

An Asset-based Approach to Community Development:

A Manual for Village Organizers



*Produced for the SEWA Jeevika Project
by Coady International Institute
St. Francis Xavier University*

CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	5
INTRODUCTION TO SEWA JEEVIKA	7
INTRODUCTION	11
SELF EMPLOYED WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION: A BRIEF HISTORY	13
BUILDING ASSETS AND PROMOTING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH	15
THE PARTICIPATORY MICRO PLANNING PROCESS UNDER SEWA JEEVIKA ..	17
INTEGRATING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH INTO THE JEEVIKA MICRO- PLANNING PROCESS	25
SEWA JEEVIKA’S SIX STEPS OF MICRO-PLANNING	26
MODIFIED MICRO-PLANNING PROCESS.....	26
TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH	27
SELECTING VILLAGES.....	29
MOTIVATING VILLAGERS.....	31
Appreciative Interviewing.....	32
Community Analysis of Success.....	33
Positive Deviance	35
IDENTIFYING VILLAGE ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES.....	37
Mapping Individual Skills: Hand, Heart, Head.....	39
Capacity Inventories.....	42
Mapping Groups or Associations.....	43
Mapping Institutions.....	46
Mapping Physical and Natural Resources	48
Transect Mapping.....	50
STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THE JSM	53
IDENTIFYING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.....	55
Leaky Bucket	56
LINKING ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VILLAGE PLANNING	59
Linking, Mobilizing, and Organizing for Immediate Action.....	61
PRIORITIZING AND SCHEDULING WORK.....	65
Building a Comprehensive Plan	66
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	69
REFERENCES.....	71

FOREWORD

This manual and its companion manual on participatory monitoring and evaluation, is the result of a joint effort by the Self Employed Women's Association (India) and the Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University (Canada).

Inspired by Gandhian principles, SEWA's mandate and its work on the SEWA Jeevika project has emphasized respect for the disadvantaged and for the power of collective action. It follows from this that working with the disadvantaged requires an appreciation for their strengths and capacities as well as a determination to use these strengths to increase access to the means of livelihood security and a life of dignity. On the part of the Coady Institute, its historical traditions in the Antigonish Movement expressed similar confidence in the power of people organizing: "Use what you have to secure what you have not!" urged Moses Coady in 1939.

An asset-based approach to community development is faithful to both these traditions. This manual brings together an understanding of factors determining livelihood security with a way of working with people at the village level. It relies on field workers who recognize the assets, experience and knowledge of the most disadvantaged. It can help people to identify opportunities to collaborate together to improve their prospects, and further help them to make the social and institutional connections that will sustain an upward trend in their living conditions over the longer term.

These manuals are dedicated to those Village Organizers and SEWA members who have worked tirelessly and selflessly to achieve the goals of SEWA Jeevika.

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INTRODUCTION TO SEWA JEEVIKA

Being a member based organization, SEWA's policies and programmes are all member-centered. The priorities are set and directions are decided by the members. These members are the street vendors selling vegetables or used garments in small towns, the hand cart pullers transporting bricks to construction sites in big cities, the home-based bidi rollers in the slums, the rural artisans in distant villages, the salt pan labourers in coastal communities, or the gum collectors of desert areas.

Being a democratic organization – where the members are the owners and managers – the priorities and planning of SEWA are grounded in the reality of the members. The decisions are taken by consensus, involving all cadres of organizers and grassroots leaders.

Two thirds of SEWA's members are rural workers. They make food items out of grains, sew leather goods, stitch garments, trade soaps and electric bulbs, work on tobacco farms as labour, dig earth for making roads, and harvest water in ponds and wells. In the rural areas, there is a surplus of labour and fewer employment opportunities. Hence, organizing rural workers calls for creating alternative employment opportunities.

SEWA's approach to rural organizing is area-specific and demand driven. Under the leadership of SEWA's members the community itself designs and implements all community-based activities. SEWA helps women members in rural communities to build and operate their own organizations by forming cooperatives and district level federations. As a result, the members develop collective strength and bargaining power, and create alternative sources of employment, thereby building livelihood security for their families.

Livelihood activities are structured according to local needs and regional characteristics, but with a strong conviction that, however "poor" people are in material assets, they have skills, experience and social networks that are the building blocks of improving their livelihood options. Thus, SEWA members have been successful in forming cooperatives or producer groups for a variety of activities like water conservation, dairy production, craftwork, reforestation and salt farming.

SEWA's rural organizing has always been member centered and participatory. The local communities, under emerging women's leadership, identify opportunities and address issues of priority to them. They plan ahead. This is not easy or uniform but gradually more and more people get involved and take ownership.

SEWA has learnt some important lessons over the decades it has been functioning especially regarding sustainability of activities of poor women. They are:

- (a) Organising is a must. Local women should form their own organizations to start, and plan, and monitor village level activities. Building on their existing experience and skills, it is important to introduce new skills and strengthen existing capacities to motivate them to run these organizations.

- (b) Village level projects must have tangible and measurable achievements. Water should run into the kitchen of the woman. Milk must be collected by the cooperative to give higher wages. Unless the local women see immediate gains in their lives they will not be interested in participating in a project. This is especially true of projects involving poor women who can not wait for a long gestation period.
- (c) Activities must be oriented towards building people's assets for full employment and self reliance. To assess this, SEWA uses the following impact measurements:
1. Have SEWA members obtained more employment from SEWA's efforts?
 2. Has their income increased?
 3. Have they obtained food security and nutrition?
 4. Has their health been safeguarded?
 5. Have they obtained child-care?
 6. Have they obtained shelter and related services?
 7. Have their assets increased? Assets include their own savings, land, house, work space, tools of work, licenses, identity cards, cattle, or share in cooperatives. All these should be in the woman's name.
 8. Have women's own organizations been strengthened?
 9. Has leadership by women increased?
 10. Have women become self-reliant, both collectively and individually, so that leadership potential of all women has been built?
- (c) The local organization formed should be linked with existing infrastructural support such as credit, markets, or Government programmes. Such a link should be in terms of flow of funds, use of government's development programmes, participation in other organizations such as milk cooperatives or village administration or the worker's council. Linking with the government is not always easy. The government may wish to control or take over. It may want to use the local organization for political purposes. Government may compete with the local organization. These are real risks that women face.
- (d) The local organization formed should have a reliable flow of funds from multiple sources which may include funds from government programmes; contributions from the local population; funds from income generating activity; or any other source. Multiple sources of funds provide a buffer against external shocks—donor-driven or government policy induced or market forces related—that are hindrances to sustainability.
- (e) All projects, programmes or activities must recognize the possibility of natural or man-made disaster and provide resources to mitigate the impact of these and reduce the possibility of future occurrence. For poor women this comes naturally to their management of family affairs because they are the first and worst victims of disasters and therefore most conscious of averting and managing risk. But most women's development projects leave out the provision for the possibility of a disaster. As a result, many projects or activities fail due to floods or droughts or other disasters.

- (f) Sustainability calls for sustained involvement of organizations and donors, especially when the activity or project shows one of the early signs of failure. Instead of doubling the involvement, staff and resources are withdrawn or thinned out, which only leads the project to early failure. Donors or the government often want to claim success but not face up to slow or no progress, they want to change the conditions of poverty, but want the poor and women take all the risk.
- (g) Sustainability needs caution and selection. All projects can not or need not become sustainable. An emergency relief programme for rural widows or women flood victims may need continued outside support. Such projects or activities should neither be discarded from the agenda nor forced to meet sustainability criteria.
- (h) Sustainability costs. By-and-large it is cheaper to implement a regular fixed-time project than a project that aims to become sustainable. Sustainability requires investments of a certain scale and for a certain period. Projects that aim to become sustainable call for more resources, and are mostly front-loaded. Without adequate support, and related preparation, it is unrealistic to expect to achieve sustainability. Often donors seek low investment but a high return from anti poverty projects. Such luck is rare.

Having recorded SEWA's experience, it should be mentioned that it is possible that in the quest for sustainability a project may settle for maintaining the status-quo, an unequal relationship of power. While striving for sustainability, the overall goal of empowerment of women should not be lost. This may mean women gaining power and transforming existing structures. This is a political process when it happens at a large scale.

Sustainability in fighting women's poverty is difficult to achieve through the limited time frame of a "project" approach. A flexible partnership approach with a long term outlook is more likely to achieve sustainability.

It is based on the above lessons learnt over three decades of experience that SEWA entered into a unique partnership with International Fund for Agriculture and Development, Government of India, and Government of Gujarat. The partnership was aimed at supporting economic recovery of the earthquake affected 40000 members of SEWA. The project is called Jeevika. "Jeevika" is a Livelihood Security Programme for Earthquake Affected Households in Gujarat. Jeevika is an all encompassing programme aimed at economic recovery of 40,000 rural households who are SEWA members in the three earthquake affected districts of Gujarat. The Programme embraces an integrated, demand driven and livelihood centered approach to implement a comprehensive rural development agenda as a part of economic recovery. SEWA called it "Jeevika"—which means "means of livelihood".

In Jeevika, SEWA was upscaling the organizing of women members as well as the development of affected villages. SEWA was further decentralizing its own activities by building Village Development Committees. Ownership of the programme and the village plans was by the villagers themselves.

SEWA partnered with the Coady International Institute of Canada to develop a systematic participatory planning method that took into consideration the importance of building social and organizational assets as a means to securing and sustaining material assets. The approach assumed a gradual build up of assets through SEWA Jeevika, allowing for greater diversification of livelihood and the capacity to maximize the value added from production before the gradual withdrawal of project funds. SEWA's own tools and methods developed over the decades were systematically recorded adapted for this purpose.

Also SEWA's organizers had to play the role of facilitators. In other words they had to not only strengthen SEWA and its various activities but also reach out to the greater needs of the community and the village. The organizers have to facilitate the process so that the villagers and the Village Development Committee themselves prepare the plans.

The Coady team trained SEWA organizers and Village Development Committees. The Village Development Committees prepared up to 56 village plans. These plans have been prepared by a process, where the rich and the poor in the village, young and the old in the village, high caste and low caste, from different trades and occupations, different religions—all began to sit together. Not only do they sit together, but they also bring out the village needs, and prioritise those needs—including the needs of the poorest and the women— while recognizing their existing strengths and capacities. Hence these plans are owned by the village. The process has been difficult, taking time, demanding creativity to balance different interests.

The experience has also demonstrated how partnerships can run into difficulty if the roles, communication structures and cooperation strategies are violated or disrupted even by one partner. However, despite the painful challenges in the partnership between SEWA and the Government of Gujarat, the strength of the partnership with communities has been able to sustain many project activities. The funding has been delayed beyond a reasonable schedule but the women have struggled to keep activities alive. The Village Development Committees have developed clear plans for maintaining project activities through donations from relatively wealthy members of their own or the neighbouring community, or local businesses, mothers or students voluntarily agreeing to pay higher fees, or large number of women providing voluntary labour. By engaging Village Development Committees and communities as full partners in the project so that they are not only involved in needs identification but also in deciding which activities to implement, how and when to implement them and in budgeting and monitoring them, a strong sense of ownership over the activities and programs has been built which motivates Village Development Committees to take responsibility for ensuring the sustainability of these activities despite growing difficulties with some partners. The Jeevika experience has shown both the power and the effectiveness of building economic recovery and development programs with strong village level partnerships, as well as the risk the poor, and women, face when they partner with the government and the donors for large scale change.

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INTRODUCTION

SEWA Jeevika is striving to build assets and capacities among village people in the Kutch, Patan and Surendranagar districts who experienced a devastating earthquake in 2001 and who need to be able to protect themselves from the consequences of natural and man-made disasters in the future. Focusing on the poorest of the poor, SEWA Jeevika's entry point is through local organizing committees called *Jeevika SEWA Mandals*.

Through *Jeevika SEWA Mandals* (JSMs), villages have the opportunity to apply for funding to strengthen people's asset base. For example, funding may be used to: introduce technological innovations for improved agricultural productivity; diversify sources of livelihood; build infrastructure to ensure adequate water supply; or provide loans to micro-entrepreneurs. One asset that is strengthened in the process is the organizational capacity of the JSM. The Village Organizer works with the JSM to ensure that the needs and interests of the poorest in the village are taken into account in the village plans, helps the JSM members to ensure that the plans are followed through, and facilitates stronger relationships with the local *panchayat* and other government or private sector agencies. Although often inexperienced and with limited literacy skills, JSM members have been effective in carrying out this function when given adequate training and on-going support by a trusted Village Organizer.

