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Putting People First: Exploring the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in Waterloo Region

January, 2004

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Contributing Writer: **Sanjay Govindaraj**
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“...SL approaches must be underpinned by a commitment to poverty eradication. ...” (Carney, D., & Ashley, C. (1999) *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from early experience*, p.7)



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Community Economic
Development
Technical Assistance
Program



Putting People First:

Exploring the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in Waterloo Region

January, 2004

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INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is to eradicate poverty by presenting cutting-edge strategies for addressing and eliminating issues that perpetuate those living conditions.

Application of the SLA is in the experimental stages of development in Canada. For the most part, the approach has been successfully implemented in rural communities existing under conditions of extreme poverty in other areas of the world such as Indonesia, Zambia, and Cambodia (refer to DFID's website: www.livelihoods.org). There is no template to follow, however, for Canadian urban areas. We consider our one-year project in Waterloo Region a basic exploratory step and certainly the first attempt at applying SLA theory in this region. We humbly acknowledge that our accomplishments in the past year are only a few small steps towards achieving the SLA's ultimate goal.

The primary objectives of this pilot project were to:

- Develop local SLA knowledge and expertise
- Begin initial exploration of the SLA by means of integrating theory into practice
- Support community agencies to custom design the SLA for their use
- Report on the findings and produce a comprehensive document to share the learning.

The content of this report will provide the reader with examples of agencies who integrated the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach with their services. It will include detailed explanations on the use and modification of SLA forms; simple techniques and examples for applying and evaluating SLA methods; feedback from the participants, and perhaps most important the experienced learnings that were encountered throughout the process.

The overall purpose of this document is to share the experience, the learnings and the newly enhanced implementation tools as guidance in the event other organizations choose to implement the SLA in their respective communities. The SLA can be applied to various levels of society from the individual/program level to the organizational and policy levels. No matter which level one chooses to implement the SLA, **"Putting People First"**, must be at the heart of its design and development.

Should the reader want the full scope of the SLA in all its complexity we refer you to the www.livelihoods.org website. You will find the "guidance sheets" an informative place to start as well as the following documents: *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from early experience*. DFID (1999) by Ashley, C. and Carney, D.; and *Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches; Progress and Possibilities for Change*, DFID, Carney, D. Additionally, you can refer to the two research papers entitled: *Women in Transition Out of Poverty*, January, 2001 and *Women in Transition Out of Poverty*, January, 2002 written by Mary Ferguson and Janet Murray. Although their work is based on women's economic development activities, much can be learned about individual and program implementation in general. It is their adaptation of the asset pentagon that was used by this project.

"Learning must not mean theorizing. Practical application in the field – combined with a learning attitude and appropriate backup support to learning – represent a positive way forward." (D. Carney & C. Ashley, (1999) *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from Early Experience*,) p. 44).

BACKGROUND

(By: Sanjay Govindaraj)

Talking about poverty issues first necessitates a general look at statistics in Canada as a whole and for the purposes of this document at the Region of Waterloo itself.

Poverty in Canada

Poverty has increased in Canada over the past decade. There is a greater gap in the income of Canadians than ever before. Although there is no official measure of poverty in Canada, the Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs (LICO) is probably the best known. Using LICO stats for 1990, 15% of all persons were living in poverty. By 1999, the proportion increased to 16.2%. This means that close to 4,886,000 persons were living in poverty. Of these, 1,298,000 were children under the age of 18¹. Measured in 1991 dollars, the poverty gap for all households grew by 36 per cent (\$3.6 billion) between 1981 and 1991².

Canada spends billions of dollars each year through a wide range of programs to alleviate poverty through income subsidies and social programs. These efforts help but they don't eliminate poverty³.

Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada

The Region of Waterloo is located in southwest Ontario, 100km from Toronto. As per 2001 census data 433,875 people live in this region. The economy of Waterloo Region has long been considered one of the most successful in Canada due to a diverse economic base and close proximity to the US markets. The Region also has two of Canada's leading educational institutions (Wilfred Laurier University and the University of Waterloo) attracting students from all over the world and producing a highly skilled workforce. Waterloo Region had the highest population growth of any Ontario Economic Region. Between 1991 and 1996 the Region's 10 % growth was 1.5 times faster than the Ontario average of 6.6%⁴. Despite all this prosperity, poverty in the region is quite evident in key pockets of low income neighbourhoods. Overall, 12% of the population (42,000 individuals) had low incomes in 1990,⁵ and by 1995 poverty had increased to 15.13 % (53,500 individuals)⁵.

Income disparity and depth of poverty seem to be greater in Waterloo Region than in Canada as a whole. In 2001 the total average earnings for all Waterloo families was \$55,310, about 10% greater than the rest of Canada at \$50,339⁵. The total average annual earnings for poor families was lower than Canadian averages - a low \$ 7,795 compared to poor families across Canada at \$ 9,330.⁵

¹ Canadian Council of Social Development, "Percentage and Number of Persons in Low Income/Poverty, by Age, Sex and Family Characteristics, Canada, 1990 and 1999", http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/fs_pov9099.htm

² Ross, D., Scott, K. & Smith, P. (2000). *The Canadian Fact Book On Poverty*, published by the Canadian Council on Social Development.

³ Torjman, S. & Hodgson, D. *Poverty in Waterloo Region*. Op2000 Publication Series. www.op2000.org

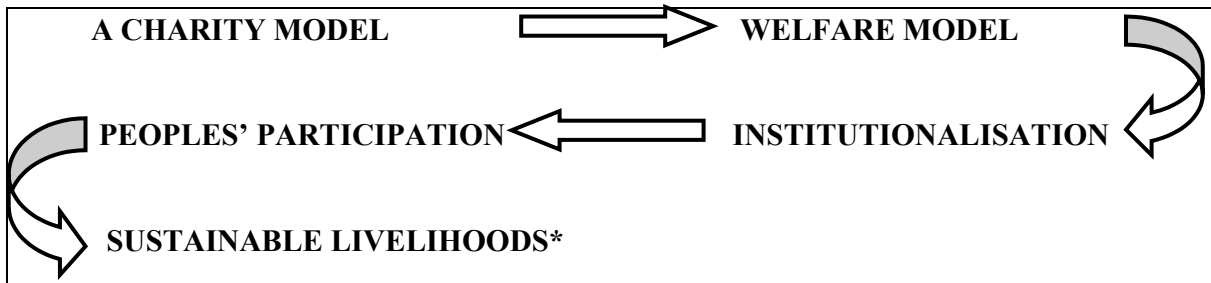
⁴ HRDC, Population Characteristics of Kitchener-Waterloo, 1996 census

⁵ The Urban Poverty Consortium of Waterloo Region (2000). *Lets talk about Poverty: Poverty fact sheet series*. <http://www.waterlooregion.org/poverty/talk/1.html>

The result of this disparity has been that in Waterloo Region, an estimated 5.8 % of the population was supported by food hampers in 1999⁶. In the year 2000 a total of 40,610 food hampers were distributed.⁷ As well, homelessness was estimated at 1,500 to 2000 individuals while 4,000 households were on waiting lists for housing geared to income.⁸

The obvious nature of increasing poverty rates has created the need for further innovation. One such development is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) and the subject of this document.

Dr. Naresh Singh, in his role as Canada Trust/Walter Bean Visiting Professor for 2000-2001 at the University of Waterloo presented the evolution of the Sustainable Livelihoods model. Strategists and think tanks addressing poverty have changed their approaches over the last 4 decades⁹. They have evolved from the traditional “charity model” of the early 1950’s to the present “Sustainable Livelihoods” thinking in the late 1990’s.



*”Sustainable Livelihoods is a complex set of ideas, principles and analytical tools that have been labeled the *Sustainable Livelihoods Approach*. It has acquired an extraordinary prominence in development thinking and activity within a very short time frame.”¹⁰

The work of Chambers and Conway in the early 1990’s built on participatory research practices and ideas that were originally put forward by the World Commission on Environment and Development. They stated that ... “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future”¹¹.

⁶ The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, “Spring News 2001”, <http://www.foodbankwloo.org/images/spring2001.pdf>

⁷ Fridge is Bare Report, March 2001, Peter Katona, Waterloo Region Food Bank

⁸ Understanding Homelessness in Waterloo Region, Social Planning Council of K-W, Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries and the Waterloo - Wellington-Dufferin District Health Unit, 1999

⁹ Sustainable Livelihoods Concept paper, 1998, Naresh Singh & Samir Wanmali

¹⁰ Robb,C.(1999) Can the poor influence policy ? PPA’s in the developing world <http://www-wds.worldbank.org/>

¹¹ Section 1.1 Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, Department of International Development (DFID) www.dfid.gov.uk/, Adapted from Chambers, R. and G. Conway (1992) *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21 st century*. IDS Discussion Paper 296. Brighton: IDS.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD CORE PRINCIPLES

Essential to the implementation of any new framework that will be applied to our fellow humans is a professional responsibility to not only learn the underlying principles that drive the theory but to also integrate within the practitioner's mind these same principles. The following chart is a summary of the SL principles and concepts written by the DFID:

Department for International Development's Core SL Principles

Poverty-focused development activity should be:

1. **People-centered:** sustainable poverty elimination will be achieved only if external support focuses on what matters to people, understands the differences between groups of people and works with them in a way that is congruent with their current livelihood strategies, social environment and ability to adapt.
2. **Dynamic:** external support must recognize the dynamic, nature of livelihood strategies, respond flexibly to changes in people's situations, and develop longer-term commitments
3. **Responsive and participatory:** poor people themselves must be key actors in identifying and addressing livelihood priorities. Outsiders need processes that enable them to listen and respond to the poor.
4. **Multi-level:** poverty elimination is an enormous challenge that will only be overcome by working at multiple levels, ensuring that micro-level activity informs the development of policy and an effective enabling environment, and that macro-level institutions and policies support people to build upon their own strengths.
5. **Conducted in partnership:** with both the public and private sector (sl guidance sheet sect 1.2 "It is hoped that the dialogue around the development and implementation of the sustainable livelihoods approach will eventually provide the basis for deeper and more meaningful development partnerships.")
6. **Sustainable:** there are four key dimensions to sustainability – economic, institutional, social and environmental sustainability. All are important – a balance must be found between them (we are using 5 asset areas).

SL approaches must be underpinned by a commitment to poverty eradication.

TWO KEY COMPONENTS OF THE SLA FRAMEWORK used by organizations in this project

The SLA’s framework consists of various components, two of which have been highlighted by this project. For a complete description of the framework and all it’s components developed by DFID, see the Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets: Section 2: Framework at www.livelihoods.org. You can also view an adapted version found in *Women in Transition Out of Poverty*, 2001.

1) Asset Pentagon

The SLA is about building on a person’s existing strengths (referred to as “assets”) as well as creating new ones. The **Asset Pentagon** is a key component of the SL Approach acting as a visual aid and a practical tool for participants involved in SLA programs.

The Asset Pentagon visually represents 5 asset areas that speak to the holistic aspects of everyday living. They are considered the building blocks necessary for individuals to move out of poverty and achieve a sustainable livelihood. The Pentagon acts as an empowering exercise for participants to identify and “map” their currents assets, choosing the ones they want to strengthen. Participants are thus encouraged to view their lives through a broader scope, opening up doors and assets they may otherwise never have identified.



