Raising the voices of the poor

**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

![Image](https://example.com/image1.png)

**VILLAGE LEVEL STUDIES METHODOLOGY**

**COLLECTION OF DATA**
- By resident investigators
- Lives in the village
- Speaks the local language
- Masters in Agriculture
- Training provided in data collection
- Engaged full time
- Takes 3 weeks to conduct full round of interviews, then starts rotation again

**MICRO DATA**
- Household + individual DATA
- Stratified by land holding size (incl. landless)
- Demographics
- Crop production (inputs & output)
- Asset ownership
- Consumption expenditure
- Employment & wage
- Land & soil
- Market prices
- Rainfall
- Gender disaggregation

3 contrasting regions on:
- Crops
- Soils
- Rainfall

**DATA ADVANCEMENTS**

**DEVELOPMENT INVESTORS**

- ICRISAT core donors
- USAID funding
- USAID
- UK ODI (Overseas Development Institute)
- World Bank and Oxford University
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**DATA DISTRIBUTION**

Data distributed via CDs
Data is web enabled - access via request

**COMPARATIVE DATA**

**WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT**

- Measured by:
  - Labor participation
  - Social networks
  - Time allocation
  - Assets
  - Decision making

**NUTRITION**

- Measured by:
  - Dietary diversification
  - Anthropometry
  - 24 hour dietary recall
  - Health and Sanitation

**LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS**

- Social networks development programs
- Health and shocks and more...

**SURVEYS**

**1st Generation Data**

- **INDIA INSIGHTS** (1975/76 - 1980/81)
- **EXPANDING THE VOICES OF INDIA** (1980/81 - 1984/85)
- **RESURVEY INDIA** (1985/86)

**2nd Generation Data**

- **AFRICA INSIGHTS**
  - **NUTRITION**
    - 240 Households (across 4 of the 6 villages)
    - 240 Households (across 10 villages)
  - **NUTRITION**
    - 320 Households
      - (across 4 of the 6 villages)
    - 240 Households (mostly across 6 villages)

**3rd Generation Data**

- **RESURVEY INDIA**
- **GROUPS**
- **SCOPING STUDY** (2008/09)

**SURVEYS**

- **1975/76**
  - 6 Villages (150 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
- **1977/78**
  - 6 Villages (160 households)
  - 4 Villages (160 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
- **1980/81**
  - 4 Villages (100 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
- **1989/90**
  - 4 Villages (266 households)
  - 2 Villages (180 households)
- **1992/93**
  - 4 Villages (192 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
- **1999**
  - 8 Villages (384 households)
- **2001/02**
  - 4 Villages (266 households)
  - 2 Villages (180 households)
- **2005/06**
  - 4 Villages (266 households)
  - 2 Villages (180 households)
- **2008/09**
  - 4 Villages (200 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
- **2010/11**
  - 4 Villages (200 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
- **2014/15**
  - 4 Villages (200 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)

**DATA COLLECTION**

- Reseach investigators
- Gender plus nutrition study investigators

**DATA ADVANCEMENTS**

- Generator of data distributed via
- Raising the voices of the poor
- Generation Data
- Data warehousing
-糍is made of spatial and temporal analysis
- Analysis features will be added to the datawarehouse (eg graphs and summary reports)

**NUTRITION STUDY**

- Iron testing (via
- Anthropometry
- Morbidity pattern
- Weaning practices
- Breast feeding &
- 24 hour dietary recall
- Child survival (weight...)

**SOCIAL NETWORKS**

- Livelihood options
- Gender and nutrition study

**LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS**

- Social networks development programs
- Health and shocks and more...

**SURVEYS**

- **1975/76**
  - 6 Villages (150 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
- **1977/78**
  - 6 Villages (160 households)
  - 4 Villages (160 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
- **1980/81**
  - 4 Villages (100 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
  - 2 Villages (80 households)
- **1989/90**
  - 4 Villages (266 households)
  - 2 Villages (180 households)
- **1992/93**
  - 4 Villages (192 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
- **1999**
  - 8 Villages (384 households)
- **2001/02**
  - 4 Villages (266 households)
  - 2 Villages (180 households)
- **2005/06**
  - 4 Villages (266 households)
  - 2 Villages (180 households)
- **2008/09**
  - 4 Villages (200 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
- **2010/11**
  - 4 Villages (200 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
- **2014/15**
  - 4 Villages (200 households)
  - 2 Villages (96 households)
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
  - 350 unique users from 18 countries

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 within 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)

"...one 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 shown 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)

LEADING TO IMPACT

GLOBAL USE OF THE DATA
- Over 10,000 citations by 2008
- Useful for many issues

"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

"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)