

# Through the wellbeing looking glass: the relevance of well-being concepts to SSF *A literature review*

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**Governing Small-  
scale Fisheries for  
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# Objectives of review paper

- to determine the relevance of a conceptual framework centered on well-being to analyze social and economic dynamics in small-scale fisheries
- To provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of well-being, in the social science literature in general, and the development literature in particular
- To provide a preliminary review of well-being concepts in the SSF literature
- To determine the added value of well-being to our current understanding of social and economic dynamics in fishing communities



Can the well-being approach help govern small-scale fisheries better?

# The wellbeing approach

- understood and critiqued as an empty notion; notoriously slippery, difficult to measure or to operationalize
  - Critique from applied, development/quantitative economic perspectives
- perceived to be an important and all-encompassing term conveying a breadth and depth of meanings no other term can
- seen to be a contested concept - its meaning and content influenced by particular social, political and cultural contexts; who is using it and why
  - Critique from conflict approaches – political economy, Marxism



# Key Theoretical Strands of Wellbeing Analyses

**The Capabilities Approach**  
 Nussbaum (1995)  
 Sen (1999)

**Sustainable Livelihoods Approach**  
 IDS/DFID

**Human Rights-based Approaches (HRBA)**

**Theories of Human Need/ Social Psychology**  
 e.g. Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001)

**Welfare Economics & Economics of Happiness**  
 e.g. Easterlin (2006)  
 Graham & Pettinato (2000)  
 Veenhoven (2004)

**Participatory development**

**Vulnerability Approaches & Human Security Analyses**

**-Poverty as capability deprivation** ('capability as individual diversities and abilities)  
 -Emphasis on functionings ('doing particular things / how well a particular aspect of life is lived')

-Factors affecting livelihoods of the poor and the relationships between these  
 -Social economic and environmental vulnerabilities taken into account

-Rights explicitly integrated as means and ends to human development  
 -Focus on peoples' agency, local needs and aspirations –moving away from overtly legalistic approach  
 -RBA as political process to develop local capacities for participation

*Different strands include:*  
 -Michalos' Goal Achievement model  
 -Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs  
 -Gerson's transcendental conceptions of wellbeing ('being of worth')

- Focus on relative income and/or social status and reported happiness  
 -Reliance on subjective and objective measures  
 -Social status and societal norms are considered

**IDS & WeD Group (Bath)**  
 ('3-D Wellbeing': Material, Social & Cognitive)

**UNU-WIDER, Helsinki**  
**UNU-EHS, Bonn**

Amnesty Intl., CARE Intl, Habitat International Coalition (HIC)

**Oxford Economics Group**  
 "Subjective Wellbeing Poverty" Analysis

**Princeton**

- Canfield et al (2006)
- Copestake (2005)
- Gough and McGregor (2007)
- McGregor (2008)
- Yamamoto (2005)

- Brauch (2005)
- Gaspar (2004)
- Clarke (2006)

- Kingdon and Knight (2003)
- Knight et al (2006)
- Offer (2004)

Kahneman and Kruger (2006)-  
*The Day Reconstruction Method*

**Human Development Index (UNDP)**

**Wellbeing Literatures**

**Qualitative & Quantitative Measures of wellbeing**  
**Early indices (focus on local living conditions e.g. safety on streets, unemployment, rule of law. :**  
 \* Index of Social Progress (Estes 1984)  
 \* 'Quality of Life' in Nations (Slotjje 1991)  
**More recently:**  
 \* Happy Planet Index (nef)  
 • The Wellbeing Assessment method/  
 • 'Wellbeing of Nations' (Prescott-Allen 2001)  
 \* WeDQoL survey (WeD Group, Bath)  
 • Participatory poverty assessments  
 • (*Voices of the Poor*)

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# Mapping common ground: wellbeing and approaches to poverty analyses

## QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES TO POVERTY

- Income, wealth, consumption (individual/household level measures), GDP, GNP (economic productivity)
- subjective wellbeing; economics of happiness

