

TRAINING MODULE

VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE: THE ASSET PENTAGON

TIME

30-90 minutes, depending on options chosen and size of group

MATERIALS NEEDED

Flip Chart, one piece of paper for each group or one A4 (8.5 x 11) paper for individuals

Markers different colors for group work or pen for individual work

Masking tape for group work

Optional: video about farmers' organizations, projector, speakers

INTRODUCTION

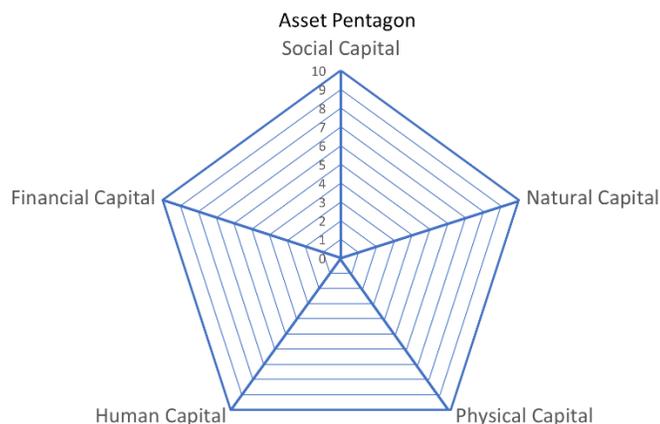
We tend to think about poor people in a one-dimensional way (poor people are poor because they don't have money), which results in program interventions that address only the financial needs of people but do not improve their resilience. This lesson encourages reflection about one's own assets, both tangible and intangible, and the vulnerabilities of different groups (youth, women, widows, minorities etc.). This lesson can be done with small groups (best when working with extension or community educators) or with participants working individually (best when working directly with beneficiaries). This lesson was developed based on the DFID Livelihoods Framework. More information is available at https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P516_EID_K3736-Demo/unit1/page_15.htm

OBJECTIVES

- To move beyond monetary measures of wellbeing and to conceptualize livelihoods in holistic terms.
- To understand resilience and vulnerability.
- To understand the value of farmers' organizations and cooperation in increasing resilience and how some types of assets can be leveraged to gain other types.
- To explore the relative vulnerabilities and resilience of certain groups (youth, women, widows, minorities, etc.) and how program interventions address these vulnerabilities.

STEPS

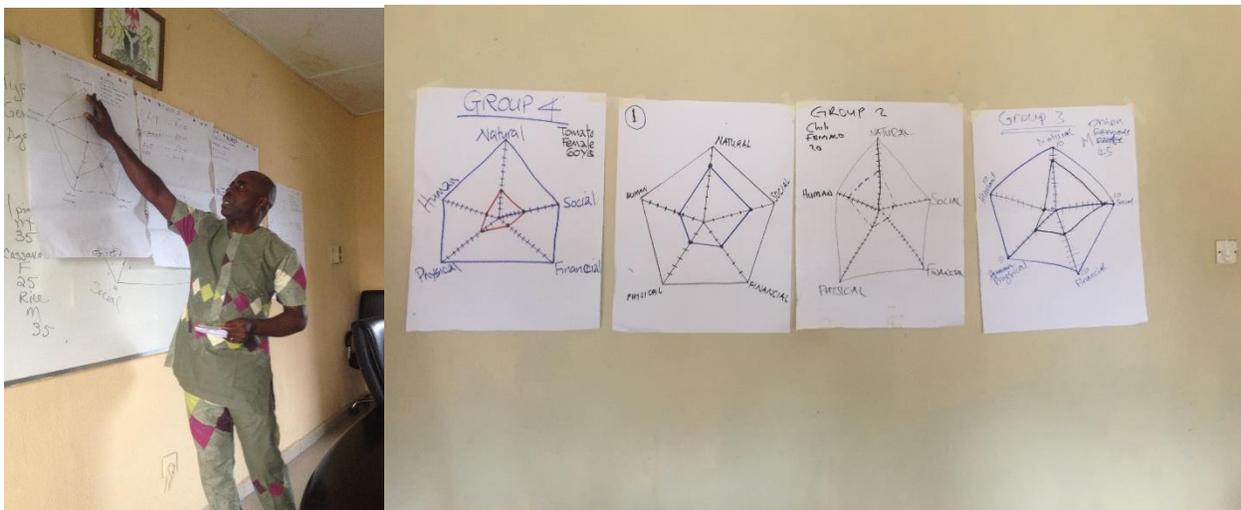
1. Ask the participants if they think they live in a poor country. Discuss all of the resources that the country has (farmland, rivers, people, roads, ports etc.). Ask them to think about the resources they have as individuals (or as an organization) (family, farm tools, land, education, training, fruit trees, membership in a cooperative). 5 minutes
2. Explain that money is just one type of asset. We can categorize our assets in (at least) five different types:
 - **Social Capital**, which encompasses close social networks such as family, friends, neighbors as well as weaker social networks, such as membership in farmers' organizations, Village Savings and Loans or Savings and Internal Lending Communities, etc;
 - **Natural Capital**, which includes access to water, farmlands, fertile soil, forests and trees, livestock, etc.;
 - **Physical Capital**, which includes farm equipment and tools, roads, motorbikes, bicycles, houses, etc.
 - **Human Capital**, which includes formal and informal education, training, human health and nutrition, access to labor etc.;
 - **Financial Capital**, including cash, savings and access to credit. 15 minutes.
3. Draw a pentagon on the flipchart. Explain that we can think about a person's (or and organization's) assets in the form of a pentagon. Label each point of the pentagon with a type of capital (it doesn't matter which type goes at each point, but keep it consistent throughout the lesson so that you can easily compare the results of the groups).