Definitions of the 5 Asset Areas:

Human: The skills, knowledge, abilities and capabilities that aid in the development of the other asset areas

Social: The benefits that come through relationships with people and institutions

Physical: Actual physical things that people own, control or have access to

Personal: Intangible assets. The inner resources of an individual.

Financial: Income, credit, investments

The pentagon model shown above is the design adopted for use throughout this project. Based on our learning over the past year, however, some adjustments have been made and this is discussed at the end of the document under ‘Outcomes’.

2) The Vulnerability Context

The SLA perspective reminds us that we all live within the ‘context of vulnerability’. That is, we are all susceptible to the shocks, trends, systems, cycles and patterns that impact on our livelihoods.

Sustaining our individual livelihoods depends largely on how well we integrate and cope with whatever vulnerabilities are currently affecting our lives. For example, if our health fails and we cannot work, do we have enough resources in place to maintain our current livelihood or would this vulnerable aspect trigger a fall into poverty?

A total of 183 vulnerabilities were identified by the participants of this project and are discussed later in this document as well as the new “Vulnerability Pentagon” created out of that information (pg. 22)

‘Putting People First’ PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

We took the following steps to implement the SLA Project in Waterloo Region.

“Practical application of SL approaches – combined with time and support for reflection and dialogue – represent a positive way forward.”
D. Carney and C. Ashley, (1999) *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from early experience*, p. 3)

1. Information Session

The first step towards implementation was to inform and promote the SLA project in the local non-profit social service sector in our region about the SLA and measure their interest. An information session was organized and delivered through OP2000’s ‘*Network Exchange and Speaker Series*’ in September, 2002. Approximately 100 people attended.

SLA Project information packets were made available along with registration forms for the upcoming SLA training workshops.

2. SLA Training Workshops

Two 2-day workshops were held in Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge in November, 2003. They were delivered by Eko Nomos.

Thirty-two people attended, bringing 15 programs together for possible SLA development. (Appendix I, for a list of participants)

3. Follow-up Support for Participating Organizations

Five organizations chose to take part in the project. Follow-up support varied according to agency needs and requests. SLA project staff worked with each organization to guide them through their implementation plans. Support consisted of one-to-one consultations, database development and data entry, forms re-design, and a group training session was delivered to one of the participating agencies.

4. Closing Wrap-up Session

45 people attended the wrap-up session.

Not only did the participating agencies expend time and effort on implementing the SLA, but 3 of the 5 organizations gave presentations describing their experience of the implementation process (Lutherwood, National Child Benefit, and YMCA Settlement/Integration Services). Also inspiring was a talk by a leading expert of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, Dr. Naresh Singh. (Author of the book: “*Sustainable Livelihoods – Building on the Wealth of the Poor*”).

An exciting outcome developed from a group discussion about the topic, “Next Steps” in the Waterloo region. The pro-active nature of this discussion is addressed in the ‘Conclusions’ section of this document.

PROFILES OF THE FIVE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

1. SMALL STEPS TO SUCCESS (SSTS)

ABOUT THE PROGRAM: SSTS (an initiative of the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank and YWCA of Cambridge) is a ~~preemployment~~ program for women who have been facing significant obstacles to employment due to social, economical and educational barriers resulting in poor self-esteem, low self-confidence and passivity. The SSTS supports their participants to gain enough inner resources to become proactive in their lives and prepares them to move into employment, advanced training programs or higher education. Although the main focus is in the human and social asset areas, it views the women from a holistic perspective, adjusting program content accordingly and initiating linkages to other resources.

SSTS runs for 13 weeks with an additional 3 ½-week work placement component. Follow up can continue for up to 1 year in the form of individual and group support.

Background: SSTS was the first to implement the SLA.

SL project length: 1 year

No. of participants completing the project: 8

SLA Outcomes: Staff produced some visual aids to support the understanding and integration of the asset perspective for staff and participants.

They separated their curriculum into asset areas and provided a curriculum calendar for the SSTS participants (see example below). They also developed an enlarged picture of the asset pentagon, listed the categories for each asset area and displayed it in their training room.



A Vocational Life Skills Program for Women

Sample only (miniature version)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		Orientation	Friendship Social Asset	Computers Human Asset
Community Resources Physical Asset (Information)	Goal Setting Human Asset	Self-Esteem/Confidence Human Asset	Relationships Social Asset	Computers Human Asset
Self-concept Human Asset	Setting Boundaries Human Asset	Eating on a Shoestring Physical/Financial Asset	Time Management Human Asset	Computers Human Asset
Stress Management Human Asset	Stress Management Human Asset	Communications Human Asset	Resumes Human Asset	Computers Human Asset
Personal Strengths & Values Personal Asset	Depression Human/Personal			

2. NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT (NCB) COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM IN WATERLOO REGION

Background: Five NCB sites volunteered to pilot the SLA: Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, Centreville-Chicopee Community Centre, Preston Heights Community Group, Langs Farm Village Association, and Mill-Courtland Community Centre. Each site has Outreach Workers who were responsible for implementing the SLA.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM: Nationally, the overall goals are to prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty, promote attachment to the workforce and reduce government overlap and duplication. The rationale is that parents on social assistance should be supported as they move into jobs by having better access to essential benefits and services for their children. Parents already working in low-income jobs are also helped to receive the supports they need in order to stay employed (National Child Benefit Reinvestment 1999 Ontario Municipal Report).

The Social Services Department of the Region of Waterloo incorporates the elements of effective engagement, relationship building within families and communities, partnerships and shared accountability between the informal and the formal systems of services and supports, and addresses the issues related to child poverty in Waterloo Region. The Community Outreach Program is a community based service which incorporates person to person active engagement, system navigation (referrals), agency/organization systems support and client access to a subsidy fund, with the aim of assisting low income families with children by meeting their basic needs.

SLA Project Length: 6 months

No. of participants completing the project: 39

Project Outcomes: Staff initiated and worked with the SL Coordinator to develop a MS Access database application for SLA use. It is a valuable prototype we can build upon.

Small Steps to Success and the NCB Community Outreach Programs implemented the SLA in a fashion similar to each other. This implementation, along with enhancements, challenges and lessons learned is outlined in the implementation

process described later in this document.

3. LUTHERWOOD COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

ABOUT THE PROGRAM: Lutherwood is a multi-faceted social service agency serving over 10,000 people per year, 'building better futures' for individuals, families and communities offering mental health, employment and seniors services.

The Community Services Department includes: Learn\$ave (financial asset development), Child and Parent Place (supervised access and exchange), CradleLink (volunteer support for new parents), Infant Mental Health, Family Literacy, and Volunteer Resources.

SLA Project Length: no set length

Number of participants completing the project: 64 community professionals participated in a conference organized by Lutherwood. As well, 14 of their staff took part in the team project.

Project Outcomes:

A) Lutherwood's Community Services department introduced the SLA Assets at a one-day conference, *Building Assets in the Family*. (See Appendix II for the conference flyer). They offered 5 workshops, each one relating to one of their program areas and each covering one of the 5 asset areas. Their introduction offered general information on the SLA and its relevance to the workshops. Concluding remarks were offered by personal testimony from someone who lost her livelihood to poverty. The generous sharing of her personal story displayed increases and decreases in specific asset areas.

B) The Lutherwood Program Manager realized that the staff needed to have an understanding of *asset building* and needed to experience the concept prior to successfully implementing it with the people they support. She decided to have a team building day where the staff would take part in an asset self-assessment geared towards the workplace. Asset mapping tools were customized to incorporate concepts specific to team functioning in the workplace. Out of that assessment the team has decided to prioritize strategies to build the team's social and human assets, while acknowledging that development in the other asset areas is also important and will be the focus of future work.

The Manager also created new categories related to work teams for each asset area. They were subsequently adapted and expanded upon by the SL Project to create an Asset Identifier List for Teams (see Appendix III)

5. YWCA SETTLEMENT/INTEGRATION SERVICES

ABOUT THE PROGRAM: The purpose of Cambridge YMCA Immigrant Services is to enhance the "wellness" of newcomers/immigrants by providing integration opportunities, resources and other support services to assist in fostering the creation of an inclusive community. Employment Services are provided to immigrants and newcomers. Assistance and advocacy in seeking and resuming employment are provided, in addition to individualized employment support and resume preparation.

SLA Project Length: no set length

No. of participants completing the project: ongoing one-to-one employment counseling sessions

Project Outcomes: The SLA is used by one of the Employment Counsellors in her work. She designed and delivered two SLA presentations to other agency staff.

6. CAMBRIDGE KIWANIS VILLAGE NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORP. SUPPORTIVE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR YOUTH

ABOUT THE PROJECT: The purpose of this service is to develop a supportive housing option in Cambridge where homeless youth aged 16 to 24 can find stability and take that important step towards independence. This project assists homeless youth during the transition from the structured residential program at Argus Residence for Young People to long-term supportive housing in subsidized rental units at Kiwanis. Key identified supports include: developing key qualities of home which include security, privacy, comfort and connectedness, psychological, social, physical and emotional supports, and functional/practical supports (financial information and advice, help acquiring basic necessities, kitchen and domestic supports)

SLA Project Length: 6 months

No. of participants completing the project: 0

Project Outcomes: This agency created categories for each asset area geared to youth. Their work was adapted and expanded upon to create an Asset Identifier List for Youth. (see Appendix IV). This list can easily be

modified to build a list for adults.

IMPLEMENTATION: INDIVIDUAL AND PROGRAM LEVELS

Individual Level

The SLA offers an enhanced, asset-based approach to measuring outcomes for individuals involved in programs. It also offers an effective tracking method that looks at the individual in a holistic fashion, offering a more complete view of an individual's movement out of poverty. It provides a framework for the individual to understand the factors affecting this movement.

By also looking at the 'vulnerability context', individuals become more informed about the obstacles in their way of moving and staying out of poverty. They realize that the condition of poverty is not their fault which in turn fosters a sense of self-confidence and hope.

"Empowerment is a nonsense word when it implies that some with power will give power willingly to those without. Only self-empowerment is possible, and our role is to build the capacity of those without to take power." Dr. Naresh Singh, Sustainable Livelihoods Approach Project, Wrap up Session, 2003.

With the right support and objectivity, people can begin setting goals and developing strategies that will strengthen their assets and eliminate or at least minimize the vulnerable aspects previously in their way. The entire SLA process provides people with self-empowering tools and a learning experience that encourages practical application towards change.

Program Level

The SLA also offers a tool for the design and evaluation of a program's effectiveness. Practitioners can ask themselves: "In what way could an SLA contribute to this program?" "Are we viewing the people we support holistically? Does our program encompass a holistic approach? What asset areas do we need to address?" "What can we adjust based on what participants address as assets they wish to strengthen or create?" "Are we informing participants of resources that are available in the various asset areas? "Is there increased movement in the asset areas we are covering in this program for the group as a whole? Answers to these questions can lead to adjustments in program content or structure that might better support the individuals served by the program.

Note: Although the SLA looks holistically at human beings via the five asset areas practitioners do not have to deliver services addressing all of them. We can play an important role, however, by encouraging the people we support to at least think about developing these areas of their lives in order to achieve what they desire - one step at a time. In this way we at least begin to facilitate a change in perspective to an internal asset-based one. Links to services that address other asset areas can be offered should participants request help in areas not covered by your service.

