



Enhancing the resilience of those most vulnerable to (food) system shocks

Towards a sense-making framework and assessment methodology

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The COVID-19 pandemic, and especially its responses such as lockdowns and transport restrictions shocked the world in 2020. Rapid assessments of the crisis showed that especially poor people were hit hard, facing immediate threats to their food and livelihood security. Various UN agencies indicated that progress towards achieving SDGs is likely to be set back by decades. The people suffering from hunger is on the increase. With that context in mind a research was started at Wageningen University to assess impact of shocks such as COVID-19 on the **most vulnerable** groups of people, anticipated to suffer even more.

The research assignment developed three methodologies that allows both academic as well as support organisations to better understand how more vulnerable groups in society respond to crisis and what room there is to enhance their resilience. These methodologies were tested in two case studies (migrant labourers in the sesame sector in Ethiopia, jobless migrant youth from pastoral communities in Somaliland). Concepts and methodologies are described in seven reports that to a large extent build on each other.

1. Guijt, J. and N. Rozemeijer. Enhancing the resilience of those most vulnerable to (food) system shocks – Synthesis paper. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543741>
2. Wigboldus, S. and J. Jacobs. Enhancing the resilience of those most vulnerable to (food) system shocks – Clarifying and unpacking key concepts. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543742>
3. Wigboldus, S. and J. Jacobs. Enhancing the resilience of those most vulnerable to (food) system shocks – Towards a sense-making framework and assessment methodology. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543743>
4. Roo, N. de and J. van der Lee. Exploring vulnerability and resilience from a multifaceted and systemic perspective – Case studies in Ethiopia and Somaliland. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543744>
5. Wattel, C.J., M. Sopov and M.A.J.M. van Asseldonk. Responsible finance for vulnerable groups under COVID-19. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543745>
6. Wattel, C.J., M. Sopov and M.A.J.M. van Asseldonk. Finance for Resilience Tool (FORTE) – A rapid assessment tool. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543746>
7. Fonteijn, H., J. Groot and X. Guo. Analysing the resilience of food systems with scenario analyses and reverse stress tests – Concepts and an application on the Ethiopian sesame value chain. <https://doi.org/10.18174/543747>

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1 Introduction



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In “Enhancing the resilience of those most vulnerable to (food) system shocks – Clarifying and unpacking key concepts” (Wigboldus, S. and Jacobs J., 2021) we explored a variety of angles on vulnerability and resilience, and how this plays out in the lives of the most vulnerable groups in society. In this paper, we take a next step by capturing related key dimensions and dynamics in a sense-making framework. This can serve as a basis for an assessment approach and methodology. Because it is conceptual in nature, it needs to be operationalised. In this paper, we take a first step towards doing so. The paper of Nina de Roo and Jan van der Lee in this series: “Exploring vulnerability and resilience from a multifaceted and systemic perspective – Case studies in Ethiopia and Somaliland, 2021” demonstrates how the application of this can be done through a rapid assessment and then reviews how such application involves adaptation to the specific assessment context.

The framework identifies generic dimensions and their interactions which are meant to be specified for a particular vulnerable group. This involves an iterative and two-way process where the conceptual needs to inform main elements that one needs to get to grips with, while the on-the-ground realities of a particular focus of assessment and research needs to inform the operational design in relation to questions regarding feasibility and appropriate distinctions and focus.

2 Tentative framework

Figure 1 presents the framework that we settled on. It is not a causal model and is first of all meant as a coherent presentation of relevant dimensions to be assessed in relation to vulnerability and resilience. It is geared towards creating a number of characterisations (profiles), the descriptive part, which can then be analysed and interpreted in terms of how they interactively shape particular vulnerability and resilience conditions. Finally, the assessment can be used to identify ways in which such conditions could be improved, which conditions need to be prioritised, etc.

