



## Internal CEESP NRGF Background Brief #10

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**Vulnerable Populations - What does this term mean, what are the assets of vulnerable populations, and why is it important to strengthen their voices and decision-making power and how can that consideration be integrated into the NRGF design and application?**

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### **What does the term vulnerable populations mean?**

- People with threatened land tenure and property rights are vulnerable including<sup>1</sup>:
  - Women – economically vulnerable, more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and domestic violence,
  - households that have been directly affected by HIV/AIDS – the death of the male risks property rights and/or property rights require continuing active use of land, children’s property rights are often unclear upon the death of the parents to HIV/AIDS;
  - pastoralist communities – experience varying degrees of rights as they move across the landscape utilising grazing land in numerous locations, are under threat from population growth, expansion of sedentary agriculture;
  - indigenous populations – competing claims from non-indigenous people, rights over natural resources, and conservation NGOs ; and
  - people displaced during violent conflicts or who are at risk of being displaced by natural disasters such as climate change.
- Vulnerable people may belong to a number of cohorts that make them more vulnerable for example women who are indigenous and living in pastoralist communities<sup>2</sup>
- The above does not mention vulnerability from threats to or lack of water rights. For example the rights of water for the private sector and economic development is often

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<sup>1</sup> Katz, Elizabeth (2010) *Land tenure, property rights, and natural resource management: Land tenure and property rights reform in the developing world: who is vulnerable?* United States Agency for International Development. pp.

<sup>2</sup> Katz, Elizabeth (2010) p. 35

given more importance than those of 'small farmers'.<sup>3</sup> This is also the case in Australia where Indigenous people's rights to water are currently being debated. Recently Aboriginal people in northern Australia have been granted water allocations for economic purposes, and the Murray Darling Basin Plan now asks states to consider Indigenous water uses and values.

- Vulnerability can be assessed by testing resilience and adaptability. How adaptable is the group to the change/s and are there ways that they can adapt if the change/s cannot be prevented?
- IUCN's promotion of protected areas has created a separation of nature and culture that has changed the way people experience parts of the world. West et.al. (2006) argue that the protected area policy is a form of globalization that is leading to a generification of nature and a simplification of the understanding of people and their surroundings. These processes that are a result of protected area policy have impacts for those people living in and near protected areas and those that are displaced by them<sup>4</sup>.

### **What are the assets of vulnerable populations?**

- Natural resources: water, land, forests and other plants, fauna, minerals
- Knowledge of natural resources and ecosystems and ecosystem processes
- Cultural and spiritual values that offer an alternative world view and protect biodiversity

### **Why is it important to strengthen their voices and decision-making power**

- Women with property rights experience the following benefits (Katz 2010):
  - Are less likely "to become economically vulnerable in their old age, or in the event of the death of or divorce from their spouse"
  - Access to economic support from children for widows
  - Empowers women in their negotiations within the home, society and community
  - Increases ability to buy food and to educate children
  - Are less likely to be at risk of HIV/AIDS
- Women with land rights are also more likely to be able to participate in decision-making in the community and communities are therefore more likely to be responsive to their needs (Katz 2010)
- UNDRIP
- International Labor Organization Convention 169 'which establishes a framework for the recognition of the rights of indigenous and tribal populations' (Katz 2010)

### **How can vulnerable population voices be considered/integrated into NRGF design and application?**

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<sup>3</sup> Omer Aijazi and Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere with Nigel Crawhall *Rights Mapping – achieving conflict sensitive adaptation* DRAFT (2013).

<sup>4</sup> Paige West, James Igoe, and Dan Brockington (2006) 'Parks and Peoples: The Social Impact of Protected Areas' *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 2006. 35:251-77

- The NRGF should adopt and incorporate the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- The framework should incorporate the principles of free, prior, informed consent. But what does FPIC mean, how is it implemented and how is this influenced by who shapes it?<sup>5</sup>
- “Conservation planning and management needs the kinds of ‘inversions’ much debated in development planning in recent decades, from a top down expert-driven blueprint approach, towards participatory and inclusive social learning (e.g. Pretty 2002) and towards shared governance and deliberative democracy (O’Riordan and Stoll-Kleeman 2002b)”<sup>6</sup>.
- The framework should incorporate ways to empower the people directly affected at the local level. There should be a distinction between advice/involvement from ‘representative groups’ at say the national or international level and that of people that are directly affected. This is to ensure that the nuances and uniqueness of each case is considered (O’Faircheallaigh 2009, and West et.al. 2006).
- The vulnerable population must be empowered in “effective” social impact assessments (SIA) that should accompany natural resource decision-making processes as well as the management of the impacts following from those decisions<sup>7</sup>.
- Participatory techniques for decision-making processes should be sensitive to incorporating the voices of women and children who may be disadvantaged by having lost their property rights (Katz 2010)
- Need to consider multiple governance systems – Indigenous rights include the rights of indigenous people to have their own systems and institutions (Katz 2010)
- Participatory rights mapping is a tool that can be used to address rights issues and can promote dialogue with others. It can include:
  - A representation of territorial boundaries
  - Spatial experiences e.g. hunting, farming, food gathering, water harvesting;
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Languages (Aijazi & Mohamed-Katerere with Crawhall).
- “Rights mapping can be integrated with vulnerability assessments and environmental impact assessments, and can be used to show where changes in rights from adaptation overlap with existing vulnerability indicators such as poverty, and conflict stressors such as environmental degradation.” (Mohamed-Katerere, XX)

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<sup>5</sup> Meilissa Marschke, David Szablowski and Peter Vandergeest, ‘Engaging Indigeneity in Development Policy’ *Development Policy Review*, 2008, 26 (4): 483-500. [Note there must have been some research into how to define/unpack FPIC since this article but I did not have the time/resources to seek it out].

<sup>6</sup> William M. Adams and Jon Hutton ‘People, Parks and Poverty: Political Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation’ *Conservation and Society*, Pages 147-183 Volume 5, No. 2, 2007

<sup>7</sup> O’Faircheallaigh, Ciaran (2009) ‘effectiveness in social impact assessment: Aboriginal peoples and resource development in Australia’ *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 27(2), June 2009, pages 95-110

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