CONSIDERATIONS: Before Starting the Implementation Process

- Always remember the SLA principles that underpin this work. It is not enough to use the words and action steps of the SLA. The principles need to be considered every step of the way along with a commitment to work towards the final goal of poverty reduction and its eradication.
- There is no one way to implement an SLA. There will probably be as many SLA's as there are programs, projects and organizations.
- Working with assets does not mean we ignore needs. Conversely, there is a danger of focusing on the lack of assets. Perhaps what Dr. Singh said at our wrap-up session will help clarify this point: *"If you use the concept of assets but focus on the lack of assets, you are back to dealing with needs". "When you begin with the assets of the poor you do not neglect their needs. These emerge as the gap between where they are now and what they conceive of as a more sustainable livelihood."* (Sustainable Livelihoods Project, Wrap up Session, 2003)
- The initial training for practitioners should be developed in a manner that simplifies the SLA complexity but includes SLA background information, the core principles, the framework, the vulnerability context, and the asset pentagon. It may be helpful to ask practitioners to fill out the asset mapping tools themselves as a way to experience, as well as demonstrate its effectiveness and use.
- The SLA approach puts people at the forefront of its development. It brings their priorities to the surface and considers the obstacles standing in the way of moving forward. And if necessary, these may need to be communicated at policy level.
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) are always important, particularly for a new approach. Ongoing M & E and being flexible in making adjustments along the way is crucial and something for which staff should be prepared. The Sustainable Livelihoods planning cycle would be helpful to read regarding this process. (J. Murray and M. Ferguson, (2002). WEDC. *Women in Transition Out of Poverty*, p. 47-53)
- The excitement of realizing how important the approach is and the promise it holds, can lead one to want to race to the finish line and achieve the SLA's ultimate goal of making policy change now! Just as we know we cannot fast track people out of poverty, we cannot rush the implementation of an approach as new and complex as the SLA.
- Implementation is most effective when all staff involved, including management, are committed to completing the process.

"... more work is required on monitoring and evaluation. A request was heard for a greater focus on vulnerability, what this means and how we should measure changes in it." D. Carney and C. Ashley, (1999) *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from early experience*, p. 28)

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The following implementation process and suggestions are based upon the work and learnings of the **Small Steps to Success** and **National Child Benefit Community Outreach Programs**. To augment the learning gained from these efforts, consider reading ‘*Women in Transition Out of Poverty*’, January, 2002.

The main reason the SSTS implemented the SLA was to increase the effectiveness of working at the individual level, but they also tested out one of the tools used for program evaluation purposes. The NCB’s focus was geared more towards program evaluation. These implementations are a work in progress and the forms available in the appendices are still considered drafts.

A) DESIGNING THE FORMS NECESSARY TO CAPTURE ASSET SELF-ASSESSMENTS AND PROGRESS

When considering the forms used for the participants and program we learned it was important to first think about the following:

- What do you want to capture qualitatively and quantitatively?
- How will you separate and make clear the important distinction between assets and vulnerabilities? (Eg. Some participants put vulnerabilities down in their asset assessment and not in the vulnerability section and listed needs where the assets were meant to be explored)
- Ask clear and specific questions.
- Make sure you are covering everything you want for the pre and post comparison.
- Test out the design before using them.
- Decide how often you want the forms completed. (Eg. SSTS now has the capability to follow up with program participants for at least one year. They designed the forms to enable an asset rating and mapping at the beginning, 6 month and 1 year markers. On the other hand, the NCB pilot project was performed over 6 months. Their forms enabled the evaluation at the beginning, 3 and 6 month markers. Use whatever makes sense for your program and its resources. Ask yourself: “Is it realistic to expect change at the 3-month or 6-month marker? Why is it important that I do an assessment at this point?”)
- For the sake of time, energy and efficiency, simplify the forms to meet your needs without losing what you want to capture. The forms were one huge challenge and the amount of paperwork was a common complaint. It is important to customize and take out whatever doesn’t flow. It is just as important, however, to keep the 5 asset areas in mind while leaving room to capture the vulnerabilities.
- You may want to ask the following questions: “Does an increase in asset areas result in a decrease in the number of vulnerabilities? How do we measure this? And how do we measure the *degree* of vulnerability? Or do we need to measure it? These were questions that came up late in the project that we have no answer for at this time.
- Along with case notes, the forms will make up your case file.

The forms take time to explain and complete. It is best for the practitioner to be present when the forms are being completed to answer any questions and provide guidance. You may even want to give a periodic check to see if the participant understands what is expected in each section. It is preferable that the participants fill in the forms but check for literacy issues and offer support accordingly. Whatever the method, it is important to let the

participant self-assess. Allow one hour or more per session for explaining and filling out the forms as well as some conversation. Later assessment appointments provide a great opportunity to follow up with participants. An appointment to fill out the forms can be combined with other reasons for meeting.

The SSTS introduced the SLA to participants during one-on-one sessions for the initial intake. The Program Coordinator was aware of literacy issues with some of the women and thought it would be better to proceed individually. Individual sessions combined with a group approach, however, may be more efficient. For example, the participant can fill out the initial registration upon intake in an individual session; the asset mapping components can be introduced in the first group session, and a choice can then be made regarding how to proceed with the self-assessments. Although it takes more time, it may be most effective to meet individually to go over the process, working with the individual to self-assess assets, regardless of what is presented in the group sessions. In this way, the practitioner ensures that the asset concept is understood and, if necessary, can offer further guidance.

The facilitator's challenge is to provide the participant with the best possible guidance and information that will aid in their understanding of what the thinking process needs to be in order to get the most objective self-assessment and self-rating that is possible. Extra time needs to be taken at this stage.



- In general, people are not accustomed to viewing their lives from an asset perspective. The facilitator must be able to give the participant a good picture of what this looks like in order for the participant to get the best value from the self-assessment
- Asset rating is subjective. The facilitator can support objectivity by asking... “Where are you now and where would you like to see yourself in the future?” For the second assessment, the question may be... “Since your last rating, where do you see yourself – has anything changed/improved/worsened?”
- Where possible give examples. (This is where it would help if the worker/facilitator became familiar with the process by performing her/his own self-assessment.)
- If the participant has children, providing/paying for childcare is a great help when they come in to register and or complete the self-assessment.
- If outcomes are to be shared, use an identifier for your forms so that confidentiality is maintained.
- For practice, testing purposes and for experiencing what it's like, the worker can fill out the forms prior to implementation. If time permits, you may want to test your forms out on others and make any necessary adjustments.
- Provide participants with an example of how you used the forms to map your own assets and how it was useful.
- The worker should review the forms before the participant leaves so that if there is any misunderstanding it can be caught and fixed right away. You walk the line of guiding the participant in filling out the forms accurately and leading the participant to answer in a certain way - you must be careful here.
- **Remember** - customize to meet **YOUR** program needs.

B) RECRUITMENT

NCB had participants already active in their program and they were asked if they would like to take part in a pilot project. On the other hand the SSTS incorporated the SLA into its program at the beginning of a new group so that recruitment was unnecessary. SSTS participants were informed about the process and the time it would take at the same time that an appointment was made for registration. Recruiting participants will depend on the nature of your service.

Explaining the SLA Project to Participants

If you are going to use the self-assessments as a tool to evaluate your program,

- Make it clear to participants that you are assessing the effectiveness and benefits of the program by looking at a group of people. It is the collective information from all participants that helps the program evaluate its effectiveness. The self-assessment is a tool they can use to assess themselves.
- Explain that feedback is needed in order to make the program the best it can be for them and others that follow.
- Explain that the purpose is to see if the program is making any difference in their lives.

What some practitioners did,

- Assured participants of confidentiality.
- Suggested they pick their own confidential identifier.
- If there is a final report, let participants know that copies will be made available to them.
- Expressed enthusiasm about the process and in the participant's commitment for taking part.
- Impressed upon participants that their opinion is valued.
- Stated why the SLA process is important and how participants can contribute to making possible future policy changes.

Addressing Participant Expectations

One of the objectives of the SLA is to bring to light vulnerabilities and communicate these issues at the policy level. A goal is to help bridge the gap between the micro and macro levels of our society. Given this, some participants may feel that great changes are going to be made instantly because of their participation in the project. If influencing change at the policy level is one of your project's objectives, make expectations clear. Let people know that change takes time, but without their involvement - their *voice* - change may not happen at all.

C) Examples, Descriptions of the Forms and SHARED LEARNINGS

Originally five sample forms were shared with the SSTS program by Mary Ferguson (Eko Nomos). SSTS adapted them and shared the revised formats with the SLA Project. The following table lists the names of the forms and when they were used. This table is available in a one-page format for your use. (see Appendix V)

Starting Point	Mid Point	Final
1. Information Collection Consent 2. Registration/Baseline 3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating 4. Your Asset Map 5. Group Statistics (record 1 st rating)	3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating (only what has changed from the initial assessment) 4. Your Asset Map 5. Group Statistics (record 2nd rating)	2. Registration/Final 3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating (only what has changed from the initial and mid-point assessment) 4. Your Asset Map 5. Group Statistics (record final rating)

1. Information Collection Consent Form (Appendix VI)

- This form is filled out once at the start.
- Addresses people’s concerns about privacy and who will see the data and how it’s going to be used. If sharing the data with others, this form should be kept in a separate file because it has the participant’s name on it. All other forms can use an identifier.

2. Registration Form (Appendix VII)

- Filled out at the beginning and end of the allotted time frame.
- Demographic and qualitative data are gathered here. It’s important to decide on what you want the data to capture.
- Too much data or not enough? You decide. Some say “more is better”. You can always trim it down after you have piloted it for awhile.
- You want to ensure that people are recognizing as many assets as possible and that it will point out the accumulation of assets. This data helps support the asset rating changes. For example, if a participant moves from a cell to a landline phone (physical asset), this may qualify as a step forward and also improve one of their other asset areas (eg. *social*). As was noted earlier, testing out this form ahead of time is a good idea and will ensure the best possible results.
- You may want to quantify the contacts you have with each participant (and the amount of time spent in individual sessions). This affects the participants’ social asset area and you may want to keep this data for program evaluation purposes.

SHARED LEARNINGS

- ❖ If you look at the registration form, you will find the following questions under the social asset areas: *How many friends or family (not including the people you live with) did you see within the last month? Name the program(s) or activity(ies) you are involved in within your community: Are you connected with other supports/ services? If so, how many?*

There was some confusion around these questions. Explain to participants what you mean by friend? Does this include acquaintances? Perhaps leave a space on the form to list the names for friends and family and all community supports. Providing a list of commonly used community organizations helps participants remember which ones they are involved with. Encourage people to take more time with these questions to stir their memory of just who exactly is in their social support circle. The Asset Identifier Lists are also useful.

- ❖ Consider whether you want to separate what the participants are involved in personally and what other family members in the household are involved in. For example, if a child is involved in hockey, do you want this to be part of the family picture, or do you want to put the sole focus on the individual who is involved in your program.
- ❖ For income, you may want to capture total household income, the participant's income or both. You may also want to distinguish sources of income (i.e., unemployment, work) between other household members and the participant. Whatever you decide, the form should clearly state it. If you do not separate the participant's income and sources from other household income and sources the results will not clarify the individual's movement.

