

# Applying Livelihood Approaches to Natural Resource Management Initiatives: Experiences in Namibia and Kenya

Caroline Ashley

**Working Paper 134**

Results of research presented in preliminary  
form for discussion and critical comment



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**Applying Livelihood Approaches to Natural Resource  
Management Initiatives:**

**Experiences in Namibia and Kenya**

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## **The Sustainable Livelihoods Working Paper Series**

This working paper is one of a series that cover practical applications of Sustainable Livelihood (SL) approaches within natural resources management. The papers provide substantial case study material of varied practical experiences, combined with reflection on the emerging findings concerning uses of SL. Some focus on specific types of application of SL approaches (e.g. project design, impact assessment) and some on their application to specific sectors (e.g. water, tourism).

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This set of Working Papers on livelihoods is co-ordinated by Caroline Ashley (ODI) and funded by the Department for International Development's Rural Livelihoods Department. Comments or enquiries should be sent to Caroline Ashley ([c.ashley@odi.org.uk](mailto:c.ashley@odi.org.uk)) or Kate Burke ([k.burke@odi.org.uk](mailto:k.burke@odi.org.uk)).

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## Summary

This paper reviews different uses of livelihoods analysis in four projects/programmes, and identifies lessons learnt on the application of a livelihoods approach. All four examples explored how rural livelihoods affect and are affected by natural resource management (NRM) initiatives.

Three applications come from Namibia. Participatory planning of wildlife uses was done with communities, with the aim of helping them enhance wildlife's contribution to livelihoods. A review of livelihood strategies in Caprivi Region was conducted to identify implications for the Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme. The rural tourism sector was assessed in terms of its multiple impacts on rural livelihoods and how these can be enhanced. In the final example, from Kenya, a methodology for impact assessment was developed, focusing on livelihood impacts of wildlife enterprises.

A livelihoods approach was used at two different levels. Firstly, as an underlying principle, putting livelihoods as a focus, and enhancement of livelihoods as a central aim in making recommendations. Secondly, as an analytical tool to assist with detailed livelihood analysis. The scope and methods of livelihood analysis varied, but in each case it involved identifying the livelihood issues that are priorities for local people and then exploring the links between livelihood strategies and the various NRM initiatives.

Findings on the fit between NRM initiatives and rural livelihoods varied from context to context, although some common themes emerged, such as the importance of impacts on assets and other activities. Findings on methods include the need for a combination of methodologies, the importance of integrating stakeholder analysis and participatory assessment, and the value of the sustainable livelihoods (SL) framework as an analytical structure.

Lessons learnt on application of a livelihoods approach in these four cases include:

- Livelihoods analysis can serve a wide variety of applications, such as: reshaping a programme to enhance the 'fit' with livelihoods; impact assessment; understanding factors driving participation of key groups; and as a focus for participatory planning with communities.
- Sharing a livelihoods approach as a broad-brush principle was as important as, and possibly more effective than, sharing the details of livelihoods analysis.
- Livelihoods analysis can be done without the SL framework, but the framework helps to broaden and structure the scope of enquiry. However, issues that are not prominent in the framework, such as empowerment, should not be neglected.
- Livelihoods analysis can be very useful for showing how an intervention 'fits' with livelihood strategies, and how people's livelihoods are being enhanced or constrained. On this basis, recommendations for improvements in the intervention can invariably be made. However, it is less useful for quantifying changes in livelihood security or sustainability. Aggregation of results is therefore also more difficult.
- Livelihoods analysis is resource intensive. In particular it requires a combine of field methodologies, including participatory techniques, ability to adapt them, and strong analytical skills.
- A livelihoods approach was often welcomed by partners, because it has instinctive appeal and was useful in generating insights and recommendations. However, adopting the approach for themselves not only requires commitment to enhance local impacts but also skills in appropriate analytical techniques.

The main values of a livelihoods approach that emerge from these four applications are that: it provides an explicit focus on what matters to poor people; synthesises perspective of different disciplines; broadens the scope of enquiry from cash flows, direct impacts and positive impacts to other important issues; the SL framework is a useful analytical tool; and livelihoods analysis generates practical recommendations to enhance the design and implementation of initiatives. The main challenges that emerge are: limitations in the framework (complexity and gaps); difficulties for partners in implementing the approach; high resource inputs needed; and the difficulties of quantifying contributions to livelihoods.

Finally, in the four cases reviewed here, experience of using a livelihoods approach in one enhanced the next. This confirms the value of reflecting on and sharing practical experience of applying a livelihoods approach.

# 1. Introduction

This working paper reviews uses of Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) analysis in four quite different projects/programmes concerned with aspects of natural resource management, particularly wildlife management. It seeks to identify what emerged from the use of livelihoods analysis, strengths and weaknesses of the approach, and lessons learnt. The underlying theme in the four examples is exploration of the links between rural livelihoods and common property resource management (CPRM), looking at the influence of livelihood strategies on CPRM, and how CPRM interventions affect livelihoods.

Three examples come from Namibia: the first focuses on participatory planning of wildlife use with communities; the second on understanding livelihood strategies to enhance the Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme; the third on assessing the impacts of tourism development from a livelihood perspective. The fourth example, from Kenya, was an assessment of livelihood impacts of wildlife enterprises. SL analysis in the first example was an integral component of the project, tested out in the planning phase, while in the other three it was used in project *review*.

In each example, livelihoods analysis was used along with elements of what could be called the broader 'livelihoods approach' (i.e. putting people's livelihood concerns at the centre). The SL framework was not explicitly used in all cases, as some occurred before or simultaneously with development of the framework, but its relevance can be considered retrospectively.

This paper first describes the four activities (Section 2). It then provides examples of what can be learnt from the use of livelihoods analysis in three different ways:

- Findings about people's livelihoods and 'fit' with the project/programme concerned
- The methods used for doing livelihood analysis
- The ways in which livelihoods approaches were developed, shared and used

Sections 3 and 4 then review the strengths and weaknesses of livelihoods approaches, as found in these examples, and identify lessons learnt.