Economic analyses of wellbeing

## PARTICIPATORY POVERTY ASSESSMENTS WorldBank's project *Consultations with the Poor*

- *Voices of the Poor* (Narayan 2000)
- **Bottom-up, participatory methods** to draw out **peoples' own perceptions**, experiences and visions of wellbeing; articulation of **needs and aspirations**
- Perceptions of wellbeing as **multidimensional, identity-bound, gendered, age-specific spatially contingent, context-dependent & socio-culturally relative**
- Beyond material and livelihood security – *"wellbeing as a state of mind and being"*

## THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

Capabilities as fundamental entitlements Or 'freedoms'

Bodily capabilities (e.g. health, literacy, shelter) political freedom and participation, social opportunities and affiliation, cognitive virtue, ecological virtue; leisure; separateness [Nussbaum 1995; Sen 1999]

Social capital

WeD

Meanings, beliefs and values that underpin aspirations and goals (farming or fishing as a "way of life")

## THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH

**Livelihoods** - "way(s) of making a living"  
Five core asset categories of *livelihood security* (human, physical, natural, social, financial)

**Entitlements, social and institutional arrangements governing resource access**

## VULNERABILITY APPROACHES

- Changing patterns of risk
- \* Ecosystem impact on human wellbeing
- \* Coping strategies to economic, social and ecological change

Ecological, socio-political & economic threats that endanger livelihoods

## ECOSYSTEM WELLBEING

Interdependency on ecosystem services

**Rights & capabilities:** health, education literacy, shelter, nutrition, social and political participation

## RIGHTS BASED APPROACHES

Social, economic & cultural rights through participatory citizenship

Participatory development

Wellbeing of Nations

MEA

## ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

**Rights & freedoms:** Freedom from want; fear; freedom of future generations to inherit healthy environment; freedom from hazard impacts

# Social Wellbeing: comparing definitions and indicators

Schools of thought/bodies of work	Definition	Indicators	Key elements
Sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA)	<p>A livelihood comprises the <b>capabilities, assets and activities</b> required for a <b>means of living</b>. A livelihood is <b>sustainable</b> when it can <b>cope with and recover from stresses and shocks</b> and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, <b>while not undermining the natural resource base</b> (Chambers and Conway 1992).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Human capital</b></li> <li>• <b>Physical capital</b></li> <li>• <b>Financial capital</b></li> <li>• <b>Social capital</b></li> <li>• <b>Natural capital</b></li> </ul> <p>(Chambers and Conway 1992)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Asset-based (5 capitals) HH livelihood portfolios</i></li> <li>• <i>Vulnerability to risks and shocks</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of mediating institutions and processes that govern access to assets and activities</i></li> </ul>
Capabilities approach	<p><b>Capabilities</b> may be called <b>'wellbeing freedom'</b>, 'reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another' (Sen 1992). <b>Capabilities</b> include the <b>ability</b> to be adequately nourished, to avoid premature mortality, and to take part in the life of the community. <b>Functionings</b>, in contrast, are <b>the state of being well-nourished and actually taking part in the life of the community</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Life</b></li> <li>• <b>Bodily integrity and health</b></li> <li>• <b>Senses, imagination and thought</b></li> <li>• <b>Emotions</b></li> <li>• <b>Practical reason</b></li> <li>• <b>Affiliation – living with others, social basis of self respect/ freedom from discrimination</b></li> <li>• <b>Other species</b></li> <li>• <b>Play</b></li> <li>• <b>Control over environment</b></li> </ul> <p>(Nussbaum 2000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Multi-dimensionality of human development</i></li> <li>• <i>Poverty as capability deprivation ('capability as individual diversities and abilities)</i></li> <li>• <i>Emphasis on functionings ('doing particular things / how well a particular aspect of life is lived')</i></li> </ul>