Using asset-based thinking in micro-planning

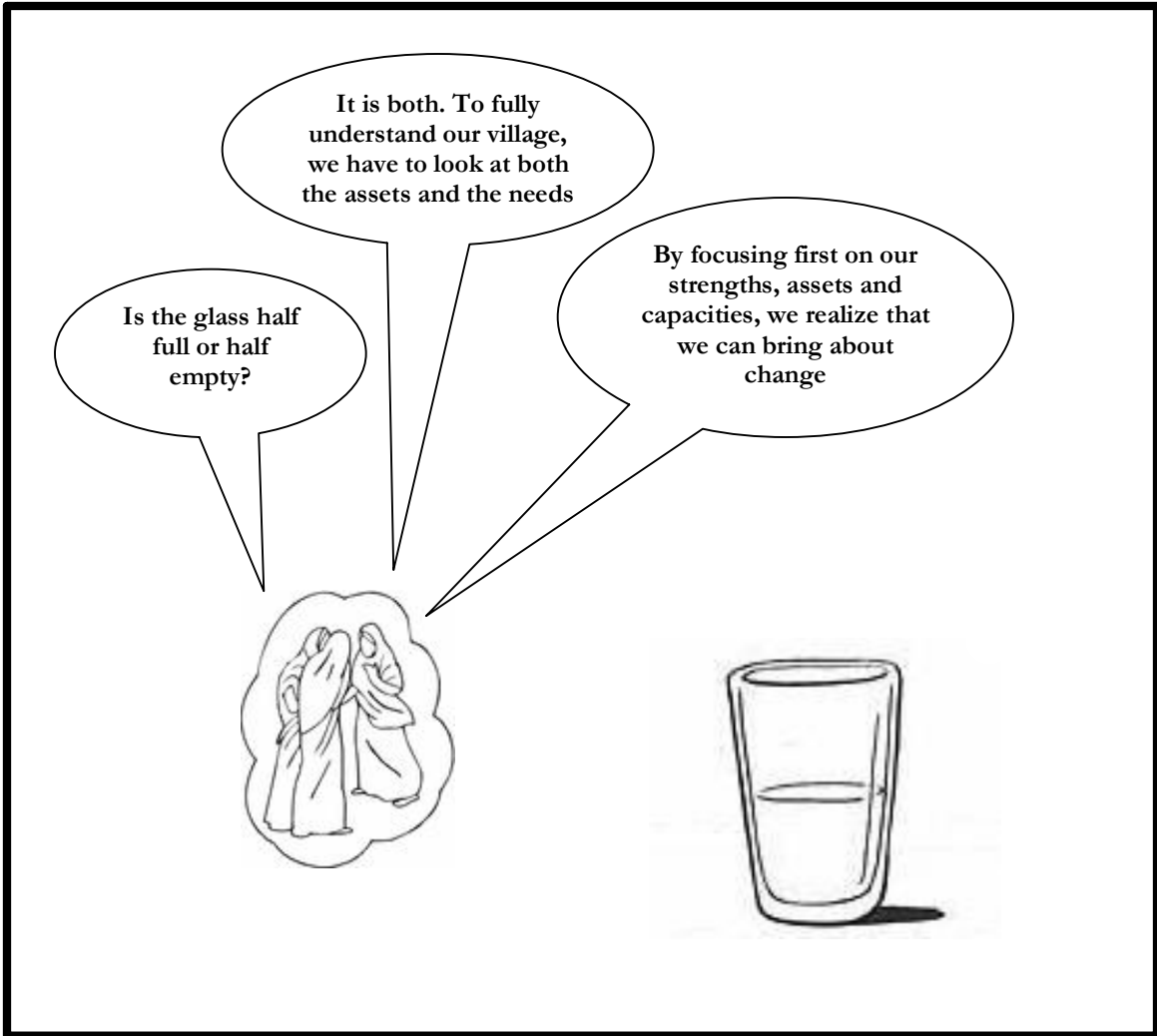
Participatory planning is an integral part of building community capacity. JSMs are at the centre of this planning activity, playing the role of convener, facilitator and capacity builder. Responsible for project implementation and monitoring, they necessarily play a primary role in the planning process.

An asset-based approach to community level micro-planning encourages a shift in orientation from "needs" and "problems" towards "assets" and "opportunities" for sustained livelihood security. By recognizing the potential of existing skills, resources, and organizational capacity, villagers are in a better position to take advantage of opportunities to diversify their social and economic asset base. Diversification is a critical element of livelihood security and sustainability.

In this manual, an asset-based approach to mobilizing, organizing, and planning village development is outlined. It is designed to help Village Organizers recognize the assets that villagers have, however modest. Village Organizers can then help villagers to see how these assets can be mobilized to secure what they need, whether this is access to information, technical advice, or basic infrastructure. Project funds can only be effective if they are channeled through well organized and well motivated groups, and groups tend to be well motivated when they have confidence in their own capacities.

Project funds are temporary, so the strongest legacy that SEWA Jeevika can leave is the increased capacity of villagers to organize to secure their livelihoods in the future.

Focus on assets as well as needs



SELF EMPLOYED WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: A BRIEF HISTORY

SEWA is a trade union. It was registered in 1972 when a group of women, headed by Ela Bhatt (later SEWA's leader), broke away from the textile union in Ahmedabad forming a member-based organization of poor, self-employed women workers. At the end of 2004-2005, SEWA had an all-India membership of around 700,000 women workers. These members are from the unprotected, invisible, uncounted and undercounted work force which constitutes 94% of India's labour force and accounts for 64% of India's GDP.

Being a member-based organization, the issues, needs and demands of the members are the core of management and operational strategies and priorities. As members are from the deprived sectors of society, development from within is the focus and strategy of SEWA for development. That is to say SEWA focuses on working with members to strengthen their ability to earn a livelihood and to be self-reliant.

SEWA's Strategy

SEWA organizes workers to achieve their goals of full employment and self-reliance through the strategy of struggle and development. The struggle is against the many constraints and limitations imposed on them by society and the economy. The development activities strengthen women's bargaining power and offer them new alternatives. Practically, the strategy is carried out through the joint action of the union and the cooperative. Also, there is much to be done in terms of strengthening women's leadership, their confidence, their bargaining power within and outside their homes and their representation in policy-making and decision-making. In this way, their issues, their priorities and their needs can guide and mould the development process in India. Towards this end, SEWA has been supporting its members in capacity building and developing their own economic organizations.

SEWA is both an organization and a movement. The SEWA movement is enhanced by it being a *sangam* or confluence of three movements: the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement. However, it is also a movement of self-employed workers: their own, home-grown movement with women as the leaders. Through their own movement women become strong and visible. Their tremendous economic and social contributions become recognized.

SEWA's Philosophy

SEWA adheres to the Gandhian philosophy of guiding poor, self-employed members to organize for social change following the principles of *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *sarvadharmas* (integrating all faiths and all people) and *khadi* (propagation of local employment and self-reliance). After the earthquake of 2001, SEWA's work with earthquake victims focused on mobilizing members to rebuild resources and convert them into opportunities on the basis of local strengths and skills. This is further augmented by SEWA's holistic approach to development. SEWA believes that multiple inputs and interventions are

essential for women to emerge from poverty, vulnerability and years of deprivation. Thus, SEWA's integrated approach to poverty eradication comprises:

- **Organizing** for collective strength, bargaining power and representation in committees and boards at district, state, national and international levels;
- **Capital formation** at the household level through access to financial services (savings, credit and insurance) to build up and create assets in the names of the women householders (land, house, shed, equipment, cattle, bank balance);
- **Capacity building** to stand firm in the competitive market. For example, access to market infrastructure; access to technology information, education, knowledge and relevant skills (like financial management and planning). Capacity building is also essential for women to run their own organizations;
- **Social security**, which includes healthcare, childcare, shelter and insurance to combat the chronic and acute risks faced by members and their families; to enhance their well-being and productivity; and to ensure that sickness or sudden crises are not a drain on their fragile household economies.

Each of these four components must exist simultaneously and in a combination that is valuable and manageable for the workers themselves. One without the others does not yield results. SEWA's two main goals are full employment and self-reliance. Full employment means employment whereby workers obtain work security, income security, food security and social security (at least healthcare, childcare and shelter). Self-reliance means that women are autonomous (individually and collectively) both economically and as decision-makers.

BUILDING ASSETS AND PROMOTING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The SEWA Jeevika project is responding to a situation where many people in the three districts are extremely vulnerable in times of natural disaster or economic crisis. Strengthening and diversifying their asset base has therefore been a priority. While the asset base is being rebuilt – such as an adequate water supply, access to financial services, reforested land – SEWA Jeevika is also preparing villages for the withdrawal of project support when communities will have to mobilize and manage these renewed and strengthened assets themselves to ensure continued livelihood security. Preparing for this stage, SEWA Jeevika and various levels of government will have to “step back” and allow the community to lead.

Role of SEWA

Having worked with women in these earthquake-affected districts for a long time, SEWA is well known and trusted in many of the 400 villages covered by the SEWA Jeevika project. During the course of the project, SEWA has been helping entire villages with development plans using project resources to build assets, especially for the poorest of the poor. Building assets includes building the organizational capacity of the most vulnerable in the village to continue to access resources and negotiate for greater returns on their labour or for their produce.

Gradually, SEWA’s role will become that of an intermediary, helping village associations and JSMs make the connections and linkages necessary to sustain and diversify their livelihoods. In this role, SEWA will help villages to access sources of information, technical assistance, funding, markets and legal recourse, while ensuring that the villages retain control over their development agenda. SEWA can also help villages negotiate with many agencies such as various levels of government, banks, marketing boards and other external institutions. Through such social networking, organizational capacity building and institutional linkages, asset building can continue without SEWA’s development assistance.

Village Organizers are the front line of SEWA Jeevika. They are the face of SEWA in the villages and this puts each of them in a unique position to positively influence the development process. In keeping with an asset-based approach to micro-planning, Village Organizers can support villages and JSMs in a number of important ways. These include:

1. Using their facilitation skills to help community organizations in effective decision-making
2. Encouraging the inclusion and participation of all community members (especially the most vulnerable) throughout the development process
3. Supporting the emergence of local leadership and the vision of the JSMs
4. Acting as a link between villagers and SEWA management (at the district and PMU level), and institutions in government and private sectors.

The most helpful Village Organizers are those who have confidence in and respect for community capacity and competence, and those who have made the shift from focusing on problems to focusing on opportunities.

Role of Government

The Government of Gujarat has overall responsibility for the Jeevika project, while responsibility for implementation of the project lies with SEWA. This means that government personnel take an active interest in the work of SEWA and expect to be kept informed of project activities. Because funding is channeled through government, it is important that there is mutual understanding between the government and SEWA so that the plans made at the village level can be implemented in a timely manner.

At the village level, the *panchayat* institutions are important players in village development. However, the poorest villagers often say that they know little about the *panchayat* and have little contact with elected members. During SEWA Jeevika, it is important to improve the responsiveness of the *panchayat*. One way is through the JSMs because any use of common land must gain approval first of all from the *panchayat*. Another way is by enlisting support of the *panchayat* when village cleanliness campaigns are carried out. As the JSM gains in strength as a voice for the poorest members of the community, the *panchayat* will have to be more responsive and ensure that the poorest members of the community have access to the resources channeled through the local government system. This will be a critical factor in sustaining the progress made through SEWA Jeevika when the project comes to an end.

Role of JSM and community members

A recent report on the effectiveness of the JSMs described their role as follows

The Jeevika SEWA Mandal (JSM) is a village development committee, selected by villagers, responsible for the overall planning, implementation and monitoring of Jeevika activities in its village. The idea behind the JSM is to place those traditionally excluded from decision making – the poorest of the poor, the marginalized and women – at the center of development. It is formed during a series of village meetings, and members are selected to ensure representation from all castes, trades and streets in the village. At a minimum, two-thirds of JSM members are women...The JSM, in other words, is a participatory institution tasked with leading the development of its village under Jeevika. The progress of Jeevika in a particular village is thus dependent upon the degree to which the JSM has been able to actively meet this task¹

The JSMs will play an important role sustaining access to resources and information for the poorest of the poor once the project comes to an end.

¹ MacDonald, J. (2005)

THE PARTICIPATORY MICRO PLANNING PROCESS UNDER SEWA JEEVIKA

SEWA Jeevika's planning approach is described in this section using the example of the village of Fatehpur where villagers have undertaken a micro-planning process with the help of SEWA.

SEWA Jeevika expects villages to be able to independently manage and maintain programs and village institutions upon completion of the SEWA Jeevika project. Therefore, it is the villages themselves that are responsible for program planning, implementation and monitoring. SEWA Jeevika's role is that of a convener, facilitator and capacity builder, feeling that villages must be both owners and managers of the project. Thus, SEWA Jeevika works with each village from the initial stages of their partnership to form a Village Development Committee or *Jeevika SEWA Mandal (JSM)*, which will ultimately be responsible for implementing SEWA Jeevika initiatives in their village. As many villages lack experience planning, implementing and monitoring long-term programs, SEWA Jeevika relies on a highly process-oriented approach wherein intensive investments are made in training and capacity building for villagers. The following description of the process in Fatehpur village shows just how much time and effort is required to build the trust necessary for the project to move forward.