## 2. Four uses of livelihoods approaches in NRM projects

### 2.1 Participatory planning of ‘Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification’

#### 2.1.1 Background

The ‘WILD’ project – on Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification – is a Namibian project that was being developed in 1997. The aim of the project is to help rural communities to exploit their new rights and opportunities for sustainable wildlife use in ways that most enhance their livelihoods. One of the main ways of doing this is for the project to *facilitate* participatory livelihoods analysis and land use planning in some of the first communities to adopt wildlife use. From this, lessons can be learnt and shared with others about how different wildlife uses affect livelihoods, and about grass-roots decision-making processes that are useful. The substantial project development phase in 1997 tested out this strategy by holding short-term participatory planning workshops with two communities in western Namibia. The workshops were not about planning the WILD project, but about community plans for integrating wildlife, using the proposed methodology of the WILD project. The aim was to help develop the project strategy while simultaneously providing some immediate support to the ongoing processes at community level.

WILD is a project of the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism and is funded by the UK’s Department for International Development. The development phase was from April to October 1997, with fieldwork in June, and the full 3-year WILD project has now commenced. The two participatory workshops of the development phase were held with 2 emerging (now registered) wildlife ‘conservancies’ in Kunene Region, north west Namibia: Torra Conservancy and Khoadi !!Hoas conservancy. A conservancy is a community body formed by residents to which the government devolves conditional wildlife use rights. Until these were established by legislative amendment in 1996, wildlife on communal land was entirely the property and responsibility of the state.

#### 2.1.2 Application of livelihoods approaches

There are three points to note about the use of livelihoods approaches in this project:

- The livelihoods analysis is done *by* local communities, with facilitation of outsiders, to help with their own decision-making, as well as to generate lessons to share with others;
- Livelihoods analysis is not part of the project cycle – for planning or review – but is an intrinsic component of the project;
- Apart from the specific use of livelihoods analysis, the project reflects a ‘livelihoods approach’ at a deeper level. Early ideas for the project focused on comparing *economic* returns to wildlife and other land-uses under different conditions. Other professionals were focusing on the institutional and policy conditions needed, and on the ecological implications of community wildlife use. The decision to prioritise the *livelihood impacts* of different wildlife uses reflected a commitment to prioritise what mattered to local residents and would drive their decision-making. Technical inputs from economics, ecology, policy analysis and social development would feed into this.

### 2.1.3 Activities and outputs

At both Torra and Khoadi !!Hoas, a week's fieldwork comprised two two-day workshops with farmers (men and women) and a meeting with the local Committee. The workshops focused on:

- Current land-use management strategies and the livelihood priorities that lie behind them (e.g. livestock management and how these are linked to risk avoidance, coping with drought, and cash-generation strategies);
- Outlining various wildlife use options (e.g. luxury tourism, small-scale tourism, trophy hunting, a wildlife area);
- Assessment of the pros and cons of each option, focusing on its fit or conflict with current land-uses and with livelihood priorities.

The workshops used a variety of PRA-type techniques combined with general discussion, and were tightly facilitated by four WILD team members plus Committee representatives of the conservancy involved. The outputs of each week were of three different types, reflecting the mix of objectives involved:

- Insights on members' views of alternative wildlife development options and their impacts. These were immediately fed back to the Conservancy Committee (through discussion plus a brief written report) but also to others involved in conservancy policy and support;
- Insights for project design confirming the basic principle of learning through facilitation of participatory planning, while indicating refinements;
- Commitment of community leaders to the planned WILD project and their comments on how it should be designed.

#### **Box 1 Examples of techniques to explore livelihood impacts of wildlife use options**

The first half of each participatory workshop discussed current land management and livestock management, as a way of exploring livelihood strategies and priorities, and setting the context for planning discussions. Then the participants were presented with four alternative scenarios for wildlife/tourism development. Basic information on the inputs required and likely outputs was provided (e.g. amount of land used, for what, likely employment and income etc.). Four working groups considered one option each, listing the pros and cons for local residents, and then comparing their option to the other three. Each reported back, giving other participants a chance to comment on the pros and cons identified. This process revealed a wide variety of concerns and hopes, covering issues such as risk, land use, conservation, and distribution of benefits.

After the work of each group had been discussed, three further activities were done to help to explore the priority issues, and differences among stakeholders. Firstly, all the participants were asked to use marks or stickers to indicate a preference for which option the conservancy should proceed with first. This revealed which pros outweighed which cons for a majority, showing for example a tendency to minimise risk rather than maximise income. Secondly, the group discussed how different stakeholders in the community would view the options and would be affected differently.

Finally, the facilitators compiled sets of cards listing all the different pros and cons of wildlife development that had emerged during the day. Again in working groups, the participants were asked to rank these in order of priority. This revealed relatively high consensus about the most important issues (cash, physical security, impacts on livestock). It was also useful to compare differences between results of ranking – not only differences and similarities between the two workshops in each Conservancy, and between each Conservancy area, but between results from the farmers' workshops and then from the results of the same exercise conducted with Conservancy Committee members.

## 2.2 Review of livelihood strategies of households in Caprivi, and implications for CBNRM

### 2.2.1 Background and rationale for the livelihoods review

Caprivi Region is in north east Namibia and has been a major focus of Namibia's long-standing Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme) since the early nineties. During this time, the CBNRM programme has helped develop community-level management and monitoring of grass, veld products, wildlife and small-scale tourism, with a strong focus on building institutional capacity for common property resource management. This is now bearing fruit in the form of several registered and emerging conservancies. Caprivi is the wettest part of Namibia, is the only Region with perennial rivers and average annual rainfall above the minimum required for dryland farming (approx. 550mm), has considerable wildlife and three National Parks/Reserves, and neighbours international wildlife and tourism areas (Botswana's Chobe National Park, Zimbabwe/Zambia's Victoria Falls). As such, the potential for more productive management of wild natural resources is considerable.