<p>Human needs; social psychology : “subjective wellbeing”</p>	<p><b>Fundamental or ultimate needs of all human beings do not differ nearly as much as do their conscious everyday desires.</b> A measure of wellbeing that focuses on these fundamental needs can be applied across societies and time as fundamental needs are universal, whereas daily desires differ both inter-temporally and inter-spatially. Whilst local cultures may determine specific roads to achieve these ends, these ends themselves can be considered universal. <b>The ultimate need to which humans aspire is self-actualization (Maslow 1970)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smiling frequency</li> <li>• Smiling with the eyes (“unfakeable smile”)</li> <li>• Ratings of one’s happiness made by friends</li> <li>• Frequent verbal expressions of positive emotions</li> <li>• Sociability and extraversion</li> <li>• Sleep quality</li> <li>• Happiness of close relatives</li> <li>• Self-reported health</li> <li>• High income, and high income rank in a reference group</li> <li>• Active involvement in religion</li> <li>• Recent positive changes of circumstances (increased income, marriage)</li> <li>• (Diener and Suh 1999, Layard 2005, Frey and Stutzer 2002)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Basic needs, safety, belonging, self-esteem, self-actualization (Maslow 1970)</b></p>
<p>Welfare economics: “economics of happiness” ; “subjective wellbeing”</p>	<p>An assessment of welfare, combining psychological and economic techniques. (Graham 2005) Subjective wellbeing measures features of individuals’ perceptions of their experiences, not their utility as economists typically conceive of it...<b>Life satisfaction is a combined assessment of the balance of affect (positive and negative feelings) in one’s life with how one’s life measures up to aspirations and goals (Kahneman and Krueger 2006).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall happiness/satisfaction with life</b></li> <li>• <b>Labor market situation (employment status)</b></li> <li>• <b>Job satisfaction</b></li> <li>• <b>Health</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing conditions</b></li> <li>• <b>Social relations (marital status, civic trust)</b></li> <li>(Lelkes 2005; Graham 2005)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Happiness economics relies on more expansive notions of utility and welfare, including interdependent utility functions, procedural utility, and the interaction between rational and non-rational influences in determining economic behavior. (Graham 2005)</i></li> <li>• <i>“Experienced utility” or “process benefits” - direct subjective consequences of engaging in one activity over others;</i></li> <li>• <i>“Remembered utility” – retrospective evaluations of past episodes (K&amp; K 2006)</i></li> </ul>

# Social Wellbeing: comparing definitions and indicators

Schools of thought/bodies of work	Definition	Indicators	Key elements
<p><i>Voices of the Poor</i> (Narayan/WorldBank 2000)</p>	<p>“Wellbeing and illbeing <b>are states of mind and being.</b> Wellbeing has a psychological and spiritual dimension as a mental state of harmony, happiness and peace of mind.” (Narayan 2000)</p>	<p><b>Material Wellbeing:</b> Food; assets; shelter work/livelihood  <b>Bodily Wellbeing:</b> Being strong; healthy; looking good  <b>Freedom of choice and action:</b> Being able to help other people in the community; to gain an education; to have mobility; to have time for rest, recreation and being with others  <b>Security:</b> Safe and secure environment; personal physical security; confidence in the future; Lawfulness and access to Justice; security in old age  <b>Social (and psychological) Wellbeing:</b> Caring for and settling children, having self-respect and dignity, living in peace and harmony, having good relations with family and community</p>	<p><b>Their approach combines:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Participatory methods which helped articulate gendered and identity-bound perceptions of wellbeing ;</b></li> <li>• <b>* Cultural and social dimensions of wellbeing with material needs and institutional arrangements;</b></li> <li>• <b>Cognitive perceptions of what it means to live a “good life”</b></li> <li>• <b>The way people think/feel about their own agency</b></li> </ul>
<p>Vulnerability approaches</p>	<p>Vulnerability refers to <b>exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty in coping with them.</b> Vulnerability has thus two sides: an external side of risks, shocks, and stress to which an individual or household is subject; and an</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Net assets</b></li> <li>• <b>Labor power</b></li> <li>• <b>Dependency ratios</b></li> <li>• <b>Access to food</b></li> <li>• <b>Exposure to external stress and shocks</b></li> </ul> <p>(Chambers 1989)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vulnerability is linked with</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- deprivation</li> <li>- ill-health</li> <li>- malnutrition</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Coping strategies to economic, social and</b></li> </ul>

