Conceptualizing Empowerment in International Development Education

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Raya G. Hegeman-Davis

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Joan DeJaeghere, Dr. David Chapman

August 2013

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank the International Development professionals who took time out of their extremely busy lives to help with my study and without whom his study would not have been possible.

Thank you to my advisors, Dr. DeJaeghere and Dr. Chapman. I appreciate your support, edits, patience and guidance. I feel very blessed to have had you both as my friends and advisors through this process. I am grateful to my other committee members, Dr. Frances Vavrus and Dr. Frances Lawrenz for your suggestions, ideas and support.

I am thankful for the amazing and inspiring members of my cohort as well as the wonderful, supportive students and staff in the EDPA department. Thank you to my friends, especially Kate McCleary for your thoughts, suggestions, edits and enthusiasm for my research topic and completion.

I would also like to thank my friends and family whose support and love allowed me to finish this dissertation. Thank you to my husband and son for their patience and personal sacrifices in support of my completing this degree. Finally, thank you mom and dad for your love, support and commiseration through this long process.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the diverse and amazing women in the world. I am inspired by all that you do every day.

Abstract

Empowerment, especially of women and girls, has become a central focus of development efforts over the past decade. There are a wide variety of ways in which the construct of empowerment is defined and conceptualized across development efforts. This plethora of meanings has allowed for a multitude of development programs to be labeled as empowerment programs, but has also led to confusion as to what is meant by the term empowerment and what it is that empowerment programs are attempting to accomplish.

This study aimed to provide greater specificity about the definition and conceptualization of empowerment within international development education programs, specifically within programs which intend to empower women and girls. By asking professionals in the field of international development education about their experience with empowerment programs, this study helps to clarify the meanings of empowerment for these individuals and to identify the most salient aspects of the empowerment programs with which they work.

Twenty one interviews were completed and 32 questionnaires were collected from professionals working in 12 different organizations including non-government organizations, multi-lateral aid organizations, bi-lateral aid agencies (such as USAID) and private consulting firms.

Quantitative and qualitative data analyses showed that these development organization professionals conceptualized empowerment along three main themes Agency, with a focus on decision-making; Power relations/negotiations in family

relations; and Laws and structures to empowerment. The sub-theme of involving men in empowerment also came out as a critical theme to empowerment. These four themes indicate what the participants feel are the most salient issues in empowerment programming. In general, participants defined empowerment in individual-agency-based terms indicating that their empowerment programs are focusing on a linear progression of individual progress.

These four themes indicate a conceptual framework for empowerment which places agency at the forefront with other domains of empowerment being addressed separately or at a later time. The focus on agency may, in the short term, allow empowerment programs to address larger numbers of individuals and may indeed provide a building block for empowerment, but may also limit organizations' conceptualizations of empowerment as well as reduce the possibility for transformative change in the lives of women and girls.

The theme on power relations and negotiations in the family highlights the complex nature of family hierarchies and the shifting nature of women's roles within them. The findings indicate that these participants view empowerment programs addressing the constraints women face from other women as important and in some situations more important than the constraints from men. Future research into this area may allow for these complex power dynamics to be addressed in a manner that reduces any possible negative effects on women while increasing their status and bargaining power within both the male – female hierarchies as well as the female-female hierarchies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the last decade the concept of empowerment has become a central focus of development efforts and has recently become a buzzword in the "language of mainstream development" (Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p. 1044). The term empowerment is associated with a wide array of development initiatives from micro-loans, to mentoring programs and work training programs; as well as to describe outcomes such as increased political participation, poverty reduction and psychological and emotional empowerment. These initiatives may be aimed at varied populations (though generally focused on marginalized groups) and may focus on individuals or communities or both. Quite often, however, empowerment programs are focused around women and economic development, such as micro-financing or income generation programs. More recently the term has begun to be used in referring to an outcome associated with girls' education. Empowerment, as is reflected by the root of the word em*power*ment, is generally regarded as a process by which to reduce social inequalities and redress power imbalances across different socio-economic groups (Oakley, 2001). Empowerment has also been discussed by Sen (1999) and Walker and Unterhalter (2007) in terms of capabilities which are opportunities or freedoms to achieve what one considers valuable. For example, capabilities gained through education may provide a space for disadvantaged individuals to learn to organize politically as well as provide the tools for each person to shape his or her own life.

Many empowerment programs assume that education plays a very important role in women's and girls' empowerment as it is a medium through which to enhance girls' and women's self-esteem and self-awareness and to open opportunities for females outside of

the home (Sohoni, 1995). However, some scholars have noted that not only increased access to or levels of education is necessary for empowerment, but also structural barriers such as discriminatory laws and practices, must be addressed (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005).

The term empowerment, as used in development, does not have one precise definition, but instead has been defined by practitioners in many different ways, making the term amenable to diffuse applications (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). The many definitions of empowerment have somewhat followed the underlying tenets of international development over the decades. For instance, in 1948, President Truman proclaimed that the United States "must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas", assuming that developing countries should follow a Western model of modernity (Porter, 1999, p. 6). Similar to broader development aims, the way in which empowerment has been used and defined has changed across decades and been influenced by theories development.

At present, however, approaches to international development are more contested. Development is a term that has become highly ideologically loaded and holds different meaning for different people (Kabeer, 2001). For many, development is still synonymous with economic growth, while others define development in terms of greater freedom or reduced vulnerability (Sen, 1999; Vavrus, 2007). A narrow meaning of development refers to:

"the planned process by which resources, techniques and expertise are brought together to bring about improved rates of economic growth in an area variously designated as the Third World, the developing world, the periphery or the South" (Kabeer, 2001, p. 69).

Empowerment, similar to development as a whole is also contested and affected by different conceptualizations of development. It may be circumscribed to mean a change in one's economic conditions or resources, but also may be defined more broadly in terms of greater freedom or reduced vulnerability. Thus, the various approaches to development used by organizations and individuals can have a large impact on the way in which empowerment is conceptualized.

Taking into account the broad spectrum of approaches to development, this study uses a working definition of empowerment which is defined not by market goods, but by the extent to which human well-being is assured (Kabeer, 2001). This meaning is in line with Sen's (1999) characterization of empowerment as a process that expands the real freedoms people enjoy. This working definition is not meant to be proven or disproven by this study, but is only a starting point from which to explore the varied and complex ways in which the term empowerment is defined and used by professionals working with education programs in the field of international development.

Problem Statement

The term empowerment is being used as one goal or outcome for many development programs which are being created and implemented by a variety of groups including local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), international NGOs and other

international donor agencies. Oakley (2001) writes that, "in terms of the actions and processes associated with the promotion of development and change, we currently live in the age of empowerment" (p. 13). Despite the plethora of empowerment projects and the level of funding accompanying this trend, it is not always clear how empowerment is being defined (meaning a goal or indicator of success or impact) or conceptualized (as a theory of change or set of program processes) and the "explicit connections between empowerment research and program development are in many cases tenuous" (Grabe, 2011, p. 234).

The varied ways in which empowerment has been defined and used by development organizations has allowed "practitioners and researchers to pick from a menu of related, and at times vague, concepts rather than rely on a cohesive picture" (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010, p. 646). While the existence of numerous definitions of empowerment is not inherently problematic, it does make planning, implementing and measuring effective empowerment programs challenging. As Rowlands (1995) states, "the concept of 'empowerment', if it is used precisely and deliberately, can help to focus thought, planning, and action in development. However, when its use is careless, deliberately vague, or sloganising, it risks becoming degraded and valueless" (p. 106). Luttrell and Quiroz (2007) also argue that an ambiguous definition of empowerment (or none at all) can be problematic; this lack of clarity can lead to a "lack of coherence across the organization and undermines accountability among the donor, their partners and target groups" (p. 2). The lack of clarity around empowerment at the organization level

can lead to fragmented notions at the project level with no "straightforward translation into practice of textual commitments to empowerment" (p.2).

The discourse of women's and girls' empowerment is used to raise funding as well as national and international attention for development projects and programs. The term empowerment is used to both inform and label programs and the ambiguity around the term empowerment, at both the organization and project level, can lead to a disconnect between policy and practice that can prevent interventions from making successful and measurable changes in the lives of women and girls. Therefore, there is value in finding conceptual clarity for both the creation and measurement of empowerment programming. With a clearer understanding of what development professionals mean by the term empowerment we can strengthen interventions and better focus measurement and outcomes.

The purpose of this study is to provide greater specificity about the definition and conceptualization of empowerment within international development education programs, specifically within programs which intend to empower women and girls.

Purpose of Study and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to explore how professionals working with education programs in the field of International Development think about and use the term empowerment in their education work. This research sought to bring conceptual clarity to the term as well as explore emergent contextual themes from different world regions. The research question addressed by this study was:

How is empowerment defined, conceptualized and operationalized by people working with education programs within international development organizations?

For the purposes of this study, the participant population was defined as those who work in direct connection to empowerment programs or whose work impacts monetary investment or program implementation. Participants included both high level managers as well as programmatic level field workers within various international development agencies.

While this study, and thus the research question, was exploratory in nature it was informed by a conceptual framework based on perspectives of empowerment from two bodies of literature: Gender and Development (GAD) and the Capabilities Approach. These two approaches were chosen because they offered broad conceptualizations of empowerment from which to frame the survey and interview questions about specific organizational and individual conceptualizations as well as aligned with discussions and conceptualizations in the most recent literature on empowerment. The conceptual framework was used to inform the working definition of empowerment in this study as well as the research question and the data collection instruments. Both GAD and the Capabilities Approach will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Theorizing Gender and Development

Gender and Development (GAD) is a feminist perspective on development efforts which emphasizes the importance of gender relations and the interconnection of gender, race and class to women's social position (Connelly, Murray Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000; Pearson & Jackson, 1998; Vavrus, 2007). The other framework used by this study,

the Capabilities Approach, emphasizes choices and freedoms that one values and is able to choose for one's well-being and is not necessarily from a feminist perspective (Sen, 1999; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). To better understand a GAD perspective it is important to know the history of theory and research on women and development and how and why GAD approach emerged. This section will outline the feminist development paradigms from Women in Development (WID) to Women and Development (WAD) and GAD. A discussion of the capabilities approach will follow.

Women in Development

Prior to 1970 many scholars thought that the process of development affected men and women in similar ways. In fact, women were generally not considered as important to development efforts since much of development was economically driven and women were not seen as productive members of the cash economy (Momsen, 2004). Ester Boserup's 1970 book on women and development, *Woman's Role in Economic Development*, challenged the fundamental assumptions of international development and demanded that a gender dimension be added to the study of development. The rise of the Women in Development (WID) approach was aided by the rise of women's movements in Western Europe and North America, the 1975 UN International Year for Women and the International Women's Decade (Momsen, 2004).

Theoretically, scholars using this approach drew on a combination of modernization and liberal feminist theories and aimed to integrate women into economic development efforts by focusing on income generation projects for women (Connelly et al., 2000; Momsen, 2004). WID advocates also argued that women needed to be trained

for employment in the modern economy or national development would suffer (Vavrus, 2007).

Working within the modernization paradigm, WID proponents did not generally seek to change the basic assumptions of development at the time, but continued to measure development by the adoption of Western technologies, institutions and values (Connelly et al, 2000; Vavrus, 2007). This approach was critiqued for being ethnocentric and universalizing a "particular white Western middle class vision" (Jackson & Pearson, 1998, p. 6). The main contribution of WID to issues of gender and development was to begin to ask how women could be included in the development process (Connelly et al, 2000).

Moser (1993) uses the term 'Women in Development' with a wider scope than other theorists and includes five development approaches under this categorization. The approaches she includes are: welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment. While Moser (1993) discusses each of these approaches as a linear process used in chronological order, in reality the approaches are often used simultaneously by development agencies.

The welfare approach was introduced in the 1950s and 1960s. Moser (1993) identifies this approach as pre-WID and considers this to be the earliest policy approach specifically concerned with women in developing countries. The welfare approach was based on three assumptions: first, women were passive recipients of development, not active agents of change. Second, that motherhood is the most important role for women in society and third, that child-rearing was the most effective role for women to take in

terms of economic development. The focus of welfare programs was to address practical gender needs relating to women's reproductive roles therefore casting women, rather than a lack of resources, as the problem (Moser, 1993).

Moser (1993) classifies the equity approach as the original WID approach, introduced in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The equity approach recognized that women were active participants in the development process and contributed to economic growth through both their productive and reproductive roles. Equity approach proponents argued that women needed to be included in the development process through access to employment and the market place. This "original" WID approach focused on economic independence as a synonym for equity.

The anti-poverty approach saw women's poverty as a problem of underdevelopment, not of subordination. Thus, the purpose of the anti-poverty approach was to ensure that poor women increased their productivity. Moser (1993) describes this second WID approach as a "toned down version of equity" (p. 66). The anti-poverty approach was oriented toward women's practical needs by providing employment, but it did not focus on greater autonomy nor address strategic gender needs (Moser, 1993).

Moser (1993) lists the efficiency approach as the fourth and now predominant WID approach. This approach assumes that women's economic contributions will make development more efficient and effective. The emphasis in this approach has shifted away from women back towards development on the assumption that increased economic participation for Third World women was automatically linked with increased equity.

Moser's (1993) fifth policy approach to women in development is empowerment. According to Moser, the empowerment approach developed out of dissatisfaction with the original WID as equity approach. The empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women and the sources of women's insubordination in the family. This approach also emphasizes that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, and economic status (Moser, 1993).

Moser (1993) discusses these five policy approaches as different WID approaches, however, other authors in the literature (Connelly et al, 2000; Momsen, 2004; Porter, 1999; Steans, 2006; Vavrus, 2007) separate the empowerment approach as its own paradigm. Moser's (1993) differing classification is debatable, however, since her explanation and definition of the empowerment paradigm is similar to those used by others describing this development approach (discussed more in chapter two), how it is classified (whether as part of WID or a separate paradigm) is not the important debate in this study.

Projects and policies that were based in the WID perspective (Moser's equity approach) generally did not directly address issues of women's empowerment. WID proponents would have theorized women's empowerment in terms of economic self-sufficiency. An empowered woman was a woman who had successfully taken part in income generating activities (Rathgeber, 1990). The scholars who supported the WID approach did not tend to challenge the "basic social relations of gender," but assumed that gender relations would automatically change as a result of women becoming equal economic partners in development (Rathgeber, 1990, p. 493). The focus of WID

proponents was including women in existing development programming, which, as an approach did not take into consideration the causes or roots of women's oppression and subordination due to race, class and culture as well as patriarchy (Rathgeber, 1990).

The WID approach came under considerable criticism in the 1980s. Critics argued that WID perspectives obscured issues of power and inequalities and did not address broader re-distributional issues of development efforts (Steans, 2006). The main criticisms of WID were that it failed to take into account the differences in women's situations; it had a tendency to assume that all women were a homogenous group; it did not account for cross-cutting factors such as class and ethnicity; and it overlooked gender relations by focusing exclusively on women (Porter, 1999). In response, the Women and Development (WAD) paradigm was proposed.

Women and Development

Scholars writing from the WAD approach sought to focus on the relationship of women to development instead of simply incorporating women into existing strategies (Porter, 1999). The Women and Development approach was based in neo-Marxist thinking and began from a position that women have always been a valuable part of development processes instead of suddenly being incorporated into development as a result of WID-thinking feminists (Rathgeber, 1990).

Projects based in the WAD approach aimed to reduce the effects of patriarchy by targeting (or including) only women (Connelly et al, 2000; Vavrus, 2007). The scholars using the WAD approach stressed the importance of women's knowledge, women's work and women's goals (Connelly et al, 2000). This approach recognized women as

important economic actors in the informal and household work that occurs outside the formal economy (Porter, 1999). While scholars from the WAD approach took a more critical view of women's economic contributions than the WID approach, they did not challenge the basic tenets of development at the time either. Proponents of the WAD approach viewed women's work inside the home as equally important to women's work outside the home but, similar to WID, viewed women's empowerment in economic terms (Zwart, 1992). The WID and WAD approaches did not often overtly work towards empowerment of women and girls in programming and initiatives.

Scholars using the WAD approach were criticized for considering women as a single group instead of recognizing differences among women, especially along racial and ethnic lines (Connelly et al, 2000). WAD scholars were also criticized for viewing women as "independent from their productive and reproductive relations with men" (Vavrus, 2007, p. 29). In other words, focusing on women in addressing gender inequalities in development "led to a focus on women in isolation from the rest of their lives and from the relationships through which such inequalities were perpetuated" (Kabeer, 1994, p. xii)

Gender and Development

In response to the criticisms of WID and WAD the Gender and Development (GAD) approach emerged. Scholars supporting GAD generally focused on socially constructed ideas about gender and the relationships between men and women instead of focusing on women alone. GAD scholars also recognized the differential impact of development on women and men (Connelly et al, 2000; Pearson & Jackson, 1998;

Vavrus, 2007). GAD proponents focused on a redistribution of power and challenged inequity and oppressive power structures (Mannathoko, 2008). These scholars also acknowledged that women were not a homogenous category and emphasized the importance of the influence of differences of class, age, religion and ethnicity on development outcomes (Momsen, 2004). GAD proponents distinguished between women's practical needs that would improve women's lives within their existing roles, and strategic needs that seek to increase women's ability to take on new roles (Connelly et al, 2000; Momsen, 2004; Steans, 2006).

Empowerment, as theorized by GAD scholars, focused primarily on changing power relations between men and women, and therefore, it emphasized understanding men's role in women's empowerment. As Bannon and Correia (2006) argued, women's well-being cannot be improved without considering men, their relationship to women and the negotiations that take place within gender relations.

Some current scholars on women's empowerment support the GAD approach as being useful in thinking about empowerment because of the focus on socially constructed gender relations and changing power dynamics between men and women (Datta, 2002; Datta & Kornberg, 2002; Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005; Oakley, 2001; Staudt, 2002). An in-depth discussion of power will be undertaken in Chapter Two, however, it is important to note that power can be theorized and discussed in a variety of ways. In general, many development organizations, by targeting women only, conceptualize power as 'power over' or zero-sum meaning that women will gain power at the expense of men (Sharp, Briggs, Yacoubt and Hamedt, 2003). Conceptualizing power change as a zero-

sum situation affects how development organizations approach changing women's economic and social status as well as how communities and families react to such changes. Generally, in a zero-sum situation, those in power are not willing to relinquish power to those who are perceived as less powerful. Families, communities and governments may be less likely to support social and structural change if the changes entail a transfer of power from men to women and boys to girls. Thus, some GAD scholars argue that it is important to take conceptualizations of power relations into consideration when planning empowerment programs for women and girls and to be intentional in addressing the power dynamics within the family, community and nation. A GAD perspective on empowerment calls for examining the specific social, political and economic factors in a community that are leading to gendered patterns of disempowerment and does not simply assume that women are disempowered due to traditional norms or values or patriarchal domestic arrangements (Vavrus, 2007).

The GAD approach to conceptualizing empowerment was used to inform this study as it emphasizes power relations as well as a view of women and girls as agents of development, not simply recipients. As a researcher I believe it is important to take into account differences in race, class, gender and power and that women represent a diverse group of human beings. In addition, the development agencies participating in this study engage with women from across these various social categories, making GAD an applicable approach to this research. While there are undoubtedly current development programs which use both WID and WAD approaches, the critiques listed above indicate

that these feminist approaches lack the complexity necessary to adequately address issues of gender and development, especially when working on empowerment.

This study engages in discussions of empowerment from a GAD perspective by emphasizing the importance of gendered relationships, recognizing the influence of women's differences (class, age, religion, etc) and distinguishing between women's practical needs and strategic needs in empowerment programs. The GAD perspective, however, does not provide a full picture of empowerment as it does not fully encompass the intricate process and outcome of empowerment. The capabilities approach will help to fill some of the gaps left by GAD when theorizing empowerment for women and girls.

Table 1: Gender, Education and Development: Contrasting Frameworks

Framework	Linked theories	Understandings of gender	Understandings of development	Understandings of education	Understandings of empowerment
Women in Development (WID)	Modernization, Human-capital theory	Gender = women and girls	Growth, efficiency, good governance, social cohesion	Schooling, inclusion	Economic independence and success
Women and Development (WAD)	Dependency Theory, Neo-Marxism	Gender = women and girls	Challenging patriarchy, Exploitation of the Third World	Inclusion of girls through exclusion of boys	Economic independence and success
Gender and Development (GAD)	Structuralism, Marxism	Constructed social relations, power	Challenging inequity and oppression	Conscientization, empowerment, gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and gender auditing	Changing gendered power relations

Source: Adapted from C. Mannathoko (2008)

Capabilities Approach

The capabilities approach is most associated with Amartya Sen's writings, particularly as introduced in his 1999 book *Development as Freedom*. Sen (1999) envisioned the capabilities approach as a new way to envision the process and goals of development. Sen (1999) writes that development should expand freedoms that people value to allow them to be fuller social persons who exercise their own volitions and interact with and influence the world in which they live (p. 15). Thus, the capabilities approach to development views individuals not as passive recipients of the benefits of empowerment programs, but as active agents in their own empowerment.

