



TOOL 5

WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT



Social survey being carried out in Gazi, Kenya, as part of the Mikoko Pamoja project.
Credit: Mikoko Pamoja



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What is the **purpose** of a well-being assessment?

- To identify critical livelihoods interventions for inclusion in the project design.
- To establish the socio-economic baseline in terms of the percentage of households in different well-being categories.
- To identify and assess key socio-economic indicators to use for project monitoring.

Plan Vivo Carbon Standard (PV Climate) **requirement?**

Strongly recommended. Although this is not specifically a PV Climate requirement, Well-being Assessments are strongly recommended as a tool for developing the socio-economic monitoring plan and baseline in the PDD (which is a PV Climate requirement) including the socio-economic indicators that will be used.

When to use this tool?

- Participatory well-being assessments should be used during project development (PDD stage) to develop ideas for relevant project interventions that will have socio-economic benefits, especially for the most disadvantaged project participants who can be identified using this tool.
- Participatory well-being assessments forms an important part of project monitoring by providing baseline socio-economic information and associated indicators, in a participatory way, that can be used to monitor socio-economic impacts over the course of the project - especially for the most disadvantaged households. Ideally, a project should conduct participatory well-being assessment throughout the project implementation period - as a minimum at the start (before validation) and again before verification.

Why is this tool required?

This is an important tool for PV Climate projects which can be difficult to facilitate sensitively because it reveals individual household vulnerabilities. It should therefore

be adapted to fit with local contexts and conditions. Bear in mind that it aims to find out the well-being status of different households - not their wealth or income levels. In some contexts, households will not be afraid of revealing their well-being status, in other situations they may not be prepared to reveal all types of information.

PV Climate projects aim to improve peoples' livelihoods and increase their levels of well-being through project interventions and activities - this tool helps participants and coordinators understand local livelihood strategies and identify appropriate project interventions that can achieve this. The well-being assessment is also a way to identify relevant and applicable socio-economic indicators that can show how people's livelihoods have changed as a result of the project. These indicators can be monitored to demonstrate project impact - especially for identified disadvantaged groups in the community. Using socio-economic monitoring it will be possible for projects to show differences between project impacts on different stakeholders and importantly, to show how the most disadvantaged groups have benefitted.

Participatory well-being assessments may be used as an alternative to a formal socio-economic survey. It has the advantage of using local knowledge and perceptions as the basis for the assessment rather than a questionnaire/survey which can be expensive and very time consuming to conduct, as well as producing a large amount of data which becomes difficult to analyse.

There are many different techniques for well-being assessment. The tool described here is a simple version that is most applicable for local project coordinators and developers working with PV Climate projects.

Who should participate?

Participants for the well-being assessment should include a small number of literate local people (5-6 people) selected for their local knowledge and covering a selection of occupations, ages, ethnicities, wealth statuses, and gender. Including a knowledgeable and respected local leader as a participant can be very helpful. It may be necessary to repeat the tool in different hamlets/wards of a village if the whole community population is very large. It should be facilitated by an experienced facilitator since it can potentially be sensitive and may raise some difficult issues.

How to use the tool?

- ☐ Discuss and agree with the small group of participants the meaning of well-being. You can give some examples of indicators from the table shown below. It will be important to explain that this is not about wealth or income. This is important because language and perceptions regarding the meaning of well-being will vary from project to project and community to community.
- ☐ Agree on the unit of analysis - in most cases this will be the household.

If there are too many households in a community, a discrete sub-unit should be selected covering up to 50 households only. If there are more households, then the assessment will have to be repeated in different sub-communities (sometimes called hamlets or wards).



The first part of the assessment is to develop locally appropriate and relevant indicators of well-being with participants in the small group.

- Explain to the group that the purpose of this part is to identify indicators that can be used to distinguish different households in terms of their well-being status.
- Ask questions like “how do you know if a household has a high or low level of well-being?” and “what are the visual signs of well-being?” ask participants to give their suggestions and record their answers.
- Make a list of the possible well-being indicators that have been identified (see table below for suggestions). There are many possibilities depending on the community and the socio-economic context.
- Prepare a flipchart with a table listing the indicators (or showing their pictures) in the first column. Discuss and agree which are the most useful and informative and rank them accordingly. See the table below where indicators are ranked from 1-10. You do not need to use all the indicators - so prioritise until you have a suitable number (at least 5).
- For each indicator, discuss and agree how you can define the status of the indicator for each household being considered. Note that this is not an exact science - participants should give their perceptions based on their local knowledge. Write this in the second and third columns of the table and add any comments or explanations in the last column. You may find it necessary to add extra columns if you find that you need to describe the status in more categories - but avoid making the exercise too complicated.



The second part of the assessment is to assign a status to each individual household based on the agreed indicators. The information can be collected in various ways. Avoid using formal surveys and questionnaires because these are time consuming, need a lot of resources and are not very participatory. A better method is to continue the participatory discussion in the form of a focus group or semi-structured Interviews with a small group of key informants. This depends on the number of households being assessed and takes into account any sensitivities around well-being indicators, the capacity of the group and existing information availability.