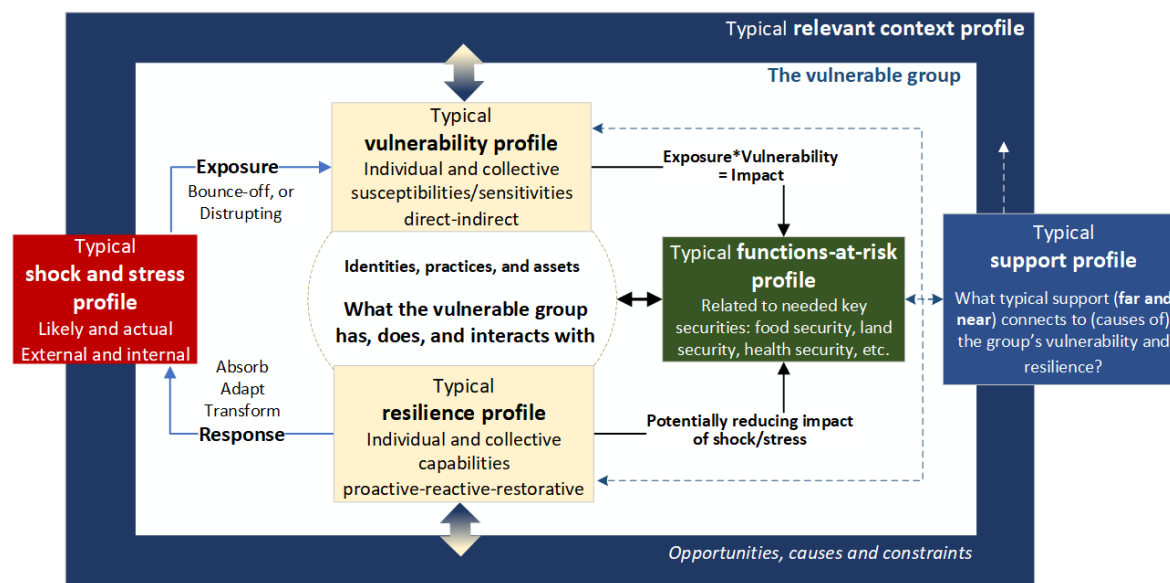


Figure 1 Vulnerability and resilience assessment framework

The assumption underpinning the use of this framework, is that understanding the status and dynamics of these elements, and the way they interact, will provide a good basis for appropriately informing policy and decision-making on responsible investments and wider interventions to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience of that group.

Application of the framework will involve three steps:

- **Description:** This is about creating typical characterisations of each of the profiles for a particular group.
- **Analysis:** This is about creating an understanding about *why* things are the way they are and what it may mean for future shock exposure and vulnerability of that group.
- **Interpretation:** So what does this mean in terms of what would be the most appropriate way of positioning responsible investments and wider interventions, e.g. in terms of to which of the typical profile conditions it would need to connect.

We will first focus on the descriptive part (section 3) and discuss options for analysis and interpretation in section 4. In the following we unpack the key elements of the framework in terms of what they are about:

1. The vulnerable group
2. The typical shock profile - including the dynamic way in which it exposes vulnerability
3. Their typical vulnerability profile - including the dynamic between individual/group vulnerability and the relevant context (influence)

-
4. Their typical resilience profile - including a) the dynamic between individual/community resilience and the relevant context (influence), and b) the dynamic way in which the group typically responds to particular shocks/stresses
 5. Their typical functions-at-risk profile
 6. The typical relevant context profile
 - a. Key conditions supporting resilience and/or reducing exposure to shocks
 - b. Key conditions causing vulnerability and/or exacerbating exposure to/impact of shocks
 7. The typical support profile

3 Unpacking the dimensions and dynamics expressed in the framework



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For the different profiles, we apply a systematic approach of defining key research/assessment questions, related information needs, related methods/tools, related sources of information, and related use of information. This involves an iterative process. For example, the accessible sources of information may limit the scope of type of information that can be obtained. Or, in considering how information will be used, it may turn out that certain information is not very relevant.

Then, we suggest the type of questions that can be considered pertinent for each of the profiles. It is, however, a tentative identification which will be further specified and evaluated in the process of application in two case studies (Roo, Nina de and Jan van der Lee, 2021). Not every question may be as relevant in each specific situation, so the profiles first of all identify key **types of** conditions and related questions that one needs to get to grips with as well as what dynamics play out between different types of conditions.

We consider it critical to start with selecting questions to be answered before defining indicators. This will prevent collecting more data than necessary, and/or data that in the end does not help answer pertinent questions. So it means identifying what type of insights an assessment is meant to generate, translate this into related questions to be answered, and from there to select what exactly needs to be assessed to be able to provide such answers.

