
Sustaining Livelihoods in Southern Africa

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Theme of the Issue The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

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Editor's notes

This is the first issue of Sustaining Livelihoods in Southern Africa, a joint initiative of Khanya-managing rural change cc, PLAAS of the University of the Western Cape, and CARE. We aim with this to stimulate debate and sharing of experience about livelihoods in the region. In this first Issue we introduce readers to the sustainable livelihood (SL) approaches. Included are summaries of relevant documents/publications including examples of the different ways that different organisations operationalise SL, including CARE, DFID OXFAM, and Khanya-managing rural change. Some of these documents are not recent. However they provide clear background information about the evolution of the SL approach. SL programmes/projects that are underway and forthcoming events such as workshops are highlighted. We invite readers to make contributions of short articles or comments for future editions.

Key SL documents/articles

Implementing the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Approach (DFID) Diana Carney: Sustainable Rural Livelihoods-What contributions can we make? 1998. This article, presented at the Department for International Development's Natural Resources Advisors' Conference in July 1998, provides a broad overview of the sustainable livelihoods approach, at that stage described as the sustainable rural livelihoods approach. It explains why and how DFID adopted the approach, the framework and how it is operationalised by DFID. A copy of this publication can be obtained from the Sustainable Livelihoods Support Office, Department for International Development, 94 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 5JL, UK.

Sustainable Livelihoods Concept paper. A paper created by the Sustainable Livelihoods Unit of UNDP. 1999. This paper highlights when and how the sustainable livelihoods approach became a focal point in UNDP's approach to and debate on development, as well as the definitions of livelihoods and sustainability. The paper further explains how sustainable livelihoods is operationalised within the UNDP, that is, the analysis of operational methodologies and tools. In addition, the paper looks at the value sustainable livelihoods approach is adding to policy and programming. Lastly, the paper describes specific elements of sustainable livelihoods programmes in various countries to demonstrate how sustainable livelihoods can be viewed as both an approach to development programming and as a specific programme itself. This paper can be obtained from www.undp.org/sl/documents/Strategy/.

Sustainable livelihoods: Lessons from early experience: (DFID) Caroline Ashley and Diana Carney. 1999. The publication is intended to update readers on DFID's progress in implementing sustainable livelihoods approaches to poverty eradication. The

publication begins by highlighting the origins, principles, and definitions of SL. Lessons from early experiences are shared by looking at ten country projects, from four continents, and outlining weaknesses and strengths of SL approaches in these projects. Drawing from these lessons, authors provide critical reflection on practical applications of SL approaches. Issues of partnership, and internal institutions, as well, are addressed. The publication can be found on www.livelihoods.org.uk. or www.ids.ac.uk.

Sustainable Livelihoods and Political Capital: Arguments and Evidence from Decentralisation and Natural Resources Management in India. Baumann, P. 2000. Eldis. DFID's sustainable livelihoods framework has been frequently criticised for the little attention it pays to political and cultural capital. In this article Baumann argues for the inclusion of political capital in the sustainable livelihoods framework. Baumann examined the potential of sustainable livelihoods by applying the framework for analysis in a research project on decentralised natural resource management in India. The study found that the strength of sustainable livelihoods as an analytical framework was compromised by the fact that it does not include political capital as an endogenous asset. He then highlighted a number of points to illustrate the importance of political capital. The article can be found at www.eldis.org; www.ids.ac.uk/cgi.exe. or www.livelihoods.org.uk.

Application of CARE's Livelihoods Approach. A presentation to the Natural Resources Advisors Conference, 1999. Michael Drinkwater and Tamara Rusinow. This article provides a general overview of CARE's livelihoods model, approach and framework. In linking theory and practice, the authors describe some of the success they have had in applying this framework at a practical level in their rural and urban programming, pitfalls and lessons and some general experiences they have had in mainstreaming the livelihoods approach at an institutional level. Most importantly, this article updates readers on how CARE's livelihoods model is evolving. This article can be obtained from Michael Drinkwater: drinkwaterm@care.org. or www.livelihoods.org.uk.

