

Tool Name: Asset Wheel	
What is it?	An asset wheel is a visual method of showing the different assets (resources) and the linkages among them.
What can it be used for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding differences in the asset bases of a range of social groups • establishing an asset baseline for exploring livelihood strategies and diversification
What does it tell you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the range of assets that people have access to and control over in securing the well-being of themselves and their families • how assets are used to develop and manage livelihood strategies of different social groups • the links between different types of assets • opportunities for and constraints to increasing asset holdings • the potential impacts of program/policy change or implementation on the asset bases of different social groups
Complementary tools	Transect walk, community resource map, social mapping, seasonal calendar, Venn diagram
Key elements	This participatory data generating process uses local identification of asset ownership.
Requirements	
Data/information	This tool generates data and information; the only prior information required is for sampling analysts.
Time	30 to 60 minutes
Skills	Good participatory facilitation skills and knowledge
Supporting software	No software needed
Financial cost	This study will cost \$30,000 to \$100,000 when conducted as part of a participatory study, depending on the number of communities sampled and the geographical scope of the study.
Limitations	Sensitive issues (such as gender differences in asset distribution arising from local cultural norms) might arise so good facilitation skills are required.
References and applications	<p>Brocklesbury, M.A. 2002. <i>Chars Livelihoods Programme, Diversity and Livelihoods Assessment. Fieldwork Guide</i>. "Annex One: Outline of Methods." Swansea: Centre for Development Studies.</p> <p>Coady International Institute. 2004. "Operationalizing an Asset-Based Approach at the Community Level." http://www.tessproject.com/products/seminars&training/seminar%20series/Assets_Materials/Mathie_and_Cunningham.ppt.</p> <p>Synergos. 2002. Asset-Based Community Development workshop. http://www.synergos.org/events/abcd2002/.</p>

Asset Wheel: Procedures and Examples

Time, Materials, and Skills Needed

Allow 30 to 60 minutes to produce and analyze an asset wheel and to ensure that a full discussion occurs with local analysts.

Markers, cards, and large sheets of paper are required. Notebooks/paper and pens will be needed to make a copy of the diagram and for the note-taker to record the discussion generated during the diagram development. The asset wheel can be drawn on the ground; if this is the case, then a large area will be needed with various objects such as sticks, stones, leaves, seeds, and so on which the analysts can use to represent different assets.

The discussion group will include a facilitator, observer/note-taker, and selected local analysts. The facilitator and observer/note-taker should be experienced in both the principles behind the use of participatory tools and methods as well as in their practical use.

Possible Approach

The following approach is a general example that can be adapted to suit the local context, views of local analysts, and the research objectives.

Step 1: Select Local Analysts. Identify the groups of people to talk to about their perceptions of their access to and management of assets. These decisions will be based on the objectives and depth of information required for the research. For example, separate groups of men and women might be useful because women and men might use and prioritize different assets. However, it might be also necessary to break down the population into further categories (such as ethnicity, well-being category, or caste). Groups of five to ten local analysts should reflect any relevant and important social divisions.

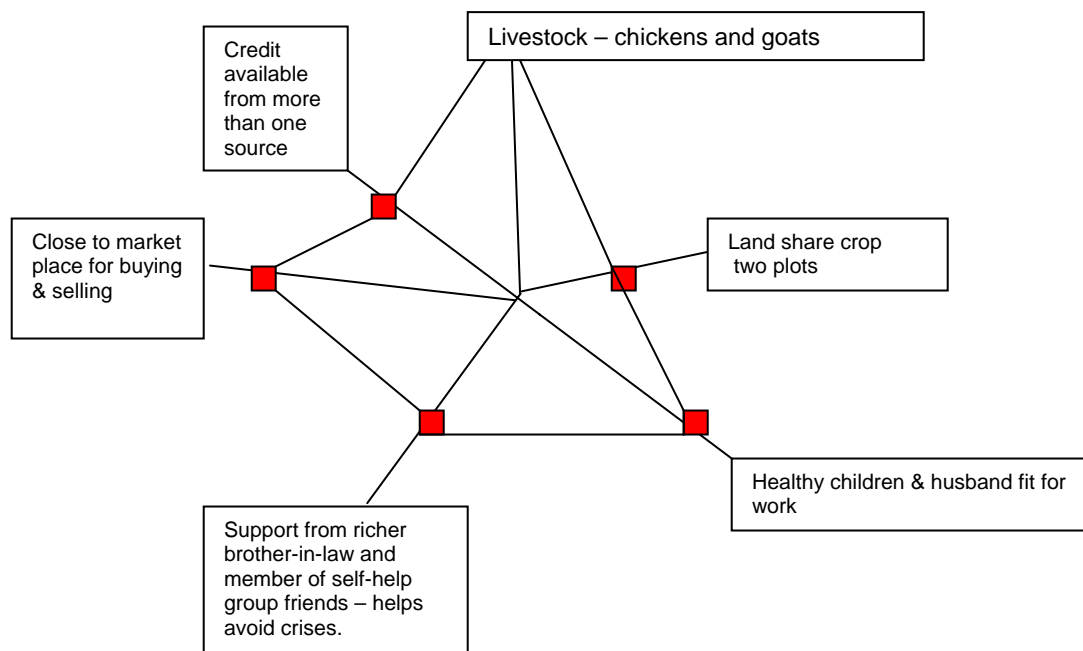
Step 2: Provide Introductions and Explanations. When working with each group, the facilitator and observer/note-taker should begin by introducing themselves and explaining carefully and clearly the objectives of the discussion (that is, understanding the range of resources, or assets, that they have access to and control over in securing the well-being of themselves and their families). Check that the local analysts understand and feel comfortable with what will be discussed.