In 1997, a review of the livelihood strategies of rural Caprivians was initiated by the CBNRM programme, for a number of reasons. By that time, a great deal of information had been gathered on different CBNRM options, including tourism development, wildlife use, parks and neighbours links, thatching grass sale, veld food harvesting, veld product processing and sale, and craft making from non-timber forest products. *Economic* analysis had been done comparing the returns to different activities. Intensive institution-building work combined with social science research by university graduates had built a picture of many *social* issues affecting CBNRM, particularly institutional weaknesses, gender issues and the extent to which the benefits of CBNRM could be distributed equitably. A strong presence of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and conservation-trained student researchers and NGO-staff provided a growing picture of *conservation* aspects of CBNRM. However, once many initiatives were at the point of take-off (in 1997), local residents and Conservancy Committees would face many decisions, impacts were likely to intensify, and some adaptation in implementation of CBNRM activities may be needed. Furthermore, by 1997, the agriculture Ministry had radically increased the information base on agricultural practices from virtually zero, to substantial data sets based on survey information combined with much qualitative information from farming systems research in a neighbouring (not too dissimilar) Region. The livelihoods review was commissioned by the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Programme<sup>1</sup> in order to pull together all the disparate strands of understanding that had been gained so far, and bring in a livelihoods focus.

### 2.2.2 Purpose and components of the livelihoods review

The aim of the livelihoods review (Ashley and LaFranchi, 1997) was to learn more about the links between livelihood strategies and CBNRM in both directions: how livelihood strategies influenced people's common property resource management and engagement in CBNRM, and how the activities of the CBNRM programme were affecting their livelihoods. The review synthesised knowledge on livelihoods from a range of different sectors, particularly including agriculture and fisheries, and interpreted this in terms of its significance for CBNRM. Specifically, there were three elements to the review:

- An overview of livelihood needs and strategies;

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<sup>1</sup> A USAID-funded WWF-US programme to support the Namibian Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme, and working in close collaboration with the Namibian partners.

- An assessment of how CBNRM activities fitted into and affected these needs and strategies;
- Recommendations on how the programme could enhance impacts on livelihoods and participation of key target groups.

The overview of livelihood needs and strategies was done without the benefit of the current SL framework, so used a more simple matrix plotting different activities against household needs. Activities included livestock, crops, employment, veld product harvesting, fishing and wildlife/tourism, while needs ranged from the immediate physical ones of food and shelter, to broader livelihood needs of cash income, reserves, a buffer against drought, cultural assets, and community management capacity. This matrix proved useful in highlighting how the *combination* of activities met the combination of needs, the importance of livestock for meeting many needs simultaneously, and where wildlife/tourism development could help to fill important gaps (cash income, cultural assets and community management capacity). Nevertheless, it is evident with hindsight that the SL framework, and particularly the distinction it offers between assets and needs, would have been useful and added texture – as well as complexity – to the analysis. The review also looked at the key factors determining how households combine activities to meet needs, particularly the preferred order of strategies to gain food self-sufficiency and to acquire sufficient cash.

A second component of the analysis used the information gathered on livelihood strategies, needs and gaps to reflect on links with CBNRM. It focused mainly on how CBNRM activities ‘fit’ with livelihoods, emphasising both *positive* and *negative* impacts, intended and unintended, and highlighting particular interests of the poor and of women. By looking at the reverse link – how people’s livelihood priorities affect the relevance of CBNRM to them, it also identified factors affecting their participation in the programme. This analysis of the fit between CBNRM and livelihood priorities led readily to the third component: recommendations on how to enhance impacts on and participation by key groups.

### 2.2.3 Application of livelihoods approaches

Livelihoods approaches were applied at two levels:

- Shifting the focus from different sectoral perspectives (economics, social equity, agriculture) to a central focus on people’s livelihoods;
- Developing a more detailed analysis of livelihood strategies and priorities.

Unlike the WILD workshops described above, the review was conducted entirely by outsiders for external purposes. It was commissioned for the CBNRM programme and conducted as a desk review, though by two authors who had been closely involved in implementation activities in Caprivi. It drew on a vast range of grey literature, particularly from NGOs in the area, student researchers, progress reports and analytical reports from the CBNRM programme, and data from other government ministries. Although some of this research and implementation work had been through participatory techniques, the livelihoods review in itself was not at all participatory.

## 2.3 Assessment of the impacts of tourism on rural livelihoods

### 2.3.1 Background

Tourism has been developing rapidly in Namibia since independence in 1990, including in the rural communal areas. The CBNRM programme has helped to develop forms of community involvement in

tourism. The Government's Tourism Directorate has been actively trying to develop the policy framework for tourism growth, including a commitment to community tourism. And the private sector has been developing its products, particularly in the more spectacular communal areas where wildlife is present – which is also where conservancies are forming.

The review of livelihood impacts of tourism was not a specific project, but was an initiative by the author to synthesise a range of findings on tourism impacts, and to help to promote a livelihoods focus within the tourism sector. Presentations on the livelihood impacts of tourism have been made to southern Africa community tourism practitioners, and to the UK-based tourism community interested in community impacts, and have now been written up in an ODI working paper<sup>2</sup>. The analysis builds on several years' practical involvement in promoting tourism at policy and field level in Namibia and draws heavily on developments in the CBNRM programme including the participatory analysis done for WILD and the Caprivi livelihoods review documented above.

### 2.3.2 Purpose of the analysis

The review of livelihood impacts of tourism serves three different purposes at different levels:

*i Cross-disciplinary synthesis and summary of local level impacts.*

The review synthesises accumulated understanding of different types of impacts of tourism on rural people from different technical perspectives. As in the cases above, economists had done economic analysis, social development workers had done social and institutional analysis etc. But the livelihoods focus integrates these in a way that puts people's concerns at the centre.

*ii A challenge to conventional tourism approaches*

The review seeks to promote an *approach* or way of thinking about tourism development that is not familiar to this sector. In many developing countries, including Namibia, tourism is often seen by economists as a route to macro-economic growth, by the private sector as a commercial activity, and by conservationists as an element of sustainable use to create conservation incentives. But none of these prioritise livelihood concerns of poor people, nor, therefore, suggest ways to enhance local impacts. A fourth approach adopted by some NGOs, is to view community involvement in tourism as a strategy for rural development, but in practice this too often focuses on *cash* income and employment generation. A livelihoods perspective helps to shift the focus to a broader range of tangible and intangible costs and benefits.

*iii Generating practical recommendations on ways to enhance the livelihood impacts of tourism*

By analysing how different types of tourism development fit or conflict with livelihood priorities in different circumstances, the review identifies ways in which impacts can be enhanced. The review concludes that tourism's contribution to livelihoods can be enhanced by adjusting decisions on what is developed and how, in ways that reflect people's livelihood priorities. This has specific implications in Namibia – for example on how conservancies might choose to develop exclusive tourism areas, and how government can improve the planning process. At a more general level, there are also process implications for tourism planners, other policy-makers, communities, businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in other countries, if they wish to embrace the livelihoods focus outlined in (ii).

