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Expert Group Meeting on Adopting the Sustainable  
Livelihoods Approach for Promoting Rural Development  
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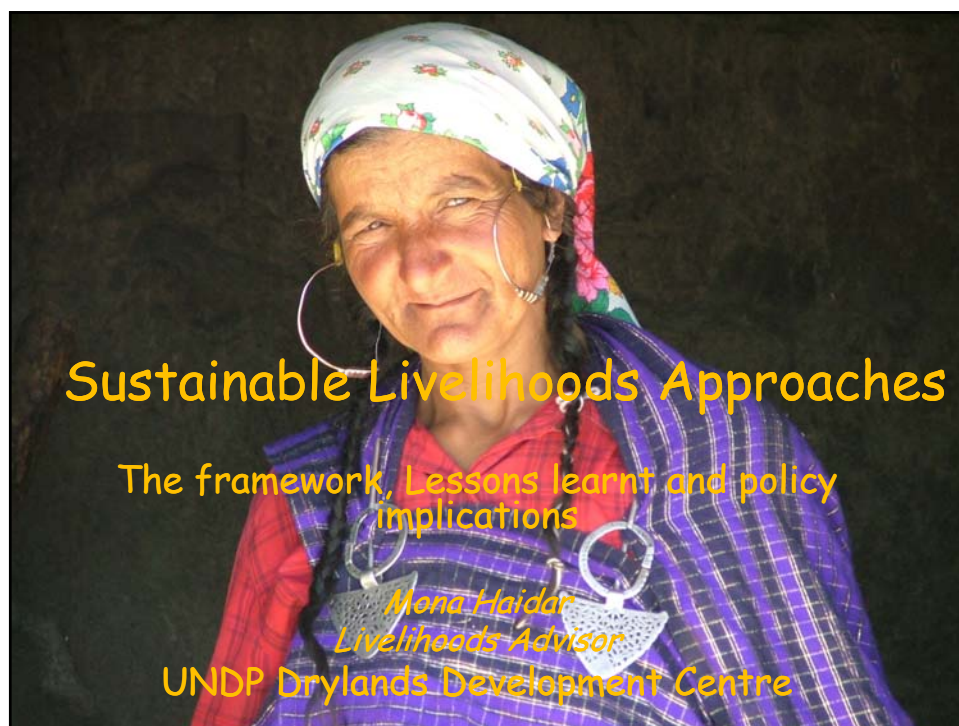
**SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD APPROACHES  
THE FRAMEWORK, LESSONS LEARNT FROM PRACTICE  
AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

*By*

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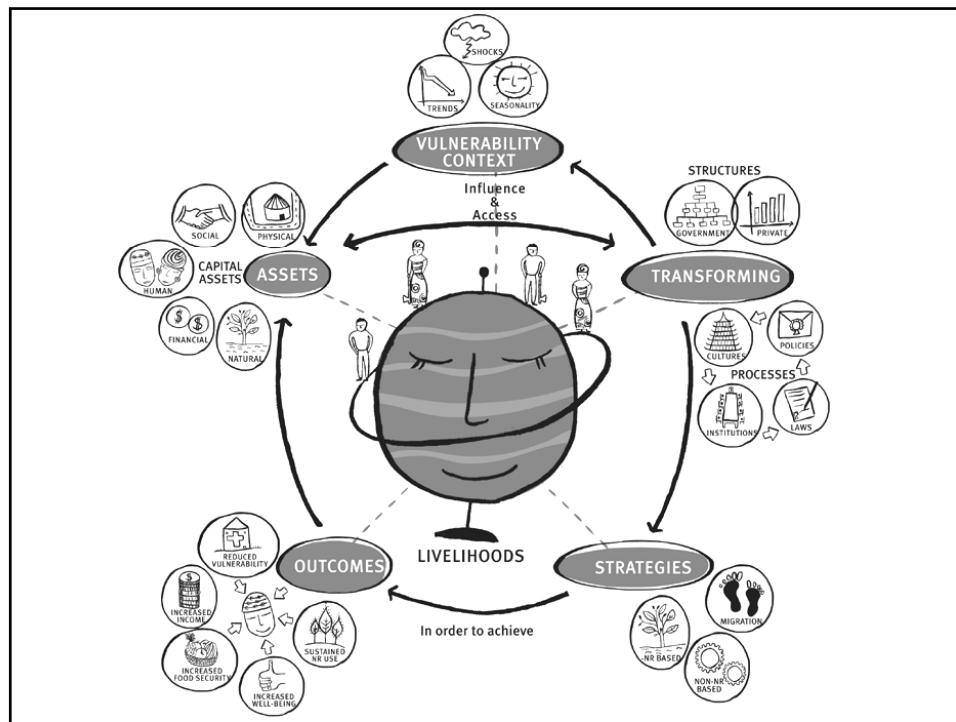
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## Plan