Sen (1999) argues that substantive freedom is crucial because freedom "is not only the basis of the evaluation of success and failure, but it is also a principal determinant of individual initiative and social effectiveness" (p. 18). Therefore, a person's quality of life is a function of what the person is able to be and do; their capabilities (Kaufman, 2006).

The capabilities, or freedoms, of all individuals need to be secured through social and institutional arrangements. Fostering capabilities for all people requires the removal of deeply embedded obstacles in the structures of power and exclusion including "discriminatory laws, customs, practices and institutional processes, all of which undermine opportunities and outcomes in education" (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005, p. 3). Monkman, Miles and Easton (2008) argue that lasting empowerment depends on the ability to alter social and cultural structures that promote inequalities. Therefore the capabilities approach draws attention to change in both personal agency and in social and

institutional structures which are constituted by both material structures such as access to labor markets and the "rules and social forces (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, customs, etc.) that limit or influence the opportunities that determine the actions of individuals" (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton & Bird, 2009, p. 14).

Amartya Sen (1999) does not limit or identify which capabilities are necessary; instead he argues that each individual will define the key capabilities based on their own values and needs. Nussbaum (2006), however, argues that the capabilities approach will prove useful in the pursuit of equality between men and women only if a definite list of the most central capabilities is developed. Nussbaum's list identifies ten capabilities that are necessary for a life with dignity. The ten capabilities represent general goals that can be further refined by the society in question and all ten capabilities are important for each and every member of the society. According to Nussbaum, a society without these ten capabilities for each person will not be considered a just society regardless of overall wealth. Nussbaum's (2006) Central Human Capabilities include:

1. *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely or because one's life is so reduced as to not be worth living

2. *Bodily Health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

3. *Bodily Integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choices in matters of reproduction.

4. *Senses, imagination and thought.* Being able to use the senses to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a 'truly human' way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training.

5. *Emotions.* Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.

6. *Practical reason.* Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

7. *Affiliation:*

- Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another.
- Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

8. *Other species.* Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. *Play.* Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. *Control over one's environment:*

- Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.
- Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers (p. 53).

Nussbaum's (2006) list is open-ended and subject to continued revision so that any society's account of the most fundamental entitlements is always subject to editing (either supplementation or deletion). Nussbaum (2006) writes that the capabilities approach is important for gender justice because capabilities can be a tool for securing and achieving rights, but is only useful when there is some concept of what the central human capabilities may be. Sen (1999) argues that freedom of choice is intrinsically important and therefore, does not agree with the idea of a compiled list of capabilities. Robeyns (2003) also criticizes Nussbaum's list because the process by which the list was created is unknown.

Both Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2006) put forth that the capabilities approach aims to ensure social justice and the rights for all people. Sen and Nussbaum both discuss capabilities and social justice most often in terms of political, economic and health freedoms. While Sen (1999) does acknowledge the importance of education as a

basic capability, he makes no distinction between education and schooling and presents education as an unqualified good for human capability expansion and human freedom (Unterhalter, 2003). Walker and Unterhalter (2007) more critically discuss the use of the capability approach as applied to education.

Capabilities and education

There are many questions surrounding the use of the capabilities approach with gender and education. Unterhalter (2003) argues that the tight link between education and capabilities theorized by Sen is problematic as schooling processes and facilities often do not enhance the freedoms of students, especially girls. Walker and Unterhalter (2007) also question when a child should be given the choice to accept or reject certain components of their own schooling. These critiques beg the question: How can capabilities for girls (and boys) be fostered in and out of school?

Unterhalter (2003) reiterates that schooling does not happen within a vacuum, but instead is located within the norms and patterns of society. Schooling is a socially constructed phenomenon which often serves to reproduce social inequalities. Despite that fact that schooling is not acquired in isolation from the social environment, it is important to acknowledge that schooling may be a transformative process which can promote change and contribute to building a just and democratic society (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005).

Clearly the relationship between capabilities, education and empowerment is somewhat problematic and needs to be considered further. It seems obvious that education is intimately connected with capabilities; however, there are still many

unanswered questions about the way in which learning (or schooling) promotes the real freedoms that people enjoy (Flores-Crespo, 2007).

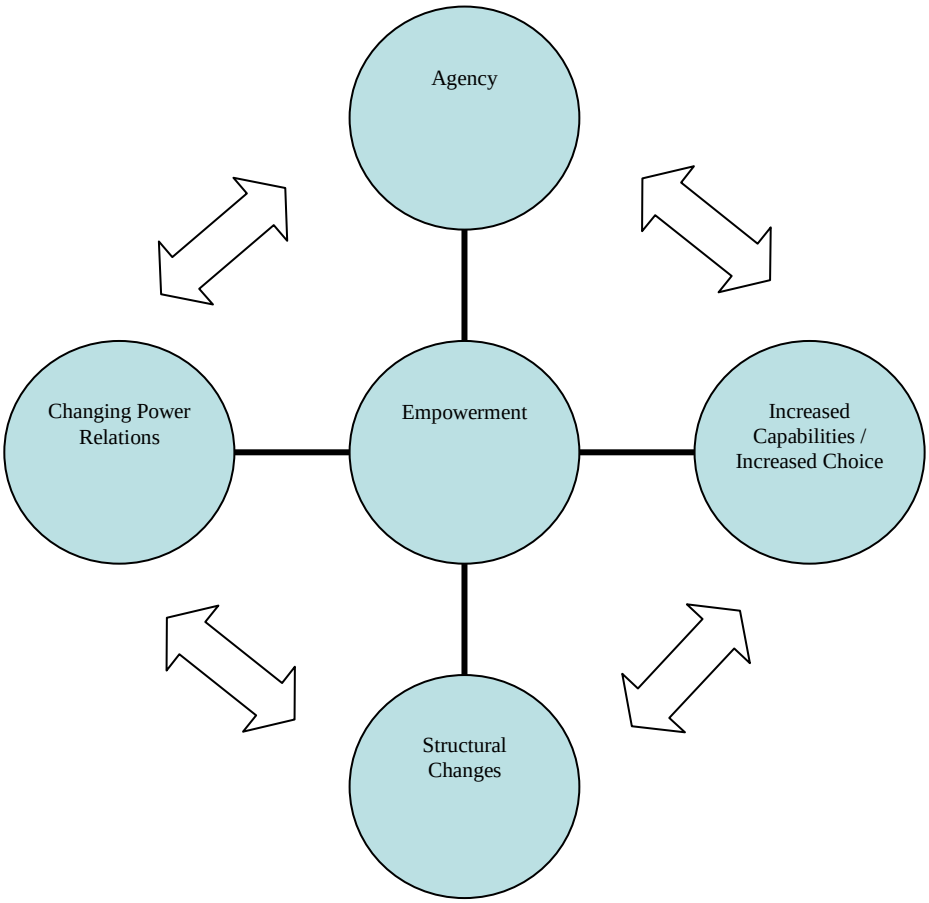
Conceptual Framework of Empowerment

This study used the GAD and capabilities approaches to inform a four dimensional framework of empowerment, all of which are useful in understanding conceptualizations of empowerment in education programs. The capabilities approach highlights the importance of freedoms to secure wellbeing (functionings) (including freedom to make choices as well as opportunities to rights and resources) and structural change; the GAD approach emphasizes the importance of changing power relations. Based on the literature, I assumed that change needs to happen within and across these categories for transformative empowerment to happen for women and girls. Empowerment may be transformative when it leads or contributes to a "process of changing the underlying power relations that render women disempowered" (Strandberg, 2001, p. 3). The literature also indicated the importance of agency as part of a complete and transformative framework for empowerment.

Empowerment is a complex and interconnected process, which is continuous and has no final, empowered end state (Stromquist, 2002). Change within only one category may improve the lives of women and girls, but would not address the complex nature of women's subjugation. Women are disempowered by (among other causes) gendered power relations within the household; a lack of access to economic opportunities (thus reducing poverty); and a possible lack of personal agency that can affect future aspirations and choice making (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Datta & Kornberg, 2002;

Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). Therefore, the operational conceptual framework for empowerment used in this study took into account choice making and capabilities as well as power relations, structural changes and personal agency.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of empowerment



The conceptual framework was also informed by my personal assumptions regarding empowerment, developed during the course of my graduate and professional work. First I assumed that empowerment for women and girls is a generally positive process and that education programs have the potential to increase women's and girls' sense of empowerment. Second, that it is a human right to have a quality education and

to have the choice to continue one's own education, or not, outside of the pressures of economic, social and safety obstacles. The possible effects of these assumptions and my biases will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

I used this conceptual framework, grounded in a GAD and Capabilities Approach, as a lens through which to approach the questions asked in the data collection instruments as well as in analysis of the data. This approach will be discussed more in Chapter Three.

Significance of the Study

As discussed above, empowerment is frequently used in connection with development policies and projects, however there is little consensus around the meaning of the term (Kabeer, 1994). In the past ten years there has been both an increase in academic articles and books written about empowerment and discussions about the importance of empowerment for development efforts. There is still, however, a lack of conceptual clarity and specificity around the aims of empowerment programs and definition of empowerment.

This study sought to bring conceptual clarity to an idea that is highly prominent in the field of development education by investigating the ways in which education development experts are using and operationalizing the term.

Chapter Two reviews and discusses the current academic literature on women's and girls' empowerment. The chapter focuses on the definitions and frameworks of empowerment as applied to international development programs and will discuss and critique example programs which seek to empower women and girls.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature that utilizes the concept of empowerment in relation to women and girls. The chapter begins with a discussion of the history of the empowerment approach in international development efforts. A discussion of the literature theorizing empowerment for women follows. The next section discusses the multitude of definitions used for women's empowerment and the ways in which women's empowerment is generally addressed in development efforts. Next, theories of girls' empowerment, especially as used in educational contexts, will be discussed. Empirical examples of girls' empowerment programs are then critically analyzed to highlight how conceptualizations of empowerment are limited by program goals or desired outcomes. I will briefly make a distinction between the concepts of agency and empowerment and the chapter will end with a summary of the research and how this research informed the development of the study's survey.

Empowerment and Development

As discussed in Chapter One, the GAD framework came about as a response to the limitations of WID. GAD feminists recognize that women are deeply affected by patriarchal structures and power relations at the national, community and household levels (Connelly et al, 2000). Feminist grassroots development organizations in particular, drawing on GAD, identified empowerment as a strategy to move beyond the WID focus on formal equality with men (Kabeer, 2001). Projects implemented from a GAD perspective attempt to improve women's position by changing unequal gender

relations. Thus, scholars and programs using a GAD approach address empowerment through changing gendered power dynamics (Qing, 1999). Feminist scholars, particularly those from the global South, promoted empowerment as a new approach that allowed women to challenge patriarchal, political and economic inequalities (Batliwala, 2007; Kabeer, 1994; Parpart, Rai & Staudt, 2002).

An early vision of empowerment offered by feminists of the South was rooted in a commitment to collective action in response to specific problems and in respect of local contexts. The grassroots nature of early empowerment programs was in answer to a perceived failure of top-down development initiatives to lesson poverty and other gender inequalities for women. Empowerment was envisioned as a weapon for the weak, best wielded through participatory activities, such as women's organizations, group protests, marches and participation and access to community meetings and decisions, to address issues of gender equity at the local level (Kabeer, 1994; Momsen, 2004; Parpart, Rai & Staudt, 2002). However, some scholars from the Global South, such as Srilatha Batliwala (2007) warn that empowerment has lost its transformative edge by being altered from a concept evolved to address specific development challenges into a universally applicable panacea. In this way empowerment has been robbed of its original meaning and strategic value.

The mainstreaming of empowerment projects means that many are no longer based in grassroots participatory activities, but are part of larger, top-down development initiatives. The relatively recent adoption of the term empowerment by mainstream development agencies has, in some cases, changed the goal of empowerment programs

from fostering social transformation to improving productivity within the *status quo.* The general use of empowerment has led to the creation of a linkage between empowerment, inclusion and voice that "papers over the complexities of empowerment, both as a process and a goal" (Parpart, Rai & Staudt, 2002, p. 3). For example, income generation or micro-loan programs support traditional development goals of reducing poverty, yet do not necessarily empower women. Income generation alone, without full autonomy to spend the income and control resources, does not equal empowerment. Women may become income earners, but still not increase their power in decision making, social relations or in freedom of movement (Moghadam, 2007; Narayan, 2005). Further, even if income generation does result in economic empowerment for women, it cannot be assumed that empowerment in other dimensions (i.e. political or social) of women's lives will follow. Women can be empowered in some areas, but not in others (Malhotra, 2003).

Dimensions of Women's Empowerment

Different agendas, emphases and terminologies pervade the literature on empowerment. Often the terms 'women's empowerment', 'gender equity' and 'female autonomy' are used synonymously. While these terms share some similar underlying concepts, Malhotra (2003) argues that there are two essential elements that distinguish women's empowerment from these similar concepts (gender equity, female autonomy). The first is that it is a process, not simply an end state. The second element is agency, meaning women must be active participants in their own empowerment; it cannot be conferred upon them from elsewhere. Distinguishing between these terms in

empowerment programs may help to clarify goals, desired outcomes and processes. Questions persist, however, of why women's empowerment in particular should be of special interest in development agendas and programs above or beyond the empowerment of other marginalized groups.

Women's empowerment has unique elements that set it apart from other empowerment initiatives aimed at marginalized groups. First, women are not simply one group amongst a set of disempowered groups (such as poor, ethnic minorities, etc.). Women represent a cross-cutting of identity and social status that is found amongst all other disempowered groups. Second, the household and familial interactions represent a central locus for women's disempowerment that is not necessarily true for other groups (Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender, 2002). This means that women's empowerment initiatives need to focus on structures at multiple levels, including the household. From this perspective, women's empowerment requires systematic changes in most institutions to address patriarchy (Kabeer, 2001; Malhotra et al, 2002).

A review of the literature on women's empowerment indicates that definitions focus around a few main groups using key words, such as: choices, capabilities, and power relations (Malhotra et al, 2002). Examples of definitions of women's empowerment as found in the literature have been grouped according to these key words in the table below. I have chosen to only include definitions of women's empowerment that were found in development and gender literature. I have also only included definitions with a clear articulation of the meaning of empowerment.

Table 2 Definitions of Women's Empowerment

Choice making	Moghadam (2007)	Empowerment is a multidimensional process and refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in all spheres (social, economic and political) to shape one's life.
	Smulovitz and Walton (2002)	Empowerment is understood in terms of the capacity of poor and subordinate groups to influence development processes, and consequentially achieve greater well being.
	Narayan (2005)	Empowerment refers broadly to the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life.
	Kabeer (1999)	The expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.
	Alsop and Heinsohn (2005)	Empowerment is to enhance an individuals or groups capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Empowerment is the capacity to make effective choices.
	World Bank (In Moghadam, 2007)	Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.
	Rowlands (1997)	Empowerment is more than participation in decision-making, it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.
Changing Power Relations	Oakley (2001)	The process of empowerment is referring to relative positions of formal and informal power enjoyed by different socio-economic groups and the consequences of gross imbalances in the distribution of power.
	Parpart, Rai and Staudt (2002)	People are empowered and changed through resisting disciplinary power relations. Empowerment is the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power (Srilatha Batliwala).
Capabilties	Mason (2005)	Women's empowerment is likely to involve not only their gaining new individual capabilities, but also the emergence of new beliefs about their right to exercise these capabilities and to take advantage of opportunities in their community.
	UNESCO (In Moghadam, 2007)	Empowerment is a multidimensional process of achieving basic capabilities, legal rights, and participation in key social, economic, political and cultural domains.

Women's empowerment is generally focused around three main domains in the literature: economic, political and social empowerment (Luttrell et al, 2009). Each of these three categories will now be discussed in more detail.

Economic empowerment

Due in part to difficulties in measuring different types of empowerment and due partly to the focus of many development efforts, economic empowerment has been the most studied form of empowerment (Narayan, 2005). Economic empowerment often focuses on entrepreneurial opportunities for women, such as micro-loans, and the benefits of women's economic activity on the household and nation (Moghadam, 2007). There is some evidence that in areas where women are economically active, girl children receive a higher share of household resources because they are viewed as potential wage earners; thus, in these situations, the mother's economic empowerment results in benefits for the girl child as well (Moghdam, 2007). However, women do not achieve economic empowerment simply by working; Economic empowerment of women "is possible only when women have full autonomy to spend their income and also control resources" (Moghadam, 2007, P. 151).

Economic empowerment, while valuable for a variety of reasons, does not tend to result in transformative social change. Narayan (2005) argues that "women may become income earners but still not increase their power in decision making, in social relations, or in freedom of movement" (p. 22). As stated previously, women may be empowered in some areas and not in others, so it should not be assumed that economic empowerment

will organically lead to social, political or other empowerment (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005).

A focus only on economic empowerment also limits the effects of an intervention. Oxaal and Baden (1997) argue that "to the extent that mainstream development discourse views empowerment as an individual rather than collective process, it emphasizes entrepreneurship and self-reliance rather than cooperation to challenge power structures" (p. 76). In a review of empirical studies of women's empowerment, Malhotra and Schuler (2005) found that the political and legal dimensions of empowerment tend to be operationalized at regional and national levels of aggregation, while familial, social and economic dimensions of empowerment are often operationalized at the household or individual levels; and they suggest effort needs to be made in empirical research to measure empowerment across multiple levels.

Political empowerment

Political empowerment focuses on increasing women's access to and participation in political bodies at the local and national levels. Longwe and Clarke (1999) define empowerment as "women's actual exercise of power over the allocation of resources and ability to control public policy. This is measured by data on women's occupation of decision-making positions in the public domain, such as seats in parliament, and top management positions" (p. 8) and Stromquist (2002) defines political empowerment as an "awareness of power inequalities and the ability to organize and mobilize" (p. 23). The more women who hold positions of leadership at the local, state, and national levels, the more women will be perceived as decision makers (Datta, 2002). In political

empowerment, power is operationalized as decision making ability. Thus, a woman's increased power would be indicated by "increased decision making authority in family and community affairs" (Datta, 2002, p. 76).

While Staudt (2002) views political engagement as the key challenge to empowerment "in both process and outcome" (p. 99), Malhotra et al. (2002) argue that achievements such as increased political engagement are outcomes of empowerment, but are not empowerment itself. Empowerment is more than the simple possession of power, but instead involves the exercise of power (Parpart, Rai, and Staudt, 2002). Thus while increased political participation and representation may be indicators or outcomes of empowerment, or even one piece of empowerment, it does not represent women's empowerment in its entirety.

Social empowerment

Social empowerment seeks to address issues of social exclusion of women and girls. Malhotra et al. (2002) define social inclusion as "the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities" (p. 4). Social empowerment is often theorized as women's access to social spaces and access to non-familial social networks (Malhotra et al, 2002) and measured by women's freedom of movement. However, other indicators may include male / female communication patterns, gendered patterns of domestic labor or negotiating marriage relations and decisions (DeJaeghere, Hegeman, & McCleary, n.d.; Malhotra et al, 2002).

Critiques of Empowerment

While much of the discussion around empowerment in the literature views it as a positive process and outcome there is some criticism, especially of how empowerment is commonly implemented through development programs. The term empowerment is often used by international development agencies in a manner that "robs it of any political meaning, sometimes as not more than a substitute word for integration or participation in processes whose main parameters have already been set elsewhere" (Kabeer, 2001, p. 224).

Empowerment projects often put the onus on women to confront patriarchy and change their own lives. Kabeer (2001) critiques scholars' assumptions that women are able to challenge the belief systems in which they were raised, analyze their own situation and develop their own strategies for change. Vavrus (2007) similarly argues that the rhetoric of empowerment constructs a notion of "a highly autonomous female subject upon whom much of the responsibility for national development falls" (p. 39). Oppression and disempowerment often prevent people from considering that there is an alternative to their current situation. As women internalize cultural subordination, they may be unable to change their own perceptions without an outside agent (Luttrell et al, 2009). Thus, some scholars argue that empowerment cannot be an individual process and that the onus should not be solely place on women to change the systems and cultures from which they are disempowered.

Other critics note that empowerment relies on assumptions based on women's economic, political and social lives in the developed world and that the "commonsense notion of empowerment assumes a universal system of reasoning about gender, power

and local control, thereby eliding the historical and cultural specificity of the representations that empowerment embodies" (Vavrus, 2000, p. 228). Datta (2002) and Datta and Kornberg (2002) argue that developing countries need to find indigenous mechanisms and indicators of empowerment instead of following the parameters set by industrialized countries.

