

Working Paper 191

**A Critical Review of Approaches to
Assessing and Monitoring Livelihoods in
Situations of Chronic Conflict and Political Instability**

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The Livelihoods and Chronic Conflict Working Paper Series

This Working Paper forms part of a series that reviews the range of ways in which livelihoods approaches are currently used by operational agencies and researchers working in situations of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI). The aim of the series is to document current practice so that useful lessons can be learned and applied to ensure for more effective policies, needs assessment, and aid programming to support livelihoods during protracted conflict. Many of these lessons from each of the individual papers are summarised in a synthesis paper. The series also includes an annotated bibliography and a paper outlining the conceptual issues relating to the applications of livelihoods approaches to SCCPI.

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Acronyms

CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEG	Food Economy Group
FEWS	Famine Early Warning Systems (USAID)
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network (USAID)
FSAU	Food Security Assessment Unit (Somalia)
FSVP	Food Security and Vulnerability Profile (USAID)
HEA	Household Economy Assessment (SCF)
HLS	Household Livelihood Security (CARE)
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group (ODI)
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network (ODI)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MERLIN	Medical Emergency Relief International (Sierra Leone)
MSF–H	Medecins Sans Frontiers–Holland
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (UK)
PIP	Policies, institutions and processes
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
RoC	Republic of Congo
RRA	Rapid rural appraisal
SAF	Standard Analytical Framework
SCCPI	Situations of chronic conflict and political instability
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SC–UK	Save the Children–United Kingdom
SPLM	Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Education Fund
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (WFP)
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International

Vernacular term

<i>Sharia</i>	Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Koran, prescribing both religious and secular duties, and in some cases retributive penalties for law breaking.
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Summary

This paper reviews emergency livelihoods assessment approaches in situations of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI). Approaches are reviewed using an adapted livelihoods framework and an analysis of what happens to livelihoods in chronic conflict and political instability. It also examines how a livelihoods analysis can add to the identification of appropriate interventions to address protracted risks to livelihoods. The overall aim is to contribute to better understanding of the problems faced by populations in chronic conflict and political instability, and to find ways of protecting livelihoods to more effectively save lives and reduce future vulnerability.

SCCPI are associated with a parallel economy centred on conflict, a high degree of violence and a weak or failed governance environment. The severity of the impact depends on the nature of war strategies, the war economy, and the accountability and effectiveness of local institutions and processes. Vulnerability is to a large extent determined by social and political status. The aim of livelihood strategies in such situations often becomes limited to ensuring food security or survival. Strategies frequently include a return to subsistence, illegal, criminal or immoral activities.

Most emergency livelihood assessment approaches focus in particular on food security as an outcome, and assess livelihood strategies at the household or community level. Few include an analysis of political vulnerability or the processes at the macro-level which lead to this. Getting information on involvement in the war economy is difficult. Methods commonly used in conflict or political analysis can be incorporated in livelihoods assessments to include this dimension.

There are several challenges in conducting livelihoods assessments in SCCPI; mainly due to problems with access and insecurity, differences in livelihood strategies from stable situations, and an increased potential for bias. Agencies have made adaptations to approaches and methods to address this. These adaptations include the categorisation of the population according to political, security, or displacement factors rather than livelihood groups to define groups with similar means of accessing food. It also includes a greater emphasis on secondary information, triangulation and combining qualitative and quantitative information. Once immediate relief needs to save lives have been identified, a livelihoods analysis can be developed over time through longer-term monitoring.

The potentially harmful effects of livelihoods interventions and of the assessments themselves also need to be considered. Any form of assistance has potentially harmful effects in situations of conflict but the longer-term nature of livelihood support, in particular building the capacity of local institutions, could compromise the neutrality and impartiality of assistance. Harmful effects may include working with institutions aligned with one side of the war or diversion of goods to warring parties.

In current practice, the main use of emergency livelihoods assessments is to determine the need for immediate relief, usually food aid. This may be because the scope for supporting livelihood strategies at community level is limited during violent conflict, due to fears of causing harm, to funding constraints, or agency mandates.

Some assessments identified other interventions; including asset delivery or provision, market-, cash- and labour-based interventions, but also building the capacity of local institutions, and protection and advocacy to hold states and warring parties accountable for the provision of basic needs to civilians. A focus on relief and asset delivery, and assessments to identify the need for this, only addresses people's economic vulnerability but not the political vulnerability that is a key characteristic of SCCPI. For such interventions to be effective there is a need for the protection of vulnerable groups so that they are able to hold on to existing assets and those provided or created through assistance. The implication for assessments is that the causes of political vulnerability need to be examined in order to determine how to protect populations.

1 Introduction

This paper reviews livelihoods assessment methodologies in situations of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI). Livelihood approaches were developed for use in politically stable, development contexts, yet in recent years have increasingly been applied in chronic emergencies.

SCCPI are associated with violence, weakening of state institutions, a parallel economy, and periodic life-threatening situations for some population groups. Emergency relief is the predominant form of international assistance in SCCPI, which is short term, and therefore cannot address the protracted problems associated with chronic conflict and political instability. Chronic emergencies require longer-term measures to alleviate human suffering. A review of livelihoods approaches identified a need to better understand the problems faced by populations in SCCPI, and the constraints they face in maintaining their livelihoods, and finding ways to support livelihoods (Schafer, 2002).

Livelihood support can have various meanings, ranging from livelihood provision, to protection, recovery and promotion (Maxwell, 1999). This paper considers livelihood support from a humanitarian perspective, in other words, livelihood protection as a more effective way of saving lives. Livelihood interventions are not well defined, and can include anything from asset provision (e.g. seeds and tools), market-, cash- and labour-based interventions, capacity building, to advocacy and global trade campaigns.

A new analysis is needed to identify appropriate interventions and how they can be effective in reducing people's vulnerability and their ability to cope with external shocks. This paper contributes to this new analysis by critically reviewing the extent to which existing emergency assessment approaches analyse livelihoods and the types of livelihoods interventions that are, and could be, identified for SCCPI. Ideally, a livelihoods assessment in SCCPI should provide information on:

- The severity of risks to livelihoods
- Who is vulnerable and why
- What livelihood strategies people are pursuing, and what their priorities are
- Appropriate types and levels of livelihood support
- Feasibility of livelihood support
- Which formal and informal institutions to work with, and how
- The potentially harmful effects of livelihood support

This paper first reviews what happens to livelihoods in SCCPI to determine the key elements of an assessment. This is based on a review of the literature, the case studies of the Overseas Development Institute's (ODI's) Political Economy of Conflict and Livelihoods project,¹ and the findings of a cross-section of assessments conducted in SCCPI.

The review of assessment approaches starts with an analysis of the conceptual and theoretical basis of common assessment approaches. The majority of assessment approaches reviewed are emergency food security assessments, rather than livelihoods assessments, as the former are common in emergencies. The review considers specifically how a livelihoods analysis can contribute to going beyond emergency food aid as a form of assistance. Types of assessment

¹ Based on empirical field research in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Casamance in Senegal and Sierra Leone, this project explores how political economy analysis can best be integrated into humanitarian agencies' practical planning and programming in SCCPI. At a conceptual level, the project considers how frameworks already in use could be strengthened by bringing in a better appreciation of power relations and political vulnerability. At a more practical level, the project explores the constraints associated with political economy and livelihoods analysis in SCCPI.

approaches reviewed are: CARE's household livelihood security approach, Oxfam-GB's livelihoods approach to food security assessments, Save the Children (SC-UK's) household economy approach, the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC's) economic security analysis, Medecins Sans Frontiers-Holland (MSF-H's) food security analysis, as well as the World Food Programme's (WFP's) Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) and the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Famine Early Warning System (FEWS). An examination of anthropological approaches and how they have been used in SCCPI is also included. A description of each methodology is included in Annex 1.

This review is followed by an analysis of the practical application of assessment and monitoring approaches in situations of SCCPI. For each approach, a number of assessment reports were studied. These reports were obtained for: Sudan (northern and southern), Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola, Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo (RoC), Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Abkhazia, Ingushetia, Kosovo, and Colombia. This section examines the practical constraints to assessing livelihoods in SCCPI, and how assessment approaches were adapted. Political and conflict impact analysis is reviewed more briefly, to consider how aspects of it can be included in an emergency livelihoods analysis. The final part of the paper presents conclusions on the application of a livelihoods framework in SCCPI, assessment approaches and interventions.

2 SCCPI and their Impact on Livelihoods

2.1 Characteristics of SCCPI

Several key characteristics have been identified for situations of political instability: weakened or non-existent public institutions, state legitimacy contested, strong informal or illegal economy, high degree of violence, forced displacement, and politically marginalised sections of the population. Key features include a crisis of statehood, deliberate destruction of livelihoods, and an economy centred on conflict (Schafer, 2002).

Some SCCPI are associated with a continuous risk to lives, for example, those in DRC and Angola (Jackson, forthcoming; Le Billon and Bakker, 2002). Others experience periods or areas of relative stability. For example, in Somalia, between the early and late 1990s, political violence, food insecurity and disease gave way to a situation characterised by depleted household asset bases, lack of social services and poor terms of trade (Le Sage and Majid, 2002).

The nature of war has changed significantly over the past decade. New wars are characterised by their links to global networks and distinctive parallel war economies (Cliffe and Luckam, 2000; Duffield, 2001). SCCPI may be a consequence of changes in global political economy that has, for example, resulted in marginalisation of Africa in the world economy, led to weakening of states through structural adjustment programmes, and a decline in aid. SCCPI may be a response or adaptation to this marginalisation and decline in aid patronage. Elites and warlords reassert themselves into the political economy through parallel economies. At a local level, a key feature of these crises that distinguishes them from natural disasters is that they are political. Warlords survive on extractive and predatory relationships with local populations. The undermining or destruction of livelihoods is the consequence of deliberate attacks on people, their institutions, or their livelihoods (Bradbury, personal communication, August 2002). Some of the most extreme impacts of war are likely to occur in situations where internal conflict has an important economic function for the minority elite (Keen, 1998).

Some researchers argue that the distinction between war and peace is becoming increasingly blurred (Duffield, 2001; Cliffe and Luckam, 2000; Le Billon, 2000). A violent peace can create risks to livelihoods similar to those often found in situations of civil war. As in civil war, violent peace can be associated with economic upheaval, collapse of public goods, asset stripping, human rights abuses (Le Billon, 2000), as well as being reliant on the parallel economy. The boundaries between public and private spheres, state armies and non-state military formations, warfare and criminal activity become less distinct. New wars differ from violent peace in terms of degree, rather than being absolute or opposed conditions (Duffield, 2001).

2.2 Livelihood definitions and frameworks

A recent review of livelihoods approaches shows that they are far from uniform and prescriptive but are instead constantly evolving and developing (Hussein, 2002). This allows for imaginative adaptations to be made as required, but also renders the concept and use of a livelihoods approach rather difficult to grasp. For this reason, this paper refers to one of the earlier, often cited, definitions of livelihoods:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social assets) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

In SCCPI, livelihood options are constrained by insecurity, on-going conflict and a lack of basic services. Certain livelihood strategies are part of the dynamics that also sustain conflict and instability (Schafer, 2002). Sustainable livelihoods will be difficult to achieve under such circumstances. An alternative definition for livelihoods in SCCPI is given below. This definition excludes notions of sustainability while bringing in survival in addition to longer-term well-being. It also introduces the concept of vulnerability which, some have argued, needs to be placed more centrally within a livelihoods framework applicable in SCCPI (Pain and Lautze, 2002). Young et al. (2002) define livelihoods as:

The ways in which people access and mobilise resources that enable them to pursue goals necessary for their survival and longer-term well-being, and thereby reduce the vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflict (Young et al. 2002).

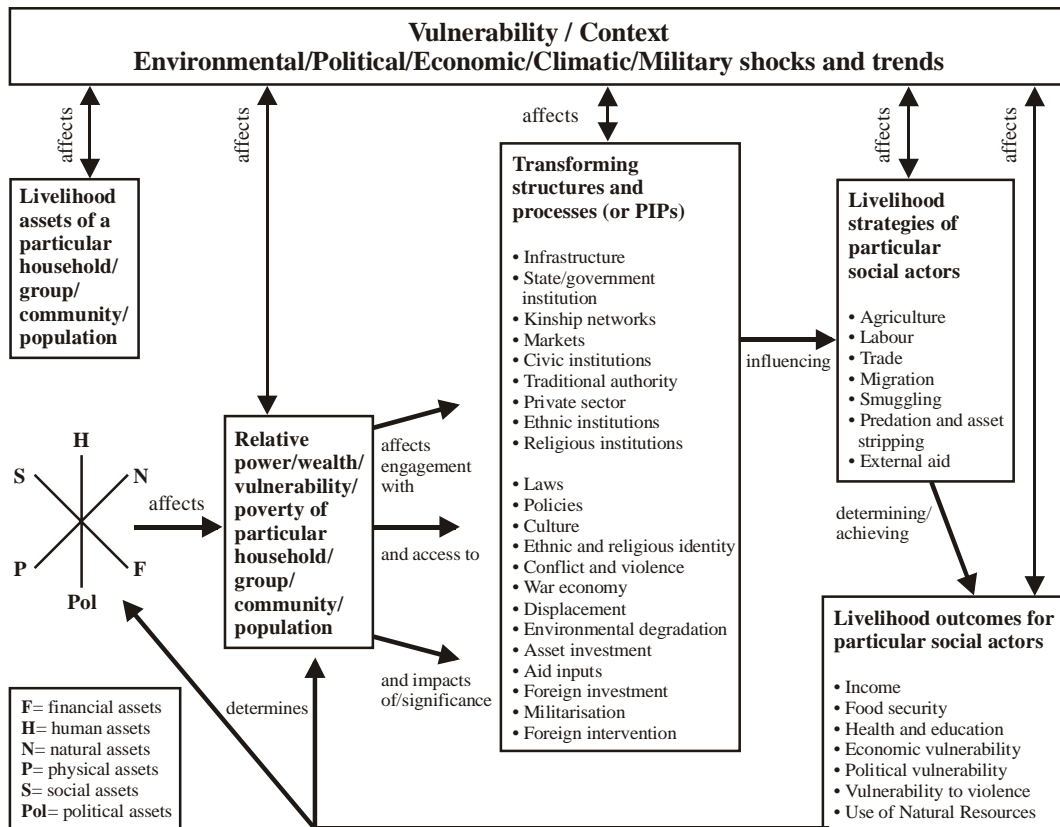
The livelihoods framework presented in Figure 1 emphasises the integral relationship of vulnerability to other aspects of the framework (Collinson et al. 2002). Common components of livelihoods frameworks include (Carney et al. 1999):

- Vulnerability context – including resources, infrastructure, economic, political, environment, shocks and stresses;
- Resources or assets (although sometimes considered under strategies) – including financial, human, natural, physical, social and political assets;
- Transforming structures and processes, or policies, institutions and processes – government, non-government and private-sector organisations, and laws, policies, culture and institutions;
- Livelihood strategies;
- Livelihood outcomes or goals.