We add the word “typical” to each profile to indicate that vulnerable groups will not be homogenous and that descriptions will pertain to what applies to the group in general. If differences within the

group are significant, the assessment may need to be done separately for different sub-groups, or at least differences will need to be noted in that part of the assessment where it applies.

3.1 The vulnerable group

First of all, we emphasise in the framework that this is about “typical” profiles. There is no way of doing justice to all forms of variety within a group. A choice of what will be called a “vulnerable group”, in terms of a boundary, will need to strike a balance between not making it too specific because it would require making ten thousand different assessment, and not too broad because it would involve too many exceptions to the “typical”. In other words, the group should be homogeneous enough. This homogeneity then particularly applies to their susceptibility to typical shocks they are (potentially) exposed to. This does not rule out that a finding from the assessment can be that the defined group boundary is inappropriate, e.g. because possibly men and women are impacted in quite different ways.

For the vulnerability profile and the resilience profile, we apply two perspectives: a profile of 1) the typical vulnerable group member, of 2) as part of a typical community for that particular vulnerable group. As far as it is feasible, and depending on the extent to which these involve different characteristics, this may involve identifying two typical vulnerable group members, e.g. man and women, and two typical types of communities that they are part of.

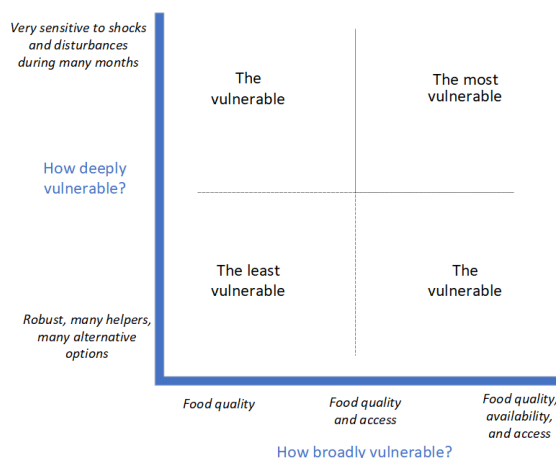


Figure 2 Simplified characterisation of what being vulnerable relates to

When to characterise a group as a “most vulnerable group”?

This involves a relative characterisation. Everyone is vulnerable in a certain way. Even very rich people can be vulnerable in e.g. psychological ways. Our focus here is therefore on socio-economic vulnerability. As a proxy, we consider this to be about a combination of 1) what is vulnerable in terms of availability of and access to sufficient and nutritious food, and 2) the extent of vulnerability (incl. how susceptible/sensitive to shocks, year-round or seasonally) (see Figure 2). Their vulnerability will stretch into other areas of life as well, that is why we talk about a proxy.

The assessment is meant to unpack the **multifaceted vulnerability** of vulnerable groups in the sense that it identifies multiple ways in which they may be vulnerable, and how such multiple ways of being vulnerable creates **systemic vulnerability**.

3.2 The typical shock profile

The typical shock profile is about characterising what typical shocks and stresses a typical member of the vulnerable group has been and will (potentially) be exposed to, and the typical ways in which these shocks and stresses impact on aspects in which they are vulnerable.

Suggested key questions	Key information needs to be able to answer the question	Selected methods and tools to assess this	Selected sources of information	How related insights will be used to inform re: responsible investments /interventions
What are the most important shocks/stresses (potentially) exposed to?				
What livelihood activities are (expected to be) impacted by these shocks/stresses				
What particular vulnerabilities are (potentially) exposed by these shocks/stresses?				
What is the likelihood of being or becoming effected by these shocks and stresses, and their susceptibility/ sensitivity to those?				
How severely are they (expected to be) impacted by these shocks and stresses?				

There are also internal shocks to which vulnerable group (members) are exposed, such as health shocks, payment of dowry, breaking down of equipment, etc. Rather than creating a separate element for this, we suggest to include it in the shock profile or the vulnerability profile, depending on the type of shock. The suggested questions may have different answers for different shocks/stresses. The case studies (Roo, Nina de and Jan van der Lee, 2021) mentioned earlier show a way of presenting such differences in a one overview.