# Social Wellbeing: comparing definitions and indicators (slide 1)

Schools of thought/bodies of work	Definition	Indicators	Key elements
WeD Group, Univ. of Bath (McGregor 2008)	<p>Wellbeing is a <i>state of being</i> with others which arises where human needs are met, <i>where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals</i>, and where one can enjoy a satisfactory quality of life.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Material wellbeing</b></li> <li>• <b>Relational/Social</b></li> <li>• <b>Cognitive /Psychological</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <i>The extent to which material &amp; psychological needs met</i></li> <li>* <i>Capacities to act meaningfully in pursuit of aspirations</i></li> <li>• <i>Satisfaction with quality of life</i></li> </ul>
Gender approach	<p>Development is a process for increasing human well-being (survival, security and autonomy), and not confined to economic growth or increased productivity. <b>Gender analysis needs to clarify whether immediate, underlying, and/or structural factors are responsible for inequality</b> and how these affect the well-being of people. Women and men are located within families and households, which in turn are linked to a <b>network of social relations</b> connecting them to the community, market, and state (Kabeer 1994).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resources/assets</b></li> <li>• <b>Agency/decision-making</b></li> <li>• <b>Achievement/outcomes</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>The approach highlights the importance of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>social relations as determining people's roles, rights, responsibilities and claims over others</i></li> <li>• <i>institutions as key to producing and maintaining social inequalities, including gender inequalities</i></li> <li>• <i>gender policies as differing according to the extent gender issues are recognized and addressed.</i></li> </ul>

Schools of thought/bodies of work	Definition	Indicators	Dimensions of wellbeing
<p><b>Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005)</b></p>	<p>People are integral parts of ecosystems and a <b>dynamic interaction</b> exists between them and other parts of ecosystems, with the <b>changing human condition driving, both directly and indirectly, changes in ecosystems and thereby causing changes in human well-being</b>. At the same time, social, economic, and cultural factors unrelated to ecosystems alter the human condition, and many natural forces influence ecosystems.</p>	<p><b><u>Security</u></b>: Personal Safety; secure resource access; security from disasters;  <b><u>Basic material for good life</u></b>: adequate livelihoods; sufficient nutritious food shelter; access to goods  <b><u>Health</u></b>: strength; feeling well; access to clean air and water  <b><u>Good social relations</u></b>: social cohesion mutual respect ; ability to help other  <b><u>Freedom of choice and action</u></b>:  The opportunity to be able to achieve what an individual values doing and being</p>	<p>Emphasis on mapping interactions between human wellbeing and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• ecosystem services and;</li> <li>• direct and indirect drivers of change (e.g. climate change, economic globalization, technology adaptation and use etc.)</li> <li>• Intrinsic value of ecosystems and species, irrespective of their utility</li> </ul>
<p><b>‘The Wellbeing of Nations’</b> Prescott-Allen (2001)</p>	<p>Human wellbeing as “a condition in which all members of society are <b>able to determine</b> and meet their needs and have <b>a large range of choices to meet their potential</b> .</p>	<p><b>Health &amp; population Wealth;</b>  <b>Knowledge &amp; culture Community</b> (i.e. rights &amp; freedoms)  <b>Equity</b></p>	<p>Human wellbeing and ecosystem wellbeing are given equal importance/weight given their interdependency in this model</p>

# SSF Literature: Wellbeing approach

## Two main theoretical strands

- Social well-being (McGregor 2008)
- Economics of happiness (Dixon 1997; Kahneman and Krueger 2006)



# SSF Literature: Social wellbeing approach

- Key authors:
  - Theoretical/exploratory: Bavinck 2008, 2009, Coulthard 2009, McGregor 2009, Coulthard et al. 2011
  - Empirical: Coulthard 2009, Weeratunge 2009
- Thrust
  - To analyze general and specific SSF issues using a well-being approach
  - To link it with interactive governance concepts in SSF
  - To link with/frame in terms of fisheries crisis (Coulthard et al.)
  - Empirical papers apply a well-being approach to analysis
- Gaps/value addition
  - Confined to WeD approach; theoretical discussion will gain from including other approaches

