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A user's note: wealth ranking by cards[1]

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• Introduction

Wealth ranking by card-sorting is a method to understand <u>relative</u> wealth within a specific area. It helps to learn how richer and poorer households (or individuals) in an area differ from each other and about local criteria of well-being. It is particularly useful to identify informants from different socio-economic groups and to investigate the impact of an intervention on these different groups. Wealth ranking is best done with up to 100 households (or other unit) who know each other well. Three informants should carry out the exercise for the same community to reduce bias.

• Preparation

First:

- discuss the way families are organised within the community to determine how it is sub-divided and what the most relevant local unit is to rank, e.g. household, cooking unit, production unit, and find the best local term or phrase [NB household used in this text]; and,

- discuss local criteria and terms for well-being and identify the best local word or phrase.

• Preparing the cards

Making a list of all households to be ranked can be based on a social map of the community and by finding out who lives where. You can also ask different groups or individuals from the community to name the households. If based on local health records or a census, the list will need to be checked to ensure it is complete with the first informant. Each informant must be check the list to make sure it is complete.

Then:

- obtain names of all households (or other unit) and write them down; check this and give a code number to each;
- write the name and number of each household on a card (e.g. an index card);
- find a willing and able informant, who knows the community; and,
- find a quiet place to discuss well-being.

• Introduction to the informant

Each informant should understand the purpose of the exercise well, especially that the discussion is about relative wealth and not absolute overall well-being or a sub-set of wealth, such as cash, number of cattle etc.

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[1] Adapted from: *Wealth Ranking in Smallholder Communities: A Field Manual* by Barbara E Grandin (IT Publications, 1988) and *Introduction a la Méthode Accélérée de Recherche Participative* by Bara Gueye and Karen Schoonmaker Freudenberger (IIED, 1991).

Discuss:

- the purpose of your research and of the exercise;
- the general difference between rich and poor in the area;
- general differences of problems between rich and poor;
- the local word/phrase for well-being (you must have a common understanding of its meaning);
- the unit being ranked;
- the list of households being ranked to check; and,
- the name on each card and ensure it stands for the whole household, not only the individual.

• **Card sorting**

- Explain that the informant will be asked to put the cards into piles (or rows), each of which is a different level of well-being; that they can make as many piles as possible and change the number of piles or location of a card during the exercise;

- Shuffle cards;

- If the informant is not literate, explain you will read out the name on each card and that they can put them into the different piles;

- Simply put down the first card, reading the name on the card (if the informant is not literate);

- For each card, read out the name and ask the informant to place it below or above, to the left or the right of existing piles/rows, considering in which pile it belongs. If necessary, read out the names of all the cards in each pile so that the informant is clear about who is in which pile/row;

- One by one, the informant puts cards into piles/rows;

- At the end, review each pile with the informant, reading out each card in the different piles to check the cards have been grouped correctly. Start with the pile of the richest or poorest and continue with the pile/row next to it. If necessary, the informant should make changes;

- If one pile is very large, ask the informant if that pile can be sub-divided; and,

- Write down the household numbers by pile on a recording sheet (see example below).

• **Follow-up discussion**

- For each pile/row, ask the informant what characterizes those households (or other unit) in terms of well-being;
- Write down the responses for each pile/row;
- If you are investigating a specific issue, ask the informant to identify particular households relevant for your research, for example: those households that have a latrine, those that have received credit/inputs, those that have school-going children, those that have a pregnant woman or a case of tuberculosis; and,
- Other possible questions to probe with are: *Are there any cases of households moving from one group to another? For example has anyone moved from the poorest pile upward, or vice versa? How has the situation changed in the past 10 (or so) years?*

Repeat the introduction, card sorting and follow-up discussion with two or three more informants (individuals or groups).

• **Computing and grouping**

- Calculate the score for each household for <u>each</u> informant. This is easiest by calculating the score for each pile/row for each informant (see Sheet 1 below).

$$\text{The score} = \frac{\text{Pile number of household in which household is located}}{\text{Total number of piles made by that informant}}$$

- Write the household numbers in a line and use this to record the scores (see Sheet 2 below). Do not include any households that were ranked by less than two informants.

- Calculate the average score for each household.

$$\text{Average score} = \frac{\text{total of its scores}}{\text{number of scores}}$$

- Find any unreliable scores, where one informant gave a low score and another gave a much higher score. As they are unreliable, they should be treated with care and could be investigated further to understand why they have such different scores.