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<sup>2</sup> See (Ashley, 2000) 'The impacts of tourism on rural livelihoods: Namibia's experience', ODI Working Paper 128, based on presentations prepared in 1998 for the southern African Development Community (SADC) – Natural Resources Management Programme Workshop on Community Tourism in southern Africa and for a Royal Geographical Society Conference on Tourism and Livelihoods.

### 2.3.3 Activities and outputs

The review of livelihood impacts of tourism was first pulled together in 1998 and developed further in 1999, so has been able to draw on the SL framework during this process. The review has two main components:

- *An assessment of how tourism developments can affect different aspects of rural livelihoods*, using the SL framework as an analytical checklist. This means that impacts are considered on assets, activities, livelihood outcomes, and ability to cope with or influence external influences<sup>3</sup> such as institutions and policies. The effect of these external influences on the type of impacts generated by tourism is also considered;
- *Implications for how livelihood impacts of tourism can be enhanced*. Some implications are at the general level: the need to recognise a wide range of direct and indirect livelihood impacts that matter to local people, not just generating cash and jobs; the need to develop processes that enable local livelihood concerns to be reflected. There are also implications for dealing with specific issues, such as the trade off with other activities, particularly livestock, due to competition for land and other natural resources.

The SL framework provided a ‘livelihood lens’ through which to re-interpret and synthesise existing information on livelihood impacts, such as the discussion and ranking of impacts during WILD planning. The analysis draws heavily on *local* level tourism initiatives. While ‘community tourism’ is just one small segment of the tourism market, the initiatives that closely involve local residents were particularly useful for understanding the wide range of livelihood impacts, and how plans are adapted by people according to livelihood concerns. For example, negotiations that took place between potential tourism investors and Conservancies in 1999, and in Torra Conservancy from 1994-97, reveal many insights about Conservancy members’ priorities that cannot be obtained from sites where lodge development has been driven entirely by outsiders.

## 2.4 Assessment of economic and livelihood impacts of wildlife enterprises in Kenya

### 2.4.1 Background

The final example of use of SL approaches is from Kenya, though it drew on the previous work in Namibia. The author was contracted by Africa Wildlife Foundation to develop a methodology for assessing the economic and livelihood impacts of wildlife enterprises, and to oversee the first two case studies using the methodology. This was part of a larger AWF project on Conservation Economics and Commerce, called WELD – Wildlife Enterprises and Local Development. The overall aim is to assess and enhance the effectiveness of wildlife enterprises as a strategy for conservation and development.

The first two case studies to be completed were of a tourism lodge established by members of Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, near Mount Kenya, and a butterfly farming enterprise (Kipepeo Project) set up within the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Conservation Project near Malindi, on the Kenyan Coast. Other case studies are underway in Uganda and Tanzania, and the methodology has been written up in a handbook. Another ODI Working Paper summarises the methodology and reflects on its application,

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<sup>3</sup> In the language of the SL framework it assesses any change in people’s ability to influence the ‘transforming structures and processes’ (such as policies, organisations, institutions) that govern their livelihood opportunities, or to cope with the ‘vulnerability context.’ In the review itself, more simple terminology is used by describing key ‘external influences’ as policies and institutions.

strengths and weaknesses (Ashley and Hussein, 2000)<sup>4</sup> so only the issues concerning use of SL approaches are covered here.

### 2.4.2 Purpose of the impact assessments

The impact assessments aimed to identify how the enterprises are contributing to development and conservation, and whether there is a tension between their development, conservation and commercial objectives. Such an assessment is intended to be useful both to project staff, to improve implementation, and to the broader AWF review of the effectiveness of wildlife enterprises. The impact assessment therefore differed from conventional project reviews in two ways:

- It assessed impacts in terms of broad economic and livelihood change, not in terms of pre-defined project objectives and plans. This is because it sought to identify overall contribution to development, not to assess accomplishment of planned activities for internal management purposes. Given that the projects have the broad if undefind objectives of contributing to conservation and development, it could be said that the review was focusing on goal or purpose level, rather than activities and outputs. Changes in livelihoods was adopted as a key measure of impact.
- Assessment of commercial viability was an integral component, because these projects are *enterprises*, so viability determines sustainability. The commercial assessment was a complement to, rather than a component of, the analysis of local economic and livelihood impacts.

### 2.4.3 Rationale for the emphasis on livelihood impacts

The project reviews have a very explicit focus on *livelihood impacts*, because this is seen as offering a contrast to conventional approaches in conservation and development spheres. As in the tourism sector, mentioned above, there is a tendency in conservation and development circles to focus on cash and jobs as the main local benefits of projects. Generation of cash income is the way in which development projects are expected to create incentives for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Other approaches might focus on sector-specific outputs, such as biomass and wildlife populations. A focus on livelihoods was emphasised as a more appropriate measure of what the project means to local people, and therefore of its likely contribution to development and conservation. The rationale for this was grounded in greater understanding of poverty, such as the importance of assets, diversified portfolios of activities, and the variety of outcomes pursued by the poor.

### 2.4.4 Components of the impact assessments

The impact assessments explored a wide variety of changes or trends caused by the project, analysed these in terms of their financial and livelihood impact on different stakeholders, and from this drew interpretations about its development contribution and how it could be enhanced. The livelihood impact analysis was only one strand, but a major one. Apart from the commercial viability, it drew on other components of the review, as illustrated in Figure 1.

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<sup>4</sup> See ODI Working Paper 129 'Developing practical methodologies for livelihood impact assessment: Experience of the African Wildlife Foundation in East Africa'.



The main components therefore were:

- Stakeholder analysis
- Estimates of local financial impacts
- Analysis of broader livelihood impacts on both participants and non-participants.
- Analysis of the influence of external policies and institutions on project impacts

The stakeholder analysis underpinned all the discussion of impacts, ensuring that differences between stakeholders were identified and distribution of costs and benefits assessed. The financial analysis provided information on the scale of financial flows injected into the local economy from the project, which in itself was a key finding. But the estimates of different types of flows were also integrated into the livelihood analysis, to investigate their significance to the livelihoods of those receiving them. The analysis of external influences was one of the ways of identifying ‘key factors’ that shape the livelihood impacts.