# SSF Literature: Economics of happiness approach

- Key authors:
  - Theoretical/Empirical: Pollnac and Poggie (2008); Smith and Clay 2010
- Thrust
  - To analyze job satisfaction and why fishers remain in fisheries despite lack of economic returns
  - To show relationship between subjective (job satisfaction) and objective (HH income) wellbeing among fishers (Smith and Clay 2010)
  - Longitudinal and comparative studies on changes in subjective and objective happiness
- Gaps/value addition
  - Confined to economics of happiness approach; theoretical discussion will gain from including other approaches and case studies

# SSF Literature: Sustainable livelihoods approach



- Key authors
  - Theoretical: Allison & Ellis 2001, Allison & Horemans 2005
  - Review: Macfadyen & Corcoran 2002
  - Empirical/Applied: Allison 2002 (Uganda); Allison & Mvula 2002 (Malawi), SFLP, West Africa
  - Social-institutional mechanisms/exclusion: Bene 2003, Neiland and Bene 2004
- Thrust
  - Holistic analysis of social and economic dimensions, including vulnerability and institutional structures/processes
- Gaps/Value addition
  - Cognitive dimension (identities and aspirations) not always elaborated



# SSF Literature: Vulnerability

- Key authors:
  - Adger et al. 2005, Allison et al. 2009
  - Jepson & Jacob 2007, Clay & Olsen 2008 , Coulthard 2008, Ahmed and Fajmer 2009, Brooks et al. 2009, Bene 2009
- Thrust
  - National level vulnerability of the fisheries sector (to climate change)
  - Vulnerability assessment in fishing communities – fishing as a way of life, exposure to risks.
  - Vulnerability indices
  - Within SLA framework
- Gaps/Value addition
  - For national analysis and RVI, a well-being approach could have improved the social and added cognitive dimensions
  - For VCI, a more rigorous and holistic framework to generate indicators
  - For Brooks et al. 2009, it would have strengthened the cognitive dimension



# SSF Literature: Capabilities

- Key authors
  - Literacy (Maddox 2008, Maddox and Overa 2009)
  - Health (Huang 2002, Allison and Seeley 2004, Westaway et al. 2007)
  - Food security (Kurien 2004; Aswani and Furusawa 2007, Bene et al 2010)
- Thrust
  - Contextualizing literacy, health, food security issues within fisheries community/sector realities and governance
  - Social and material dimensions are well covered
- Gap/value addition
  - Better incorporation of cognitive dimension



# SSF Literature: Social capital

- Key authors
  - Isham (2000), Adger (2002), Fowler and Etchegary (2008), Amarasinghe (2009)
- Thrust
  - One paper with a more econometric approach, one with a socio-psychological/wellbeing approach, one with a social approach (cooperatives)
- Gaps/Value addition
  - Missing a more comprehensive well-being approach



# SSF Literature: Identities

- Key authors
  - Pollnac et al. 2001, McGoodwin 2001, Eder 2005, Gupta 2007, Blount and Kitner 2007; ethnographic monographs (e.g. Stirrat 1988, Hviding 1996)
- Thrust
  - Ranges from empirical, political economic, post-modernist to linguistic approaches
  - Strong on cognitive and social dimensions
- Gaps/Value addition
  - A well-being approach would incorporate the material/livelihood dimension better



# SSF Literature: Rights

- Key authors
  - Overall human rights: Allison et al. 2011, Allison 2008, Sharma 2008
  - Fishing tenure rights: Davis and Jentoft 2001, Aswani & Furusawa 2005, Davis & Wagner 2006, Sherman 2006, Capistrano 2010
- Thrust
  - Incorporate human rights into fisheries governance
  - Most work is on indigenous/aboriginal fisheries tenure rights in the context of SSF governance
- Gaps/value addition
  - Rights-based development approach would link with issues of vulnerability, marginalization/social exclusion and asset poverty
  - A well-being approach would provide a more holistic framework which would connect human rights/security issues with livelihoods and social relations