- Refresher on SLAs
- Lessons learnt from international practice
- Two SLA applications
- Implications for supportive policy



## Origins/ Definition

- Dates back to Chambers & Conway, early 1990s, famine and food insecurity
- Gained momentum late 90s
- "A livelihood comprises the **capabilities**, **assets** and **activities** required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks." (Chambers and Conway's, 1991)

## What are Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches (SLA)?

- A way of thinking about the objectives, scope and priorities for development.
- Place people & their priorities at the centre of development.
- Focus poverty reduction interventions on empowering the poor, supporting their access to assets, and developing an enabling policy and institutional environment.

## Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches Principles

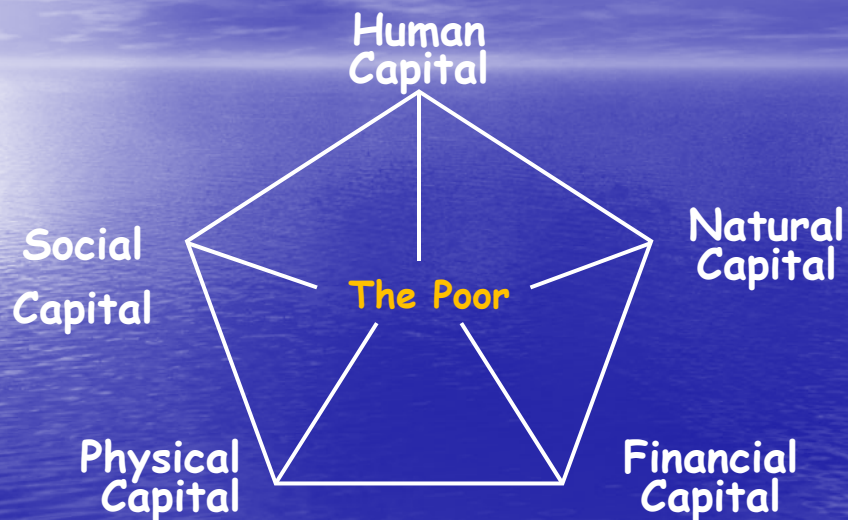
- **People-centered:** Focus on perspectives, priorities and strengths of people
- **Holistic:** Recognize different factors/processes influence people, the multiple livelihood strategies in pursuit of multiple livelihood outcomes.
- **Dynamic:** Recognize that livelihood strategies change over time.
- **Build on strengths:** Start with an analysis of strengths rather than needs.
- **Consider macro-micro linkages:** to inform more supportive policies and institutions.