Within the livelihoods analysis, three main themes were explored: an overview of people’s livelihood strategies and priorities; how the project changed or fitted with these; and differences between stakeholders. To assess changes in livelihoods, a wide range of fieldwork methods were used to explore pros, cons, trends and changes associated with the project. As in the tourism review above, the SL framework then provided the ‘lens’ through which this data was synthesised to provide an overview of how the project fits with livelihoods or changes them, and why.

The following section summarises findings from these four applications of livelihoods approaches. For ease of reference, the key features of the four are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1 Summary of four applications of livelihood approaches**

<b>Example</b>	<b>Location, Country</b>	<b>Use of SL approach</b>
WILD participatory planning	Kunene Region, north west Namibia	Facilitating Conservancy planning of wildlife/land use. Fed into project design
Livelihood strategies and CBNRM in Caprivi	Caprivi Region, north east Namibia	Review of livelihood strategies to identify implications for on-going CBNRM programme
Impacts of tourism on rural livelihoods	Namibia	Desk-based synthesis of livelihood impacts of rural tourism sector, and how they can be enhanced
Economic and livelihood impacts of wildlife enterprises	Kenya Il Ngwesi: Laikipia District Arabuko Sokoke: Malindi District	Project review: assessment of impacts

### 3. Findings from the experiences

The work described revealed a great deal about livelihoods in the area and how these relate to NRM activities. Given that these are highly context-specific, only some of the main trends are summarised here. The work also generated findings on useful methods for livelihood analysis. Finally, it provided insights into the process of adopting livelihoods approaches. These three different types of findings are reviewed here and summarised with examples in Table 2 at the end of the section.

#### 3.1 Content: findings on livelihoods and their fit with NRM projects

Needless to say, the detailed findings about people's livelihood priorities and how they affect and are affected by project activities on NRM were highly varied. Some common themes and important insights nevertheless emerge.

##### 3.1.1 *The importance of a wide range of impacts*

In all cases it emerged as important to identify both positive *and negative*, direct *and indirect* impacts on livelihoods. Impacts on *assets* and on other livelihood *activities* were highlighted in several cases, and these components of the SL framework served as useful categories.

##### **Negative impacts**

Negative impacts, such as wildlife damage to crops in Caprivi, are often of major importance to people, particularly the poor, and can in fact be minimised. But outsiders often focus on maximising benefits (such as income) rather than minimising costs.

##### **Impact on assets**

A project or enterprise may affect a few people directly, but can affect the asset base of many more. For example, at Il Ngwesi tourism lodge, the financial flows are only significant for the 50 or so employees and self-employed artisans. For the majority of Group Ranch members it is the lodge's *impact on assets* that matters, particularly on natural capital (by encouraging set-aside of emergency grazing in the wilderness area), human capital (by funding pre-school development) and access to physical capital (through emergency use of the vehicle to get to hospital). Similarly participatory analysis of impacts of tourism in Namibia identified impacts on access to natural assets – particularly access to emergency springs and grazing – to be important.

##### **Fit with activities**

The fit or conflict with other activities was highlighted in the WILD work and at Arabuko Sokoke. One of the main advantages of tourism identified during the WILD participatory planning is that it enables a farmer to 'continue as a farmer' because employment is near home. It therefore fits with pastoralism much more easily than distant jobs that involve hiring a herdboyc or relying on relatives. In the Arabuko Sokoke butterfly project the fact that the enterprise takes little time and is done at home and so does *not* conflict with other activities is one of the key advantages of the work, particularly for women.

### 3.1.2 *Differences between the poor and others*

In all cases, it was essential to combine the livelihoods analysis with disaggregation of stakeholder groups. In particular, differences in livelihood strategies and outcomes between poor and non-poor and between men and women were reviewed. This highlighted that, in Caprivi for example, the most ‘visible’ impacts are of more concern to the less poor – jobs in tourism, competition between wildlife and livestock for grazing, and the development of new institutional roles. The analysis identified three key issues particularly relevant to the poor for the programme to focus on: plant-based natural resources (not just wildlife), the timing of income dividends (to coincide with the lean season), and dealing with negative impacts (particularly crop damage).

### 3.1.3 *Reasons for (lack of) participation*

Most of the work described focused on how a change in natural resource management (through CBNRM, tourism, conservancy development, or a wildlife enterprise) affected people’s livelihoods. But it is also proved invaluable to use the livelihoods analysis to explore the link in the opposite direction: i.e. how people’s livelihood strategies affect their participation in the activity. By drawing on the disaggregated analysis for key stakeholder groups, this could identify strategies for enhancing participation of specific target groups. For example, analysis of inputs and outputs of butterfly farming highlighted the high degree of risk involved, particularly at low levels of production. Given that risk-avoidance is a particularly important strategy for the poor, this helped to explain why poorer group members had given up farming. In the Caprivi review, it was recommended that continued and expanded focus on the livelihood priorities of women (such as thatching grass and management of other plant resources) would be most likely to enhance women’s participation.

### 3.1.4 *How projects ‘fit with’ livelihoods rather than change them*

In no instance was it possible to say that X livelihoods had changed by Y amount (other than in terms of how many people earned how much income). Not only was it very difficult to *quantify* change in, for example, access to assets or ability to cope with drought, but often the impact of the project was in terms of ‘fit’ rather than ‘change’. In many cases the project intervention ‘contributes to’ or ‘puts pressure on’ household strategies. Tourism ‘fits’ with drought coping and portfolio diversification but ‘conflicts’ with risk minimisation and maintenance of liquidity given the up-front investment required. Butterfly farming ‘fits’ with other home-based work, but doesn’t actually change them. It is an addition not an alternative strategy, offering livelihood support not transformation.

### 3.1.5 *Recommendations to enhance impacts and participation*

In all cases, it was relatively easy to draw recommendations from the analysis on how to enhance livelihood impacts or encourage participation of key stakeholder groups. For example, a range of useful directions emerged for the Conservancy Committees involved in the WILD participatory planning, in terms of minimising risk and trade-offs with current livelihood priorities, including details of possible land use plans. The tourism review generated recommendations at quite a different level, by highlighting the importance for planners of adopting processes that enable local livelihood concerns to be reflected.