3.3 The typical vulnerability profile

This profile is about the question of what key aspects characterise their vulnerability. So what exactly makes them be characterised as “vulnerable”. What exactly in their lives and livelihoods is vulnerable to such degree that they have become defined this way. It may help understand whether this is about inherent vulnerability of assets or practices, or rather more caused by external conditions, or a combination of these.

Suggested key questions	Key information needs to be able to answer the question (some examples)	Selected methods and tools to assess this	Selected sources of information	How related insights will be used to inform re: responsible investments /interventions
Which of their assets are vulnerable and in what way?	Characterisation of their human capital: (e.g. fragile health); social capital: (e.g. limited social network); physical capital: (e.g. limited equipment); financial capital: (e.g. limited financial assets); natural capital: (e.g. limited (collective) cultivable land, forest)			
What in their livelihood practices/strategies makes them vulnerable and in what way?	Characterisation of attributes of practices/ strategies in terms of diversity, redundancy, flexibility, etc.			
What conditions in the relevant context influence their vulnerability? In what way(s)?	Characterise: - Institutional environment - Entrepreneurial environment - Natural environment			
What relevant differences within the group in terms of vulnerability (e.g. gender related) need to be distinguished?				
What risks emerge from existing vulnerabilities (in view of relevant potential shocks)?				

3.4 The typical resilience profile

This profile is about conditions that form the basis for resilience or the lack of it. What can they avail of in case of a need to respond to a shock? For example: when there is a drought (shock) and I have no means of irrigating my land (vulnerability), what can I avail of to prevent this shock from adversely affecting my key securities?

Please note that it may be more practical to combine an assessment of e.g. assets 1) in terms what assets are part of what causes vulnerability, and 2) in terms of what assets are a resource/potential for being able to be resilient in the face of shocks.

Suggested key questions	Key information needs to be able to answer the question	Selected methods and tools to assess this	Selected sources of information	How related insights will be used to inform re: responsible investments /interventions
What assets co-shape the basis of their resilience and in what way?	Characterisation of their human capital (e.g. education, strong faith and psychological resilience) social capital: (e.g. strong family relationships, good connections with political party); financial capital (e.g. savings); natural capital (e.g. a cow); physical capital (e.g. a mobile phone)			
What attributes of their livelihood practices/ strategies co-shape the basis of their resilience and in what way?	<p>Characterisation of attributes of practices/ strategies in terms of diversity, redundancy, flexibility, mobility, etc.</p> <p>How robust are their livelihoods in terms of being able to handle variations in conditions without leading to negative outcomes (how susceptible)?</p> <p>How diverse are their practices/livelihoods in terms of having alternative options?</p> <p>To which extent is there redundancy (are their buffers/surpluses) achieved through livelihood practices?</p> <p>How flexible are their ways of securing their livelihoods in terms of ability to adjust to different conditions?</p> <p>How mobile are they in terms of an ability to move to places that have better conditions for their livelihoods?</p>			
What capabilities co-shape the basis of their resilience and in what way?	<p>Characterisation of</p> <p>Access: how good/creative in gaining access to external support?</p> <p>Activation: how/the extent to which they are able to bring their resilience capacity to bear in response to a shock</p> <p>Anticipation: how good are they at anticipating shock impact and timely respond as a result?</p>			
Access to what conditions in the relevant context support their resilience? In what ways?	<p>Risk finance options?</p> <p>Social protection options?</p>			
How do group members typically respond to relevant shocks/ stresses. What are the implications?	<p>Characterise in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try to delay, withstand (aim for robustness) - Absorb effects - Adapt effects - Transform because of (anticipated) effects 			
What relevant differences within the group in terms of resilience (e.g. gender related) need to be distinguished?				

3.5 The typical functions-at-risk profile

This profile is about livelihood goals and related desired outcomes. They may be summarised in terms of key securities such as food security, health security, land security, climate security, and energy security. This may also be framed as basic needs. The idea is to identify what are typical needs/securities that are already put to rather unacceptable thresholds, and/or that are particularly prone to being affected negatively by (plausibly) anticipated shocks.

