
Sustaining Livelihoods In Southern Africa

Issue: 13

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Theme: Learnings about the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

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Editor's notes

This month's edition highlights the findings of '*Goodbye to Projects: The institutional implications of using sustainable livelihoods approach to development interventions*' (Goodbye to Projects - GtP), which completed earlier this year. Anna Toner of Bradford Centre for International Development (BCID, UK), is the main author of the newsletter, with Ian Goldman of Khanya. Other key partners were Tom Franks (BCID), Faustin Kamuzora of Mzumbe University (Tanzania), Fred Muhumuza of Makerere University's Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) in Uganda, David Howlett of UNDP Tanzania, and Tsiliso Tamasane and Ian Goldman of Khanya-managing rural change (SA). We also say goodbye to Tsiliso, who has taken up a good opportunity with the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa. Tsiliso can be contacted at TTamasane@hsrc.ac.za. Until he has been replaced Ian Goldman is the editor of the newsletter.

Some background to "Goodbye to Projects?"

The project explored the opportunities and challenges presented to organisations seeking to institutionalise a sustainable livelihoods approach in order to better achieve focused poverty reductions. Selected case study interventions were examined in relation to SL principles (See Box 1). These were then used to identify and clarify the challenges to the design, appraisal and implementation of development interventions.

Box 1 SL-grounded audit (Adapted from SLA principles in Carney (2002))

- 1) Poor People as focus
- 2) Participation
- 3) Partnerships
- 4) Holistic approach
- 5) Policy and institutional links
- 6) Building on strengths
- 7) Dynamic and flexible
- 8) Accountability/ responsiveness
- 9) Sustainability (economic, social, environmental and institutional)

The research was conducted in two phases. The first phase consisted of general and country reviews on SL and development interventions. The second phase of the research has been the compilation of detailed case studies of development interventions in Uganda, Tanzania and Southern Africa. These case studies compare and contrast the implementation of a range of sector

wide approaches, programmes and projects all developed with a livelihoods-orientation, which reflect the shifting language of development (See Box 2).

Box 2 The Case studies

HIV/AIDS Interventions

Ugandan Aids Commission (UAC): This case explores the Ugandan's government's strategy to combat the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS

SHARP! (Sexual Health and Rights Programme): a CARE programme in Lesotho and South Africa training peer educators in target social groups to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS.

Community-Based Planning Interventions

Planning programme for district development within capacity 21 (Tanzakesho): A UNDP programme piloting a participatory planning methodology for the production of environmentally sustainable village plans.

Community-based planning project: a DFID-funded, four-country action-research project managed by Khanya covering South Africa, Uganda, Ghana and Zimbabwe exploring how an empowering participatory planning process can be integrated with the local government planning system.

Productive/Natural Resource Management Interventions

TEAM (Training for Environmental and Agricultural Management): Implemented by CARE Lesotho, to develop an agricultural extension model based on farmer extension facilitators.

Agricultural Sector Programme Support: A multi-faceted initiative financed by Danida, implemented by various government ministries with components including institutional support, smallholders irrigation, on-farm seed production, rock-phosphate research, private agriculture sector support and an environmental programme.

Sustainable Management of the Usangu Wetland Catchment (SMUWC): A DFID-funded project aiming to improve the management of water and other natural resources in Usangu in order to improve the livelihoods of poor people and downstream users.

Magu District Livelihood and Food Security Project (MDLFSP): A CARE Norge project aiming to decrease the vulnerability of 5000 households in Magu district through a range of activities covering agricultural extension and strengthening community-based groups.

PMA (Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture): The PMA is a cross-sectoral partnership between government, donors and NGOs, and seeks to reform all aspects of agriculture in Uganda.

Key findings from case studies

The application of an SL-audit to each of the above case studies suggests the following lessons for operationalising the principles of a sustainable livelihoods approach.

Poor people's livelihoods as focus of intervention:

- Livelihoods analysis is a very useful tool to use in design and evaluation and should disaggregate the poor (eg by social group in CBP, by wealth ranking in TEAM, by vulnerability in SHARP!);
- Systems should build on the priorities of the poor (eg CBP shows the priorities of the poor influencing prioritisation in meso-level integrated development plans);
- There needs to be holistic integration of livelihoods into the activities/focus of the intervention. Some interventions profess a livelihoods focus, but this does not occur in practice, and the focus remains on technical interventions or single enterprises and not livelihoods.

Participation by beneficiaries:

- Participation is a much misused term and must be interrogated. GtP used a ladder of participation ranging from manipulative participation to self-mobilisation as a very empowering form. It is then important to strengthen the link between the objectives of the intervention and the type of participation (eg self-mobilisation is aimed at in some aspects of CBP and Tanzakesho, but consultation is required in ASPs);
- Participation has critical links to sustainability. For example CBP seeks to institutionalise participation into existing funding streams/institutions, while in SMUWC irrigation committees were coordinated through district councils;
- There was evidence of the effectiveness of using existing structures wherever possible on which to

base participation (eg CBP uses ward committees, Tanzakesho uses village councils), while recognising that “capture” by these institutions or elites must be watched for;

- Simple and effective participatory monitoring systems are needed which should be participatory wherever possible (this was attempted in CBP and SHARP! but with some difficulties and requires more work).