Explain that we can graph these assets on a scale of 0-10 (0 is in the middle of the pentagon and 10 is at each point). These values are somewhat subjective, but relate the aspirations of the individual (if the individual wants to own a house with a metal roof but now has a hut with a thatched roof, think of the house as 10 and the current situation could be plotted at about 2 under physical capital).

Connect all of the plotted point to form a five-sided shape. A small shape indicates vulnerability, a large shape indicates resilience. 10 minutes.

- Divide the class into groups of about 3-6 people. Have each group decide what type of farmer they will represent on their chart (a 20-year-old female cassava farmer, a 60-year-old male pig farmer, a widowed 40-year-old female tomato farmer etc.) Have the groups reflect on the average person of this type. How much formal education is that person likely to have? Is that person likely to be a member of a farmers' organization or Village Savings and Loan? Would the person have access to land? What is his or her land tenure situation? Have the groups draw the pentagon on their flipchart paper and graph the assets of their chosen farmer. If you are working directly with beneficiaries, they can reflect on their own situation and plot their own pentagon on a piece of A4 paper. 20-30 minutes.
- Have one person from each group present their pentagon. The group will usually speak up if they do not agree (if they disagree that a 20-year-old female would have access to so much land, for example). 20-40 minutes depending on number of groups.



- After all groups have presented, point out the differences between males and females of the same age (maybe a female has more social capital but less human capital) or youth and adult farmers of the same crop (youth may have higher human capital but lower natural and financial capital). 5 minutes.
- Explain that certain types of capital can be used to leverage other types of capital. For example financial capital (access to a loan) could be used to leverage access to physical capital (a tractor). Social capital (membership in a Village Savings and Loan) could be used to leverage financial capital (a loan). In some cases, you would then have to lower the amount of leveraged capital (for example if a tree (natural capital) is cut down to build a house (physical capital), you would have less natural capital. 10 minutes.

NOW WHAT?

End with a reflection, asking participants for their thoughts and how their perceptions have changed. How do they think of their situation now? How can they make better use of their farmers' organization to leverage different types of capital? How does the program (or

intervention or policy) in question impact these different types of capital? Does it promote resilience?

VARIATIONS

- Begin the discussion with a video about farmers' organizations, for example *Vision Becomes Reality*, which can be downloaded in English, French, Dagaari, Kusaal or Sisaala from <https://www.accessagriculture.org/vision-becomes-reality>. End the lesson by showing the video again, pausing to point out every time the farmers' organization uses one asset to leverage another, for example, uses social capital (group membership) to leverage financial capital (loans) and physical capital (tractor).
- If video is not available, a short scene could be acted out by facilitators.
- The analysis can be done at the organizational level, with the group reflecting on the assets of their farmers' organization, for example.
- Add a sixth dimension of capital, such as political capital to discuss collective action and political power.

REFERENCES

Hinshelwood, E. (2003). Making friends with the sustainable livelihoods framework. *Community Development Journal*, 38(3), 243-254.

This module was developed by Anna Snider and is based on the Asset Pentagon, a component of the Livelihoods Framework.