Suggested key questions	Key information needs to be able to answer the question	Selected methods and tools to assess this	Selected sources of information	How related insights will be used to inform re: responsible investments /interventions
What basic needs are already under pressure? Because of what?	Characterise:. Food related: - food availability - food access - food quality - food stability Other: - water related - health related - shelter related - land related - freedom related - relationships related - opportunities related Etc.			
What basic needs are anticipated to become (even more) under pressure because of relevant shocks/ stresses? (in view of existing vulnerabilities)	Same as above			
What do they consider to be of primary importance in terms of livelihood function?				

3.6 The typical relevant context profile

Under vulnerability profile and resilience profile we have focused on the dynamics of the way in which the context plays a role in vulnerability and resilience. Here, we characterise the context more generally. Or, framed differently, this is about identifying patterns and what in principle is supportive or undermining in terms of vulnerability/resilience of the particular group.

Key questions	Key information needs to be able to answer the question	Selected methods and tools to assess this	Selected sources of information	How related insights will be used to inform re: responsible investments /interventions
<p>What relevant characteristics of the context (e.g. food system) (potentially) affect their vulnerability?</p> <p>How big of a role does it play for the overall vulnerability of the group?</p> <p>What relates to public sector conditions and what to private sector conditions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies, laws, legislation - Politics and power - Social cohesion and solidarity - Natural environment - Trade, markets, prices - Services, technologies <p>Vulnerability exacerbating, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Institutionalised conditions (e.g. systemic injustice, no access to benefits, etc.) ii. Acts of injustice which can be linked to specific actors (e.g. land grabbing, unfair wages, etc.) iii. Natural conditions (vulnerable to drought, storms, floods, poor soil fertility, etc.) 			
<p>What relevant characteristics of the context (e.g. food system) (potentially) affect their resilience?</p> <p>How big of a role does it play for the overall resilience of the group?</p> <p>What relates to public sector conditions and what to private sector conditions?</p>	<p>Same as above</p> <p>Incl. the extent to which they have access to institutions, structures, processes which support their resilience by providing additional options to respond to shocks.</p> <p>Emerging opportunities</p>			
	<p>What of the following applies and affects vulnerability/resilience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural inequalities - Unfair distribution of benefits, e.g. in the value chain - Exclusion from party benefits - Structural neglect - Land grabbing or other forms of loss of access to (natural) resources 			
<p>Add a question or two on, or integrate in the above, something in relation to scales: there is a direct context, an intermediate context, and a more remote context. So this is about the local, national, global. Conditions will relate to different scales.</p>				

3.7 The typical support profile

This is not yet about identifying appropriate ways of responsible investment/intervention, but rather to characterise what is already going on in terms of support options. Later identification of appropriate ways of responsible investment/intervention may also connect to already ongoing support options.

As noted in the frameworks, this is about support both far and near. Near is about the community of which they are part. Far may be about intervention by the government or international organisations.

Key questions	Key information needs to be able to answer the question	Selected methods and tools to assess this	Selected sources of information	How related insights will be used to inform re: responsible investments /interventions
What kind of support interventions take/took place, by who, connecting to what of the above components (entry point)? What is the role of government, private sector, third sector actors? Is it about support in anticipation of shock, during shock, or in recovery from shock?				
Access to what community functions supports their resilience/reduces their vulnerability?	Operationalising a view on collective resilience			

This may be elaborated in the interpretation phase in terms of the following type of questions:

- How effective and appropriate do support options appear to be?
- What alternative support options may have better effects? (in case this is mentioned in documents, interviews, or based on observations)

4 The application process

In previous section we elaborated the basis for the **descriptive** part of the methodology. This is about creating characterisations of the profiles in terms of the state of affairs. In this section we provide a number of suggestions regarding the way in which the **analytical** and **interpretative** part of the methodology may be set up.

The **analysis** of the descriptive part will be about creating an understanding about why things are the way they are and what it may mean for future shock exposure and vulnerability of that group. This is about identifying in what in particular resides the vulnerability and resilience of the group (specific factors). It is also about creating a dynamic perspective on the overall vulnerability and resilience of the group by considering all profiles together and interactively.