Partnerships with agencies:

- Partnership is also a misused term – and ranges from a full legal joint venture, to one where one partner effectively is in control and informs another. These must be understood in terms of power and control in order to overcome disparities between partners. CBP shows an effective multi-agency partnership, while donors are a powerful force in PMA and Tanzakesho. In the latter the district council controls activities but UNDP controls funding and content;
- Partnerships can be through contribution of time, finance and other resources. CBP succeeded in part due to limited financial resources from the donor which forced partners to have to contribute in a major way and so be committed);
- Partnerships can be vertical (linking micro-macro levels) or horizontal (promoting a holistic, coordinated approach). The PMA is an example of vertical control, while the UAC was better at enabling partners holistically but also works vertically;
- Effective partnerships are also critical for sustainability eg SMUWC by district government with irrigation groups, UAC with international NGOs.

Holistic approach:

- Holistic action should be through coordinated through horizontal partnerships eg the Magu Project with a research institute and the private sector;
 - “Control” of all aspects of livelihoods within a project is unsustainable, and hence interventions must link to the broader system, and not try to incorporate all within the project (as to some extent TEAM tried to);
- It is important to understand the broader environment including the risks and assumptions in the intervention, which may be problematic and to consider these in the design. An example is SMUWC which analysed systematically the ‘change drivers’ in the Usangu area.

Policy and institutional linkages:

- The micro-meso-macro linkages (community-district-province-national) are critical for impact and sustainability;
- The meso level is critical for sustainable implementation and is sometimes missed out in the partnerships (eg TEAM/Magu had difficulties in linking with the district/local government);
- It is very important to link to higher-level policies and institutions (ie macro level) in design. For example in SCLP project management was handled by an existing section within the national department, which strengthened capacity in government. It is also built effectively on a participatory process to develop the national White Paper on Coastal Livelihoods;
- It is important to recognize the importance of integrating with existing cycles of planning/funding as did the PMA. CBP started not aligned and then moved to align planning and budgeting cycles.

Building on strengths:

- Existing institutions should be used wherever possible, building on their resources, skills, capacity, eg the PMA uses all levels of government and Tanzakesho built on local government;
- Starting with a vision or outcomes-based process rather than a needs-based process builds the confidence to succeed. This was seen at community level in CBP and at an institutional level in Tanzakesho and CBP;
- It is important as part of the planning process to identify the strengths of community, institutions and the area in planning processes. This was seen in both CBP and Tanzakesho);

Dynamic and flexible (or learning and responsiveness):

- Interventions can and should be responsive to beneficiaries as well as existing institutions. It is important to integrate interventions with existing systems, and allow them to change and grow as part of the learning process. PMA, UAC, and CBP demonstrate effective micro-macro linkages which feed lessons through the system;
- Piloting is very important as a means of learning but needs to explicitly aim at mainstreaming. This has important lessons for whether projects are appropriate. CBP is an examples of a project which explicitly worked with existing systems and partners, and piloted approaches from which policy and practice was changed;
- The critical link is between learning and action through monitoring and evaluation, and this

flexibility and lesson-learning must be designed in to interventions (as was explicitly with CBP);

- It is important to involve key institutions in the learning process even if their inputs and commitment are limited initially (eg CBP sought linkages with key actors for later upscaling and replication);
- Flexibility can also be misinterpreted as goal creep, to maintain people in employment, and to ensure that agencies continue to be funded. Interventions such as projects or programmes should be limited life unless they are mainstreamed;
- Use of local rather than external consultants can assist with integrating the learnings locally (eg Tanzakesho on micro-projects).

Accountability (note this is a facet of responsiveness, but was brought out separately in the project):

- This emerged as one of the most problematic areas in most of the interventions, accountability to partners as well as accountability to beneficiaries;
- To *beneficiaries*: promoting accountability of those components which relate to them, eg CBP is promoting feedback to ward committees on progress with their plans. Improving accountability to beneficiaries can be assisted by using local languages in reporting eg SMUWC attempted to make all findings available in written Swahili and via video. Use of local consultants assists here;
- To *partners* – the use of steering committees, or development committees (eg CBP 4-country partner meetings have now become national SC meetings);
- A challenge is what is public information – for example who “owns” the minutes from steering committees etc, and so should they be made publically available?
- It is important to develop a practical and creative relationship with media eg the use of community radio. There was a media debate in Uganda in relation to the PMA and UAC issues.