3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating Form (Appendix VIII)

- This form is used for participants to list what they view as their current assets and to rate themselves accordingly. Vulnerabilities can be noted here. The following question was added to the form to elicit that information: *“What are the difficulties that make it hard for you to take a step forward towards a more secure future?”*
- This form is also a good starting point for goal setting and leads to the development of livelihood strategies that will strengthen and create assets and decrease vulnerabilities.
- The rating scale can be from 1- 5 or 1-10. 1-10 allows for more growth, whereas 1-5 may feel a little restrictive. One comment was that 1-10 may be too far a stretch (but realistically, it IS a far reach for people living in poverty to gain the asset necessary to achieve a sustainable livelihood level).
- When this form is filled out at the beginning it should address all assets in as much detail as possible. For the mid- and final points, only changes should be noted. This does not mean that the program participants are expected to strengthen all of their assets. Instead, suggest they choose three from each area to work on. Remember, the SLA brings a holistic approach to the individual and the program, but it does not mean that programs providing skills training need to cover all asset areas. This is where referrals to other community resources come into play.
- **Important:** The asset self-assessment backs up the subsequent self-rating. If a rating changes, you will be able to identify the reason for the change from the self-assessment. Case notes should also support any changes. Example: if you noted in the person's file that she/he is dressing better and holding her/his head up higher or taking on a leadership role within the group and the participant self-rates higher in that

particular asset area, then your observations support the participant's rating and vice versa.

SHARED LEARNINGS

- ❖ Participants may think more on a day to day basis and be unable to think ahead to the future.
- ❖ There are issues of over-rating and under-rating
- ❖ Participants may feel pressured to rate higher the next time.
- ❖ Subjectivity: Ratings depend on how people feel on a particular day.
- ❖ It can be difficult at first to describe what is meant by an "asset". Although ultimately this is decided by the participant guidance from the facilitator is helpful.
- ❖ When providing asset word examples to participants there is a tendency for some participants to use the asset word without clarifying what s/he means by it.
- ❖ The training and skill level of the facilitator and the time s/he has are factors that contribute to the best possible objective assessments.
- ❖ Participants need a starting point for assets. Facilitators can use the Asset Identifier Lists and, having previously thought through the process, add their own to the lists. It helps if the facilitator starts out thinking from the position of 'nothing' and then describes what having a little bit would look like (i.e. what does a 'little bit' of self-esteem look like?). For housing, one could start from being homeless as a reference point because anything above that may be considered an asset. In the financial area, a lack of debt is an asset.
- ❖ Examples of questions participants can ask themselves for exploring assets are ... "What resources have I used in the past?" (eg. personal, social, human)? And... "What's available now?"
- ❖ Helping participants visualize a picture of where they would like to be and what they would like to have in their future (5 years from now) is effective.
- ❖ Explaining and guiding objectively while remembering it is up to the individual to rate her/himself is important.
- ❖ Participants need to hear that this process is not a "test". Nor is it about a grade. Rather, it is about objectively assessing where they are at today.
- ❖ If this is not the first assessment, it is useful for the participant to review previous assessments and compare.
- ❖ When using examples of each asset area we were reminded to be cognizant of the group we were serving and used language people could relate to. Simplify. Use participants' words to expand upon the 'Asset Identifier Lists'.
- ❖ Some questions found to be helpful to support the person's understanding of what is required in the social asset area are... "Who did you see in the last month?" "How

many people have you seen this month, and what relationship do you have with each of them.”

- ❖ Listing vulnerabilities is difficult. Encourage participants to think carefully. The facilitator should be alert and looking for the ones they may not be aware of.
- ❖ Having something in place to measure vulnerabilities gives participants a place to refer back to if they choose to see if any have changed.

4. Asset Map Form (Appendix IX)

- The Asset Map is a visual representation based on the ratings in the *Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating* form.
- The participant colours it in and is given a copy.
- If s/he does not bring the map with her/him during the next assessment/evaluation, a copy can be made available.
- For the first assessment the facilitator may want to provide a sample asset map to help participants get started. You could have one on the wall along with the SLA principles.

5. Group Statistics Form (Appendix X)

This statistical form is the basis for program evaluation. For example, SSTS works to enhance the personal, social and human asset areas. If one person’s rating drops from the baseline, it may be due to an individual’s personal struggles. However, if upon adding up group ratings it was discovered they all remained low, stayed the same or dropped over the course of the year, particularly in the aforementioned asset areas, this indicates a need to further evaluate the program and make the necessary changes.

The chart below reflects the asset ratings, on a scale of 1 to 10, from an SSTS group using the *Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating* forms. The self-assessments were taken at baseline, six months and one year. The self-assessments and case notes should back up these scores.

Group Statistics - Sample															
A = baseline, B = 6 months, C = 1 year															
Group # 4	Human			Physical			Personal			Social			Financial		
Identifier	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
23	4	0	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0
24	6	9	9	6	7	7	6	8	9	8	8	10	2	4	5
25	4	6	7	6	5	7	2	7	9	2	7	7	4	3	6
26	6	8	9	6	8	9	6	7	6	4	4	8	2	5	6
27	6	8	9	4	4	6	2	8	9	6	8	9	2	2	3
28	2	8	7	10	9	9	4	8	8	8	8	8	2	2	2
29	6	8	6	4	4	0	4	6	4	4	8	8	2	2	0
30	6	7	8	4	4	5	8	7	7	2	8	8	4	4	5
31	6	6	7	8	8	4	4	5	5	2	2	4	2	4	5
Total	46	60	62	54	49	47	40	56	57	40	53	62	24	26	32

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. Benefits for the Participants and their Feedback

An interesting observation was the number of people who liked the fact that it helped them view their lives from a positive and holistic perspective. The tool appears to be empowering.

Here is what some participants said:

“Gave me a picture of what I actually have and made me more appreciative of it.”

“ ...helped me see myself more and more every time I did it.”

“...It's a lesson in self-discovery and it points out what my needs really are and it helps me to focus on them to make the necessary change...”

“Given me the bigger picture of my life and how it breaks down and how I need help and where.”

“It's definitely helped me to define what areas were affected my life and started steps for change.”

To view all the participants' responses to this project see Appendix XI.

2. Data Collection

A prototype database was developed because a method was needed for data collection and compiling results. It was developed as a method for working with the data from this project but not to the extent that would make it a solid application, hence the term 'prototype'. It offers a starting point for further database application development. The following images provide a snapshot of some of the database features.

The screenshot shows a web-based application window titled "Participant Information". It contains a form for entering participant details and a table for asset ratings.

Participant Information Form:

- Participant's Identifier: 27
- Age: 45
- Gender: Female
- Completed Final Assessment? Yes
- Date of First Contact: 9/1/2002
- Length of Project: 1 year
- Completion Date: 8/31/2003
- Program Site: Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank
- City: Cambridge
- Township:
- Program: Small Steps to Success
- Sponsoring Organization:

Asset Ratings Table:

Assessment Point	Physical	Social	Personal	Human	Financial	Total - all asset areas	Total - HSP
Baseline	10	8	2	4	2	26	14
Mid-Point	9	8	8	8	2	35	24
Final	9	8	8	7	2	34	23

Asset comparison (baseline/final): Decrease, No change, Increase, Increase, No change, Increase, Increase

COMMENTS:

- Physical: These fields are
- Social: used to record the
- Personal: details of the
- Human: changes (or lack of)
- Financial: to the asset ratings.

This application is a prototype developed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach Project - Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada - 2003. A collaborative effort of the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, DP2000, and the YWCA of Cambridge. Funded by: The Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo, United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries and Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP).

Record: 53 of 56

The image on the previous page displays some of the participant information captured by the NCB Outreach program. Below each asset area is a comments section. It is here where practitioner's can describe what changed in the person's life that led them to change their asset rating. This information would come from the asset self-assessment and case notes.

The next image shows the contents of the 'Assets' tab. It holds participant information for each asset area. The social asset data is viewed below.

Participant Information

Participant's Identifier: b12 Age: 35 Gender: Female Completed Final Assessment? Yes

Date of First Contact: 10/2/2001 Length of Project: 6 months Completion Date: 10/20/2003

Program Site: Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank City: Cambridge Township:

Program: National Child Benefit - Outreach Sponsoring Organization:

Assets: **Asset Ratings** | Vulnerabilities | Outreach | Comments

Physical | Social | Personal | Human | Financial

Family Status: Couple with Children Notes:

CHILDREN

Total	# in this Range	Age Range	Organization/Program Connected to:
2	2	0-5	Cambridge Family Early Years C
1	1	6-10	Community Access Program
0	0		CSHFB Food Co-op
			Library

Assessment Point	# of Friends/Family Seen in the Last Month	# of Supports/Services currently connected to (all):	# of Region programs currently involved in
Baseline	25	2	1
Final	50	2	1

Compare: Increase No change No change

This application is a prototype developed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach Project - Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada - 2003. A collaborative effort of the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, DP2000, and the YWCA of Cambridge. Funded by: The Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo, United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries and Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP).

Record: 1 of 56

Another form in the database application was created to provide some statistical information. The image below gives you an idea of what is captured.

Program Statistics (of those who completed the project)

Number enrolled in the project: 48 Number of Participants completed the project: 39

Total Outreach Worker contacts: 221 Total referrals made: 391 Total involved in Regional Services: 39

Program | Sites | Demographics | **Asset Ratings-Program** | Vulnerabilities | Vulnerabilities - All Programs

	Increase	Avg # contacts	Avg # referrals	Decrease	Avg # contacts	Avg # referrals	Same	Avg # contacts	Avg # referrals
Number of participants - all asset areas	31	5	9	7	6	12	1	3	4
Percentage of the total group	79	Avg # Friends/Family: 13	Avg # supports/services: 3	18	Avg # Friends/Family: 8	Avg # supports/services: 2	3	Avg # Friends/Family: 4	Avg # supports/services: 2

	Increase	Avg # contacts	Avg # referrals	Decrease	Avg # contacts	Avg # referrals	Same	Avg # contacts	Avg # referrals
Number of participants - social, personal and human asset areas	29	5	9	7	6	12	3	1	1
Percentage of this group	74	Avg # Friends/Family: 14	Avg # supports/services: 3	18	Avg # Friends/Family: 8	Avg # supports/services: 2	8	Avg # Friends/Family: 1	Avg # supports/services: 1

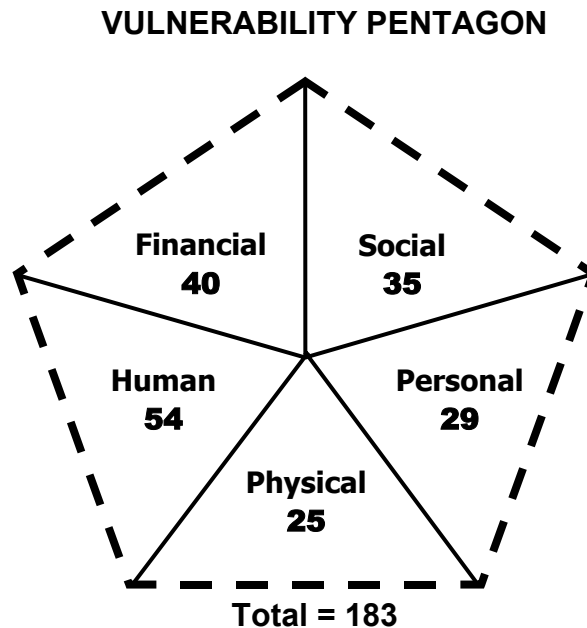
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS - EACH ASSET AREA (baseline to final)		Increase			Decrease			Same		
SOCIAL	Number	22	8	9	27	7	5	27	7	5
	Percentage	56	21	23	69	18	13	62	18	21
PERSONAL	Number	23	8	8	24	7	8	24	7	8
	Percentage	59	21	21	62	18	21	62	18	21
HUMAN	Number	24	5	10						
	Percentage	62	13	26						

Avg # Outreach contacts	6
Avg # programs/services	5
Avg # referrals and/or resources made available	10
Avg # Social Contacts (per participant)	12

This database application also includes all the data from the registration form separated into asset areas, a place to record the vulnerabilities, feedback from participants; number of contacts and referrals made by the practitioner; and statistical forms .