## The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Livelihoods approaches are based on a conceptual framework to aid analysis of the factors affecting peoples' livelihoods

### Livelihoods assets



## Livelihoods assets

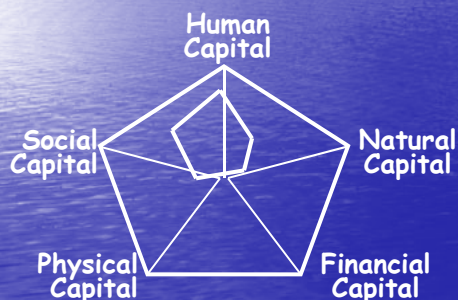
- **human** capital: health, education, knowledge and skills, and ability to work/adapt
- **natural** capital: natural resources such as land, soil, water, forests and fisheries
- **social** capital: social resources, formal & informal networks, access to decision-making, etc.
- **physical** capital: infrastructure (roads, water supply and sanitation, communications, schools) and tools and technology for production
- **financial** capital: financial resources including income from employment, trade and remittances, savings and credit

## The Asset Mix

- Different households have different access to livelihood "assets"
- Livelihoods affected by:
  - diversity of assets
  - amount of assets
  - balance between assets

So.....

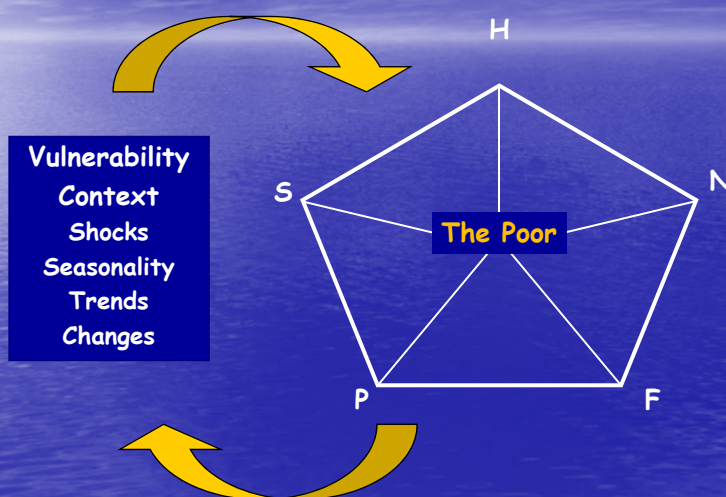
**Landless  
female  
agricultural  
labourer**



- Human capital
  - no education
  - limited skills
- Natural capital
  - landless
- Financial capital
  - low wages
  - no access to credit
- Physical capital
  - poor water supply
  - poor housing
  - poor communications
- Social capital
  - low social status
  - discrimination against women

**= an extremely reduced  
"livelihood  
pentagon"**

## "Vulnerability" Context



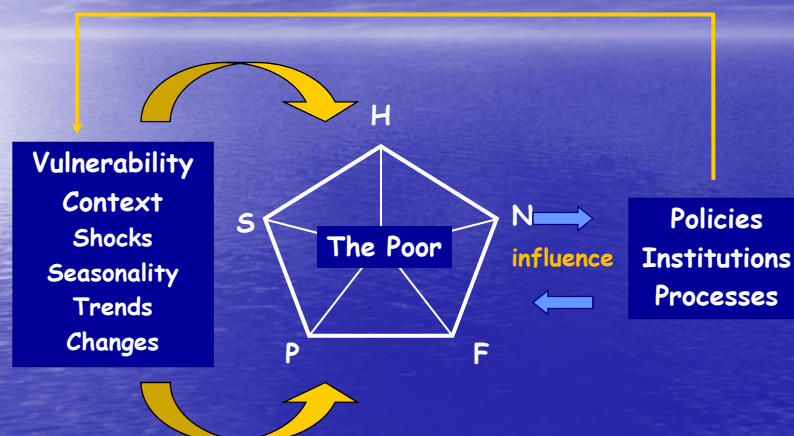


## "Vulnerability" Context

The vulnerability context within which people pursue their livelihoods includes:

- **Shocks:** Conflict, natural shocks (floods, droughts, etc), economic shocks, Health shocks
- **Seasonality:** seasonal fluctuations in prices, production, employment opportunities
- **Trends and changes:** Population, environmental change, technology, markets and trade

## Policies, Institutions & Processes





## Policies, Institutions & Processes (PIPs)

- cover the complex social, economic and political context within which people pursue their livelihoods strategies
- PIPs operate at global, national, regional, district and local levels.
- Include policy and legislation, social and political organization, governance, service delivery and resource access institutions

## Livelihood Strategies

Production, investment, reproduction

Combining:

- the assets they can access

Taking account of:

- the vulnerability context

Supported or hindered by:

- policies, institutions and processes.

