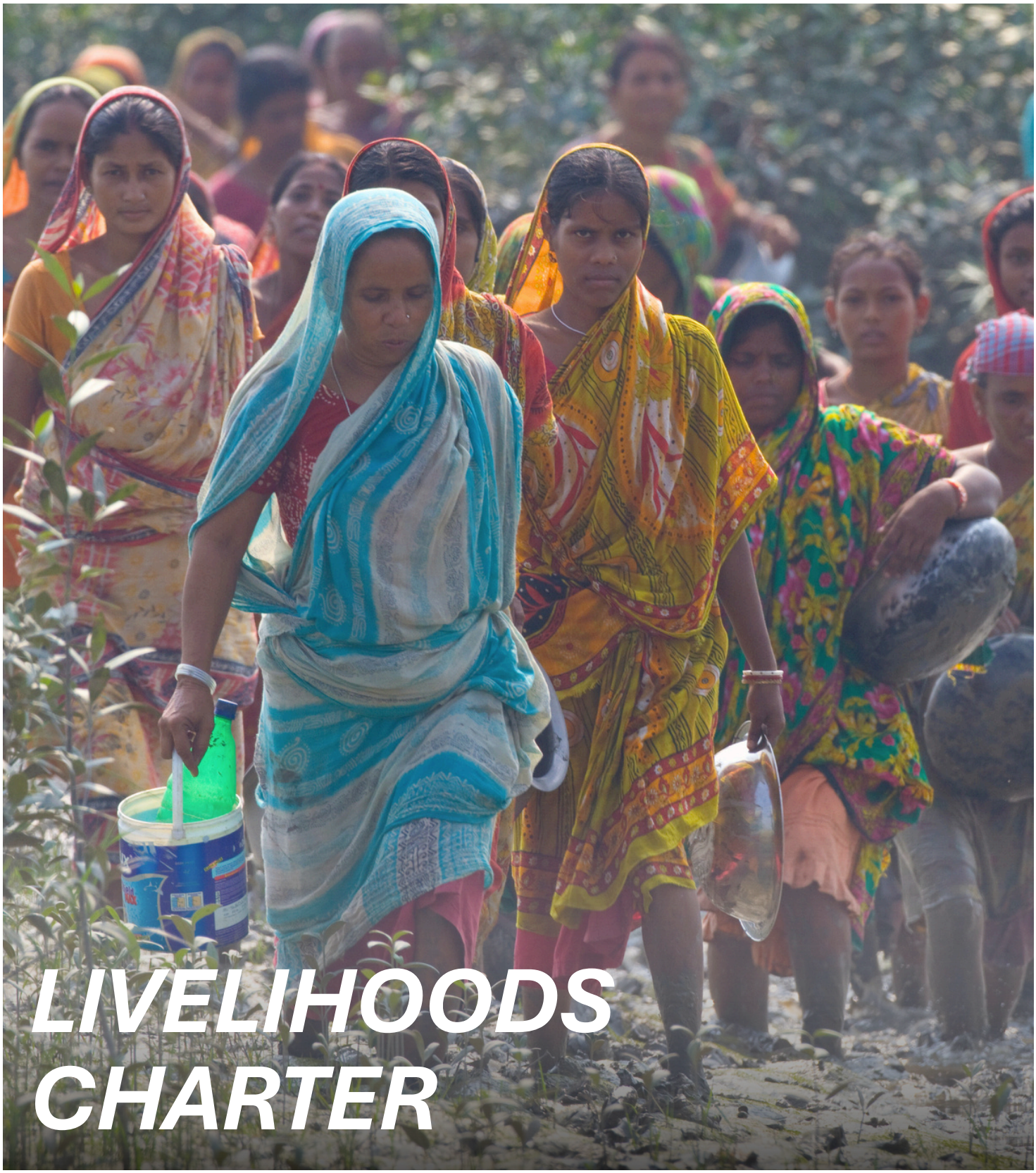


LIVELIHOODS CHARTER

"THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON WHAT WE DO IN THE PRESENT"

– Gandhi

LIVELIHOODS
ACT TODAY FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Photo credit: Hellio & Van Ingen

INTRODUCTION

Livelihoods's mission is to support the efforts of agricultural and rural communities to live in sustainable ecosystems which serve as the foundation for their food security and provide the resources that ensure their sustainability.