3. A New Pentagon that summarizes vulnerabilities

An interesting finding developed while deciding how best to summarize the list of 183 vulnerabilities identified by the project participants. They all fit within each of the 5 categories listed for the Asset Pentagon. The result was the creation of a “Vulnerability Pentagon”.



It is notable that the greatest number of vulnerabilities fell into the *Human* category. *Human* assets are defined as the “...capabilities of the household members – their combined knowledge, skills, state of health and ability to labour or command labour – that enable them to make best use of their assets and engage in different livelihood activities” (deSatge, R. (2002) *Learning about livelihoods Insights from Southern Africa*, p. 98).

It is the individual’s “capabilities” and “skills” that will have a direct effect on improving the other asset areas.

The visual impact of the results in the “Vulnerability Pentagon” makes even clearer the need for holistic intervention! It also supports SLA researchers who are persistent in saying that forward movement needs to take place in all asset areas in order to reach a sustainable livelihood.

For a detailed list of all the vulnerabilities, see Appendix XII.

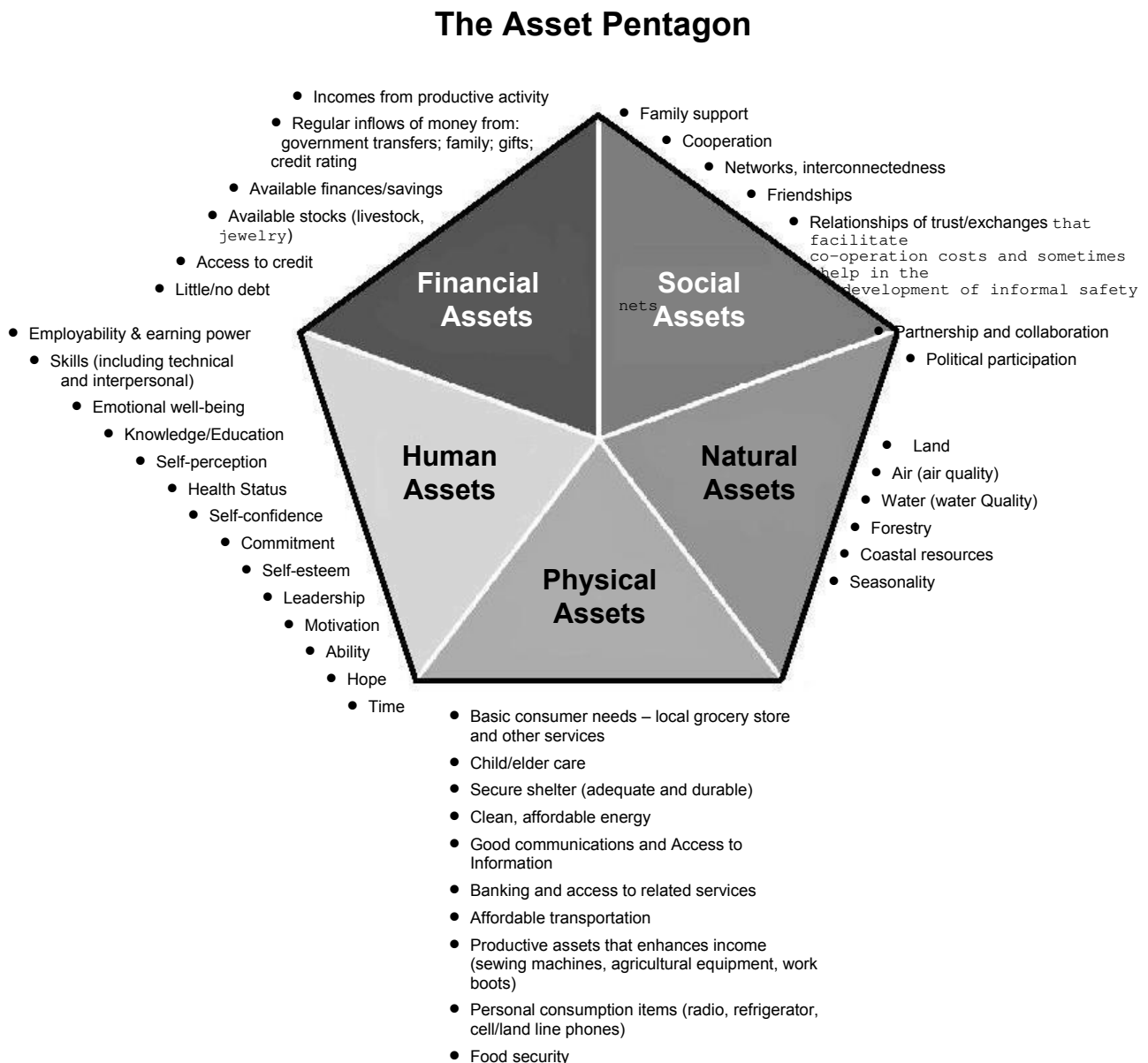
4. A Revised Asset Pentagon

The Asset Pentagon introduced to us during our workshop training by Eko Nomos was adapted from the model developed by the DFID.

DFID's Asset Pentagon includes a *Natural* Asset area that Eko Nomos had changed to the *Personal* asset area for the pentagon developed out of their research. The Natural assets include: "Land, Air, Water, Forestry and Coastal Resources".

The most significant change occurred at the end of this project. We revised the Eko Nomos version of the Pentagon by adding back the *Natural* Asset area and taking out the *Personal* asset category. We saw that the personal assets could be covered in the *Human* asset area. This change was encouraged by Dr. Singh during our "Wrap-up Session". We were reminded of the importance of our Natural Assets and their effect on all of us.

To see the DFID's Asset Pentagon and their view of the livelihood assets visit their website (www.livelihoods.org), and click on the Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, Section 2: Framework.



Working with the asset areas brings to light other categories and where they fit in the pentagon's framework. For example, with our project, some categories such as "hope", "time", "commitment", "food security", and "lack of debt" were added as they were discovered. It becomes obvious in this work how the asset areas inter-relate and easy to surmise that what affects one area could very well affect one or more of the others.

5. A Waterloo Region SLA Working Group Formed

An exciting and welcome outcome that evolved from our project's "Wrap-up session" was the formation of a work group that will look at relevant policy changes.

Over and above working at the individual and program level, the SLA incorporates the goal of policy change to promote sustainable livelihoods. Community partners working together have a stronger voice than working in isolation. A unified voice is powerful and more likely to influence this change.

6. Lessons for implementing an SLA project such as this one:

- When providing SLA training to organizations we have learned to keep it simple!
Because of the complexity and broad scope of the SLA, it can be overwhelming and difficult to understand. As with simplifying any complex set of ideas this was a difficult task. One of the questions Sanjay and I kept in mind while going through this process was: "How much information do we give an interested agency and how much do we hold back." Of course, those who became enthusiastic about the SLA principles and concepts needed to know something of the bigger picture. The challenge then, was to encourage organizations and their staff to build the foundation first, step by step, while offering more of the bigger picture when, and if they were ready. The training content was also simplified, only giving pieces of what we believed were needed to get individual and program implementations started.
- Implementing a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach does not mean you discard what you are doing now. A question to ask is... "Where does this fit? What can I do first? What is the most efficient way?"
- An interesting question to explore when there has been an increase in assets is... "How much could the increase be due to seeing life more positively?"
- While implementing this new approach, without forerunners or 'how-to' books, it helped to be comfortable with the insecurity of the 'gray' areas as we moved forward
- Changes in staff can greatly affect the implementation process, particularly if it is the previous staff that had the most knowledge and commitment towards implementing the SLA. The next staff is not only beginning a new position but has to deal with the 'unknowns' of a new approach. It is helpful, therefore, to have more than one staff involved in an SLA project from the beginning. The commitment of management is also crucial in order to provide staff with support, training and encouragement.

"THE SL framework ... can be difficult to introduce... to partners. ... it may be best to build up the framework in pieces, verbally and visually, before presenting the whole thing. This will be more powerful if it can be done using examples and experience from the field that are common to audience members. In some cases, a simplified version of the framework has been used. Another option is not to introduce the framework at all, but to keep it 'in one's back pocket' as a mental checklist."
D. Carney and C. Ashley, (1999) *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from early experience*, p. 31

- It is important to start with small manageable pieces and adjust as time goes on – building on your work. You cannot rush SLA development if you want to do it successfully. It has to be implemented one manageable piece at a time while building on the assets that develop. Sharing our lessons, flexibility and transparency are important keys.

“Flexibility in using the (SL) approaches is desirable, but the overall level of critical thinking must remain high if SL is to continue to make a contribution to poverty reduction. To this end the learning and sharing of ideas that has so far characterized SL thinking should remain a priority, as should the strong emphasis on SL’s core message of promoting people-centred development.” D. Carney, *Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches: Progress and Possibilities for Change*, p. 10)

CONCLUSION

The primary objectives of this pilot project were to develop local SLA knowledge and expertise; begin initial exploration of the SLA by means of integrating theory into practice; support community agencies to custom design the SLA for their use, and report on our findings producing a comprehensive document to share the learning. We have accomplished all objectives and, indeed, have surpassed the original goals. Unexpected and exciting outcomes were the development of a prototype database application; the ‘Vulnerability Pentagon’, and a revised Asset Pentagon with additional categories. Adding to the unexpected was the formation of the *Waterloo Region SLA Working Group* who will focus their time and energy on change at the policy level. This outcome, only once dreamed of is now a reality.

This document reflects our learnings and challenges throughout the process of exploring the application of the SLA in an urban area. It is intended for submission to the DFID’s web-site www.livelihoods.org. A Canadian SLA web site is currently under construction and will soon be available for access to SLA resources. We will be submitting this work to that site as well.

From a personal and professional perspective I have learned a great deal during this project and I will always be grateful for the growth, the people, the stories and the growing pains of instituting something new in my community. As a practitioner I have always tried to put into practice a value I hold dear – acceptance without judgement. Viewing people through an “asset” lens, however, has shifted that value to a more elevated position. Seeing others in a more holistic manner, their lives, their obstacles, their strengths and their vulnerabilities has given me the gift of a deeper acceptance and understanding of people living in poverty. This shift in deepening values can only be had by experiencing the kind of involvement myself and my colleagues undertook in a project of this nature. As I have stated throughout this report, organizations and practitioners whose hearts are involved in using this approach will find themselves growing and in so doing, will certainly have more of an impact on the people they serve.

