Empowerment and Health

UCL Centre for Gender and Global Health Launch Day
Sabina Alkire, 16 February 2017
“Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development.”

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom

“The poor person is someone brimming over with capacities and possibilities.”

Gustavo Gutierrez

“A strong breeze can break branches. A whirlpool in the ocean waters can sink boats. But a strong willpower can give you courage, and even if your destination is a thousand miles away, you can be successful.”

Amit, young man, Uttar Pradesh India
Key Lessons from

Moving out of Poverty

The capital of a poor person is his physical strength. He uses his strength.

Uganda
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Definition or Concept of Empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albertyn (2001)</td>
<td>Effective empowerment must occur at each of 3 levels: micro (attitude, feelings and skills), interface (participation and action immediately around the individual) and macro (beliefs, action and effects)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alkire 2005</td>
<td>Empowerment is an increase in certain kinds of agency that are deemed particularly instrumental to the situation at hand. Thus I am choosing to assume that empowerment is a subset of agency, and that increases in empowerment would be reflected in increased agency (but not necessarily vice versa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alsop 2006</td>
<td>Empowerment is defined as a group’s or individual’s capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes</td>
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<td>Appleyard 2002</td>
<td>Empowering people to make their own decisions, rather than be passive objects of choices made on their behalf. It focuses on empowering all people to claim their right to opportunities and services made available through pro-poor development (Bartlett, 2004, 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartle, Phil (2003)</td>
<td>Having the capacity to do things that community members want to do and going beyond political or legal permission to participate in the national political system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennet 2002</td>
<td>Empowerment is used to characterize approaches based on social mobilization. A key element in most social mobilization approaches is helping poor and socially excluded individuals realize the power they gain from collective action. Often social mobilization approaches work “from below” to create voice and demand for change among diverse groups of poor and socially excluded citizens (Bartlett, 2004, 54)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown (2003)</td>
<td>Providing empowerment opportunities as necessary prerequisites to altering a person’s potential reality and giving people the means to better themselves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chambers (1993)</td>
<td>Empowerment means that people, especially poorer people, are enabled to take more control over their lives, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element. Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions, and to adapt to rapid change. (Bartlett, 2004, 55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig and Mayo 1995</td>
<td>Empowerment is about collective community, and ultimately class conscientization, to critically understand reality in order to use the power which even the powerless do possess, so as to challenge the powerful and ultimately to transform the reality through conscious political struggles (cited Oakley 2001, 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friedmann 1992</td>
<td>An alternative development involves a process of social and political empowerment whose long term objective is to <strong>rebalance the structure of power</strong> within society by make state action more accountable, strengthening the powers of civil society in the management of their own affairs and making corporate business more socially responsible (cited in Oakley 2001, 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gootaert 2005                | Empowerment falls in three categories:  
- making state institutions more responsive to poor people  
- removing social barriers  
- building social institutions and social capital                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
<p>| Grootaert (2003)             | Expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable <strong>institutions</strong> that affect their lives                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Jackson 1994                 | The process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless (a) becomes aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, (b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, (c) exercise their control without infringing upon the right of others and (d) support the empowerment of others in the community (cited in Rowlands, 1997, 15) |
| Kabeer (2001)                | Empowerment … refers to the expansion in people’s ability to <strong>make strategic life choices</strong> in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. (Bartlett, 2004, 57)                                                                                                                                 |
| Lokshin and Ravallion (2003) | Taking actions that selectively empower those with little power to <strong>redress power inequality</strong>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Malena (2003)                | Enabling or giving power to (whom) to do (what)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Malhotra (2002)              | Enhancing assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence, and hold accountable the institutions that affect them                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Mayoux 2000; DFID            | Women’s empowerment is defined as ‘individuals acquiring <strong>the power to think and act freely</strong>, exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential has fallen equally to members of society’                                                                                                                                                                                |
| McMillan, et al. (1995)      | <strong>Gaining influence</strong> over events and outcomes of importance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Moser (2003)                 | Expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives                                                                                                                                                                                                 |</p>
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Narayan 2005</td>
<td>The expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oppenheim Mason and Smith (2003)</td>
<td>Extent to which some categories of people are able to <strong>control their own destinies</strong> even when their interests are opposed by others with whom they interact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxaal and Baden 1997</td>
<td>Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can <strong>freely analyse, develop and voice their needs and interests</strong>, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above, by planners or other social actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfam 1995</td>
<td>Empowerment involves <strong>challenging the forms of oppression</strong> which compel millions of people to play a part in their society on terms which are inequitable, or in ways which deny their human rights (Oxfam, 1995) in (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowlands 1997</td>
<td>‘Empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to <strong>perceive themselves</strong> as able and entitled to make decisions.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spreitzer (1995)</td>
<td>Intrapersonal empowerment as the component of psychological empowerment that deals with cognitive elements. Other components are interactional (thinking about and relating to the environment) and behavioral (taking action and engaging issues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strandburg</td>
<td>Empowerment can overall be defined as all those processes where women <strong>take control and ownership of their lives</strong>. Control and ownership requires an array of opportunities to choose among and this understanding of empowerment overlaps with the concept of human development when defined as “a process of enlarging people’s choices”. Both concepts describe processes, but where human development entails enlarging choices, empowerment is the process of acquiring the ability to choose among these enlarged choices… (Bartlett, 2004, 59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Eyken 1991</td>
<td>Empowerment is an <strong>intentional and ongoing dynamic process</strong> centered on the local community, involving mutual dignity, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking a valid share of resources gain greater access to and control over those resources, though the exercise of an increased leverage of power (cited in Oakley 2001, 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDR 2000/2001</td>
<td>Empowerment as the process of ‘enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision making. And it means removing the barriers- political, legal and social- that work against particular groups and building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets’</td>
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</table>
What is Empowerment?