### 3.2 Method: findings on methods for livelihood analysis

In all cases a wide variety of methods were used, ranging from PRA-type workshop activities (in WILD and the Kenya impact assessments) to a heavy reliance on existing data and reports (in Caprivi and the tourism assessment). The need to draw on a variety of methods and sources is perhaps the dominant methodological finding. Beyond this, however, some other issues also emerged.

#### 3.2.1 *Detailed financial analysis is needed*

It is sometimes thought that a livelihoods focus involves a shift away from quantitative analysis to intangible ‘soft’ issues. It is true that intangible and unquantifiable indicators of change need to be incorporated, but in at least two of the activities described here, *detailed financial analysis* was invaluable. The Kenyan impact assessments and Caprivi CBNRM review all involved estimating local income flows of four different types: formal wages, casual earnings, profits to owners, and collective income. For each type, the number of earners, average amount per person, and total amount earned was estimated. Only on the basis of such detailed analysis was it then possible to interpret the likely livelihood significance of such flows.

For example, the financial analysis in Caprivi identified that approximately 1% to 5% of households in a community could gain a permanent job, earning around N\$2,000 to N\$3,000 per year, while another 5% could increase their casual earnings by anything from ten dollars to a thousand dollars a year. The livelihood analysis then assessed the significance of these, in that the full-time wages could lift a household from insecure to secure (livelihood transforming), while the casual earnings could be equivalent to a term’s school fees, a couple of bags of grain etc. They would not change livelihood strategies or security, but would help cash-strapped households to make ends meet.

#### 3.2.2 *Stakeholder analysis must be integrated into livelihood analysis*

As illustrated by the findings on livelihood issues, reported above, livelihood differences between key stakeholder groups were explored. This was vital to avoid aggregating priorities into an unrealistic ‘average’ and to shed light on the benefits and participation of key stakeholder groups. In addition to the distinctions between men and women, poor and non-poor are important, other key distinctions varied from place to place. Therefore, particularly in the Kenyan impact assessments, it was important to conduct stakeholder analysis to define the different groups of stakeholders with common interests. It was then necessary to disaggregate the livelihood analysis to understand differences and similarities between stakeholder groups.

#### 3.2.3 *Livelihoods analysis may or may not be participatory*

Each of the activities relied on some data collected through PRA-type activities (in some cases the PRA was part of the livelihood analysis, in other cases it was already captured in secondary sources). However, the degree to which they could be said to be ‘participatory’ varied enormously. The WILD work was partly extractive – outsiders wanted to learn about livelihood-wildlife issues and test out a project methodology – but it was also participatory in that it was planned with conservancy leaders and furthered decision-making *by* community members. The experience was seen as demonstrating a useful conjunction between livelihood approaches and participatory planning that will now be taken further in the main WILD project.

However, the other activities were fundamentally extractive rather than participatory despite their use of PRA-tools. The Kenyan impact assessment methodology recognised that participatory techniques were *essential* in order to learn about people's own livelihood priorities and preferences. They are not optional to livelihoods analysis at that level of detail. A workshop technique called 'Participatory Assessment of Livelihood Issues and Impacts (PALI)' was developed, to explore project impacts through matrices, ranking and working group tasks. But it was also important to recognise that this approach was not the same as a 'participatory evaluation' in which residents assess the project according to their objectives and for their own purposes. Here, the evaluation was led by 'outsiders', and the project was assessed primarily against SL criteria, though the priorities of local people were important for defining those criteria in practical terms.

### 3.2.4 *Use of the SL framework with many other tools*

The fact that the Caprivi and WILD work preceded the dissemination of the SL framework so were done without it shows that livelihoods approaches certainly can be adopted without the framework. As happened in Caprivi, analysts are then likely to develop their own more simple categories or matrices. The later assessment of Namibian tourism and impact assessments in Kenya did use the SL framework as an analytical tool and benefited from doing so. It provided a relatively easy way of taking the livelihood analysis further and structuring complexity. Some of the data from the WILD planning and the Caprivi review were reinterpreted through the lens of the SL framework for the tourism review, and in doing so the findings became easier to compare, contrast and summarise.

However, in both the Kenya methodology and in presentations of the tourism review, a simplified SL framework was used, in order to introduce the key components to those unfamiliar with the approach. It was judged that the full framework (Carney, 1998) would have been off-putting and counter-productive to tourism practitioners and to AWF staff learning new approaches to impact assessment.

The SL framework was just one tool, and was used mainly at the *planning* and *analytical* stages. As illustrated in the Kenya methodology (Figure 1) it provides a prism through which to view the findings. It is important to reiterate that in order to collect the data to be interpreted, a wide variety of methods and tools were needed.

For example, the Caprivi review drew on large-scale surveys by the Agriculture ministry, national census data, findings from Farming Systems Research, gender analysis by researchers, progress reports by NGO staff, PRA-type research and planning activities by university students, community discussions, knowledge/observation of community actions, and project appraisal reports conducted for the transport sector and fisheries sector. The Kenyan impact assessments used 9 information-gathering techniques including review of literature, review of project documents and data, PALI workshops, key informant interviews, household surveys, market visits, financial records and financial 'rummaging', policy discussion, and observation.

### 3.2.5 *Demands on skills and resources*

The reviews of CBNRM and livelihoods in Caprivi and the livelihood impacts of tourism were not resource intensive. They required application of a new perspective to analysis of a wealth of information that already existed (approximately one month's work). Nevertheless they drew on several years' experience and a mass of information. By contrast the WILD participatory planning and Kenyan impact assessments indicate how resource- and skill-intensive livelihood analysis can be.

The WILD participatory planning was very short term (one week in each conservancy), though it was clear that *much* longer would be needed to really facilitate a process of developing and implementing plans (as in the full the WILD project). But the two weeks were very resource intensive. The team comprised 4 people: 3 expatriates and 1 Namibian, with over 60 years' development experience between them, and considerable PRA experience. Developing the workshop methodology, and adapting it during the 2 weeks, was an intensive process in which the team felt that all their skills and experience were needed.

