



CRS University

INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MODULES

Glossary of Terms

Access¹

The ability to use *assets* and benefit from services. *Access* is often defined by *systems* and *structures* and helps to determine livelihood *strategies*.

Assets

Something tangible or intangible that people own or to which they have access. There are six categories of *Assets* in CRS' Integral Human Development conceptual framework: financial, human/spiritual, natural, physical, political and social. *Assets* are also called "capital" or "capacities" in other livelihoods frameworks. *Assets* are often damaged or lost in a disaster (e.g., tsunami or earthquake). Control over access to *assets* is often dependent on *systems* and *structures* (e.g., gender or caste).

Asset diversification

A livelihood *strategy* of increasing resilience by having many different types of *assets* to depend on in a crisis and reducing vulnerability to the loss of one or a few *asset* types.

Asset maximization

A livelihood *strategy* of increasing the quantity and quality of *assets* to improve the capacity of households to leave poverty and reduce vulnerability.

¹ This is an abbreviated version of the full Glossary of Terms found on pages 50-56 in the CRS publication "[A User's Guide to Integral Human Development](#)"

Asset recovery

A livelihood *strategy* of rebuilding *assets* lost in a disaster.

Coping/Survival mechanisms

A livelihood *strategy* used by people to get through difficult periods, which can have positive as well as negative effects.

Cycle

Seasonal event that occurs on a predictable and periodic schedule over time (e.g., flooding, drought, malaria, hungry season, drop in grain price following harvest).

Disaster

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing wide-spread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. A disaster is a function of the risk process. It results from the combination of hazards, conditions of vulnerability and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk.

Disaster risk reduction

The conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development.

Food aid

Edible commodities donated to populations in food insecure situations in order to improve their *food security*.

Food availability

The supply of food in a nation, region or locality. Sources of supply may include home production for consumption, food stocks and *food aid*.

Food access

The ability of a household to obtain food for its needs, whether its source is home production, commercial purchases or transfers. Physical access (in terms of market access) is also important.

Food security

The physical and economic access by all people, at all times, to sufficient food and water to meet their needs for a productive and healthy life today, and the good health to use it properly, without undermining future *food security*.

Integral

Holistic, essential for completeness, having everything required. For example, Integral Human Development would not be limited to an objective of increasing income, but would also look at health, education and right relationships within the household and the community.

Integral Human Development

A concept originating from Catholic social teaching, IHD promotes the good of every person and the whole person; it is cultural, economic, political, social and spiritual. IHD is also a process that enables individuals and communities to protect and expand the choices they have to improve their lives, meet their basic human needs, free themselves from oppression and realize their full human potential. The CRS vision for IHD is that the people we serve increasingly realize their full human potential in solidarity with others and in the context of a just and peaceful society that respects the dignity of every person and the integrity of creation.

IHD conceptual framework

A comprehensive, holistic framework, which allows one to assess and analyze the complex reality of poverty, vulnerability and resilience at multiple levels. It builds on the Sustainable Livelihoods model developed by DFID and utilized by organizations such as CARE and Oxfam but is unique in its grounding in Catholic social teaching.

Livelihood Strategy

Households develop their livelihood *strategies* based on the combination of *assets* to which they have *access*, and the vulnerabilities to which they are exposed, taking into consideration both the enabling and constraining aspects of *structures* and *systems*. There are six major categories of livelihood *strategies*: Coping/survival *strategies*, Risk reduction, Engagement, Asset recovery, Asset diversification and Asset maximization. Outcomes from the *strategies* can be positive or negative.

Mitigation

Structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.

Outcomes

The results of livelihood *strategies*, which are based on *assets*, *systems* and *structures*, and sources of *risk* and *vulnerability*. *Outcomes* can include *access* to basic needs, *food security*, more sustainable use of natural resources, increased income and/or well-being. Higher level *outcomes* can include the protection of human dignity and peace and justice for all members of a community.

Resilience

The capacity of a household or community to cope, resist, and recover from a *shock*, *cycle* or *trend*. This is determined partly by the amount and diversity of *assets* to which the household has *access*, community solidarity mechanisms and the effectiveness of disaster preparedness plans.

Risk reduction strategies

A livelihood *strategy* that minimizes household or community *vulnerability* to *shocks*, *cycles* and *trends*. This could include, for example, planting drought resistant seed varieties in a drought-prone region.

Risk

Potential losses from a *shock* due to household or community *vulnerability*. Examples of *risks* include natural risks, health risks, economic risks, life cycle risks, social risks, political risks or environmental risks. *Risk* = Hazard x *Vulnerability*.

Shock

Sudden, severe events that harm people's lives or livelihoods (e.g., epidemics, natural disasters, conflicts, job loss, death of wage earner, military coup, etc.).

Structures

In the context of CRS' *IHD conceptual framework*, *structures* are defined as the "hardware" or institutions which include the public and private actors and organizations that define policies and deliver services. They affect how we can use certain *assets* and, in some cases, who has *access* to specific *assets*. Structures can have an enabling effect on households, but they can also sometimes constrain households.

Sustainable Livelihoods

The capabilities, *assets* (including both material and social) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and *shocks* and maintain or enhance its capabilities and *assets* both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.²

Systems

In the context of CRS' *IHD conceptual framework*, the "software"; including the beliefs, norms, values, identity, policies, markets and rules for interaction. Examples include gender norms or economic policies and regulations. Systems affect how people use certain *assets* and, in some cases, who has *access* to specific *assets*. Individuals or communities with a lot of *assets* may also be able to influence *systems* for change through advocacy or engagement *strategies*. *Systems* can either enable or constrain households.

Trend

Tendency that occurs over time. For example, crop prices could be increasing or decreasing, and rainfall could be increasing or decreasing.

Trend analysis

² Adapted from DFID. 1999. Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets.
http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_pdfs/section1.pdf

A process whereby a team collects data through a variety of methods (e.g., case histories, calendars, photographs and maps) to construct patterns over time in order to identify prevailing tendencies.

Vulnerability

The degree to which people are put at *risk* by or susceptible to the effects of a hazard due to their geographical location, poverty, weak infrastructure, gender, age, health status, etc.