There is still much work to be done. Further long-term research through implementation of the SLA is necessary. This one-year project has achieved a baseline by which further research can develop. We have only just begun.

But no matter where we are on the continuum of SLA work, the SLA philosophy has to be accomplished in a systematic, principled, committed, and determinedly forward movement. Only in this way can sustainable, positive differences be made in the lives of people living in poverty.

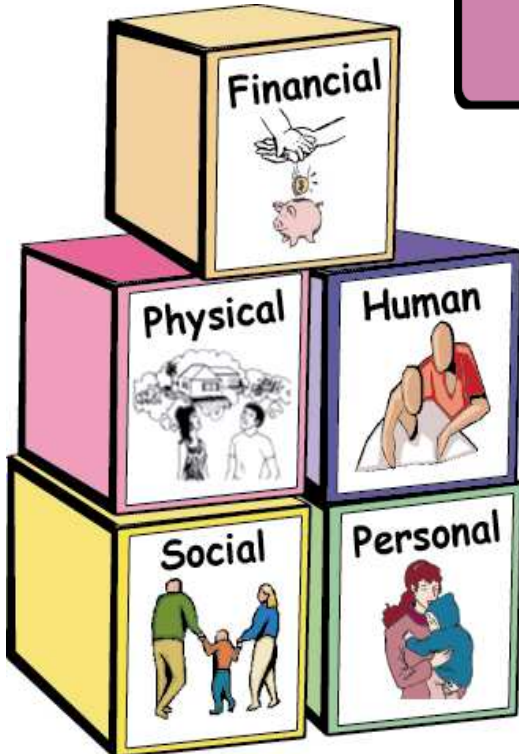
For further information, copies of this report or the MS Access database, please refer to the contact information at the beginning of this report.

APPENDIX I

List of Workshop Participants

Organization	Representative(s)	Position	City
Better Beginnings, Better Futures	Lorna Schwartzentruber	Program Manager	Guelph
	Gayle Valeriote	Community Development Coord.	
Cambridge Kiwanis Village Non-Profit Housing Corp.	Erica Mitchell	Supportive Housing Worker	Cambridge
	Linda Prior		
	Steve Garrison	Executive Director	
CEDTAP Ontario	Cathy Lang	Regional Co-ordinator	
Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank	Angela Ferguson	Student	Cambridge
	Dave Sage	Student	
Family & Children's Services	Craig Gibson	Youth Service Worker	Kitchener
Focus for Ethnic Women	Ari Ariaratnam	Executive Director	Kitchener
Langs Farm Village Assoc.	Kerri-Lynn Wilkie	Health Promotion Coordinator	Cambridge
	Tammy Saunders		
Lutherwood-CODA	Donna Buchan	Programme Manager - Community Services	Kitchener
	Sonia Gaudreau	Learn\$ave/Youth\$ave	Cambridge
	Julia Footman-Paterson	Volunteer Coordinator	
	Sherri McDermid	Family Literacy Coordinator	
NCB –Community Outreach Program	Noreen Steinacher	Administrator – NCB Programs	Region of Waterloo
	Lorraine Eisenporth	Coordinator - NCB	
Op2000	Denise Wamsley	Project Developer	Kitchener
	Sharalynn	Project Support	
	Sanjay Govindaraj	Project Developer	
SL project	Mary MacKeigan	SL Coordinator	Cambridge
Op2000	Sanjay Govindaraj	OP Collaborative Representative – SL Project	Kitchener
Small Steps to Success	June Anderson	Program Coordinator	Cambridge
	Mandy Richardson	Outreach Coordinator	
	Sharon Lootsma	Student	
	Mary MacKeigan	Sustainability Coordinator	
Dupont Canada, Social Innovation Enterprise	Chris Degrow	Manager, Methodologies & Consulting	Mississauga
The Ontario Trillium Foundation	Tracey Robertson	Regional Program Manager	Kitchener
United Way of Cambridge & North Dumfries	Ron Dowhaniuk	Executive Director	Cambridge
Women and Economic Development Consortium	Debra Campbell	Women and Economic Development Consortium	
Working Centre	Geeta Vaidyanathan	Student	Kitchener
	Stephanie Mancini	Coordinator	
YMCA Settlement/Integration	Ines Sousa Batista	Executive Director	Cambridge
	Dawn Poh Quong	Coordinator, Centralized Employment Res. Centre	

APPENDIX II



**THROUGH
INTERACTIVE AND
NETWORKING
WORKSHOPS**

Hosted by

**Lutherwood – CODA
Community Services**

Thursday, May 1, 2003

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at

Luther Village on the Park

139 Father David Bauer Drive

Waterloo, Ontario

Tel. 519-743-2460 ext. 118 Fax: 519-749-0519

www.lutherwoodcoda.com



Lutherwood – CODA Community Services invites you to share a one-day conference to explore "Building Family Assets" through interactive and networking workshops.

Schedule of Events

Registration and Refreshments

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Opening/Plenary

9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

This session will introduce the concept of asset building for families. It will define the various types of assets – personal, social, financial, physical and human. It will help us explore our own assets and examine what strengthens and challenges asset areas.

Workshop Block One

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Workshop A Helping Families Develop Mediation and Conflict Skills

By - Sonia Gaudreau and Rose Mary Burkhart



During this workshop you will have the opportunity to

- Determine how effective you are as a listener
- Identify 'communication killers' and discuss its relation to conflict
- Recognize empathy as a way to warm up conversation
- Learn how to resolve conflict based on interest, rights and power
- Practice the four steps of mediation process

Workshop B Strengthening Your Working Relationship With Families

By - Joanne Casemore and Bonnie Taylor



During this workshop you will have the opportunity to

- Explore a worker's qualities and competencies that increase effectiveness
- Identify the barriers to family work and discuss solutions
- Understand the stages of a helping relationship
- Share strategies and ideas through small group activities

Workshop C Supporting Families to Find and Keep Safe, Sustainable Housing

By - Lynn Macaulay and Cristine Dearlove



During this workshop you will have the opportunity to

- Assist families in developing short, medium and long-term housing goals
- Create strategies with families that build on strengths and minimize housing barriers
- Gain tools to help families resolve rental housing challenges
- Assisting families to thrive in rental housing

Lunch

Lutherwood – CODA – Community Services

www.lutherwoodcoda.com

Workshop Block Two

12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Workshop D Encouraging Family Literacy

By - Sherri McDermid and Sonia Koprivnikar



During this workshop you will have the opportunity to

- Review the principles of early learning
- Identify factors that can affect a parent's ability to help their young child develop e

learning and literacy

- Explore the critical skills necessary for literacy development

Participate in activities that can be shared with parents

Workshop E Building Financial Assets In The Family

By - Sonia Gaudreau



During this workshop you will have the opportunity to

- Understand the factors that impact financial assets
- Determine a "money personality"
- Explore the influences on spending and savings choices
- Understand the basics of budget management
- Learn techniques for maximizing financial assets

Workshop F

Self Care Within the Boundary of the Helping Relationship

By - *Julia Footman Patterson and Maria Lembo*



During this workshop you will have the opportunity to

- Network for support and information sharing to reduce the incidence of emotional/physical distress
- Develop simple strategies to establish, build upon and maintain strong boundaries with the people we serve
- Explore creative ways of taking care of yourself as a service provider
- Identify initial signs and symptoms to be aware of in determining preventative measures and maintenance of “good health”

Receive a reading and resource list for continued exploration within the area of self care

Asset Building Testimonial



Deb Misener-Jones “Professional singer, guitarist, yodeler, entertainer”.

By combining basic, optimism, faith and a touch of humour, Deb shares her story of overcoming years of personal obstacles and building family assets to reach her dream of a music career.

Through the years, Deb has maintained her optimism and firm belief that **“you can’t let it make you a victim”** while facing many challenges such as living with a bipolar husband, being a single parent, her children’s own mental health and behaviour problems, financial and chronic health struggles.

Adding some fun to her inspirational and heart warming story, Deb highlights her program with demonstrations of yodeling and Swiss cowbells, audience participation and her **“music to cheer the spirit”**.

Closing

4:00 p.m.

APPENDIX III

Asset Identifier List for TEAMS (Draft)

Social Assets

- Peer support/learning
- Networks
- Community connections
- Task forces
- Committees
- Action groups
- Volunteering
- Relationships of trust
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Group support
- Mentor support
- Interpersonal communications systems
- Management support
- Human resources

Financial Assets

- Revenue
- Money for salaries
- Money for non-salary expenses,
- Regular inflows of money
- Supplies
- Knowledge of financial issues

Human Assets

- skills & abilities (organizational, assertiveness, stress-management, writing, communication, leadership, conflict resolution)
- training and education
- health
- talents
- gifts
- self-esteem
- self-confidence
- work/life balance
- adaptability
- enthusiasm
- intention
- flexibility

PHYSICAL ASSETS

- work place (space, light, temperature, safety)
- transportation
- tools/equipment
- communication systems (technical)
- interdepartmental processes

- **NATURAL ASSETS** (not developed for this project)

APPENDIX IV

Asset Identifier List for YOUTH (Draft)

Social Assets

Family Support (Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Grandfathers, Grandmothers, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins)

List Family Members:

- Who likes you
- Who loves you
- Who listens to you
- Who talks to you constructively
- Who believes in your success
- Who stimulates and encourages you
- Who spends time with you
- Who laughs with you
- Who trusts you
- Who tells you what not to do
- Who are not afraid to discipline you when needed, in an appropriate manner

Friends:

- long term since childhood
- trustworthy
- spend time with you
- same interests
- listen and talk with you
- help you with problems
- debate/challenge you
- tell you when you're right and wrong

Social Groups

- Team mates; members of the same club/sport/activity
- Support groups

Other People You Trust (not family or friends)

- School teacher(s) & Guidance Counsellor
- Church leaders
- Sports - Coach, Manager,
- Counsellors (Youth Groups, professional)
- Family Doctor, nurse
- Boss at work, co-workers
- The mother/father of a friend
- Instructor who teaches skills such as art lessons, music lessons etc.
- A political leader - municipal, regional, provincial, federal
- A famous rock singer or group
- A movie star
- Community Centre or Neighbourhood Association leader
- Food Bank worker
- A Social Worker or Outreach Worker
- A policeman, lawyer, judge or probation officer

Financial Assets

We're talking MONEY! How do you get money?

- Do you work and earn a wage? (Part-time at a store, babysitting, cutting the grass, delivering newspapers, etc.)
- Do you get an allowance from your parents?

- Do you receive money from the government just for you?
- Do you get gifts of money from other relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles etc)?
- Do you get money to buy clothes or personal items that is not taken from your weekly allowance?
- Do you have a credit card?
- Have you got a savings account with money in it?
- Do you trade stuff for other stuff?
- Do you have savings bonds that someone saved for you?
- Have you got investments that someone made for you such as educational plans, insurance policies, stocks and bonds.