- Write the average score for each household on the cards you used for the exercise.

- Put the cards in order from lowest to highest average score (rich to poor).

- Make a second recording sheet by copying this row of households on it (see Example 3 below).

- Divide this list of households, ranked according to relative well-being into groups. This can be done by looking for large gaps in average score (which implies a big jump in difference of well-being) and

making that a dividing point between two categories of well-being. You can also take the average number of piles used by the informants (never more! as this would be false accuracy) and use any large gaps in average scores to divide it into that number of groups.

NB   Great care must be taken about where results are recorded and kept, who uses them and how they are used. If the data is misused, you will lose the community's trust and it will be impossible to use this type of well-being ranking in future.

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WEALTH RANKING BY CARD SORTING
Record Sheet 1

(Record information from the informants piles)

INFORMANT # 1 (Divided cards into 3 piles) | WEIGHT *

Pile 1 (Richest) : Cards 10, 4, 14, 19, 13, 5, 18 | $1/3 = .33$

Pile 2 : Cards 1, 6, 9, 15, 20, 7, 17 | $2/3 = .66$

Pile 3 : Cards 2, 8, 12, 16, 3, 11 | $3/3 = 1$

INFORMANT 2 (Divided cards into 5 piles)

Pile 1 (Richest) : Cards 9, 14, 11, 6 | $1/5 = .20$

Pile 2 : Cards 10, 5, 18, 13, 1, 15 | $2/5 = .40$

Pile 3 : Cards 9, 20, 17, 7 | $3/5 = .60$

Pile 4 : Cards 16, 8, 11 | $4/5 = .80$

Pile 5 : Cards 2, 12, 3 | $5/5 = 1$

INFORMANT 3 (Divided cards into 4 piles)

Pile 1 (Richest) : Cards 14, 6, 1, 15, 12 | $1/4 = .25$

Pile 2 : Cards 4, 9, 13, 5, 8, 10 | $2/4 = .50$

Pile 3 : Cards 7, 17, 20, 19 | $3/4 = .75$

Pile 4 : Cards 8, 11, 16, 3, 2 | $4/4 = 1$

* Now calculate a score for each pile.
If there are three piles, the richest pile gets a weight of $1/3 = .33$.
The middle pile gets $2/3 = .66$
The poorest gets $3/3 = 1$

If there are four piles proceed in the same way except now the denominator in the fraction is four. The richest pile gets a weight of $1/4 = .25$, the 2nd gets $2/4 = .50$; the 3rd gets $3/4 = .75$ and the poorest gets $4/4 = 1$.

Note that in this system the poorer people have higher numbers!

WEALTH RANKING BY CARD SORTING

Record Sheet 3
(To classify the cards according to wealth)

Average Score	Card Number
1.	2
1	3
.93	8
.93	11
.78	16
.75	12 ?
.67	20
.67	17
.67	7 ?
.59	9
.51	6 ?
.44	15 ?
.43	1 ?
.41	10
.41	5
.41	18
.41	13 ?
.34	4
.26	14
.18	19 ?

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■ Now go back and divide the list into different wealth groups. Note those where there were discrepancies on Sheet 2.

WEALTH RANKING BY CARD SORTING

Sample Record Sheet 2
(To Calculate the Average Score for each Card)

Card	Score from Informant 1	Score from Informant 2	Score from Inf. 3	Average
1 x	.66	.40	.25	.43
2	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
4	.33	.20	.50	.34
5 x	.33	.50	.50	.44
6	.66	.60	.25	.51
7	1	.80	.75	.64
8	.66	.60	1	.75
9	.33	.70	.50	.59
10	1	1	1	.41
11	1	1	.25	.75
12 x	.33	.40	.50	.44
13	.33	.20	.25	.26
14	1	.10	1	.09
15 x	.66	.60	.75	.78
16	.66	.60	.75	.67
17	.30	.40	.51	.41
18	.33	.20	1	.45
19 x	.46	.60	.75	.67

■ Calculate an average score for each card. Example Card 1: Add the scores given by the three informants (.66 + .40 + .25 = 1.31) and divide by 3 to get the average. $\frac{1.31}{3} = .43$

■ Find any discrepancies where one informant gave a low score and another gave a higher score. Circle these cases since they are not reliable rankings.