

The following short article follows chapter 2 (p. 14-15 and Appendix IV, p. 58-59) of my dissertation at SOAS, University of London.

Anita Leutgeb (2013) Fair Trade, better lives? An assessment of Fair Trade's contribution to improve Turkana basket weavers' livelihoods. University of London, SOAS, unpublished dissertation.

Livelihoods systems framework

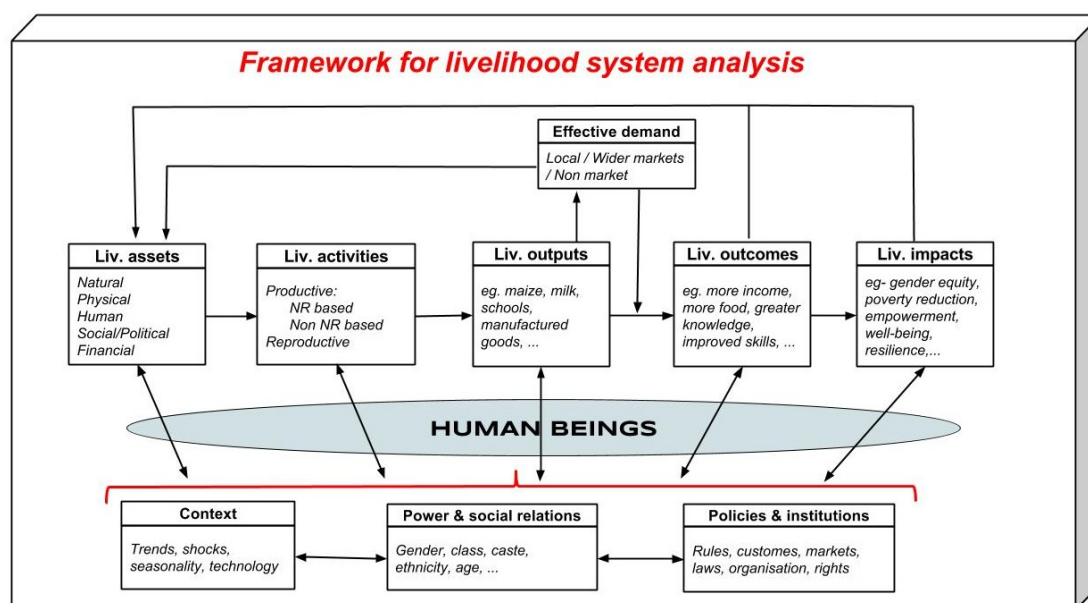
Livelihood approaches have their origins in the early 1990s in different UK institutions, mainly IDS, ODI and DFID with influences dating back to the early 1980s. Scoones (1998) by drawing on Chambers and Conway (1992) and others has given the 'IDS team's definition' of 'livelihood', that has become one of the most cited definitions on livelihoods:

'A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.'
(Scoones, 1998: 5)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) should depict the whole complexity of the reality of most of the poor in developing countries in one graph and serve as an analytical tool for planning, monitoring and evaluation. More recent critiques of the SLF come from gender and social development researchers who highlight the omission of political, gender and power relations (de Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Okali, 2006). Others (Dorward, 2003) have identified markets, institutions and technology as 'missing links in livelihoods analysis' (Dorward, 2003: 1). Drawing from different sources, an adapted framework for analyzing livelihoods was developed as a conceptual framework for the purposes of this study. This livelihoods system analysis framework differs from more 'classical' frameworks in the inclusion of the following:

- power and social relations (which influence all livelihoods)
- social and political assets
- reproductive activities
- markets
- livelihood impacts
- the graphical depiction of human beings at the centre of the livelihood system

Figure 1: Framework for livelihood system analysis



Source: Leutgeb, drawing on Scoones (1998: 4); DFID (1999: 1); Ellis (2000: 30); Dorward (2001: 2); de Haan/Zoomers (2005)

The original idea of a people-centred approach has been graphically depicted in the framework. People are part of a complex system. The framework helps to shed light into the complexity. A single researcher can hardly achieve to cover the whole complexity of such a framework. As others, however, have mentioned (Scoones, 1998; DFID, 1999), such frameworks serve as guides, tools or checklists. Depending on the particular study case different aspects will get more attention than others.

Markets (with the basic market forces supply and demand) are an important element of the livelihood system. Market failures, thin or missing markets, absent markets all constrain or foster peoples' possibilities to realise their livelihood goals. People's livelihoods are strongly influenced by contextual factors, by social institutions, political decisions as well as power relations. And people themselves through their actions (with varying degree of agency) shape these factors – therefore the arrows in the graph are in both directions. The immediate objective of Turkana women's basket weaving is – after having satisfied the own demand – to sell the baskets to either Fair Trade or Non-Fair Trade marketoutlets. Therefore, markets determine their possibilities to generate income and achieve wider goals (e.g. improved ability to cope with shocks).

Following the program theory logic a distinction between output – outcome – impact has been made. *Output* is the immediate result of an activity, *outcome* (also called *effect*, *objective*, *purpose*) is the short- to mid-term result achieved by using the output and *impact* is the long-

term change that is a consequence of the output (also called *goal, higher level outcomes, highest level results*).¹

To explain the different terms, here an example: Basket weaving is an activity. The *outputs* of this activity are baskets. By selling the baskets, income is generated. The income is the *outcome* of the activity. Income enables the basket weaver to buy food. If the income is sufficiently high and regular, in the long run the weaver will experience positive changes (*impact*) in his/her food security.

The above framework has been designed specifically for this study and served as an *aide-mémoire* for study design and data analysis. It should, however, be useful for different kinds of studies as the originally already broad approach has been further expanded and incorporated common critiques to the SLF.

¹ Different authors and agencies use sometimes different terms with equal meanings or equal terms with different meanings (Bamberger et al., 2012, chapter 2 and 10; RBM, 2010; Wilson-Grau, 2008; Smutylo, 2001).