Livelihood strategies are composed of the activities that generate the means of household survival and longer-term well-being. Livelihood strategies may be divided into natural resource based activities (e.g. collection and gathering, cultivation, livestock-keeping, weaving) and non-natural resource based activities (e.g. trade, services, remittances, etc.) (Ellis, 2000). In many of the assessment approaches reviewed, livelihood strategies are referred to as production strategies, income-earning strategies, gifts and loans. Livelihood strategies are dynamic: they are able to respond to changing pressures and opportunities and adapt accordingly (Ellis, 2000), which contributes towards the overall resilience of livelihoods in SCCPI.

Livelihood outcomes and goals are also subject to change: for example, in peaceful and politically stable situations, livelihood goals might include increased well-being or more income; whereas in times of crisis, people's goals might become focussed on such short-term objectives as personal safety, food security, reduced vulnerability and survival.

Figure 1 Adapted Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to support analysis in situations of chronic conflict and political instability



Source: Collinson et al. (2002)

2.3 Impact of SCCPI on livelihoods

This section uses the livelihoods framework to review the impact of SCCPI on livelihoods. It starts with the context considered in terms of the macro-political, economic and military environment, including the nature of the war economy, war strategies and the collateral impacts of war. This is followed by an examination of the governance environment which, together with the macro-contextual factors, determines people's vulnerability. The last part of the section considers livelihood capital and strategies to examine what people do in SCCPI and what their priorities are. Information on the macro-level context was obtained from published research, whilst the information on livelihood strategies is based on the assessment reports gathered for this paper, together with published work. The analysis presented in this section is used in Section 3 as the basis for reviewing assessment approaches and their appropriateness in SCCPI.

2.3.1 The impact of macro-economic, political and military factors

The tactics of war are often designed to block people's access to food and other resources. The use of food as a weapon can be categorised as acts of: omission, commission and provision (Macrae and Zwi, 1994). Acts of **commission** include direct attack by the military or militia to undermine food production, destruction of farms and livestock, looting of assets, and the deliberate hindering of livelihood strategies by, for example, restricting movement, blocking access roads, controlling food supply and prices. Acts of **omission** include the failure by authorities to declare an emergency or to deny access to the victims of war, and acts of **provision** include the selective provision of food to

government supporters, to those from whom support is sought, or to lure populations into areas controlled by the military.

The consequences of war or political instability, the collateral impacts, can also have a severe impact on livelihoods for some groups. These include both macro-economic and local-level consequences on livelihoods. Some examples are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Examples of the collateral impacts of war

Macro-economic consequences	Micro-economic consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarcity of basic goods • Collapse of economic regulation and rules of exchange • Reduced investment • Falling incomes, food production, exports and imports • Declining tax revenues, rising budget deficits • Geographical and economic fragmentation • Biased price structures and exchange rates in favour of politico-military forces • Hyperinflation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecurity may result in restricted mobility • Reduction in land cultivated • Restricted grazing mobility • Fluctuation in market prices • Asset depletion • Increasing levels of debt • Blocked access to markets • A reduction in trade • Disintegration of markets • Abandonment of traditional livelihood strategies to become involved in war economy • Displacement

Source: Le Billon (2000); King and Adams (2000); Le Sage and Majid (2002); Jackson (forthcoming)

Displacement can be an intended or unintended consequence of war, or a coping strategy. Displacement separates people from their livelihood sources. Whether people can access resources is determined in part by government policies and regulations on access to land and employment, the livelihoods of host populations, and relations between their hosts and the displaced.

The nature of the political economy of war determines the degree of exploitation and abuse of certain groups. Predatory war economies create some of the most severe impacts on livelihoods, as armed groups relate to local populations and economic resources through violence, predation and forced labour. This can result in massive displacement, destitution and death (Le Billon, 2000). In many such economies, it is groups that have been historically marginalised and oppressed that are abused. In predatory war economies, violence becomes a means of asserting power and economic control. Violence may be perpetrated by states, warlords or other forms of leadership or by ordinary people. Forms of violence by states and warlords may include: asset stripping of weak or marginalised groups, looting, forced labour (e.g. in mining), and unscrupulous taxation by warlords (Le Billon, 2000). The longer a civil war, the more likely it becomes that people will find a way to profit from it.

2.3.2 Policies, institutions and processes (PIPs)

Policies, institutions and processes (PIPs), or transforming structures and processes, can be broadly understood as the governance environment – both formal and informal – within which livelihoods are shaped (Hobley, 2001). This includes government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and the private sector, and processes such as laws, policies, culture or customary practices, markets and institutions (Hobley, 2001; Ellis, 2000). These are key determinants in access to resources and in determining the viability of livelihood options.

In SCCPI formal governance structures often ineffective. States may be weak or contested (e.g. Sudan, Afghanistan, Angola), or have collapsed (e.g. Somalia, Liberia, DRC) (Schafer, 2002). State failure is associated with a lack of democratic process, failures in conflict management and a failure to ensure basic human rights. Non-violent mechanisms for expressing dissent are absent. There is breakdown of law and order, of judicial and policing systems, and a limited ability to provide public goods (Cliffe and Luckam, 2000). In weak states, governments and faction leaders use underpaid fighters to derive part of their incomes from looting civilians or from illegal trade. Taxation or diversion of relief assistance by rebel movements is common in many emergencies (see for example, Jaspars, 1999a). People's protection and welfare depends in part on the legitimacy and accountability of political structures, the rule of law, and the provision of basic services by the state. From a livelihoods perspective, an analysis of the governance environment should include an examination of the accountability of government authorities, the rule of law and a functioning judiciary system, and the existence of functioning public services.

The role of informal governance structures becomes crucial in SCCPI. The informal governance environment includes such local institutions as civic, religious, or ethnic institutions. It also includes markets, and customary practices, for example, those relating to marriage, gender roles, inheritance, ownership and access to resources.

Local institutions can play a positive role in maintaining public order, as for example, in Somalia through customary law and local *sharia* courts (UNDP, 2001). Informal systems for the transfer of remittances in Somalia and Afghanistan allow households to continue to access financial resources in the absence of functioning state services (Ahmed, 2000; Pain and Lautze, 2002). On the other hand, some local institutions may be involved in the diversion and taxation of resources (including relief) from the most vulnerable population groups, for example, in southern Sudan and Sierra Leone. Trade, both legal and illegal, continues to operate in SCCPI, and often becomes an important component of livelihood strategies. For example, in Somalia, there has been a boom in trade and services since the 1990s, in which the private sector plays an instrumental role (UNDP, 2001).

2.3.3 Impact of SCCPI on vulnerability

Vulnerability is a combination of shocks and trends that are exogenous to or beyond the control of the household (Carney et al. 1999; Ellis, 2000), and households' assets and access to assets, as well as their ability to cope with external shocks.

In general, people in SCCPI are more vulnerable to periodic 'shocks' from violence, crop failure, floods and other disasters because they lack assets, social protection, state welfare, and security. In a weak or oppressive state, people receive goods and services and have economic opportunities on the basis of their proximity to power. A key feature of SCCPI is politics that revolve around maintaining power and the economic advantage of the minority elite, by exploiting weaker or powerless groups. War strategies may be aimed at civilians perceived to be supporting the opposition, whereas economic violence is often aimed at population groups who have been historically marginalised or socially excluded.

Power, representation and inclusion in society or lack thereof in SCCPI are often determined by ethnic or political identity and affiliation. It is not necessarily the poor who are most vulnerable (Duffield, 1994; Keen, 1991; de Waal, 1994). In insecure situations, those with assets may be equally at risk. Ethnicity becomes politicised, traditional minorities and historically marginalised groups may be exploited by state or non-state actors. It is people's political or social status which makes them most vulnerable. Certain population groups are also politically vulnerable if they are

excluded from political systems and lack basic political rights, such as a judiciary system that will punish crimes against them. There are degrees in the extent of abuse and exploitation of politically vulnerable groups, the most extreme of which is genocide.

Within certain vulnerable political or ethnic groups there may be social groupings that are more vulnerable than others. These may include traditionally weaker or marginalised groups within society, but war also creates female-headed households, orphans, unaccompanied minors, and elderly people who have lost their social support networks. Their social exclusion, or lack of representation, may be heightened in SCCPI.

Box 1 Examples of political vulnerability in Somalia and Sudan

In Somalia, the main victims of the 1992 famine fell into two categories: traditional minorities and people displaced from their homes because they belonged to the wrong clan. The worst famine occurred among these groups. Marginalisation and exploitation along lines of gender roles, minority status and racial identity continue to this day. In Sudan, the Dinka have been marginalised since the 1960s. By the mid-1980s the political vulnerability of the Dinka was such that their property and cattle became a fair target for raids from northern militia. This precipitated one of the most severe famines in 1988 in Bahr El Ghazal, and significant displacement into northern Sudan. The problems that displaced Dinka face can be explained by the fact that they are Dinka, rather than the economic problems associated with displacement: within the political economy of Sudan, the Dinka occupy a special and subordinate place. In 1998, another famine occurred in Bahr El Ghazal, when it was found that within the Dinka as a large grouping, the worst affected were the smaller and politically marginalised clans.

Source: de Waal (1994); Le Sage and Majid (2002); Duffield (2001); Harragin (1998); Jaspars (1999a)

2.3.4 Livelihood capital

The adapted livelihoods framework (see Figure 1) includes human capital (livelihood capabilities), social capital (claims and access), economic capital (stores and resources), and also political capital. Political capital is determined by connections to power.

Livelihood capital is severely affected by SCCPI. Whilst the minority elite benefits from political instability and civil war, the majority of the population loses capital. Stores and resources may be destroyed, and for ordinary people financial assets are frequently almost non-existent. Human assets are eroded as war may decrease the value of labour, and human resources may be diverted towards militia. Information on social capital varies. Many of the assessment reports reviewed note a weakening of community support structures, as everyone is affected by war. Others argue that whilst wider social networks may weaken, they actually become stronger within smaller social units (Harragin, 1998; Narbeth, 2001). Social capital may also include religious and professional networks.

2.3.5 Livelihood strategies during SCCPI

Livelihood strategies are profoundly altered by the impacts, and political economy, of war. War causes individuals to modify their behaviour as a result of destruction and erosion of assets, changes in economic opportunities, and the politicisation of ethnicity. War also modifies people's behaviour deliberately, for example, through forced labour and military service.

Livelihood strategies are generally understood as the strategies that people *normally* use in peaceful and stable times to allow them to meet basic needs and contribute to future well-being. In SCCPI

such livelihood strategies become restricted, either because they are no longer possible, because certain sections of the population are excluded from opportunity, or because more lucrative options appear as a result of the war economy. Livelihood goals may be reduced first to protecting livelihoods and later to meeting basic needs and ensuring survival.

In drought or economic disasters, people adopt coping strategies to protect their livelihoods and prevent destitution. Coping strategies have been defined as ‘temporary responses to declining food entitlements, which are characteristic of structurally secure livelihood systems’ (Davies, 1993). Coping strategies in response to drought are adopted in stages, and were originally divided into insurance and crisis strategies (Corbett, 1988). People develop insurance strategies in anticipation of environmental uncertainty and food shortages, such as building up assets and diversifying income. During the initial stages of food insecurity, people may adopt such strategies as migrating to work, collecting wild foods and reducing food intake. These strategies are not damaging to livelihoods and aim to prevent destitution. Devereux (1999) more precisely names these strategies accumulation, adaptation and coping strategies respectively. Crisis strategies, which are damaging to livelihoods are not, strictly speaking, ‘coping’ strategies. People adopt ‘crisis strategies’ in response to prolonged crisis, and as such crisis strategies involve the erosion of essential assets and ultimately lead to destitution (Corbett, 1988). Such strategies have also been termed ‘survival strategies’ (Devereux, 1999), as the main aim of the people becomes survival.

Strategies adopted in SCCPI may not follow the sequential stages found in natural disasters. In addition, people may not be able to, or want to, rebuild their former livelihoods. The strategies adopted in SCCPI are a response to the lack of formal employment opportunities, the lack of state services, the growth of the illegal/informal economy, and the destruction of assets. For the majority of the population, their main goal becomes survival. From an examination of available literature and assessment reports, the strategies people use in SCCPI can be roughly divided into four categories; return to subsistence activities and using all available strategies to acquire basic needs, engagement in the parallel or informal economy, violent or illegal acts, and acts which are morally degrading within their own culture. Box 2 proved some examples.

Box 2 Examples of strategies adopted in response to SCCPI

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Falling back on subsistence farming | • Engaging in the informal economy |
| • Revival of old crafts | • Theft and looting |
| • Petty trade | • Joining local militia |
| • Seeking relief | • Overcoming social taboos |
| • Increasing indebtedness/borrowing | • Prostitution (including child prostitution) |
| • High reliance on remittances from relatives abroad | • Child labour |
| | • Early marriage |

For many people strategies become limited to small-scale production, petty trade and other marginal activities. In rural areas, people frequently revert to subsistence mode, whereas urban livelihoods are often based on small-scale business with minute profit margins, just sufficient to purchase daily meals. The number of activities carried out frequently increases, which is necessary because most only earn a marginal income.

The parallel or informal economy which develops in SCCPI creates new opportunities for elites, and causes mutations of grassroots modes of livelihood (Jackson, forthcoming). The war economy involves all levels of society, for example, the commodity chain for coltan – a form of tantalum ore mining in Eastern DRC involves individual miners, syndicates, and multinationals (Jackson, forthcoming). To characterise economic activities during wartime, Le Billon (2000) recommends a division according to scale (macro-, meso- or micro-), and their degree of illegality or criminality.

Four categories are suggested; legal (e.g. manufacturing, trade, subsistence farming), grey area (e.g. large-scale extraction, informal trade, small-scale smuggling), illegal (e.g. government corruption, asset transfer, taxation by armed groups), and criminal (e.g. capital flight, forced labour, robbery).

People may be forced into illegal activities because they lack other opportunities. The reasons for involvement in such activities need to be carefully examined. For example, in Afghanistan, opium cultivation provides the means through which sharecropper farmers can access the land and credit necessary for food production. Such activity could be seen as a justified means of dealing with risk (Pain, 2002). Prolonged conflict can prompt ordinary people to embrace violence. Almost all reports of assessments conducted in SCCPI mentioned theft and looting as a hindrance to the achievement of food security.

