

Module 2: Baseline Assessment

SESSION 6: THE REFERENCE YEAR

FACILITATOR NOTES

Presentation	<i>Reference Year.ppt</i>
Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>H2.6 Handout 1 - Reference Year</i> • <i>H2.6 Handout 2 - Historical Timeline</i>
Extras	<i>Livelihoods Field Handbook</i>
Practitioners Guide Reference	Chapter 3 HOW TO GATHER BASELINE INFORMATION: <u>Activity 4 – Visit Community (or Village) and Interview Community Representatives.</u> <i>What you need to know before the interview</i>
Time	1 hour

Purpose and content

To explain the concepts of a 'reference year' and a timeline, what they are used for and how they are selected/developed.

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Explain what a reference year is, why it is needed and how to select one
- Explain what a timeline is, what it can be used for and how to obtain one
- Explain the difference between the consumption year and the agricultural year

When to run this session

This is Session 6 in the Baseline Training Module. It is important to introduce the concept of the reference year early on in the training as it has relevance for how questions are asked in the field and how monitoring data is gathered and stored.

Handouts

- *H2.6 Handout 1 - Reference Year*
This describes what a reference year is, why it is needed, and how to select one.
- *H2.6 Handout 2 - Historical Timeline.*
This outlines what a timeline is and why it is useful, gives tips on how to develop one with key informants, and gives an example.

Key learning points

- HEA baseline information is a set of information on how people acquired food and cash in a particular year. This is called the reference year.
- It is important to know which year this is so that a problem specification can be defined for subsequent years (for example, 'maize production is 80% of production in

the reference year') in order to analyse how access to food and income will be affected.

- Defining and using a reference year means we can **use data from existing monitoring systems** and data collection regimes such as Ministry of Agriculture data, or price data.
- The reference year is a **consumption year** and, in cropping areas, should start in the month when people normally start to consume food from their fields, i.e. at the end of the hungry season. This is different from the agricultural year, which usually starts when people start preparing their fields or planting seeds.

Session plan

Session plan summary		
Activity	Methodology	Timing
1. The reference year: what is it and how do we choose it?	Presentation Plenary discussion	15 minutes
2. Exercise: doing a timeline	Small group exercise / role play	35 minutes
3. Choosing a reference year for the forthcoming assessment Wrap up	Plenary discussion	10 minutes
Total		1 hour

ACTIVITY 1: THE REFERENCE YEAR: WHAT IS IT, WHY DO WE NEED IT AND HOW DO WE CHOOSE IT? (15 MINUTES)

Start with the presentation *Reference Year.ppt*. If possible, use this as an opportunity for participants to tell you what they know about recent years in the area that the baseline is going to take place in.

ACTIVITY 2: DOING A TIMELINE

Distribute *H2.6 Handout 2 - Historical Timeline* and go through how to do a timeline, as described on the first page. Refer to the timeline example on the second-to-last page (this is also presented on the second-to-last slide in the presentation).

The handout includes a blank timeline sheet on the last page for the small group exercise. How you run this exercise depends on whether you are about to do an assessment, and if so how many participants are familiar with the recent history of the area to be studied. If there are a reasonable proportion of participants with local knowledge, you should try and develop a timeline of the study area.

- Divide participants into small groups, trying if possible to ensure that each group includes one or two participants with local knowledge. Each group can then do a role play of a timeline interview, with some members of the group interviewing the 'local key informants'. They can use the handout *H2.6*

Handout 2 - Historical Timeline as an aid. They should write out their timeline on a piece of flip chart paper for presenting to the group in plenary.

- These timelines can then be compared in plenary. Ask one group to go through their timeline. Other groups can then add events or opinions.
- Once you have come to an agreement about key events, good years and bad years, it is a good idea for everybody to write this out as a preliminary timeline in the Livelihoods Field Handbook. They can then refer to this, and revise as necessary, during the field assessment.

If participants do not know the area well, or if they are not about to embark on a field assessment:

- Divide participants into small groups such that people who know a particular area are grouped together. Ask each group to put together a timeline for the area they all know, using the blank timeline sheet at the end of the handout *H2.6 Handout 2 - Historical Timeline*.
- Refer to the Timeline page in the Livelihoods Field Handbook, making sure participants are aware that it is there and to be filled in and used in the field.

ACTIVITY 3: CHOOSING A REFERENCE YEAR FOR THE FORTHCOMING ASSESSMENT AND WRAP UP
(10 MINUTES)

Discuss which year would be a good reference year to choose in the forthcoming assessment and make a preliminary selection.

Wrap up the session, trying to include the key learning points above.