The focus of empowerment efforts has begun to shift from women to girls, especially around discussions of quality and equity in education. The next section will discuss theories of empowerment for girls and youth.

Theorizing Girls' Empowerment in and Through Education

Education development efforts towards Education for All (EFA) have increased primary and secondary enrollments across many regions for both boys and girls. The 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report shows near parity (female to male ratio of .96) for the world (p. 62). Parity in enrollment, however, is not enough to declare that gender equality is achieved. It has become clear over the past decade that parity in enrollment does not necessarily equal increased achievement or completion for girls and other marginalized students and does not equal empowerment (Chisayma, DeJaeghere, Kendall & Khan, 2012; Herz and Sperling, 2004). Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) challenge educators and practitioners to think of education in terms of a transformative process which will promote social change and contribute to building a more democratic society instead of a focus simply on issues of parity; development efforts must move "beyond access." Education is increasingly being considered a vehicle through which to empower girls and women.

Much of the literature about empowerment and development is associated with adults and not youth, and therefore, a key question is whether there is a difference between how we construct and measure empowerment of women and empowerment of girls? Empowerment of youth and girls is based more in the language of human and child rights, which may signal a different conceptual framework being used in youth empowerment work.

A separate conceptual framework for youth may be necessary as the terms used to discuss women's empowerment can be problematic when applied to girls. For example, economic empowerment of women is only considered to be possible when women have full autonomy over the spending of their income and control over economic resources (Moghadam, 2007). In the case of wage-earning girls, especially under circumstances of extreme poverty, it is unlikely that girls will be able to obtain full autonomy of their economic resources. Girls (and women) as part of a larger family unit are defined in relation to others (i.e. wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law) (Sohoni, 1995). This relative positionality may limit a girl's ability to manipulate resources. Family resources (food, labor, wealth) in many situations benefit boys more than girls (Sohoni, 1995), which further reduces a girl's ability to control economic or social resources.

The discourses around political and social empowerment will also be different for girls than women due to family hierarchies and structures. In many countries and cultures "boys, like men, command greater space and value: that differential is sustained through a process of covert or overt neglect of the girl" (Sohoni, 1995, p. 13). Interventions around girls' social empowerment need to consider the complex structures

of families (and communities) and how families work with and distribute scarce resources. In the past it has been assumed that the empowerment of women would trickle down to their daughters, hence little attention was paid directly to girls by development efforts (Sohoni, 1995). However, evidence has shown that in some cases girls' labor was increased as they took on addition workloads created by their mothers' participation in development projects (Sohoni, 1995). Youth empowerment also differs from adult empowerment in part due to increased constraints. Women face constraints to empowerment due to economic, structural, and social norms; whereas youth face the similar constraints with the compounding effects of age and family. Sohoni (1995) argues that "girls are twice as denied (resources) and in a worse position than even women" (p. 1). Therefore, it is important to look at girls' empowerment separately from women's empowerment and to not simply apply the same concepts to youth as are applied to adults.

In an analysis of empirical studies on youth and empowerment, DeJaeghere et al. (n.d.) found the literature around youth empowerment focused more on psychological and cognitive empowerment with the use of terms such as increasing self-esteem, self-confidence or self-efficacy. This may be in part because there is evidence that psychological development during "adolescence heavily influences whether a girl reaches womanhood with high self-esteem or whether she enters into destructive or dependent relationships with men" (Barker, Knaul, Cassaniga, & Schrader, 2000, p. 4). Other key dimensions found in youth empowerment include: developing and enacting leadership,

understanding changing social power relations between adults and peers and changing structural issues, especially at the school level (DeJaeghere et al., n.d.).

Many definitions of empowerment for youth focus on increasing individual agency (particularly definitions around capabilities and changing power relations), but there is increasing debate in the literature around individual versus collective agency. Narayan (2005) argues that collective capabilities (or agency) are necessary to break down the barriers of powerlessness and voicelessness. While many youth empowerment activities focus on psychological or individual empowerment, they happen within families, communities and organizations leading to an "inter-relatedness of individual and community level empowerment outcomes" (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, and McLoughlin, 2006, p. 37).

In the literature the most common terms used for youth empowerment include leadership, self-esteem and power relations (DeJaeghere et al, n.d.). The majority of education development projects that overtly state girls' empowerment as a goal or outcome are implementing projects that work in these three areas. However, a focus on only these three dimensions may limit girls' empowerment and, therefore, have a limited impact on changing girls' lived experiences. In addition, as stated earlier, empowerment in one dimension is not necessarily related to empowerment in another. The next section will use these three terms as well as the capabilities approach to discuss empirical studies of girls' empowerment to understand how empowerment for girls is being used and theorized in the field.

Leadership

Psychological empowerment is one of the most commonly used forms of youth empowerment and is often linked to leadership (DeJaeghere et al., n.d.). Stromquist (1993) writes that psychological empowerment "involves understanding the self and the need to make choices that may go against cultural and social expectations" (p. 14). Jennings et al. (2006) also highlight the importance of critical reflection and increasing the capacity for critical thinking in oppressed groups, to better understand the societal context and how to create change in that context. Leadership programs generally aim to increase participants understanding of their social context and facilitate decision making, as well as increase self-esteem, although it is unclear in the literature if there is such a linear relationship between leadership skills and increased self-esteem. The psychological empowerment literature suggests that critical reflection, a good understanding of how to make decisions, and what the outcomes may be are all necessary for leadership programs to have an empowering effect.

Sperandio (2000), in her research on empowerment of girls in secondary schools in Uganda, utilizes leadership and decision-making in her definition of empowerment. In her study, Sperandio (2000) sought to identify if Ugandan women felt empowered from their secondary school experience and in what ways schools model or foster leadership among women. She surveyed a total of 590 female students in nine secondary schools encompassing co-educational day schools, co-educational boarding schools, and an all girls' boarding school.

Sperandio (2000) found that girls' felt empowered in an environment of high expectations, documented rules and regulations, clear goals and aims of the schools and a

positive atmosphere from teachers and administrators as well as fellow students. The impact of high expectations is shown in the recollections of one study participant: "As soon as I stepped inside the gates of N… I knew I would qualify for the University... the teachers were always there for us, my fellow students were ever ready to help, and as for the administration - it was always ready to remind us of what brought us to school" (p. 59). Thus, the expectations of teachers and administrators that girls' act as leaders in their own educations seemed to have an empowering effect on the students by increasing their self-esteem and future outlook.

Providing opportunities for girls to exercise their skills as leaders also seemed to empower women later in life. Women who attended schools where there was clear leadership and a fostering of self-discipline, duty and community felt the experience shaped the long-term outcomes of their lives. One former student felt that her school experience broadened her understanding of social roles and expectations and that without the leadership experiences from her school days she would have had a much more difficult life (p. 60).

The presence of female teachers and female head teachers provided role-models; however, it was strong leadership of the school and the setting of high expectations for achievement and behavior that empowered girls to act as leaders and work to mobilize resources from their communities and parents.

The findings from this study suggest that it is helpful for teachers to be sensitized to gender issues and trained in fostering leadership opportunities for boys and girls. Policy makers can help improve outcomes by making expectations of teachers and head

teachers clear as well as providing examples of good practices and reward schools that demonstrate such behaviors (Sperandio, 2000).

The Sperandio (2000) study indicates that fostering leadership in girls requires more than simply showing girls what a leader looks like (i.e. the female teachers). Leadership must be experiential; the girls needed to live and experience a leadership role for it to become transformative.

In a related study Bajaj (2008) explored girls' and youth leadership stemming from a unique school program in Zambia. The study is framed in terms of transformative agency. Bajaj (2008) defines transformative agency as "a belief in one's present or future ability to improve individual social mobility and transform elements of one's society" (p. 4) and highlights that once cultivated, transformative agency, like empowerment, is situational. The Umutende school differed from other schools in the district by focusing on values such as peace, truth, social justice and non-violence. The school fostered cultural pride, equality, and participation by including students in the working of the school. The teachers and administrators also influenced student's self-conception through the language that was used to address students on a daily basis. Teachers and administrators would encourage leadership and agency in the students with statements such as, "one day when you are running the country" and "when one of you becomes president" (Bajaj, 2008, p. 6). The daily reiteration of leadership messages seemed to impact students' self-concept. Students talked about a desire to become leaders and elected officials to be able to bring positive change and improve their communities and country. Pupils from other schools enacted their agency in different ways which suggests

that the curriculum and structure of Umutende (focused on community service and interactive pedagogy, longer school day, smaller class sizes) did enhance the students' belief in their own ability to transform their surroundings. Upon graduation, however, the students were less able to continue to enact their agency. The students often felt unprepared for the unequal and unfair reality of life outside of the school and were unsure how to negotiate within the corrupt and unjust power structure.

Agency, post graduation, was situational and "operated distinctly in different contexts and at different moments" (Bajaj, 2008, p. 14). The students in this study showed strong leadership while in a safe and caring school environment, but were less able to enact their leadership when presented with barriers outside of that safe, supportive environment. The agency fostered within these students was transformative in the students' self-concept, but was not transformative in terms of lasting and sustainable change to their lives and contexts. The program was solely school based and did not foster inter-linkages with parents and other community members or work to enhance students' access to resources outside of the classroom. This may be one reason why students were less able to enact their agency outside of the school setting.

The study by Bajaj (2008) highlights multiple important processes for the girls' empowerment programs. First, repetition of high expectations and anticipation of success for the students from teachers and faculty led to a strong sense of leadership and positive aspirations for the students. This point may be even more crucial for girls as they often begin with lower self-confidence and lower future aspirations than boys. Second, high expectations and support of student leadership needs to be coupled with a

critical awareness of wider social structures and norms. Critical understanding and critical reflection are necessary for youth empowerment (Jennings et al, 2006) and a lack of awareness may actually be disempowering to youth when they leave the relative safety of the school setting.

Leadership is often listed as an outcome or goal of girls' empowerment initiatives and these studies have shown that leadership is linked to increased self-confidence and positive aspirations in some contexts. It is still unclear, however, how empowered a girl will be who has taken part in such a leadership program and to what extent her new level of self-confidence and positive aspirations will affect other areas of her life.

Self-esteem

Empowerment for youth is often used inter-changeably with "self-esteem" and "self-confidence" and increasing self-esteem is a commonly stated outcome of girls' education interventions. This is considered an important outcome in terms of social change because girls need to gain a sense of security and confidence to move from known behavior to unknown behavior (Barker et al, 2000). There is also evidence to suggest that girls with lower self-esteem are less likely to take part in income generating activities and often have lower educational attainment (Barker et al, 2000). Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) argue that a critical role of education for girls is fostering the confidence to express themselves as individuals; one of the goals often cited in self-esteem raising programs. While there is a close link between self-esteem and empowerment, self-esteem alone is not sufficient for girls' empowerment. Martinez Bordon (2003) found in her study of girls' education in Mexico that self-esteem and self-

confidence were not sufficient capabilities for girls to create change in their lives or necessarily impacted their ability to continue on to higher levels of education. While girls' found the ability to create social networks with friends at school to be empowering, ill-treatment by teachers and lack of support from family and community still greatly impacted girls' abilities to obtain further education or employment (Martinez-Bordon, 2003).

In another study, Murphy-Graham (2008) looked empirically at the outcomes of an empowerment program called *Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial* (SAT) in Honduras. The program focused on mainstreaming gender into all aspects of the secondary school curriculum and using learner-centered pedagogy to improve achievement. The curriculum had five capabilities (instead of academic disciplines) including "technology, mathematics, science, language and communication, and community service" (Murphy-Graham, 2008, p. 34).

Murphy-Graham (2008) relied on Kabeer's (1999) definition of empowerment to analyze the outcomes of the project. She defined empowerment as: "a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability" and "the essence of empowerment is to enhance women's capacity for self-determination" (p. 32). The study was conducted in four villages along the Caribbean coast populated predominantly by the Garifuna (an ethnic minority population). Murphy-Graham (2008) aimed to understand qualitatively the difference between young women who had participated in the program at secondary school age and those who had not. In particular, she aimed to understand whether the program had an impact on their

sense of empowerment in their post-school (adult) lives. She interviewed 12 women who had taken part in the SAT between two and six years and six women who had not taken part in the program.

Murphy-Graham (2008) found that women who had participated in the SAT program had more options available to them economically and had set more reasonable goals for the future over the following year. She suggested that these differences are due to participants' increased knowledge, understanding, self-confidence and awareness of gender equity. This study found that the SAT program gave women both specific knowledge and critical understanding; through their critical understanding women who had participated in the program were able to list problems they saw in the village as well as possible resolutions to the problems. The women who had not participated in SAT had a more difficult time thinking of problems and possible solutions.

The SAT program also appears to have changed the participants' self-confidence and self-esteem as measured through their ability to read in public, speak-out during church services and give presentations. The women also began to think critically about gender roles in the home and community and to argue (at least amongst themselves) for a more balanced division of labor.

Psychological empowerment, however, does not directly address many of the structural issues that the women in these villages were facing. Murphy-Graham (2008) points out that there are many obstacles that cannot be overcome by increased self-confidence such as: "poverty, violence, corruption, disease and the complacency of those in power" (p. 45). The women also continued to be constrained by a lack of jobs and

unchanging social norms (such as men in leadership positions). As discussed earlier in this paper, psychological empowerment is part of a strategy for long-term social change. However, psychological empowerment alone cannot change the larger structures in which women live and work (Murphy-Graham, 2008).

Capabilities

Formal schooling systems can be places that foster capabilities in girls, but they can also be places that deprive girls of capabilities. The unequal social relations and contestations in girls' lives outside of schooling are also replicated and lived within the school system. In this way, formal schooling may empower girls in some respects, but is not, necessarily, a panacea for all gender inequalities (Unterhalter, 2003). One example of the complexities of the school environment and the subsequent affect on capabilities is the Bangladesh Female Stipend Programme (FSP). The FSP was created to encourage enrolment of girls in secondary school. The basic tenets of the programme were that an increase in girls' education would delay marriage and reduce fertility (Raynor, 2005). In terms of increasing female enrolments in secondary school (with a subsequent rise in primary enrolments) the programme is considered a success. However, the programme has been contested in certain communities where there has been both a desire for boys to also receive stipends and to maintain the status quo in gender relations.

Raynor (2005) found, in a study of FSP participating families, that girls and women were very positive about the power of education to solve their problems. Men and boys agreed that education was beneficial for women in girls in terms of increased opportunity for employment, but was more beneficial in terms of girls learning how to

become better wives and mothers. Some boys wanted a girl who had some education, but not more than they had themselves.

Mothers of girls in the FSP had the strongest belief in their daughters' increased capabilities. These mothers felt that the programme was changing the girls' social status within the family and increasing the chances for a better life and better living conditions. Some mothers even felt their daughters had completely open futures because with increased education and the ability to support themselves, their daughters were not reliant on obtaining and keeping a husband.

Men and boys were not as positive regarding the possible increase of girls' capabilities. Raynor (2005) found that there was a general desire among boys and men for girls' education to lead to employment, but not to empowerment. Neither boys nor girls envisioned the benefits to the individual girl from increased education, only the mothers envisioned better things for their daughters.

This discussion has shown the complicated nature of women's and girls' capabilities and schooling. While empowerment was not an overt goal or outcome of the FSP, there is clear evidence that girls' capabilities were increased at least in terms of future vision. However, these capabilities were significantly limited by the opinions of men and boys and the lack of empowerment of women and mothers to make decisions for their families. Thus far the FSP has been careful to promote the programme as supporting traditional values and gender roles. However, Raynor (2005) suggests that now that the programme has momentum and widespread acceptance that it may be possible to build in more overt programming to promote the empowerment and equality of women and girls.

Power relations

As the word "empowerment" affirms, power is central to the concept of empowerment; however, the relationship of power to the empowerment of girls is not well defined in the literature. This critical aspect of empowerment has not often been taken up by authors working in girls' education. Yet, other authors argue that empowerment is essentially about shifting the power imbalance to boost the influence of those groups relatively powerless in relation to others who have access to and use of formal and informal power (Oakley, 2001; Staudt, 2002). This definition is situated in a world with a limited power supply, a "zero-sum" world where any gain in power by one group inevitably results in the loss of power by another group (Oakley, 2001, Rowlands, 1997). In a "variable sum" world, the powerless can be empowered without reducing the nature and level of power already held by powerful groups (Oakley, 2001). While a variable sum view of power, such as girls and women increasing negotiating power within the family without reducing male power, may be a useful conceptualization when striving to improve gender relations, most often those in power fear losing power and envision a zero sum framework when confronted with the empowerment of others. This may be especially true when empowering girls within a family structure. There may be resistance from parents and older siblings who fear a reduction in their own power.

More useful to the discussion of girls' empowerment is to consider different forms of power. Oakley (2001) discusses a form of power he calls the 'power to be able'; this type of power equals feeling more capable and in control of oneself as opposed to power over another person. Oakley (2001) argues for power in a Freirian

sense of knowledge gaining and increased power to be able to; the building of critical understanding among marginalized and oppressed groups.

Power to and power over still limit our conception of power relations, especially when considering gender relations. Rowlands (1997) builds on the Freirian notion of power to include four forms of power: power over, power to, power with, and power from within (p. 12). In Rowlands' model, power over is a patriarchical, zero sum power structure where women or girls gaining power will take power away from men. In this theorization of power the powerful are often reluctant to change the status quo and relinquish power to others. This type of power can be bestowed upon one person by another (Rowlands, 1997). Chambers (2006), however, argues that power over does not always need to be a negative construct. Instead the negative or positive aspect of power over depends on how that power is used and argues that there is potential for top-down transformations in which power over can be used to create gains for the powerful as well as the less powerful; in other words, a win-win construct of power.

Rowlands (1997) describes 'power to' as not involving domination by one group, or bestowing power on another, but is a generative power. Power to is achieved by increasing the ability to resist and subvert power over. Rowlands (1997) defines power with as, "a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together (p. 13). Finally, power within is based in self-acceptance, self-respect and respect and acceptance of others (Rowlands, 1997).

Power is embedded in social relationships and affects who has use of and access to resources, both material and ideological (Monkman, Miles, and Easton, 2008).

Marginalized groups may become empowered through collective action, "but that action is enabled or constrained by the structures of power that they encounter" (Parpart, Rai, and Staudt, 2002, p. 4). The studies highlighted in this section look at power relations and structural change in the context of gender and education.

Martinez Bordon (2003) uses Rowlands' notion of *power to*, *power with* and *power through* in her analysis of teachers' and peer relationships with students and its effect (encourage or inhibit) on empowerment of girls in secondary schools in Mexico. Martinez Bordon interviewed students in their third year of secondary school who were attending a *Telesecundaria* (schools that use TV as the central teaching component) which is a type of schooling created to increase enrolment and retention of rural children. The author operationalized empowerment by looking at whether teachers were able to foster or encourage the development of "self confidence and self-esteem, as well as the abilities to negotiate, to communicate, to get support, to defend self-rights, etc." (p. 8).

Martinez Bordon (2003) found that in two of the three schools in which she conducted her research the teachers were punitive, they would sexually harass girls and were demeaning to students (i.e. telling the students they are only as smart as first graders). In the third school, the teachers and students had a positive relationship with little punishment or harassment. She argues that students' self-esteem and self-confidence are stunted by negative interactions with the teachers. However, in one school parents and students worked together to dismiss a teacher who was behaving inappropriately, which encouraged the development of 'power to' through the girls' ability to communicate the problem with their parents and gain their support. Martinez

Bordon (2003) concluded that a positive teacher student relationship is beneficial to increasing student self-esteem, but is not a sufficient condition to account for empowered behavior. The strong parental involvement of school C seemed to be the more important factor in terms of girls' expressions of empowerment.

Martinez Bordon (2003) also found that the act of attending school alone was empowering to girls. Once a girl graduated from school her movements were quite restricted by her family, but when in school girls and boys had the same rights. Despite a poor learning environment girls found school a place to build social capital, play, and share their problems and dreams with other girls; they were able to develop *power with*. Martinez Bordon concluded that school was empowering for girls, but due more to social interaction with peers than due to increased education. She found that the school experience:

> Helps girls to empower themselves, is inter-related with the social context where girls live, with their families' attitudes and beliefs about what is the role of men and women in society, along with the job opportunities available to them (p. 25).

This study indicates that larger societal structures, such as gender roles and job opportunities, have a strong impact on the empowerment of girls. In this study, girls with supportive parents were able to enact 'power with' to dismiss certain teachers, but they were not able to enact 'power to' remain in school beyond secondary education. The focus on individual empowerment (self-esteem, self-confidence) while improving certain aspects of the girls' lives had limited impact on the greater challenges girls face.

