

HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT

Pathway Component: food production; agricultural income; women's empowerment; food prices; food access

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URL: http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/toolkit/CARE_HLSA_Toolkit.pdf

CONTENT SUMMARY

Brief Description: A Household Livelihood Security Assessment (HLSA) is a holistic and multi-disciplinary analysis. The HLSA process aims to enhance understanding about local livelihood systems (economic, socio-cultural, and political systems and the constraints, vulnerabilities, marginalization, and risks of poor families living within this context) and important differences among types of households and among members within the household. A HLSA is a type of rapid rural appraisal (RRA) or participatory rural appraisal (PRA).

A rights-based approach to HLS makes a concerted effort to identify the underlying and root causes of poverty, livelihood insecurity, and the vulnerabilities of marginalized families.

Uses: The main purposes of HLSAs are to understand the nature of livelihood strategies of different categories of households (social differentiation); their levels of livelihood security; and the principle constraints and opportunities that can be addressed by programming.

Outputs from such assessments should, at a minimum, include the identification of risk factors facing households or groups, key location-specific criteria for differentiating wealth categories of households, and identification of key leverage points and opportunities to pursue in future programming.

Tool Components: The main components are:

1. Introduction to Household Livelihood Security Assessment/Diagnostic Issues
2. Pre-Assessment Activities
3. Target Area Selection
4. Creating Livelihood Security Profiles
5. Developing and Fine Tuning Objectives
6. Survey Sample Selection
7. Survey Team
8. Primary Data Gathering Methods
9. Data Analysis and Interpretation
10. Program Recommendations
11. Written Report

OPERATIONS

Number of Staff Required: There are normally two-to-four six-member teams.

Time: The HLS is generally conducted over a period of one week to two months.

Cost of Assessment: Not specified; this will depend on the context, staff salaries, and the duration of the assessment.

Training: Prior to going to the field, the team participates in a four-to-five-day workshop that introduces team members to the concepts that form the basis of the data collection procedure and the methodology they are about to implement. All team members participate in the review of data collection forms to ensure that appropriate topics are addressed. The development of tools for the survey is an

interactive process and a capacity-building exercise for local institutions.

Geographic Targeting: The number of sites that can be studied will depend upon the number of team members and the amount of time that can be spent in the field. Once the number of sites has been determined, the team can begin the process of selecting the sites. This is best accomplished through a combination of purposive and random sampling.

Type of Data Collection: The data collection process is dynamic and interactive, as researchers evaluate the data collected and reformulate data needs on a daily basis. All interviews are essentially semi-structured with emphasis on dialogue and probing for information. Data collected includes:

- Qualitative descriptive information
- Quantitative descriptive information
- Analytical (causal) information

Degree of Technical Difficulty: The HLSA is a complex, multi-disciplinary analysis. In the HLSA, field workers have to collect, analyze, and validate the data themselves. For this reason, the four or five day training is essential.

Complements other Resources: These techniques should be viewed as complementary to other research methodologies, such as formal surveys and in-depth anthropological studies.