Livelihoods acts as a platform providing the means to restore or preserve ecosystems that are degraded or threatened by mobilizing payments for environmental goods and services, sustainable agriculture markets and carbon offset mechanisms.

Livelihoods is a link between economic actors and institutions that want to act decisively in favor of the environment through actions having a strong ecological, economic and social value- added component, on the one hand, and the communities for whom these actions are vital, on the other hand.

Livelihoods creates value for the communities who benefit from the actions based on restoration, preservation and agricultural development and for the investors and other stakeholders who benefit from an enhanced and functional environment in return for their investment in and partnership with the Funds.





The Livelihoods Charter aims to define the vision, strategic directions and principles of action which govern the selection and conduct of activities and actions carried out under the framework of Livelihoods. This Charter constitutes the common reference amongst the partners who make up the Livelihoods network:

- **Investors in the Livelihoods Funds** which have the purpose of generating impact and return while seeking the best balance between the value created for communities and the value creation for the investors.

- **Shareholders of the company Livelihoods Venture** whose goal is to select, develop and execute projects in which the Funds invest. Livelihoods Venture brings into play the appropriate skills and technical and financial resources necessary to ensure the success of the mission. The company operates as a "social business."

- **Members of the association Livelihoods Network**: A network of grassroots organizations and personalities from the South and North who have proven their ability to deliver programmes that are consistent with the principles of the Livelihoods Charter. The association operates as a network bringing together various capabilities and competencies thereby enabling the capitalization of know-how and exchange of expertise amongst its members, generating quality projects, and serving as a forum for reflection and expression of thoughts and ideas.

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I. WHY LIVELIHOODS?

Livelihoods was born out of the realization that the food crisis, environmental crisis and the social crisis are all closely linked:

- Of the 1.2 billion people who suffer from malnutrition, nearly 80% are farmers, small breeders and fishermen who are poor and whose resources are directly linked to the ecosystems within which these communities reside.
- These poor producers provide the bulk of the world's food supplies accounting for 1.5 billion small farmers and operators whose future condition will be a determining factor in the struggle for food security, poverty reduction and the migration of rural populations towards cities in the South and North.
- The pressure of human activity on fragile ecosystems is ever amplifying: degradation and soil erosion, deforestation, overgrazing, loss of biodiversity. While the "green revolution" during the 70s-80s had sharply increased the agricultural productivity for some regions of the South through the massive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the more generalized or widespread application of its practices could not be implemented without further aggravating the ecological crisis.
- The increase in food requirements linked to the rapid growth in world population (estimated at 9 billion in 2050) combined with the challenges of climate change calls for a profound change in agricultural production models. "Ecologically intensive" agricultural models should progressively replace "carbon intensive" farming practices.
- Access to local and regional markets is presently a major economic challenge for rural production output. It is also an opportunity if producers are able to better organize themselves so as to ensure their own food security and enhance their production capabilities by feeding rapidly growing urban populations.
- The production and consumption models and patterns in developed countries and those in newly industrialized countries are neither sustainable nor suitable for wide spread application across the entire planet. Whatever the political and economic difficulties may be, a fundamental movement is already underway to invent new models that can sustainably meet the needs of future generations.
- The efforts to mitigate climate change and safeguard the natural resources of the planet require a dual approach: on the one hand, reducing the environmental footprint of human activities which may be achieved in particular through technological innovation in terms of energy and transportation, and on the other hand, the development of carbon offset mechanisms that encourage carbon sequestration in natural ecosystems.

IN CONCLUSION

The future of poor rural populations will be at the core of the demographic, economic, social and ecological challenges over the coming years.

Rural communities can play a major role in the fight against climate change, and the preservation of resources and natural cycles, with a view to improving not just their own lives but also contributing to the improvement of the lot of humankind as a whole.



