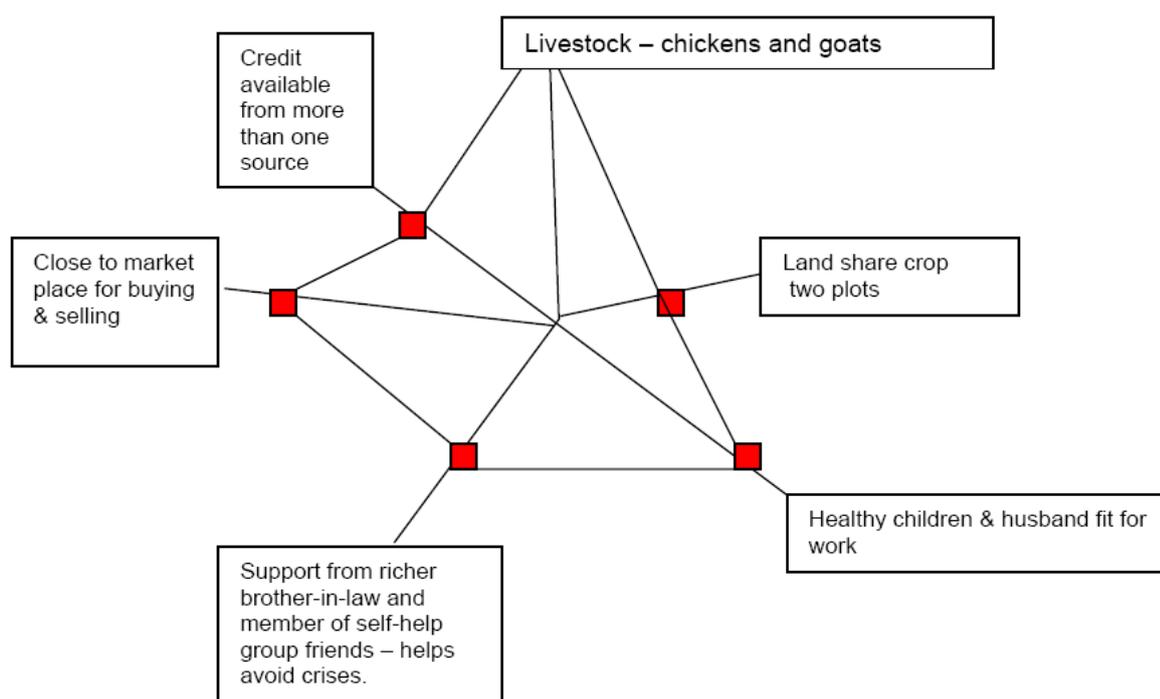
Allow approximately **2 hours** for this exercise.

- 1) Ensure that all participants are clear on what is understood by the term assets (or resources). Then ask participants to brainstorm and list their different assets and write or draw a picture of each asset on a card (if drawing on the ground, use cards or other local materials to represent each asset). It may be useful to have a checklist of assets to prompt discussion, framed around the 5 asset classes of Sustainable Livelihoods frameworks (human, social, natural, physical, financial). It is important that local participants identify locally important assets.
- 2) The cards should then be laid out so that everyone in the group can see them. Ask participants to discuss what they consider to be the most important assets. During this discussion it is important to establish which assets are most important, why and for whom (who benefits).
- 3) When participants feel they have listed all their important assets, the assets can be sorted into appropriate groups (for example, various agricultural tools / implements could be grouped). The number of assets will vary greatly but it should be possible to group them together into ten to fifteen groups.
- 4) On the basis of the previous discussions, ask participants to agree how many asset wheels to prepare, recognising the differences in asset holdings for different social groups. It is important

to develop a range of asset wheels, one for each social group under consideration. Comparing the asset bases of different social groups will help build up a picture of how assets are used to develop and manage livelihood strategies.

- 5) A large wheel should be drawn with the same number of spokes as the number of asset groups, and then each spoke can be marked with a card for each group (for example, Agricultural Tools or Family Support).
- 6) The spokes on the wheel represent a scale with low (or zero) at the centre and high (or 10) at the outside. Local participants should assess the level of asset holdings for each social group under consideration and to score it by marking the spoke at the right point along the scale.

Figure 1: An example of a simple asset wheel (World Bank, 2005)



- 7) Discuss and analyse the asset wheels, in particular focusing on the difference between different social groups. Exploring the differences in scoring might also provide information regarding opportunities for and constraints to increasing asset holdings and access to assets.

Questions to guide discussion and analysis

The following questions can be used to guide the discussion but should be adopted and adapted according to the focus of the exercise.

- How are asset holdings different for different people or households?
- What are the links between the different spokes; do different kinds of assets affect each other and how?
- What events or changes external or internal to the individual, household or group affect the accumulation or depletion of assets?
- Are there any seasonal differences in assets?
- Who makes the decisions over assets (in the household and in regard to specific 'community' assets)?
- How might a particular intervention affect asset holdings and management?

Points to remember:

- ❖ Sensitive issues (such as gender or other social differences in asset distribution) might arise, although these can be addressed through good facilitation.
- ❖ Local participants should be encouraged to build as much of the diagram as possible without interruption and to suggest anything else that should be recorded.
- ❖ Before using this tool read the accompanying document, *A guide to using tools for participatory approaches*.

For further information

World Bank (2005) *Poverty and Social Impact Analysis Sourcebook*
<http://go.worldbank.org/ZGZHJEDBZ0>



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