Micro planning in Fatehpur village

The village of Fatehpur is in Patdi Block of Surendranagar District and is home to 300 households. In recent years, the village has seen calamities like drought, cyclone, flood and earthquake. During the last earthquake in 2001, almost all households were affected. Fatehpur was selected as a Land and Water Management village under the Jeevika project and began working with SEWA Jeevika in 2003.

Gaining acceptance in the village: Though SEWA was working in these areas for several years, the focus had always been on activity specific groups. Under SEWA Jeevika, however, the focus was the entire village. SEWA Jeevika knew that they would need to call a village meeting or *gram sabha* to engage all the villagers in the project. However, they also knew that before initiating the *gram sabha*, Village Organizers and District Coordinators needed to visit the village to convince villagers of the value of SEWA Jeevika attempting to organize a *sabha*. After three visits to Fatehpur, the villagers understood the project and were willing to attend a *gram sabha*.

Commencing the gram sabhas: After building rapport in the village, SEWA Jeevika staff organized a *gram sabha*. Village Organizers visited each street and *mohalla*, especially the houses of the poorest villagers, and encouraged them to participate in the *gram sabha*. Despite their efforts, few villagers attended the first *gram sabha*. The SEWA Jeevika staff (including Village Organizers and Management) persisted and, after two more *gram sabhas*, the villagers decided to start the Jeevika project in their village.

Formation of Jeevika SEWA Mandal and selection of key positions: Once the villagers of Fatehpur agreed to accept the Jeevika project in their village, they needed to form a Village Development Committee called a *Jeevika SEWA Mandal* (JSM). At the next *gram sabha*, Village Organizers reinforced the importance of the JSM and explained its tasks, responsibilities and formation process. The SEWA Jeevika staff took time to sensitize villagers about the importance of including the poorest of the poor from each caste and street on the JSM. The representation of women was also emphasized. Keeping in mind different criteria like knowledge, aptitude, experience, leadership skills and readiness of the members, the villagers then selected the members of the JSM. In Fatehpur, 11 leaders were elected as JSM members of whom seven were women. During the *gram sabha*, villagers also selected the chairperson, president and secretary.

PRA under leadership of JSM: With the JSM in place, the village could conduct a Participatory Rural Appraisal. The whole village, under the leadership of the JSM and facilitation of SEWA Jeevika, started a Participatory Rural Appraisal. A *gram sabha* was held to explain the importance of generating a holistic picture of the village – its history, resources, needs, liabilities, goals, etc. Village Organizers continued to emphasize the importance of generating a clear picture of the village and introduced the basic concepts of social and natural resource mapping prior to beginning the actual mapping process.

Initiating the Process of PRA: The village of Fatehpur was able to begin work almost immediately although this is not the case in all villages. (Depending on seasonal work demands or festivals some villages may wait days, weeks or months before beginning the PRA). To initiate the planning process, SEWA Jeevika called a meeting of the JSM and the Land and Water Management (LWM) team. Villagers were asked to think about how they use planning in their everyday lives – planning for a market day, planning for an agricultural crop and routine household planning were all used as examples. From these, the villagers were able to understand the need for the planning process and could identify the necessary steps for developing a plan. These were:

1. Assess the existing assets
2. Identify the problems or issues associated with these resources and how they can be addressed
3. Identify actions required
4. Identify the priorities
5. Identify the necessary resources to achieve the priorities
6. Decide on the best possible resource allocation

1. Assess the existing assets

The first step is taking stock of existing assets, resources and the resource conditions. Sources of information/methodologies for gathering necessary information on these resources are identified below.

RESOURCE	SOURCES OF INFORMATION
<i>Land</i>	<i>Participatory mapping, maps and records with Talati, field visit</i>
<i>Water</i>	<i>Participatory mapping, maps and records with Talati, field visit</i>
<i>Forests</i>	<i>Participatory mapping, maps and records with Talati, Forest Department records, field visit</i>
<i>Livestock</i>	<i>Panchayat records, focus group discussions with villagers</i>
<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Household and social mapping, Panchayat records, focus group discussions with villagers</i>

2. Identify the problems or issues associated with these resources and how they can be addressed

The participants were divided into small groups to deliberate on the problems associated with the resources. Members of the LWM team facilitated the deliberations in these small groups, taking care to ensure that men and women discussed the problems in separate groups.

3. Identify actions required

Possible actions for effectively addressing these problems were discussed in small groups.

4. Identify the priorities

The LWM team then asked the groups to prioritize actions based on the acuteness of the problems and urgency of action required. After each small group presented to the whole meeting, the villagers were able to reach a consensus. The outcome is identified below.

RESOURCE	PRIORITIZED ACTION
<i>Land</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>land development</i> 2. <i>improved seeds and fertilizers</i> 3. <i>irrigation water</i> 4. <i>bullocks for cultivation</i> 5. <i>pest control</i> 6. <i>crop protection from wild ass</i> 7. <i>crop insurance</i>
<i>Water</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>drinking water</i> 2. <i>water for livestock</i> 3. <i>water for domestic use</i>
<i>Forests</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>forest rehabilitation and development</i> 2. <i>grassland development</i> 3. <i>agro-forestry/farm-forestry</i>
<i>Livestock</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>green fodder</i> 2. <i>cattle feed</i> 3. <i>cattle health</i> 4. <i>animal insurance</i> 5. <i>dairy/market linkages</i>
<i>Human Resources</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>employment generation</i> 2. <i>nutrition</i> 3. <i>health</i> 4. <i>education</i> 5. <i>housing</i> 6. <i>communication</i>

5. Identify the necessary resources to achieve the priorities

Information collection: Once the actions were prioritized, the micro planning team of Fatehpur developed an action plan. First, they gathered exact information about the resources and resource conditions using participatory methodologies. These methodologies included resource mapping, household mapping, social mapping, timelines, and assessments of seasonal variations in migration, health, income, etc.

Transect: Once this information was gathered, the micro planning team had to arrive at the best alternatives for their village. This required them to see the resources first-hand. SEWA Jeevika staff helped them to draw a transect route on the resource map created during the PRA. The line traversed all the resources and areas represented, giving the micro planning team a broad view of the village resources. The micro-planning team then divided into two teams, each taking a separate route. During the walk they noted agricultural fields, bodies of water, forested areas and village settlements, discussing each with the farmers, women and other groups they passed in the village. From these discussions and through consultation with the LWM team, they were able to combine local and professional knowledge to determine the best possible actions.

6. Decide on the best possible resource allocation

On the basis of the finalized plan, the micro planning team made an assessment of all the proposed activities. Both primary information (collected through participatory information) and secondary information (written documentation) was collated to make final preparations for land development, forest development and pond renovation. SEWA Jeevika helped Fatehpur's micro planning team to identify other development agencies working within the village both to explore opportunities for collaborative action and to avoid duplication of projects. With all this information, the micro planning team designed prepared a cadastral map² for future reference.

The micro planning team then presented the action plan at a *gram sabha*. This helped fine-tune the plan as well as enhance the feeling of ownership for all villagers. As much as possible, the micro planning team tried to reflect the priorities of the whole village in the plan by phasing in a variety of activities over the duration of the project. The costs attached to each action were based on the unit costs of the various proposed activities and were also discussed in the *gram sabha*. This gave an idea of the overall and yearly program budgets, although the exact costs were calculated at the time of implementation. The finalized plan of action is given below.

² A public map of the value, extent or ownership of land as a basis of taxation

RESOURCE	ACTIONS
<i>Land</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>farm bunding (350 hectares)</i> 2. <i>demonstration plots (8)</i> 3. <i>seed bank (1)</i> 4. <i>trainings (4): pre-seasonal/seasonal/special</i> 5. <i>exposure visits (4)</i>
<i>Water</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>bore/pipeline for drinking water: with WASMO</i> 2. <i>50 RRWHS</i> 3. <i>renovation of well (1)</i> 4. <i>deepening of pond (4)</i> 5. <i>check dam (1): with government</i>
<i>Forest</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>wasteland development (50 hectares)</i> 2. <i>plantation (40,000 saplings)</i> 3. <i>nursery (20)</i>
<i>Livestock</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>cattle feed (500 bags)</i> 2. <i>cattle camps (4)</i> 3. <i>fodder bank (1)</i> 4. <i>Mahila dairy cooperative to be formed (1)</i> 5. <i>trainings (20)</i> 6. <i>exposure visits (4)</i>
<i>Human Resources</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Bahvadi (1)</i> 2. <i>health trainings (48)</i> 3. <i>health camps (4)</i> 4. <i>mobile health van (1)</i> 5. <i>Jeevanshala (1)</i> 6. <i>hostel: with government</i> 7. <i>member training</i> 8. <i>accounts training</i> 9. <i>JSM training</i> 10. <i>Jan Jagruti training</i> 11. <i>campaigns</i>

Documenting the plan

After recapitulating the entire planning process at a *gram sabha*, the micro planning team, with the support of SEWA Jeevika, held discussions about the structure of the plan. First, they identified the target audience for the plan. This audience included the JSM, LWM team, government agencies and other agencies or persons not directly connected with the project. They decided that the document should be written in such a way that it is able to communicate not only the plan or project related details but also to highlight the approach followed in SEWA Jeevika. With respect to this, the micro planning team finalized the structure of the plan as follows:

1. Introduction
 - a. Village
 - b. SEWA
 - c. Jeevika
2. Planning process
 - a. Process summary
 - b. Problem analysis
 - c. Objectives
 - d. Rationale
3. Plan of action
 - a. Summary plan with budget
 - b. Yearly plans with budget
 - c. Implementation schedule (quarterly phasing)
4. Implementation mechanisms
5. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Annexes

- I. Basis of costing
- II. Standard designs

Review and Summary

The above process varies from village to village and district to district as the characteristics of each village are different. As micro planning work is communal work, social factors, village politics, and education levels play a major role. Occurrences such as deaths, sicknesses, marriages and festivals also significantly influence the course or progress of the micro planning process. The elements of the above process, however, give a general outline of the micro planning process in SEWA Jeevika villages throughout the districts of Patan, Kutch and Surendranagar.

INTEGRATING AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH INTO THE JEEVIKA MICRO- PLANNING PROCESS

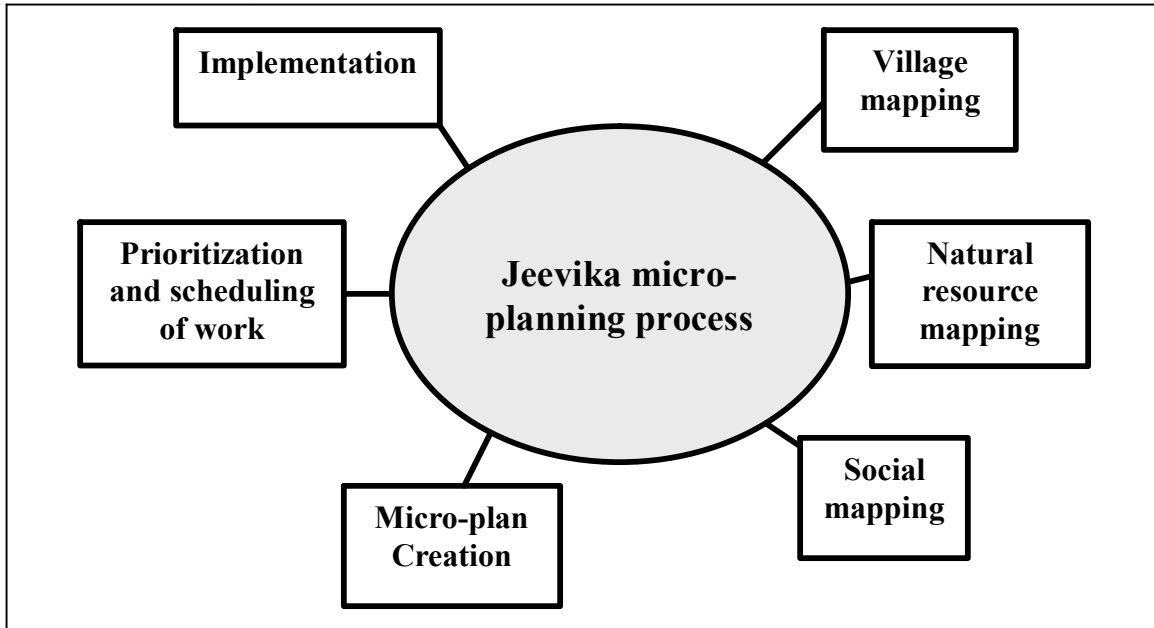
Due to the strong relationships of trust formed between Village Organizers and rural villages, SEWA Jeevika has a unique opportunity to help connect community capacities and strengths with the opportunities for building assets and diversifying livelihoods. The tools and activities included here can be used at the village level to mobilize, build and renew assets so that villagers can respond to such opportunity.