In addition to these strategies adopted specifically in response to SCCPI, people may also adopt the strategies found in natural disasters as long as the security situation allows it. For example: searching for wild foods, changes in diet (reduction in intake, switch to cheaper staples etc.), migration for work, and the sale of non-essential assets.

2.4 Challenges and scope for supporting livelihoods in SCCPI

A key objective of livelihoods assessments is to identify the scope, appropriateness and feasibility of interventions to support livelihoods. This poses several challenges in SCCPI. The first is the general lack of clarity on what livelihood interventions could be. However, this also provides significant opportunities for taking an innovative approach to supporting livelihoods, based on a coherent analysis of the risks to livelihoods at both the macro- and micro-levels.

The possibilities for asset delivery and other community-level programming may be limited, both due to insecurity and because many of the strategies used during SCCPI are violent, illegal, or immoral. Some have argued that when violent conflict has ceased, possibilities may include the extension of social services to reduce household expenditure on health, veterinary care, water, education, cash to rebuild asset bases, public works programmes and intervention in markets to ensure adequate access and terms of trade for poor households (Le Sage and Majid, 2002). Cash for work has the added advantage that it may be less subject to theft than such other commodities as food aid. This intervention has been successfully applied in Somalia and Northern Uganda (ICRC, 2001; Khogali and Takhar, 2001).

An additional consideration for assessments in SCCPI is the likelihood of abuse or manipulation of assistance and the potential for violating the principles of humanitarian action. The potentially negative impacts of providing any form of assistance in situations of on-going conflict are well-documented (e.g. Anderson, 1999; Duffield, 1994; Keen, 1998; Macrae and Zwi, 1994), and range from providing resources to warring parties through diversion and taxation of assistance, and providing an incentive for attacks on civilians, to reinforcing existing inequalities in power relations, and the exclusion of politically and socially marginalised groups (Jaspars, 2000).

Since ineffective governance structure is one of the key characteristics of SCCPI, one of the most obvious options to support livelihoods may appear to be building the capacity of local institutions. However, some of the groups or institutions responsible for violence are often the same ones that are involved in aid delivery. In conducting livelihoods assessments in SCCPI it is essential therefore to assess the accountability and representativeness of local institutions, not only from the perspective of the vulnerability of certain groups but also as to whether and how to work with these institutions. Each of these institutions will have its own particular agenda, and a capacity building exercise will necessarily play into this. Principles of neutrality and impartiality in providing

assistance may be compromised, as support to government institutions can be viewed as supporting one side of the conflict, and the priorities of informal governance structures may not necessarily be to assist the most vulnerable.

Any assistance will benefit local authorities to some extent, and it could be argued that going beyond immediate life-saving assistance therefore compromises neutrality. This applies to all forms of assistance provided in SCCPI, but the fact that livelihood support interventions are intended to have a longer-term impact may make them suspect in the eyes of belligerents. Building the capacity of one livelihood group could imply strengthening one side of the conflict (Young et al. 2001). The principle of impartiality could be compromised because assistance is not aimed at those most in need. Those who benefit from livelihood support are those who still have livelihoods.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the core principle of humanitarian action, that of humanity, implies the need to protect livelihoods: 'Humanity: to *prevent* and alleviate human suffering wherever it might be found. To protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being.' One way to prevent human suffering is by protecting livelihoods.

Summary

- Key characteristics of SCCPI include a parallel economy centred on conflict, high degree of violence, and a weak or failed governance environment;
- A livelihoods framework can be used to examine the impact of SCCPI on livelihoods, by examining the impact of war strategies, collateral impact and the war economy on livelihoods as part of the context, and the impact of the governance environment on vulnerability, as well as livelihood capital and strategies specific to SCCPI;
- Vulnerability in SCCPI is in part determined by social and political status;
- The strategies that people adopt in response to SCCPI are mainly aimed at survival, and can be divided into subsistence activities, involvement in the parallel or informal economy, violent or criminal acts, and morally degrading activities;
- Identifying livelihoods interventions in SCCPI is difficult because of the lack of clarity on what livelihoods interventions are, because of the constraints posed due to access and insecurity, and because of the nature of some of the strategies adopted;
- Programming in SCCPI needs to consider the likelihood of abuse of assistance by warring parties, and the potential for compromising humanitarian principles.

3 Assessment Approaches in SCCPI: Methodology, Theory and Concepts

3.1 Introduction

This section reviews some of the assessment approaches commonly applied in SCCPI, in particular those approaches which consider aspects of livelihoods. The aim of reviewing these assessment approaches is to examine which aspects of these approaches are useful as part of a livelihoods analysis, and how a livelihoods analysis can add to the identification of appropriate interventions in SCCPI. The approaches are reviewed in relation to the analysis of the impact of SCCPI on livelihoods as described in Section 2.

Approaches reviewed include CARE's livelihoods security approach (Frankenberger et al. 2000) and Oxfam-GB's livelihoods approach to food security assessments in emergencies (Young et al. 2001), SC-UK's household economy approach (SC-UK, 2000; Boudreau, 1998), ICRC's economic security analysis (Mourey, 1995), MSF-H's food security analysis (van der Kam, 2001), as well as WFP's VAM (WFP, 2001) and USAID's FEWS (Eilert, 2000). It is arguable whether WFP and FEWS actually have an institutionalised approach. Different methodologies are used for VAM in different countries, and a methodology for VAM in emergencies is still in the process of being developed. This review uses the pilot studies done in Uganda and Kenya, which were carried out to develop an emergency VAM methodology (Haan et al. 2001; WFP, 2000).

Two anthropological studies are considered for this review. One was conducted in southern Sudan over a period of ten months (Harragin, 1998), the other in Somalia over the course of a year (Narbeth, 2001).

3.2 Key elements of approaches

3.2.1 Objectives

The objectives and key elements of the different approaches are summarised in Table 2. Objectives of the emergency assessment approaches reviewed generally include:

- Estimation of the severity of food insecurity
- Identification of vulnerable groups
- Identification of appropriate interventions.

The severity of food insecurity may be considered in terms of risks to lives or a household's ability to acquire food, and risks to livelihoods. This is often determined in relation to different stages or degrees of food insecurity. CARE's livelihood security approach and applied anthropological research aim to analyse livelihoods more holistically. The anthropological study in southern Sudan aimed to provide relief agencies with knowledge about the socio-political system of the Dinka to address vulnerability more effectively in project interventions (Harragin, 1998). The study in Somalia had the objective of understanding the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of southern Somalia in order to develop concrete indicators of vulnerability for food needs assessment and targeting methods (Narbeth, 2001). Objectives which are not covered by any of the approaches, but relevant to SCCPI, include determining the scope, feasibility and appropriateness of livelihood support, determining implementation mechanisms, and the potentially negative impacts.

3.2.2 *Extent to which approaches adopt a livelihoods framework*

Assessment approaches used in emergencies rarely incorporate all aspects of the livelihoods framework as described in Section 2.1. Some of the basic elements of each approach are given in Table 2. Emergency assessments generally focus on the micro-level, i.e. community and households, and determine livelihood outcomes to estimate relief needs.

Only two of the assessment approaches refer specifically to livelihoods in the description of their methodology; CARE's livelihoods security approach (Frankenberger et al. 2000) and Oxfam-GB's livelihoods approach to food security assessments in emergencies (Young et al. 2001). CARE's approach is the only one which makes use of all aspects of the livelihoods framework. Assessments which incorporate all aspects of livelihoods appear to be done mostly by more development oriented agencies, as part of a baseline survey to inform overall programming priorities (Frankenberger and McCaston, 2001). Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Vision International (WVI) have also used baseline surveys that incorporate many aspects of livelihood outcomes in southern Sudan (Walsh and Leonardo, 1999; WVI Sudan, 2001).

Other approaches consider elements of livelihoods, such as food security, economic security, and the strategies and assets needed to bring these about. An economic security analysis (as employed by ICRC) considers the terms and means of exchange (resources and assets) by which the obligatory expenses of a household are met. A household economy analysis considers both food and income sources, and expenditure. The approach analyses food and income security to estimate whether a particular food economy or wealth group suffers a food deficit (SC-UK, 2000).

Most of the assessment approaches reviewed focus on livelihood outcomes, and within this, on food security. Oxfam-GB, FEWS, WFP VAM, and MSF-H approaches have a focus on food security. The Oxfam-GB approach considers severity of food insecurity both in terms of the impact on people's ability to feed themselves in the short term and its impact on livelihoods and self-sufficiency in the longer term (Young et al. 2001).

3.3 Application in SCCPI

All assessment approaches reviewed were originally developed for stable situations, either development (CARE, WFP VAM) or natural disasters. Applications in SCCPI are limited. From the assessment reports found, the most common approaches applied in SCCPI are the household or food economy approach² (mostly in the Horn, East and Central Africa) and ICRC's economic security analysis. MSF-H's food security analysis is potentially a useful approach for SCCPI, but has only recently been developed (van der Kam, 2001). USAID's FEWS were developed for natural disasters and do not have comparative advantage in assessing food insecurity resulting from sudden political change or conflict (Chopak, 2000).

² The same assessment approach is referred to as household economy by SC-UK, and food economy by the Food Economy Group (FEG); a partnership of independent consultants.

Table 2 Objectives and elements of assessment approaches

Approach	Objectives	Elements of livelihoods	Application
CARE livelihood security	To provide a multi-dimensional view of livelihoods to identify vulnerable households, and people's goals to identify programming priorities	All	Mostly development, stable situations
Oxfam-GB livelihoods approach to food security	To determine the severity of food insecurity in terms of risks to lives and to livelihoods, and to identify appropriate interventions	Food security	Mainly natural disasters Displaced political emergencies
SC-UK household economy	To estimate the impact of a 'shock' on the ability of a household to acquire food and non-food goods.	Food security, income and expenditure	Natural disasters Refugees Conflict
ICRC economic security	To determine the risk of decapitalisation and to intervene to prevent this	Resources, assets, strategies, obligatory expenditure	Conflict
MSF-H food security	To determine the stage of food insecurity and appropriate food and health interventions	Food security and access to health care	Conflict, but limited applications because newly developed approach
WFP VAM	To provide a detailed understanding of food insecurity and vulnerability conditions and thus support programme design, particularly regarding food aid targeting and priority groups	Food security	Mostly development, but also includes monitoring in disaster-prone areas
USAID FEWS	To manage threats to food security through provision of timely and analytical early warning and vulnerability information	Food security	Natural disasters
Applied anthropological research	To improve knowledge of social and cultural dynamics to inform interventions	All, but often with particular emphasis on specific aspects, e.g. social capital, local institutions, governance, etc	Mostly stable contexts Development

The approaches show differences in the relative focus on economic, social or political factors. Many approaches have an economic perspective in order to determine the need for assets and resources as part of an emergency response. Anthropological approaches use a social perspective but such field work in emergencies or politically unstable situations is rare. Commonly used livelihoods assessment approaches generally do not incorporate a macro-level analysis of the processes that cause risks to livelihoods and political vulnerability; i.e. war strategies, the political economy, the governance environment, and the dynamics of power within the context of war. Most assessment reports did include a description of the political situation in the background context, and included the impact of political- and conflict-related events on livelihoods or food security as part of their analysis; for example, the impact of theft, looting, destruction, etc. Information on involvement in such illegal activities such as extraction of minerals, black market activities, smuggling, or otherwise criminal activities is particularly difficult to get through household interviews.

Only ICRC's approach has an explicitly political focus and analyses political vulnerability. ICRC's economic security analysis identifies groups in communities who are vulnerable because of their ethnic, economic, social and cultural characteristics. Information is also gathered on the political and military ruling of the different warring groups, ethnic, religious, social, and cultural discrimination, impairment of public and private services and population displacement, amongst other things (Mourey, 1995). Inclusion of political vulnerability was found in some other assessment reports (see Box 3). CARE–Burundi combined the benefit–harms analysis with a livelihoods approach that included an analysis of political rights (CARE–Burundi, 2002), which is discussed in Section 5.

Box 3 Examples of political vulnerability in livelihoods assessments

WFP VAM's initial emergency assessments in Kenya had as one objective an understanding of the political, economic, social and environmental dynamics of food insecurity. Similarly in Uganda, elements of political vulnerability were analysed, along with an analysis of the types of violence and insecurity and the impact of this on food security. WFP Afghanistan developed a rapid food security assessment strategy that incorporates an analysis of political vulnerability at regional or district level, to identify priority groups for assessment. At village level, the strategy emphasises the need to ensure that all ethnic groups are represented. Also in Afghanistan, MSF–H refers to the war economy in relation to the taxation of relief by the Taliban.

Source: Haan et al. (2001); WFP (2000); Jaspars and Fielding (2002)

3.4 Underlying concepts and definitions

All approaches are based to varying degrees on entitlement theory, and concepts of vulnerability and coping strategies. Sen's entitlement theory forms the basis of all food security approaches. The theory states that 'famines occur as a result of people not *having* food rather than there not *being* enough food' (Sen, 1981). Thus famine is a problem of access to food rather than food availability. Entitlement theory has several limitations in relation to SCCPI. Sen himself pointed out that his approach 'concentrates on rights within the given legal structure in that society, but some transfers are illegal acts, and therefore not accommodated by the entitlement approach nor can they be measured easily' (Sen, 1981). Violence and illegal acts are an integral part of SCCPI however.

Table 3 Concepts and definitions in assessment approaches

Concept	Definition
Livelihood security	Adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic needs (including adequate access to food, potable water, health facilities, educational opportunities, housing, and time for community participation and social integration)
Economic security	When a household's resources and assets are sufficient to meet the obligatory household expenses
Household economy	The sum of household income and the exchange value of its labour and other assets
Exchange entitlements	People's ability to acquire food
Food security	Access by all people at all times to the food needed for a healthy life
Coping strategy	Temporary responses to declining food entitlements, which are characteristic of structurally secure livelihood systems. Or strategies which do not cause serious damage to livelihoods
Crisis/survival strategies	Strategies used as a last resort to prevent destitution and death leading to the depletion of essential assets causing permanent damage to livelihoods
Food deficit	The gap between food requirements and food sources when households are unable to overcome the reduction in normal food sources after a shock, by finding alternative food sources

Most approaches distinguish between coping strategies which are reversible and do not damage livelihoods in the longer term, and crisis or survival strategies which may cause permanent damage (Oxfam-GB, 2001). Many assume a sequential adoption of strategies, with increasing damage to livelihoods in the later stages of food insecurity or crisis. In SCCPI, many of the strategies used are survival strategies. They are not temporary but reflect a mutation of livelihoods.