Human Assets

A) What have you got going for you? What makes you special and valuable? What skills do you have?

- Can you operate a lawn mower?
- Can you operate a cash register?
- Can you give good customer service?
- Can you count money?
- Can you look after little children?
- Can you operate a computer and input data?
- Can you deliver papers and look after a paper route?
- Can you drive a car yet?
- Are you in good health or do you have disability?
- Can you lift heavy objects?
- Do you like people or are you afraid of them?
- Can you sing? Play piano, guitar, or any musical instrument that might launch you in a career as a solo artist, or as part of a musical group.
- Can you skateboard so well; people might pay to watch?
- Are you exceptionally good at sports - soccer, hockey, golf, etc.?
- Are you so intelligent that you can invent things?
- Do all your friends look up to you and depend on you to lead?
- Where do you get your information from?
- What Knowledge do you possess?
- Do you have an area of specialisation (i.e. computer games specialist, nobody can beat me at Doom etc.) - everybody wants to pick my brain
- I possess extensive knowledge of (i.e. reptiles, gardening, astronomy, cooking, chemicals, electricity, electro-magnetic resonance imaging, antiques, worms, skateboarding techniques (I could write a book on this).
- Everybody asks me about?.....because I know everything on this subject.
- I could teach skiing - I know exactly what novice skiers need to learn and I am patient with people who are not as smart as I am.

B) What makes you tick? Are you excited by life and can't wait to get on with it? Or does life seem stressful and the future looks boring?

- What are your hopes for the future?
- Are you the best there is - somebody special and valuable? Or do you think you are not important, there's nothing special about you?
- When you look in the mirror do you see someone who is cool and in control, up on the latest fashion, great looks, and confidence - can't wait to get out there. Or do you see a loser - nothing's going right, what's the use? Fat ugly going nowhere fast. Or maybe you see someone who is flawed (there's a honkin' gross pimple on my forehead, my nose is too big, I'm too fat/or too skinny, but well, what the heck, it's the best I can do and if someone doesn't like it that's their problem. I can't wait to see the air bands play in the school gym today.
- When there is something you want, do you have the guts to ask for it? Or do you let others go first?

- Have you ever wondered why you were born? Did you figure it out yet or are you still wondering? Have you questioned people about it? Is it really important for you to know?
- How much do you really want to change what is hurting you in your life? A lot, somewhat, etc

Physical Assets

Do you have a place to live?

- Is it a house, apartment or some other type of shelter?
- Do you feel secure in this place?
- Have you got enough heat, light, water, toilets, food and clothing available here?
- Is it neat and clean enough, or do you need to do something?
- Do you have a computer with Internet or do you have access to one?
- Do you drive, walk, take the bus or does someone else drive you to places you have to go? Do you have money for the bus as often as you need?
- Is there a grocery store/shopping nearby, and do you have enough to eat?
- Do you have a television of your own, or is there one for everyone to watch?
- Do you have a radio or stereo system and CDs or tapes to play?
- Do you breathe ok in your house, or are there things that bother you like asthma?

Natural Assets

- not developed by this project

APPENDIX V

Table of the 5 Forms used by SSTS and NCB Outreach Programs

(See Appendix VI - X for samples of each form)

Note: (if your project is short- 6 months or less - you may want to skip the mid-point).

1. Information Collection Consent

- Informs the participant that the data may be shared for a purpose. That purpose will depend on how you plan to use the data.

2. Registration/Baseline

- The participants fill this out
- Includes all demographic information and any qualitative data you want to collect. This acts, in part, as a backup to the asset rating.
- For the last assessment, you may want to make another copy of this form and label it 'FINAL' to distinguish it from the first one

3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating

- The participant fills this out and self-rates each asset area. The next time it is filled out, they need only to write down what has changed. They still rate themselves.

4. Your Asset Map

- The asset map provides a visual for the participants. They colour it in based on their ratings. A copy is given to them and one is kept in the file.

5. Group Statistics

- The ratings taken from each asset map at the beginning, mid and end points.
- Shows the individual's movement
- Gives group totals by asset area that can be used in evaluating the program

Starting Point	Mid Point	End Point
<p>1. Information Collection Consent</p> <p>2. Registration/Baseline</p> <p>3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating</p> <p>4. Your Asset Map</p> <p>5. Group Statistics (record 1st rating)</p>	<p>3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating (only what has changed from the initial assessment)</p> <p>4. Your Asset Map</p> <p>5. Group Statistics (record 2nd rating)</p>	<p>2. Registration/Final</p> <p>3. Personal Asset Identification and Self-Rating (only what has changed from the initial and mid-point assessment)</p> <p>4. Your Asset Map</p> <p>5. Group Statistics (record final rating)</p>

APPENDIX VI

Information Collection Consent

**An agreement between the _____ Program of the
_____ and participants**

I understand that the purpose of the collection of information about my progress is to learn more about the effects of the _____ Program on people's lives.

I understand that I can refuse to answer any question that is asked.

I understand that no question or information will be connected to me personally.

I understand that a _____ Program staff member will interview me privately at this time, 3 and 6 months from now even when I am no longer involved in the program.

I understand that the questions I will be asked will include information about:

- Housing and basic needs
- Contacts and supports
- Money and things
- Health and work
- Personal strengths

The _____ Program staff will keep names, personal information and comments confidential. I understand that everything I say will be kept confidential. The information that I provide will be combined with information from all other participants in the _____ Program/Sustainable Livelihood Pilot Project to guide _____ Program staff in better meeting the needs of the participants in the program and to provide a summary report to the _____ Program and the Sustainable Livelihood Project.

Upon request, I can receive a copy of the summary report.

This consent form has been discussed with me and I understand it.

Date: _____

Participant's Signature

Witness

APPENDIX VII

Registration

FIRST/FINAL

Agency/Organization Name: _____

Program: _____

Date: _____ Site: _____ Identifier: _____

Neighbourhood/City: _____ Age: _____

Gender: Male Female First contact date with Worker: _____

SOCIAL ASSETS

Family Status: 2 Parent Single Parent Other _____

Total # of Children: 0 - 5 (# ___) 6 - 10 (# ___) 11 - 15 (# ___) 16+ (# ___) =

How many friends or family (not including the people you live with) did you see within the last month? _____

If you are involved in other supports/services please list all of them (organization name, program/service). _____

How many supports/services all together? _____ (please give total number)

Any other type(s) of people contacts that you can think of? _____

FINANCIAL ASSETS

Source(s) of Income(Check all that apply to you and your family):

OW ODSP Employment Insurance Employed (P/T
F/T) Self Employed Child support CPP Community
Participation
National Child Tax Benefit Other (please specify) _____

Total monthly income from the above sources: _____

PHYSICAL ASSETS

Do you have a cellular phone?

Do you have a phone hooked up in your home? Yes No

Do you have a computer?

If yes, do you have internet access? Yes No

Do you have access to someone else's computer? Yes No

Do you have access to someone else's internet? Yes No

I live in a: (Please check one)

- Rental house or apartment
- Shared house or apartment with people other than my family
- My own house
- Transitional housing
- Subsidized housing
- Shelter
- Other (Please explain) _____

Are you satisfied with the quality of housing you currently have? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Do you have access to transportation? Yes No

- Family car
- Car pool
- Bus
- Other (Please explain) _____

Are you satisfied with the quality of transportation you currently have? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Childcare

Do you require childcare? Yes No

Do you have childcare? Yes No

If yes, are you satisfied with the quality of childcare you currently have? Yes No

Is it a formal/regulated centre Yes No

Is it informal (friend/family/neighbour/other) Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

For what reasons do you need childcare (i.e. employment, training, school, respite, volunteer, health)? _____

HUMAN ASSETS

Highest level of education completed: Grade _____ College University

Have you been employed in the past? Yes No

Date last employed? _____

Type(s) of Employment: _____

If currently employed, type of employment: _____

Hobbies/Skills: _____

Disability: For the purpose of this questionnaire, a person with a disability is one who, because of a long term or recurring physical or mental constitution, experiences difficulties in carrying out the activities of daily living.

Do you have a disability as defined above? Yes No

Anything else you would like to add?

Please fill out at the last assessment.

Will you take a minute and tell us how you felt about participating in this project? Was anything helpful/not helpful? What did you like/not like?

APPENDIX VIII

(Please note: This form has been made with less lines for each asset area for space considerations)

Personal Asset Identification and Self Rating

(If this is NOT your FIRST self-assessment, please list only those things that have changed since your last assessment.)

Agency/Organization Name: _____

Program: _____

Date: _____ **Identifier:** _____

Social Assets

**Rate
yourself
(1 to 10)**
1 is low
10 is high

Financial Assets

Physical Assets

**Rate
yourself
(1 to 10)**
1 is low

Natural Assets

What are the difficulties that make it hard for you to take a step forward towards a more secure future? **(Please list all you can think of)** _____

(Please answer in the last assessment). Has this project affected your life in any other way?

