

# Livelihoods and making a living

## Disasters reduce peoples' capacity to sustain their livelihoods through destroying or undermining their activities, assets and capabilities.

Peoples livelihoods are made up of the following assets:

Human capital	<i>Skills, knowledge, physical labour, health</i>
Financial capital	<i>Savings, wages, credit</i>
Natural capital	<i>Land, water, environmental resources, bio-diversity</i>
Social capital	<i>Social norms, trust, groups, networks, associations</i>
Physical capital	<i>Transport, shelter, energy, communications</i>

### Impact of disaster on livelihood security

- Disasters expose households and communities to extreme shocks and stresses that threaten the security of their livelihoods.
- HIV and disease breakdown human and social capital while droughts, flooding, pests and animal disease destroy financial and natural capital.
- Conflicts lead to loss of land and financial assets, destruction of physical assets and break down of social support structures.
- Many people survive the immediate effects of disaster, but with depleted assets and capacity to cope, they are more vulnerable to future threats.
- Women and children bear the brunt of food shortages, subsequent poor health and longer term livelihood insecurity.
- Food aid can contribute to livelihood insecurity particularly where food is available within the country but people lack the assets to access it.

### Assessing livelihood security

- Supporting livelihoods demands an understanding of the activities, assets and capabilities used at household level in making a living.
- Detailed analysis is needed to gain an adequate level of understanding – a process which contributes to bridging disaster relief with long term sustainable development.

Areas of analysis	Tools for analysis
Context – <i>Economic, environmental, political, historical, social, cultural</i>	Review of government documents, baseline data, statistics, research, evaluations
Livelihood assets – <i>Human, social, financial, natural, physical capital</i>	Wealth ranking, surveys, key informant / household interviews, transects
Institutional / organisational influence – <i>government, civil society</i>	Venn diagrams, stakeholder mapping and analysis
Livelihood security strategies – <i>production, financing, processing, exchange, marketing, trade offs</i>	Calendars, focus group discussions, transects, flow diagrams
Livelihood security outcomes – <i>i.e. nutrition levels, environmental protection, skills development</i>	Surveys, baseline data, ranking

### Reduction of disaster risks is essential to livelihood security

#### All In Diary CD Resources:

© CARE (2002) Household Livelihoods Security Assessment – a toolkit for practitioners  
© Practical Action Technical Brief – Rainwater harvesting

#### Web links for further information

[www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org), [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org), [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)  
<http://www.itdg.org/>, <http://www.agromisa.org/>,  
<http://practicalaction.org/practicalanswers/>

#### Interventions to strengthen livelihood security:

*Community based disaster risk management*

*HIV and AIDS awareness raising, and prevention*

*Cash token schemes*

*Food for work and infrastructure rehabilitation initiatives*

*Supplementary feeding programmes for vulnerable groups*

*Alternative energy and rainwater harvesting.*

*Seed multiplication and inter cropping initiatives with local crop varieties.*

*Agricultural interventions that protect land tenure rights i.e. tree planting*