..... *Leading to*

## Livelihood Outcomes

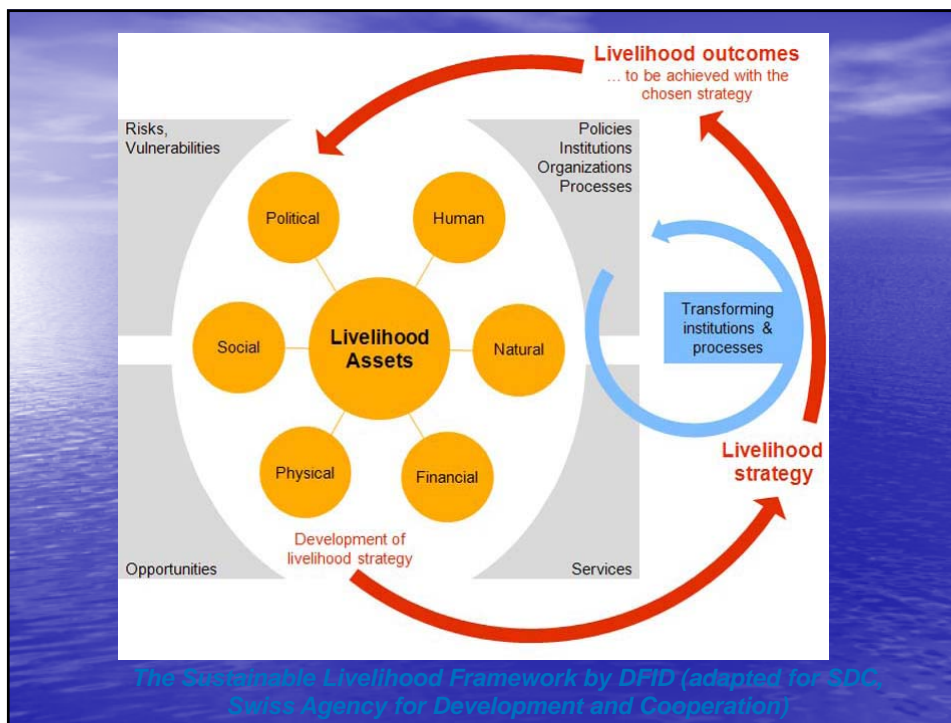
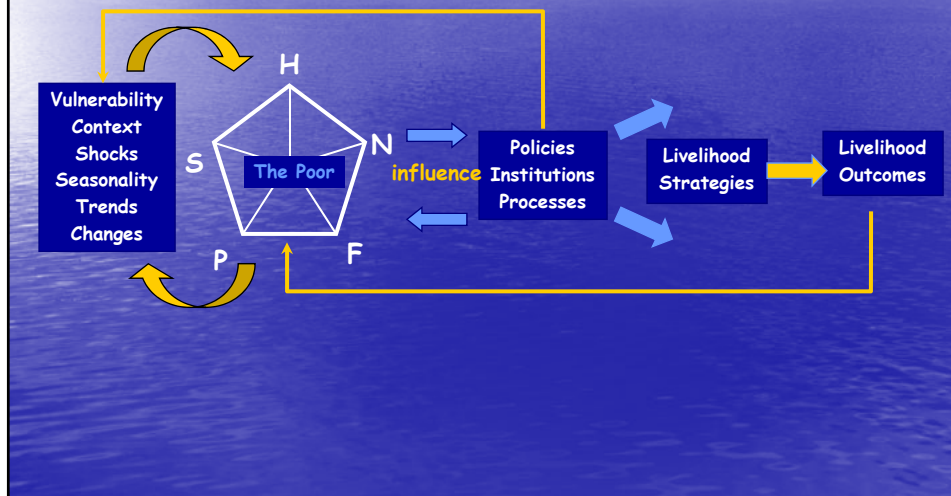
- increased income
- reduced vulnerability
- increased well-being
- improved food security
- more sustainable use of natural resources