This guide does not prescribe a model for community development. Instead, we offer some tools and activities that can be integrated into the existing micro-planning process used by SEWA Jeevika to encourage community-driven initiative. These tools have to be used with common sense as an aid to, rather than a replacement for, relationship-building and community mobilizing. It is important to note that many of the tools in this manual are written language as presented. They can be easily adapted, however. If members of a group are illiterate, the Village Organizer can use pictures and symbols in place of words to help people understand and contribute.

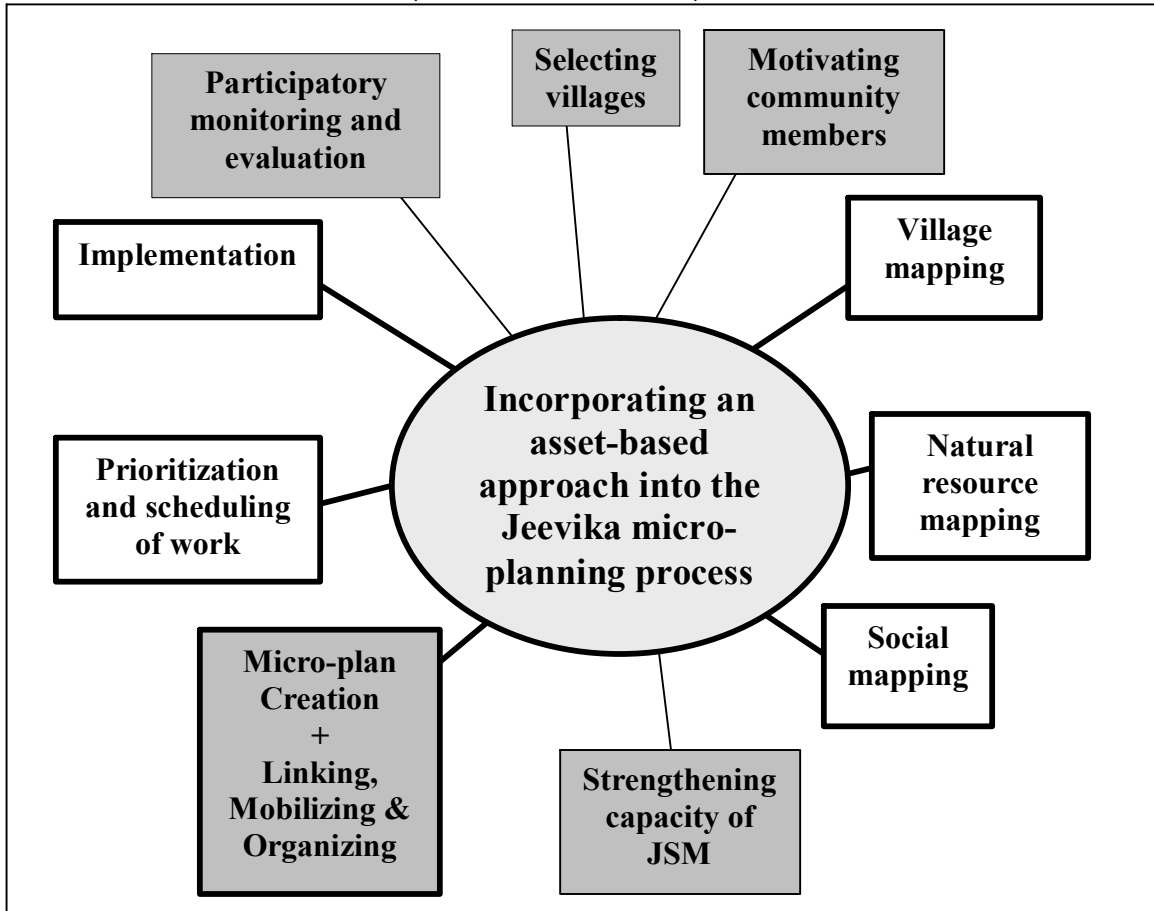
The following is an adapted diagram of SEWA Jeevika's six steps for micro-planning. In the subsequent diagram, five more steps have been added to reflect the layout of this manual. The final diagram highlights tools and techniques featured in the manual that may be used during various steps. These are tools and methods that SEWA Jeevika (specifically Village Organizers) and villages can use to:

- recognize, identify, and mobilize assets
- link local assets to economic opportunities
- monitor and evaluate the micro-planning process

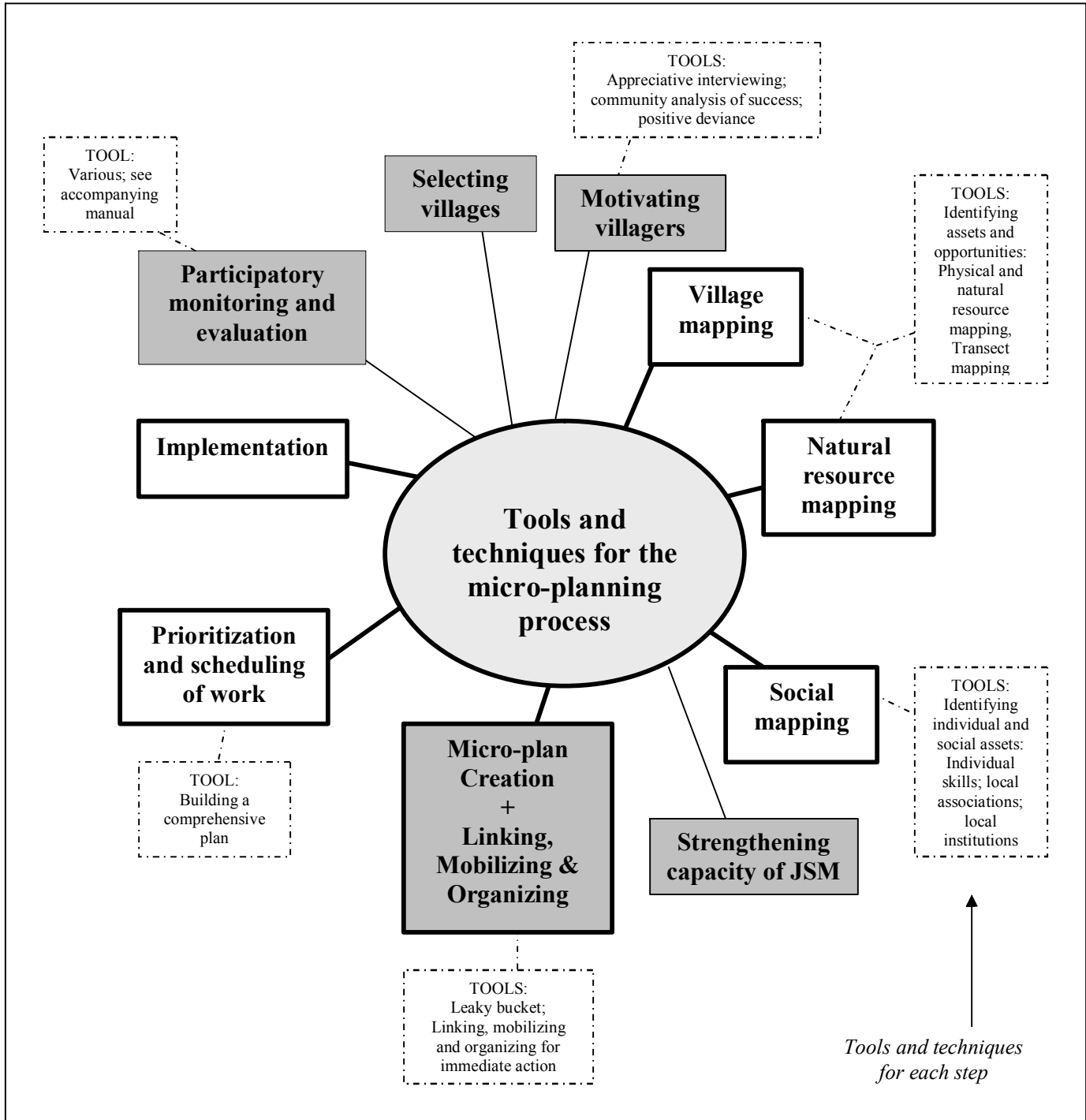
SEWA JEEVIKA'S SIX STEPS OF MICRO-PLANNING



MODIFIED MICRO-PLANNING PROCESS (FOCUS ON ASSETS)



TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH



Note: The tools and techniques suggested for each stage are not listed in a particular order. Similarly, the in-depth descriptions of the tools and techniques in the following section are not listed in a particular order. Each is used at the discretion of the Village Organizer because he or she knows best the situation of the village in which they work and can decide which tool(s) is appropriately used when.

SELECTING VILLAGES



What is it?

In order for the SEWA Jeevika project to be successful in meeting its objectives, it has to work with villages that understand and value its approach to development. This ensures that SEWA Jeevika and the village will not be working at odds with one another, but collaborating to improve the livelihood security of the poorest of the poor. While SEWA Jeevika must identify villages with certain characteristics to achieve its mandate and be accountable to funders (percentage of poorest of the poor, level of access to basic services, etc.), the villagers themselves will also need to select SEWA Jeevika as a partner in their village development process.

Why is it necessary?

SEWA Jeevika wants to choose villages that have the most chance of success so that they in turn can be an inspiration or model to other villages that have not yet brought together the conditions needed to be successful. Looked at from SEWA Jeevika's perspective, it is important to ensure that the village is committed to involving the poorest of the poor, in the development process. There must be a critical level of interest and commitment to the project and to a process by which villagers are actively engaged as citizens rather than passive clients. When people have the confidence and skills to drive their own development, they are in a position to improve the life and livelihoods throughout their village.

Looked at from a villager's perspective, NGO involvement is not always welcome. NGOs come and go. They promise, and sometimes do not deliver. They sometimes persuade villagers to contribute money and then disappear. If villagers are going to spend time coming to meetings and participating in project activities, they have to be confident that it is worthwhile in the longer term.

Who should be involved?

In the case of SEWA Jeevika, the process of building trust in the village may have already begun long before the Jeevika project actually started because of the savings, credit, and trade-based work it has been carrying out with women over many years. Nevertheless, helping villagers understand the purpose of SEWA Jeevika requires several meetings with the whole village at the *gram sabha*, and also with existing groups, associations and individual households. It can take several weeks of these discussions for villagers to decide to participate in SEWA Jeevika.

When should it be done?

Before any project activities begin, both the village and SEWA Jeevika must decide that the partnership is compatible and worth pursuing. Both parties need to be assured of the other's commitment in order to move forward and begin planning.

How can it be done?

While SEWA Jeevika identifies the vulnerable districts and vulnerable villages, it is the villages that ultimately decide whether or not they want to participate as a project village. For this reason, SEWA Jeevika has to be very clear in its message about why a project that focuses on the poorest people in the village is important, and what the village can expect from participating in SEWA Jeevika. The initial meetings are as much (if not more) for the village to learn about SEWA Jeevika as they are for SEWA Jeevika to learn about the village. Open communication from both sides is critical in village selection.

MOTIVATING VILLAGERS



What is it?

The success of an asset-based approach to development depends on sustaining people's motivation to participate. SEWA has years of experience of mobilizing women, discovering that success quickly builds upon success and that highlighting these successes helps motivate others to join the movement. Under SEWA Jeevika, Village Organizers can generate positive energy and momentum by using similar strategies; asking people to tell stories about past successes where villagers have taken initiative and asking how these village resources can be used again to make a difference.

Why is it necessary?

Exploring past successes generates pride among villagers and helps them understand why and how they have succeeded. Not only does this create energy and excitement as people tell their stories, it also helps people to start thinking about how they can mobilize in similar ways for new initiatives. At its core is the idea that people are motivated to act when they feel confident in their capacity (both as individuals and as a community) to create positive change in their lives.

Who should be involved?

Depending on the village and scope of the project, it may be appropriate to focus work with different groups of people at this stage. Sometimes it is appropriate to involve the whole village, such as at a *gram sabha* meeting. If the project is broad in scope and/or will impact many people in the village, this would be the best approach. Sometimes, however, it is more appropriate to work with particular groups, for example a *swashrayee mandal*, or a group of farming households or craft workers.

When should it be done?

Motivating villagers to take part in their village's development process is the entry point to successful community-driven development. Leadership in the village is needed to sustain this motivation over the long term.

How can it be done?

Whether in a formal setting (such as a meeting) or informally (in day to day conversation), energy and momentum are built when people talk to each other and are encouraged to share stories of past success.