The household economy approach, together with the approaches developed by CARE and WFP VAM, analyse food or livelihood security for different wealth groups, which implies a link between wealth status and vulnerability. In SCCPI, a key determinant of vulnerability is social or political status. Whilst poverty makes recovery from shocks more difficult, it is not poverty which makes people vulnerable to attack or to economic violence. In some assessment reports, socio-political groupings are depoliticised by being described as different wealth groups (see Box 4). Some assessments differentiate groups according to the different economic activities they undertake and the assets they have, rather than analysing how their socio-political status determines their livelihood strategies.

Box 4 Example of where political vulnerability determines access to food but is assessed for wealth groups

In an assessment in Ajiep, southern Sudan, in 1998, the population was divided into different wealth groups as part of the food economy analysis. Groups included:

- The better-off: chiefs, officials, traders, cattle owners
- Households with children in the feeding centres
- Brewers (without child in feeding centre)
- The poor; firewood sellers/pounders (without child in feeding centre)

The poor were found to have least access to food aid, although no explanation for this is given in the assessment report. At the same time as the food economy assessment, an anthropological field study and a study on targeting done for WFP, found that those most vulnerable to food insecurity (and with least access to relief) were the displaced and people who were unrepresented by local leadership.

Source: Delaney et al. (1998); Harragin (1998); Jaspars (1999a)

3.5 Methodology and analysis

Most approaches include a number of stages in information collection. These include:

- Information gathering on the context, which includes a description of macro-economic, political and social factors;
- The identification of food economy or livelihood zones and, in some cases, different wealth groups within these;
- An assessment of different food and income sources, and sometimes expenditure, in normal times and the changes as a result of a particular shock;
- An assessment of coping strategies;
- In some approaches, an assessment of nutritional status as a measure of the severity of food insecurity.

A food economy or livelihood zone is a geographical area in which the population has similar means of accessing food and income, in similar proportions. Within the zone, groups are assumed to respond in a similar way to such shocks as drought, conflict, and economic collapse.

Differentiation into livelihood zones or groups and wealth groups becomes problematic when livelihood options become limited or when many households become involved in the same

activities. Also, in SCCPI a different classification may be required to produce population groups with similar ways of accessing food and that face similar constraints. For example, on the basis of politics or ethnicity, social status, phase of displacement, type of displacement settlement, risk of attack, government- or opposition-controlled areas, etc. (see Box 5). Such groupings have been termed ‘access groups’ (Boudreau and Coutts, 2002) (see also Section 4.4). ICRC’s economic security analysis starts with the identification of regions where populations are put in danger because of armed conflict or natural/economic disasters (Mourey, 1995).

Box 5 Food security assessment in Uruba, Columbia

Oxfam–GB conducted an evaluation of its assistance programme for the displaced population in Uruba, Columbia in 1999. The population was divided into five separate groups depending on location and settlement type; river homeland, river camp, rural homeland, rural camp and urban camp. The assessment found that all groups were able to meet immediate food needs and that there was very little acute malnutrition. Food security was determined by access to fertile land, garden crops, fishing, small livestock and income trade. The most food-secure communities were those where people lived close to their own land and where collective farming allowed them to work in relative security. These communities also proclaimed active neutrality to prevent harassment from rebel movements and government forces. The assessment recommended a number of interventions including: securing trade for isolated river homeland settlements producing surplus food by buying it from them and using it as part of the monthly ration to distribute to other camps, and initiating income-generating activities for the urban site.

Source: Young et al. (2001)

WFP’s emergency assessments in some cases also started with the identification of areas or population groups at political or security risks; for example, WFP Kenya included a civil security index as one of the variables in the assessment of food security, and also appeared to relate risk and type of insecurity in part to ethnicity (Haan et al. 2001).

Many assessment approaches compare the relative importance of the different food and income sources in a normal year and after a particular shock for each livelihood group. This normative analysis becomes problematic in SCCPI because it is difficult to determine a ‘normal’ year. In some assessments only the strategies at the time of the assessment were assessed. In others, assessments assumed that a normal war year was one where conditions were relatively secure and the population suffered no natural disasters. Also, a normative analysis of prices or crop production is difficult to undertake and is influenced by a number of factors other than supply and demand, for example, security, deteriorating road networks, etc.

In some protracted conflicts, baseline information on livelihood or food economy zones in normal years or under normal conditions can be developed over time, as part of a regular food security monitoring system. Such a long-term approach can also overcome temporary problems of access. An example of such a system is that developed by the Food Security Assessment Unit in Somalia (Boudreau and Coutts, 2002; Shoham and Kanyanga, 1998) (see Box 6). The impact of certain events is monitored by the regular collection of such food security indicators as rainfall, crop production, market prices and terms of trade. Changes in these indicators are interpreted according to people’s normal food and income sources in different food economy zones known from the baseline. In southern Sudan, a similar unit exists which carries out baseline and regular monitoring assessments, as well as assessments following particular shocks (WFP and SCF, 1998).

In analysing the assessment findings, the severity of food insecurity is determined by a combination of the following indicators:

- A food deficit;
- A large shift in entitlements;

- An unusually high prevalence of malnutrition (taking into account other influences on nutritional status; public health and the social and care environment);
- The adoption of crisis strategies, or a large proportion of the population adopting marginal activities.

Food insecurity constitutes a risk to livelihoods, and is generally the only livelihood outcome that is analysed by emergency assessment approaches. An economic security analysis determines the severity of the risk by the degree of decapitalisation.

In the sustainable livelihoods approaches used in development contexts, analysis in terms of the identification of risks and opportunities is done by the community.

3.6 Uses of assessments

Most emergency assessments are done to identify the need for emergency relief; in many cases estimating the need for food aid and feeding programmes. The uses of assessments are closely related to the mandate of the agency, or to those who commission the assessment. Household economy assessments are often commissioned by WFP or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to assess or rationalise food aid needs (Boudeau, 1998). MSF–H uses assessments to determine the need for general rations, and different types of feeding programmes. Few assessments give recommendations on how to target interventions to those most in need.

CARE's and Oxfam–GB's livelihoods approaches, ICRC's economic security analysis, and in some cases household or food economy analyses, are also used to determine the need for livelihood support interventions. Interventions are determined by the severity of food insecurity, and an analysis of which livelihood systems are most affected and how. However, an important question to consider in the adoption of livelihoods approaches in emergencies is 'which agencies are able to respond with a broad range of interventions?' Most agencies focus on a limited number of specific interventions. Recommended livelihoods interventions may include general food distribution to protect livelihoods, income support, agricultural support, and livestock/fishing support (see Boxes 5 and 6).

Box 6 Food security monitoring and recommendations in Somalia

The Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) monitors food security in Somalia. Extensive food economy baseline information has been gathered across the country over a number of years. These baselines are then used to estimate the impact of a variety of shocks including insecurity, drought, flooding and livestock disease outbreaks. Monitors collect information on rainfall, market prices, terms of trade etc. This is complemented with 'remote sensing' data. Recommendations often go beyond food aid. For example, in April 2000 the FSAU monthly bulletin made a number of recommendations specifically aimed at supporting livelihoods. These included veterinary or water-related interventions, rangeland management and recovery, and seed diversification programmes. In Gedo region which had been particularly affected by insecurity and drought, the monthly report advocated community-based veterinary programmes. The FSAU has also recommended the extension of social services to reduce household expenditure on health, and education, cash to rebuild asset bases, public works programmes and intervention in markets to ensure adequate access and terms of trade for poor households.

Source: Shoham and Kanyanga, 1998; Le Sage and Majid, 2002

ICRC's economic security analysis recommends a range of responses depending on the stage of crisis. This includes preventive measures to reduce risks to livelihoods, including economic support; for example, food aid, veterinary support, and means to diversify and intensify production. Survival relief is provided when lives are at risk. When the situation has stabilised, programmes promote rehabilitation (Mourey, 2000).

At present, the focus of interventions in SCCPI is mostly on relief and asset delivery, and assessments are used to identify the need for such assets or resources. This, however, addresses economic vulnerability and not the political vulnerability that is a key characteristic in SCCPI. In SCCPI, in order for interventions to be effective, there is a need to protect vulnerable groups so that they are able to hold on to existing assets and those provided or created through assistance.

For ICRC, preventive measures also include political negotiation to prevent abuses. ICRC emphasises the building up of relationships of confidence and dialogue with all authorities. It has a specific mandate to monitor and promote the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) which presupposes a responsibility of the authorities to endorse, support and facilitate the delivery of relief assistance. IHL also prohibits the use of starvation as a weapon of war. In the event of assistance being abused, it also incorporates a mechanism whereby the ICRC can address the authorities with these concerns and request their intervention, in order to guarantee the full protection of the population according to the provisions of IHL (Loan, personal communication).

In addition to the provisions of IHL, it is now being argued in some quarters that human rights law should apply to all authorities in situations of conflict and crisis, and that the right to food is non-derogable (Jonsson et al. 2002). Some assessments recommend advocacy on rights as necessary to support livelihoods. For example, Hines and Balleto (2002), report that findings of displacement assessments were used to encourage national responsibility for internally displaced persons (IDPs), including property and employment rights. Most humanitarian NGOs are, however, more familiar with advocacy within the humanitarian system than the need to promote states' adherence to their legal obligations.

Summary

- Objectives of assessments are generally to determine the severity of food insecurity, identify vulnerable groups and appropriate interventions;
- Many emergency assessment approaches consider aspects of livelihoods, in particular food security;
- Assessment approaches focus on livelihood strategies and outcome at the micro-level; few include an analysis of political vulnerability or involvement in the war economy;
- Only ICRC explicitly incorporates elements of a political analysis;
- Most approaches examine access to food and income for different livelihood or wealth groups, whereas grouping according to social or political status more accurately reflects groups with similar access to food;
- The uses of assessments are often limited to determining the need for emergency relief, usually food aid;
- Some assessments recommend livelihood support including income, market, agriculture and livestock support at micro-level, and at macro-level; negotiation to protect civilians under humanitarian law and advocacy to promote human rights.

4 Practical Application of Approaches in SCCPI

4.1 Introduction

Household or food economy assessments were reviewed from southern Sudan, Somalia, DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, and Angola, ICRC's economic security analysis in Abkhazia³, Ingushetia⁴, Angola and RoC, and Oxfam-GB's livelihoods approach in northern Sudan, Tajikistan, and Colombia. WFP pilot studies for emergency VAM or rapid food security assessments were carried out in Kenya, Uganda and Afghanistan. The only example found of the application of CARE 's livelihood approach was in Kosovo (Sanderson and Westley, 2000), and the combined livelihoods and benefits-harms analysis in Burundi. The only example of MSF-H's food security analysis was in Afghanistan. Examples of FEWS, baseline surveys by CRS and WVI from southern Sudan were reviewed, as were anthropological studies in southern Sudan and Somalia.⁵

These assessments (and wider literature) indicate a range of constraints that occur in collecting information on livelihoods in SCCPI. These include:

- Insecurity and denial of access
- Limited quality of access
- Difficulty in obtaining information on illegal, informal, or criminal activities
- Rapidly fluctuating livelihood patterns

These constraints are particularly problematic for a livelihoods approach that generally involves more in-depth information gathering than an assessment to determine immediate relief needs. Some assessment reports showed adaptations to the 'standard' approach to better suit the context.

4.2 Assessment methods

There are a number of methodological features which distinguish a livelihoods assessment approach from other assessment approaches. Livelihoods approaches in stable contexts collect information:

- Using participatory methods
- Over a sufficiently lengthy period of time to obtain in-depth understanding of the complexities of livelihood systems
- On people's own priorities or livelihood goals
- On the linkages between the micro- and the macro-environments

Assessment methods commonly used in the approaches reviewed in this paper are summarised in Table 4.

Most agencies place similar emphasis on primary and secondary data. WFP VAM and USAID FEWS traditionally use mainly secondary data, but are increasingly complementing this with primary data. Secondary data collection includes literature reviews, examination of databases, early warning systems and local food information system reports, and meetings with agency staff at national and district levels.

³ Abkhazia is a semi-autonomous region in Georgia.

⁴ Ingushetia is an autonomous region in Russia.

⁵ Assessment reports were difficult to obtain and in most cases depended on the authors' personal contacts and past experience. They may therefore not be representative of the application of the various approaches in general. However, every effort was made to find as many examples as possible.

Table 4 Methods used by different assessment approaches

Approach	Data sources	Methods of primary data collection
CARE livelihoods	Primary and secondary; quantitative and qualitative	Key informant interviews, focus groups Proportional piling, ranking, mapping, time trends, seasonal calendars, transect walks, direct observation Household interviews Anthropometric survey
Oxfam food security	Primary and secondary; qualitative	Key informant interviews, focus groups Proportional piling, ranking, mapping, time trends, seasonal calendars, transect walks, direct observation Household interviews Anthropometric survey
SC–UK HEA	Primary and secondary; qualitative and quantitative	Key informant interviews, focus groups Proportional piling, ranking, mapping, time trends, seasonal calendars, transect walks, direct observation Household interviews for different wealth groups
ICRC economic security	Primary data; quantitative	Mainly household interviews Anthropometric survey
MSF food security	Primary; qualitative	Key informant interviews, focus groups Anthropometric survey
WFP VAM	Mainly secondary data collection; quantitative	
USAID FEWS	Secondary data collection mainly quantitative. Primary data for vulnerability profiles	
Anthropological research	Primary; qualitative	Participant observation, plus key informant interviews, focus groups, mapping, time trends, seasonal calendars, transect walks

Primary data collection involves a combination of methods, usually including household interviews, and a variety of qualitative or rapid assessment methods. Qualitative methods include key informant interviews, household interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. Tools used particularly by Oxfam–GB, Household Economy Assessment (HEA) and in emergency VAM pilots include proportional piling and ranking, mapping, time trends, seasonal calendars, transect walks and direct observation. Some of these methods are described in Annex 2.

Ensuring the validity and reliability of results is particularly challenging in SCCPI because of the risk of manipulation of information, or excluding certain groups from assessment. Triangulation and cross-checking of findings from different sources, in addition to on-going monitoring becomes particularly important. One of the strengths of HEA is that it has a rigid assessment framework that provides clear methods not only for assessment but also for analysis. Furthermore, in quantifying different food and income sources, and expenditure, the analysis needs to ‘add up’ and thereby minimises the scope for manipulation. Other approaches improve validity by combining qualitative methods with such quantitative methods as an anthropometric survey (e.g. Oxfam, MSF and ICRC approaches). In such assessments, the findings from qualitative methods must match findings on nutritional status. VAM has started implementing consumption surveys for similar reasons. Assessments also require a careful balance between using local and outsider knowledge to engender confidence in findings. This can be achieved by utilising a combination of national and expatriate staff.