Operationalising Livelihood Security: A Holistic Approach for Addressing Poverty and Vulnerability. Timothy Frankenberger, Michael Drinkwater, Diane Maxwell. 2000. CARE officially adopted Household Livelihood Security as a programming framework in 1994 and over the past 5 years has been working to institutionalise the approach in its programming worldwide. This paper describes how Household Livelihood security has been operationalised in CARE. Drawing on lessons learned from a number of countries, the paper shows how livelihood concepts and tools have been taken into account in strategic planning, diagnosis, design, implementation, monitoring, reformulation and evaluation. The paper can be obtained from Michael Drinkwater: drinkwaterm@care.org.

Livelihoods Approaches Compared. (DFID, CARE OXFAM, UNDP) 1999. Diana Carney, et al. This article provides a brief comparison of the livelihoods approaches of the UK Department of International Development (DFID), CARE, Oxfam and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The comparison looks at each organisation's livelihoods approach, core emphasis and definitions, types of activities, operationalisation of the approach, and lessons learned so far. The article is available at www.livelihoods.org.

SL activities/programmes

1. Khanya carried out a series of 4 studies which looked at the institutional issues arising from promoting such an approach in Southern Africa. These studies were carried out in Zambia, Zimbabwe and two provinces in South Africa during 1999, and aimed to draw from the development of policies and institutions in these countries over the past 20 years. The study used the SL framework to structure analysis, using a vertical transect linking a case study village and district through meso level to central policy-making. The focus was on the changes to policies, structures and processes to support a sustainable rural livelihood approach.

Country reports and a methodology report are available on www.khanya-mrc.co.za, or www.livelihoods.org.

2. PLAAS is conducting a scoping exercise in Flagstaff and Lusikisiki for a two year project on "Sustaining Rural Livelihoods in South Africa". First summary of the exercise is due by end-April 2001. For details contact Edward Lahiff at elahiff@uwc.ac.za, Tel +27 (0)21 959 3961.

Upcoming events

1. The HSRC in a joint effort with UNDP will hold a workshop on the 29th May 2001, at the HSRC offices. The workshop will be on the UNDP's Human Development Report. For further details contact Richard Humphries at RHumphries@silwane.hsrb.ac.za
2. CARE-TEAM project in Lesotho is holding a sustainable livelihoods workshop in Bloemfontein on 4&5 June 2001. For more information contact Sechanba Mokhameleli at CARETEAM@leo.co.ls
3. The Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN), based at the Human Sciences Research Council will hold a conference on Southern African land issues and their links to poverty alleviation and reduction in the region. The conference will be held at the HSRC in Pretoria on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 June 2001. For more information contact Richard Humphries at RHumphries@silwane.hsrb.ac.za
4. Khanya-managing rural change is hosting an international workshop on community-based-planning in Durban on the 19 & 20 June 2001. Participating countries are South Africa, Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The aim of the workshop is to share experiences between these countries. For more information contact James Carnegie at james@khanya-mrc.co.za or 083 555 5053. If you know of good case studies of community-based planning in South Africa, please give details to Tsiliso at tsiliso@khanya-mrc.co.za.

Useful internet resources on sustainable livelihoods

DFID SL site www.livelihoods.org.uk

UNDP SL site www.undp.org/sl/

Institute of Development Studies www.ids.ac.uk

Khanya's website www.khanya-mrc.co.za

ODI www.odi.org.uk

Future topics

We invite contributions for upcoming topics. The topic for June will be on community-based planning.

Sustaining Livelihoods in Southern Africa is an initiative of Khanya-managing rural change, PLAAS of the University of the Western CAPE, and CARE. The editor is Tsiliso Tamasane and he can be contacted at tsiliso@khanya-mrc.co.za, tel 082 499 5497. Previous newsletters are available at the Khanya website, www.khanya-mrc.co.za. We welcome contributions, of events, relevant documents, comments etc.