TOOLS:

Appreciative Interviewing
Community Analysis of Success
Positive Deviance

TITLE

Appreciative Interviewing

Effective village development work begins with building relationships at the village level. Appreciating the achievements and strengths of the villagers is an important aspect of this relationship building.



OBJECTIVES

- To enable villagers to recognize existing strengths and assets
- To allow SEWA Jeevika to recognize the village's strengths, assets and community capacity to drive its own development
- To analyze the village's achievements and use these as reference points when collaborating with villagers to design further action
- To develop confidence in the village's capacity to drive its own development both within the village and at SEWA Jeevika



METHODOLOGY

- Start informally, talking to people about their past achievements when working together as a village.
- Focus conversations by suggesting specific topics such as,
“Tell me a story about a village activity that you consider to have been successful” or *“Tell me about a time when this village mobilized to get something done without help from outsiders”*
- Probe to gather more detailed information by asking:
*“What was it about **you** that made the activity successful?”*
*“What was it about **others** that made the activity successful?”*
*“What was it about **the situation** that made the activity successful?”*
- Help villagers to analyze their successes by facilitating group discussions

TITLE

Community Analysis of Success

Encouraging people to discover the local reasons for success can help them understand how to create successful village development initiatives in the future.



OBJECTIVES

- To encourage villagers to think critically about the factors contributing to past successes
- To highlight the connections between the strengths and assets that exist in the village and the village's past achievements



METHODOLOGY

- After conducting many appreciative interviews, bring villagers together to do a collective analysis of their past successes. For example, they might talk about how they recovered from a recent drought or how they came together to build housing for some families
- As people discuss stories of past success, encourage deeper analysis by using simple probing questions.
- Continue to probe the “whys” of the story – discovering the people, policies, environment, assets and connections that led to these successes. In addition to “why”, probing questions can include “how”, “who” and “who else”.
- For example, a conversation between a villager a SEWA Jeevika Village Organizer could sound like this:

Organizer: Why do you think you were able to organize to build houses for these families?

Villager: Because we had some vacant land and very active leadership. We also wanted to help our neighbours.

Organizer: Why?

Villager: Because it is a tradition to help everyone in the village have shelter and livelihood. We cannot let our neighbours suffer.

Organizer: What was it about the leaders in your village that made it successful?

Villager: The leaders were able to talk to SEWA Jeevika and also with the *panchayat* to help secure resources. They are dedicated and helped encourage many people to contribute to the project.

Organizer: Why?

Villager: They had confidence in us. They knew us well. They knew that many of us had special skills to contribute. They have the confidence to talk to people from outside the village and explain what we need for the poorest of the poor.

Organizer: Any other reason?

Villager: They realized that we all had to feel as if it was our project. They made us feel proud to be part of this village and helping our neighbours.

TITLE

Positive Deviance³

In every village there are stories of success. Somehow certain people find ways to succeed despite facing difficult situations that others have not been able to overcome. This success could be better health, higher crop production or a more successful livelihood project. The strategies used by these people are likely appropriate and acceptable to others in their village. Identifying and learning from this “positive deviance” can help shape a village’s development.

OBJECTIVES



- ∞ To identify people, families or groups that are achieving above average results
- ∞ To understand the strategies they have used to overcome challenges
- ∞ To use those ideas to plan wider village development



METHODOLOGY

- ∞ Start talking to people! Ask questions about what is “normal” or “average” in the village. Ask what challenges prevent most people from prospering.
- ∞ Then ask if there are people doing better than “average”, even though they also face these challenges. Be persistent – there will always be people doing *something* very well. For example, one household may have a particularly productive farm.
- ∞ Encourage people to identify the specific behaviours and circumstances that explain the success.
- ∞ Discuss how those same circumstances and behaviours could be accomplished by others in the village.

³ Save the Children USA

IDENTIFYING VILLAGE ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES



What is it?

Asset mapping brings people together to “discover” all of their assets. Villagers can draw a village map to identify physical and natural assets such as roads, buildings, private land, common land, irrigated land, and water sources. Villagers can also list the skills and capacities of individual people and groups or associations, and map some of the social characteristics of the village. Individuals carrying out the mapping exercise will begin to see ways in which individual skills can be combined with associational, institutional, and natural assets to create new enterprises or opportunities.

Why is it necessary?

Through a comprehensive asset mapping exercise, villagers are often impressed when they “discover” their existing strengths and assets. This is often the spark for new ideas about what they can do next. In addition, some maps may be developed into a comprehensive picture of the village at the present time and posted on a wall for all to see. This can be used as a baseline and changes can be recorded on the map for people to see progress and achievements. For example, maps can be used to show changes in land under irrigation, households with children going to school and the number of households with a water supply. Asset mapping is a good tool for villagers to socialize the community’s history, especially with the youth who might not be familiar with it. Also gender and environmental issues can readily surface when doing this exercise.

Who should be involved?

It is essential that mapping is done by local people and that they have genuine ownership of the process. If the mapping is seen as “extraction” (an outsider coming into the village to take information away for its own purposes), the villagers will be less likely to think their contributions to the process can make a difference to day-to-day life in their village. As many people as possible should be involved in the mapping process, especially the marginalized (women, poorest of the poor) as their skills, talents and assets are often overlooked.

When should it be done?

It is a good idea to do this early in the process, as a way of building community relationships and building a common reference point for community planning purposes.

How can it be done?

The tools below are designed to help Village Organizers carry out asset-mapping exercises of various types.

TOOLS:

Mapping Individual Skills: Hand, Heart, Head

Mapping Groups or Associations

Mapping Institutions

Mapping Physical and Natural Resources
Transect Mapping
Capacity Inventories

TITLE

Mapping Individual Skills: Hand, Heart, Head⁴

This exercise helps people recognize the variety of strengths each person has. This is done by brainstorming and grouping skills in three categories – head (intellectual), hand (physical) and heart (emotional). Everyone possesses skills and qualities in each of these areas. By identifying each individual's particular strengths, he or she will be able to see how one person's skills complement other peoples' skills. There are many people who do not even realize all the skills they possess! By understanding their strengths people may feel more confident contributing to development projects in their village.



OBJECTIVES

- To identify the skills and capacities of individuals for community building
- To strengthen the confidence of villagers in their own skills and capacities
- To encourage individuals to see potential connections between individual skills and the work of local associations, institutions and businesses

(For example, a connection between a person's carpentry skills, a local group's marketing skills, and tools or work space provided by an institution could result in a profitable micro-enterprise)

- To provide an opportunity for people with "hidden" skills and talents to be recognized



METHODOLOGY

- Ask a group of individuals to think about what they do well. It might be their work or something else they are known for within their community
- Explain that these skills and capacities can fall into different categories, including intellectual (head), physical (hand), and emotional (heart)
- Give examples of each type:
 - Head: analysis, organization, writing

⁴ Kretzmann, J. & McKnight, J. (1993)

- Hand: cooking, farming, dancing
- Heart: compassion, humor, teamwork

☞ Ask people to brainstorm about their own skills and capacities in these areas. Have people share their lists and continue to build them. People who know one another can add to each others lists.

☞ List the skills on separate charts for each category. See the example on the following page.



- Carpentry
- Farming
- Cooking
- Mechanics
- Sewing
- Weaving
- Animal husbandry
- House construction



- Compassion
- Care of elderly
- Sense of humour
- Conflict resolution
- Willingness to collaborate
- Cooperative spirit



- Analysis
- Accounting
- Organization
- Business and trading
- Management
- Literacy
- Problem solving
- Money management

TITLE

Capacity Inventories

Once individuals have a better understanding of their own skills, they may want to do a capacity inventory of the village. Going a step deeper than the “Head, Heart, Hand” exercise, capacity inventories help people to understand how their assets can be combined with other people’s assets for community development.



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To create a broad inventory of all the individual skills and talents in a village
- ∞ To encourage villagers to see potential connections between the assets of various individuals
- ∞ To inspire ideas for village development and each person’s active role in the process
- ∞ To spark organizing and mobilizing



METHODOLOGY

- ∞ Use skills gathered during “Appreciative Interviewing” and “Head, Heart, Hand” activity as a place to start.
- ∞ Organize the assets in ways that would be useful for the village and local initiatives at the time.
- ∞ Indicate the levels of ‘interest’, ‘experience’ and ‘ability’ of individuals in each skill area.
- ∞ Continue to expand the inventory to include everyone in the village with villagers interviewing each other.
- ∞ A big chart placed in a central area is a good place to record skills and talents. It will also make it possible for people to continue adding new names to the list.

TITLE

Mapping Groups or Associations

Identifying assets usually begins with an inventory of voluntary groups at the village level as these are groups of people already mobilized around some form of community activity. These groups are sometimes called “associations” to differentiate them from institutions which are organizations whose members are employees.

Associations are ways in which people organize around a particular task. In SEWA Jeevika project villages, associations include the JSM, the *swashrayee mandal*, users of common land, cooperatives and *jeevanshala* classes.

Groups can often stretch beyond their original purposes to become full contributors to the development process, even if that is not their original mandate. (For example, a youth group that gathers to play sports could get involved in an income generating activity).



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To discover the informal and voluntary groups or associations that are active in a village
- ∞ To understand the various relationships between these associations
- ∞ To identify opportunities for collaboration among associations



METHODOLOGY

- ∞ Invite interested community members to a meeting. Include women, men, youth and elders. Make the group as representative as possible.
- ∞ Ask participants to list their personal connections to associations. Describe the role of these associations and list names of the leaders.
- ∞ Expand the list to other associations. Ask each of the participants to identify other associations that he or she knows about. If known, list the leaders and name the person among your group who is best connected to the leader.
- ∞ Talk about opportunities for collaboration among associations.

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- Once the group has drafted a comprehensive list of the associations that exist in the village, it may be useful to illustrate their relative size (membership) and importance to overall village life. For example, see the following diagrams

Explanation of diagrams on next page:

For this village, there are seven village level associations listed. Each has one or two leaders and a number of men and women (there are three groups whose membership is comprised totally of women). The villagers completing these diagrams think that the fodder bank group, with 12 members, has the least importance in the overall village life – perhaps because its mandate is limited. The JSM is seen to have the most importance to village life while the Swashrayee Mandal, dairy cooperative and Jeevanshala class all have relatively high importance to the villagers.

In the chapatti diagram, this same information is shown in a more visual form:

The larger “chapattis” represent associations with larger memberships.

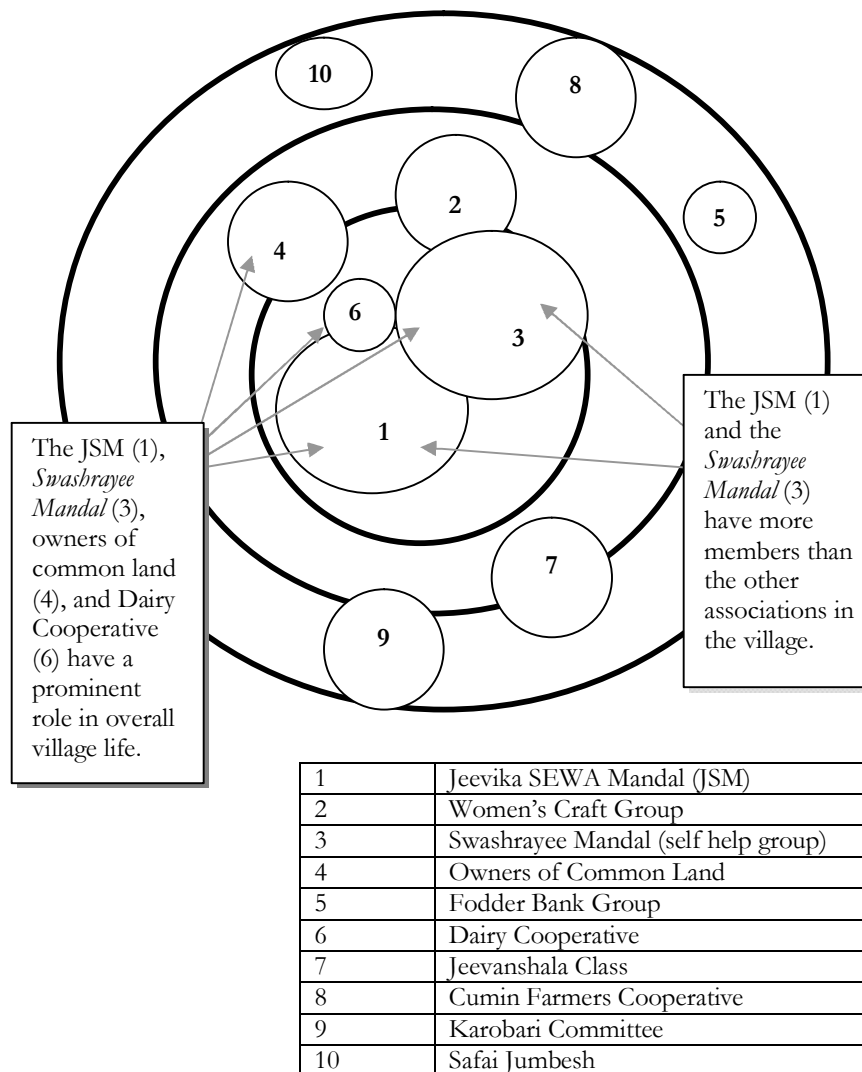
“Chapattis” close to the centre represent associations with a prominent role in overall village life.