## Livelihood Outcomes

Poverty - a "poor" livelihood outcome:

- based on a fragile set of livelihood assets
- unable to adapt to shocks, changes or trends
- not supported, or hindered by policies, institutions and processes (do not allow a good use of assets)
- result of inappropriate livelihood strategies

# The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework





## Lessons learnt from practice

- A series of reviews was undertaken mainly by DFID in 1999, 2002 and 2008 on experiences from the use of livelihood approaches to rural development
- They came to the following conclusions:

## Lessons learnt from practice

- The approach has been successfully used at international, national, regional and local levels
- For research, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and policy development
- To move beyond sectoral and institutional boundaries.
- For the identification of development priorities and new activities and to review current activities (not designed with SLA)



## Lessons learnt from practice

- Overall SLAs are most useful as an analytical tool.
- SLAs can improve the quality of entry points. (entry points that more conventional approaches may miss)
- SLAs can improve the relevance/ effectiveness of interventions.
- By not being restricted to a single-sector, SLAs open up opportunities for a range of partners.

## Lessons learnt from practice

- SLAs do not ensure sustainability. Environmental, social, economic and institutional sustainability need to be addressed/negotiated stakeholders
- Partners are likely to be sectoral ministries; limited ability to embrace the holism of SLAs
- Any organization adopting SL approaches is bound to face internal challenges: review institutional procedures, support staff to develop new skills and to learn by doing

## Lessons learnt from practice

Particular areas where SLA have been valuable include:

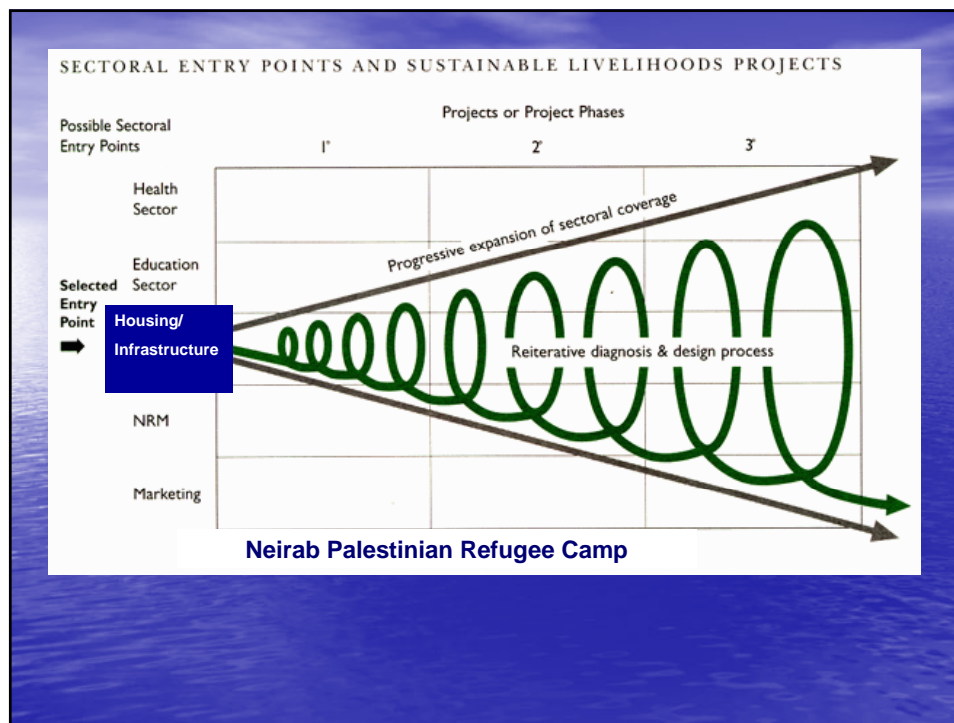
- SL can help identify the key differences between the poorest and other groups as well as being used to track changes over time.
- Analysing complex trends such as climate change and conflict situations and linking these to practical action.
- Providing a framework for understanding the recent food crisis and how and why it affects different groups in different ways.

