Participatory Wealth Rankings as A Tool for Targeting and Evaluation: Do participatory methods successfully identify the poor and measure change in their lives?

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Abstract

Participatory processes have been used in development programs for many years to target and include the rural poor (Chambers 1-293). They have been deployed in rural East Africa to identify and ensure inclusion of the poorest households as well as to understand “locally relevant dimensions of poverty” (Hargreaves, Morison, et. al. 212-229) Assessing the effectiveness of community-based qualitative approaches is critical to field program design. Village Enterprise, an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) that specializes in microenterprise development for the rural poor in East Africa, employs a mixed methods targeting approach using Participatory Wealth Ranking (PWR) and Progress out of Poverty Index\(^1\) survey (PPI). This combined approach offers a unique opportunity to assess the validity of the PWR targeting methodology and to open the discussion of an end-of-project PWR as a potential evaluation tool as well.

Village Enterprise staff use the PWR process first to identify qualified households within a village, working with village opinion leaders both to develop characteristics of four categories of relative wealth (wealthy, moderate, poor, very poor) and to place households in quadrants. Field staff then follow up by administering country-specific PPI surveys to households in the PWR ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ categories to verify the likelihood that each household is living in poverty. This mix of processes helps to confirm the village socioeconomic stratification and to validate the ability of the PWR to find and include the poor (Van Campenhout 406-438). This paper will compare the number of qualifying households in PPI surveys of 5,724 households placed in the ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ categories from PWRs conducted in each of the 46 villages across Uganda.

Using Village Enterprise data, this paper seeks to understand: 1) if PWR is an effective initial (“baseline”) tool for successfully targeting the poorest members of a rural village; and 2) if PWR should also be applied at program conclusion “end line” for qualitative evaluation purposes. Regarding targeting, initial analysis indicates that PWR does successfully identify poor households within a village, but must be followed up with verification. For end-of-project evaluation, early comparisons suggest that an endline PWR could be important as it would put impact on households in the context of community observations and movements. When applied PWRs can be used as a valid tool for identifying households in extreme poverty, a rapid means of assessing village level socio-economic diversity, and a useful post-program evaluation process.

\(^1\) Originally developed by The Grameen Bank as a straightforward, statistically sound way to determine the likelihood that a household is living in poverty. Each PPI survey is country-specific and includes 10 questions about asset ownership, household health, housing materials, and education to ascertain the likelihood that a household is living in extreme poverty. Each question is scored, and then the total score for all 10 questions correlates to a probability that the household lives in extreme poverty.
Introduction

A brief history of participatory methodologies

Participatory processes have been deployed in rural East Africa to identify and ensure inclusion of the poorest households as well as to understand “locally relevant dimensions of poverty (Hargreaves, Morison, et. al. 212-229). Additionally, participatory practices are instrumental in building context-specific knowledge of local communities.

Participatory methods for designing, monitoring and evaluating development programs emerged in the 1970s as a way to add depth to traditional methods. These new methods sought to include the voices of the poor in development practice, and to avoid embodying, “the concepts of categories of outsiders rather than those of rural people, and thus impose meanings on [their] social reality (Chambers 1-293).”

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) was the genesis of the movement towards inclusive development practice. RRA was designed to garner information from local populations about their perceptions of their livelihoods and their lived realities in order inform development interventions. RRA simply meant carrying out transect walks in a given village, and doing so with the assistance of local leaders and community members to quickly assess the locality. This localized information about the environments of the rural poor inspired further advances in participatory methods.

Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) followed RRA as a means of uncovering information alongside community members rather than simply extracting local knowledge from them. PRAs took more time and were centered on a workshop-style group learning approach facilitated by local experts, rather than being led by development professionals. The expanded focus beyond extracting knowledge to uncovering needs with community involvement was a revolutionary step.