# SSF Literature: Gender



## Key authors

- Livelihoods: Bennett 2005, Kusakabe et al. 2006, Tindall & Holvoet 2008
- Vulnerabilities: Bennett et al. 2004 (coping strategies)
- Capabilities: Appleton 2000, Bene & Merton 2008 (HIV/AIDS); Khader et al. 2006 (nutrition), Maddox and Overa 2009 (literacy)
- Social capital: Kim 2003, Kripa & Surendranathan 2008
- Identities: Nadel-Klein & Davis, 1988, Davis 1988, Gulati 1988, Davis 1993, Overa 1993, Ram 1993, Rubinoff 1999, Walker 2001, Hapke & Ayyankaril 2004, Power 2005, Neis et al. 2005
- Rights: De Silva & Yamao 2006, McCay 2006, Munoz 2008, Sunde & Telela 2008, Nayak 2006, 2008
- Conceptual: Weeratunge et al. 2010



# SSF Literature: Gender

- Thrust
  - Dimensions of well-being interwoven into analysis because the feminist theoretical framework emphasizes lived experiences and gender constructs are recognized as social and cultural
  - Work on identities uses ethnographic approach
- Gaps/Value addition
  - A well-being framework would help to be more systematic
  - Would help to be more rigorous with the material dimension
  - Kabeer's social relations perspective is grounded in a well-being approach but hardly used in the SSF literature

# Conclusions



- Well-being approaches build on previous social, psychological and economic approaches
- Incorporation of well-being approaches limited in the SSF literature – social wellbeing and economics of happiness approaches predominate
- Some dimensions of wellbeing can be identified implicitly but not grounded substantively in a conceptual framework
- SLA, poverty, vulnerability, capabilities, identities, rights and gender are themes which can be linked to wellbeing concepts within the SSF literature – main focus on material and social dimensions
- Well-being perspective can add the cognitive dimension (i.e. motivations and aspirations of people), now mostly revealed in ethnographic studies
- Gap in SSF literature: How to effectively link human wellbeing to ecosystems wellbeing/health

# Good things of land and sea

“People of the Marovo area relate to their marine and terrestrial environments as sources of material and spiritual sustenance. It is axiomatic to Marovo perceptions of the lagoon and surrounding lands and seas that these environments contain an immense cornucopia of ‘good things’ (*tingilonga leadi*) that provide the basis (*chubina*, trunk, bottom of) of the Marovo way of life. In the following pages, I attempt to describe the Marovo environment in terms of what it provides people with, in terms of both ‘resources’ that can be exploited for food and cash needs, and of the less tangible but nonetheless crucial ‘affordances’ such as markers of history and of social relations. (Hviding 1996)

# Perceptions of a “good life”

*A household needs food security, firm village leadership, a strong church to have a good life. I am personally not someone who needs so much. I'm thankful to have enough to eat and nobody is sick. My family is healthy, my basic needs are met.* (Male, 56 years, copra, gardening, fishing, retired forestry officer)

*Helping each other is very important. If people don't help each other we don't have good things [from the garden and reef]. When I compare my family with others, my family is better. We have what others don't have. We're not hungry. Gardening and fishing help us.* (Female, 50 years, gardening, fishing, weaving mats)

*People need to have enough to support themselves – money, shelter. I wouldn't say we're more well-off. There are others more well-off in terms of resources, depends on how they make money. For everything they depend on money – better standard of living. Some have resources and don't make use of them because of laziness. In villages they have more resources than in towns.*

(Male, 39 years, reef fish collector, trading, fishing)

*A family needs water, house and a garden. We are the same as other people.*

(Female, 45 years, gardening, fishing, copra)

**(Field data, Western Province, Solomon Islands, 2010)**

# Thank you.