## Lessons learnt from practice

- In climate change adaptation work a key objective is to strengthen people's overall resilience as the future becomes more uncertain.
- It is thus important to work on:
  - using natural resources more effectively
  - diversifying economic activity
 Both areas are at the heart of SL thinking.

## Action-oriented recommendations

- The holistic analysis should lead to one or more focused interventions.
- Initial entry points may begin by addressing a community priority in one sector, and take in other sectors as the programme matures
- This allows sequential movement into areas that require more community awareness, such as NRM interventions





## Application of SL approaches at the policy/programming level

UNDP Drylands Development Centre

### UNDP Dryland Development Centre (DDC)

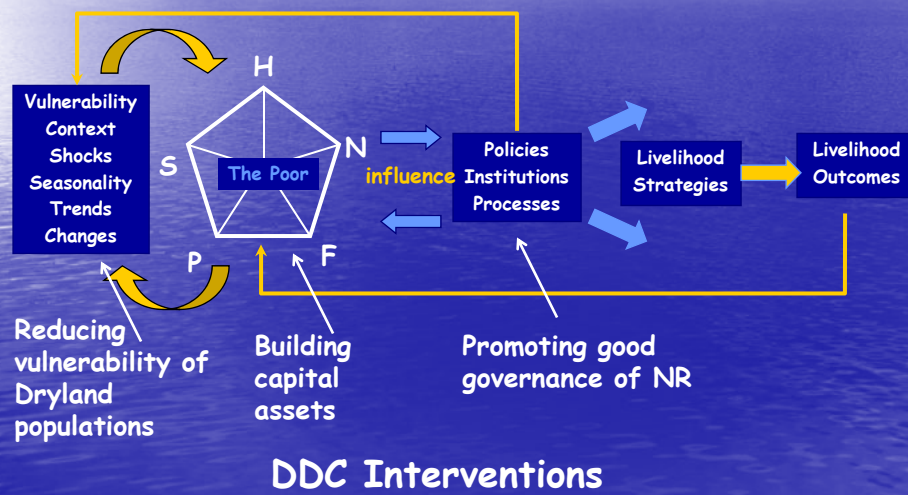
- Emerged from UNSO (1973) or the UN Sudano - Sahelian office to combat desertification and drought; a technical operation for drought relief.
- In 2001, UNSO reviewed its identity; process largely influenced by livelihood thinking.
- A new programmatic approach was adopted. DDC launched the **Integrated Drylands Development Programme (IDDP)**: a comprehensive program delivering policy advice and technical backstopping for enhancing livelihoods in the drylands.



## UNDP Dryland Development Centre (DDC)

- Focus shifted from technical interventions targeting natural resources to a comprehensive approach to drylands development putting people at the centre.
- Natural resource management objectives were balanced with poverty alleviation objectives.
- DDC interventions today are along 3 lines:
  - Building capital assets of dryland people.
  - Reducing vulnerability of dryland populations.
  - Promoting good governance of natural resources.