Over 33 definitions.

Able to act on behalf of goals that matter.

'I believe I can'

Moving out of Poverty
Sen’s agency is wider than most definitions of empowerment

• i) agency is exercised with respect to multiple goals;
• ii) agency includes effective power as well as direct control;
• iii) agency may advance own wellbeing or may address other-regarding goals;
• iv) recognizing agency entails an assessment of the value of the agency objectives;
• v) agency introduces the need to incorporate the agents’ own responsibility for a state of affairs into their evaluation of it.

Alkire 2008 in Arguments for a better world, Basu & Kanbur
Agency

“what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important.”

“someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well”
Sen *Development as Freedom*. 1999: 19

agency is the person’s ability to act on what they value and have reason to value.
Drèze & Sen 2002

“The approach … is essentially a ‘people-centered’ approach, which puts human agency (rather than organizations such as markets or governments) at the centre of the stage. The crucial role of social opportunities is to expand the realm of human agency and freedom, both as an end in itself and as a means of further expansion of freedom. The word ‘social’ in the expression ‘social opportunity’ (…) is a useful reminder not to view individuals and their opportunities in isolated terms. The options that a person has depend greatly on relations with others and on what the state and other institutions do. We shall be particularly concerned with those opportunities that are strongly influenced by social circumstances and public policy…” (p 6).
Given the extent and forms of gender disparity in India, there is an urgent need to focus not only on what can be done for Indian women (important as it is), but also on what Indian women can do for India – helping to make it a very different country.
Some Empirical Observations

• Track **deprivations & gendered inequities**

• **Moving Out of Poverty**: A **longitudinal** study of families who moved into and out of poverty over 10-25 years.

• **Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)**: a **measurement** tool
  – That can be analysed – N Ghana
  – A health index?

• **Data Gaps** hamper empowerment analysis
  – **Relative Autonomy Index**: sharply focused.
India: strong economic growth since 1980s.
Uneven progress in social deprivations:

Table 1.1 Comparison of India’s Performance with Bangladesh and Nepal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (PPP, constant 2005 international $)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,193</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3,203</td>
<td>1,569</td>
<td>1,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth (p.a.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>-53</td>
<td>-93</td>
<td>-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under-5 Mortality Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>770</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>-400</td>
<td>-560</td>
<td>-600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Immunization (DPT) (%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite conceptual nuance, simple measures can illuminate.

- Deprivations of both men and women
- Gender inequities
- Women’s empowerment priority for NGOs (GR, BR)
- Family planning
- Social norms (and their evolution)
- Role of grass-roots agents of change
Moving Out of Poverty in India
Vol 3

• 4 states: AP, Assam, UP, West Bengal
• 1995-2005
• 300 villages
• 2 movements:
  – moving out of poverty
  – falling into poverty
Health-related Findings

• **Falling into poverty is primarily a story of health and social shocks**

• **Aspirations** are a powerful force for moving out of poverty, and **Poor people’s self-confidence and empowerment** drives change (internal empowerment)

• Among institutions, **family** matters most
Piloting and Development of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Health?
Purpose

• Design, develop, and test an index to measure the greater inclusion of women in agricultural sector growth that has occurred as a result of US Government intervention under the Feed the Future Initiative

• What is “greater inclusion”? The concept of Inclusive Agricultural Sector Growth is broad and multi-dimensional

• Feed the Future defines it as: “the empowerment of women in their roles and engagement throughout the various areas of the agriculture sector, as it grows, in both quantity and quality”

• Could this be done for health?? Should it?
A woman’s empowerment score shows her own achievements.

