Resilience and Sustainability

Rapid Community Level Integrated Assessments

Objective:

The following is a proposed guideline structure to support partners in conducting **integrated rapid assessments in communities** for the design of Resilient & Sustainable programmes. The steps below are suggestions only and up to the discretion of partners, it should be adapted to their needs.

Many partners will already be using participatory and learning tools (PLA) in communities to design projects. What is new about this is its multi-theme approach, where core technical thematic areas are explored together generating holistic and integrated information to be considered in programme design.

This is meant to be a "rapid" assessment and should take no more than two days to complete, ideally only one day is needed. This is meant to be a scoping exercise and not a comprehensive assessment and should be complemented by other, longer term needs assessment and programme design processes such as CAFOD's Hazard Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HVCA). Refer to PMM chapter on Resilience (Chapter 8) for more tools and guidance for each respective thematic area. This tool could be applied as a rapid assessment for both relief, rehabilitation and development projects, In the design of emergency response programmes, resilience and sustainability should be considered at the outset, using these tools in complete format, or in part, will ensure the programme design addresses initial needs in combination with longer term sustainability.

Please note that although this tool is written with reference to resilience and sustainably programmes, the truth is that much of what is in here would be applicable and considered good practice for all programmes. Any programme that addresses reducing vulnerability of a community (individuals within a community) should simultaneously look to build resilience of that community. The tools herein provided are useful to all programmes but may need to be adapted as per the local context and programming area.

Step I- Transect Walk

The transect is a tool to help us learn more details about the environmental, economic and social resources in a community. A transect walk is a systematic walk along a defined path (transect) across the community/project area together. It depicts a cross-section of an area along which a number of issues are recorded. It is a way of exploring with community members the different features of the community; this can be geographical, institutional, social… for instance, observing the water and sanitation conditions asking, listening, looking and producing a transect diagram. The purpose of a transect is to organise and refine spatial information and to summarise local conditions in the area. The information is gathered from direct observation while walking through the community.

This information will hopefully result in a better understanding of the lay of the land, so to speak. It should be complemented by probing questions to stimulate conversation, for instance, looking at current evacuation routes or where floods tend to happen and understanding what people do when hazards occur. Equally important are structures of socio-cultural significance such as churches, schools, cemeteries.

How to Facilitate:

The transect walk is normally conducted during the initial phase of the fieldwork. It is best to walk a route, which will cover the greatest diversity in terms of infrastructure and other significant community landmarks and common spaces. Depending on who walks with you, the results may be very different, so it is important to ensure you have a few people accompanying you on this journey, perhaps a youth leader, a farmer, a woman, an elderly person or a person with disability as they will all have different views.

Step II- Community Map

Also known as a Village Resource Map this tool that helps us to learn about a community and its resource base. The primary concern is not to develop an accurate map but to *get useful information about local perceptions of resources*. The participants should develop the content of the map according to what is important to them.

Key Questions:

1. What natural resources are abundant?
2. What natural resources are scarce?
3. Does everyone have equal access to land?
4. Do women have access to land?
5. Do the poor have access to land?
6. Who makes decision on land allocation?
7. Where do people go to collect water?
8. Who collects water?
9. Who collects firewood?
10. Where do people go to collect firewood?
11. Where do people go graze livestock?
12. What kind of development activities do you carry out as a whole community? Where? Who is responsible for organizing this?
13. Which resource do you have the most problem with?
14. What are the major landmarks in your community?
15. Where is the main road?
16. Where do people congregate when there is an emergency?

How to facilitate:

The Village Resource Map is a good tool to begin with and complements the transect walk, as they are both preliminary assessment tools used to understand the layout of the community and the resources that are available. It is easy and fun for the community members to do. It helps initiate discussion among the community and with the partner programme design/ needs assessment team.

As noted above, it is good to do this map with separate groups of men and women and to include ranging ages and persons with disability as they may use different resources. For example women, might map the resources they think are important (like water sources, firewood sources, etc). While men may consider other resources (like grazing land, infrastructure, etc). Maps may include: infrastructure (roads, houses, buildings, bridges, etc); water sites and sources; agricultural lands (soil types, slopes, crop varieties and locations); elevations; forest lands; grazing areas; shops, markets; health clinics, schools, churches; special places (sacred sites, cemeteries, bus stops, shrines, etc).

Tasks:

1\. Find a large open place to work that is safe and accessible to all members of the community.

2\. Start by placing a rock or leaf to represent a central and important landmark.