The Kenyan impact assessments were mainly done by a Ugandan economist and expatriate consultant, with inputs from other key Kenyan and expatriate staff and a volunteer. The comparatively lower levels of experience and skills in impact assessment did pose some problems, particularly in conducting PRA work, and particularly now that the methodology is supposed to be replicated in other case studies by the AWF staff alone. The fieldwork was done in 2–3 visits, with the longest visit of about 10 days, but the analysis and writing up were drawn out over several months. In total, each case study took an estimated 10-person months of work. The process highlighted two resource issues: first, that SL analysis needs to be adopted by people who already have strong fieldwork and social science skills and can simply *adapt* their skills to focus on livelihood questions; and secondly the need for very strong *analytical* skills to implement the impact assessment methodology.

### 3.2.6 *Limited use of quantification*

Where possible results were quantified, but in practice this was mainly limited to the financial analysis (described above). There was some quantification of qualitative data through ranking of pros and cons (in WILD planning – see Box 1) and by questioning survey respondents on the degree of importance they attached to advantages and disadvantages of the lodge (at Il Ngwesi). The survey responses were then converted into a score, enabling the most significant impacts to be identified. On the whole, however, results remained largely qualitative. This made it difficult to summarise the main findings in succinct factual terms (e.g. for policy-makers) and reinforces the finding that it is easier to assess 'fit' with livelihoods than the degree of change.

## 3.3 **Process: findings on development of livelihood approaches and their relevance**

The four activities described here all adopted a livelihoods approach in some form. How was this introduced, how relevant was it, how easy or difficult in practice and what difference did it make?

### 3.3.1 *Livelihoods as a focus for cross-sectoral and people-centred perspectives*

In the Namibian activities, there was no policy or methodology in place to encourage a focus on livelihoods. It emerged as the obvious focus when drawing together perspectives from economics, social development, institutional development, conservation and policy analysis, and while trying to get closer to the perspective of residents on the ground. It made sense to specialists from each discipline, and particularly to those who work at community level. It built on the deep-rooted commitment in the CBNRM programme to enhance local benefits. In Kenya, the livelihoods focus came from the outside consultant, based both on Namibian experience and on then-evolving UK experience with Sustainable Livelihoods, but also was readily adopted by AWF staff for similar reasons.

### 3.3.2 *Use of a livelihoods approach to shift others to a broader focus*

While the livelihoods focus emerged naturally for some, it was also strategically used to help to shift others towards a broader focus. This occurred in two ways:

- In both Namibian tourism and Kenya impact assessment it encouraged economists and others to look *beyond cash incomes* when considering local impacts.
- The review of Namibia tourism purposely offered a livelihoods focus as a contrast to the conventional tourism perspectives which tend to focus on economic *or* environmental *or* socio-cultural issues. The review argued that a livelihoods approach was a more effective way of understanding and enhancing the impacts relevant to local people than the *narrower sectoral perspectives*.

### 3.3.3 *Multiple purposes of livelihoods analysis*

The four activities described shared common elements in their livelihoods approach but served different purposes and demonstrate the flexibility of livelihoods approaches. The WILD planning demonstrated that livelihood analysis can be done by communities and serve their objectives as well as ours. The Caprivi CBNRM analysis was initiated by programme staff in order to guide programme development with location specific recommendations. The tourism review similarly aimed to identify guidance for enhancing livelihood impacts but was aimed mainly at outsiders at a much more general level – policy makers and practitioners in Namibia, southern Africa and in UK tourism-development circles. The Kenyan work was focused more tightly on assessing impacts of specific projects.

The common elements of the four activities were:

- Attempts to understand which livelihood issues were priorities for local people
- Exploration of the links between current livelihood strategies and various initiatives in NRM

It should also be noted that *within* each of the four activities described, the livelihoods analysis was used for more than one purpose, and in some cases it served four objectives:

- Evaluation of impact – although this proved difficult to quantify
- Analysis of ‘fit’ with livelihoods and areas of conflict
- Increased understanding of participation rates
- Generating recommendations to enhance impacts and participation

In addition, the work promoted a focus on poor people’s own livelihood priorities among professionals, as noted above.

### 3.3.4 *Value-added of the livelihoods analysis*

Did the livelihoods analysis add anything new? All the insights gained could no doubt have also been gained in other ways, by others with different skills and without the SL framework. But this approach gave a particular slant to the way they were interpreted and synthesised. The degree to which this was ‘new’ depended on what had gone before. In Caprivi, the NGO implementing the CBNRM programme (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation) was already closely attuned to local people’s needs and the review essentially confirmed directions which were already taken: focusing on plant resources, addressing wildlife damage etc. In the Arabuko Sokoke butterfly project, there had been

relatively little work on assessing impact and the main input had been a household survey by an outsider. This focused heavily on what income was earned from butterfly farming. The analysis of livelihood impacts therefore added a much more finely textured analysis of different types of impacts and their distribution, which was more useful for adapting project implementation (such as risk-reducing measures).

### 3.3.5 *Relevance to policy-makers*

Three of the four activities were strongly focused at the local or project level, and only the tourism review specifically aimed to generate recommendations for policy-makers. Nevertheless the other three were used to identify some implications for policy-makers. For example the same issues that were important for Conservancy Committees in Kunene – to minimise land-use trade-offs between tourism and pastoralism, particularly in regard to drought resources – were also conveyed to tourism planners. The recommendations to the CBNRM programme in Caprivi to focus on minimising negative impacts, particularly wildlife damage to agriculture, were also relevant to a broader circle of policy-makers. The tourism review identified several implications for how policy makers could adapt tourism to enhance livelihood impacts. Looking beyond the specifics, the two main messages for policy-makers that have emerged are:

- Interventions (projects, programmes, tourism plans, sector policies) generally can be adapted to enhance livelihoods, if there is commitment to this and adequate understanding of people's complex livelihood priorities;
- Adapting to people's livelihood priorities means learning from them, and so requires *processes* that enable their concerns to be expressed and to influence decisions.

### 3.3.6 *Uptake of the approach among others*

The livelihoods approach has generally been welcomed for two reasons: it has *instinctive appeal* to those with a fundamental commitment to enhancing the local impacts of their work, and the findings of the livelihood analyses have been *useful*. However, Kenya is the only case where others have been expected (and have tried) to take it on board themselves by replicating the methodology in Uganda and Tanzania. The process is still underway but preliminary experience suggests, not surprisingly, that it is more difficult for others to adopt the *process* and implement the approach, rather than simply use the findings.