Sampling needs to ensure that all political, economic and social groups within society are represented. HEA and Oxfam–GB’s approaches sample the food economy or livelihood zones, and HEA also samples the various wealth groups within this. This does not necessarily ensure representation of all political and social groups in the assessment. CARE and the VAM pilots are most explicit about sampling a number of representative sites and a certain number of households at each site. The numbers of sites are determined by population density and diversity of livelihood systems in an area. ICRC’s approach is less structured and more opportunistic about sampling, so that in some cases households are sampled until the assessment team ‘is happy with the overall picture’ (Mourey and Aburabi, 1999).

In conducting assessments in emergencies there is an ongoing tension between the need for speed, reliability and the degree of participatory involvement. The duration of assessments depends on the coverage, quantity of information and the level of detail required, and in SCCPI also on security and access. In acute emergencies, the participatory element is frequently compromised and an in-depth assessment may not be possible. Emergency food security assessments usually take between three and four weeks. More in-depth baseline assessments, or livelihoods assessments in chronic emergencies may take between four and six weeks (e.g. HEA baselines and CARE’s Household Livelihoods Security (HLS)), whereas anthropological field work carried out in emergencies has often taken around one year.

The long-term nature of SCCPI, however, means that once the need for immediate relief has been identified, in many politically unstable situations there may be time to conduct in-depth livelihoods assessments. Good examples of this are the long-term monitoring systems established in Somalia and Sudan, where knowledge of livelihoods is gradually built up over time (see Section 3.5).

4.3 Challenges in the application of livelihoods assessment approaches in SCCPI

4.3.1 Insecurity and denial of access

Problems of access and insecurity affect all types of assessments in SCCPI. Access may be limited to a few hours on the ground, or at the extreme, there is no access to the affected populations at all. In such situations primary data collection in the field is minimised, with a focus on triangulation of information and secondary data analysis prior to conducting the field assessment.

In many situations, access is almost unrestricted but insecurity is highly sporadic, for example, in northern Kenya (Haan et al. 2001). Access is sometimes restricted to day-time (i.e. it is not possible to stay in the area overnight), and some roads may be unusable (due to mines or recently reported security events). A recent assessment by MSF–H in northern Afghanistan cited the main constraints as ‘time, distance, accessibility and the security situation’ (MSF–H, 2001), while WFP cited ‘insecurity as the main difficulty in carrying out a recent assessment in Kitgum, Uganda’ (WFP, 2000).

Box 7 Examples of assessments where access is limited to a few hours

An assessment in Daru town, Sierra Leone by Medical Emergency Relief International (MERLIN) was restricted to three hours on the ground. The town was cut off by rebel forces so that access had to be carefully negotiated with military forces and UN agencies. A multi-agency assessment team was flown in by helicopter and collected data on nutritional status and prices. Similarly in Afghanistan, WFP's rapid assessment strategy was designed for rapid helicopter surveys, with three to four hours on the ground, and included the gathering of information from as many different sources as possible in order to triangulate findings, and also a rapid nutrition screening. Much more time was recommended for analysis of secondary data and careful selection of areas and population groups for assessment based on a prior analysis of vulnerability and risk.

Source: Cadge and Russel (2000); Jaspars and Fielding (2002)

Access may be denied by government or warring parties. Even with no access, it may be possible to do a basic analysis by either using a previously constructed baseline or by developing a baseline from secondary data. In Somalia and southern Sudan, the development of baseline data over time allows for a rough interpretation of the impact of certain shocks on different food economy zones.

Sampling may also be difficult, and the most vulnerable are likely to be least accessible. In Abkhazia, ICRC addressed problems of sampling by interviewing people coming to the ICRC canteens. The teams also went to urban areas and asked families if they knew someone in need. 'Needy' families/individuals would then be interviewed (Barry et al. 2002).

Box 8 Examples of assessment with no access to affected populations

In Brazzaville, Republic of Congo (RoC), ICRC had no access to people living in the Pool region and devised a method of assessing the situation there by interviewing people who arrived at a reception centre in Brazzaville. Livelihood zones were determined with key informants from the region. In southern Sudan or Somalia, in extreme cases, conclusions about needs are made from knowledge of people's livelihoods from baseline assessments, and the anticipated impact of a particular event. In some of the Annual Needs Assessments for southern Sudan, the greatest needs are predicted for areas that were inaccessible at the time of the assessment.

Source: Jaspars (1999b); Karim et al. (1996)

4.3.2 Quality of access

Quality of access refers to the ability of assessment teams to interview enough people within the affected population without interference. Even in stable (non-emergency settings) it is often difficult to gain access to the poorest and to determine who speaks for whom. In SCCPI there may be deliberate attempts to prevent certain groups from providing information, or from providing politically sensitive information. The presence of authority figures or security apparatus during interviews is one way in which information may be limited. For example, in a recent assessment in Afghanistan people were afraid to talk openly when the Taliban authorities arrived at interviews. Female perspectives were also limited due to the new edict that forbids women to be interviewed (MSF-H, 2001). In addition, government or local authorities may attempt to control information gathered through preventing the release of survey information.

Box 9 Government control over information in northern Sudan

In northern Sudan, the insistence of local authorities on the presence of 'security' personnel is a frequent hindrance to acquiring reliable information. In addition, survey questionnaires have to be approved by government prior to their use, and reports have to be approved prior to their release. This creates problems particularly for the type of participatory and iterative process required for livelihoods assessments, as interviews are not pre-determined by a structured questionnaire. In Operation Lifeline Sudan's northern sector, attempts to use qualitative approaches were unsuccessful at least until 1996. Similar problems continue to occur. The findings of a recent Oxfam-GB survey in Red Sea State in Sudan, could not be released because it had not been approved by the local ministry. This hindered the agency capacity for obtaining funding for an emergency response.

Source: Karim et al. (1996); Oxfam-GB (2001a)

Working through translators can also be problematic. Those conducting the interviews or facilitating discussion may manipulate or falsify information, or are unable to provide correct translations for fear of their own security. The only real solution to this is to learn the local language (as in the anthropological study in southern Sudan) or to build up local knowledge over time, to be able to judge and cross-check the information obtained through translators. Field monitors in southern Sudan and those working for the FSAU in Somalia build up this knowledge through repeated visits to affected areas.

Box 10 Examples of problems of working through translators

Much of the field work in an anthropological study in Somalia was undertaken through a translator, raising concerns over the ability to grasp a sense of 'original' meanings and associations. In southern Sudan, WFP's study on targeting was severely hindered by the use of people belonging to the 'humanitarian wing' of one of the opposition movements (the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA), a part of the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM)), as translators. These movements were themselves implicated in, or under pressure, to divert or tax food aid and tended to belong to the more powerful clans.

Source: Narbeth (2001); Jaspars (1999a)

There are advantages and disadvantages in using expatriate or national staff to collect information. Expatriate staff members are more likely to be trusted with sensitive information that may relate to discrimination or persecution, while national staff may be identified with political or ethnic groups that are responsible for such discrimination. Local staff may have suffered at the hands of ethnic groups to which the respondents belong and may therefore not be entirely trustworthy (Borrel et al. 1999). On the other hand, local staff will have far better knowledge of the complexity of political factors at play in a given situation and may also be able to spend far longer in the field from a security point of view, especially if interviews are being conducted in 'home' areas.

4.3.3 Difficulty in getting information on violent, illegal and informal activities

In SCCPI, many livelihood strategies are violent or illegal. People will generally be reluctant to talk about such activities. Governments and authorities may also be reluctant to divulge information about some of these activities, especially since in many cases they are likely to be directly implicated. In general, assessment reports contained little information on such livelihood strategies as theft, looting or involvement in the war economy. These sources of income are generally excluded from the analysis.

Box 11 Examples of difficulties in getting information on criminal or violent activities

In a food economy assessment in Ajiep, Bahr El Ghazal, South Sudan, it was impossible to get information on the food and income sources of the ‘better-off’. They were thought to be the people that received relief food through diversions and taxation following distributions, additional ration cards, and through theft. It was expected that quantities of relief food received varied depending on proximity to the chiefs and officials.

In CARE’s assessment in Burundi, whilst people felt able to talk about some rights abuses, CARE was unable to obtain information on gold mining or the economy around this.

In Afghanistan, much of the income for some groups is derived from the opium trade, from illegal trans-national trade in consumer goods and minerals, and from remittances. None of these could be assessed in WFP’s food security assessment. To account for the under-estimation in income sources, when estimating food aid needs, sources of food and income were quantified and expressed as cereal equivalents and compared with only 80% of 2100 kcals per person per day to estimate the percentage of energy requirements met through these various sources.

Source: Delaney et al. (1998); CARE Burundi (2002); Jaspars (2002)

Even getting information on legal sources of income such as remittances is difficult. These ‘invisible’ activities can constitute a large proportion of livelihood resources. In the case of Somaliland a study recently found that over one third of the population received remittances of over US\$4000 per annum (Ahmed, 2000).

Methods of triangulation (discussed in Section 4.2) may pick up whether these types of activity are being adequately reported by respondents. For example, in Kuito, Angola, SC–UK found that income and expenditures often did not balance so that other information gathering techniques were used, for example, working out weekly budgets and physical observations of conditions of family and compounds (Sawdon, 2000). In situations with a significant diversification of household type in terms of demographic composition and patterns of income, the assessment findings provided examples of actual income and expenditure of three households to illustrate the range of circumstances encountered (Seaman et al. 2000). Methods used in political analysis attempt to gain this information through key informants and other secondary information rather than through household interviews (see Section 5).

4.3.4 Difficulties in identifying livelihood and wealth groups

The change in livelihood strategies during SCCPI may make it difficult to identify livelihood groups.

Box 12 Examples of difficulties in identifying livelihood groups

- In Kosovo, disruption to people’s livelihoods forced them to adopt a wide range of activities so that it was difficult to generalise about livelihoods;
- In Tajikistan, this diversification of activities had led to ‘blurring’ which made it impossible to identify defined livelihood groups;
- In Uganda, a WFP assessment identified 34 livelihood zones in 12 districts; this made the assessment ‘a bit unwieldy’;
- In Rwanda, a livelihood analysis was impossible as 70% of the population had a food problem and depended almost exclusively on food collected from the forest. Vulnerability was identified as a function of household demographic structure with the most vulnerable being old persons, single mothers, children-headed families and families with sick or disabled members.

Source: Sanderson and Westley (2000); Oxfam–GB (2001b); WFP (2000); Mathys and Seaman (1999)

In many assessments, rather than identifying livelihood groups or food economy zones, different social or political groupings were identified at the initial stage of the assessment. The principles of the first stage of assessment remains the same. It involves the identification of population groups who have similar ways of accessing food and income, in similar proportions, and who are exposed to similar risks. In SCCPI, this may be based on location, risk of attack or insecurity, or political status; e.g. displaced, residents, returnees, phase of displacement, type of settlement, etc. For example, WFP's assessment in Uganda identified groups on the basis of their access to fields which in turn reflected susceptibility to rebel attack at the time of the assessment (WFP, 2000). Similarly, in a WFP assessment in Burundi, the middle wealth group was defined on the basis of land holdings but also on being in an insecure zone (WFP, 1999) (see also Boxes 5 and 14).

Box 13 Example of dividing population into groups using political and security factors

In Angola, three distinct areas could be identified in terms of risks to livelihoods:

- Areas under full government control and accessible to traders and relief agencies: sporadic attacks but government and agencies are re-establishing local institutions and people are resettling;
- Areas under military government control and not accessible to traders and relief agencies. People were drawn to these areas because of militia attacks. Restrictions on movement, limitations on trade, mines and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) attacks meant that people had few livelihood options;
- Areas under UNITA control or disputed: no agency presence, high level of abuse reported by people displaced from these areas, including forced labour, displacement, and systematic looting.

Source: Le Billon and Bakker (2002)

Wealth status as a factor in livelihoods analysis is also subject to change in SCCPI. It may be difficult to ascertain the range and proportion of different wealth categories in a defined livelihood group for a number of reasons, including:

- The range of demographic patterns may increase so that there is no longer a typical household for each wealth group (Sawdon, 2000);
- The disruption and displacement caused by the instability has led to lack of knowledge in the new community about neighbours so that standard wealth ranking methods cannot be easily employed (Seaman et al. 2000);
- Wealth can change rapidly as assets are looted or destroyed (Mourey and Aburabi, 1999; Seaman et al. 2000);
- Difficulties also arise as livelihoods can fluctuate considerably over a short time frame in SCCPI.

Difficulty in identifying livelihood groups is particularly apparent for IDPs who in the initial stages of displacement may lack established livelihood patterns and so change livelihood activities on the basis of opportunity (Young et al. 2001). Continuous displacement can also lead to rapidly changing livelihood activities and IDPs may be reluctant to disclose information about livelihood activities before being registered for relief (Sawdon, 2000).

Summary

- Assessment methods in SCCPI need to overcome: problems of security and limited access, difficulties in getting information on illegal or criminal activities, and in defining livelihood groups;
- With limited access, assessments make more use of secondary information, place a greater emphasis on cross-checking and triangulation, interview people displaced from affected areas, and develop baseline information gradually over time;
- A combination of local and expatriate staff often works best in minimising the manipulation of information;
- Combining secondary information sources, triangulation, making information 'add up', may help to obtain information on illegal or criminal activities;
- In SCCPI, the identification of livelihood groups is often replaced during an initial stage of assessment by the identification of groups based on political, security or displacement factors.

5 Conflict and Benefit–harms Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The analysis in Section 2 showed that there are three aspects of the macro-environment in SCCPI that are important to consider when determining risks to livelihoods:

- War strategies and their impacts
- The political economy of war
- The governance environment

The review of livelihoods assessment approaches in Sections 3 and 4 shows that such a macro-level analysis is rarely incorporated in the assessment approaches commonly used in emergencies. This section reviews some of the literature on political and conflict analysis to identify ways of analysing the macro-environment identified above, and to see how elements of this can be incorporated into livelihoods assessments to identify further possibilities for livelihood support. Political and conflict analysis is usually not done in relation to its impact on livelihoods, and in most organisations is done by different people from those who carry out livelihoods assessments. The aim of conflict analysis is generally to predict the risk of conflict or increasing severity of conflict and at project level to try and minimise the negative effects of programmes on conflict-related processes.