3\. Ask the participants to draw the boundaries of the village. It is always good to have a key to denote certain symbols. If distances can be drawn to scale even better but this may not be possible in which case the facilitator could ask questions i.e. distance during the discussion of the map.

4. Ask the participants to draw other things on the map that are important. Don't interrupt the participants unless they stop drawing.

5. Once they stop, you can ask whether there is anything else of importance that should be added, for instance, river crossing points, informal gatherings paces…

6. When the map is completed, facilitators should ask the participants to describe it. Ask questions about anything that is unclear.

Use the key questions to guide a discussion about resources in the village. One or more facilitators should ask the questions, another should take notes on what is said.

Be sure to draw a picture of the map on a piece of paper. Be sure that the final map includes direction indicators (North, South, East, West).

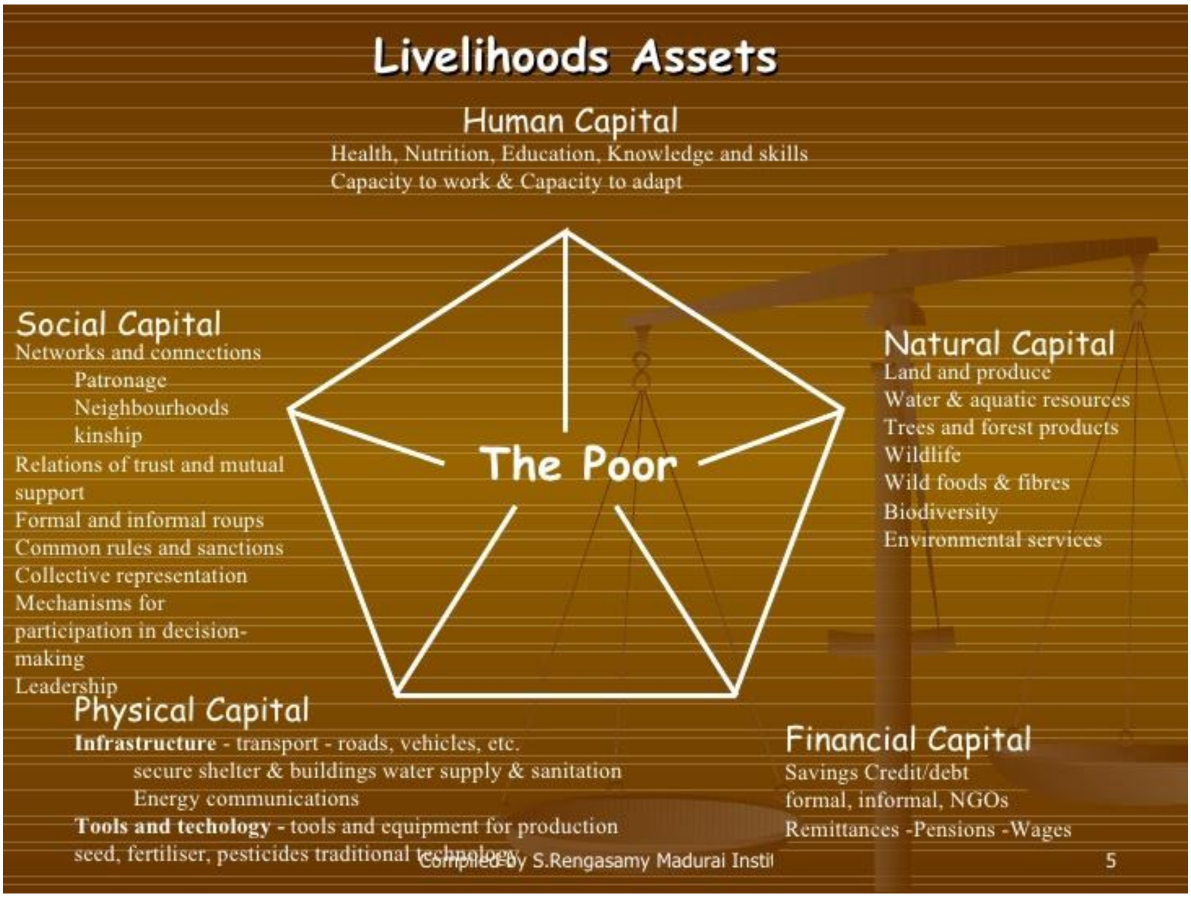
Step III - Hazard Identification

This exercise should be conducted in the same area where the community resource map was developed. Start by asking community members to list all of the hazards that have impacted their community (i.e. floods, storms, heavy winds, earthquakes, crop blight, drought, etc.). For each hazard identified, have the community members use a symbol to denote the hazard event (i.e. a specific type of leaf, stone, etc.). The symbol should be distinct from the rest of the items on the community map. Using the map developed by the community in the previous step, have participants place the hazards in areas where they impact the community. It is important here to include representatives from all groups in the community as some hazards may impact differently for varying groups. For example, an older woman may find that a small amount of rainfall making a river fuller and flow faster prevents her crossing while a young man taking livestock to pasture does not consider this a hazard.