Photo credit: Arka

II. THE ACTIONS OF LIVELIHOODS





1 **Livelihoods acts primarily on the restoration and preservation of ecosystems upon which the food security of communities, the welfare of surrounding populations and cities, and the sustainable economic activity of industries are based.** Actions by all Livelihoods initiative will be essentially based on, but not limited to the following:

- **Agro-forestry systems:** wetland mangrove forests, mixed forests combining forestry with agriculture by cultivating crops under a forest cover and practising integrated or sustainable forest management, cultivation of export crops (e.g. coffee, cocoa, etc.) and food crops, etc. These systems allow the reconstitution of organic matter and biodiversity necessary for the development of fish resources and agricultural crops.

- **Livestock farming or production models that promote the regeneration of degraded soils, pastures and cultivated fields**, having lost their carbon content and soil fertility. Various agronomic protocols such as restoration or deferred grazing, crop cultivation under vegetation cover, ploughless tillage, etc., allow soil to regain their fertility and water resources to be protected.

- **The sustainable energy technologies:** by providing access to rural communities. In developing countries, access to energy (heating and lighting) is a significant expenditure item, a heavy cost in terms of time and a major cause of deforestation. Alternatives adapted from biomass that are suitable to small farms are currently available and contribute to environmental protection.

2 **Livelihoods focuses on projects addressing three objectives.** These objectives are interrelated and in the vast majority of natural and semi-natural ecosystems they also are positively correlated:

- **Ecological**: restoration / enhancement of natural ecosystems and supporting agricultural methods and livestock farming practices that effectively balance increased food resources and income, low pressure on the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources (water, soil, plants).

- **Economic**: actions to help small producers improve access to food security and greater autonomy by employing appropriate agronomic practices and access to technologies that ensure greater productivity and enhance the value of their products. Actions to provide surrounding cities and industries with clean and appropriately available water and sustainable agricultural produce.

- **Social**: the social impact of programmes is taken into account in the design and execution of Livelihoods programmes. Particular attention is paid in terms of farmers revenue, access to essential goods (education, water, health, etc.), the condition and status of women and young girls, the social and cultural cohesion of communities.

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3 **Livelihoods focuses on projects with the potential to have a broad impact with respect to the areas and populations concerned:**

- By selecting the best projects that have been successfully tested in pilot phase, Livelihoods thus equips them with the means and capacity to be significantly scaled up to several thousand hectares.

- By selecting the grassroots organizations that have proven their ability to successfully pilot projects and their effectiveness in leading a participatory process with local communities. Livelihoods gives these organizations the means to implement large scale projects.

- By capitalizing on replicable models and working on methods and processes that enable the replication in various different contexts.

4 **Livelihoods mobilizes the financial resources and the skills and capabilities necessary to achieve the objectives established together with the fund's investors and NGO partners:**

- Value created for communities and investors: the programmes developed by Livelihoods are aimed at providing communities with the resources from restored ecosystems and generating for investors a return. Both parties therefore have a common interest in maximizing the programme's impact.

- Production costs: Livelihoods programmes are designed to help achieve the environmental and social goals while aiming to do so at a competitive price In the event that a project so requires, Livelihoods and its partners may seek additional funding in the form of development grants.

- Certification / impact measurement: Livelihoods mobilizes its own resources as well as external expertise to develop a high level of knowledge of agricultural produce certification and other project impact measurement in the target areas.





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III. THE LIVELIHOODS PRINCIPLES

The 10 principles set out below constitute the frame of reference underpinning the actions undertaken by Livelihoods. They are based on experiences and lessons drawn from multiple development actions implemented worldwide. Not every one of these can be systematically implemented by Livelihoods but together they should all guide the process of selection and execution of programmes supported by Livelihoods:



1. Ecologically-intensive models

After several decades of vastly increased yields based on monoculture and the massive use of chemical inputs, it is widely admitted that this agricultural model cannot be widespread across the world due to environmental reasons and cost implications. Livelihoods will encourage ecologically intensive agriculture based on the optimal and sustainable use of natural resources (soil, water, biodiversity, carbon etc), promote technologies that are both efficient and accessible to small farmers, and support science-based solutions that contribute to yield increase while sustainable from an economic, social and environmental point of view.

2. Participatory approach

Involvement of communities and their participation in the action and in its governance are considered indispensable prerequisites to ensuring the success of these projects. It is by convincing them of the usefulness of the initiative for their communities and the benefits that can be derived from the action that the local populations become engaged and mobilized. The assumption of project ownership by the community offers a guarantee that the results achieved will be protected and maintained over time.