This shift marked a movement away from cumbersome large-scale surveys for monitoring and evaluation, toward approaches that married evaluation design and analysis with input from stakeholders. The intent was twofold: to break down the rural-urban dichotomy where technocrats designed and evaluated data, and where evaluators were completely disconnected from rural people and data collectors in the field. Instead the new focus was on mutual learning in the process of design, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions.

Increasingly, participatory methods are being used not only to generate context-relevant indicators for poverty, wellbeing, and other qualitative measures, but to generate statistical information about changes as a result of development interventions (Hargreaves, Morison, et. al. 212-229). Examples of this include: participatory evaluation, a tool for including stakeholders as active participants in evaluation rather than subjects (Pankaj, Welch, and Otenso 1-8); participatory data analysis, where findings are turned back to communities to take part in the analysis process; and participatory program design.

Many authors have shown the need for more holistic approaches to poverty assessment that go beyond the standard consumption and expenditure measures (Hargreaves, Morison, et. al. 212-229; Collomb, Alavalapati, et. al. 2012). In addition, participatory methods help to identify the extreme poor who are often missed and excluded from development interventions because these methods allow for community members to identify those from within their communities who need access to such interventions. Often, the poor suffer from a lack of inclusion because development workers are unfamiliar with the local social landscapes.
The Village Enterprise Approach

Village Enterprise, an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) that specializes in microenterprise development, currently works in Kenya and Uganda. Its mission is “to equip those living in extreme poverty with the resources to create sustainable businesses.” The Village Enterprise program is a one-year intervention that uses training, mentoring, grants/assets (not loans), and savings to help groups of three owners start a micro-business. Targeting those in poverty and measuring the impact of the business income and savings on their household wealth status is essential to fulfilling the mission.

Targeting. Village Enterprise recently adopted a Participatory Wealth Ranking methodology (PWR) as the primary measure in its targeting process because PWR is efficient, facilitates community buy in, and is a cost savings for the organization. It is efficient because it allows field staff to bring opinion leaders together to identify the poor in their village, rather than having to survey every household at the outset. It helps achieve community buy in because community members themselves identify those who are in need of help, rather than having outsiders select people for participation. Finally it is a cost savings because enumerators only conduct a validation survey for those households who were placed in either the ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ categories during PWR.

Staff first conducts the PWR process with community leaders to identify qualified households within a village using village-identified characteristics of four relative wealth categories (wealthy, moderate, poor, very poor) and to place households in these categories. Enumerators then follow up by administering country-specific Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI) surveys to households in the PWR ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ categories to verify the likelihood that each household is living in poverty. This mix of processes helps to understand the village socioeconomic stratification and to confirm the comprehensiveness of PWR activities to effectively identify and include the poor (Van Campenhout 406-438). This paper will compare the results of the 5,200 PPI surveys collected in 46 villages to the list of identified households coming from the ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ categories from PWRs in these same villages.

Measurement and Evaluation. If the PWR methodology is found to be accurate in targeting, then the Village Enterprise M&E team wondered if it might also be used to measure impact within the local context at the completion of the program. A comparison of poverty definitions, categories, and household locations within quadrants at the beginning and at the end of a project would allow field staff to see how community definitions of poverty shift over time as well as which households fall in the “poor” category. If so, it would be possible to use the results to evaluate change that came about as a result of development interventions at a level of detail not available with traditional quantitative methods.

Comparison Methodology and Tools

Village Enterprise Survey Locations

A majority of the world’s poorest people live in rural areas (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2010) and Village Enterprise focuses its work in rural Kenya and Uganda. Village Enterprise Ugandan offices are located in the cities of Hoima (Western Region) and Soroti (Eastern region).
• In the Hoima District, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2011), 35.2% of the population lives on less than US $1.25 per day. The Hoima area has high rainfall levels, fertile soil, and two planting seasons. The region is becoming more populated as discoveries of oil reserves continue in this region. Currently the population stands at 499,100 (Ministry of Water and the Environment, 2010). There is a high rate of human migration through the area and there are many refugee camps serving displaced populations from The Democratic Republic of Congo to the west and South Sudan to the north. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) maintains a regional office in Hoima to serve these people. There is an enormous amount of linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity, but tenancy is often short-lived, poorly documented, or unknown.