Step IV – Hazard Prioritization (Pocket Voting)

Using symbols from the previous exercise which represent each hazard identified by the community, have each participant vote for which hazard they feel impacts them the most. This is best done anonymously so that certain members of the community do not influence other participants. Give each participant one stone and place a cup next to each hazard symbol. In an area, which cannot be seen from the overall participant group, arrange the cups and hazard symbols. Then, ask the participants to cast one vote for the most impactful hazard. While not the first goal of the assessment, community understanding of the perceived risk of the hazards is important when developing any actions plans for resilient communities, even if the focus of the project is not DRR. As a discipline DRR offers many important tools which can help in the design of resilient programmes. For instance, through the exercise above we may be able to identify flood prone areas and hence choose to risk proof assets in that area This can be referenced throughout the steps of the design process to ensure that hazards are considered.

Step V- Assessing the Community's Current Asset Basse



The livelihoods pentagon is a tool for understanding how household systems interact with the outside environment - natural environment, social dynamics, the policy and institutional context….

Assets refer to the resource base of the community and of different categories of households. In the centre left of the diagram above we have a pentagon that stands for different types of **assets** available to local people **- human, natural, financial, physical and social**. These assets are interlinked.

Types of livelihood assets (illustrative examples)

Human: household members, health, active labour, education, knowledge and skills
Physical: infrastructure, livestock, equipment, vehicles, houses, irrigation pumps,
Natural: access to land, forests, water, grazing, fishing, wild products and biodiversity
Financial: savings/debt, gold/jewellery, income, credit, insurance, remittances
Social: kin networks, group membership, trust, collective representation /socio-political voice and influence

How to Facilitate:

Task:

1- Draw a pentagon on a flip chart
2- Code each corner according to an asset type (e.g social, natural, financial…)
3- Draw a dot in the middle and a line from the middle to each of the 5 corners
4- Through discussions with community members, facilitators will aim to identify, where the community perceives itself in relation to these assets, as illustrated by the Spider Diagram below. When necessary, there may be different groups involved in the discussions. Responses for specific groups can be plotted separately on the pentagon to assess difference between sub-sets of the community. When discussing each "Livelihood Asset", have the community

identify on a scale of 1 – 5 where each asset ranks. The scale can be represented the following way:
1 – Livelihood Asset is Very Weak
2 – Livelihood Asset is Weak
3 – Livelihood Asset is Neither Weak or Strong (Neutral)
4 – Livelihood Asset is Strong
5 – Livelihood Asset is Very Strong

Once the community has reached a consensus in the discussion, plot their responses on the Spider Diagram.

A) *General*

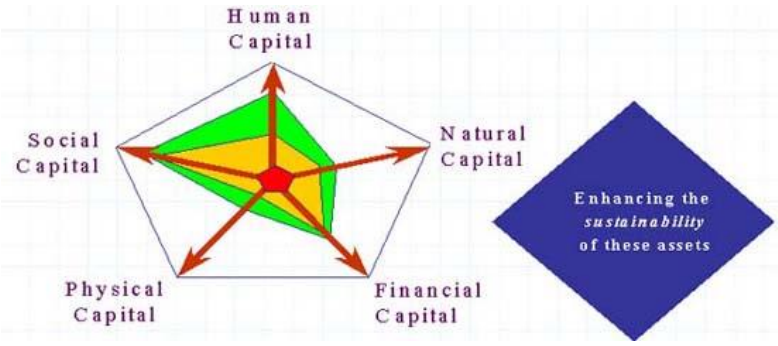
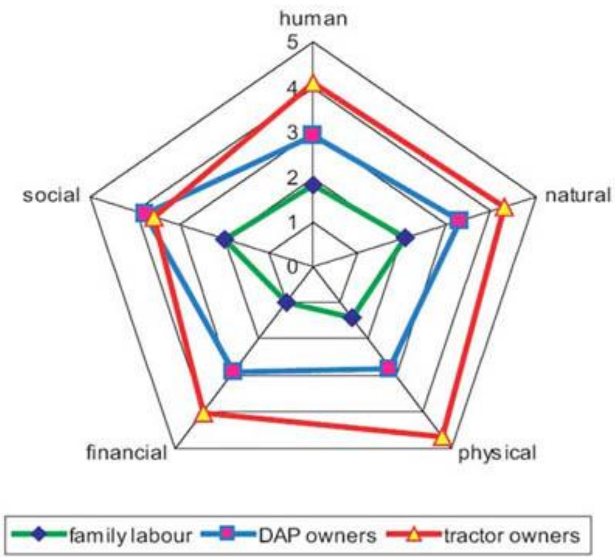


