

Village Dynamics Studies

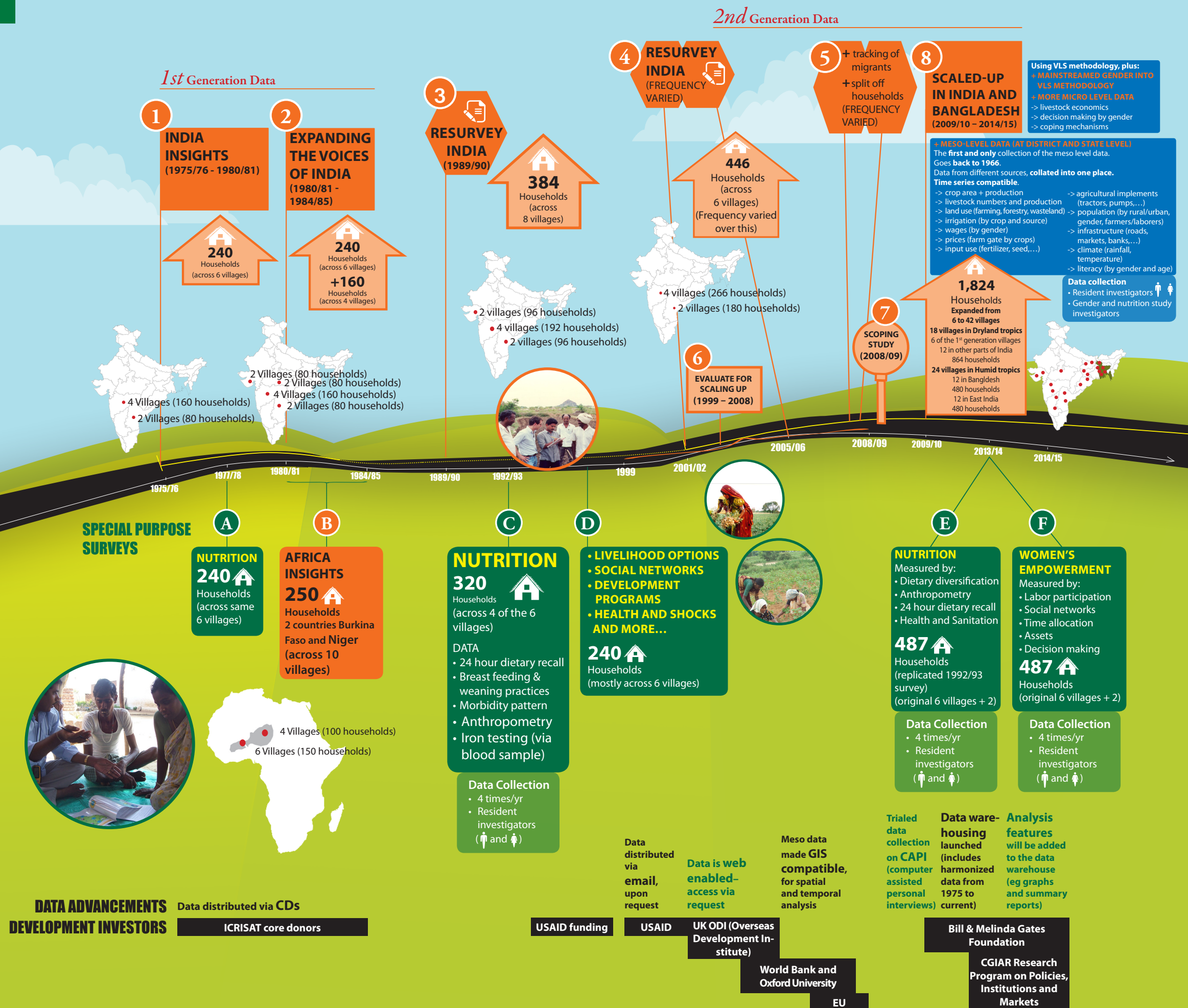
The **voices of the poor** are generally not heard when high level decisions are made for policy, investment and development actions. Understanding the people and the on-the-ground realities are important to create pathways out of poverty. VLS does this!

- A unique dataset collected all year round by full time investigators who live in the villages
- Longest time series panel data
- Most in-depth understanding of any village level dynamics
- First and only meso-level data collated for the countries covered
- Household and district level insights
- Learning repositories for understanding agricultural and rural transformations