• Soroti District is one of the poorest in Uganda with nearly 53% of the population living on less than US $1.25 per day (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2011). It is a region dominated by marshes and semi-arid flood plains. Communities’ activities are largely focused on pastoral work (livestock rearing) and subsistence agricultural activities (Sulaiman et. al.). According to the Ministry of Water and the Environment, the current population of the district is 554,900.

While the high poverty rates in both of these districts suggest that finding the extreme poor should be a simple task, it can pose many challenges. Often those people who are the most poor are equally the most difficult to locate; a combination of marginalization in the community, lack of voice, and physical inability to be seen makes these groups hard to find.

**Two Targeting Methodologies Deployed (Baseline)**

Poverty can be defined in relative and absolute terms. Relative poverty suggests that a household is poor in the context of its village, or specific social setting. Absolute poverty indicates a household does not have enough money to meet their basic needs. Village Enterprise deploys both methodologies in locating the poor within local areas: (1) PWR indicates relative perception of wealth within a particular village; (2) Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI) survey confirms that households identified in relative position, also fall below national levels of absolute poverty.

Step 1: Participatory Wealth Rankings (local definitions and relative economic standings)

Village Enterprise uses the Participatory Wealth Ranking (PWR) process to help identify the poorest households within villages. The PWR provides a concrete, village-specific definition of poverty which, in turn, assists community members to name those within their villages who need help. The PWR process occurs as follows:

1. Village Enterprise Field Coordinators and Business Mentors carry out a community resource mapping exercise to identify other NGOs, health clinics, and other services present in a village. This allows Village Enterprise to know whether the village is already being served by other NGOs, or has access to services that another, underserved village would not. Furthermore, this mapping exercise

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2 Poverty is also multidimensional and dynamic. Households can move in and out of extreme poverty, and most frequently, it is not linked to just one specific factor.
identifies village households, and helps ensure that all are accounted for in the PWR process.

2. Business Mentors work with local leaders to identify a group of five to six knowledgeable, well-respected members in a given village.

3. In concert with identified leaders, Business Mentors go through a participatory wealth ranking exercise for all households within the village:
   a. To articulate the characteristics of households that fall within each wealth category- wealthy, moderate, poor, and very poor. The characteristics for each category come exclusively from local leaders, and are specific to that community.
   b. To rank within categories each household in their village, placing each one into categories based on the criteria they chose as a group.

The goal of participatory wealth rankings is to know who constitutes the extreme poor in each village, and to make sure that those households are included in the Village Enterprise program. The literature has shown that effective PWRs can generate locally relevant indicators and characteristics of the poor. (Van Campenhout, 2006). Additionally, PWRs help generate community buy in for an intervention (Chambers, 1997), and they elucidate definitions of poverty that take into account more than a simple monetary indicator can convey (Sen, 2000). Finally, PWRs are also a rapid form of assessment, eliminating the need to visit every household in a village. For example, Village Enterprise saves time and money by focusing survey resources solely on households that have already been indicated as living in relative poverty.

Step 2: Progress Out of Poverty Index Survey of Identified Households

Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI), originally developed by Grameen Bank, is a simple, yet statistically reliable way to measure the likelihood that a household is living below a national poverty line. Village Enterprise uses the PPI survey created for use in Uganda. The PPI consists of 10 multiple-choice questions that represent a given household’s characteristics and asset ownership. Each answer within the 10 questions is assigned a score. The total score (sum of the 10 answers) corresponds to the likely poverty level. The highest possible score on the PPI is 100 points, while the lowest is 0—low scores indicate higher probability of poverty.

Village Enterprise cut-off line for inclusion into the program is a maximum PPI score of 39 points (unless someone meets specific inclusion or exclusion criteria that allow a higher score to still be eligible, or a lower score ineligible). A score of 39 corresponds to a 55% probability that a household is living in extreme poverty. Village Enterprise uses this to ensure proper targeting and as a means of verification that households were properly placed in the poor and very poor categories in the PWR exercise. It helps avoid elite capture because placement is objectively verified as poor and very poor.