- ☐ Prepare a list of households in the village or sub-unit (hamlet). This can be obtained from recent census information or, for small communities, by asking for the names of households or by looking at the Social Map and listing the households on it. Prepare a small card or use a stone to represent each individual household. Note: census information may be out of date (with missing households) so, using local knowledge, more recent household arrivals may need to be added
- ☐ Starting with the first indicator, take each card/stone in turn and assess the status of the household against the listed indicator and place it in a status category on the actual flipchart. Allow plenty of discussion about each household until everyone agrees that it has been correctly placed. Continue with all the remaining households for the first indicator.
- ☐ When all households have been completed, you will have different numbers of cards/stones in each status category for the indicator. Don't keep a record of the names of the households in each category - the objective is simply to find the number of households in each. Count the number of households in each category and record the number
- ☐ Repeat the step for each of the well-being indicators putting each household into the categories defined. After each indicator has been completed, record the number of households in each status category.
- ☐ The initial numbers form the socio-economic baseline information for the community. They can then be converted into percentages e.g. 25% of households have no land or 40% of households have food self-sufficiency for only 8 months.
- ☐ Although this is not necessarily highly accurate information, it will be understood and have real meaning for local people, and they will feel they have participated in collecting the information.
- ☐ It may be necessary to repeat the Well-being Assessment Tool depending on the size of the community - perhaps in each sub-community or hamlet.
- ☐ After some years, the exercise should be repeated using the same indicators to show what has changed. Again, the information collected can be summarised in terms of percentages and project impacts can be suggested e.g. the percentage of households with 8 months food self-sufficiency has increased from 40% to 50% etc.

The project team should review secondary sources of information before beginning this exercise e.g. census data. Additional information can be obtained from discussions with key informants (e.g., village chiefs and extension agents).

Criteria for assessment may include the type of house, family size, size of landholdings and their level of productivity, availability of irrigation water, number of livestock, ownership of farm machinery, off-farm cash remittance, food sufficiency, and children's access to formal education.

Examples of some well-being indicators & status categories

Indicator & Rank	Status 1	Status 2	Comments
1. Type of house	Well-constructed 'modern' house in good condition	Poor quality or 'traditional' house	Depends on the local context. Roof condition may be critical for this indicator
2. Income source of the household	At least one external source of income (from a paid job or remittances sent by a family member)	No external sources of household income	Consider the importance of seasonal income sources
3. Geographical location of the household	In a village/ community and able to benefit from some local services e.g. school, health post, all-weather road	Geographically isolated or distant from local services	Social Mapping may provide more information if this has been carried out
4. Social status of household	Members of the majority ethnic or caste group	Members of a minority ethnic or discriminated caste group	In some cases, it will be important to also consider the status of recently arrived and settled immigrants to the community
5. Head of household	Male headed	Female headed (e.g. widow)	
6. Indebtedness	None	Household has some debts	This may not be known - but participants could guess based on their local knowledge about the households
7. Food security	Able to feed all household members for all or most of the year from own resources	Food deficit from own resources for some months of the year	Particularly important for subsistence farming communities and households

8. Land ownership	Households owns a significant area of productive land	Landless household or holding only a small area of land	Important for smallholder farming communities
9. Household assets	Household owns a vehicle and TV	No significant assets	Based on local context
10. Livestock ownership	Larger number of cattle owned	Few or no cattle owned	Based on local context

A. Example of Well-Being Assessment for a community in Bhutan

<p>LARGE LAND HOLDINGS</p> <p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - owns vehicles - owns building - lease lands - CGT roofing - owns apple orchard - owns cattle - excess production and sold. * collects firewood, leaf litter. 	<p>≥ 50 decr ~ 2 Ac</p> <p>15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - own CGT roofing - just sufficient. - small apple orchard. - own cattle - * collects firewood, leaf litter. 	<p>NO LAND < 50 decr</p> <p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not self sufficient - stays in a hut - no cattle - daily labourer in other's field * collects firewood
<p>GOVT. SERVANT</p> <p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-3 from each village, ones - mostly working with gold and silver smith at Anglenzampa - only 2/3 in Army. - They are also farming * No products collect. 	<p>LIME BURNING</p> <p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - main source of income - 5 times per week minimum - sells at the rate of Nu. 800 per ton. - They also do farming * Collects firewood for burning * Collects limestone 	<p>SILVER SMITH.</p> <p>16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They also does farming - And make side income through silver smithing. * Coal burning/charcoal * Resin (Botho)

B. Example of Well-being Assessment prepared by women from a Baka community in Cameroon

In this example, the exercise brought to light the cyclical problems of alcoholism, domestic violence, financial management (bottom of diagram) and their indicators of well-being (top of diagram) which comprise a field producing enough for their children to eat well; good clothes; a lamp in the house; and pots and pans in the kitchen.