Step 3: Produce an Asset Wheel Diagram. Ask the local analysts to explain what they understand by assets. Ask them to list different types of assets and write or draw a picture of each asset on a card (if drawing on the ground, use cards or other local materials to represent each asset). Lay the cards out so that everyone in the group can see them and then explore with the local analysts what they consider to be important assets. For example, ask how important friends and family are to well-being and what they contribute to what people think of as assets; ask whether good health or education are assets, and why and for whom; ask about what type of work is an asset and who benefits; and so on. Explore these types of questions with a range of other possible assets (such as associations, organizations, informal groups; individual skills; institutions, including opportunities in the policy environment; and natural resources).

Once the local analysts feel they have listed all their important assets, ask them to look again at the cards and see if they want to group any of the assets together (for example, they might want to group the separate cards for chickens, goats, and cattle together as livestock). The number of assets will vary but it should be possible to group them together into five to ten groups.

Ask the local analysts to draw a wheel on a large piece of paper (or on the ground) with the same number of spokes as the number of asset groups, and then mark the spokes with a card for each group. Explain that the spokes on the wheel represent a scale with low (or zero) at the center and high (or 10) at the outside. Ask the analysts to assess the level of asset holdings for each group and to score it by marking the spoke at the right point along the scale (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Simple Example of an Asset Wheel



Source: Brocklesbury 2002.

Step 4: Analyze an Asset Wheel Diagram. The completed diagram can be used to provide a baseline of asset holdings for different population subgroups. Exploring the differences in scoring might also provide information regarding opportunities for and constraints to increasing asset holdings. Ask the local analysts to explain the links between the different spokes; do different kinds of assets affect each other and how? Ask about what events or changes external or internal to the household or group affect the accumulation or depletion of assets and how a particular policy or program might affect asset holdings and management. Explore any seasonal differences in assets and who makes the decisions over assets in the household.

It is important to develop a range of asset wheels. Comparing the asset bases of different social groups will help build up a picture of how assets are used to develop and manage livelihood strategies.

Step 5: Conclude the Activity. Check again that the local analysts know how the information they have discussed and provided will be used. Ask them to reflect on the advantages, disadvantages, and the analytical potential of the tool. Thank the local analysts for their time and effort.

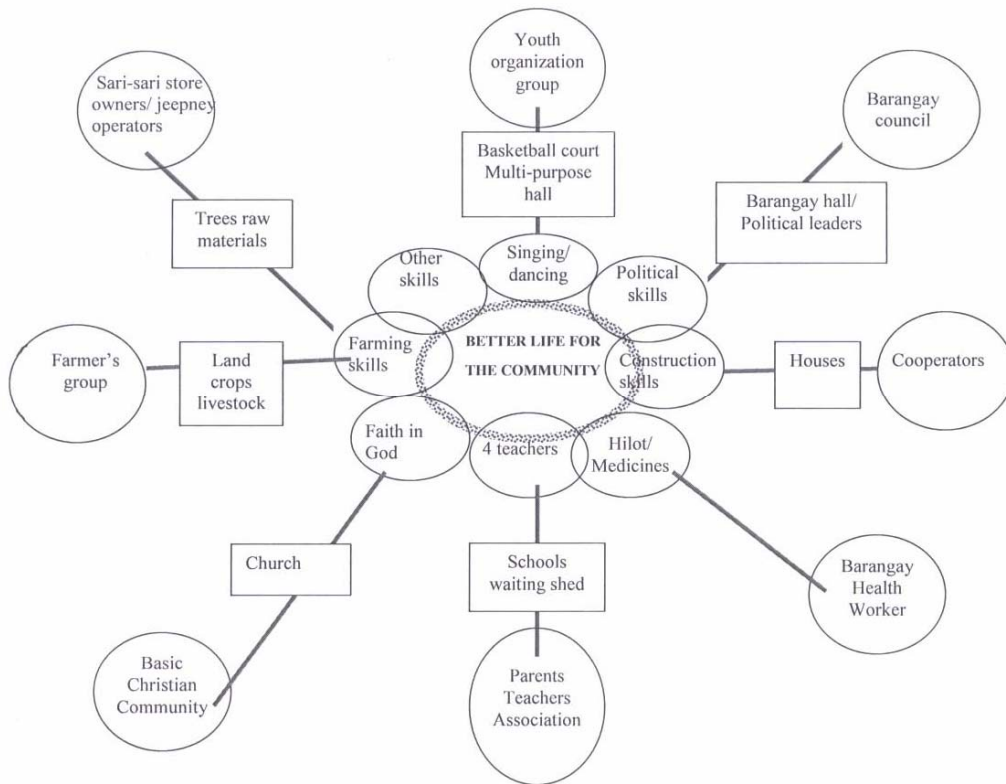
Points to Remember

Good facilitation skills are key. The approach outlined above is a general guide; be flexible and adapt the tool and approach to local contexts and needs.

Case Study Example: Asset Wheel in Sitio Midkiwan, Philippines

In Midkiwan, a sitio in Barangay (village) Baranga in the Southern Philippines, local analysts traced individual, organizational, physical, economic, and external assets, and explored how these assets are linked with each other. Figure 2 shows an asset wheel constructed during this process. Through the process, people in Midkiwan are beginning to leverage their local assets to promote, among other things, the formation of cooperatives and micro-enterprises, a health program, and land reform. The process of local people organizing themselves and examining their assets has also led them to increase demands on government to install a water system, build an elementary school, and construct electrical support for the community (Synergos 2002).

Figure 2. Asset Wheel in Sitio Midkiwan, Philippines



Source: Coady International Institute 2004.