Livelihoods assessment approaches, like other assessments, rarely incorporate an examination of the potentially negative impacts of the recommended interventions. A number of methodologies have been developed to try to assess this risk and thereby minimise it. For example, Anderson’s ‘do no harm’ framework (Anderson, 1999), CARE’s benefits–harms tools (CARE, 2001), and Oxfam–GB’s net-benefit analysis (Oxfam–GB, 2001c). These approaches are reviewed only briefly here, as no examples were found of the application of benefits–harms approaches to specific livelihoods interventions.

5.2 Conflict and political analysis

5.2.1 Conflict analysis tools

There is no single explanatory framework for looking at complex conflict systems. However, various authors and agencies have developed checklists or tools with the different dimensions of the political and economic context that need to be taken into account (DFID, 2001; Dawson, 2001; Le Billon, 2000). These tools have the following common elements that are relevant to an analysis of risks to livelihoods:

- Historical antecedents or origins of conflict
- Political, economic, social and security factors that contribute to tension and severity of conflict
- Political rights
- Interests and incentives of the key actors in the conflict
- Exploitation and exchange of key commodities

Aspects of checklists for the sources of tension and conflict are given in Table 5. The aim of this tool is to map out and weight these sources, to identify the linkages and connections between them and to make a judgement about the key sources of conflict.

Table 5 Structural sources of tension and conflict

Security	Political	Economic	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security forces weakly controlled • Human rights abuses by security forces • Legacy of past conflict • Proliferation of light weapons • Presence of non-state military actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrepresentative political system • Lack of independent judiciary • Lack of independent media and civil society • Corruption • Weak political parties • Lack of political participation in governance process • Political exploitation of ethnic/religious differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening economic disparities • Macro-economic instability • Destabilising external investment patterns and international economic policies • Increasing competition over scarce resources • Growth in parallel economies • Development of a war economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social exclusion • Legacy of unresolved conflict • Absence of cross-cutting social and civil society organisations • Failure of dispute mechanisms • Decreasing legitimacy of customary authorities

Source: DFID (2001); Dawson (2001)

The sources of political tension are those that relate to the formal governance environment. Benefits–harms tools use a similar categorisation by dividing human rights and the unintended impacts of relief and development projects into (CARE, 2001):

- Political rights and impacts
- Security rights and impacts
- Economic, social and cultural rights and impacts

There are three sets of tools in the benefits–harms package; profile tools, impact tools and decision tools. For political analysis, the profile tool could potentially be useful, in particular to examine political vulnerability. The political profile tool has three components: the identification of different political and social groups in the community; an examination of political power and discrimination; and the communities' political rights and freedoms. Following the identification of different groups, those with and without power are analysed. The examination of rights and freedoms includes a review of protection by law, participation in politics and freedom of expression (CARE, 2001). These tools would need to be adapted for SCCPI as they do not include an analysis of the political economy of the conflict.

Box 14 A rights-based analysis by CARE in Burundi

CARE–Burundi combined a rights-based analysis with livelihoods analysis in Muyinga province, Burundi. The assessment identified the Batwa, a group of potters, as a politically vulnerable group. Rights abuses were analysed in terms of the exploitation of the poor by the rich (who bought assets cheaply and asked for high interest on credit). Other rights abuses identified included illegal detention and arrest by local authorities and forced sale of goods by the police and local administration. The overall conclusion was that rights abuses compromised a general improvement in food security for certain groups.

Source: CARE–Burundi (2002)

Tools for an analysis of the political economy of war include an analysis of the incentives and interests of the key actors (from DFID's conflict analysis tool - DFID, 2001) and a tool to help characterise the various economic activities during wartime (in Le Billon, 2000). An analysis of key actors involves the following:

- Mapping out all the key actors
- Identification of their interests in relation to the conflict
- Examination of the relations between the different actors
- Examination of their capacity to influence the conflict
- Determining what interest they have in peace
- Determining which incentives could be offered for the authors to choose peace

Examples of key actors include: community leaders; displaced communities; local NGOs; criminal organisations; armed groups; business; neighbouring governments; and donors, among others. It is also valuable to examine the nature of armed groups including: their aims and ideology, the nature of their leadership, their constituency, the nature of their war strategies (do they target civilians or destroy economic infrastructure?), and what type of economic support they have.

Finally, a tool used by the ODI political economy studies was ‘market structure analysis’ (Le Billon, 2000). This involves choosing a key commodity and examining the context in which it is exchanged. For example: timber in Senegal (Evans, forthcoming) and coltan in eastern DRC (Jackson, forthcoming). This yielded findings about involvement in the war economy not revealed by the livelihoods assessments.

Box 15 Finding out about involvement in the war economy

A study in Senegal, which attempted to combine a political economy and livelihoods approach, found that no households in the livelihoods assessment reported involvement in the war (or parallel) economy. Their involvement in the war economy was discovered by gathering secondary information and interviewing key informants to follow the trade in timber, including merchants involved in the (illegal) timber trade. A food economy assessment in eastern DRC reports as main sources of income sale of farm products, wage labour and such marginal activities as charcoal production, sale of firewood, etc. A political economy study, in contrast, describes in detail the illegal trade in coltan, and joining local militia or banditry as strategies to gain resources.

Source: Evans (forthcoming); King and Adams (2000); Jackson (forthcoming)

5.2.2 Methods

Methods generally include secondary data collection, key informant interviews and discussions or workshops within agencies with a long-term presence in the area which capture and analyse the existing knowledge of field staff. A variety of techniques is often combined. Much of the information required is too sensitive to ask directly from households. Even key informant interviews or secondary data collection has in some cases led to the arrest of researchers and confiscation of assessment materials (e.g. Le Billon and Bakker, 2002). Key informants may include: agency staff, local representatives, civil servants, local traders, or journalists.

Box 16 Examples of secondary information sources for conflict analysis

- Macro-political situation: academic literature, UN/government reports, NGOs, embassies;
- Macro-economic situation: country reports by the Economist Intelligence Unit, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, government and embassy reports;
- Micro-economic situation: UN specialised agencies and NGO reports, reports on corruption by ‘transparency international’, provincial and district authorities;
- Micro-political dynamics: international and local human rights organisations.

Source: Le Billon (2000)

Conflict analysis and benefits–harms analysis, when conducted by NGOs, are often done within the agency, rather than being based on interviews with affected households. In fact, one of the main purposes of benefit–harms tools is to stimulate discussion within the agency. Project field staff members frequently already know the answers to many of the issues raised (CARE, 2001). Oxfam–GB recommends workshops with informants from the region and country, both within and outside of Oxfam–GB (Dawson, 2001). The purpose of such workshops is to identify the main actors in the conflict, major conflict trends, and the implications for Oxfam–GB.

Interviews with local informants usually start with less sensitive information; in the case of the benefits–harms tools, this included information on economic, social and cultural rights (CARE, 2001). In political analyses interviewers may also start with a general discussion on livelihoods (Jackson, forthcoming) or the trade in a particular commodity (Evans, forthcoming). Key informant and household interviews are usually done by local people, and in some cases were found to be easiest if interviewers had worked in a community before and were known by the members. In a study of the political economy of Senegal, the research assistant sometimes asked questions under the guise of doing research for his own timber business. Results were only noted after the interview (Evans, forthcoming). Another strategy to get information on the political economy was to refer to an analysis of other conflicts and ask how this compared to what was happening in the particular population being surveyed (Evans, forthcoming).

Box 17 Methods and constraints for CARE’s rights-based assessment in Burundi

In CARE’s assessment in Burundi, different checklists were developed for large discussion groups, smaller focus groups, and for households. Discussions started with a large group, to identify the community’s problems in general. Questions on rights and responsibilities were asked in smaller groups. Institutional mapping was done to identify different institutions, and the level of engagement between them and the community. Households were only interviewed for the livelihoods assessment. Asking questions on rights and political vulnerability was not easy. People found it difficult to discuss the abuses in 1993, particularly to identify those who were responsible. Similarly, questions on the causes of the war were difficult because of the different ethnic groups participating in the discussions. The presence of local authorities at group discussions inhibited people and some meetings were dominated by Hutu.

Source: CARE–Burundi, 2002.

5.3 Minimising negative impacts

This section briefly describes tools to analyse the potentially negative impacts of livelihoods interventions in SCCPI. Some of the potentially negative impacts were mentioned in Section 2.4 and included direct effects of providing resources to warring parties through diversion, taxation of assistance, or providing implicit support to warring parties or state institutions by working with them. It is also increasingly being argued that in situations of human rights abuse, it is vital to examine the pre-existing human rights conditions of people conducting the assessment, and interviewees, to prevent any risks to them as a result of the assessment (Beyer and Cass, 2002). For example, in Rwanda, census lists of orphanages and boarding schools were enumerated for research purposes. These lists included numbers of children, name, age, sex and ethnic origin. The lists were later gathered by government agents ordered to kill all children with Tutsi names or of Tutsi descent.

The key questions to consider in analysing potentially negative impacts include:

- What is the risk of excluding the most vulnerable groups?
- What are the potential risks associated with the assessment, or misuse of information?
- What is the risk of benefiting warring parties?
- Which institutions to work with and how?

The analysis of the political economy of war and the governance environment, as discussed in Section 5.2, will give most of the answers to questions on possible negative impact of aid. The same will happen to aid as to other resources in SCCPI. The assessments reviewed for this paper rarely incorporated an analysis of the potentially negative consequences of recommended interventions. The risks of misuse of information can be analysed by examining previous human rights records; for example, through human rights organisations.

A benefits–harms analysis assesses the actual and potential tensions between different groups, who controls resources, and the ways in which aid programmes influence these. In addition to the profile tools mentioned above, CARE’s benefits–harms tools also include impact tools and decision tools. For example, the security impact tool considers how relief interventions can weaken or strengthen people’s physical security. It does this by looking at four areas: external threats to the community; internal patterns of violence in the community; the underlying causes of violence; and community-based conflict resolution (O’Brien, 2002). Similarly the political impact tool considers the impact of aid on power structures, political rights and processes, and the underlying causes of political rights denial (CARE, 2001). The decision tools then consider how the recommended (or on-going project) can address the harm or take up a new opportunity to benefit people.

Benefits–harms tools are based on Mary Anderson’s ‘do no harm’ framework, which identifies the dividers and connectors within societies suffering internal conflict. Dividers are factors which divide people, the tensions between them, and the capacities for war. Connectors are factors that bring people together in situations of war. This is followed by an identification of the characteristics of the aid agency and its programme and their impacts on the dividers and connectors (Anderson, 1999).

Oxfam–GB has developed a net–benefit analysis, which has similarities to ‘do no harm’, but differs in important respects. Net-benefit analysis acknowledges that some degree of harm is inevitable, but retains a default position to intervene. The ‘do no harm’ analysis has been criticised for leading agencies and donors to do nothing, for fear of causing harm. Net–benefit analysis also looks at shorter time horizons than ‘do no harm’, in the interests of accuracy (Oxfam–GB, 2001c).

Summary

- Aspects of conflict and political analysis tools useful for examining risks to livelihoods include: tools to examine sources of tension and conflict, benefit–harms analysis, key actor analysis and market structure analysis;
- Most methods are reliant on secondary sources of information and key informants;
- Questions on involvement in the war economy are frequently too sensitive to ask directly, and interviews usually start by focussing on social and economic factors, or on livelihoods;
- Much of the information on political economy is already known by agencies’ national staff and issues can be discussed in workshops;
- Key questions to consider in analysing the potentially negative impacts of assistance are on the risk that the most vulnerable will be excluded, the risk of benefiting warring parties, and with which institutions to work and how;
- There are a number of benefits–harms tools that help in analysing the potentially negative effects of aid, and the way in which it is provided.

6 Conclusions on Livelihood Assessment Approaches in SCCPI

6.1 Components of a framework to assess livelihoods in SCCPI

In SCCPI, there is a need for in-depth analysis of livelihoods in order to better identify appropriate interventions and to determine how interventions can be most effective in protecting livelihoods and saving lives. There is a need to move beyond emergency relief.

SCCPI have a significant impact on livelihoods. The severity of impact depends on the nature of war strategies, the war economy and of the governance environment. People's vulnerability is to a large extent determined by their social and political status. At the local level, people's behaviour is either voluntarily or non-voluntarily altered. Livelihood goals or outcomes frequently become limited to ensuring survival. The strategies adopted include subsistence strategies, involvement in the parallel or war economy, or violent or illegal acts.

An adapted livelihoods framework may provide the basis for assessing livelihoods in SCCPI. A livelihoods framework can establish links between SCCPI and impact on livelihoods and can lead to an understanding of the dynamics of livelihood vulnerability in SCCPI. The framework can be adapted by:

- Considering war strategies, the impact of war and the political economy, together with the governance environment, to identify livelihoods options and risks and the need for protection of vulnerable groups;
- Examining the governance environment by considering the accountability of government institutions, the rule of law and the provision of public services, and the informal governance environment in terms of local institutions, practices and markets;
- Placing a greater focus on an analysis of social and political vulnerability;
- Recognising the limited goals and options for livelihood strategies in SCCPI and developing a new way of analysing and interpreting the types of strategies used by people in response to SCCPI.

6.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches for assessing livelihoods in SCCPI

The key strengths of livelihood approaches, in general, are that they consider all elements essential for people to make a living not only in the short term, but also to contribute to longer-term well-being. Livelihoods assessment approaches aim to be participatory and identify interventions according to people's own priorities.

A review of current assessment approaches used in SCCPI shows that they consider some, but not all, aspects of the livelihoods framework. Apart from CARE's HLS approach and anthropological research, most focus on food security as a livelihood outcome. All consider livelihoods at micro- (or household- or community-) level, yet to assess the impact of SCCPI on livelihoods there is a need to add a macro-level analysis of the political economy.

The approaches were developed for stable, non-conflict, situations from which many of the underlying concepts, including vulnerability and coping strategies, are derived. In all assessment approaches, except ICRC's economic security analysis, vulnerability is usually considered from an economic rather than a political perspective. No livelihoods assessment was able to get information on involvement in the war economy. The causes of political vulnerability need to be examined in

order to determine how to protect populations. This includes an examination of war strategies, the political economy of war, and the accountability of states and non-state actors and institutions. More attention also needs to be focussed on understanding the governance environment, and particularly how this environment relates to vulnerability and changing livelihood strategies.