The **interpretation** will be about considering the analysis in terms of what this means for, e.g., appropriate ways of positioning responsible investments and wider interventions, e.g. in terms of to which of the typical profile conditions it would need to connect. This is about addressing the 'so what?' and 'now what?' questions: So if someone intends to contribute to the reduction of vulnerability and strengthening of resilience of this group, what would be responsible investment/intervention that connect to the realities sketched through the analysis?

4.1 Application approach and principles

Rapid assessment approach

Elaborate vulnerability assessment approaches are available, such as developed by FAO. However, it is easy to drown in the many details. Could it be more appropriate to do for a proxy approach which aims to assess key indicators only?

Since resilience is an emerging property that actually only shows in the face of shock events and their impact, it will be hard to determine beforehand what the status of resilience is. Sometimes the closest we can come is to decide on a number of proxy indicators which fairly well represent issues related to vulnerability and resilience. Which means it will sometimes be arbitrary which proxies are appropriate to use. This underscores the importance of creating conceptual clarity and comprehensiveness to prevent overly biased assessment methodologies.

We therefore suggest applying this assessment methodology as a rapid appraisal approach, aimed at generating **good-enough insights** to responsibly inform policy and decision making regarding responsible investments/interventions. As much as possible, it will be based on readily available data/information. Getting insights from the perspective of the vulnerable group itself, is key. If possible, work with those who already had interactions with them along these lines. Good-enough and responsible needs to go hand-in-hand. It means that rather than focusing on in-depth insights, the focus will be on identifying key dynamics that matter and using well-chosen proxies to understand related conditions. Based on such rapid appraisal, one may still decide to do an in-depth study of specific elements.

Who assesses?

It is critical to meaningfully involve vulnerable groups/primary stakeholders themselves and relevant (local) stakeholders in resilience assessment and strategizing. They know about the on-the-ground realities and have their own perspectives on what does and does not build resilience. This also relates to traditional/informal resilience capacities. Introducing new elements that allegedly build resilience may come at the expense of (proven and sustainable) traditional/informal resilience. This includes issues relating to informal markets and informal networks. However, it concerns not only assessing

vulnerability and resilience in participatory ways, but also involving primary stakeholders in reviewing options and opportunities for responsible investment.

Activating specific concerns and complications

This may include ways of addressing issues regarding power and politics and who would need to be the focus of study. The study may be surrounded by sensitive topics. As discussed earlier, systemic conditions may be a major cause for the vulnerability of certain groups. However, politically it may be more attractive to support vulnerable groups in relation to e.g. their own assets, rather than considering one's own role in causing such systemic conditions.

4.2 Application methods and tools

Collecting data and information

Data collection and information gathering may involve different processes, including reviewing documents and reports, doing surveys, having interviews with key informants, etc. We will not elaborate on options in this context. Chapter 5 will discuss this aspect further in the context of the two case studies.

Tools for structuring analysis and interpretation

The tables on the profiles mainly relate to the descriptive part of the assessment. We also need analytical tools which bring together various aspects of the assessment in such a way that new insights emerge. The following are examples of ways of sense-making after the descriptive part of the assessment is done.

Example 1:

Though we are only doing two case studies now (Nina de Roo and Jan van der Lee, 2021), for the future, an analytical tool like the following could help to create concise overall characterisations of the vulnerability and resilience of different vulnerable groups to be able to find patterns, compare implications, etc.

Profiles	Characterisation (all in light of desired achievement/maintenance of priority basic needs/functions)				
	5: severely vulnerable and hardly resilient	4	3	2	1: low vulnerability and/or strong resilience
Shock (to what extent exposed to (variety of) different and severe shocks/stress?)	Exposed to (risk of): - Very likely shocks - Variety of shocks - Severe shocks				
Vulnerability (how broadly and deeply vulnerable?)	Vulnerable across all basic needs in a severe way				
Undermining context (to what extent is context a causal factor for vulnerability?)	- Institutionalised conditions big challenge - Natural conditions big challenge - Encroachment conditions big challenge				
Resilience (how strong basis for resilience?)	- Very limited assets - Complicating attributes - Only absorbing as response option				
Supportive context (to what extent is context supportive to resilience?)	- Hardly or no access to benefits from institutions - Hardly or no benefits from societal structures and processes				
Support (to what extent appropriate and effective support initiatives active?)	- Hardly or no appropriate/effective support initiatives to strengthen resilience/reduce vulnerability				

A total score may be made. The overall score (e.g. named vulnerability-resilience score) may be interpreted in terms of typical ranges: e.g. 25-30: the extremely vulnerable; 20-25: the most vulnerable; 10-20: the more vulnerable; less than 10: the less vulnerable.