Five domains of empowerment:

1. Production 1/5
   - Input in productive decisions 1/10
   - Autonomy in production 1/10

2. Resources 1/5
   - Ownership of assets 1/15
   - Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets 1/15
   - Access to and decisions on credit 1/15

3. Income 1/5
   - Control over use of income 1/5

4. Leadership 1/5
   - Group Member 1/10
   - Speaking in Public 1/10

5. Time 1/5
   - Leisure 1/10
   - Workload 1/10
What is the WEAI?

• An aggregate index in two parts:
  – Five domains of empowerment (5DE): assesses whether women are empowered in the 5 domains of empowerment in agriculture
  – Gender Parity Index (GPI): reflects the percentage of women who are as empowered as the men in their households

• It is a survey-based index, not based on aggregate statistics or secondary data, constructed using interviews of the primary male and primary female adults in the same household
How is the Index constructed?

WEAI is made up of two sub indices

- **5DE** = \((1 - M_0)\)
- **GPI** = \((1 - P_1)\)

**Five domains of empowerment (5DE)**

A direct measure of women’s empowerment in 5 dimensions

**Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)**

All range from zero to one; higher values = greater empowerment

**Gender parity Index (GPI)**

Women’s achievement’s relative to the primary male in hh
Who is empowered?

A woman who has achieved ‘adequacy’ in 80% or more of the weighted indicators is empowered.
Bangladesh Pilot results

- 31.9% of women are empowered
- Disempowered women have adequate achievements in 60.7% of domains
- 59.8% of women enjoy gender parity
- Households without gender parity have a 25.2% empowerment gap between the woman and man

Overall, the WEAI score is 0.749
Bangladesh: How to increase empowerment?

Contribution of each indicator to disempowerment of women and men.
Empowerment, wealth and education

- **Wealth** – clear association with empowerment in Uganda, but an imperfect proxy in Bangladesh and Guatemala:
  - 76% in top three quintiles are disempowered in Guatemala

- **Education** – significant influence in Guatemala and Uganda but insignificant for men and women in Bangladesh:
  - In Uganda, 35% of women with less than primary schooling are empowered vs. 45% with primary education
  - 31% of women with less than primary education were empowered in Bangladesh vs. 33% with primary schooling
Relevance for policymaking

1) Captures empowerment directly:
   – Using new data, not proxies
   – Shows how to empower women in each context

2) Three ways to change it:
   – Empower women
   – Increase scores among disempowered women
   – Increase gender parity & reduce gap
Health and WEAI in N Ghana:
Ross and Zereyesus et al *IFAMA* 2015

- Investigated the extent to which empowerment affects nutrition (BMI and DDS) using MIMIC modelling
- 72% of women were disempowered by the WEAI.
- The WEAI overall is not associated with higher health.
- Yet five WEAI indicators exhibit a statistically significant relationship with women’s health status:
  1. access to and decisions on *credit*,
  2. ownership of *assets*,
  3. autonomy in *production*,
  4. *group* membership, and
  5. *leisure* time
Gendered analysis of the global MPI: work in progress with Robles.

**Individual Censored Headcounts**
Proportion of people who are MPI poor and deprived in each indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years schooling</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Mortality</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Fuel</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: in some indicators men’s health achievements may be lower.
“Women’s equal, full participation—their voice and agency—is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing.”

– Hillary Rodham Clinton

Voice and Agency
Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity

Jeni Klugman
Lucia Hanmer
Sarah Twigg
Tazeen Hasan
Jennifer McCleary-Sills
Julieth Santamaria
Some findings from the literature reviewed:

• **Gender-based violence** is a global phenomenon – 1 in 3.

• **Many women lack sexual and reproductive rights**: IPV

• **Each year, almost one in five girls under 18 in developing countries gives birth**

• Poverty increases gender gaps

• Women’s groups and **collective action** play a pivotal role in building momentum for progressive reform.

• **Data are insufficient to analyse voice and agency**
“Measuring Women’s Autonomy in Chad using the Relative Autonomy Index”
Vaz, Pratley, & Alkire *Feminist Economics* 2016

- Validated the Relative Autonomy Index statistically
- Demonstrated domains of autonomy are distinct
- Women are less autonomous than men in each domain
- Correlations with subjective well-being, other agency and decision-making questions, and satisfaction are low.
- Regression analysis shows that autonomy information is *not* replicated by standard proxies for women’s empowerment such as level of education or income poverty status.
- **Data on autonomy should be gathered as they may unlock new relationships between agency & outcomes.**