Associations' Importance Diagram

NAME OF ASSOCIATION		LEADER(S)	WOMEN	MEN	IMPORTANCE IN VILLAGE LIFE		
					😊	😐	😞?
JSM	JSM	Dinaben	6	3	✓		
Women's Craft Group		Ramiben	8	0		✓	
Swashrayee Mandal		Leelaben	10	0	✓		
Owners of common land		Bipinbhai	4	7		✓	
Fodder bank group		Darikaben	6	6		✓	
Dairy Coop		Bansibhai	3	8	✓		
Jeevanshala		Nandaben	11	0	✓		
Karobari committee		Smitaben	6	4			✓
Cumin Farmers' Coop		Goaben	2	7			✓
Safai Jumbesh		Sanaben	4	5		✓	



Chapatti Diagram



TITLE

Mapping Institutions

Local institutions are often overlooked as sources of assets that village groups can draw upon to support their development activities. Making a list of local institutions can often result in the discovery of potential assets the village had never previously considered in support of their development efforts.



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To discover the full range of institutions
- ∞ To identify which assets these institutions could offer for village development
- ∞ To understand the links between local institutions and local associations



METHODOLOGY

- ∞ Ask people to identify local institutions including:
 - Government institutions such as agricultural extension offices, health clinics, schools and libraries
 - NGOs such as SEWA Jeevika
 - Religious institutions such as temples, mosques and churches
 - Private sector institutions such as cooperatives, banks, and private businesses
- ∞ For each institution list its potential assets including:
 - Services and expertise
 - Space and facilities
 - Materials and equipment
 - Purchasing power
 - Employment practices and personnel
 - Links to institutions outside the community

Institutional Mapping Chart

Institution	Services on offer	Facilities	Materials	Expertise	Purchasing Power	Links
Local Government						
NGO 1						
NGO 2						
Local Business 1						
Local Business 2						

TITLE

Mapping Physical and Natural Resources

Drawing a map can help villagers better understand the diversity of physical assets (roads, buildings, etc.) and natural assets (tree cover, land conditions, water sources, etc.) that exist within the village. Maps provide a visual image of village conditions that is easy for all villagers (even those who are illiterate) to understand.



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To identify the physical and natural assets that exist within a village
- ∞ To show living conditions within the village (types and location of houses, access to services, etc.)
- ∞ To promote inclusiveness in the process of asset mapping
- ∞ To generate baseline information against which future changes can be analyzed over time

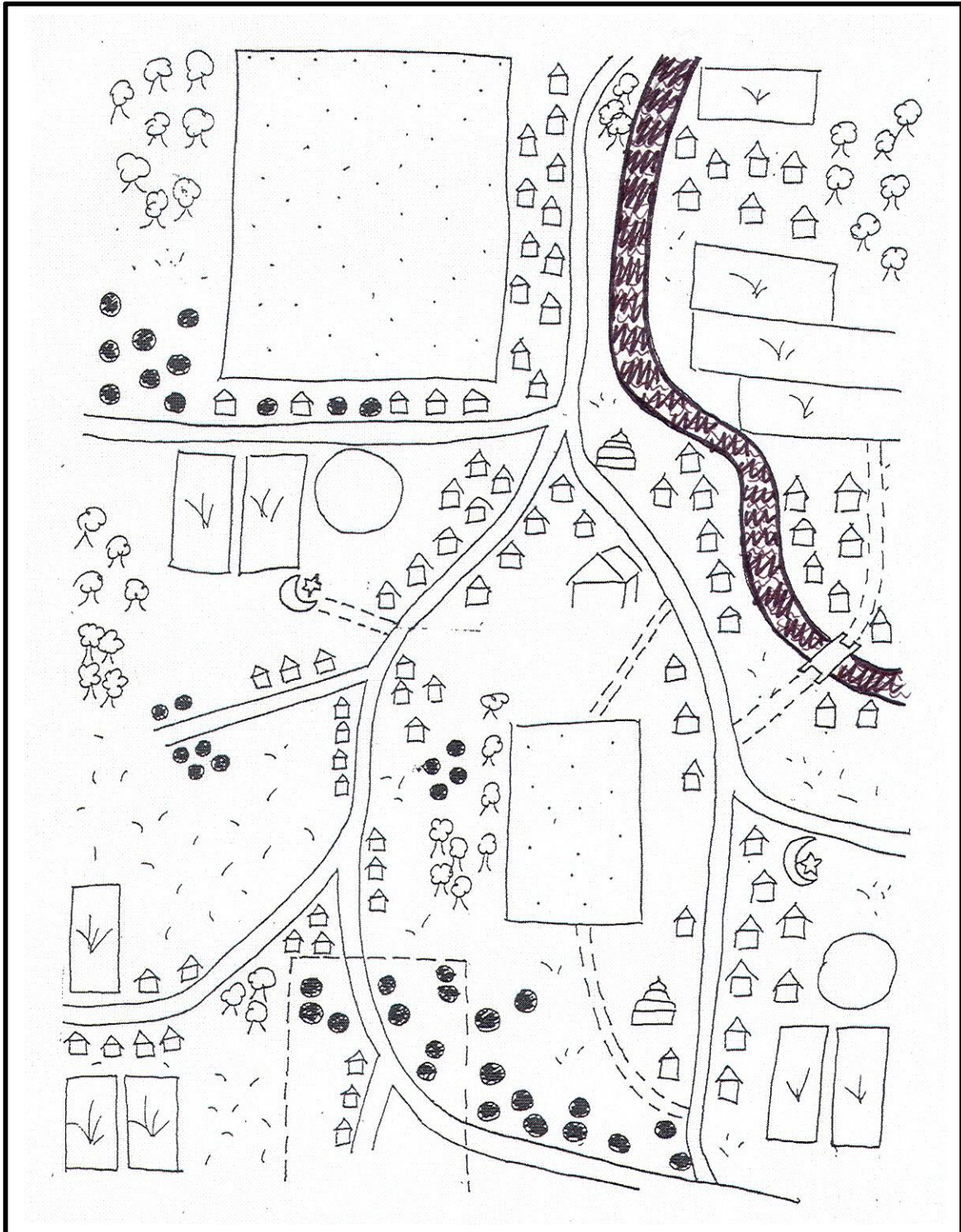


METHODOLOGY

- ∞ Gather a broadly representative group of villagers together.
- ∞ Provide papers, pens and markers for drawing.
- ∞ Explain that you would like them to draw a map of the village including all physical and natural resources. Give examples for what might be included in each category.
- ∞ Ask people to start drawing, using symbols to represent different kinds of assets (i.e. squares for houses, circles for water sources, triangles for tree cover).
- ∞ Once a first draft of the map is created, invite more villagers to come in and add to or correct the map.
- ∞ Post the map in a public location within the village so that people can continue to add to it.

Village Map

- POND
- ☁ TREE COVER
- POOREST HOUSEHOLD
- ☒ HOUSEHOLD
- ☑ IRRIGATED LAND
- ☐ COMMON LAND
- ☾ MOSQUE
- ☎ TEMPLE



TITLE

Transect Mapping

Another participatory method for mapping physical assets and natural resources is transect mapping.

Following the general village mapping process, a transect is an effective way of documenting natural and physical assets in more detail. A transect is an imaginary line across an area to capture as much diversity as possible. By walking along that line and documenting observations, an assessment of the range of assets and opportunities can be made. For example, by walking from the top of a hill down to the river valley and up the other side, it will be possible to see a wide range of natural vegetation, land use, soil types, crops, land tenure, etc.



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To document the diversity of village assets in detail, including what and how resources are used
- ∞ To identify opportunities for development based on the natural and physical assets that exist in the village.

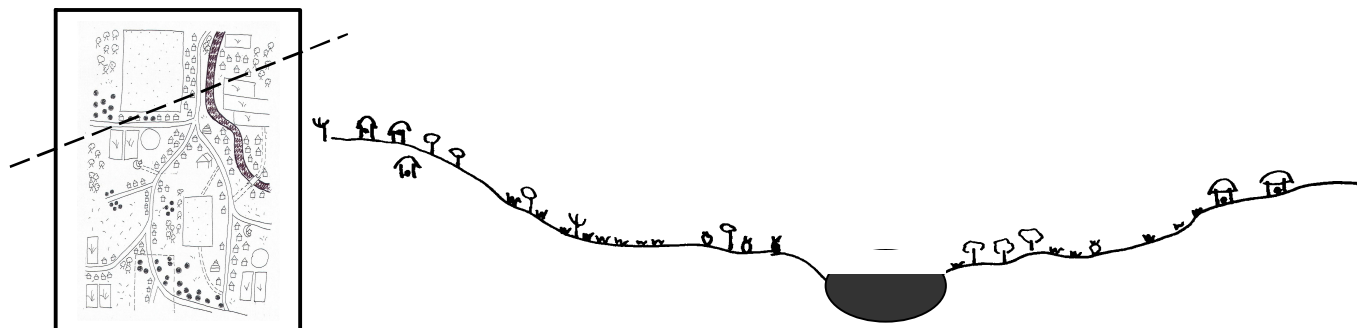


METHODOLOGY

- ∞ A village map should be drawn by villagers to show land use, land tenure, water sources, buildings and facilities, roads and boundaries.
- ∞ The villagers should then decide where to draw a transect line through the village. The line should cross a diversity of areas including homes, water sources, agriculture and roads. (Note: if the area is particularly large, villagers may split into groups to cover more of the village simultaneously).
- ∞ As a group, villagers should then attempt to walk through the village following the imaginary transect line.
- ∞ As they walk, villagers should make observations about land use, trees, animals, soils and resource tenure in different areas. They should also try to identify opportunities for development based on their observations.

Village Map with
Transect Line

Transect Map



Zones	Upland	Hillside	River bank	River	River bank	Hillside
Land use	House, buts, Mosques, food drying and storage, animal pens	Pasture	Fallow land, pasture, water sources, fields	Water sources	Fields, fallow land banana fields	Houses, buts, food drying and storage, fields, fallow land, pasture
Trees	<i>Parkia biglobosa</i> , <i>Combretum micranthum</i> , <i>Lophira lanceolata</i>	<i>Parkia biglobosa</i> , <i>Acacias</i> , <i>Combretum micranthum</i> , grasses	<i>Erythrophleum suaveolens</i>	--	<i>Bauhinia reticulata</i> , <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> , <i>Parkia biglobosa</i>	<i>Mangifera indica</i> , <i>Citrus aurantium</i> , <i>Carica papaya</i> , <i>Borassus aethiopicum</i> , <i>Tamarindus indica</i>
Animals	Goats, sheep, cattle, poultry	Goats, sheep, cattle, poultry, squirrel, hare, field rats	Monkeys, domestic animals	Fish	Monkeys, field rats	Goats, sheep, cattle, poultry, hare
Soils	Gravel surface, Little soil development, Man-made soils in tapades	Skeletal soils, over dolerite Gullying	Black soils, easily worked. Increased clay content	--	Ferrallitic soils, silty or sandy clays, soil accumulation, ochre	Black soils, Easily worked
Resource Tenure	Compounds and tapades: private individual holdings Pastures: open access	Open access	Fields/fallow land: limited access. Private individual/family holdings and communal management Water sources: open access, communal management Pasture: open access	Open access, communal management	Fields/fallow land: limited access. Private individual/family holdings and communal management Banana fields: private holdings	Compounds, tapades, enclosures: individual/family property, private. Outer fields: limited access Private/individual holdings and communal management
Opportunities						

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THE JSM



What is it?

An “assets” orientation influences the capacity building process. In SEWA Jeevika, Asset-building for poverty reduction is a fundamental objective of the project, given the precarious nature of the livelihood base of people in earthquake affected areas. Rebuilding those depleted assets, however, is only the beginning of a long term process of sustained development. Strengthened capacity of the JSMs to mobilize existing assets and access new ones is key to the process.

Who should be involved?

All members of the JSM should be involved. They should work together with Village Organizers and other SEWA staff and resource people to build their capacity in various ways – through training, through active involvement and through practical experience.

When should it be done?