There are several aspects of political analysis and benefits–harms tools that could be used as part of an analysis of livelihoods in SCCPI to get information on the political economy and governance environment. The risks associated with the assessment itself and the potentially harmful effects of livelihoods interventions in SCCPI also need to be considered as part of an assessment. Harmful effects may include compromising neutrality by working with institutions aligned with one side of the war, or diversion of goods to warring parties. The human rights environment can indicate the risks to interviewees and surveyors in conducting such assessments.

There are several challenges in doing assessments in SCCPI, mainly as a result of insecurity, lack of access, and the changes in livelihoods that occur as a result of SCCPI. The identification of livelihood groups, a key aspect of livelihoods assessment approaches, becomes problematic when everyone becomes involved (to varying degrees) in the same marginal activities and their livelihoods are destroyed. This also poses problems for wealth categorisation. In SCCPI a classification other than livelihood groups may be required to group people with similar ways of accessing food and who face similar risks and constraints. Examples include classification according to political identity or affiliation, phase of displacement, settlement type, risk of being attacked, or the nature of controlling authorities. Many assessment approaches rely on the identification of a ‘normal’ year with which to compare food and income sources after a certain shock. This is rarely possible in protracted conflict situations.

Major practical constraints are security and access, the potential for manipulation of information, and difficulty in obtaining information on illegal or criminal activities. Livelihoods assessments in particular require time and access for in-depth information collection, preferably in a participatory manner. Although speed of assessment is crucial for determining emergency relief needs, the need for very rapid assessments is perhaps not a necessary requirement for the identification of livelihood support interventions, given that SCCPI typically last for several years. It is also difficult to get information on illegal or criminal activities in livelihoods assessments.

There are several ways in which agencies have overcome these constraints. These include a greater reliance on secondary information and key informant interviews, and increased triangulation and cross-checking. HEA attempts this by quantifying food and income sources, and expenditure that need to ‘add up’. Other approaches combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Longer-term monitoring, gradually building up a picture of livelihoods over time, is potentially most useful and is possible because of the protracted nature of SCCPI.

6.3 Identifying interventions in SCCPI

For most agencies, assessments in SCCPI tend to be used to determine the need for immediate relief inputs rather than to identify longer-term livelihoods support interventions. Some agencies have identified the need for other livelihood support interventions, such as asset delivery or provision, and market-, cash- and labour-based interventions. Interventions may also include building the capacity of local institutions and protection and advocacy to hold states and warring parties accountable for undermining people’s livelihoods and for the provision of basic needs to civilians. At present, the focus of interventions in SCCPI is mostly on asset delivery, and assessments are used to identify the need for such assets or resources. This, however, addresses economic vulnerability and not the political vulnerability that is a key characteristic in SCCPI. In SCCPI, in

order for interventions to be effective, there is a need to protect vulnerable groups so that they are able to hold on to existing assets and those provided or created through assistance.

The focus on relief interventions may be in part because the scope for funding livelihoods interventions may be limited as they fall in between the conventional categories of ‘relief’ and ‘development’. Because of fears of unintentionally ‘doing harm’, agencies may lack knowledge or experience as to how best to support livelihoods, and their assessment tools may be inadequate to identify viable interventions. Agencies may also believe that longer-term livelihood-support interventions in SCCPI go against humanitarian principles. Another issue is agency capacity and mandates. Most agencies focus on a limited number of specific interventions. Inter-agency co-ordination is therefore important for a holistic approach to supporting livelihoods.

The scope for livelihood support at household or community level may be limited during violent conflict or insecure situations, and in particular where the strategies that people use are degrading, criminal or illegal. However, there is a wide range of unstable situations, ranging from violent conflict to sporadic banditry. When violent conflict has ceased, options for livelihood support increase. An understanding of the nature of SCCPI and of livelihood options in each situation is necessary to determine the feasibility and appropriateness of livelihood support. Livelihood programming options must be considered very carefully for a number of reasons:

- The level of insecurity and problems of access may limit possibilities for establishing the management structures and institutional support mechanisms required to implement some livelihood interventions successfully;
- ‘Visible’ resources and support provided in livelihood interventions may place beneficiaries at risk from warring factions;
- Interventions may compromise impartiality by supporting one livelihood group over another;
- In strengthening viable economic and political institutions, it is essential to avoid reinforcing the power of predatory and illegitimate forces;
- Ethical considerations to supporting livelihood or survival strategies that may indirectly support the war economy;
- Livelihood options often contract in SCCPI and the type of survival strategies adopted by many people to replace these options may be violent, illegal or immoral.

A key area of agency interventions is increasingly in advocacy and in some cases witnessing (temoinage). Advocacy needs to be aimed at states or warring parties to promote adherence to their legal obligations. For example, International Humanitarian Law is clear that starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited, and that state authorities should support and facilitate the delivery of assistance. Some argue that aspects of human rights law are non-derogable in situations where this is conflict and crisis, such as the right to food (meaning that states may not temporarily suspend certain obligations under International Human Rights Law). Others believe human rights are not just in law, but are determined by our common humanity. It follows that human rights belong to us all, and so do human responsibilities. This approach involves the identification of rights bearers, and duty bearers other than states (Jonsson et al. 2002). Whatever the means, it is clear that livelihoods interventions in SCCPI needs to include an element of protection as well as programming.

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Annex 1 A Description of Different Assessment Approaches

A1.1 CARE–Household Livelihood Security (HLS) Approach

A1.1.1 Sources

Frankenberger et al. (2000); Frankenberger and McCaston (2001); Maxwell (1999); Oxfam–GB (2001)

A1.1.2 Objective

The main objective is to provide a multidimensional view of livelihoods to identify vulnerable households and people’s goals and to identify programming priorities.

HLS assessments may have multiple objectives; global learning where there is little or no previous knowledge, and/or strategic planning to improve the allocation of scarce programme resources. Building partnerships is often a secondary objective.

A1.1.3 Stages in assessment/assessment framework

CARE makes use of a sustainable livelihoods framework as the basis for its assessments. The same framework is used for assessments, monitoring and evaluations, and has the following components:

- Context; including natural resources, institutions, infrastructure, history, economic, cultural and political environment, demography, shocks and stresses;
- Livelihood strategy; including assets, production and income, processing, exchange, marketing, and consumption activities;
- Livelihood outcomes; involves the security of food, health, water, shelter, education, community participation, and personal safety.

These data allow the construction of livelihood profiles. The impact of different risks is then analysed; including environmental, social, economic, and conflict-related risks. The impact of these risks on the various sources of livelihood within a population (human, financial, natural and social capital, as well as economic activities is analysed together with an analysis of vulnerability. The HLS approach also collects information on opportunities, e.g. ‘What are people doing in a positive way that can be built upon?’

A1.1.4 Methods

The approach uses different methods, depending on time and resources. When time permits, both primary and secondary information is collected. Secondary data are gathered on the context, access to services, and the current nutritional and health status of the population. Primary data are collected on livelihood resources, and livelihood strategies. Six to 12 villages in a region are assessed. The guiding principle is to capture a range of different types of villages to determine if there are differences in livelihood status across various settings. Methods include key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and household interviews in purposively chosen villages. How much primary data is collected depends on the availability and quality of existing information. An in-depth assessment takes about four to six weeks to complete.

A1.1.5 Analysis

The approach first determines the feasibility of different livelihood strategies, by analysing the contextual information. The analysis should identify the key leverage points that allow CARE to have the maximum impact on people's livelihoods. The identification of risks and opportunities is done by the community.

A1.1.6 Uses

HLS has mainly been used to identify livelihood support interventions in stable development contexts. The framework is also increasingly used to identify needs in chronically vulnerable areas. HLS may identify four phases of programming according to the objectives of livelihood support:

- Livelihood protection to prevent loss of assets, e.g. livestock marketing, providing drought-resistant seeds, and employment generation through food-for-work schemes;
- Livelihood provisioning to save lives and protect or improve nutritional and health status;
- Livelihood recovery to rehabilitate livelihoods, for example, provision of food until harvest, distribution of seeds and tools, restoration of institutional capacity, etc.;
- Livelihood promotion to improve production and income-earning opportunities.

A1.1.7 Application

The CARE HLS has mainly been applied in stable situations. The limited unstable contexts in which it has been applied include Kosovo and Burundi. In Burundi it was combined with a benefit-harms analysis.

A1.1.8 Strengths and weaknesses

A strength of HLS is that it is based on a well developed holistic livelihoods framework and that assessments have the potential to identify a range of interventions. Its major weakness is its limited application in SCCPI, and the approach has therefore not undergone adaptations to deal with the constraints of working in such situations.

A1.2 USAID FEWSNET: Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) and the Food Security Vulnerability Profile (FSVP)

A1.2.1 Sources

Chopak (2000); Eilert (2000)

A1.2.2 Objectives

The main aim of USAID FEWS is to manage threats to food security through provision of timely and analytical early warning and vulnerability information. The overall objective is to strengthen the abilities of African countries and regional organisations to manage threats to food security. The objective of constructing a Food Security Vulnerability Profile (FSVP) is to identify risks for

particular livelihoods, e.g. natural disaster, wars/conflict, food prices, trade policies, and budgetary or foreign exchange restrictions.

A1.2.3 Stages in assessment/assessment framework

FEWS uses a framework whereby food security comprises three major components: availability, access, and utilisation. Ideally, the assessment starts with the construction of baseline profiles (FSVPs) for specific livelihood groups. HEA may be used to do this. Information on key risk and hazard variables are monitored regularly, these include: rainfall, crop production, and prices of staple foods. Risks are categorised as environmental, social, and health-related but findings are applied to agro-ecological zones. Where possible, retrospective databases are constructed for these variables covering several years thus allowing 'normative' comparisons to be made.

A1.2.4 Method

FEWS relies mainly on quantitative data, much of which is secondary data. The information collected includes: crop estimates (forecasts and estimates), livestock and pasture conditions, satellite imagery analysis, price data and market information, food balance sheets, map data (population estimates, roads, infrastructure, etc.), and health and nutrition data, among others. FSVPs use participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques and are heavily dependent on key informant interviews at village level.

A1.2.5 Analysis

Changes in food security are analysed in normative fashion, i.e. the deviation of the risk or hazard indicator from normal. FSVPs examine food security levels and inter-annual variation of particular population groups that allow patterns and trends to be seen. Households are categorised as those employing broadly similar food access strategies and experiencing the same level, trend and variability of food security. The food access strategies of these populations are compared to food requirements over a period of time.

A1.2.6 Uses

The main use is to provide early warning of food insecurity and to identify at-risk populations so that timely responses can also be made. Construction of FSVPs is mainly concerned with chronic food insecurity, and can make recommendations to livelihood programmes in the longer term.

A1.2.7 Application

FEWSNET works in a large number of countries that are recovering from the effects of conflict, e.g. Mozambique, Rwanda, Eritrea and others that are still experiencing conflict, e.g. Somalia, Mauritania and southern Sudan.

A1.2.8 Strengths and weaknesses

Until recently the main weakness of the system has been the absence of a link between risk/hazard and its impact on the food or income sources of specific livelihood groups. The construction of FSVPs is an attempt to create this link. However, very few of these profiles have been constructed. In general, FEWS has little capacity for, or experience of, conflict early warning or monitoring and assessing the impact of conflict on different livelihood groups.

A1.3 Save the Children (SC–UK) and Food Economy Group (FEG) Household Economy Approach (HEA) and Food Economy Analytical Framework

A1.3.1 Sources

Boudreau (1998); SC–UK (2000); Oxfam–GB (2001); Boudreau and Coutts (2002)

A1.3.2 Objectives

The main objective is to identify the impact of a shock, on the ability of households to acquire food and non-food goods.

A1.3.3 Stages in data collection/assessment framework

The first stage in a food economy analysis is the development of a baseline. This involves:

- Defining the food economy/household zones in the area of analysis;
- Socio-economic differentiation, defining wealth or ‘access’ groups within each food economy zone;
- Interviews to establish sources of food, income, and expenditure, for households in each wealth group.

This is followed by collecting hazard information, for example, changes in rainfall, crop production, pasture condition, market prices. The outcome analysis then involves combining the hazard with the baseline information.

A1.3.4 Methods

Both secondary and primary information is compiled, with most of the information collected at community level. Secondary data is used to define the food economy zones. The methods of primary data collection are PRA/rapid rural appraisal (RRA), focus group interviews, key informant interviews, ranking (including pair-wise) and proportional piling. Interview locations are usually chosen to include as much variation as possible. The wealth groups are self-defined by the community. Interviews are conducted with representatives of particular wealth groups. The interview then refers to a ‘typical’ household in that group. Interviews are highly structured and a typical interview takes about two hours.

A1.3.5 Analysis

The analysis aims to estimate the likely effect of a shock on the ability of households within a population to:

- Acquire sufficient food;
- Maintain its non-food consumption, e.g. education, health, fuel, soap and other goods.

Food, cash income, and expenditure are converted into ‘food equivalent’ units. For the baseline, the sources of food and income have to add up to an average of 2100 kcal per person per day, as the minimum food requirement for survival. The approach also assumes that there are minimum non-food requirements that need to be satisfied through income and production.

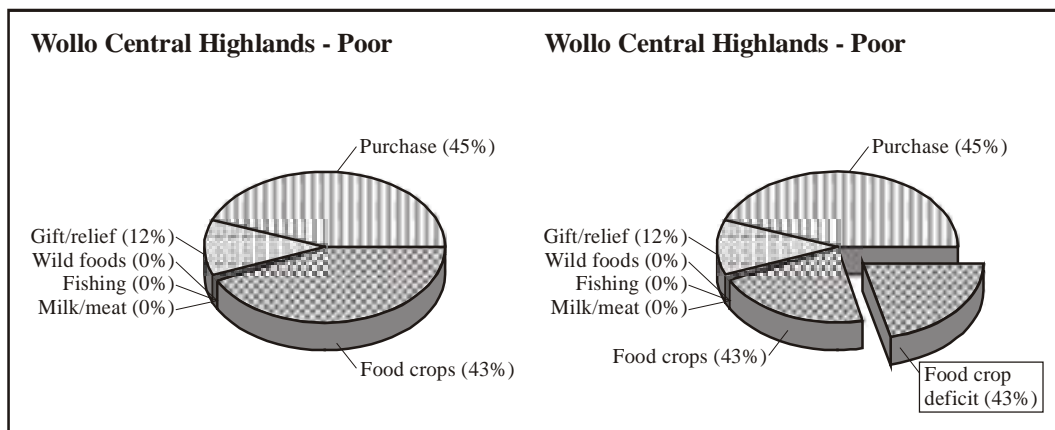
There are two steps to estimate whether the household faces a food deficit. Firstly, to calculate the likely household deficit resulting from the problem, and secondly, to estimate households’ ability to overcome such deficits.