## The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



## Examples of on-going DDC initiatives

- Morocco & Lebanon: Enhancing market access for drylands producers/products (vulnerability context, PIP, livelihood assets)
- Yemen: Decentralized governance of water resources (PIP box)
- Tunisia: Elaboration local development plans and their integration (livelihood assets, diversification, PIPs)
- Syria: Enhancing community adaptation to drought (Vulnerability context, livelihood assets)

## Lessons learned

- Buy into "SL approaches" at all levels: the promoting agency, policy-makers and implementers
- Catalyzed a shift in thinking in DDC from a dispersed project management operation to a holistic programmatic approach.
- Pushed for a new way of promoting sustainable land management; people rather than land

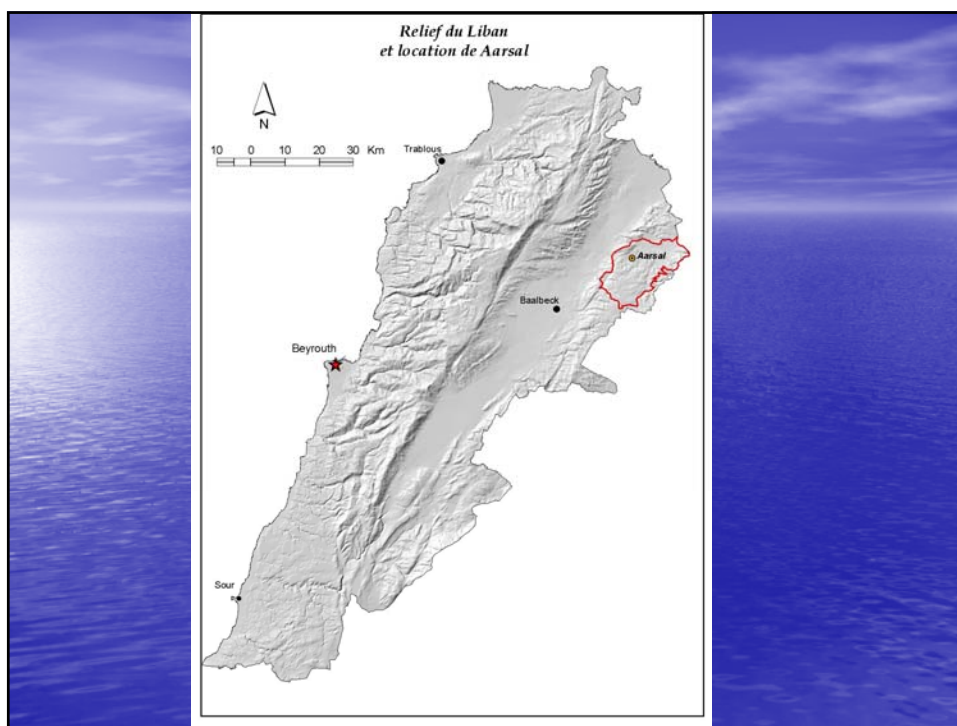
## Application of SL approaches at the analysis level

The case of Aarsal, Lebanon.

### The case of Aarsal, Lebanon

- Aarsal is a large village (35,000 people)
- On the dry slopes of the Anti-Lebanon mountain.
- Covers 5% of Lebanon
- Traditionally agro-pastoral (sheep and goat grazing; wheat and barley planting)