As SEWA Jeevika’s involvement in project villages will eventually cease, it is important to ensure that the JSM is prepared to continue leading the development process without outside assistance. In order to prepare JSM members to assume this role, the capacity building must be on-going throughout the project. From the time the JSM is formed until the last day of SEWA Jeevika’s involvement in a village, both formal and informal capacity building should be taking place.

How can it be done?

SEWA Jeevika focuses its capacity building at three levels: member level, field staff level and senior staff level. Apart from the training specific to SEWA members in functional literacy and awareness-raising, the training of “barefoot managers” and members includes:

- Principles and approaches to area based and village planning and development
- Community participation and empowerment
- Village communication, interaction and dynamics
- Village and household economics
- Technical training in selected development interventions
- Rural institution development
- Disaster mitigation strategies and actions
- SEWA and Gandhian philosophy

IDENTIFYING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



What is it?

Under the SEWA Jeevika project, funding has been made available to help villages build their asset base. Villages also need to be able to identify economic opportunities towards which their assets can be mobilized. This section of the manual focuses on how to help the village analyze its local economy so that people can see both the effect of SEWA Jeevika on the local economy and the importance of developing the capacity to sustain livelihoods once the project withdraws.

Why is it necessary?

The people living in SEWA Jeevika project villages are among the poorest of the poor and are faced with crises such as food shortage, natural disasters and illness in their day-to-day lives. In order for them to prepare to meet these challenges and break out of the poverty cycle, local economic opportunities need to be identified for people to organize around.

Who should be involved?

Everybody plays a role in the local economy so it would be valuable to have as many people as possible involved in identifying economic opportunities. The Village Organizer can help the JSM identify the different opportunities under SEWA Jeevika as well as other opportunities. These can then be taken into account when the JSM constructs a plan for the village.

When should it be done?

Identifying economic opportunity is critical to the micro-planning phase and is often a trigger for ideas for group action.

How can it be done?

In order for people to make decisions about improving their local economy, they need to understand how it works. Village Organizers can work with groups of villagers to show that the local economy has inflows of income as well as outflows of expenditure. When people see this in visual form, they start to see possibilities for increasing money coming in to the village and decreasing money flowing out. They also see the importance of producing goods and services locally so that they can keep money circulating within the village and therefore contribute to local economic growth.

TOOL:

Leaky Bucket

TITLE

Leaky Bucket

The “Leaky Bucket” is a useful tool for understanding how a local economy works. By imagining the village’s economy as a bucket with money flowing in and leaking out, people can understand the importance of retaining money within the village. They can start to identify ways of increasing the flow of income into the village and preventing the leakage of money out of the village which happens when goods and services are purchased outside.



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To identify money for goods and services flowing in and flowing out of the local economy
- ∞ To identify opportunities for income generation in the village
- ∞ To understand the local economy and its relationship to the larger economy



METHODOLOGY

- ∞ Bring together a broadly representative group of villagers (each person will have a personal experience of the local economy).
- ∞ Brainstorm:
 - Goods and services that are bought and sold within the village and outside the village
 - Money that flows in and out of the village
 - How money circulates within the village through the sale of goods and services
- ∞ Draw the bucket indicating inflows, outflows and circulation
- ∞ Identify opportunities to increase inflows and circulation of money within the village. For example, demand for high quality craft products may be an opportunity for organizing craft workers. These are inflows – money coming into the village from outside.
- ∞ Identify opportunities to plug leaks. For example, improving agriculture production in the village might decrease the need to spend money on food outside the village. Composting might decrease the need to buy

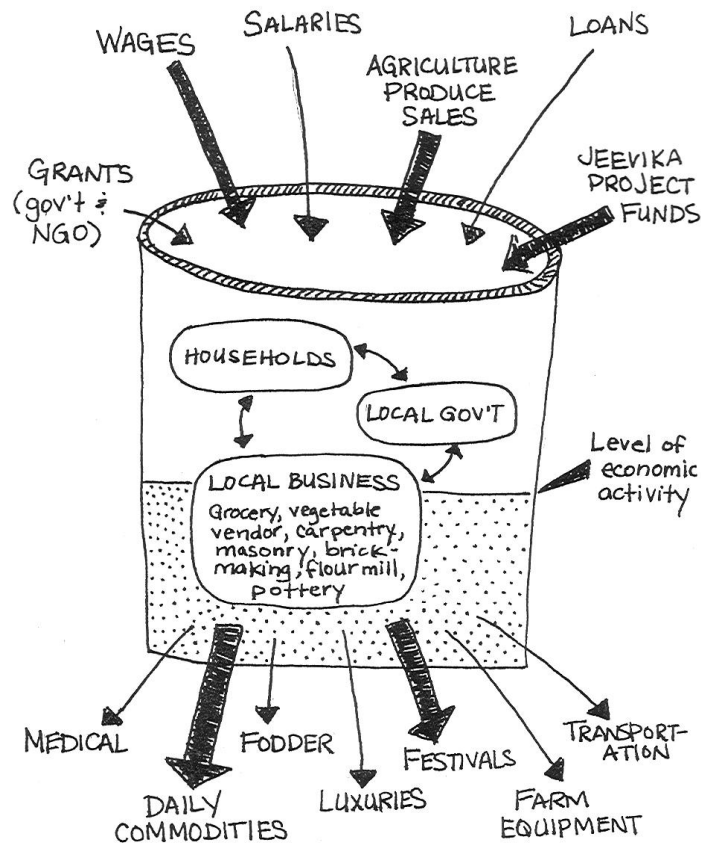
fertilizers not available locally. Money spent on food that is produced and sold outside of the village is a “leak” in the local economy.

- Keep the picture of the bucket in the village and encourage people draw new ones to show the changes.
- Remember that the SEWA Jeevika project will be a source of “inflows” in to the local economy. From the project point of view these are investments that should result in a stronger capacity among villagers to generate higher incomes and a more secure livelihood in the future. But this will be something to watch over the course of the project. If the local economy is only stronger because of SEWA Jeevika funding, it is not sustainable!

Note:

As villagers and JSMs learn more about the local economy and become more comfortable with this tool, it may be useful to add an additional level of detail to help them in their planning. Though not illustrated here, this can be accomplished by asking people to illustrate exactly where money flows in the community. Arrows representing inflows can point directly at the local economic actor which receives this money. Arrows representing leaks can start from the local actor that spends the money. This enhanced level of detail will help the JSM plan for changes in the local economy. For example, they will be able to see exactly where Jeevika SEWA funds flow into in the village and will be able to anticipate how the phasing out of this funding will impact the local economy.

Leaky Bucket



Explanation of Diagram:

As you can see in the following diagram of a leaky bucket for a typical SEWA Jeevika village, Grants, Wages, Salaries, Agriculture Produce Sales, Loans and Jeevika Project Funds are INFLOWS. The size of the arrows represents the amount of money flowing into the village from each source. Agriculture Produce Sales and Wages are generating the most income. Loans are generating the least.

There are holes at the bottom of the bucket showing how money is leaving the village. Medical, Daily Commodities, Fodder, Luxuries, Festival, Farm Equipment and Transportation Costs have been identified as LEAKS. The village is losing a lot of money to Daily Commodities and Festivals.

There are also three main types of actors within the village. These are Households, Local Government and Local Businesses. The arrows connecting each of these indicate how money flows (or circulates) between these economic actors.

Using the leaky bucket as a tool can help people visualize the local economy and imagine ways to 1) increase INFLOWS, 2) decrease LEAKS and, 3) increase economic CIRCULATION of money within the village.

While creating the Leaky Bucket diagram, the villagers may notice certain opportunities for economic development. For example, in this case, they may decide to start a small scale retail operation that sells daily commodities so that they can buy them locally (for example, a local market). This would keep money in the village that is currently spent elsewhere. There are also opportunities to increase inflows, such as adding value to the products they produce. If, for example, the villagers are currently selling whole grains like wheat, they may be able to add value to the product by milling it and selling it as flour. If they can make more money selling flour than selling whole grains, they have added value and will bring more money into the village.

LINKING ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VILLAGE PLANNING



What is it?

Village development involves linking the assets that people have with opportunities to enhance their livelihoods. Before making concrete plans, it is important to review all the assets and opportunities that have been identified so far, and how these might be used to bring about change. Remember that an important linking asset is the capacity to organize and mobilize. This capacity will be an important consideration when coming up with ideas for village development.

Why is it necessary?

By matching assets with opportunities, village members are more likely to mobilize around a realistic activity or plan, and one which they can genuinely take responsibility for. This activity also highlights who can help make the links between village activities and outside advice, information, and resources. In fact, village development takes place more effectively when a village has strong leadership which can make the links to outside opportunities, as well as strong associations that can mobilize local assets. This activity is one way in which such leadership can emerge.

Who should be involved?

The process of systematically matching assets with opportunities often calls for some kind of village forum where the results of the mapping can be presented and analyzed. This usually involves bringing together a larger part of the village than just those who were involved in mapping the assets. This could be done with the JSM or during a larger *gram sabha* meeting.

Who is going to make these decisions? In an externally-driven process, it is usually representatives of outside institutions (SEWA Jeevika, other NGOs and government agencies) that tend to dominate this process. In an asset-based approach, it is essential that villagers themselves, as citizens (either as individuals or as representatives of associations) are in the inner circle of decision making, while institutions are in the outer circle supporting rather than directing any initiative.

When should it be done?

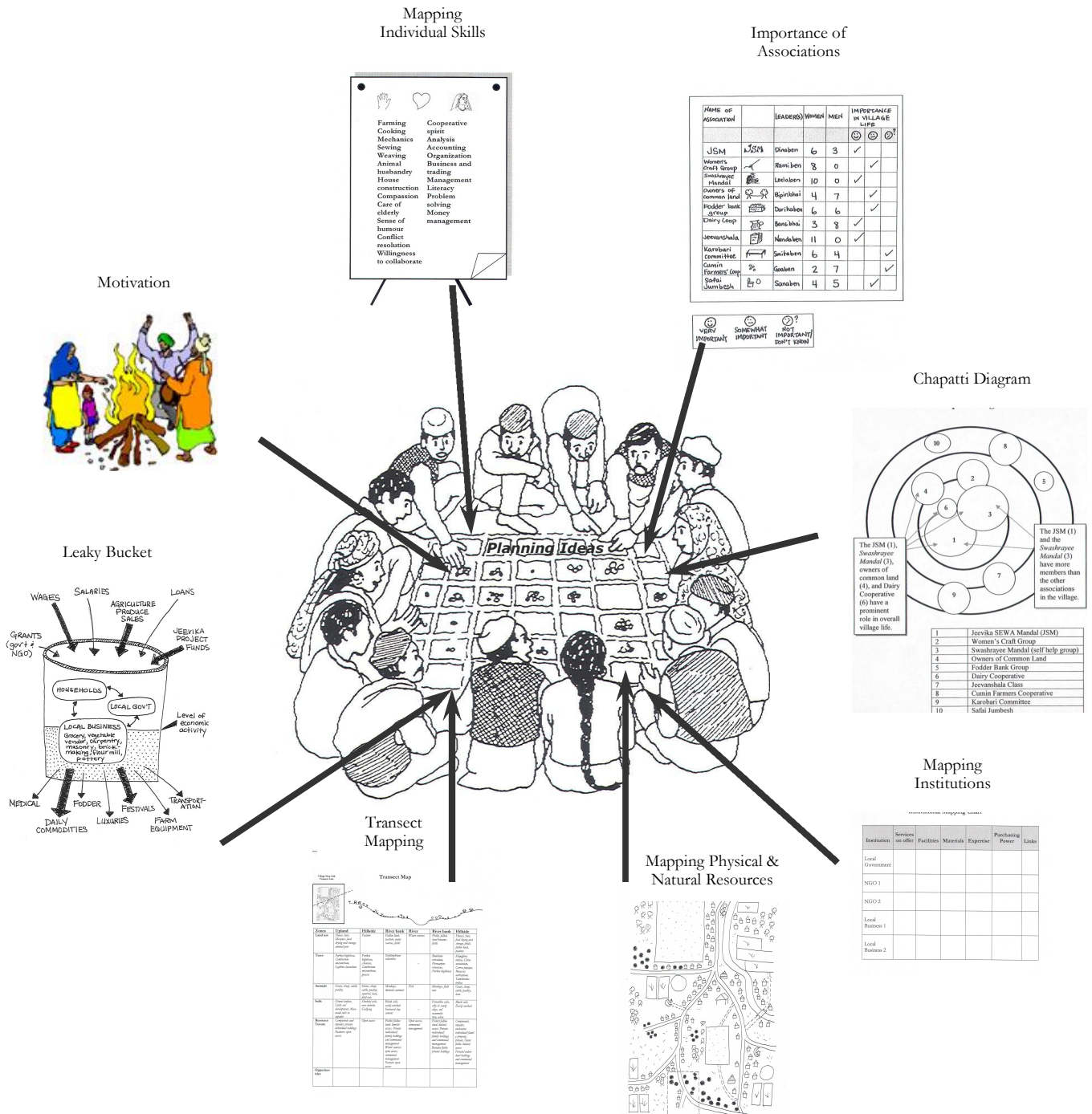
In asset-based community development, *simple* action planning may be catalyzed by appreciative interviewing and asset mapping. Often this renews the people's confidence that they can make positive changes without any external assistance. A simple village activity is planned that can build on this momentum. This immediate action can be followed up by a more comprehensive planning exercise.