3. The importance of the cultural dimension

Besides the ecological and economic pressure, rural communities are subject to strong pressure from urban models, at the expense of loss of social cohesion and cultural identity. Without denying the necessary changes, Livelihoods recognizes the crucially important role played by the cultural dimension in all development processes. The programmes supported by Livelihoods respect and are based on the cultural identity and values of the communities concerned.

Photo credits: Sandro di Carlo Darsa, Hellio & Van Ingen



4. Strengthening economic autonomy

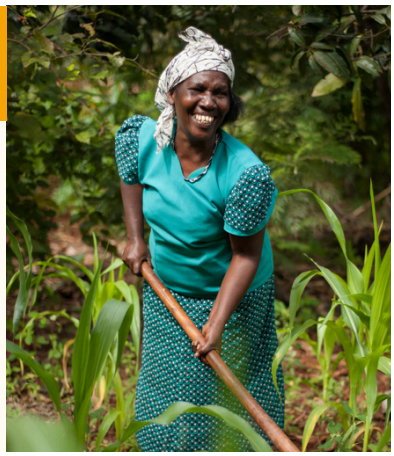
Enabling each family to move from a position of insecurity (food aid, the annual hungry / lean season, migration, disintegration of social structure) towards some economic autonomy (ability to renew their activities, to overcome major risks, economic and social stability) is one of the main goals of Livelihoods. The difficulty concerning access to markets is a major obstacle for many small producers. In addition to the actions on food producing ecosystems, Livelihoods seeks to implement initiatives with its partners with the objective of improving market knowledge, the organization of producers, methods for marketing and enhancing the value of products aimed primarily at local and regional markets.

5. The three “C’s”

Livelihoods supported programmes help improve the access of small producers to the 3 capabilities: technological capability (the best adaptable, scalable, and robust science based solutions in planting material, mechanization, renewable energies etc.), organizational capability (programme governance, organizing groups, cooperatives, etc.), economic capability (micro-finance, support for small farms or small family businesses, better management of prices and costs, market access, processing, etc).

6. Essential action by grassroots organizations and the complementary role of experts

NGOs who implement the programmes have the primary role in bringing about the success of projects funded by Livelihoods. They are selected based on their knowledge of ecosystems, their ability to mobilize communities, their project management know-how and organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, Livelihoods mobilizes high-level experts who provide the scientific knowledge required for the validation and effective control of the project.



7. Investing for the long term

Investment over the long term is an essential characteristic of ecosystem-related projects. It is in the interest of the communities as well as the investors that restored ecosystems are sustainably managed and not allowed to get degraded again. In selecting projects, Livelihoods attaches particular importance to the ecological, social and political conditions in regards to the sustainability of the programme. Monitoring of programmes by the communities is integrated right from the implementation of the project.

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8. Measuring the impact

Livelihoods has established with its local partners simple indicators that enable the measurement over time of the ecological, economic and social impact of programmes.



9. A rigorously managed “business”

Although it is engaged in pursuing social objectives, Livelihoods is an organization focused on performance and results. Like any business, Livelihoods knows that its success depends on excellence in execution, the quality of management, the ability to control costs and achieve the established objectives.

10. Equitable sharing of the value created

On each of the projects supported, Livelihoods ensures the maintenance of a proper balance between the value created for local communities, on the one hand, and the value created for investors in the Funds, on the other hand. The purpose of Livelihoods is not to maximize the financial value of investments made, but Livelihoods does have an obligation to ensure compliance with commitments made in respect of Funds investors: risk minimization, return generation, programme quality, maintenance over time.



IV. CHARTER GOVERNANCE

Component entities of Livelihoods (Livelihoods Funds, Investors, Livelihoods Venture, Livelihoods Network Association) shall adhere to the Livelihoods Charter. Furthermore they shall undertake to implement it and make it known.

The Livelihoods Advisory Council, consisting of qualified persons and representatives of the three Livelihoods entities is responsible for evaluating the implementation of the Charter as well as for proposing any amendments as necessary.

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