

Chapter 2: Vulnerability Analysis – Approach Utilised

Livelihoods Based Vulnerability Assessment Approach

The basic principle underlying the livelihoods based approach² is that an analysis of local livelihoods is essential for a proper understanding of the impact of hazards at household level. Serious crop failure may, for example, leave one group of households destitute because the failed crop is their only source of staple food. Another group (in a nearby location) may be able to cope with these crop production problems because they have alternative food and income sources that can make up the current production shortfall. They may, for instance, have livestock to sell or have the ability to gain local paid employment. The idea of maintaining food economy / livelihood baseline information is to capture essential facts on local livelihoods and coping strategies³, making it possible for a combined analysis on relative vulnerability following the impact of hazards or shocks.

Livelihood patterns clearly vary from one area to another according to local factors such as climate, soil and access to markets. The first step in a livelihoods based analysis is therefore to prepare a livelihood zone map, i.e. a map delineating geographical areas within which people share similar patterns of access to food (i.e. they grow the same crops, keep the same types of livestock, etc.), income and have the same access to markets. The Swazi VAC has recently updated its livelihood zone map and livelihood profiles to include 9 areas and 27 livelihood profiles⁴.

Where a household lives is one factor determining its options for obtaining food and generating income and another is wealth, since wealth determines access to the means of production and/or additional income generation. Wealth groups are typically distinguished from one another by differences in land holding, extent of cultivation, livestock holding, financial and physical capital, education, skills, labour availability and/or social capital. Defining the different wealth groups in each zone is the second step in a livelihoods analysis, the output from which is a socio-economic breakdown.

Having grouped households according to where they live and their socio-economic group (wealth), the next step is to generate livelihood baseline information for typical households in each group for a defined reference or baseline year. Food access is determined by investigating the sum of ways households obtain food — what food they grow, gather or receive as gifts, how much food they buy, how much cash income is earned in a year, and what other essential needs must be met with income earned. Once this baseline is established, then an analysis can be made of the likely impact of a shock or hazard in a bad year. Assessments examine how food access will be affected by the shock, what other food sources can be added or expanded to make up initial shortages, and what final income/food deficits emerge.

The objective is to investigate the effects of a hazard/shock (e.g. drought or price increase in staples) on future access to food and income, so that decisions can be taken about the most appropriate types of intervention to implement. The rationale behind the approach is that a good understanding of how people have survived in the past provides a sound basis for projecting into the future. Three types of information are combined; information on normal or baseline access to food and income, information on hazards (i.e. factors affecting access to food/income, such as crop production or market prices) and information on response strategies (i.e. the sources of food and

² The RVAC and NVACs agreed to adopt this approach at a regional meeting in Pretoria March 2003.

³ The way in which households normally cope when faced with adverse conditions that do not deplete the socio-economic basis of the households e.g. sale of productive livestock (termed survival strategies).

⁴ A report detailing these livelihood profiles is forthcoming. Most aspects of the livelihood baselines are highlighted later on the relevant sections of the report.

income that people turn to when exposed to a hazard). The approach can be summarised as follows:

Baseline + Hazard + Response = Outcome

The Swazi VAC wish to take a holistic picture when analysing livelihoods. The bases for the current assessment are the livelihood profiles developed by the Swazi VAC during November and December 2002. For each of the nine livelihood zones in Swaziland a socio-economic breakdown has been developed to better understand the opportunities and constraints that the poor, middle and better off groups face in their daily lives. A written record of these updated livelihood baselines will be produced in the weeks following this report. It will be circulated to stakeholders.

Analytical Approach 2004

The essential requirement for agreement on the current vulnerability context in Swaziland has meant an array of information has been collected and analysed. In addition, an overarching theme to consult and enable key stakeholders to feed into a combined analysis of the current context allows the Swazi VAC to perform its most important role. The VAC forms an umbrella under which very diverse stakeholders can agree on the depth and breadth of food security and livelihood problems experienced by households in rural and peri-urban Swaziland so that stakeholders have a common framework of analysis to guide their responses. Furthermore, the Swazi VAC has been keen to consult as widely as possible with communities and institutional stakeholders as to the best way forward having agreed the vulnerability context.