How can it be done?

At a JSM meeting, JSM members and other interested villagers review all the maps and inventories that have been conducted so far. At the meeting, ideas are generated about how to link these assets and opportunities for village development.

TOOL:

Linking, Mobilizing and Organizing for Immediate Action



⁵ Centre image adapted from Chambers, R. & Guijt, I. (1995)

TITLE

Linking, Mobilizing, and Organizing for Immediate Action

Identifying a village's skills, capacities and assets is only valuable if it leads to working relationships among local people and local associations. As the mapping process takes place, typically people start to organize themselves. They begin to see what can be done by combining their various skills and assets.



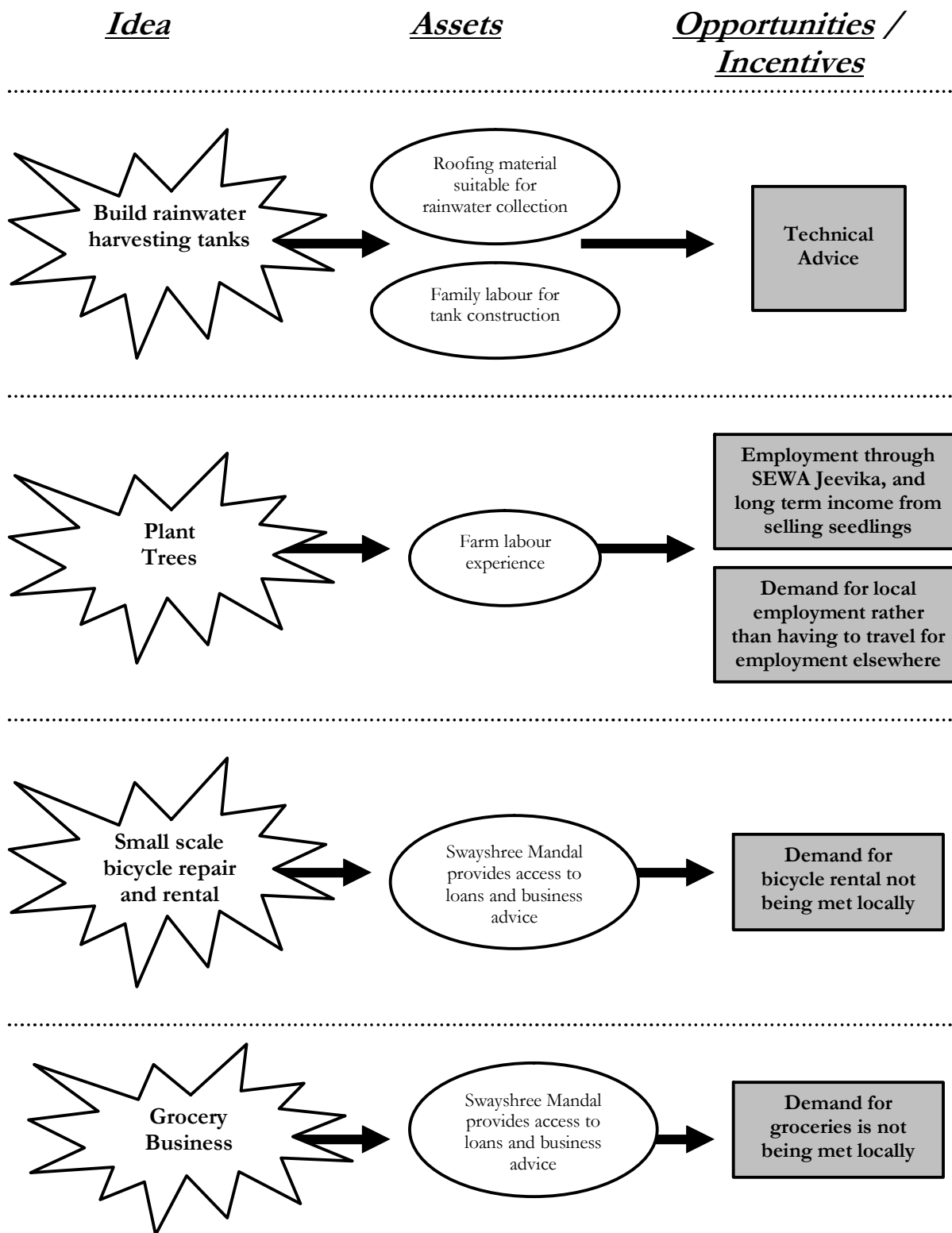
OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To allow villagers to review all the assets and opportunities that have been identified in previous exercises.
- ∞ To allow JSM members to use these ideas to stimulate activities that will make full use of assets and opportunities.



METHODOLOGY

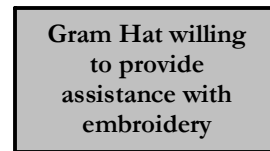
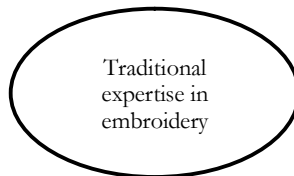
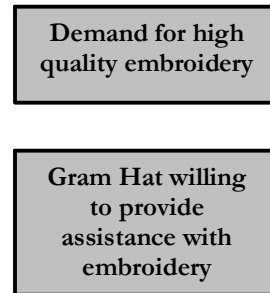
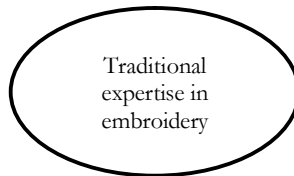
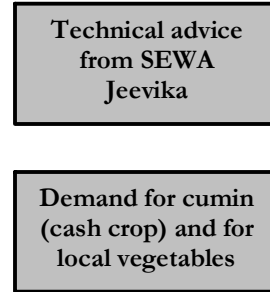
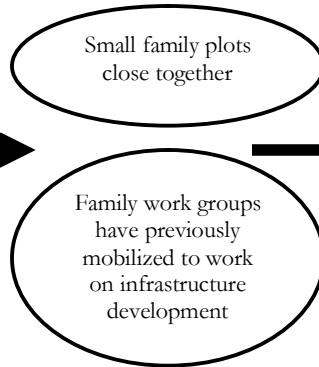
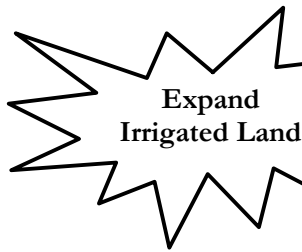
- ∞ Display all asset maps and inventories that have been completed:
 - Village map
 - Individual skills and assets
 - Associations
 - Leaky bucket
- ∞ Ask group to brainstorm what ideas they have for making good use of both their assets and opportunities
- ∞ List these ideas, indicating assets to be used and opportunities available



Idea

Assets

Opportunities /
Incentives



PRIORITIZING AND SCHEDULING WORK



What is it?

Prioritization and scheduling of work begins with a discussion about many possible ideas for action. It results in specific plans for an activity or several activities

Why is it necessary?

A clear detailed plan is necessary so that everyone knows who is responsible for what part of the plan, what resources need to be mobilized and when different activities need to take place.

Who should be involved?

All members of the JSM should be involved in prioritizing and scheduling of work and the design of a specific plan. Other members of the village may also want to be involved

How should it be done?

This depends on whether planning is being done as part of SEWA Jeevika, or if it is being done independently after SEWA Jeevika. At present, Village Organizers and district coordinators of SEWA Jeevika have an important role to help villages design micro-plans for village development, with a special focus on the poorest of the poor. The project has assisted the JSM in this task to ensure that the plan adequately reflects village priorities and to ensure that the resource requirements from the project are clearly specified. This process is an opportunity for JSMs to get the experience necessary to formulate plans independently after the end of the project – at that time JSMs will rely on village resources and resources accessed through local government, NGOs, and the private sector. Therefore, planning during the SEWA Jeevika project, when assets are being built, will be different from planning carried out after the project.

TOOL:

Building a Comprehensive Plan

TITLE

Building a Comprehensive Plan

Under SEWA Jeevika, The JSM has a special responsibility to develop a plan, making use of resources available through the project, and ensuring that the poorest of the poor are the focus of activity. Make sure that this plan builds on the skills, capacities, and assets that people already have. This way, SEWA Jeevika is seen to be “investing” in people whose capacities are recognized and valued.



OBJECTIVES

- ∞ To discuss ideas from different JSM members and the people they represent.
- ∞ To identify which ideas are in common, which complement each other, and which are different.
- ∞ To develop a long term plan maximizing assets and opportunities.



METHODOLOGY⁶

- ∞ Define the Task:
Make sure everyone is clear about what the task is and what their responsibilities are in the planning process. For example, each member of the JSM may have responsibility to discuss the planning process with other village members so that it is as transparent and participatory as possible
- ∞ Identify Goals:
Discussing goals may mean that the group discovers that different group members have different goals. It is good to identify these differences as well as to identify goals that are shared. Try to help the group identify what is in their shared interest that they are willing to work on together
- ∞ Appraise relevant facts:
This is the time when people review their ideas for action and their priorities for improving their livelihoods to ensure livelihood security in the future

⁶ Adapted from Boothroyd, P. (1991)

For the duration of SEWA Jeevika, opportunities for external funding and training support also need to be taken into consideration. What opportunities are there for loans, or for local employment, or for providing an accessible and reliable water supply through the project?

➤ Reviewing options:

At this point, a number of ideas will be voiced by members of the group. Some of these ideas may be compatible and can be grouped together. For example, the need for a reliable water supply and for local employment are compatible for the duration of the project because of the wage employment or food for work offered for constructing community water tanks. Literacy classes for women and the expansion of savings and credit through *smashrayee mandals* are also compatible, since women with literacy skills have more confidence dealing with banks and traders.

➤ Assessing the options:

At this point group members can weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of all the different options.

➤ Making decisions:

Finally, the group needs to decide:

1. What to do and how to sequence the planned activities.
2. Who is to be involved at every step.
3. Who is responsible for every step.
4. What resources are required.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION



What is it?

Community development is a complex process. There are many people involved, many activities taking place and many decisions to be made. Monitoring and evaluation is a way of gathering this learning and bringing the experiences, insight and knowledge of those involved together to help make good decisions at various levels.

The people involved at the various levels of a project all play an important role in monitoring and evaluation. Villagers, JSM members and *swashrayee mandal* members are no exception. They can help collect, discuss and analyze changes that are happening at the community level, each providing a unique and critical perspective. Their meaningful involvement and contribution in monitoring and evaluation helps build their capacity as decision-makers.

Why is it necessary?

Village Organizers have many responsibilities and, thus, a lot of insight to share with villages, with the district offices, with PMU and with each other. However, without a systematic method of tracking their knowledge and observations, the opportunity to learn from these experiences will be lost. Village Organizers are the key channel through which SEWA staff can gather feedback from villagers and use this to improve the implementation of the project. It is important to remember that all the people involved in SEWA Jeevika are working towards the same goal – to improve the livelihoods of the poorest of the poor. Everyone's contribution to strengthening capacity to meet this goal must be recognized.

Who should be involved?

There are many people who have to make decisions at various levels in a project. In SEWA Jeevika, there are different decisions that need to be made by villagers, Swashrayee Mandals, JSMs, Village Organizers, District Coordinators and PMU. For each of these decisions, different information is needed. Anyone who is responsible for making decisions should be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. Decisions made without having access to the relevant information will not prove effective.

When should it be done?

Depending on what decisions have to be made, it may be appropriate to plan quarterly, semi-annual or annual monitoring and evaluation. It is important to choose a date, time and place that are as convenient as possible for all involved. This may include working around known agricultural schedules and social festivities.

Monitoring and evaluation need to be carried out consistently for the information to be useful and comparable with baseline data. Information that is collected regularly over time gains value, regardless of the time at which it is collected. Changes happening in the village can be monitored in this way and the reasons for these changes can be discussed and analyzed.

How can it be done?

There are many tools and techniques that can be used to do participatory monitoring and evaluation. However, in order to be effective, these tools must be used in a systematic way. This means carrying out monitoring and evaluation at regular intervals, involving all the appropriate community members, and ensuring that the information gathered is accurate.

*Please refer to the companion manual:
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: A Manual for Village Organizers*

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