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3 Grameen Bank has developed country-specific PPI survey questionnaires for many countries throughout the world.

4 Exclusion criteria include having a salaried worker or teacher in the home, having more than two cows, or a completed house. Inclusion criteria include an unemployed household head, more than 8 children under 18, suffering from war or other catastrophe, or a household head living with HIV, AIDS, or other incurable illness.

5 The National Council on Applied Economic Research in India defines elite capture as, “a phenomenon where resources transferred for the benefit of the masses are usurped by a few, usually politically and/or economically powerful groups, at the expense of the less economically and/or politically influential groups (National Council of Applied Economic Research, 2009).”
Last year, Village Enterprise tested the use of PWR at the end of the program as an additional measurement and evaluation tool. Village Enterprise relies primarily on an expanded pre/post consumption and expenditure survey to measure impact. This qualitative experiment was added to bring qualitative texture to the C&E survey. The experimental PWR activities were carried out in the same way as the baseline PWR, except that two rounds were conducted: 1) with the original opinion leaders, and 2) the endline PWR added an additional round with new opinion leaders. Staff were checking to see if perceptions of what constituted poverty had changed in the village level and if household placement within wealth categories had shifted as a result of the livelihood training and grant intervention.

To test its efficacy as an evaluation tool at baseline and endline, a comparison of PWR indicators was run as a pilot in August 2012 and August 2013.

Results of Targeting Approach

**Geographic Survey Areas**

From August to October 2013, Village Enterprise staff conducted PPI surveys with 5,200 households identified as poor or very poor in PWR meetings within 46 villages in Hoima and Soroti Districts in Uganda (25 villages and 21 villages respectively). Figure 1 shows a map of Uganda, Figure 2 shows the village locations in the Western Region, and Figure 3 shows the village locations in the Eastern and North Eastern regions.

**Large Number of Households Viewed as Poor/Very Poor within Community**

In each of 46 villages, nine community leaders were invited to the PWR process on average. Community leaders included Local Chairman One (LCs-a (village-level) administrative position in the Ugandan government), village elders, farmers identified in the community as successful and having many contacts, or people perceived as having influence in the village.

The PWRs are open meetings and on average six uninvited community members were present. Their opinions were also taken into consideration when determining the characteristics for each of the four wealth categories and the placement of households into each of the categories.

Field staff was requested to find villages with a minimum of 400 residents (approximately 70 households) in order to ensure that enough people would qualify for the Village Enterprise program. The average number of households across the 46 villages was 142. Within each village, household counts within wealth categories averaged:

- Rich = seven households (5%)
- Moderately rich category = twenty-one households (15%)

(The households in these two categories are not considered for inclusion in Village Enterprise’s program. Based on the attributes assigned to each category, it would be highly unlikely that one of those households would qualify as extremely poor.)

- Poor = seventy-five households (53%)
- Very Poor = thirty-seven households (26%)

(Therefore, on average, PPI surveys were asked of 112 households per village-75 poor + 37 very poor. 2 households (1%) were not located)
Multiple Types of Indicators of Poverty Defined at Village Level

The PWR process generates a list of characteristics that community opinion leaders use to describe each of the four wealth categories for their own village. The following table lists the most common attributes assigned to each category across all 46 villages.