This section has reviewed a variety of different types of finding that emerged from the four activities. Table 2 summarises some of the main ones.

**Table 2 Some examples of findings on content, method and process**

	<b>Content: livelihoods and NRM links</b>	<b>Methods of livelihood analysis</b>	<b>Process of developing livelihood approaches</b>
<b>WILD</b> Namibia	Linkage with other activities critical: e.g. jobs near home good for farmers	Participatory planning Very skill intensive	Community can do livelihood analysis, serving their and our objectives An obvious focus when pooling sectoral perspectives and prioritising local ones
<b>Caprivi livelihoods &amp; CBNRM</b> Namibia	To make it relevant to the poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plant-based NRM</li> <li>• timing of income dividends</li> <li>• deal with negatives (wildlife damage)</li> </ul>	Exploring 'fit' & conflicts with existing livelihoods Included detailed financial analysis of CBNRM income to put in context of livelihoods	Useful for guiding programme development Identifies recommendations for enhancing impacts on and participation of key groups
<b>Tourism &amp; livelihoods</b> Namibia	Fit with drought-coping more important than cash-maximisation Policy-making needs participatory processes to learn about and respond to livelihood concerns	Synthesised wide variety of impacts using SRL framework	A contrast to conventional narrower (economic, environmental, socio-cultural) perspectives. Used to encourage shift in thinking Used to highlight general implications for southern Africa and UK practitioners
<b>Impact assessment methodology</b> Kenya	Risk a major barrier to participation by the poor in butterfly farming Butterfly farming – an adaptive strategy for a few; coping strategy for many Impact on assets more important for the majority than cash flows from Il Ngwesi lodge	Integration of skills and methods (participatory tools, stakeholder analysis, quantitative surveys) High demands on PRA and analytical skills	Encouraged analysis beyond cash and economics Approach welcomed but difficulties in adopting the methodology

## **4. Conclusion: lessons learnt on the use of SL approaches**

### **4.1 Variety of useful applications**

Livelihoods analysis can be put to a variety of uses. It is not only a tool for project design but can be used for:

- Reshaping a sectoral or programme intervention for better ‘fit’ with livelihoods
- Impact assessment of a project/programme
- Understanding factors affecting local participation in an initiative
- Participatory planning with communities

It can be very useful for a review or ‘standing back’ from a programme, even if it was not designed explicitly with livelihood objectives (so long as implementers are sympathetic to the basic goal of enhancing local benefits and so are open to the findings).

### **4.2 SL as an approach, SL as analysis**

There are many ways of applying SL approaches. The activities reviewed here used ‘livelihoods approaches’ at two different levels:

- At a fundamental level: putting livelihoods as the focus, and enhancing livelihood impacts as a central aim in making recommendations (SL as an ‘approach’);
- In the detail of analysis: exploring livelihood priorities of local people and how they are affected by NRM interventions (SL as an analytical tool).

The four examples discussed here used different techniques for the actual livelihoods analysis, but all sought to understand and categorise local people’s priorities.

The advantages of promoting a livelihoods focus are discussed in Section 4.5, as are some of the difficulties. The use of SL as an analytical tool, generates both advantages and disadvantages, which are summarised in Table 3. Some of these are specific to use of the SL framework, some more general.

### **4.3 Use of the framework for livelihoods analysis**

Livelihoods analysis can be done without the SL framework, but the framework is helpful in broadening and structuring the scope of enquiry. However, elements that are not explicit in the framework (such as people’s priorities and empowerment) need to be brought up-front.

### **4.4 More useful for generating recommendations, rather than quantifying change**

It is very difficult to say how much livelihood security or sustainability has changed. Livelihoods analysis is more likely to show how livelihoods are being supported or constrained. This is useful for generating recommendations on how to enhance the ‘fit’ between a new initiative and people’s

livelihood priorities, or address a conflict between them. But it is less useful for aggregating results and providing succinct punchy findings to policy-makers.

**Table 3 Advantages and disadvantages of livelihoods analysis and use of the SL framework**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Framework a useful structure for analysing complexity</p> <p>Ensures focus goes beyond economic and direct impacts</p> <p>Explores indirect linkages with activities and assets</p> <p>Useful to distinguish between supportive additional strategies and transforming or alternative strategies.</p> <p>Intuitive appeal for cross-sectoral and people-focused work</p>	<p>Empowerment gets lost – scattered in different parts of the framework</p> <p>People’s preferences and priorities – underneath not up front in the framework</p> <p>Difficult to quantify change</p> <p>Approach and framework need translation to field level (and to partner staff)</p> <p>Skill intensive, particularly on PRA-facilitation and <i>analysis</i> of findings</p> <p>Sustainability can get lost if not identified by people</p>
<p><b>General</b></p> <p>Must be integrated with stakeholder analysis</p> <p>Simplified framework useful for sharing with others</p> <p>Framework not used in the field, but before and after fieldwork</p> <p>More likely to identify ‘fit’ or ‘conflict’ with livelihood strategies than to demonstrate quantifiable change, for most people</p>	

## 4.5 Overall value and challenges

From these four experiences, the main values of a livelihoods approach that emerge are that:

- It provides an explicit focus on what matters to poor people;
- The SL framework has value as an analytical tool;
- The SL approach synthesises the perspectives of different disciplines;
- The SL approach looks beyond cash flows, direct impacts, and positive impacts, to the wider range of issues that matter to people;
- Livelihoods analysis generates practical recommendations to enhance the design and implementation of initiatives.

However, the main challenges that emerge are:

- Limitations that arose in using the framework – complexity, gaps;
- Difficulties in implementing the approach with partners – it requires commitment to enhanced local impacts but also skills to adopt the analytical techniques;
- The high levels of resources and skills needed for conducting livelihoods analysis;
- The difficulties of quantifying contributions to livelihoods.

Finally, it is also useful to note that the four experiences reviewed in this working paper gained from each other. Experience of using livelihoods approaches in one helped to enhance the next. This confirms the value of reflecting on, and sharing, experience of using SL approaches.

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