Some youth empowerment programs focus on peer education which is thought to empower both mentors and mentees in different ways. The 'student' is thought to be empowered through increased knowledge and seeing a successful role model will lead to increased self-esteem and self-confidence. The 'teacher' experiences increased responsibility and trust as well as new friendships. James (2002) critiqued an HIV / AIDS peer education program in South Africa, called DramAidE, to assess the success of the program in terms of increasing awareness of HIV / AIDS as well as change in personal identity or feelings of empowerment. The program was based on the teaching of life skills as a way to combat the socio-economic deprivation and associated factors that accompany such a situation, which often leads to behaviors that increase the risk of contracting HIV. The main aim of the program was to help people understand their bodies and gendered social interactions. The initiative later included youth clubs aimed at promoting health within schools. However, many of the clubs were not sustained. The peer educators were able to find a voice (agency) to critique the programs for which they were volunteers or workers. For example one peer educator felt frustrated with the limited scope of many AIDS education programs. He felt the programs were lacking and that more was needed:

> We need a social infrastructure …By that I mean communication skills and decision-making skills — things that we want. Leadership training, vocational training, civic rights and responsibility…we want mental health and hygiene. This is what makes up life skills. What we need are life skills. Not empowering us to use a condom (p. 185).

Though the program originally sought to empower youth collectively, the unintended result was the individual empowerment of the peer educators themselves. The larger, collective empowerment was much harder to obtain. This study indicates that peer education programs must take into account the complex social situations in which they are being implemented. The overarching socio-economic conditions in which this program took place were not conducive to transformative change in gender relations. It is possible for the contextual circumstances to change the program instead of the intended objective of the program to change the circumstances.

The study also cautions about possible negative unintended outcomes. For example, the success of the program is based largely on the behavior of the peer educators. It is possible for the older educators to take advantage of younger participants under the guise of education. The relationship is further complicated by combining a horizontal peer friendship with a hierarchical relationship based on level of knowledge. There is a conflict in types of power in this relationship. Instead of a power sharing relationship or a power with, the peer educator relationship became one of power over, i.e. the mentor bestowing knowledge or power on the mentee. Some participants felt they would rather learn about HIV / AIDS prevention from adults then from a peer. This may be because the power over relationship with adults is a cultural norm and thus felt more comfortable to the learner.

The power structures in which girls live their lives are complicated; the literature is still unclear as to how girls' empowerment programs change these power structures (both within the family and on a larger scale). More research about the lived experience

of empowerment for youth is necessary to understand how leadership, self-esteem, and power in youth empowerment programs may transform the lives of girls and boys.

Much of the literature around youth empowerment uses the terms "agency" and "empowerment" interchangeably (Kabeer, 1999), however, these are not the same construct. The next section will outline the difference between agency and empowerment.

Agency in Contrast to Empowerment

As stated above, agency and empowerment are often used interchangeably in the literature, thus it is important when discussing empowerment to clarify the difference between these two constructs. Agency, like empowerment, has multiple definitions, but generally refers to choice making. For example, Kabeer (1999) defines agency as "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (p. 3) and Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) define agency as the "capacity to make purposive choice" (p. 4). Others, such as Bajaj (2008) attempt to define agency as a more transformative process. Bajaj (2008) defines transformative agency as, “a belief in one’s present or future ability to improve individual social mobility and transform elements of one’s society” (p. 4).

While there is debate in the literature regarding the individual versus collective nature of agency (DeJaeghere et al., n.d.), agency is often used to refer to individual capacity and action. Drydyk (2008) argues that agency is a “concept of autonomous personal involvement in activities; it is not about the consequences of those activities on a person’s life” (p. 4). In contrast, empowerment is concerned not only with expanding agency, but also with “removing the gaps and barriers between people’s agency and the

expansion of their well-being freedom" (Drydyk, 2008, p. 5). Thus, agency is the degree to which a person is autonomously involved in their own activities at a given time and empowerment is the degree that people's agency is engaged to expand their well-being or freedoms.

In relationship to empowerment, agency is one important element of the empowerment process, but empowerment cannot be reduced to agency alone (Drydyk, 2008). The conceptual framework used in this study also indicates that while an individual or group must have agency to become empowered, agency alone is not enough for empowerment to have occurred. The literature on empowerment, especially with regards to women and girls, indicates that empowerment requires agency (personal or collective), but that organizations and structures as well as power relations must also be addressed (Monkman et al, 2008; Kabeer, 1999).

Summary

This chapter discussed diverse and competing theories and definitions of women's and girls' empowerment in the literature. It also identified the wide variety of ways in which empowerment is theorized and frames development projects, particularly within education. The conceptual framework used in this study is based on this synthesis of the literature and was used to guide the development of the questionnaire used in data collection which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

While many studies and programs of girls' empowerment use limited conceptualizations of empowerment, such as leadership or self-esteem, the conceptual framework used to guide this study aims to integrate various concepts from across the

literature for a more expansive framework. It is clear that more work needs to be done around youth and empowerment as well as women and empowerment.

This literature review illustrates that there is still some contestation as to what empowerment means for women and girls and what an empowered woman or girl would look like when operationalized. This study sought to bring some conceptual clarity to this construct through a mixed method quantitative and qualitative methodology. The next chapter will discuss the methodology used in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used to research the meanings and dimensions of empowerment as used by professionals working in international development education programs. In the first section the research goals and questions will be briefly re-stated. Since the research goals and questions guided the design and methods used in the study it is important to state them again before discussing the framework for and methods applied in this research. In the second section the conceptual framework and assumptions employed in this study including the capabilities approach and GAD framework are reviewed.

A mixed methods approach, including a survey and semi-structured one-to-one interviews, was chosen for this research. The strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods as well as the rationale for the use of both methods in this study are discussed. The sample as well as the instruments used and how the instruments were designed and data were gathered are then outlined. In the next section my biases and perspectives and how those may have affected data collection and analysis are discussed. The analysis procedures will be reviewed in the penultimate section followed by a discussion of the limitations of this research study.

Restatement of Research Question

Empowerment projects are being implemented and run across the world by a wide variety of organizations. Individuals, communities, women, men and youth may all be involved in aspects of empowerment programs. Such projects are often critiqued for not

having a well developed definition or conceptualization of empowerment or for addressing more limited constructs such as agency under the umbrella term empowerment. As stated in Chapter One, this study sought to bring some conceptual clarity and specificity to the term empowerment by understanding how professionals working with international education and development projects conceive of empowerment. The research question addressed by this study was:

How is empowerment conceptualized and operationalized by people working with education programs within international development organizations?

Research Foundations

This was an exploratory study that sought to investigate nuances of opinion and emergent contextual themes. A mixed-methods approach was chosen in an attempt to attain both breadth and depth of understanding (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A mixed methods approach refers to "employing the data collection associated with both forms of data" (Creswell, 2003 p. 190). The use of mixed methods strengthened this research by allowing me to clarify the participant responses on the survey and therefore reducing response error and missing data (Patton, 2002).

The qualitative and quantitative data addressed different but equally important aspects of the research question. Qualitative research methodology is used in an attempt to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view" rather than to collect objective data to be quantified (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). This type of methodology is "fundamentally interpretive" and requires the researcher to be open and explicit about biases and experiences since "the personal interpretation brought to qualitative data analysis cannot

be escaped" (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). In this research a qualitative methodology was considered important due to the complex and varied nature of the term in question. The qualitative data was used to inform the quantitative data and thus reduce interpretation bias.

In contrast to qualitative data, quantitative data tend to be to be primarily numerical and descriptive in terms of statistical analysis instead of rich verbal interactions (Denscombe, 2003, Merriam, 1998). Quantitative methods typically focus more on "measurements and amounts of the characteristics displayed by the people and events the researcher studies" (Thomas, 2003, p. 1). In this study the quantitative data was used to collect a wider breadth of information. Through the survey I was able to understand how the participants thought about empowerment in reference to the key concepts found in the literature.

The conceptual framework of empowerment outlined in Chapter 1 was used to guide the creation of both the survey and interview protocol and to analyze the data. The questions were based on the four dimensions of the empowerment framework: changing power relations, agency, structural change and increased capabilities and choice making. While these dimensions were used to guide my thinking in terms of the questions asked, I was not looking to prove or disprove the importance of these concepts. Instead, the framework was used to outline questions for the experts while leaving space for each expert to include other important or missing concepts.

Design of Study

Research mis-steps

The methodology used in this research was, by necessity, flexible and iterative and was adapted to best fit the participants. The first methodology attempted was a Delphi study with participants taking part in two rounds of questionnaire research. The study was aimed at seeking clarity of the meanings of empowerment, but not reaching consensus. Instead, the Delphi process would have been used to explore the wide range of expert opinion around the concept as well as highlight areas of disensus.

I considered the Delphi method appropriate for this research since it may be used when there is imprecise or incomplete information about a subject or when problems do not lend themselves to precise analytical techniques (Skulmoski, Hartman & Kahn, 2007). The sample size considered when planning the Delphi method was based on the Delphi literature. Gorden (1994) suggests the common Delphi panel consists of 15 - 35 experts. However, in an attempt to have the largest possible final n, 100 experts were to be invited to participate in Round One of the study. Typically, a Delphi study would have a response rate anywhere from 40 - 75 percent (Gordon, 1994, p. 7). Using the most conservative estimate of 40 percent the final panel would have included a minimum of 40 participants.

I found, however, that many international development professionals were willing to help with the study, but were not willing or able to dedicate time to more than one round of data collection. Each participant had an extremely busy schedule, and the e-mail containing the questionnaire would often "get lost in the shuffle." It became obvious that the Delphi method was not appropriate for this population.

Mixed-method approach

When it became clear the Delphi method was not going to be successful, I, in agreement with my advisor, decided a new methodology was necessary. Availability of participants, access to the population and differences in time-zones were all barriers to data collection. Thus a combination of telephone interview and survey was decided as the new data collection method. I chose to use survey as a research strategy to allow for a wide coverage and "breadth of view" around the topic (Denscombe, 2003, P. 6). I found considerable variation in empowerment indicators, across the four dimensions of the empowerment framework, in the literature and wanted to ask each participant about all of the indicators. Therefore, I felt a questionnaire was the most economical and least intrusive method to collect this data. The creation of the questionnaire will be discussed in detail later in the chapter. The telephone interviews were completed to provide more in-depth understanding into the use of the term empowerment as well as to allow for contextual and regional differences to emerge (Denscombe, 2003). Semi-structured interviews were used to allow for elaboration on the points that were of most interest to the interviewee. Denscombe (2003) writes that allowing interviewees to develop the interview topics "is a better way of discovering things about complex issues" and that semi-structured interviews are aimed at discovery rather than checking (p. 167).

To maximize the brief interview session (generally thirty to forty minutes) the participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in advance of the discussion. The questionnaire was used as a starting point for a conversation around how empowerment is used in the country or regional context in which the participant worked as well as how the participant thought about and used the term empowerment in his or her professional life.

The completed questionnaire was sent to me by e-mail either before or after the telephone interview. The questionnaire was also blanket e-mailed, without an interview request, to another 100 participants in an attempt to increase the number of questionnaires collected. There was little response to this attempt, so this method was not pursued further for data collection or analysis.

Instruments

A review of the literature presented in Chapter Two was used to identify important concepts and categories used on the survey. Thus, the survey consisted of a series of statements taken from the literature with closed-ended rating scale response options. The survey was separated into four sections aligned with the conceptual framework labeled: Agency, Changing Power Relations, Increased Capabilities and Structural Factors. Each section contained questions pertaining to that aspect of empowerment as defined by the conceptual framework (See Appendix A for full survey). Participants were asked to rate the level of importance of each statement to their conceptualization of empowerment from "not at all" to "critical" on a four-point rating scale. After each section a qualitative short answer question asked if the participant had any comments or additions. One final qualitative short answer question was asked at the end of the survey to ensure that important items not included by myself could be added by the participants. Participants were also asked at the beginning of the questionnaire to briefly state their personal or institutional definition of empowerment. The final section of the survey constituted basic demographic information such as age, sex, organization

affiliation, number of years in current position and the area of the world in which he or she worked.

Each of the four empowerment sections differed slightly in length with an average of 16 items per section plus a final qualitative open-ended comment box. To reduce redundancy and length the items were written as sentence fragments instead of asking "how important" with every item. Each section began with a re-statement of the main question: *How important are each of these elements to women's and girls' empowerment?* Table three shows an example of the questionnaire structure. The survey was five pages in total.

Table 3: Questionnaire example

Section A	Agency			
How important are each of these elements to women's and girls' empowerment?	Not at all important	Somewhat Important	Important	Critical
1. Women's and girls' awareness of lack of empowerment				
2. Awareness of inequalities				
3. Understanding of personal rights				
4. Understanding of self				

Due to a limited population size and possible lack of access to a large number of participants it was not feasible to pilot the questionnaire with a sample of the population. In lieu of a pilot, the questionnaire was put through two stages of review. The first stage was one round of expert review with three professional researchers to ensure the items were well written and in an order that would achieve the best results. The second stage

included two rounds of think-aloud with two professionals in international development in each round (four in total) to check that the questions were clear, concise, in a logical order, and that there were not any important concepts missing from the questionnaire. The second stage of review was also used to check the validity of the items by clarifying how each item was read and understood by professionals in the field. The instrument was refined after each round of review.

The questionnaire was sent to participants via e-mail which included a consent information sheet as a separate attachment. The body of the e-mail served as a cover letter for the questionnaire explaining who I was, the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of the research, why the participant was chosen for this study and contact information for me should the participant have any questions or concerns. The consent information sheet and the information contained in the e-mail can be found in Appendix B.

Interview

The second method used to collect data was semi-structured one-to-one interviews. The interviews were completed either by telephone or by Skype. Many of the participants lived internationally and requested to use Skype instead of their personal mobile phones. All of the interviews were scheduled by the participants to best fit into their busy schedules. Semi-structured interview questions were used, which were designed to keep the interview on track, but still allow the interviewees to respond to open-ended questions and elaborate as they saw fit. The interview began with a discussion of the participant's over-all impressions and thoughts of the questionnaire and

then moved to a more contextualized discussion of the participant's definition and understanding of empowerment. Since many of the interviews were completed using Skype, it was impractical to record the interviews. Instead I took notes by hand during the interviews and wrote field notes directly after the interview was completed in order to write down initial thoughts and reactions as well as specific voice tones or points of emphasis of the interviewees to help remind me what sections of the interview had more intensity than others. The full interview protocol is attached in Appendix C.

Sample

As expert opinions were sought, participants were chosen not to represent a general population, but due to their expert ability to answer the research question. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique was used to create the sample (Skulmoski, Hartman & Kahn, 2007). Ziglio (1996) defines an expert as one who has "the acquisition of experience, special skill in or knowledge of a particular subject" (p. 14). The experts chosen to participate in this study all worked within international development agencies in direct connection to empowerment programs. Positions of high level management as well as programmatic level involvement were included in the purposive sample. Full-time employees of international development agencies as well as consultants who have worked intensively with empowerment programs or evaluations were included.

The sampling frame was generated in three ways. First, I contacted international development experts I knew personally through my professional network. Snowball sampling was used next; I asked key contacts within my network to either provide contact information for individuals who fit the population for the study or to forward an

introductory e-mail to possible participants. Occasionally participants would offer contact information for their colleagues without it being requested. The final method used to develop the sampling frame was an internet search of development organization websites for the names and contact information of professionals working in gender and development efforts. This method proved to be surprisingly successful and resulted in a significant number of willing participants.

Twenty-one interviews and 32 questionnaires were completed. A few participants chose to complete the questionnaire without taking part in an interview. This is especially true of the participants who were contacted via other participants on my behalf. Participants from 12 different organizations took part including non-government organizations, multi-lateral aid organizations, Bi-lateral aid agencies (such as USAID) and private consulting firms. Twenty-three females and nine males took part ranging in age from 24 to 64. There was a variety of position titles including, Chief of Party, Director, Project Manager or Coordinator, Technical Advisor, Chairperson and Senior Vice President. The number of years in the current position ranged from as little as 6 months to 24 years. While all major low-income regions where aid programs are implemented were covered, only two participants specialized in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The majority of the participants worked in African, South Asian or Middle Eastern countries. Table 4 outlines the participants. Appendix D also contains a brief biography of each of the interviewees.

Table 4: Participant Breakdown

Number of interviews completed	Number of questionnaires completed	Organizations	Number of female participants	Number of male participants	Age range of participants	Example of position titles	Years in current	World Regions

							position	
21	32	12 Different organizations including: NGOs, Multi-lateral, Federal Aid Orgs and Private Consulting Firms	23	9	24-64	Chief of Party, Director, Project Manager or Coordinator, Technical Advisor, Chairperson and Senior Vice President	6 mo – 24 yrs	Africa, South Asia, Middle East, Caribbean and South America

Role of the Researcher

I applied for and received exempt status, as this study was about a non-sensitive and non-intrusive topic, from the Institutional Review Board under study number: 1104E98512. The letter of IRB exemption may be found in Appendix E.

As stated earlier in this chapter, qualitative research demands that the researcher explicitly identify any "biases, values, and personal interests" about the research topic and processes (Creswell, 2003, p. 184). This research topic is of great importance to me because I have focused on issues of girls' and women's education for the duration of my graduate career. I am a white, middle-class, highly educated woman from the United States of America and consider myself a feminist researcher. I believe that empowerment is a beneficial process and outcome for most people and that empowered people are able to make informed choices about their own lives.

I attempted to account for these values and biases in this study by taking the items for the questionnaire from the literature and asking open-ended, non-leading questions in the interviews. I never attempted to argue or change a participant's point of view, but

instead reiterated that I was not searching to prove a particular definition or concept. Despite these attempts, however, some participants from the Global South found the questionnaire to be biased towards Western notions of empowerment. The questionnaire was also criticized for including items about both the process and outcome of empowerment and for starting from the premise that there should be a change or increase in certain gendered relations, workloads, etc. Therefore, while I attempted to minimize bias in this research, it is clear that my research is still situated in a Western, White frame and may not adequately represent the view point of professionals in the Global South. I attempted to take these criticisms into consideration when analyzing the data.

Data Analysis Process

The qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously; therefore, the data were analyzed concurrently using different procedures. The quantitative procedure is outlined first.

The surveys were numbered from one to thirty-two starting with an arbitrary survey (in other words, not necessarily the order in which the questionnaires were received). The surveys were codified using the section and item number. For example, the first question of section A was coded as SAQ1. The qualitative questions in each section were not included in the SPSS analysis, but were included in the qualitative analysis. The four-point scale questions were coded with one (1) as the least important (not at all) and four (4) as the most important (critical). The demographic questions were coded differently by each question. The gender of the participant was coded dichotomously with 1 as male and 2 as female; the age and years in current position were

entered as whole numbers; the organization names were arbitrarily assigned a numerical label from one (1) to twelve (12); finally, the position title and area of the world in which the participant worked were given qualitative string labels.

After the coding sequence was created the surveys were entered into SPSS which was used to run frequencies on all of the survey items. Because I was not attempting to prove a theory other SPSS statistical analysis procedures were not used in this study. After completing the frequency analysis Excel was used to calculate the average number of participants who answered in each category for each question. These averages were used as a proxy for which part of the empowerment framework seemed to be the most important.

The qualitative data were analyzed deductively according to the conceptual framework and also using standard qualitative procedures (such as laid out by Miles and Huberman, 1994). First, each interview was given an interview number one through twenty-one and a pseudonym for privacy purposes. Second, each line of the transcript was assigned a number starting with 001. This allowed easy reference to a part of an interview, such as, interview 1, lines 003-006. A column was made on the right of the paper in which to code the data and note emerging themes. The interviews were coded three times. The first coding was done deductively by marking the lines which addressed pieces of the conceptual framework created from the literature review. Each piece of the conceptual framework was assigned a color that was then used to highlight sections of the interview that dealt with that aspect of framework. The elements of the model were

Agency (red), Increased Capabilities (blue), Changing Structure (green), and Power Relations (yellow).

The second round of data coding was done to look closely for emerging themes and ideas both within and across the interviews. Recurring themes or concepts were combined into a single file for analysis and comparison. The recurring themes were also compared to the quantitative data analyses to triangulate the data.

The third coding phase identified the definitions of empowerment used by each participant. The definitions were combined into one document for comparison and analysis. Each definition was coded inductively according to the categorization of definitions found in Table Two in the literature review. The definitions were color coded for each category: choice making (blue), changing power relations (yellow) and capabilities (orange). Since these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, definitions that overlapped were marked with multiple colors. All of the definitions fit into at least one of the categories, so there was no need to deal with divergences from these three common categories.

Limitations

This research was limited by a number of factors. Time and budget were limited and taken into consideration when planning this data collection and analysis. Over the course of this project I had a child as well as a serious injury due to a car accident. These life events changed the timeline for the research and resulted in the modification of some data collection procedures.

This research was also affected by limited access to the population. I made use of my contacts and was able to generate an acceptable sampling frame; however, I was able to access fewer participants than I had wished. While the participants reflect a variety of world regions, cultural backgrounds and years of experience, it is still a relatively small sample size.