For example, if a household usually gets 50% of its income from food crops, a 50% fall in food crops will lead to a 25% fall in household income (see Figure A1). An analysis of the ability of a household to overcome the deficit includes:

- Consumption of food stocks;
- Expanding income from wild foods;
- Getting gifts;
- Additional income from the sale of livestock, labour and donations from kin.

In determining the food gap and consequent requirement for food aid support, certain types of coping strategy will not be accounted for, e.g. sale of key assets, environmentally damaging activities, and illegal activities.

Figure A1 Effect of fall in food crops on household income



A1.3.6 Uses

The main use has been to determine or rationalise food aid needs. Although qualitative descriptions in baseline profiles may indicate the need for a range of responses, the assessment is mainly focussed on the need for food aid. Other uses can include: vulnerability analysis, modelling the impact of interventions, e.g. food aid, and estimating the effect of economic policy at the household level. The approach is increasingly being used to strengthen analysis of livelihood patterns through the baseline profiles and to identify nature of vulnerability of different FEGs/HEAs and wealth groups.

A1.3.7 Application

The approach is currently used in a variety of unstable situations, e.g. Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Burundi, and in countries recovering from instability, e.g. Mozambique, Rwanda and Eritrea.

A1.3.8 Strengths and weaknesses

HEA's main strength is having an agreed-upon, well-articulated assessment framework that enables discussion and consensus building around the results. This is vital in situations where there are concerns over manipulation of information by people in power. A further strength is the development of baselines. It is the only approach that is able to quantify food aid needs. Weaknesses include the focus on economic aspects of food insecurity; rather than the wider social and political determinants. Assessment reports often give food deficits for different wealth groups, but do not give recommendations as to the feasibility of targeting assistance to these different groups.

A1.4 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Economic Security Analysis

A1.4.1 Sources

Mourey (2000); Mourey (1995); MSF-H (1997)

A1.4.2 Objective

The main objective is to determine the risk of decapitalisation, and to intervene to prevent this. Other objectives include anticipation of how economic security might change.

A1.4.3 Stages in assessment/assessment framework

There are three stages in a typical assessment:

- Identify regions where populations are put in danger because of armed conflict or natural/economic disasters;
- Identify areas with specific risk factors to select the communities to be assessed;
- Identify communities or groups who are vulnerable because of their ethnic, economic, social and cultural characteristics;
- Collect information on renewable resources, assets, and expenses.

A1.4.4 Methods

For each community or group, the following information is collected on three clusters of resources:

- Renewable resources such as productive activities, trade, capital without interest, e.g. personal capital, real and land estate, assets via borrowing;
- Productive assets, e.g. arable land, draught animals and tools;

- Obligatory expenses of household, e.g. public services, private services, maintenance of household and food.

Methods of data collection vary according to the context. Elders and leaders are always interviewed but more emphasis is placed on interviews with families. In some cases, households are sampled until the overall picture is consistent. There is much emphasis on the knowledge of local staff and experienced ICRC staff.

A1.4.5 Analysis

The analysis involves determining the stage of economic insecurity; the first stage is when renewable resources are greater than obligatory expenses and the household is self-sufficient. In the second stage, renewable resources are insufficient to meet obligatory expenses, and capital without interest is used up resulting in decapitalisation. In the final stage, both renewable resources and capital without interest are insufficient to meet obligatory expenses and productive assets are used up resulting in destitution

A1.4.6 Uses

The approach is geared to assessing the need for economic interventions, although the contexts within which ICRC works tend to result in a prioritisation of food aid or food production support. The range of possible responses is determined by the stages of food insecurity defined above. The first stage indicates the need for preventive measures, including political negotiation to prevent abuses. In the second stage, responses may include economic support to prevent decapitalisation, including food aid, veterinary support, and means to diversify and intensify production. In the third phase, survival relief is the main response, i.e. food and services essential for survival. Once the crisis is considered to have dissipated, economic rehabilitation is provided to restore the means of production to a level necessary for household economic security.

A1.4.7 Application

The approach is mainly used in situations of conflict or conflict recovery, i.e. where ICRC are mandated to work.

A1.4.8 Strengths and weaknesses

A key strength of the ICRC approach is that it incorporates an analysis of political vulnerability which is crucial in SCCPI. A further strength is that the approach is rapid and usually carried out by experienced ICRC staff. However, its weakness is that it is not systematic so that assessments depend on the experience of the assessors.

A1.5 MSF–H framework for analysing situations of food insecurity

A1.5.1 Sources



van der Kam (2000); Oxfam–GB (2001)

A1.5.2 Objectives

The objective is to determine the stage of food insecurity and appropriate food and health interventions.

A1.5.3 Stages in assessment/assessment framework

The assessment framework consists of three stages, as indicated below:

Stage of food insecurity process	Coping mechanisms (household level)
Food insecurity 	Insurance strategies Reversible coping Preserving productive assets Reduced food intake
Food crisis 	Crisis strategies Irreversible coping Threatening future productive capacity Sale of productive assets
Famine Health crisis Death	Distress strategies No coping mechanisms left Migration Starvation and death

Each stage of food insecurity is also related to the conceptual framework on causes of malnutrition. This includes malnutrition, morbidity and mortality as outcomes, and the social and care environment, and public health as underlying causes of malnutrition in addition to food security.

A1.5.4 Methods

Information collection is specified for each stage of food insecurity. During food insecurity, early signs are monitored (early warning). In a food crisis, such intermediate indicators as food prices, availability, access, and health indicators are monitored. In famine conditions, outcome indicators such as malnutrition, morbidity and mortality are particularly important. Methods include secondary data collection, key informant interviews, systematic observation, focus group discussion, screening of nutritional status using mid-upper arm circumference, and household interviews. The assessments are done by medical co-ordinators or managers, rather than food security or nutrition specialists, as part of the initial rapid emergency needs assessment.

A1.5.5 Analysis

Analysis involves the identification of the stage of food insecurity, and the approach gives specific recommendations for interventions at each stage.

A1.5.6 Uses

In food-insecure situations the aim of interventions is to preserve livelihoods by for example, food-for-work, or support for health structures to treat individual cases of severe malnutrition. In food crisis, the aim is to ensure sufficient household food security by general food distribution. MSF–H guidelines advocate that provision should be made to support vulnerable groups, e.g. the elderly, or under-fives through selective feeding programmes at this stage. Health care systems and water resources may also require support. In famine situations the emphasis is on saving lives through general rations, selective feeding and mortality surveillance.

A1.5.7 Application

MSF–H have only recently developed the approach and written guidelines. The approach has been applied most recently in Afghanistan

A1.5.8 Strengths and weaknesses

The main strength is that the framework and analysis is easy to understand and use. It provides staff with a shared notion of concepts. Reports provide an analysis of the situation, and justification for the proposed strategy. On the other hand, people doing the assessment are not always confident of their findings because they lack training in PRA. In relation to SCCPI, a weakness is that the approach is based on sequences of coping strategies which may not be applicable.

A1.6 Oxfam–GB livelihoods approach to food security assessments in emergencies

A1.6.1 Sources

Young et al. (2001); Oxfam–GB (2001)

A1.6.2 Objective

The main objective is to determine the severity of food insecurity for different livelihood groups, and to identify appropriate interventions according to the severity of food insecurity and the nature of the livelihoods affected.

A1.6.3 Stages in assessment/assessment framework

The approach considers the severity of food insecurity in terms of its impact on people's ability to meet immediate food needs (risks to lives) and its impact on livelihoods and self-sufficiency (risks to livelihoods). The assessment starts with an examination of food availability. This is followed by the identification of livelihood groups, for which changes in food and income sources are assessed, together with the type of coping strategies adopted.

Elements of food security	Checklist/key areas
Food availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and characterise the food supply; crop production and imports, etc. • Describe market mechanisms and prices
Access/ entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the different livelihood groups according to the main means by which people acquire food • For each livelihood group identify how people acquired food prior to the crisis, and how they do so now
Severity of food insecurity – Risks to Lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess people’s ability to feed themselves • Identify major shifts in entitlement, and assess the viability of alternative food sources • Assess the impact of food security on nutritional status: determine whether the prevalence of malnutrition is unusual in relation to normal seasonal patterns, taking account of health and care-related causes of malnutrition
Severity of food insecurity – Risks to Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the vulnerability of livelihoods: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The nature of external shocks and intensity of impact on people’s livelihoods; Identify the livelihood group most affected. 2. People’s ability to cope with shocks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Type of strategy used (strategies that are not damaging to livelihoods or well-being, versus ones that are); – Proportion of people engaged in marginal/non-sustainable activities.

A1.6.4 Methods

A combination of secondary and primary data collection is used. Secondary data are collected on: the context, including geography (climate, environment, access etc.), political context (government infrastructure and commitment to addressing the crisis), security; the affected population (numbers affected, ethnic composition, gender relations, leadership); and food availability (crop assessments, market prices). Primary data may be collected on sources of food and income, coping strategies and anthropometric status. Methods include a range of PRA techniques (proportional piling, seasonal calendars, key informant interviews, focus groups etc.). Anthropometric surveys may use random cluster or purposive sampling techniques.

A1.6.5 Analysis

People’s ability to meet their food needs is analysed by analysing shifts in entitlements, and by anthropometric status. Risks to livelihoods are assessed by examining the type of coping strategies adopted and the proportion of the population adopting them. Different food and income sources are not quantified (as in HEA), but food insecurity is indicated if a population suffers a large reduction in one of its main food sources.

A1.6.6 Uses

If people are unable to meet their immediate food needs, then the immediate response is food aid. Alternative interventions designed to support livelihoods might include support to income, agriculture, and livestock/fishing.

A1.6.7 Application

The approach has mainly been applied in natural disasters, in particular to drought, floods and cyclones. Application in SCCPI include: Colombia, Tajikistan and Sudan (Red Sea State in northern Sudan).

A1.6.8 Strengths and weaknesses

The main strength of Oxfam–GB’s approach is that it can identify a range of livelihood interventions as well as the need for food aid. The major weakness is that it is based on natural disasters, and needs to be adapted for SCCPI. The approach is not consistently applied within Oxfam–GB.

A1.7 WFP – Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) and the Standard Analytical Framework (SAF)

A1.7.1 Sources

Hines (2002); WFP (2001); Oxfam–GB (2001)

A1.7.2 Objective

The main objective of VAM is to develop a detailed understanding of food insecurity and vulnerability to inform WFP food aid decision-making.

A1.7.3 Stages in assessment/assessment framework

The SAF encompasses three core activities:

- A comprehensive vulnerability assessment. This should be undertaken every three to five years and has two components: the situation analysis and community food security profiling;
- Periodic vulnerability monitoring, to support programme implementation over time. This involves monitoring the general food security and vulnerability status of key target groups by compiling early warning system information, key informant interviews, analysis of secondary data and direct field assessments by VAM staff where necessary;
- Emergency vulnerability analysis, which includes both assessment and monitoring and complements the overall WFP emergency programme design.

A1.7.4 Methods

Stages of information collection include:

- Literature review
- Secondary data analysis
- Consultation and consolidation
- Input to country strategic outline
- Community based analysis (using a combination of PRA techniques)
- Input to country plan and activity design

Secondary data sources include: satellite imagery of agro-climatic conditions, market data, and information on education, health and nutritional status, and PRA techniques at community level. The community-level assessment is done using a variety of PRA techniques.

A1.7.5 Analysis

Clustering analysis identifies clusters which act in similar ways in relation to food security. A relatively food-insecure area would have many indicators below the overall average, and a cluster that is relatively food-secure has most indicators above the overall average. Secondary data are used for this analysis. Community-level assessments (involving PRA) are used to validate findings from this analysis.

A1.7.6 Uses

The analysis is used to inform food aid decision-making at the policy level and at key points in the design and management of food assisted relief activities.

A1.7.7 Application

The VAM methodology has only recently been developed, mainly for stable, development contexts. An emergency VAM methodology is in the process of being developed and a number of pilot studies have been carried out, for example, in Kenya and Uganda. A modified VAM approach is also being developed in Columbia to assess the needs of the IDPs there.

A1.7.8 Strengths and weaknesses

There is as yet no standard emergency VAM methodology. Since this is a WFP methodology, its uses are largely limited to determining food aid needs and informing targeting decisions.

Annex 2 Rapid Appraisal Techniques

A2.1 Overview

This annex has been taken from Young et al. (2001).

A2.1.1 Direct observation

Direct observation assesses, among other things, the physical condition of the surroundings, the condition of crops and livestock, the physical appearance of people and their living conditions and the interactions between people. It is combined with a walk around the location, seeking out premises or sites relating to food security (the mill, shops or the marketplace, nearby fields), and visits to people in their homes.

A2.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews take place with key informants, who are purposively selected individuals. Interviews preferably take place away from other people. A mental or written checklist of key areas or open-ended questions is prepared in advance. Points of interest not previously considered are followed up.

A2.1.3 Proportional piling

Proportional piling is used to find out about the relative importance of different things. In relation to food security, it can show the relative importance of different sources of food, and changes in relative importance following a certain event. People are asked to identify their main sources of food or ways of acquiring food. They then select symbols representing these food sources, and put them on the ground or on a table. Against these symbols, they share out a fixed number (usually 100) of beans, beads or stones showing their relative importance. So, if there are 50 beans against crop production, this means it accounts for approximately 50% of the respondents' source of food.

A2.1.4 Timelines and chronologies

These are particularly useful in describing events prior to a displacement, or a historical review of periods of famine and food insecurity and people's perceptions of the event's main features, relative severity and underlying cause. This can give an indication of the relative severity of the current period of food insecurity, and different causes from previous periods of food insecurity.

A2.1.5 Seasonal diagramming

With seasonal diagramming, local people can describe the seasonal factors relating to food security, such as the production cycle of different food crops (planting, weeding and harvesting); the production of different livestock products; labour demands; and periods associated with raiding or other attacks. This is useful in showing seasonal differences in food supply and access to food, and

for identifying the 'hungry season', the period of plenty, and whether at a particular time of year the situation can be expected to improve, or deteriorate.

A2.1.6 Mapping

In mapping, local people are asked to draw a rough map of their surroundings, showing features like water sources, religious meeting places, schools, shops, markets, fields, areas where livestock are kept, areas accommodating particular social or ethnic groups, new arrivals and areas of restricted access. This is useful in getting an idea of scale, particularly where access is restricted. It is also useful in terms of planning visits and walks around the affected area.

A2.1.7 Activity profiles

Activity profiles are descriptions of people's activities throughout the day, and are useful in learning about gender differences and relationships, and the time spent acquiring food.