Analysing policy tools: Vulnerability Reduction Assessment (VRA)
Vulnerability in its context
Components of Drought Risk Management

Risk = Hazard × Vulnerability

Meteorological Drought
Are there trends in exposure?

(natural event)

What factors affect social vulnerability?

(social factors)
Defining vulnerability

- Vulnerability is determined by social factors
  - population changes, population shifts (regional and rural to urban), demographic characteristics, technology, government policies, environmental awareness and degradation, water use trends, and social behaviour

- These factors change over time; vulnerability is likely to increase or decrease in response to these changes
Assessing vulnerability

- **Vulnerability Reduction Assessment (VRA):** holds projects accountable to the communities that they are intended to serve, by providing information (collected during implementation) that can guide adaptive project management.
What is VRA?

- VRA is participatory rural appraisal, focusing on community perceptions of vulnerability to climate change and their capacity to adapt.
- Four indicator questions, tailored to capture locally-relevant issues.
- Data collection through community level meetings over project duration. Qualitative responses and numerical scoring provided during community meetings.
- Repeated evaluations of community perceptions of project effectiveness and climate change risks permits assessment of relative change in vulnerability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Assessing current vulnerability</th>
<th>Vulnerability of livelihood/welfare to existing climate change and/or climate variability</th>
<th>What happens when there is drought? How does this affect you and your community?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Assessing future climate risks</td>
<td>Vulnerability of livelihood/welfare to developing climate change risks</td>
<td>What would happen if drought was twice as frequent? How would this affect you and your community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Formulating an adaptation strategy</td>
<td>Magnitude of barriers (institutional, policy, technological, financial, etc) to adaptation</td>
<td>What stands in the way of adapting to increasing drought? What means do you or your community have to manage events occurring more frequently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Continuing the adaptation process</td>
<td>Ability and willingness of the community to sustain the project intervention</td>
<td>Rate your confidence that the (project activity) will continue after the project period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VRA in the field

- VRA meetings should follow awareness raising activities among the project’s local stakeholder community on emerging climate trends and future projections
- Format of meetings context-dependent, taking into account differing levels of education, literacy, pre-existing knowledge, and history of climate impacts
- Inclusive, participatory
Figure 2: Sample blank H-form
### Vulnerability Reduction Assessment (VRA) Impact of drought, flood, soil erosion on your livelihoods

1. Your ability to cope with these hazards
2. Impact of these if double fold
3. How effective you will cope?
4. How the project will reduce risk?
5. Your confidence
6. Your ability to cope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>VRA Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Shortages of food
- Water levels deep
- Not completely able to cope with climate change
- No more livestock

**Support the community ability and thus have trust that project will not risk.**

**Date:** 11 September

**Other notes:**
- Floods have benefits and limitations.
- 10 acres
- 14,000
- Can't fill...
Some caveats

- It is important to communicate explicitly to communities that participation of the entire community – particularly women, young people, and all livelihood groups – is required.
- Communities may not be immediately forthcoming with their perspectives.
- Communities may downplay the significance of threats.
- Communities may reserve judgment until they see something tangible.
Discussion

- Based on your experience, could VRA compliment quantitative indicators to assessing drought vulnerabilities?
- What vulnerability stressors impact drought in your case example?