Despite efforts to address my personal biases and values, the research was still based on literature that was predominately generated in the Global North. This research was criticized by participants from the Global South for coming from a Western view point of empowerment. I acknowledge that this research may not adequately address the "voice" of professionals, researchers and others from the Global South.

This study is also limited by the quality of the data collected. The questionnaire did not produce as much variability in response as would be ideal. Therefore I relied heavily on the qualitative data to understand how my participants were thinking about and defining empowerment and used the quantitative data as a way to support and triangulate those findings. However, since this was not a purely qualitative study and the interviews were not digitally recorded, the results and my interpretations are limited by the speed with which I was able to record the interviews and the limited scope as well as time limits of the interviews. The quotes in the results section are statements that I was able to write down verbatim, but there are other examples and generalizations made from the qualitative data that were based on imperfect notes taken during the interview process. The qualitative data may also be considered limited in the sense that participants were asked to complete the questionnaire prior to the interview, therefore possibly

leading their thinking on empowerment based on what was asked in the questionnaire. However, the questionnaire asked a wide variety of questions based on a large spectrum of empowerment literature, so I do not believe the order in which the questionnaire and interviews were completed led to a large amount of response bias from participants.

Finally, this study focuses on macro-level issues of empowerment programs; however, many programs are affected by micro-level differences of culture and language. It is possible that while macro-level trends may be adequately explored, the micro-level trends and context may be omitted.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the data from both the in-depth interviews and the survey. The data from the interviews and from the surveys are presented concurrently; however, the findings presented here are driven by what was most critical in the qualitative data due to a lack of variability in the quantitative data. Thus, the quantitative data were used primarily to support the findings from the qualitative data. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms have been assigned to all participants. The data presented below are illustrative of the main themes that emerged from the data, and the quantitative and qualitative data are woven together to illustrate the main findings or storyline about empowerment as it is defined by staff working in international development education.

This research sought to create a model of key areas that empowerment programs currently focus on based on the opinions and experiences of those working in this field. While all dimensions of the empowerment framework found in the literature are important to empowerment, not all are feasible, fundable or measurable by the organizations and NGOs working on these issues. The model of empowerment informed by this research could supplement a framework or existing model of empowerment used by NGOs for gender and education initiatives.

The chapter begins by discussing the definitions of empowerment provided by participants and highlighting any tensions or contradictions found in these definitions. Then the key findings from the interviews will be discussed and supported with the

questionnaire data in an attempt to conceptualize empowerment with greater specificity and clarity, especially in regards to education empowerment programs.

Defining Empowerment

In the first section of the questionnaire participants were asked to provide the personal or institutional definition of empowerment that they used most often in their work. The definitions provided fit well into the conceptual framework, but focused mainly on capabilities and choice making. Only two participants' definitions made explicit reference to power, but they did not make direct reference to changing power relations as had some definitions found in the literature. In general, definitions addressing choice making focused on individual agency while capabilities were often discussed as a person's capacity to achieve certain objectives.

In addition to choice-making and capabilities, four participants defined empowerment in terms of structural support or changes; however, the structural change section on the questionnaire had the highest average number of critical responses. This seems to indicate that participants feel structural changes are necessary, but are not adequate to *define* empowerment. Instead it would seem that structural changes are necessary to enable empowerment defined in terms of agency or capabilities, though this is not a universal finding across all participants. This also indicates that, for most of the interviewees, empowerment is more limited in scope, as agency, than to the broader dimensions from the conceptual framework.

Despite the use of the term empowerment by some scholars to signify group action and the continuing academic discussion of the necessity of collective agency, the

definitions of empowerment provided by participants refer primarily to individual action and not collective action. The definitions also seem to imply a linear progression from disempowered to empowerment. This may be due, in part, to the reduction of the concept into a few short sentences, but may also represent a significantly simplified version of empowerment used in development programming. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Participants expressed frustration over defining empowerment during the interviews. Many participants found it difficult to define empowerment, especially in a brief statement. None of the interviewees had discussed the definition of empowerment with their co-workers and many of the organizations in which they worked did not have official or institutional definitions of empowerment. Multiple interviewees felt that only a few words or sentences will never be sufficient to define a complex concept such as empowerment. Multiple participants also felt it is important for individuals to define empowerment for themselves. This is also how a few of the organizations at which participants worked chose to approach defining empowerment; by asking the populations with whom they worked to self-define empowerment and was regarded as an appropriate way to recognize cultural differences between development professionals and the populations with whom they work. Asking marginalized people and communities to define their own empowerment may be problematic, however. Molly, who worked for a large international NGO, argued that women and girls in Bangladesh may not be able to define or articulate empowerment for themselves, but they would still be able to feel whether or not they are empowered. While self-realization and actualization are highly

important concepts in empowerment, it is difficult for organizations and international development professionals to measure and provide data to funders based solely on a woman or girls' feeling of empowerment. Thus, while self-definition may be ideal in many circumstances, it is still important to understanding how professionals in this field are defining empowerment in their work and interventions. The next section provides a more in-depth discussion as well as examples of the types of definitions provided by participants.

Agency as empowerment

As discussed in Chapter Two, agency has multiple definitions, but generally is related to choice making. Kabeer (1999) defines agency as "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (p. 3). Many of the definitions of empowerment provided by participants seemed to be based in agency. These definitions focused on the ability to make choices or decisions about one's own life. For example participants provided definitions such as, "the perception that one has the right to and is able to have a strong voice in decisions that influence one's own life, including to work towards whatever role one aspires to in one's family, community or nation" (Amy, personal communication, February 22, 2012). Another stated, "(empowerment) means that a woman or girl has some control over her life. Control is around choices – choices in vocation, around home, in community. Basically control over her own life" (Julie, personal communication, February 17, 2012).

One participant noted that her institution did not have an official definition of empowerment, but in their Girls' Education program they "generally use the 'skills and

ability to make key life decisions' as a proxy." This program definition was partially related to her personal definition of empowerment. She personally felt that empowerment "requires both personal agency and a conducive environment or opportunity structure." However, she also felt that "if pushed, I would give a bit more importance to personal agency and capabilities than changes in power relations or structural factors" (Sarah, personal communication, January 7, 2012).

While the structural section of the questionnaire seemed to indicate that such factors are critical to empowerment, a few participants viewed the conceptual framework as a ladder rather than a circle (or concurrent change). Thus, they suggested agency needed to be addressed before there could be structural changes or changes in power relations. Other participants noted that societal change happens very slowly, therefore waiting for structural or power changes to happen before people could be called empowered would mean very few people would be considered empowered. One participant noted that if a strict model of empowerment, meaning a woman or girl was empowered in all aspects of the framework, were adhered to than "only ten percent of the planet is empowered" (Sarah, personal communication, January 7, 2012). These may be some of the reasons why some participant's personal definitions of empowerment focus more on agency, as a more instrumental approach to enact and asses change, than on other pieces of the conceptual framework.

Capabilities as empowerment

Capabilities refer to the freedoms that people value which allows them to be fuller social persons who exercise their own volitions and interact with and influence the world

in which they live (Sen, 1999). Terms such as "knowledge and capacity", "capacity and freedom to act" and "gaining skills and knowledge" were interpreted by the author as references to capabilities. Statements such as these seemed to refer to providing freedoms, skills and knowledge to people for whom these had previously not been available – in other words, fostering capabilities.

The capabilities definitions included statements such as: "(empowerment is) affecting someone in such a way as to make them able to do something they couldn't do before. Women's empowerment, economic, social empowerment…equipping people to do what they could not do before"(Ana, personal communication, February 6, 2012), or "In my own opinion, empowerment is a process of building the capacity of a person to a level whereby they are able to realize their full potentials and exploit fully their environment for the better future. For example raising consciousness / awareness, decision making process and utilization of available resources" (Peggy, personal interview, January 27, 2012).

While a little more than a dozen participant definitions were categorized as defining capabilities, this was not a term used by the participants themselves. Capabilities often seemed to be subsumed within agency in the participant interviews. Adele's definition somewhat highlights this trend. Her definition begins sounding like agency, but as she discusses her meaning further it becomes clear that she is talking about capabilities and even power. Adele defined empowerment as "awareness of one's own power to make a transformation in one's own life or social order." However, she felt that a person needs to have the ability to make change, or a "voice in shaping policy or

empowerment is negated." A person "may feel personally empowered, but if they don't have a voice to affect policy, then they are not fully empowered" (personal communication, February 13, 2012).

The agency and capabilities sections on the questionnaire had almost identical average number of responses in all four response categories. Thus, the definition and questionnaire data indicate that there was not a strong differentiation between these concepts for participants.

Structural change as empowerment

Structural change refers to altering social and cultural constructions which promote inequality (Monkman et al., 2008). Such structures include: "discriminatory laws, customs, practices and institutional processes" (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005, p. 3). The definitions in this category make reference to structures, such as: governance and laws, jobs, and opportunity or social structures. Access to resources, education, and safe spaces was also considered a reference to structural change since access is often a structural issue (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005; Kabeer, 2001; Moghadam, 2007; Monkman et al., 2008; Narayan, 2005).

There were only four definitions of empowerment as structural change. These included: "(The) realization that one citizen's thoughts and rights are equal to every others', and they therefore deserve equal access to justice, education, entitlement, civic/familial participation, and fair governance" (anonymous questionnaire response); "The ability to feel that your environment and social structures support your completing your full potential and enable you to set goals and achieve them" (anonymous

questionnaire response); and "equal access to resources, education, income generation and safe spaces" (Seamus, personal communication, February 12, 2012).

It is somewhat surprising that there are so few definitions of empowerment which focus on structural change since structural factors were critical on both the questionnaire and in the interviews. As stated above, it may be because structural change is seen as a way to support agency or capabilities. It may also be because it can be difficult to create structural change; As Penny said, "We do not have good models of changing societal institutions" (personal communication, February 8, 2012). Other interviewees felt that because structural change can be slow to happen, it is not as important a factor for empowerment. For example, Sarah said that "getting to a place where someone is empowered could happen in a very oppressive situation; eventually they can change their situation" (personal communication, January 7, 2012). Structural factors were clearly considered critical by participants, though not necessarily as a defining aspect of empowerment.

Changing power relations as empowerment

The issue of changing power relations was not directly addressed in many of the empowerment definitions, but it was discussed during the interviews as an explicit part of intervention planning and implementation. It was clear that participants think about and deal with issues of power and changing gendered patterns of power in their programming, so perhaps power is considered implicit in other changes. For example, many definitions reference equal rights or the ability to make decisions about one's own life. Accomplishing these objectives would require a change in current power structures;

therefore, issues of power may be addressed indirectly throughout the definitions used. It may also implicitly indicate that power relations are not as directly addressed in programs.

Multi-dimension definitions of empowerment

A number of definitions provided by participants referenced multiple aspects of the conceptual framework. These definitions clearly identify aspects of agency, capabilities and structure as important elements in empowerment. When analyzed using the conceptual framework, the definitions included in this section appear to most closely represent all of the elements for empowerment as defined in the literature. However, these definitions were often either used by a participant's institution, or attributed to an outside source such as UNICEF or Kabeer. The only participants whose definitions were multi-dimension and were not attributed to other sources were persons in high level positions within development agencies and who were generally in charge of gender programs within their organizations. It would seem, then, that many participants, when asked to provide their own definition, will conceptualize empowerment as either agency or capabilities.

The multi-dimension definitions included: "(Empowerment is the) process of cementing certain rights or access to resources, economics, the ability to make decisions; education, economic and political decision making. (It is also) providing skills, knowledge and access to live a better life" (Loraine, personal communication, January 31, 2012). Another participant said, "Voice, choice, decisions and equality equal empowerment for girls. (The ability to) be heard at local and national levels, the choice

to be whomever she wants to be, (she) needs to be empowered to make those decisions and equal opportunity and pay once a decision is made" (Megan, personal communication, January 23, 2012). One other multi-dimension definition was "Empowerment means increased knowledge, skills, perceptions in life, participation in decision making at all levels, increased connection in relationships with others. Empowerment understanding operates under individual women and girls and then stretches to connections to structures and systems that impact livelihood and life" (Mark, personal communication, February 22, 2012).

There were two different types of multi-dimension definitions participants provided. The first type, outlined above, contained definitions which referenced the domains found in the conceptual framework: choice, structure, agency, etc. The second type of multi-dimension definition was provided by two different participants and was based on a triangle with domains including: economic, social and education with empowerment in the center. Even though one triangle was created by the participant's organization and one was created by the participant herself, they were very similar. One triangle was made up of agency, structure and relations and the second triangle contained self-confidence (agency), economy (structure) and education (capabilities) (Frank, personal communication, February 14, 2012; Lydia, personal communication, February 17, 2012). This triangle as a diagram for empowerment does not necessarily indicate that each side has equal importance. Frank felt that the process was somewhat linear and certain items needed to come before others. Thus, while work needs to be done on "all

sides of the framework to bring lasting change" self-confidence (or agency) needs to come first.

The definitions discussed above serve to help identify the areas of the framework participants viewed as most important to empowerment. While a small minority of participants provided multi-dimension definitions which combined elements across the framework, the majority of participants focused on agency and capabilities. It was also clear that structural change was not considered critical to empowerment itself, but may be important in supporting a girls' or woman's agency.

Conceptualizing Empowerment

This section will outline the responses to the questionnaire and interviews according to the main themes from the qualitative data. As previously stated, the aim of this research was to find some conceptual clarity as to howempowerment as conceptualized in the literature was used by international development professional in their programs.. While responses were strong for all four dimensions of the framework (average critical responses: agency - 13.2; changing power relations – 12.3; capabilities – 13.9; structural – 15.1 – See Appendix F for full data analysis results), several themes within these dimensions emerged as the most critical in relation to empowerment programs. The data indicate three main themes found within the four dimensions of the empowerment framework, the themes include: agency, power relations or negotiations in family relations, and laws and structures that foster safety and protect against violence. There were also a number of sub-themes which will be discussed throughout the section.

The possible negative repercussions of empowerment will also be discussed. The chapter will end with a brief summary.

It is important to note that many interviewees felt that all items on the questionnaire were critical, but that transformative change would not occur even if all items were addressed by interventions. In other words, while all of these items are important or critical, they will not leverage change. Two interviewees talked about "attitudinal change" as the key factor. Seamus felt that attitudinal change requires a deeper understanding of empowerment than what was provided by the statements on the questionnaire. Attitudinal change involves the entire family unit. "Families have to teach their kids that the world is their oyster and that they can do anything. We need to teach our children that they are equal and can do anything. It is going to take hundreds of years to really change things" (personal communication, February 12, 2012). Angela said that she 'doesn't know what will create true change" but felt that beneficiary analyses will be most useful in working with the last and hardest to reach communities and kids (personal communication, February 11, 2012).

Agency

The quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the psychological or learning aspects of agency are critical to girls' and women's empowerment. The ability to make decisions, self-confidence, and an awareness of lack of empowerment were all discussed as critical aspects of empowerment during the interviews. The latter element, awareness of lack of empowerment, was stressed by many interviewees in that women and girls must be aware of their lack of empowerment to be able to fight for change. As one

interviewee put it, “this [awareness] is the starting point” (Mark, personal communication, February 22, 2012).

Many participants said that these cognitive aspects of agency (decision making, self-confidence and awareness) must come first for other empowerment interventions to be successful; these were “building blocks” to empowerment. For example, Amy works in the Middle East and Central Asia with programs that focus on generating “the ability to think critically” and “self-realization” because “the inner drive and ability to think critically lead to self-awareness and to understanding of one’s context”. Without these skills, she felt the empowerment and life skills programs would only make superficial changes (personal communication, February 22, 2012). Another participant stated that in her experience and context in East Africa, “achieving self reliance is (the) most critical issue in women’s empowerment process. Thus women would be able make their own decisions, be self confident and have the ability to solve problems” (Peggy, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

The quantitative data supports these statements. *Understanding of self* had 56% (18) respondents who marked it as critical and 53% (17) of participants marked *self-confidence* as critical. The item in the agency section of the questionnaire marked critical by the highest number of participants was *women and girls as active agents in their own well-being* with 62.5% (20). Thus the participant responses indicate that empowerment must begin with the women and girls and their own understanding of self.

The importance of being able to make decisions about one’s future and strategic life choices came out in the interviews as well as in the definitions of empowerment

provided by respondents. One interviewee said that the ability to make decisions about one's future is "what empowerment is all about" (Jim, personal communication, February 7, 2012). Julie felt that choice equals empowerment, "empowerment comes down to a woman having a choice, having a voice in decision making" (personal communication, February 17, 2012) and Lydia said that an "independent woman was a woman who walked freely, made her own decisions, and had options in the choices she makes" (personal communication, February 17, 2012). Almost one quarter (24%) of all definitions provided by participants related to making decisions.

The quantitative data around decision making is less clear. The *ability to make decisions about one's future,* and the *ability to make strategic life choices* were marked as critical by 59% (19) and 56% (18) respectively. However, *understanding of how to make decisions*, *decision making ability in the family, ability to articulate one's decisions* and *decision making ability in community affairs* were not considered critical by 50% (16) or more participants. The *ability to actualize one's decisions* as well as the *ability to make choices that go against cultural and social expectations* had an equal spread of respondents in the important and critical response options indicating that there is consensus that these elements are necessary for empowerment, but a lack of consensus around how necessary. The difference may be contextual or cultural, however it is interesting that making decisions about one's own life was clearly critical, yet making decisions in family and community spheres was less important.

The data indicate that making decisions about oneself or one's future is critical for empowerment, but other types of decisions relating to the family or community are not

critical for empowerment. This would indicate that many of the participants do consider empowerment to be based more in individual agency than perhaps in other aspects of the empowerment framework.

Other aspects of agency presented on the questionnaire were not considered critical. For example, one interviewee characterized items such as *belief in personal ability to transform society*, *ability to conceive of possible life choices* and *desire to act as leaders* as "questions of imagination." These questions that involve "imagination" were "helpful, but not that important." There are more important issues of rights, awareness of inequalities and becoming an active agent of one's own well-being – issues that need attention in the current moment instead of visions of the future (Penny, personal communication, February 8, 2012).

It is very interesting that the family was considered critical to women's and girls' empowerment (discussed in the next section), yet a woman or girls ability to make and articulate decisions within the family and community was not considered as important. It would seem that the effect of the family and community on women and girls is significant, but her effect on her family or community is not. Thus, while it is critical to have family and community members involved in order to change the structures and environments in a woman or girls' life, the goal of empowerment would appear to be individual, personal gains within a woman or girl herself.

One item in the agency section of the questionnaire posted a significant problem once the data were collected. The item, *woman or girl's desire to act as a leader* had the fewest critical responses (15% [5]) and the highest number of not at all important

responses (6% [2]). This item is problematic not only in part due to poor question construction by me (because desire is an operative word), but also because of respondent assumptions about the nature of the term leader. During the interviews, participants made special note that it is critical for women and girls to want to act as leaders of *themselves* but not necessarily of others. In fact, it was expressed that perhaps it would not be helpful to have all women and girls want to act as leaders of others. As one participant noted, "it is difficult to get anything done with a room full of leaders" (Frank, personal communication, February 14, 2012). Frank also offered the suggestion that the word leader, especially in the girls' education literature or even as intended in programs, "may mean confident people who are empowered, not that they are all leading others" (personal communication, February 14, 2012) It seems likely that if the question had asked about a woman or girl's desire to act as a leader of *herself* that there would have been significantly more critical responses.

Despite the problematic nature of the wording of this question, participants did not think it is important for women and girls to be leaders of others as a sign of empowerment; it was important to be leaders of themselves. This finding is consistent with the focus on self found in the agency data as well. It is worth questioning if respondents would have answered differently if the questionnaire had asked about boys desire to act as leaders. Would boys have been expected to desire to only be leaders of themselves instead of others? Would a room of only male leaders have also been considered to be problematic?

Power Relations/Negotiations in Family Relations

Family as central to women's and girls' empowerment was a clear theme in the qualitative data. Many participants said it is critical for women and girls to have family support for empowerment to be successful. For example Angela said, "you can't leverage change unless everyone is involved" (personal communication, February 11, 2012). Jim found in his programs that girls who did not have family support were not able to continue from primary to secondary education and beyond (personal communication, February 7, 2012) and Hooper said that the family environment was very important to creating an enabling environment in which empowerment can happen (personal communication, February 13, 2012). Family support was clearly considered necessary for supporting girls' and women's individual empowerment, but family also was important for creating change in the broader community. For example, Peggy said, "the family structure is the smallest unit and if given emphasis then the whole community will change systematically" (qualitative questionnaire response, January 27, 2012).