Alternatively, a more detailed characterisation may be made along the lines of the following:

Resilience capacity	Brief characterisation	1 Status contributing significantly to vulnerability	2	3 Status both contributing to vulnerability and resilience	4	5 Status contributing significantly to resilience	Totals
Assets		<i>Consider in relation to particular type of shock</i>					
Human capital	<i>Brief description of characteristics</i>			x			
Social capital				x			
Financial capital		x					
Physical capital		x					
Natural capital			x				
Convertibility of assets			x				
	<i>Score</i>	2	4	6			12
Attributes							
Diversity							
Redundancy							
Flexibility							
Etc.							
Changeability of attributes							
	<i>Score</i>						
Access to							
Benefits from institutions (incl. markets)							
Benefits from public goods							
Influenceability of access							
	<i>Score</i>						

Example 2: Creating a force-field analysis perspective

Drivers of vulnerability	Strength		Strength	Drivers of resilience
E.g. fragile access to human rights	4		Implications for basic needs under pressure	
Because of covid, loss of stable employment opportunities	3			
Etc.				

Example 3: Zooming in on (potential) factors causing and/or exacerbating vulnerability

Parameters	Short descriptions	Severity score (1-5) (to what extent contributing to vulnerability)
Structural inequalities		
Unfair distribution of benefits, e.g. in the value chain		
Exclusion from party benefits		
Structural neglect		
Land grabbing or other forms of loss of access to (natural) resources		

Example 4: Doing a SWOT analysis

<p>Strengths:</p> <p>In what aspects are they robust?</p> <p>What context conditions support their resilience?</p> <p>What forms a basis of their resilience?</p> <p>(in terms of finance, what is strong?)</p>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>In what aspects are they vulnerable mainly?</p> <p>What context conditions exacerbate their vulnerability?</p> <p>Etc.</p> <p>(in terms of finance, what is weak)</p>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <p>What low hanging fruits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing vulnerability - Strengthening resilience - Reducing susceptibility/ sensitivity to particular shocks - Etc. <p>What other opportunities</p> <p>Etc.</p> <p>(what responsible finance options match? e.g. building on what is already strong in their finance, strengthening what is weak in their finance, addressing what is mainly under threat, or introducing new opportunities)</p>	<p>Threats:</p> <p>To what shocks are they/will they probably be exposed?</p> <p>How susceptible/sensitive are they to these (types of) shocks?</p> <p>Etc.</p> <p>(in terms of finance, what is threatened?)</p>

5 Conclusions

In this paper, we have outlined a tentative sense-making framework and a related tentative assessment approach to be used in a rapid appraisal type of setup. This approach aims to enable the development of a structured understanding about key aspects of vulnerability and resilience from a variety of mutually complementary angles. Though analysis could be done in a comprehensive way as well, we suggest applying a rapid-appraisal type of assessment approach. The reason is that comprehensive analysis may easily lead to overwhelmingly complex perspectives that are difficult to translate into options for guiding intervention.

The framework distinguishes elements (profiles) that in reality cannot be separated out in all related aspects. The purpose of separating these out is only for analytical purposes, and in interpretation they need to be considered in their coherence. This also has implications for the operationalisation of the related methodology. For example, the status of assets can both be a reason for vulnerability and a source of resilience. We suggest a pragmatic way of dealing with such analytical issues, such as is also applied in the two case studies that were part of this research (Roo, N. de and Lee, J. van der. Exploring vulnerability and resilience from a multifaceted and systemic perspective – Case studies in Ethiopia and Somaliland).



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Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation supports value creation by strengthening capacities for sustainable development. As the international expertise and capacity building institute of Wageningen University & Research we bring knowledge into action, with the aim to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life. With approximately 30 locations, 6,500 members (5,500 fte) of staff and 12,500 students, Wageningen University & Research is a world leader in its domain. An integral way of working, and cooperation between the exact sciences and the technological and social disciplines are key to its approach.



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