Said about VLS data:
"The Goose laying Golden Eggs"
 Hans Binswanger, World Bank



Raising the voices of the poor

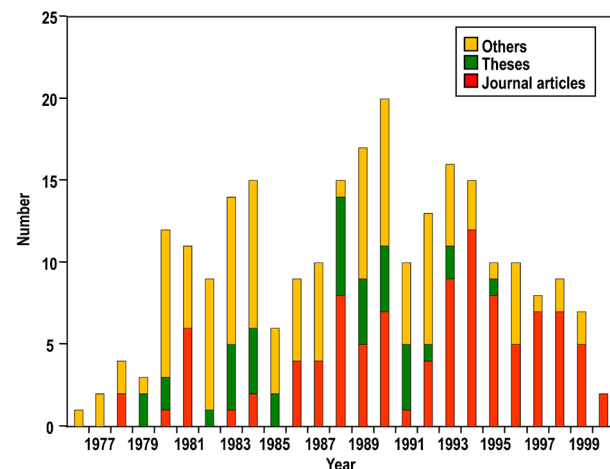


LEADING TO IMPACT

GLOBAL USE OF THE DATA

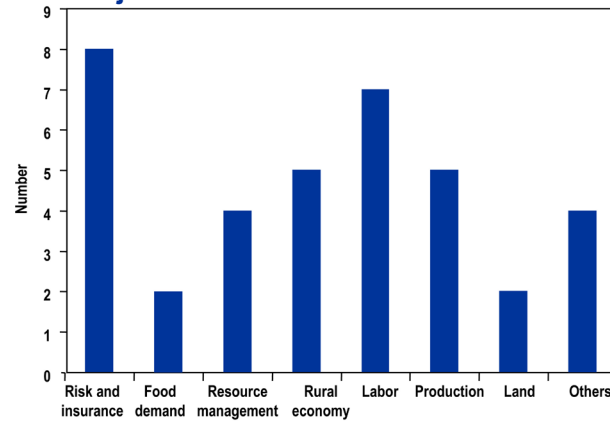
- **Strong research use** of the data - during 2011-13:
 - 350 unique users from 18 countries
 - 150 students and 200 researchers and development practitioners
 - 70 PhD students
 - **Many publications produced** from the data
 - over 150 research papers
 - 36 doctoral dissertations
- based on the empirical analysis of VLS data in India and Africa.

Publications on VLS (1976-2000)



- **Over 10,000 citations** by 2008
- **Useful for many issues**

Subject-wise distribution of VLS theses



"The other datasets I have used are no match for VLS."
Sunil Kanwar, Assistant Professor, Delhi School of Economics
"I have not seen any comparable datasets"
Christopher L Delgado, Strategy and Policy Adviser,
Agriculture and Rural Development Department, World Bank

VILLAGES USED FOR ON-FARM EXPERIMENTS

- 20 projects tested technologies and practices
- **real situations**
 - **with baseline data** already available
 - **on-farm data already available** for feasibility analysis
 - **relationships already built** with an environment of trust with the village people
- **Broad bed and furrow technology** was adapted to suit the on-farm environment and was adopted by the farmers.
 - **Pigeonpea variety** (ICP8863) was tested in Kanzara village and further adapted to cope with fusarium wilt. Through the village kinship network it was adopted in all pigeonpea growing areas of Maharashtra state.
 - **World first pigeonpea hybrid** developed by ICRISAT, was tested in VLS villages. (2008/9)

"One of the main contributions of renewed VLS is the ability to evaluate the way new technologies fit into the entire farming system. The contribution of the earlier panel provided analytical power to address some of these issues that simply will not be available anywhere else in the world."

Chris Udry, Henry Heinz II Professor of Economics, Economic Growth Center, and Council on African Studies, Yale University

INFLUENCED DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- **Commissioned to develop the IFAD India Strategy opportunities paper.** (2005-11)
- **Inputted into the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation India strategy refresh.** (2011)

"...some of the most influential articles in empirical development use this dataset on themes such as nutrition, technology adoption, tenancy contracts, activity choice, consumption smoothing or risk sharing."

Stefan Dercon, Oxford University (and co-authors)

INFLUENCED RESEARCH PRIORITIES

- **Directed ICRISAT's breeding program priorities for yields vs protein:** The village studies showed that more benefit would be gained from focusing on yield and not protein, as the extra protein would be acquired from the higher yields as well as incomes improving. (Early 1980s)
- **Catalyst for CGIAR crops-livestock collaboration:** The VLS data had showed that farmers were rejecting new higher yielding crops because they were not suitable for fodder. The VLS team championed the changes that lead to:
 - ICRISAT's breeding program incorporating traits useful for fodder
 - establishment of ILRI and ICRISAT collaborations
 - a new program on crop-livestock linkages introduced at ICRISAT (early 1990s)
- **Major global programs established:** VLS data was used as a baseline in the development of the Program Proposals of:
 - CAPRI (CGIAR Systemwide Program on Collective Action and Property Rights)
 - Harvest Plus
 - the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets.

"The detailed information collected by VLS is better than any other data sets I have used" Emmanuel Skoufias, Lead Economist, World Bank

"These are the only data sets in the world with which it is possible to study in depth impact of seasonal and annual variations in agricultural output and labour demand on human behavior, contractual choices and production relations." Hans P Binswanger-Mkhize, Extraordinary Professor at University of Pretoria; Adjunct Professor, College of Economics and Management, China Agricultural University; Board member at Khanya- Africa Institute for Community Driven Development

CAPACITY BUILDING

- **More than 300 scientists and scholars spent 1-3 months at ICRISAT learning the research methods and insights** about the village level dynamics. (during the 1st and 2nd level generation)

INFLUENCED GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY

- **Crop and weather insurance schemes were introduced:** VLS risk aversion data was used in the debate leading up to this. (1975 to early 1980s)
- **Parliament ruled to keep Common Property Resources (CPR) available for villages:** The VLS data showed that villagers, especially the poorest people, relied on common land to graze livestock and to survive during shock periods by eg harvesting fruits of a forest. (1980s)
- **Relaxation of trade restrictions between Indian states:** The meso-level data was used to promote that free trade within India would increase agricultural productivity. (1980s onwards)
- **VLS meso-level data now the standard used by the Indian government – Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):** for a strategy refresh, priority setting and decision making; as this is the only national collation of such data that is time series compatible.

"It is hard to think of any other data set in development economics that has been as influential as the village level data..."

Stefan Dercon, Oxford University
(and co-authors)

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This work is now incorporated as part of the



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Policies,
Institutions
and Markets