Gendered power relations in families were more complicated than girls having support of men or their families; it also involves negotiation of family relations. Angela, who worked primarily in African and Middle Eastern contexts, discussed the complicated nature of power relations within the family unit. It is not a black and white situation with women on one side and men on other. She felt that the:

> Perception that women don't have agency or voice is a weird one. Older women in African villages have more voice than young males. There is not a clear divide with all men on one side and all women on the other… Women are more in control of some things like family gardens. These things are extremely subtle and

> nuanced and there can be differences in how they are interpreted, but women find powerful ways to negotiate relationships. (personal communication, February 11, 2012)

Angela felt the reason for women's marginalization was not necessarily based in gendered power relations, but was a problem of access to resources. She felt that women had less access to important household resources and finances and that is what led to women's marginalization.

The issue of resources did not come up strongly in the interviews, but the quantitative data around resources was interesting. *Ability to access household resources* (such as land, water, food and clothing) and *structural access to resources* were marked critical by 63% (20) of respondents and a *change in gendered distribution of resources* was marked critical by 53% (17) of respondents. Three questions asked about who is important in increasing women's and girls' access to resources – the family, community or cooperation between family and community. These three questions had fairly even response rates across the top three response options (somewhat important to critical). It would seem that while there is little consensus as to whom in the family or community is most important to increasing access to resources for women and girls, access is important. While Angela felt that access to resources was the key issue in women's marginalization, the quantitative data around increasing access to resources seem to indicate that power relations and resources are intertwined. A woman or girls' ability to access household and community resources is, in itself, an issue of power relations and

power control and it would seem that power relations would need to be carefully considered by interventions aimed at increasing access to resources.

Participants acknowledged the complex nature of power dynamics within the family unit and that it is not only the relationship between men and women which is important; the family unit as a whole needs to be addressed by empowerment programming. Mark commented on the importance of the family unit to empowerment processes and outcomes:

> The critical player is the woman or girl herself, but within the family and household there are other players who are key in providing an enabling environment for empowerment processes instead of being barriers; integrating them into the process is very important… the family unit is very important in changing behaviors. (personal communication, February 22, 2012)

The need for focus on the entire family unit is in part because it is not only the men in the family who oppress women. A number of interviewees stated that it is often women who "keep women in their place more than men" and that "some women are the worst offenders, perpetuating what happened to them" (Adele, personal communication, February 13, 2012; Ellen, personal communication, February 22, 2012). Thus it is important to address the gender and power dynamics between all members of the family unit, not simply men and women.

The relationship between marriage, as another aspect of family relations, and empowerment was discussed by multiple interviewees during this research. Power relations within the context of marriage as well as problems of gender-based violence,

forced marriage and polygamy were discussed by interviewees. The following section highlights some of these themes in more detail.

Polygamy

Penny has worked in international development for the past ten years, primarily in West and North Africa, and felt that polygamy was one of the greatest barriers to women's empowerment in the contexts of her present and past work. She said:

> Polygamy is equivalent to aparthied. It is state sanctioned process of turning women into second class citizens. It is as bad as apartheid… such situations are more widespread than probably known, such as Senegal which looks secular and modernized on the outside, but there is a lot of polygamous marriage (personal communication, February 8, 2012).

Penny commented that polygamy represents a "fundamental disequilibrium in the relationship between men and women, and in their perceived rights. It seems to be the elephant in the room.... Not easy to resolve by any means." Polygamy is obviously an issue that is culturally situated, but is pervasive in many areas of the world. It offers a good example of how the contexts in which the participants worked tended to influence the way they thought of empowerment.

Involving men in empowerment

Multiple participants working in the Middle East discussed the necessity of involving men for the success of empowerment programs in that region. Peter said that in the Afghani context in which he works it is necessary to, "get men on board. They are the gatekeepers to the rights of women" (personal communication, February 13, 2012).

This idea was also supported by Itzel who said that in her work in Afghanistan "male support is critical." She went on to say that:

> Men are important in Afghan society, without the support of men or boys, women cannot do anything. For example, living alone is not acceptable for women. A supportive man who helps women is necessary for empowerment… going against male rule does not have good results. (personal communication, 2/28/12)

It is not just the Middle Eastern context in which the importance of men was discussed. Peggy worked in Kenya and she said this:

> In my opinion, if men and boys are more involved in the empowerment process, then the family and community will move towards equity. This is because in most African societies, men and boys have the power in most spheres where as women are seen as subordinates. Men need to be sensitized on the role of women and girls in the society and family level. (qualitative questionnaire response)

Sarah worked primarily in South Asia and also felt men and boys were important to women's and girls' empowerment:

> I feel that the value of working with men and boys to challenge gender inequality and empower girls and women cannot be overstated. However, I guess I feel it's less important that boys/men they verbalize this or advocate for girls/women's empowerment than their really being open to change themselves. (qualitative questionnaire response)

The data indicate that there are two ways in which men and boys are important to women's and girls' empowerment programs, one is supporting women and girls and

another is changing their own understandings, roles and identities. Involving men in programs intended to empower women is important in most contexts worldwide because men often have control over resources as well as, in some contexts, control over women's ability to move freely or make life decisions. It is also necessary and important to:

> Move away from destructive male gender norms. In order for men and boys to advocate for women and girls they need to examine traditional masculine roles, for example that they can be good fathers. Yes the ultimate outcome is for men and boys to advocate to women and girls, but if they do, than we are already there. (Amy, personal communication, February 22, 2012)

There also seems to be a relationship between men's and women's empowerment. For example, during a discussion of the cultural and contextual nature of a woman's ability to move freely, Ellen talked about the effects of instability on power relations between married men and women and how that may affect women's empowerment. She found through her work in countries in conflict that men were very afraid for their wives and daughters. Conflict and war had created what amounted to:

> A 'cowboy state' with a lot of violence and a lot of revenge. Women would be targeted as payback, so to protect women they (the husbands) oppressed them. Men and women were both disempowered by the situation and the violence. The men expressed their adoration of their wives, but felt powerless to keep them as safe as possible – they felt they had no control over their safety. There needs to be more thorough research into the disempowerment of men which then increases the disempowerment of women. (personal communication, February 22, 2012)

This example clearly articulates the complexity of gendered power relations within the family and the effects of disempowerment on the entire family unit. The qualitative data appears to strongly indicate the importance of gender relations to women's and girls' empowerment.

The quantitative data adds an interesting dimension to the importance of men and boys to women's and girls' empowerment. Both the items - *Men to the advocacy of female empowerment* and *boys to the advocacy of female empowerment* have a wide spread of response rates across the critical, important and somewhat important categories. None of the response categories for these two statements had more than 44% (14) of responses. In fact, the response rates for *boys to the advocacy of female empowerment* were spread fairly evenly across the top three response options. This is an interesting contradiction to the qualitative data which may be due to a couple of reasons. It is possible that the term *advocacy* is the cause of the spread of responses. Many of the participants viewed empowerment as process which happened in certain steps, or as more of a ladder than a circle. On this ladder agency and capabilities are on the first rung followed by power relations and then structure. It seems possible that advocacy would come near the top of this ladder and thus would not necessarily be critical to the empowerment process.

Another explanation may be that men and boys are critical in some ways but not in others. For example, engaging men and boys in programmatic activities or discussions and creating a supportive environment for women's and girls' empowerment may be critical, but less concrete involvement, such as advocacy is not. Regardless of conjecture,

both the quantitative and qualitative response data indicate that men and boys are critical in terms of achieving women's and girls' empowerment, but are not critical in terms of advocacy.

Income generation for women

Income generation was another issue raised that mattered in terms of girls' and women's empowerment. The questionnaire originally asked about the existence of job opportunities under the structural section, however, during the interviews it became apparent that what was meaningful to respondents was income generation (not necessarily formal employment) and that income was critical to gender relations. On the statement - *Existence of job opportunities* 44% (14) of respondents chose important and 38% (12) chose critical, while 19% (6) chose somewhat important. This spread would indicate that the existence of job opportunities is not a highly important indicator of empowerment. Respondents clarified during the interview process that income generation is key, but it is not only about job opportunities. Instead, "income generation capability is what is necessary to get out from under the power of others" (Adele, personal communication, February 13, 2012). Lydia also said that income generation "allows women to make decisions at home and gives them some power with their husbands… income gives access to household resources and changes gender dynamics" (personal communication, February 17, 2012). These quotes seem to indicate that income generation relates to empowerment in terms of access to and control over resources, rather than about structural opportunities, such as labor markets. Perhaps if the

question had been worded as *opportunity to generate income* instead of *existence of job opportunities* the response rates may have been different.

The difference between income generation and job opportunities is an interesting one. Income generation represents a focus on the individual, on capabilities and agency, whereas the existence of job opportunities is a larger scale structural difference. The focus on individual empowerment is a pervasive finding throughout this research. Perhaps income generation is of greater importance to respondents because the programs with which they work are able to address the individual more easily than the structural. More implications of the focus on income generation will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Domestic labor

Another family relations theme was the role of changes in domestic labor to empowerment. On the questionnaire *Change in gendered patterns of domestic labor* had a fairly even distribution across responses with nine *critical,* eleven *important*, ten *somewhat important* and one *not at all important*. *Change in net equity of domestic labor* had a similar response spread with nine *critical,* fifteen *important,* seven *somewhat important,* and one *not at all important.* Thus it would seem that there is little consensus about the importance of gendered patterns of domestic labor. This may be due in part to regional and cultural differences in such patterns. It may also be in part because while more equitable patterns of domestic labor may be ideal, it is difficult to achieve. For example, Penny felt that domestic labor was "such a big topic in so many societies. It would be great to see change, but it is not critical. I don't see change here anytime soon"

(personal communication, February 8, 2012). Adele also felt change in gendered patterns around domestic labor and domestic resource distribution will take a long time. She said, "I don't know how likely this is to change (gendered patterns). Culture doesn't change quickly. If we wait for this, then empowerment will never happen. People resist these changes" (February 13, 2012). And yet Mark felt that gendered patterns of domestic labor were "where we see discrimination happening. These patterns are where we see the under mining of women's and girls' realizing their rights" (personal communication, February 22, 2012).

The lack of consensus on the importance of gendered patterns of domestic labor may be, once again, due to a difference between individual agency based definitions of empowerment versus a societal, group-based definition of empowerment. Programs addressing the individual woman or girl are unlikely to address issues of familial work patterns as this would likely put the girl or woman in conflict with other family members and could do more harm than good. A sustainable change in disproportionate gendered patterns in domestic labor may require structural supports such as the enforcement of child labor laws and legal age of dropout from school. Such structural changes did not seem to be the focus of many of the programs with which participants worked. It also seemed that such changes felt out of reach for some participants. For example, Angela said "I think things are very complex. We live in a world that is increasingly polarized. Gender is an issue that has very strong dynamics; I don't see these dynamics changing, especially in Afghanistan, Iraq, etc." (Angela, personal communication, February 11, 2012). Interestingly, the data indicate that family and male support is critical, but that

changing power relations or family relations is more problematic. Thus, while power relations within families and its related sub-themes seemed to generate lots of discussion, perhaps such gender dynamics are simply too complex to address with the current programs and interventions being utilized in international development.

Laws and Structures that Foster Safety and Protect Against Violence

Another theme from the interview data was the critical nature of laws and structures that foster safety and protect against violence. The structural factors discussed by participants included broad statements such as, "the structural factors are very important… If social structures are friendly to women, she (sic) can feel safe to express her personality" (Molly, personal communication, February 3, 2012), but more often the focus was on specific areas where change needed to occur. Laws and policies that support women and girls were stated in multiple interviews. For example, Megan said, "It is critical to change government policies; government policies are so important to empowering or disempowering women" (personal communication, January 23, 2012). Angela also said, "Women find powerful ways to negotiate relationships, but there needs to be laws to protect women and girls or they have no recourse…Women need to have safe roads to travel, on and off grid electricity and access to title, not just grants and loans" (personal communication, February 11, 2012). Multiple interviewees also felt that it was important for women and girls' to be aware of local and national laws that can help them, especially in rural areas where community norms and processes that disfavor women exits. Itzel felt that, "It is critical that women and girls have awareness of rights and local laws that can support them" (personal communication, February 28, 2012).

It became clear that many of the countries in which participants worked had laws and policies aimed at creating safe and supportive environments for women and girls; however, these laws were not often enforced. Participants focused on laws around marriage and gender-based violence and discussed the necessity of creating more laws, awareness of laws and the lack of enforcement systems, especially in rural areas. Frank stated, "Despite the talents and confidence of women, it will not matter without laws, systemic changes, changes in family policy, etc." (personal communication, February 14, 2012).

The quantitative data around creating and enacting laws strongly supports the qualitative data. The questionnaire asked four different questions regarding laws or policies and women's and girls' empowerment. These questions included: *changing policies to benefit women and girls at the local, regional and national levels; enacting existing policies to benefit women and girls; protection under the law;* and *laws that allow women and girls to claim their rights.* All four questions had 53% (17) or more respondents chose the critical response option on for that item. The question about enforcing existing laws had the highest number of critical responses with 63% (20) respondents, indicating the critical nature of this structural factor.

From the interview data, however, it was clear that the creation and enforcement of laws happens within a complicated cultural and legal system which makes enacting laws not a simple matter. For example, in some cultural and country contexts there were conflicting laws affecting women's and girls' rights. The country in which Mark worked had both a "law against child marriage and a marriage act which allows young girls to be

married with her parents' permission. These are conflicting laws that undermine empowerment and need to be harmonized" (personal communication, February 22, 2012). Issues such as corruption and bribery also affected access to protective laws for women and girls in some contexts. Itzel felt that in the contexts in which she worked in Afghanistan, laws had been enacted by the international community to support women, but one "needs contacts and money to be protected under the law. The laws were not for common people" (personal communication, February 28, 2012).

Despite the difficulties and challenges in creating and enacting laws and policies it is still a critical element of empowerment. Hooper explained that:

> We spend too much money creating square pegs. We need to look at institutional and system change… The square peg of empowered people go back to a round environment and get ground back to a round peg. Empowerment is not sustainable with only square pegs. The environment also needs to change. (personal communication, February 23, 2012)

One other structural factor was clearly critical to empowerment. The importance of access to social networks and safe spaces was supported by both the interview data and questionnaire data. Frank stated that, "with systemic support women can gather and take down barriers" (personal communication, February 14, 2012). Seamus discussed the importance of social networks and safe spaces in his work context in Afghanistan:

> When women are able to congregate, the safe spaces then become a foundation for women seeking more gender equality. By having one group of women in a safe space, then word gets around and then hundreds of women want to

> participate. It is a real grass roots effort. (personal communication, February 12, 2012)

Mohammed, who works in Bangladesh, also felt structural access to social networks was very important, especially to girls:

> In our country, girls are not allowed to get together and network, but it is very important for empowerment. Girls can discuss issues of hygiene, education, etc. We are trying to get social networking for girls to improve leadership and empowerment. (personal communication, February 27, 2012)

The related questionnaire item was *structural access to resources and social networks* which had 63% (20) of respondents on that item choose the critical response option. The questionnaire and interview data both clearly indicate that laws, policies, rights and access to social networks are all integral pieces of women's and girls' empowerment in terms of both structural elements and personal knowledge and agency. The importance of laws as structural change or support seems to be influenced by a rights or legal based framework, not as much in a GAD framework of changing social norms and structures.

Negative Repercussions of Empowerment

Many of the definitions provided by participants, especially those related to agency, seemed to assume a linear progression to empowerment. The interviewees discussed the need for cultural and situational awareness when working to empower women and girls, but most respondents still discussed the empowerment process as something positive. Increasing access to income, resources, and education were almost

universally discussed in positive terms during the interviews. However, two instances of the possible negative repercussions of empowerment programs were discussed. One of the negative repercussions that participants noted was that empowerment programs may upset the balance of power in communities, which can result in dangerous situations for women and girls. Frank discussed the complications of changing power dynamics in a teacher training program:

> We have been promoting women to become teachers in rural communities, but we are getting backlash from the husbands. They are trying to get women to stop teaching. It is changing the power dynamics in the village which is leading to problems for the women and could lead to an increase in Gender Based Violence…If (people) aspire to change power relations in communities there is no way to avoid trouble; People do not want to give up power. (personal communication, February 14, 2012)

A second example of negative backlash from empowerment programs was illustrated by Itzel, who told a heartbreaking story about a woman in an Afghani village who attended an empowerment program put on by an international NGO. While the program had the best of intentions, Itzel did not think that enough attention had been paid to local customs and gender relations. She explained that a woman returned home after attending an empowerment program and told her husband he could no longer beat or abuse her because she had rights and she was an empowered woman. He responded by throwing her out of the house and abandoning her to the streets with no access to resources or help. She was beaten and raped and did not have anywhere to seek help due

to local customs regarding women who were rejected by their husbands. Local NGOs working on women's rights in the area did not know if she had died or become enslaved to a local person of power. Itzel used this story as a cautionary tale for the necessity of identifying local customs and power structures before implementing empowerment programs and interventions (personal communication, February 28, 2012).

These two examples show not only the need to understand and attend to broader social change, but also highlight that empowerment programs are not always positive experiences for women and they can result in increased danger or abuse.

Summary

This chapter discussed the main themes related to components of empowerment that international development education practitioners viewed as the most critical in empowerment programs for girls and women. These themes were used to make a model of the most important aspects of women's and girls' empowerment which may be used to inform future programming. The main themes found were: Agency, specifically individual choices and decision making, Power relations or negotiations in family relations (with a special focus on including men and boys and working to change destructive masculine stereotypes), and Laws and structures that foster safety and protect against violence. The next chapter will analyze these themes in accordance with the literature on women's and girls' empowerment and will present conclusions and recommendations.

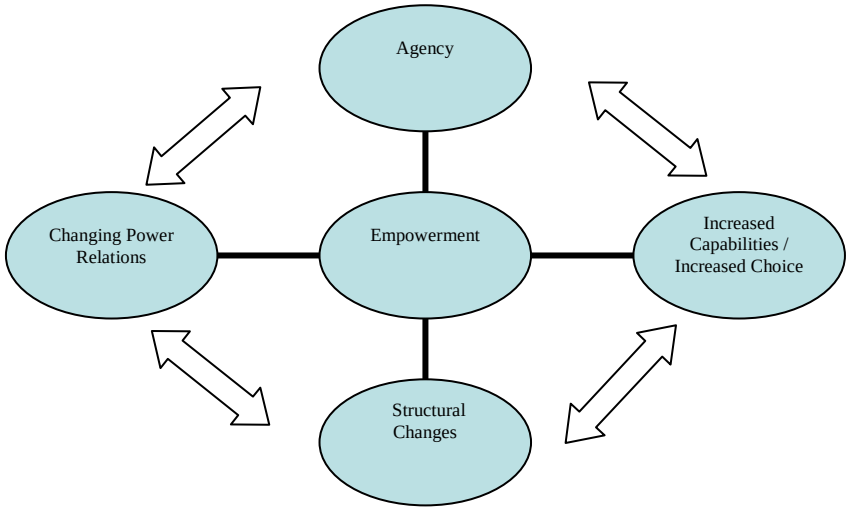
Chapter 5: Summary and Interpretation

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the ways in which professionals in the field of international development are conceptualizing and operationalizing empowerment. Based on the thoughts and experiences of these professionals, this study aimed to provide greater specificity about the definition and conceptualization of empowerment within international development education programs, specifically those which seek to empower women and girls.

Thirty-two experts from eleven different development organizations were surveyed in an attempted to explore the research question, *How is empowerment conceptualized and operationalized by people working with education programs within international development organizations?* This chapter summarizes these findings and interprets the results using the deductive conceptual framework built from the literature on women's and girls' empowerment:

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Empowerment



The definitions of empowerment provided by participants will be summarized and discussed followed by the questionnaire responses in each of the four pieces of the framework: Agency, Increased Capabilities, Structural Change and Changing Power Relations. The author will then draw conclusions regarding an over-all conceptualization of empowerment based on both participant responses and the academic literature on this topic. Finally, recommendations for empowerment programming and future research will be made.

Defining Empowerment

Key findings

While a variety of definitions of empowerment covering all aspects of the conceptual framework were provided by participants, most definitions focused on a linear, individual, agency-based conceptualization of empowerment. The definitions and questionnaire data indicated that participants did not differentiate strongly between the concepts of agency and capabilities. Out of the 33 definitions provided by participations, 20 or 60 percent focused on agency or capabilities. While only four participants defined empowerment in terms of structural support or changes, the structural change section on the questionnaire had the highest average number of critical responses. Thus, the data indicate that participants differentiate between elements that are important for an enabling environment for empowerment and empowerment itself.

Also, the only definitions of empowerment that covered all aspects of the conceptual framework were either organizational definitions or those provided by

department heads. Thus, the data indicate that most professionals in the field tend to define or conceptualize empowerment using one or two dimensions from the framework. This may be due, in part, to practicality since development programs generally only address one or two dimensions of the conceptual framework at once and often work at the local or community level. Thus, it would follow that participants tend to conceptualize empowerment in terms of personal or local change.