Table 1: Recurrent Characteristics in Levels of Household Wealth Identified in PWR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Nutrition</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of Rich</td>
<td>- &gt;100 cows</td>
<td>-All children in school</td>
<td>-All members have balanced diet</td>
<td>-Employs others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>- Owns retail shop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Job with pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Motor vehicle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Has good business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Permanent house (cement walls)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of</td>
<td>- Owns 2-3 acres of land</td>
<td>-Children can attend private school</td>
<td>- Eat 3 meals per day</td>
<td>- Owns a business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Rich</td>
<td>- Semi-permanent house (with iron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>sheet roof)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Motorcycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 3-5 cows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Multiple sets of clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of Poor</td>
<td>- Small plot of land</td>
<td>- Can only afford government schools</td>
<td>- Can only afford one meal or two meals per</td>
<td>- Household head cultivates for someone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>- Mud house</td>
<td>- Not all children attend</td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- One bed</td>
<td>- Children drop out after primary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of Very</td>
<td>- Household is landless</td>
<td>- Children not in school</td>
<td>- Can only afford one meal per day</td>
<td>- Casual labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Households</td>
<td>- Does not own their home</td>
<td>- Cannot afford school fees</td>
<td></td>
<td>- No steady income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Grass thatched roof</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Cannot afford medications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roof in disrepair/leaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Cannot afford medical care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clothes torn and dirty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No mattress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No bedding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The PWR also highlights groups that suffer from discrimination in their communities. VE also makes an effort to include marginalized groups, as they are also those in the greatest need and most extreme poverty. Twelve communities in particular indicated group-based discrimination. The groups that were identified by opinion leaders were:

- Youth, orphans, widows, women, disabled people, people living with HIV, people living with AIDS, people abusing alcohol, the elderly, and thieves.

Progress out of Poverty Index Results

After PWR where the characteristics of poverty categories were locally defined and households placed in each category, enumerators then followed up with those households placed in the poor and very poor categories. They went to each household individually to administer the Uganda PPI survey.

The PPI is a nationally-based, standardized, field-tested, and statistically sound survey comprised of ten questions. In order to test the effectiveness of the PWR methodology in identifying the poor households, Village Enterprise staff compared:

- The indicators from Uganda’s PPI with the indicators that are developed from the communities in PWR process;
- The aggregate PPI scores to check against probability estimates and program qualification.
- Future research at Village Enterprise will look at time series data, and the results of multiple cycles and years of PPI data to analyze the efficacy of the PWR, using regression analysis.

The following table (2) lists the PPI indicators and compares PPI scores from Hoima region and Soroti region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of Poverty</th>
<th>High/Medium/Low Indicator (highest points)</th>
<th>Hoima Region</th>
<th>Soroti Region</th>
<th>Identified in PWR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Members</td>
<td>6 or more</td>
<td>H (27)</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>68% NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-aged Children in School</td>
<td>Not all attend</td>
<td>M (5)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level Female Head of HH</td>
<td>Primary 5 or less</td>
<td>H (19)</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71% NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Material of Roof</td>
<td>Thatch or straw</td>
<td>M (5)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>99% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Material of Walls</td>
<td>Unburnt bricks or mud</td>
<td>L (2)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>99% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Lighting</td>
<td>Firewood or</td>
<td>H (17)</td>
<td>91% Tadooba</td>
<td>85% Tadooba NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In comparing the PPI indicators to the PWR characteristics, up to five of the ten are common to both so that both methodologies support the findings of the other. However, indicators in common fall in the medium to lower point indicator. The community also stress asset ownership, meal availability, and jobs as key indicators while PPI puts more weight on household number, education, and other home-related criteria.

In calculating the PPI score for those who fell in the poor/very poor categories in PWR identification, the team found an overall score for Uganda of 25 average, with a median of 24. In Hoima region, the average PPI score was 27 and the median was 26—which correlates to a 67% probability that a household is living on less than $1.25 per day, PPP. In Soroti the mean and median PPI scores were 23—which correlates to an 82.6% probability that a given household is living on less than $1.25 per day per capita. The PPI scores are clustered in 5-point ranges and are actually categorical groupings that then indicate the portability of living on less than $11.25 per day. There is a significant increase in that probability at the 25 point mark.

Of those households that were placed in the poor and very poor categories during the PWR, 77% qualified for the Village Enterprise program based on their PPI score. That is 4387 households. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 74% of targeted households qualified according to their PPI score. That is 4224 households in total that were considered for inclusion in the Village Enterprise program.