There have been four main thrusts to the vulnerability assessment and analytical process:

- **Analysis of secondary data** on production and supply e.g. maize, cotton, sugar cane production, livestock productivity and condition, national food and livestock prices, employment levels and the general economic climate of Swaziland and the Southern Africa region.
- **Participatory community interviews** by combined teams from the Government, UN and NGOs with key informants in 43 Chiefdoms (representing 16% of the total number of Chiefdoms) to identify:
 - current production shocks (food/cash crop production, livestock productivity, fishing, trade, non-food production, livestock/grazing condition)
 - changes in access to markets (employment, cash crops, livestock, trade, non-food production, food availability)
 - changes in prices of food stuffs and livestock
 - priorities for development outlined by the communities

The community interviews were carried out by six teams between 20th and 30th April using a semi-structured interview format. Staff from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development⁵, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives as well as staff from four different NGOs and the World Food Programme took part in the field work and analysis. A training and familiarisation exercise was held on 19th April. A basic pre-requisite for field staff selection was completion of a Household Economy Approach (HEA) training level 1 or experience with previous vulnerability assessments in Swaziland. The chiefdoms that were visited during the survey were selected in a random purposive manner with sampling support from the Central Statistics Office. Commonly ranges of between five to seven Chiefdoms were selected for interview in each of the Livelihood Zones. If zones had a low number of chiefdoms in total, such as the Lubombo Plateau, fewer interviews were undertaken to reflect the total number in each

⁵ Staff were from the Central Statistical Office of the MEPD

Livelihood Zone.

A report for each livelihood zone was produced by the teams based on the interviews conducted. Included within the reports, teams produced the first cut of the problem specification (or shock) for each livelihood zone as an attempt to measure the impact of current conditions on rural livelihoods. This analysis was combined with other secondary data analysis and consultations with wider stakeholders before a final problem specification was produced that reflects a common understanding of the vulnerability context in Swaziland. These problem specifications for each Livelihood Zone can be seen in figure 24.

Table 1: Breakdown of interviews by Livelihood Zone

<i>Livelihood Zone</i>	<i>Number of chiefdoms visited*</i>
Highveld Maize & Cattle	7
Timber Highlands	6
Wet Middleveld	6
Dry Middleveld	6
Peri-Urban Corridor	4
Lowveld Cattle, Cotton & Maize	5
Lowveld Cattle and Cotton	4
Lomahasha Trading & Arable ⁶	3
Lubombo Plateau	2
Total	43

*For a list of Chiefdoms visited please see Annex 1

- **Multi-sectoral interviews with Regional Development Teams** were carried out in each of the four regions of the country covering relevant issues/problems in the following sectors: education, water & sanitation, agriculture, health, nutrition and child protection. However, in some instances logistical issues and availability of reports at the regional level hampered efforts. The VAC is keen to include more health and nutrition data in its analysis.
- **Synthesis of information, discussion and agreement on the vulnerability context** with the institutions forming the core stakeholder group of the Swazi VAC at a stakeholder workshop held on 6th May 2004 after completion of the field work. This workshop went on to analyse and **make recommendations** on the types of livelihood promotion programmes and policies that may be beneficial.

It is expected that the breadth of data collection and analysis will be sufficient to provide a good understanding of relative vulnerability across Swaziland from geographic and socio-economic standpoints. The collaborative and consultative nature of the assessment and analytical process has been very important. Agreement on the underlying and overt reasons for increasing and/or changing vulnerability of rural livelihoods is paramount if complimentary policies and programmes can be put in place by Government and humanitarian/development agencies to reduce the level of vulnerability by strengthening the resilience of livelihood strategies.

⁶ The baseline was updated in the Lomahasha LZ. Seven interviews were carried out in total in the two chiefdoms with 4 in the Shewula area and 3 in the Lomahasha area.