Discussion

As discussed in Chapter Two, there are a wide variety of definitions of empowerment in the literature. Empowerment can be considered of both intrinsic and instrumental value; it can occur in economic, social or political spheres; and it can result in both individual and collective change.

While there may not be one way to define empowerment there is a definable difference between "empowerment" and "agency" and there are implications for programming and measuring "success" based on how participants of this study are thinking about and defining empowerment, especially if the term empowerment is actually being used to describe an individual, linear approach based in agency.

For example, some literature on empowerment emphasizes the necessity of collective action and that for marginalized populations, "the capacity to organize and mobilize to solve problems is a critical *collective* (emphasis in original) capability" (World Bank, n.d. p. 3). Oxaal and Baden, (1997) also note that "to the extent that mainstream development discourse views empowerment as an individual rather than collective process, it emphasizes entrepreneurship and self-reliance rather than

cooperation to challenge power structures" (p. 76). However, there may be a reciprocal relationship between individual capabilities and the ability to act collectively; that increasing an individual's agency will have a reciprocal affect on collective agency (World Bank, n.d.). There has also been a steady movement in development programs and goals from the collective to the individual over the past 20 years, so it is, perhaps, not surprising to find that empowerment definitions have followed suit (Kabeer, 1999; Worthen, Veale, McKay & Wessells, 2010).

It is possible that when participants defined empowerment in terms of decision-making, that it meant a very broad sense that encompasses many of the complexities involved in empowerment. For example, the World Bank (n.d.) discusses decision-making in terms of "real" choices which allow powerless people to negotiate with various institutions to improve their own lives. The concept of a "real" choice seems to imply both structural change, which would allow an individual to negotiate for institutional changes, as well as changes in power dynamics that would allow a relatively powerless person to negotiate with those of more power. Thus, it is possible that while these definitions appear to be greatly simplified, they are meant to encompass a wide scope of empowerment work. It is important for organizations and programs to clarify what the goals of increased decision-making are for both the individual and community. Such a clarification will allow organizations to decide if they are seeking to achieve agency (the ability to make decisions) or empowerment (changing structures and powers as well as addressing agency).

Capabilities approach and empowerment

As mentioned above, there is not one way to define empowerment, nor should there be. While it is critical for there to be clarity of meaning for programming and measurement, there also needs to be space for dialogue and debate about what is most important in specific contexts. The capabilities approach provides a framework for thinking about the different paths which may lead to the broad goal of empowerment. Sen (1999) uses the language of functionings and capabilities to discuss the diverse pathways to empowerment which are affected or defined by the different contexts in which people live, such as, age, gender and ethnicity as well as socio-economic factors and each individual's goals and desires. It is important to take these different contexts and factors into consideration when planning empowerment programs and interventions to ensure maximum impact. A one-size-fits-all model of empowerment is unlikely to create lasting social change since the freedoms available to marginalized populations, especially women and girls', are defined by the social, cultural and political contexts in which they live and work.

In opposition to other approaches which proscribe, from universal assumptions and in a top-down format, the key rights that are important for gender equality and empowerment the capabilities approach promotes discussion and debate about what is most important and allows for diversity of opinion and culture. Public debate and dialogue around gender roles and rights may play an important role in mediating the values and assumptions of individuals and groups as well as the conditions which can influence an individual's choices (DeJaeghere, 2012). Sen's concept of capabilities centers on the active participation of individuals – justice is not 'done to' but is 'done

with' those whose freedoms and capabilities are in question. Thus, it is critical that marginalized populations, such as women and girls, are part of the dialogue and discourse around the rights, functionings and capabilities that are vital to social change and empowerment within specific contexts (DeJaeghere, 2012; Unterhalter, 2003).

The capabilities approach provides a flexible framework with which to consider the well-being of individuals and communities. Using this approach, organizations and communities can have discussions to establish clarity around what empowerment means and entails within that community. By clarifying the functionings and capabilities that are important and necessary within different contexts the capabilities approach provides a broader framework with which to link individuals with larger structures.

Conceptualizing Empowerment

The three main themes from this study will be discussed in relation to the framework and the broader literature on empowerment, taking into consideration reflections and adaptations to the study's conceptual framework. These themes are: Agency as empowerment (specifically decision making), Power relations/negotiations in family relations, and Laws and structures to support empowerment. I have also pulled-out the sub-theme of involving men in empowerment to discuss further in this chapter. This sub-theme is critically important to consider more completely both in terms of a model of empowerment and also for future research. These four themes are each summarized and discussed below.

Agency/ decision-making as empowerment

The majority of participants' interview and questionnaire responses conceptualized empowerment in terms of agency (such as making choices). In addition, they regarded empowerment in terms of a linear process in which agency must come before other aspects of empowerment could be addressed. Components of individual agency included the ability to make decisions, self-confidence, and an awareness of lack of empowerment. Because agency was considered a building block for other aspects of empowerment by many participants, their empowerment programming, especially for girls, often focused on self-awareness, self-confidence, critical reflection and decision making. Thus, empowerment begins with women and girls and their own understanding of themselves.

The focus was not just on agency, but on the individual. The quantitative data especially highlighted the focus on the "self". For example, it was critical for women and girls to be able to make decisions and strategic life choices and to be a leader of herself. It was not critical, however, for women and girls to have the ability to make decisions within the family or community, to have the ability to articulate her decisions or to believe in her personal ability to transform society. Thus, empowerment as conceptualized by these participants and their work in international development programs is not about a woman or girls' ability to interact and negotiate with her family and community, but is focused on internal psychological traits such as self-confidence and awareness. This focus on the self once again indicates that many participants use the term empowerment as a proxy for agency. It is interesting to consider whether

empowerment programs aimed at men and boys would focus solely on the self or also on leadership and change qualities.

Due, at least in part, to the complexities and nuances of empowerment (especially across cultural contexts) development organizations often distill programming language and goals down to addressing agency. Kabeer (1999) reflects that many development agencies conceptualize empowerment in terms of individual agency, especially in regards to youth programming and Malhotra (2003) found that in a review of various concepts and terms related to empowerment in the literature, "Agency probably comes closest to capturing what the majority of writers are referring to" (p. 3). These examples show that it is not atypical for professionals and organizations working with development programs to focus on agency and often use agency as a proxy for empowerment.

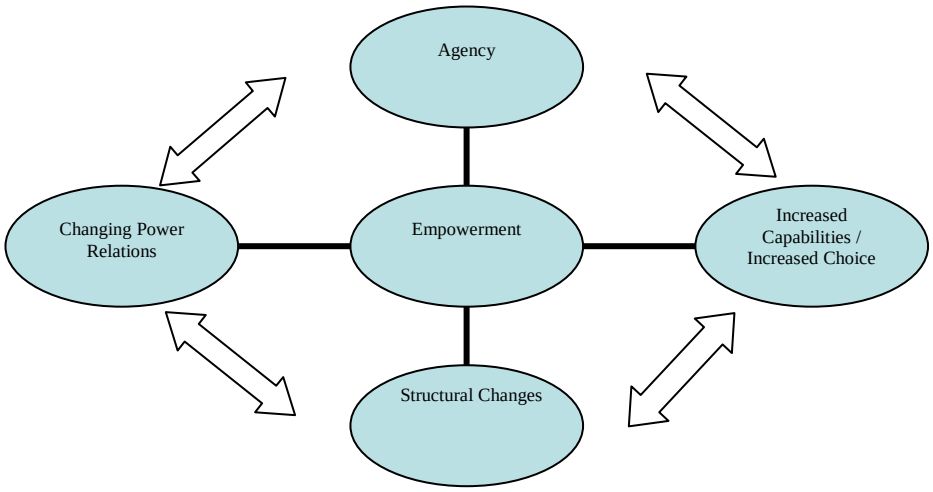
There may be a variety of reasons why development organizations and professionals choose to focus on personal agency in their programming, such as ease of development and monitoring of programs aimed at individuals, ability to follow existing best practices for personal agency development or ability to show large impact with limited funds. However, while agency only represents one part of the conceptual framework used to understand this research it is undeniably a critical and necessary piece of empowerment. A lack of agency is also what many marginalized populations will report is "central to their description of ill-being" (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007, p. 4). Thus, addressing issues of agency may seem like a feasible way to address issues of empowerment. There are also many examples of how to affect the self-esteem, self-confidence and level of awareness of both youth and adults; whereas one participant

suggested, there are few good models of how to change societal institutions on which professionals and organizations can rely.

What the findings from this study indicated, which will be discussed more below, is that participants were not simply defining empowerment in terms of agency, but using agency as a building block for other aspects of empowerment. This has implications for a conceptual framework of empowerment as well as for empowerment programming.

Though it was clear that many participants were defining empowerment as agency and that many of the programs with which they work focused on aspects of individual agency, participants also acknowledge that structural and political changes were critical in creating an enabling environment in which women and girls can become empowered. However, participants viewed the different dimensions of the conceptual framework in a hierarchy of importance with agency as a critical first rung. The conceptual framework used in this research postulated a circular, iterative process of empowerment where each piece of the framework has equal importance to empowerment:

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of Empowerment

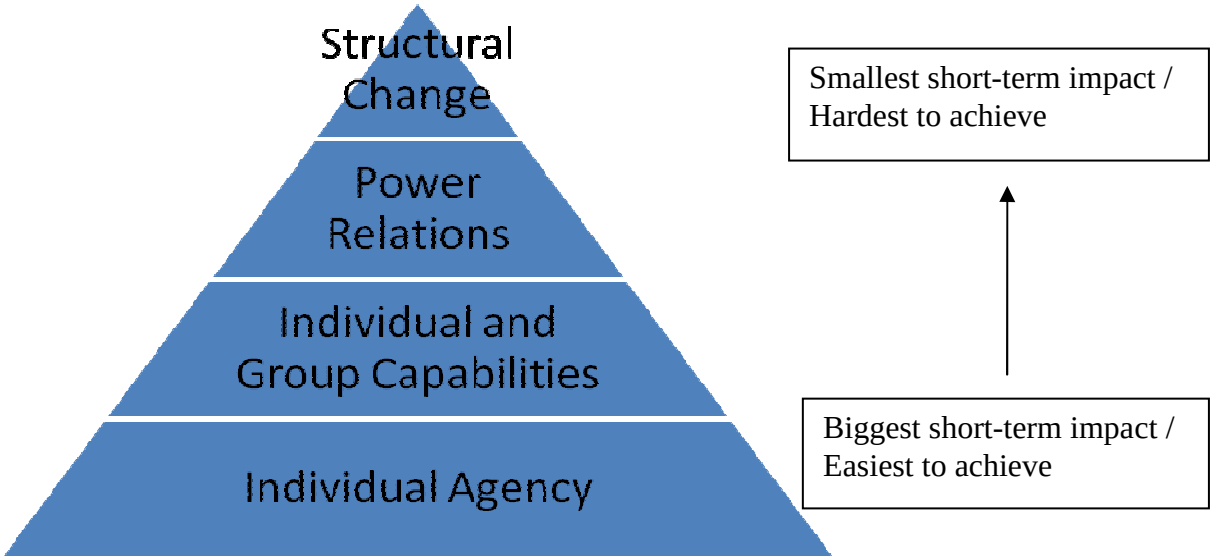


This framework does not seem to adequately reflect the way in which particpants conceptualize the process of empowerment whether for individuals or communities.

Rocha (1997) created a ladder of empowerment, made up of five rungs, which moved from individual to community empowerment. The Ladder of Empowerment is helpful in terms of picturing empowerment as a linear process from individual agency (what she terms atomistic individual) to individual agency within a community structure (embedded individual) all the way to a rung which is the community or group empowerment with a focus on policy and collective social action. Rocha's (1997) ladder, however, does not quite represent the data from this study. The axis of this ladder does not rank the rungs according to relational importance or as a representation of ranking in time (i.e. what types of interventions must come before others).

Most participants felt that agency (i.e., self-awareness, self-confidence, critical reflection) must come before other aspects of empowerment because without agency women and girls do not know what goals to set and for what changes they wish to advocate. Participants felt that when women and girls increase their personal agency they are more able to advocate for changes they desire with their home, school and community. Thus, even without large-scale structural change, increasing a woman or girl's agency is likely to beneficially affect her life. Sarah illustrated this feeling by saying that, "getting to a place where someone is empowered could happen in a very oppressive situation; eventually they could change their situation" (personal communication, January 7, 2012). Keeping this relational hierarchy in mind a new conceptual framework of empowerment could be postulated:

Figure 4: Revised Conceptual Framework of Empowerment



The different sizes of the pyramid tiers are not meant to indicate that structural changes are the least important changes; participants felt structural change was critical to empowerment. However, the bottom three tiers needed to happen before structural change was likely to occur. Also, if pressed to choose which element of the conceptual framework would have the most impact in their work, participants generally chose agency. Thus, the pyramid represents not only a hierarchical process for empowerment, but it also illustrates the amount of impact on people's daily lives that empowerment programs could achieve, especially in the short term.

Power relations/negotiations in family relations

The data clearly indicated the importance and necessity of family as a critical aspect of women's and girls' empowerment. Without the support of the family, a

supportive environment for empowerment cannot be created. Participants indicated that power relations within the family structure are often complicated and cannot be simplified to men versus women. In fact, in many participants' experience, it was often women who oppressed other women within the family structure. Thus, it is necessary to address power relations within the family unit as a whole, not just between men and women or husbands and wives. Within the concept of power relations and negotiations within the family, participants discussed topics which impact women's and girls' empowerment including: polygamy, income generation for women and domestic labor.

Participants stressed that household power relations are complicated and that there are more power dynamics for women to negotiate within the family sphere than just those between husbands and wives. This finding highlights a short-coming of the GAD approach. GAD theorists are concerned with the "social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations" of both women and men (Rathgeber, 1990, p. 494), however, research and programs tend to focus on the power dynamics between men and women specifically. The GAD approach is useful in terms of analyzing this finding for socially constructed gender power relations where women are placed in a lower position than men within the household, but is less useful in terms of power relations between different women within the household. This finding also highlights the relational and dynamic nature of power. A single individual can be both powerful and powerless in relation to different situations and relationships.

Deshmukh-Ranadive (2005) in her research on family hierarchies in South Asia found that within a domestic unit a separate hierarchy simultaneously exists among

women different from the hierarchy between men and women. The overall extended-family hierarchy is, of course, influenced by the type of family, kinship structure and culture, but in general the top ranking women tended to be the wives of the senior males in the family and daughters-in-law were intermediate to low rank depending on how many and the sex of their children. Married daughters visiting their natal families also tended to be ranked at the bottom of their natal family hierarchy. Thus, once a woman is married she has a low rank in her natal family as well as possibly in her married family and may be an outsider to both homes. Deshmukh-Ranadive (2005) found that the rights of women in the marital house were unstable and insecure because, in the face of marital strife, her rights could be revoked. In this way Deshmukh-Ranadive (2005) illustrates how a woman "may achieve a measure of power in relation to other women in the domestic unit while remaining relative powerless in relation to men and the larger society" (p. 109).

Many previous women's empowerment programs have focused on changing the household power system through increasing women's bargaining power with men. For example, programs promoting women's reproductive and sexual rights, increased access to income, increased self-esteem and self-confidence, and increased education level all claim increased bargaining power in the domestic sphere as a main goal of their programs (Oxaal and Baden, 1997; Paterson, 2004). The criticism of these programs is that without an analysis of the household power dynamics and roles, lasting change cannot be created. As Sholkamy (2010) writes:

> The hundreds of thousands of loans, schemes, health and rights classes and training sessions have bettered the lives of women at certain moments in time, but have not transformed them or the web of relations in which they act and live. (p. 257)

The data from this study indicate that an analysis of power relations must include not only the relationship between men and women, husbands and wives, but also between the different women in the household as well as possibly other extended-family members. What is yet unclear is how changes in power affect woman's bargaining power with the men in the household as well as with the other women. Further research needs to be completed on this crucial aspect of improving women's status within both her natal and marital families.

Involving men in empowerment

The data indicated that involving men in programs intended to empower women is critical in most contexts worldwide. Men often have control over resources as well as, in some contexts, control over women's ability to move freely or make life decisions. Increasing male support for women's empowerment seemed to be a key piece of the empowerment puzzle. It also seemed that a change in men's social relations and masculinities was important, especially in relation to supporting women's and girls' empowerment. Multiple participants felt it was necessary to move away from destructive male gender norms as part of creating a safe and supportive environment for empowerment.

The participants also suggested a relationship between men's and women's empowerment. For example, one participant found through her work in countries in conflict that men were very afraid for their wives and daughters. Conflict and war had resulted in men and husbands feeling disempowered to protect and care for their families. In this situation the men would often oppress women and girls in an attempt to have some control over their safety. Thus, the disempowerment of men was directly connected to the disempowerment of women and girls. The data articulated the complexity of gendered power relations within the family and the affects of disempowerment on the entire family unit. Using a GAD approach will allow us to take a more active approach to understanding how power dynamics and masculinities affect the lives of both men and women (Ruxton, 2004).

Over the past ten to fifteen years the focus on and interest in involving men in gender equality has steadily increased (Ruxton, 2004). Development work and research during this past decade has shown the importance of men to the success of interventions aimed at women and girls as well as the importance of creating separate programs which directly work with men to change cultures of violence and inequality (Kaufman, 2004).

There are multiple reasons why addressing men has proven to be equally important to addressing women in terms of gender equity programs. Kaufman (2004) states that, "most obvious is the fact that men are the gatekeepers of current gender orders and are potential resistors of change" (p. 20). Multiple participants in this study expressed the same idea using the same term "gatekeepers" indicating that this is pervasive concept and issue throughout women's and girls' empowerment programs.

Unless men's attitudes and practices change, efforts to promote gender equality are not likely to succeed. The need to work with men to change male attitudes and beliefs is not just important at the local level. If the majority of male decision makers continue to ignore the relevance of gender, it will remain a peripheral issue and will not be effectively integrated into policies and programs at all levels (Ruxton, 2004). Furthermore, involving only women in development programs can "lead to overload and exhaustion for them and may entrench stereotypes of women" as carers and men as breadwinners (Ruxton, 2004, p. 5).

The data from this study indicated that changing traditional masculinities and social relations was necessary for successful and sustainable empowerment programs. For example, changing men's view of women as subordinate and changing ideas about men as caregivers were examples provided by participants. Changing thoughts and feelings around traditional masculinities does not just benefit women and girls, but also benefit the men and boys in a society. Some studies have shown that "conformity to restrictive definitions of masculinity can lead to disengaged fatherhood, poor health, aggression, overwork, and lack of emotional responsiveness" (Ruxton, 2004, p. 10). Multiple masculinities are constructed in every culture with the dominant definitions of masculinity generally representing those with power and money. For many men the ways in which the dominant definitions of masculinity have been constructed, the institutions of patriarchy and the relations of power between men and women are, "paradoxically, the sources of disquietude, pain, fear insecurity, and alienation" (Kaufman, 2004, p. 22).

Participants in this study found that one masculinity had greater impact on women and girls living in countries in conflict. This masculinity, often found within the Middle East context, require men to be the protectors of their wives, sisters and daughters (Elsanousi, 2004). As stated previous, Ellen found that, in an attempt to fulfill this role of protector, men in conflict situations oppressed the women in their lives (personal communication, February 22, 2012).

In a 2002 workshop on gender equity a group of male NGO directors created a list of aspects of men's identities that hindered gender equality. The list included:

- Men dominate in the family, the wider society, and the State.
- Men dominate politics and decision making.
- Men are guardians of women.
- The culture of masculinity dominates at different levels (for example, a 'real man' should be a fighter, and violent).
- Men have limited understanding and vision in relation to gender issues.

However, the workshop participants also felt that men's role as protector of their families and their love for their spouses and children could be used to support a violence-free society (Elsanousi, 2004, p. 165). The need for men to protect their female family members, especially in unstable situations of conflict, has clear repercussions for women's and girls' empowerment. This signifies the necessity of a fundamental change in gender dynamics and masculinities before true gender equity can be achieved since, in most societies, even if a man loses his power in other aspects of society, he will maintain

his control over the women in his household (Elsanousi, 2004). Thus, although much gender inequality is structural, this does should not overshadow the:

> Disproportionate power that men continue to have, both as individuals and a group, to control and benefit from the structures that perpetuate inequality… Some men deny or ignore their power to affect gender relations at a personal level. Institutions like the family are created and maintained by people (Ruxton, 2004, p. 180).

While there have been great strides made in terms of working with men and boys for gender equity over the past decade, more work and research is clearly needed in this area.