PWR was successful in that 74 to 77% of households that community members thought were poor or very poor actually qualified for inclusion into the Village Enterprise program, and had a high likelihood of living in extreme poverty (67% to 83% probability of living on less than $1.25 per day).

Results of PWR Indicators Across Time (Baseline-Endline)

In August 2012 and August 2013, Village Enterprise tested an additional monitoring and evaluation tool. The PWR baseline and endline comparison was designed to understand how local perceptions of poverty changed after the one year Village Enterprise program. This comparison provides not only an understanding into how community member’s
perceptions have changed, but also what indicators for poverty remain constant after the one year intervention. These recurring indicators are indicative of macroeconomic, village-level poverty status. As indicators begin to change, it is possible to see that the village as a whole is beginning to see economic changes and improvements.

Table 3: Comparison of Top 10 PWR Indicators at Baseline and Endline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wealth Category</th>
<th>Baseline (August 2012)</th>
<th>Endline (August 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Has only two goats</td>
<td>1. Grass thatched house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Has a small bit of land</td>
<td>2. Children not educated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Asks for help from neighbors</td>
<td>3. No sauce pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Eats at least two meals per day</td>
<td>4. Malnourished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Grass thatch house</td>
<td>5. Own no animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Children attend only public schools</td>
<td>6. No shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Has one set of clothes</td>
<td>7. No land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Health is not good in household</td>
<td>9. Many children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Works doing casual labor</td>
<td>10. Can’t access enough food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noteworthy is the clearer delineation between the indicators for the poor and very poor categories; that there are more changes in the poor category, than the very poor category. The indicators are getting more specific for the community. For example, the animals owned by the household are now specified as goats (a common livestock animal kept and raised in Uganda), all children are likely in government schools rather than being uneducated or partially out of school, and casual labor is a common characteristic versus no income at baseline.

These findings show enough movement to suggest further research into the use of PWR as an additional tool for impact evaluation.
Discussion and Conclusion

There is a continuum of indicators of poverty from qualitative community participation to statistically-sound, national surveys. The comparisons of Village Enterprise methods suggest that both are needed. Participatory methods are inclusive, create community buy in, and make the process of identifying the poor more efficient. The PPI survey is a simple, objective means of verifying the PWR listings.

Community members who participated in the PWR exercise in 46 villages listed 50% of the indicators that the Ugandan PPI survey highlights. Furthermore, 74% of households that were identified by the PWR process were eligible for the program based on their PPI score. Most households had more than a 67% likelihood of living in extreme poverty. These results are promising, and lend credence to participatory methods. Without a validating step like the PPI, there is no certainty that the results from the PWR are correct or appropriate and may invite inappropriate labeling. Equally, if a PPI survey is conducted in a village without PWR as a starting point, more surveys would need to be administered to locate the same number of eligible households and important nuances of community description and buy-in might be lost.

Is 50% overlap of indicators and 74% eligible households a “good enough” measure? It is difficult to discuss attribution, or correlation given the lack of regression analysis. Therefore, future research at Village Enterprise will include several things:

- Gathering longitudinal data about PWR indicators and households, and comparing that to longitudinal PPI data
- Run regressions on the households that fall into the PWR categories, and see if those are correlated to higher or lower PPI scores
- Creating a statistical test to understand if the groups in each category are truly different from one another
- Run t-tests to determine if there is a statistical difference in the PPI scores between the groups from the PWR.

If targeting the extreme poor is the goal (as is the mission of Village Enterprise) the starting point is effective targeting. This combined method of targeting is specific to household-level interventions. Community-level projects do not stand to benefit in the same way from a PWR process that is then verified by a household level survey.

PWRs used for evaluation do stand to teach evaluators about locally-relevant indicators. Not only do they generate multi-dimensional poverty indicators at the village level, but they can be monitored over time as a way to evaluate change.
Works Cited


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6 Additional works cited for further citations will be added as a supplement.