



Framing vulnerability and adaptation in the context of the Lao Uplands

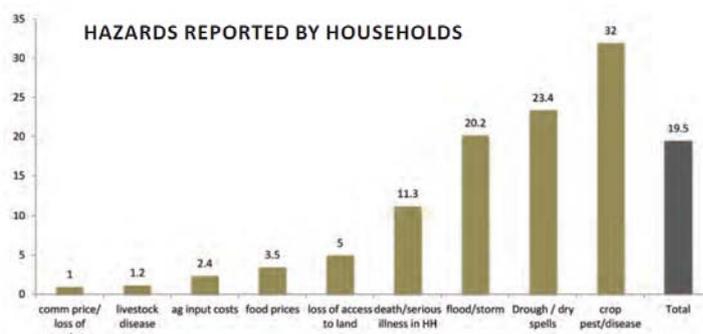
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A few definitions

Vulnerability generally refers to the degree to which a system is unable to cope with, or adapt to, negative effects of external shocks.



Risk and Vulnerability Survey, 4000HH from all provinces, MAF-FAO 2013



A few definitions

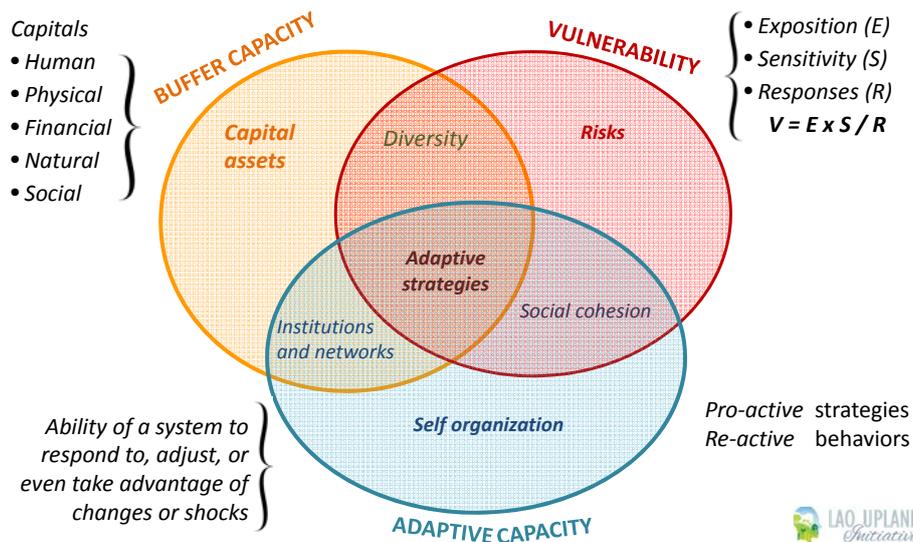
Resilience: *the capacity of individuals, social groups or social-economical systems to **accommodate stresses and disturbances**, to self-organize, and to learn in order to maintain or improve essential basic structures and ways of functioning*

Speranza et al., 2014. An indicator framework for assessing livelihood resilience in the context of social-ecological dynamics



A few definitions

Vulnerability: a key dimension of resilience



Adaptation planning

- Strictly **top-down adaptation strategies** may not capture the great diversity of local upland environments and, consequently, can lead to poorly adapted actions
- Exclusively **grassroots-level perspectives** may be too narrow and/or too context specific to allow findings to be scaled up, transposed, and generalized.
- **Increasing resilience** thus requires to combine:
 - *adaptive capacity* as a bottom-up dynamic that builds on local creativity, knowledge, and innovation, and
 - *adaptation planning* as a top-down, institutional approach aimed at generating the conditions for adaptation



Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and Climate change adaptation (CCA)

- Climate change is expected to
 - raise temperatures, modify precipitation patterns and
 - increase the frequency and magnitude of extreme weather-related events
- GoL has endorsed global DRR and CCA agenda
 - Hyogo Framework for Action – HFA
 - National Adaptation Programme of Action - NAPA,
- On-going projects and initiatives
 - vulnerability assessment approaches at multiple scales
 - early warning systems to alert farmers on climatic hazards
 - grass-root projects to strengthen adaptive capacity of vulnerable populations

➔ **Lessons learnt, impacts?**



Are upland people vulnerable?

- Debunking stereotypes
 - low capacity to adapt to climate change because of poor socioeconomic conditions
 - vulnerability of upland communities is rooted in complex dynamics
- Old versus new vulnerabilities
 - Centuries of adaptation practices to unpredictable weather events
 - agrobiodiversity and agroecology practices (e.g. mix of rice cultivars and crops in upland fields, staggered sowing dates, crop cultivation in different sites to spread the risk of failure)
 - social practices (e.g. NTFP and livestock safety nets, off-farm activities).
 - Changing context with agricultural commercialization
 - **Too many children.** 7 to 10 children per family was an asset at the time of subsistence farming but is becoming a burden with education requirement and need for cash,
 - Subsistence farming to dependence on commodity prices that are external to their system - stress brought by changing prices, contract breaking, **market uncertainties**,
 - Forest and fallows conversion into agricultural lands, shortening fallows, economic concessions - > **land scarcity**.
 - The rats have changed status from food to **pest**.
 - Intensive use of chemical inputs with generalization of mono-cropping and simplification of practices also increase risks of **crop failures** and decreasing productivity.

(Farmers voices, 2012)



ບົດນະໂຍບາຍໂດຍສັງເຂບກ່ຽວກັບຄວາມທຸກຍາກໃນ ສປປ ລາວ

ເປັນຫຍັງຊົນເຜົ່າກຸ່ມນ້ອຍຈຶ່ງທຸກຍາກ?

ຜົນກະທົບທາງດ້ານປັດໄຈການຜະລິດ, ໂອກາດ ແລະ ການຈຳແນກໃນຕະຫຼາດແຮງງານຕໍ່ຄວາມທຸກຍາກ

LAO POVERTY POLICY BRIEF

Why Are Ethnic Minorities Poor?

The relative effects of endowments, opportunities and marketplace discrimination



A combination of high fertility and poor educational attainment among the ethnic minorities emerges as the two key factors explaining most of the welfare gap between ethnic groups.

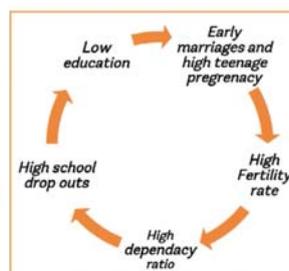


Figure 2: Most ethnic minorities are concentrated in mountainous areas

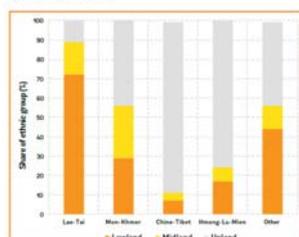


Figure 3: Ethnic minorities are less likely to have a non-farm source of income

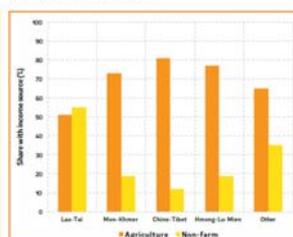


Figure 5: A higher share of working age members among ethnic minorities have primary education at most

