Method 1: Introducing the Research Theme
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Purpose

This Activity, to be conducted in the 1st Community Meeting, follows opening comments, the Introductory Video and a Q&A session on the PPA's purpose. Its goal is to:

- Explain the theme of the 2002/3 PPA in a way that people can relate to
- Identify locally significant impoverishing shocks/forces
- Systematically confirm whether or not shared understanding of core concepts (e.g. vulnerability and triggers/impoverishing shocks & forces) has been established
- Identify locally significant social groups to involve in the participatory research process

Process

Step 1: Though there is no clear translation in kiSwahili for "vulnerability," it is a concept that people are familiar with and very much concerned about.

In its most basic form, vulnerability is about "being at risk of becoming poor(er)." Thus, the PPA is simply setting out to better understand:

- What causes people to become poor(er)
- Who is at risk of becoming poor(er) due to these "triggers"
- What do people do to avoid or resist impoverishing shocks and processes
- What should Government do to support people avoiding or resisting impoverishing shocks and processes

Use a drawing – perhaps similar to the one below – to illustrate the concepts of "vulnerability" versus "resistance." This drawing should be prepared prior to the Community Meeting. Make sure that the images are clear even from a distance (templates of people & livelihoods have been given to each Research Team) and that they are relevant to each particular site. In other words, make sure that the people, houses, etc. in the drawing are in harmony with local conditions.

This drawing depicts a family on a road. Up ahead, the road branches upwards, straight ahead, and downwards. At the end of the upward branch are images of wellbeing (i.e. a good house/compound, healthy animals, etc.) Comparable images of ill-being lie at the end of the downward branch.

The facilitator should narrate a story in which this family is seeking to follow the upwards path but fear bad things happening that could prevent them from increased wellbeing or (still worse!) push them downward.

Explain: The goal of the PPA is to learn about families like the one in this drawing and the things that threaten to impoverish them. It is also about the measures people take to avoid bad things happening in the first place and, when they do, the steps they take to survive. Finally, it is about why some people have bad things strike them more often than they strike others.

On the basis of this information and *practical* recommendations from community members, Government hopes to learn what it can do to help people overcome or avoid the causes of poverty.

Step 2: Place two large pieces of flip-chart paper beside the image of ill being. Then, invite people to give an example of something that makes/has made local households poor(er). The person citing the impoverishing shock/process should illustrate each example on the flip-chart paper. Contributions should be sought from women, men, elderly persons, children, etc.

Step 3: Ask if everyone in the community is equally at risk of being struck by these forces. Solicit at least one example by asking a question, such as: "is everyone equally at risk of loosing his or her crops due to drought?"

Ask a community member to give an example (from amongst those already drawn on the flip-chart papers) of an impoverishing force that affects everyone equally, such as the disappearance of game animals. Then, ask someone else to identify an impoverishing force that affects some households less than it does others, such as the seasonal flooding of low-lying fields.

Step 4: Explain that the Research Team wants to meet with those groups of people that are affected by different causes of poverty (e.g. farmers with low-lying fields) and groups of people that have different options available to them (e.g. women, men, children, youth and elderly people) for coping with impoverishing forces. Invite community members to suggest social groups to meet with and to illustrate each on another sheet of flip-chart paper.

The facilitator should pay special attention to capturing locally relevant socio-*economic* groups (e.g. large land-owners and landless labourers, boat owners and labourers, urban unemployed and employed, well off herders and "dependents").

Step 5: Summarise the list of impoverishing forces and locally relevant social groups identified by community members. Then, solicit additions and offer to answer questions. Explain that, during the coming week, Researchers will be working with small teams of people from each of the social groups cited today.

Finally, congratulate people on what they have already accomplished and inform them that, if they have further questions or can think of other social groups to include in the research process, they should feel welcome to approach the PPA Team at any time.