Diagram A has been plotted generally for the whole community based on plenary discussion. In this case, we see a weak Natural and Physical base and strong human and social capital base.

B) *Including power dynamics*



In ***diagramme B*** the plotting has been broken down to reflect the strength of the asset base by different groups, which can demonstrate differences according to power dynamics – for instance landless, people dependent on household labour, tractor owners …

Doing this exercise will elicit a discussion and provide a visual representation of where the community sees itself vis-à-vis these assets. Points that are well developed could become solid foundations for activities, for instance, if a community has strong social capital then we know we can work with that to develop weaker aspects of the project, such as lobbying for infrastructure for instance. If you choose to do the power dynamic pentagon it can give you insights about the different in assets between the groups in the community and help address better issues of inequality and vulnerability, improving targeting. This may be a particularly useful tool when working with displaced populations to address the assets available, the power dynamics and the perception of the other group between host and displaced populations.

STEP VI- Household semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They can be used both to give and receive information.

Unlike the questionnaire framework, where detailed questions are formulating ahead of time, semi structured interviewing starts with more general questions or topics related to key themes in our resilience and sustainability approach, such as vulnerabilities to shocks, livelihoods and water. Relevant topics (such as energy needs for instance) are initially identified and become the basis for more specific questions which do not need to be prepared in advance. Not all questions are designed and phrased ahead of time. The majority of questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues. It is done in a conversational style and are often the best way for learning about the *motivations* behind people's choices and behaviour, their *attitudes and beliefs*, and the *impacts on their lives* of specific policies or events.

Semi-structured interviewing is guided only in the sense that some form of interview guide, is prepared beforehand, and provides a framework for the interview.

How to Facilitate:

Task:

1. Identifying the right people to interview

• Who you should talk will depend on your research topic.

• Are there key informants you should meet (e.g. the village chief, the head of the women's union, an influential trader, a government official)?

• Are you seeking the testimony of members of the community? Make sure that you do not only gather cases that fit what you expect to find: seek diversity. In order to widen your contacts, use the 'snowballing' technique: ask each interviewee to suggest other people you could talk to. Ask interviewees to suggest diverse people (older/younger people, more men or women, from richer or poorer households, persons with disability and those from different ethnic groups, etc).

• Don't assume that the 'head of the household' can answer for all the household's members – each person will have a different perspective to give. It is useful to interview both the husband and wife, either together or separately, time permitting.

• Take the advice of colleagues and partners on local customs, for example meeting first with the village head to get his or her consent to your presence in the village. But don't let a 'gatekeeper' determine who you speak to.

2. Setting up an interview

• Introduce yourself and your purpose. If relevant, explain that you are not bringing a project or immediate change, but are hoping that, by learning more about the situation and reporting it, we can help create change. Repeat this as you leave: your presence will create expectations that you must manage honestly.

• Consent and confidentiality. Each interviewee must give their informed consent, however informal the conversation. Agree clearly on the level of confidentiality of the interview: will it be confidential? Off the record? Reported anonymously? Or in their name?

• Location? Wherever is convenient and comfortable for the interviewee. If it is in their office or home, on their farm plot, or at their market stall, you can gain a lot of extra information from observing and asking questions about the surroundings. Be sure that you have some privacy as this may influence what the interviewee is willing to reveal.

• Timing? Schedule the interviews around times that suit the interviewees, consider the roles they may be involved in and try to choose a less busy part of their day. It should not take up too much of their time. A good rule to follow is one hour. Tell them how long the conversation will take and stick to it.

• Consider translation needs.