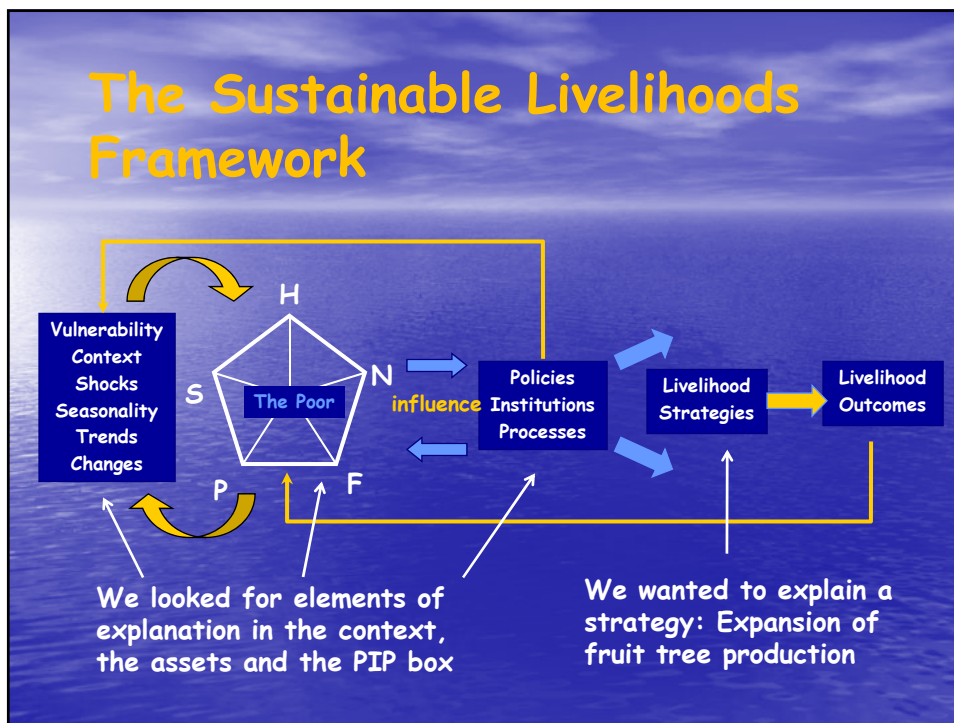
## The Aarsali paradox

- During the last 50 years, Aarsal witnessed a massive expansion of fruit tree production (Cherries and apricots)
- Positive impact on Aarsali livelihoods
- **Opposite trend in the rest of Lebanon**, with declining areas under fruit and incomes from agriculture.

## The Aarsali paradox

The research question raised: "**Why were the Aarsali people able to expand fruit tree production while others in the rest of Lebanon were not?**"





## Answers

### Why fruit tree production in Aarsal?

- **Context:** reverse migration from the city caused by civil war, capitalization from smuggling activities across the Syrian border
- **Capital assets:** Availability of land, low level of education, labor force
- **Livelihood strategies:** no migration outside Lebanon, quarries allowed livelihood diversification
- **PIP box:** no social security; trees perceived as a retirement fund, no rural development strategy from the government.

## Lessons learned

- SLF offers a comprehensive framework for analysis
- helps organize an otherwise complex process
- needs adequate time and room for effective participation from affected communities
- guides development interventions and identifies entry points based on people's priorities



## Challenges

- Need to collect/analyze data and relate knowledge from different disciplines.
- Need to combine different methodologies (secondary data, interviews, participatory assessments, landscape and history maps, GIS analysis)
- Need to understand and relate changes with time (livelihood strategies and NRM practices)

## Policy implications

### Supportive policy environment

- **Supportive international agreements:** trade policy, debt relief and conservation
- **Supportive development policy:** improving access to assets, reducing vulnerability, enhancing economic growth and promoting environmental sustainability

## Policy implications

- **Coordination between institutions/sectors** to respond to livelihoods/multi-sectoral
- **Decentralization** for better coordination in policy development/ implementation
- **Good governance** central to the objectives of ownership and empowerment critical to SLAs
- **Gender empowerment** improving women's access and participation

## Policy implications

### Initial capitalization of the poor

- Many development interventions, by their very nature, exclude the poorest who do not possess the necessary asset base
- Initial investments must be made to provide the very poor with a minimum asset base if they are to be brought back into the development process

## Policy implications

- ESCWA and member countries are committed to the International Development Goals of poverty reduction and environmental conservation.
- Adopting the livelihoods approach to understanding poverty, is expected to make a direct contribution to achieving this aim.
- It will facilitate the identification of practical priorities for action that are based on the views and interests of those concerned.

Thank you!