Sustainability:

Our methodology looked at sustainability of impact and how interventions can be replicated and upscaled. Some issues were:

Institutional sustainability

- Do donors have an exit strategy eg the use of Technical Advisors in PMA;
- Effective partnerships are critical;
- Avoiding the use of parallel structures;
- It is tempting to use existing CBOs to take on additional functions, which may jeopardise their long-term viability – so be careful about diverting CBOs away from their core mission in the quest for a local CBO to do what the intervention requires;

Financial sustainability:

- Appraisal of wider economic sustainability as well as financial sustainability and while the former should be considered, it should not dominate;
- It is important to think through the financial sustainability of an intervention at the outset. For example the planning system in Tanzakesho is not financially viable for districts, whereas CBP deliberately compromised on the methodology to try and ensure that it could be replicated;

Social Sustainability

- Recognising the danger of ‘elite capture’ of participatory processes, and understanding who is not participating as well as who is;

Environmental sustainability

- Environmental issues should not be taken merely as negative check lists, although it is important to recognise the range of impacts of environmental degradation. Conserving the environment also presents opportunities (eg forestry, re-cycling);
- The brown (urban) environment is important eg condom disposal is a question for HIV/AIDS interventions, and refuse/cleanliness issues came to the fore in urban areas in CBP.

Key documents

These are all available in pdf (Acrobat) form at

www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/research/livelihoods_and_poverty/projects/goodbye

Paper Title
The Institutional Impact of Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches on Development Intervention
Briefing Paper 1: An Overview: Projects and Principles (March 04)

Briefing Paper 2: The Application of the SL Principles (March 04)
Briefing Paper 3: The Changing Format of Development Interventions (March 04)
Briefing Paper 4: Lessons for the Community-Based Planning Interventions (March 04)
Briefing Paper 5: Lessons from the Rural Livelihoods Interventions (March 04)
Briefing Paper 6: Lessons for HIV/AIDS Interventions (March 04)
Annotated Bibliography on Livelihood Approaches and Development Interventions (Oct 01)
Review of Livelihoods Approaches and Development Interventions in South Africa (Feb 02)
Review of development interventions in Tanzania: From projects to livelihoods approaches (Feb 02)
Review of development interventions and livelihoods approaches in Uganda (Feb 02)
A livelihoods-grounded audit of Participatory Planning for District Development within Capacity 21 programme (Tankakesho) in Tanzania (Aug 03)
A livelihoods-grounded audit of Community-Based Planning Project in South Africa (Aug 03)
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Agricultural Sector Programme Support (ASPS) in Tanzania. (Aug 03)
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Sustainable Management of the Usangu Wetland and its Catchment (SMUWC) project in Tanzania. (Aug 03)
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Magu District Livelihoods and Food Security Project (MDLFSP) in Tanzania (Aug 03)
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Sexual Health and Rights Programme (SHARP!) in Lesotho and South Africa.
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Training and Environmental Management (TEAM) project in Lesotho.
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Programme (SCLP) in South Africa.
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) in Uganda
A livelihoods-grounded audit of the AIDS/STD programme in Uganda (PDF)

Useful Internet resources on Livelihoods Approaches

connect www.livelihoods.org
 ally at www.livelihoods.org/info/info_linksevents.html#4 for organisations with key involvement in
 livelihoods
www.khanya-mrc.co.za
 tho www.caresa-lesotho.org.za/
 versity www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/dppc/research/livelihoods_and_poverty/

SL activities/programmes

1. IDL is running a new range of courses from May to September 2004, including on the SLA. More details can be seen at www.theidlgroupp.com/training%20mini%20site/TPD%20Page2.htm#
2. Khanya has started a 4 country project on community-based worker systems, working with partners in Kenya, Uganda, Lesotho and South Africa. Partners include national Ministries, local

governments and NGOs. Each country is reviewing current experience at present and will be having a national CBW workshop in July (in South Africa the dates are 21-22 July). For further information contact:

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- Uganda Emmanuel Mugabi, CARE Uganda mugabi@careug.org

Future topics

This month's newsletter was written by Anna Toner of BCID (A.L.Toner@Bradford.ac.uk) and Ian Goldman. The Project website for Goodbye to Projects is at: www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/research/livelihoods_and_poverty/projects/goodbye/. We welcome feedback, ideas and contributions for upcoming topics. Future topics will include 'community-based management'.

Past editions

All these are available at www.khanya-mrc.co.za/

1. 1 May 2001 The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
2. July 2001 Community-based-planning
3. Sept 2001 Corporate Citizenship
4. Dec 2001 Rights-based approach to development
5. March 2002 Social capital and sustainable livelihoods
6. June 2002 HIV/AIDS and sustainable livelihoods
7. Sept 2002 Local Economic Development and sustainable livelihoods
8. Feb 2003 Institutional support for sustainable livelihoods
9. April 2003 Community-based Workers as a model for pro-poor service delivery
10. June 2003 Community-Based Natural Resources Management
11. Oct 2003 Sustainable Livelihoods and Gender
12. Feb 2004 Sustainable Livelihoods and Small Scale Mining

Sustaining Livelihoods in Southern Africa is an initiative of Khanya-managing rural change, and CARE. The temporary editor is Ian Goldman and he can be contacted at goldman@khanya-mrc.co.za, tel +27 51 430 0712. Previous newsletters are available at the Khanya website, www.khanya-mrc.co.za. We welcome contributions, of events, relevant documents, comments etc.