3. Skills for listening, understanding and questioning

Listening and understanding: Give the interviewee your full attention (turn off any mobile phones!). Listen for their statements of facts, but also for their attitudes and beliefs. Try not to show any visible judgement of what is being said, especially if you disagree with, or are shocked by, what you hear because your reaction may affect what else you are told. If you are unsure whether you have understood what the interviewee is saying, try paraphrasing their main point, asking '*So, are you saying that…?*' and get them to confirm or correct it.

Themes for discussion

Every interview depends on its purpose. But there is some must-have info, and some good approaches to follow, whatever the subject.

Must-have:

Basic information about the interview and interviewee, for example:

• Name of village / town and district (check spelling);

• Interviewee's name (check spelling), age and marital status;

• Interviewee's primary occupation or source of livelihood;

• Number of children and their ages (and are they in school?);

• Date of interview and full name and contact details of interviewer.

The basic information required will vary from one study and context to another, and if an interviewee has requested anonymity this should also be considered.

Talking money, measures and access to resource

• Money: People don't often like to talk about money openly. It is better to talk about sources of income rather than asking people how much money they make. You may also want to ask their perception of their HH's economic security, such as do they feel extremely vulnerable, vulnerable, comfortable or well off. It is also important to ask people about their levels of debt. You could also ask them about assets owned and financial responsibilities, such as dependants in education. This will take some pressure off the financial conversation.

• Measures: Farmers often use local measures: in Zambia, for example, rice is traded by the tin can, by the bowl or by the sack. If you want to make calculations about prices, you need to know the weight in kg. Find out before or after the interview the kg equivalents of local measures (and record it as part of your interview notes), but talk with the interviewee in terms of local measures.

Access to resource: Consider access to essential resource such as water, electricity, land and market. Is access safely available, is water free to access and what quality level of labour does access require. You could ask if changes occur to access at any time (during or following a hazard) and the impact this might have on the family.

4. At the end of the interview:

• Ask the interviewee if they would like to ask *you* any questions.

•Confirm what the interview will be used for, and if you can use their real name or should change it (and are there other details that need changing to disguise their identity?);

• You can take a photograph or other records of them and use these with their testimony.

• As soon as you leave, write down the context of the meeting – how you met this person, where it took place, who was there, the atmosphere, anything odd you noticed, and any final comments that were made as the meeting finished (these are often the most insightful comments!).

Additional Resources:

- A comparison of structured and semi-structured interviews, with more tips: www.cemca.org/books/chap10.htm
- More suggestions on listening, understanding and questioning from the Chronic Poverty Research Centre's Methods Toolbox: http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/toolbox-4.2.pdf
- The above information is based on https://itp.nyu.edu/classes/fungus/interview_technique/conductingInterviews.pdf

Step VII – World Café [1]

World Café can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. Specifics of context, numbers, purpose, location, and other circumstances are factored into each event's unique invitation, design, and question choice. The assessment team should designate one key person to stay behind at each table, they are the ambassadors of meaning and will be responsible for ensuring the conversation remains focused on the task at each of the tables. As with other assessment tools try to ensure the community is represented by age, gender and persons with disability. This will help to identify different strengths and challenges of the community. When completing needs assessment for emergency response this exercise may also help prioritise needs as identified by the communities.

How to Facilitate:

Task:

1) *Setting*: Create a "special" environment i.e. small round tables covered butcher block paper or flip charts), colored pens, and optional "talking stick" item. Make sure you have chairs for all of the participants. People will be rotating from table to table so make sure you have enough room to accommodate that. Maybe useful to actually do this in the same space where the community map was done so you can refer to it if needed.

2) *Welcome and Introduction*: The host begins with a warm welcome and an introduction to the World Café process, setting the context (why we are doing this? What will be done with the information?...), and putting participants at ease.

3) *Small Group Rounds*: The process begins one 20- 30minute round of conversation for the small group seated around a table. At the end of the 20 - 30 minutes, each member of the group moves to a different new table. The partner staff member responsible for that table stays behind. They welcome the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round.

4) *Questions*: each table holds a theme and aims to answer a particular question. In this guide, we have identified thematic areas related to resilience and sustainability (such as water, livelihoods, land, services…) you do not have to address each of this, but it is important that the facilitation team set the themes and questions for each table ahead of time. The same questions are used for each table for all the rounds. In that way building on or validating what the first groups identified. If there is no consensus this should be jotted down by the facilitating staff member.

[1] seven integrated design principles

5) *Harvest*: After the small group rotation has ended, the ambassador of meaning (table host) is invited to share insights and results from their table conversations with the rest of the group.