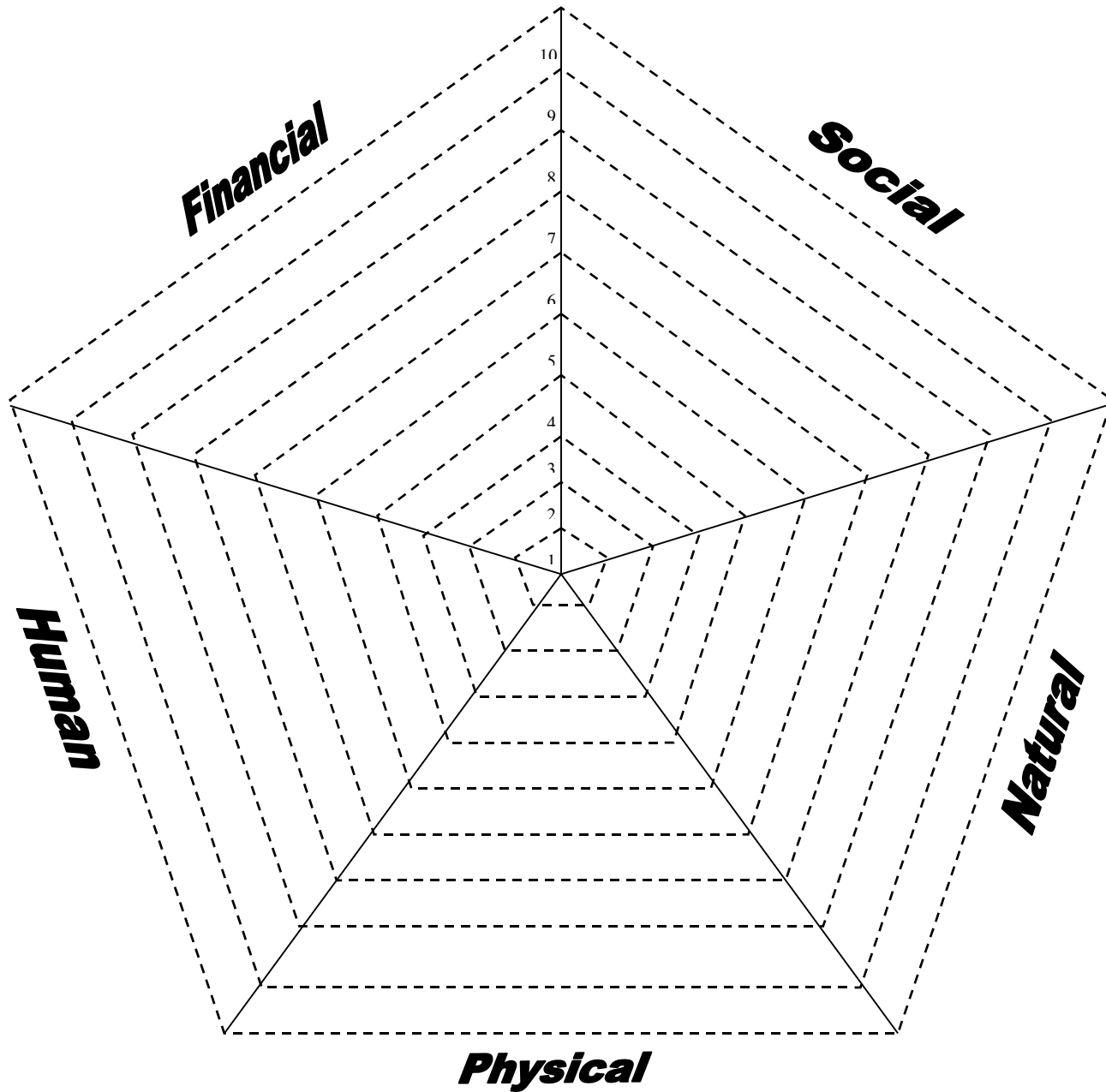
APPENDIX IX

Your Asset Map # _____

Organization: _____

Date: _____

Identifier: _____



Group Statistics

APPENDIX X

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

A = baseline, B = 6 months, C = 1 year

Group #	Human			Physical			Personal			Social			Financial		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average															

Group #	Human			Physical			Personal			Social			Financial		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average															

Group #	Human			Physical			Personal			Social			Financial		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average															

Tell us how you felt about participating in this project?	Has this project affected your life in any other way?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed for personal reflection. • Made me have a better outlook on life. • It has helped me to see exactly where my life is going and how I feel about my life. • No. • No, happy to be at home with family. If this project helps others, that's great! • helped and bettered me, gave me a different outlook on things. • makes you grateful for social resources and not worry so much about financial worries. • It's definitely helped me to define what areas were affected my life and started steps for change. • Given me the bigger picture of my life and how it breaks down and how I need help and where • Not really, but has been very helpful to get on the right road more and not the wrong road. • no. • Yes it has, it has encouraged me to do better for my family. • No. • The project has helped me see myself more and more every time I did it. • Yes. It has helped me a lot. I'm much happier and more self-confident and I moved forward with my life. • Yes, it has made me more goal oriented and I have enjoyed taking the time to complete the survey. It's a lesson in self-discovery and it points out what my needs really are and it helps me to focus on them to make the necessary change. I would recommend this project to other for sure. • This project has made me think about how to better myself, life and family life. It has made me realize that we need to do more to improve our community and our way of life. • It did make me see the positive things in my life. • It made me realize what I don't have and what I could do to get it. • Yes, it has. I realize that I have to watch my money. Now if I don't need it I don't buy it! I feel really good about going back to school. • I probably give myself more credit now than I did before doing this. • Gave me a picture of what I actually have and made me more appreciative of it. • no. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was okay doing this project. It was helpful to see the changes over the months. It showed me what things I had to improve on. • It was nice to see where I was in the first month compared to where I am in the six month. It was difficult evaluating myself from one to ten. • Good idea • I do not understand the objective of this exercise (Husband completed). • Interesting project. Quick and simple. • When you put things on paper you realize how much you get. It was helpful. • There wasn't anything I didn't like. I liked to see the changes on the graph. • length of surveys too long - pie chart, was it necessary? - liked - will help others. • I enjoyed telling you my answers to the questions. I hope I helped out. • I felt okay to participate in this project. It helped to see where my opportunities are and to better the future. • I think this project is great. It tells you a bit about where I am in my life and will also let you know what I may need some help with. • It was an interesting experience. It allowed me to look at myself and self evaluate my life in all different areas. It also showed how my life change from the summer from fall. It made me think and was helpful in making my life make more sense by taking each section apart piece by piece any looking at each one and finding what needed help by self-analyzing. I was personally helpful for my self-worth, self-esteem, self-knowledge and made me recognize what I am doing and that I am either on the right or wrong track in my life. Thank you for this experience. I find it was quite interesting and I felt safe about the confidentiality of this survey. I enjoyed it and it was quite helpful to a point. • It was interesting for me to think about all my assets and help me see that there is a lot of sources out there. • The one thing helpful was when you rate yourself, you can see where your strengths and weaknesses are. • I think it was a great idea because I am hoping that resources will become available for people like us who fall between the cracks of society. • It gave me self-confidence and it really made me look at my life after it was on paper. Then I realized I needed to do something with my life. • When I began the first entry I was depressed saddened by the results even by the second entry I didn't notice anything had changed. It pushed me to try to make a change. I wanted to see a difference in my life in my situation. It pushed me to try to make a change. I wanted to see a difference in my life in my situation. And by this entry I can see a change. So by doing this project, it was very helpful to see where I was and where I am going. I found this pretty hard at times but easy in other ways. Thank you for taking time and caring in other ways. • The breakdown of assets was very helpful because the underlying topics to elaborate on were helpful guides. I liked how specific the questions were and I did not have any hesitations in answering anything on the project survey. I liked the time frame in which the survey was given. You had enough time to make changes to your financial/social/physical assets and that was positive and builds self-confidence. There was nothing that I felt was negative and in closing would like to thank the people responsible for making this project possible. Change is a good thing. • This project was very helpful and really makes you think. I hope that this will help identify problems in the community and that with this we all can help come up with solutions that will help improve living for everyone in the community. The only thing I did not like was the rating system on yourself but hopefully this will be a help. I hope this project will be a help to identify and come up with proper solutions or at least identify there are problems. • Felt it was a little "too personal". • Made me far more aware of what I actually have in my life, beyond finances. It made me re-evaluate my own situation and focus on the positive aspects of my life. • I was happy to be a part of the program. I hope my participation helped for the future of the program. • I have learned to watch my money more and what I spend it on. I only buy what I need. This project has opened my eyes to a lot of things happening in my life. The most important part is that I am going back to school and that is something I wanted to do for a long time. This project was a very positive experience for me. • I like the fact that it gives some basis to determine the level of help that can be generated in a community, so for this it is helpful. I think that this has helped me a lot to realize that I do have quite a bit of assets. I never thought that I had as many friends as I do. It helps to write things down in order for it to register into our brains. I think that I will continue to write. • It was helpful to see what assets I have as I had never thought about it before. • It was not hard because I felt comfortable with the Outreach Worker. If it had been someone else helping me, it would be more difficult because the questions are very personal. Some questions eg. What are my skills, helps me realize what I can offer.

List Of Vulnerabilities

APPENDIX XII

#	Vulnerabilities Types	#	Vulnerabilities Types
9	Financial - lack of money	1	Financial - budgeting
6	Sole caregiver for children	1	Mental Health issue - self
5	Self-Esteem -little/no	1	F.R.O. refusing to pursue ex-partner's financial obligations
4	Self-confidence - little/no	1	Children - expecting another one
4	Relationships	1	Lack of support from outside agencies
4	Education - not having grade 12 diploma	1	Children - parenting issues (I.e. son involved with the law)
3	Health problems - self	1	Immigration Status
3	Childcare - getting it	1	Education - can't go to school due to immigration policies
3	Time - not enough time to make necessary changes	1	Stereotype of young, single mom
3	Education - lack of	1	Financial - cost of application for permanent residency
3	Children - young ones at home	1	Financial - debt
3	Employment - not good pay	1	Support - never seems enough
3	Motivation - little or no	1	Education - cannot afford cost
3	Childcare/support needed for special needs child	1	Driver's licence - getting it
3	Childcare - cannot afford it	1	Financial - cost of clothing
2	Housing - cannot afford it	1	Childcare - not affordable
2	Employment - no Canadian work experience	1	Employment - income not appropriate
2	Employment - out of the work force for a long time	1	Child(ren) - disabled and at home
2	Fear of failure	1	Employment - Canadian education wanted for jobs
2	Education - challenges of accessing (financial, childcare, time)	1	Education - degrees from homeland not recognized in Canada
2	Housing - waiting list for affordable housing	1	Partners work hours vary
2	Child Support - trouble accessing it	1	Employment - getting/finding it
2	Financial - Lack of money to get driver's license	1	Employment - need full time
2	Financial - deductions from OW because I'm working	1	Partner prefers me at home
2	Financial - no credit rating	1	Financial - one income
2	Financial - being able to budget	1	Family - not close to
2	Financial Difficulties	1	Financial - partner on disability
2	Illness - self	1	Financial - High cost of utility bills
2	Stress	1	Children - trying to do anything with 4 is hard
2	Education - cannot afford cost	1	Relationships - ex-partner's abuse
1	Fin-deduct. child tax credit because I'm working now	1	Education - lack of
1	Fear of losing existing assets	1	Financial - lack of money
1	Health - being overweight	1	Childcare - getting it
1	No life insurance	1	Housing - waiting list for affordable housing
1	No savings	1	Paperwork - the maze of information needed to sort through to apply to college/OSAP
1	Fear of future - paying back student loan, being unemployed after school, paying for childcare	1	Fear of losing drug benefits through OW if I go on ASAP
1	Shortage of local doctors prevents immediate med. Attention	1	Lack of sleep
1	Asking for help - pride	1	Education - governmental red tape to get grade 12 diploma
1	Extremely high housing costs	1	Shyness
1	Age discrimination	1	Caring for child with health issues all day
1	Sabotage - family/friends	1	Childcare
1	Family not supportive	1	Financial - no money to pay bills/rent
1	Illness - family member	1	Addiction issues
1	Financial - unpredictable future prevents change	1	Childcare - none
1	Decision-making - 2nd guessing	1	Criminal pardon
1	Transportation - none to night school	1	Education - literacy
1	Outside Influences affecting my choices/decisions	1	Ontario Works worker - not supportive
1	Fear of change	1	Employment - need more training
1	Afraid to leave work and go back to school	1	Alone time to focus on money making goals
1	Health problems - family member	1	Employment - hours cut
1	No internet access for child's computer	1	Housing - inadequate
1	Physical/Emotional exhaustion	1	Language barrier
1	Worried about bills	1	Employment - not secure
1	Worried about getting food on the table	1	Financial - lack of money to pay rent, clothe children, feed properly
1	Assertiveness - lack of	1	Feelings of inadequacy as a parent when children are hungry
1	Fear of moving forward	1	Financial - Hard to move forward when children are hungry, phone my get cut off, may not have a place to sleep
1	Financial - not able to qualify for ODSP	1	Mental health issue - children
1	Tired	1	Children - difficult access some services (age differences and social problems)
1	Hope - none	1	Mental health issues - not enough programs and activities for children with
1	Transportation to work	1	Children - education system needs to be more co-operative in handling/helping in difficult situation
1	Separating from partner	1	Financial - money to complete police exam
1	Employment - not enough experience		
1	Children - Children's Aid Society involvement		