More information and resources on how to use the World Café methodology can be found [here](http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/) (http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/)

Themes to discuss:

Below are a few suggestions for themes which can be discussed using the world café rotation methodology. Not all of these may be applicable to your site and location, so feel free to adapt the tool as you see fit.

Water:

Water sources	Uses	Access (No of HH)	Quantity (months/ time)	Quality	Who accesses?	Who controls?	Costs

Additional questions:

1. Are there storage facilities at the HH and community level?
2. Is there any water resource potential to address need? What? Where? What interventions are needed for its development?
3. Any issues on water sources/ watershed conservation? Any recommended action?

Energy:

Energy use	Energy source (list according to most common)	Technology & provider	Reliability	Sufficiency (Rating: 1-5 with 1 = insufficient and 5 very sufficient)	Access issues	Cost/ month/ hh
Cooking						
Transport						
Lighting						
Water purification						
Power for HH appliances/ tools						
Livelihood (_______)						
Other (______)						

1. Is there any resource potential for energy generation development? What? Where? What interventions are needed for its development?
2. Any issues on energy Sources? Recommended actions?

Land:

1- What are the current uses of land? (use pie chart)
2- Who are the land users? (Access)
3- Who has control over the land?
4- What are the land issues faced by the community? Any land conflict issues? Between whom?
5- Has there been external interest in the use of the land?
6- Any potential land resources available for economic 'development'?

Other services:

Services	location	Provider	access	Affordability
Health				
Education				
Transport				
Market				

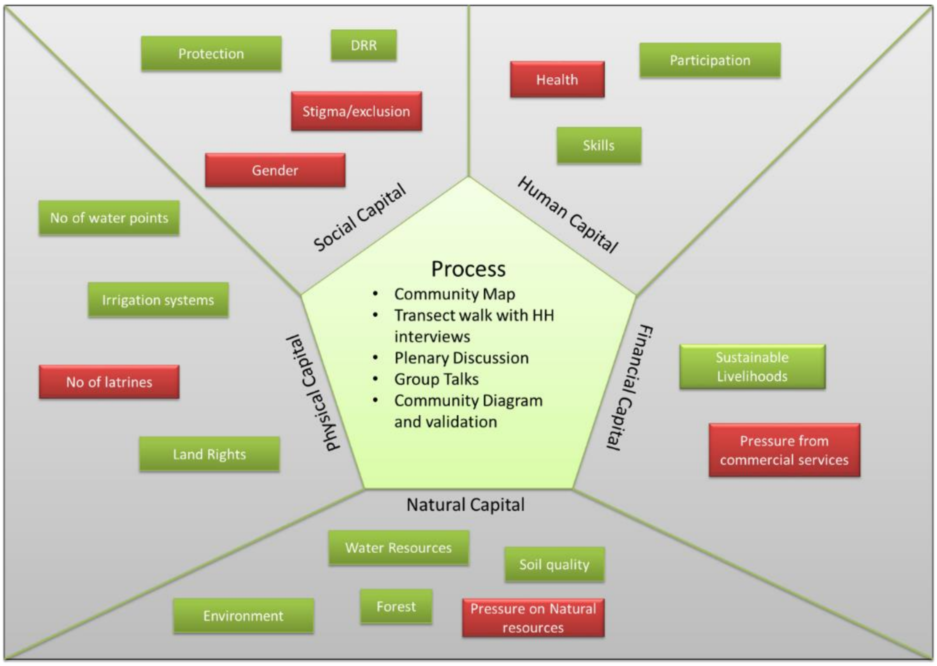
Sources and uses of income:

Primary	**Secondary**	**Tertiary**	**Uses/ estimated expenditure**	**Savings/ credit**	**Access to loans/ interest rates**

Step VIII- Digesting the Data

Collecting data is just a first step in doing assessments. From the information collected above, the assessment team will then need to review and process the data, in order to decide on next steps. These could be drilling down further on a few of the thematic areas explored above. In order to support this process and integrate the data collected, the facilitation team may want to super-impose on the pentagon the results from the other tools used.

For instance, if land tenure is a major issue, it can be plotted under the natural capital edge of the pentagon in red to denote that this is an area of deficit. If irrigation systems are functioning well, they could be placed in green under physical capital as an asset to be built upon.



Since this is a rapid assessment, ***it is meant to be a taster*** of the situation in the community. Depending on the information revealed the facilitation team will need to conduct more thorough assessments to support the programme design. Please refer to PMM documentation which provides further guidance on this.