Laws and structures to empowerment

The questionnaire and interview data both indicate that laws, policies, rights and access to social networks are all integral to women's and girls' empowerment in terms of both structural elements and personal knowledge and agency. Both the creation and enactment of laws was considered critical by participants in creating an environment that supports women's choices. Participants focused on laws around marriage and gender-based violence and discussed the necessity of creation of more laws, awareness of laws and the lack of enforcement systems, especially in rural areas. From the interview data, however, it was clear that the creation and enforcement of laws happens within a complicated cultural and legal system which makes enacting laws not a simple matter. Conflicting laws, corruption and bribery were all given as examples to the difficulties and challenges in creating and enacting laws and policies to protect women and girls.

The importance of structural access to social networks and safe spaces was supported by both the interview data and questionnaire data. Social networks and safe spaces were important as places of learning, self-development, and the basis of grassroots efforts to improve women's and girls' lives. The questionnaire and interview data both clearly indicate that laws, policies, rights and access to social networks are all integral pieces of women's and girls' empowerment in terms of both structural elements and personal knowledge and agency.

Structural change as a critical aspect of women's and girls' empowerment is well supported in the literature. Equality cannot be attained without removing the social and structural barriers to women and girls including "discriminatory laws, customs, practices and institutional processes (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005, p. 3). Participants seemed to have a more limited concept of structures, however, than that presented by Aikman and Unterhalter (2005). Participants focused more on laws, similar to Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) who argue that, "the presence and operation of formal and informal laws, regulations, and norms, and customs determine whether individuals and groups have access to assets and whether these people can use the assets to achieve desired outcomes" (p. 9).

However, as participants noted, unless laws and regulations are enforced they will not work to improve the lives of women and girls. There is a definite problem of capacity, especially in regions in conflict, for governments to create and enforce structural change particularly for the most marginalized groups. One example of this came out in one of the interviews. In the country in which Lydia works there is a law

requiring all couples obtain a marriage certificate prior to getting wed. The purpose of this law is to ensure that young girls and women are not abused by marriages, such as early marriage or outlawed polygamous relations, and to reduce traditional arranged marriages in which women are given little choice. It is extremely difficult for government officials to monitor all regions of the country, especially the most economically suppressed regions, but even if there was good monitoring, much of the rural population is not literate and so is unable to apply for the marriage certificate regardless.

This example highlights some of the challenges involved with creating meaningful structural change. Structure is critical and women need laws and regulations to protect them, but the literature on empowerment indicates that structural change also need to be accompanied by increased agency and capabilities to create transformative change in women's and girls' lives. Empowerment relies on both structure and agency to reshape the ways in which individuals and communities engage in education, development and social change (Monkman et al., 2008).

There is some question as to the level of structural change necessary for empowerment to be lasting. Whether such structural change can come from individuals at the local or community level or must come from the state at a national level is unclear. Proponents of the GAD approach put a greater emphasis on the state in promoting women's empowerment. GAD theorists tend to see the provision of social services to women as a duty of the state, rather than provided on a private or individual basis (Rathgeber, 2004).

Sholkamy (2010) argues that while practical needs may be addressed by development programs aimed at the individual at the local level, the strategic needs of women are addressed by the state, "It is the state that delivers transformations… not projects or people" (p. 257). However, there is also a focus in the literature on *communities'* ability to change social and cultural structures (Monkman et al., 2008). For instance, Jennings et al. (2006) argue that empowerment:

> Occurs within families, organizations and communities, involving processes and structures that enhance members' skills, provide them with mutual support necessary to effect change, improve their collective well-being, and strengthen intra and inter- organizational networks and linkages to improve or maintain the quality of community life. (p. 33)

With the problems of capacity and enforcement discussed above it may behoove development programs to focus, at least in the short term, on improving the capacity of communities to change structures and cultures in addition to a focus on national level campaigns or advocacy.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical implications

There were four main themes which came out of this study and were interpreted in relation to the literature on empowerment. When the four themes are put together they create a new conceptual framework. The framework was already changed in the course of this chapter from a framework which placed each aspect of empowerment in equal position along an iterative wheel to to a pyramid which orders the aspects of

empowerment in terms of a linear process as well as ease of programming with large populations.

Figure 5: Conceptual Framework of Empowerment

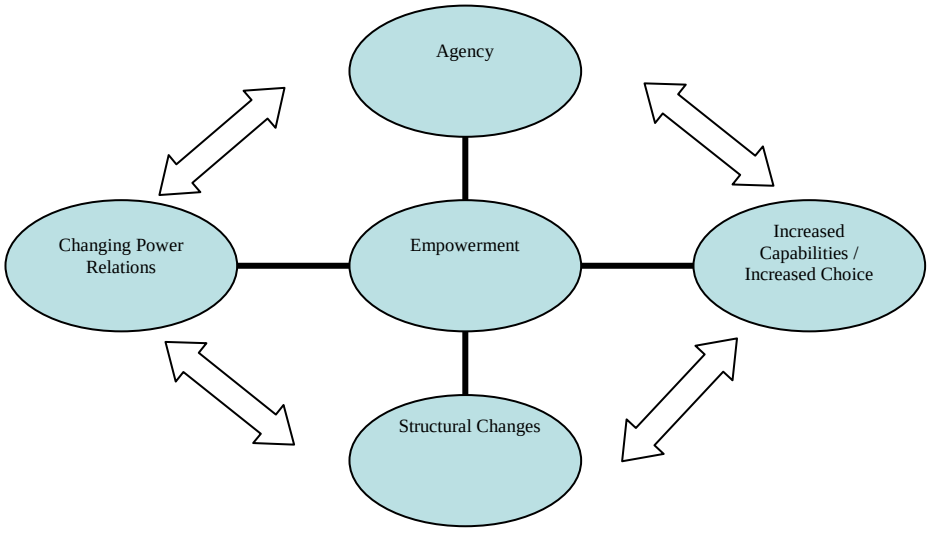
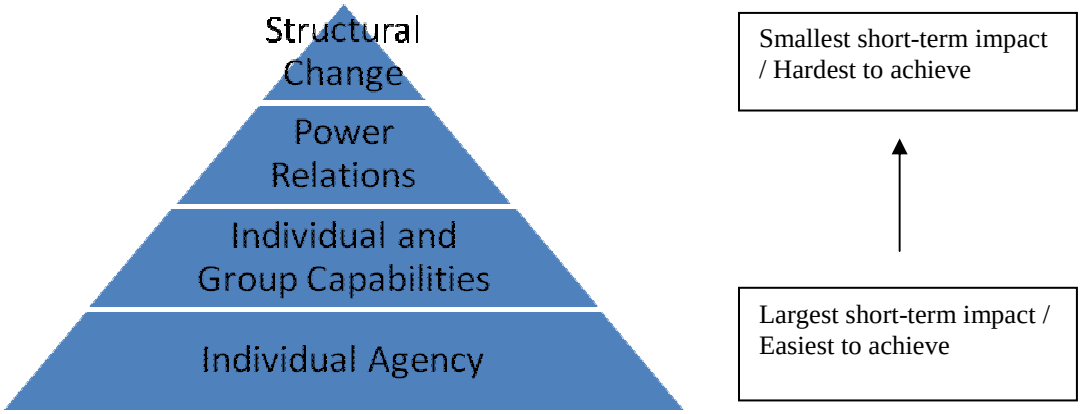


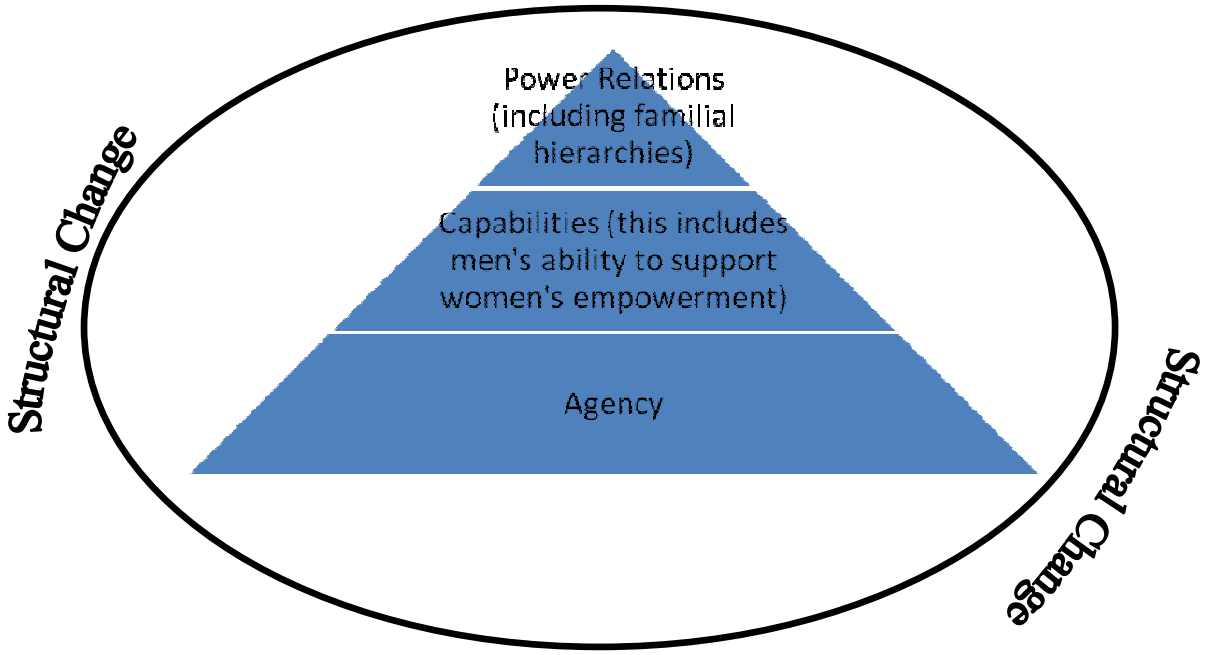
Figure 6: Revised Conceptual Framework of Empowerment



However, this new conceptual framework does not quite account for all of the themes found in this research. Family negotiations and involving men in empowerment

fit well into the existing framework, however, it was clear from the structural change findings that placing structure at the top of the pyramid is not quite right. While participants intuitively felt agency needed to be addressed before structural change, the data and literature suggest that without structural change empowerment, and indeed agency, cannot be supported. Thus, the conceptual framework, after taking into account both the themes found in this research and the literature on empowerment would still consist of a pyramid with agency on the bottom, but the entire pyramid would be encompassed by structural change. These data suggest that structural change needs to happen concurrently or even prior to agency for there to be a lasting or transformative change in people's lives. As one participant explained, "When you empower a person you create a square peg. If the square peg goes back to a round environment, eventually the peg gets ground back to a round peg" (Hooper, personal communication, February 13, 2012). Thus, it is clear that structural change is critical for creating an enabling environment for empowerment to not only happen, but to allow people to continue to grow and change in their choices and goals. However, the focus of structural change does not have to necessarily be on a grand, national scale; it can focus on community and even familial structural change.

Figure 7: Final Conceptual Framework of Empowerment



As before the tiers of the pyramid are not meant to convey that the higher levels are necessarily less important for empowerment, but that the professionals who took part in this study found, based on their own work with empowerment programs, that there is a programmatic hierarchy. Thus, participants felt that agency had to come first before some other aspects of empowerment could be addressed. Agency was not necessarily more critical to empowerment overall, but it was necessary as a foundation from which women and girls and other marginalized populations can begin negotiating the other levels of the pyramid. Also, it was clear from the interviews that agency was the easiest programming to create, measure and report back to funding agencies, as well as allowing empowerment programs to reach the greatest number of people, which was also a consideration for programming.

The iterative and relational nature of empowerment can be acknowledged within the new conceptual framework by remembering that each layer is a building block in empowerment and not an end in itself. Therefore, within different contexts and relationships the same individual may be on different levels of the pyramid simultaneously. The new conceptual framework represents a way to think about empowerment based on both the data collected in this research and the literature on women's and girls' empowerment. It takes into account not only the complexities involved in fostering transformative change in an individual's lived experience, but also the necessities of development programming and, to some degree, funding structures.

This conceptual framework can be used by individuals and organizations to think about current and future programming by highlighting the key aspects of empowerment to help decide what a given program will address and with whom. The framework can also be used to help professionals and organizations keep in mind the necessity of both structure and agency when planning and evaluating programs as well as using it as a way to differentiate between agency and empowerment.

Practical Implications

Agency and structure

The data from this study as well as the literature in general both highlight the common occurrence of using the terms agency and empowerment interchangeably. This may be due, in part, to the distillation of empowerment definitions to a broad concept of decision making. It may also be due to agency indicators being commonly used as a means to measure progress of empowerment, especially in youth programs. While

agency is at the heart of empowerment, the data and literature both suggest that it is the combination of agency with structural factors that allows individuals and groups to negotiate with, influence and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives to be empowerment (Narayan, 2005). Many of the participants in this study worked with programs which focused on increasing women's and girls' self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-awareness. While these are all meaningful and useful abilities to engender they do not, necessarily, lead to increased life options (Luttrell et al., 2009). Thus, professionals and organizations planning programs for women and girls' may find it most useful to decide if the programs they plan to implement will affect agency alone or agency and structure together (empowerment).

Community structure change to complement individual agency programs

Greig (2010) wrote that, "the alternatives that are happening all over the world are mostly happening at the level of community organizing in low income communities and in the aggregation of this organizing into broader movements; that is the future for shifting power" (p. 197). While these data and the recent literature on empowerment indicate that there is a critical need for state, and even international, level laws, policies and regulations to protect women and children, there is often a lack of capacity or will to enact and enforce these laws. Corruption, bribery and gender stereotypes held by people in power all reduce the effectiveness of large, national level structural change. Thus, it may be more beneficial for development professionals and organizations to focus on fostering structural change at the local or community level.

Much structural change work is already happening in terms of girls' empowerment at the school level with a focus on policies and positive, enabling environments. A continued focus on school and community level structural change may best support and enhance women's and girls' empowerment programs. Local access to resources, employment and regional and community policies are likely to be more beneficial to poor, rural women and girls than national structural change in the short term.

Power analyses and program implementation

This study highlighted the complicated nature of family hierarchies and power dynamics and the unstable position within those hierarchies that women often find themselves. Changing power dynamics is a complex process which can lead to potential conflicts of interest between women, and between women and men. Momsen (2001) remarked that, "development can create much wider social conflicts than just those between women and men" (p. 52).

Programs aimed at increasing women's and girls' bargaining power within the family could benefit from undertaking an in-depth power analysis which takes into account not only the power structures between men and women, but also women and women within the extended family unit. Empowerment programs aimed at changing familial power structures should be undertaken with care so as not to place women in an untenable position between their natal and marital families.

Involving men and boys in empowerment programs

Over the past 15 years there has been increasing focus on both including men and boys in programs intended to empower women and girls as well as programs to directly

address men's masculinities and gender stereotypes. This research underscored the necessity of both types of male involvement. In many of the cultural contexts in which participants worked men were the "gatekeepers" of the rights of women. Without support from the men in their lives the women were unable to make positive changes in their lives or even attend the empowerment programs. Paterson (2004) found in her work in Balochistan that "programs that are unwilling to consider the potential impact on men, and change required of them, are unlikely to be successful" (p. 37).

These data also suggest that women's and girls' empowerment programs could also include men and boys to increase male support for empowerment and increase understanding of equity and rights throughout the community. It may also be beneficial to create separate programs aimed at addressing masculinities and which allow for a critical examination of male social roles to be undertaken, either as companion programs to women's and girls' empowerment or as stand-alone programs. Addressing masculinities and social expectations for men's behavior can be empowering for both men and women and may reduce the power conflicts which often accompany increasing women's empowerment.

Empowerment and measurement

Before empowerment programs can be measured or evaluated, they need to be developed and implemented. The term empowerment is only useful for programming and measurement when, through discussion and debate with local community members (including women and girls), a consensus and clarity has been reached as to what is meant be empowerment in each local context. The conceptual framework of

empowerment is useful in framing these discussions with community members by creating a structure for empowerment. The radial framework originally taken from the literature does not indicate any place from which to "begin" the work of designing empowerment programs and thus may lead community members to abandon untenable multi-sectoral programming. Thus, the framework may be used as a tool for creating and continuing communication strategies with the communities in which empowerment programs will be implemented.

Many of the participants in this study felt that global measures of empowerment were less useful in terms of measuring change because such measures did not adequately account for local and situational differences. As stated throughout this chapter, the conceptual framework created as a result of this study indicates that some aspects of empowerment must be addressed before others, thus global measures may not be the best approach to measuring and evaluating empowerment programs. Measures or indicators that are created around the separate pieces of the conceptual framework would allow for a level of nuance and localization that global measures may miss. Empowerment is also relational – an individual is empowered relative to her previous status as well as to others in her reference group (Narayan, 2005). Indicators which are created around the separate pieces of the empowerment framework would allow for greater flexibility in measuring an individual's level of movement in terms of relational empowerment. The framework is also useful in terms of measurement by highlighting the crucial programming areas which need to be addressed, and the order in which they will create the most impact. In this way

the framework helps to clarify the role of empowerment in achieving positive development outcomes, a critical piece in measuring empowerment (Narayan, 2005).

Implications for Future Research

Power differences between women within the same family network

Both the literature on women's and girls' empowerment and the findings from this study indicated the importance of family hierarchies and power dynamics. It is yet unclear how empowerment programs aimed at increasing women's bargaining power within the home may affect her power relations with other women and extended family members. Also, it is unclear how increasing a woman's bargaining power in her married home may affect her relationship with her natal home. Further research into these complicated power hierarchies could ask:

- What types of increased bargaining power within the family affect women's hierarchies and how?
- How are women's power relations affected differently from the gendered power relations between men and women?
- In what ways does changing women's bargaining power affect both her current and future position within the extended family hierarchy?

These types of questions and analyses have the potential to improve understanding of how the complicated power dynamics within families are affected by external development programs and what the long term affects of such programs may be on women and girls. With a better understanding of how to influence and change such dynamics and avoid negative effects, empowerment programs can be strengthened and

designed to create transformative change within women's lives with minimal adverse effects and familial struggle.

How disempowering men may lead to disempowering women

One interesting and important piece of data from this study suggested that men who are living in countries in conflict oppress women, at least in part, because they are unable to fulfill their role as protectors. In a situation in which violence against women is used as a form of revenge against men, husbands and fathers oppressed the women in their families as a form of protection. Both men and women were disempowered by this situation and by the violence. Further research into this possibility could help to improve the way in which empowerment programs address gender inequalities in these regions. Research in this area could ask questions such as:

- How is the disempowerment of women related to the disempowerment of men?
- How does violence again women affect men's perceptions of control and oppression?
- In situations of conflict and violence against women, how can empowerment programs best address the concerns of both men and women?

Research into the relationship between conflict, men's disempowerment and women's disempowerment can help to improve the way in which women's and girls' empowerment programs address the concerns and underlying causes of women's oppression.

Limitations of the Study

The findings in this study have a few limitations. Firstly, the professionals who I interviewed were extremely busy and had very strict schedules. This meant that the interviews were completed within a set amount of time, regardless of whether all of the questions were addressed. Thus, there were times when the interviews were not as in-depth as I would have liked. The interviews were also completed via Skype and at times were not of as high a quality as desired. Secondly, the questionnaire was created by me based on the indicators of empowerment I found during my literature review. While I attempted to be thorough in my research and understanding of empowerment there were still some concerns voiced by a few participants that my questionnaire was only representative of a Western perspective on empowerment. This research may not adequately represent the perspective of women and feminists from the Global South. Finally, this research attempted to distill an extremely complex and interwoven concept into distinct dimensions that could be discussed and analyzed. The different aspects of empowerment work in conjunction with each other and often overlap. Thus, the conceptual frameworks may represent a "cleaner" concept of empowerment than is the reality.

Final Thoughts

I undertook this research in an attempt to create some conceptual clarity around what empowerment means to people who work with women's and girls' empowerment programs in the context of international development education. Some of the findings were not surprising, for example, that agency is important and some parts of the research were somewhat disappointing (the lack of variation across questionnaire responses). But

the pieces that stand out for me, that were nice surprises, were the idea that empowerment is a series of building blocks not a circular iterative process. Based on the literature I had conceived of empowerment in terms of equal pieces in a radius and I find the idea of a pyramid with hierarchies of empowerment domains to be interesting. A pyramid, in opposition to a radius, indicates that each piece of the empowerment framework does not hold an equal position in the framework. The pyramid does not necessarily indicate that some parts of the framework are more important to empowerment, but that participants felt some aspects of empowerment needed to come before other parts could be addressed. This indicates a fundamental difference in how empowerment is conceived – as a series of steps on a ladder rather than a radius with pieces which are address simultaneously. The difference in the frameworks impacts how empowerment programs are conceived and developed. The radial framework indicates the need for a multi-sectoral approach which would address multiple aspects of the framework at once. However, the ladder framework indicates a need for resources to be focused on certain pieces of the framework depending on the level of progress toward empowerment.

The other surprise from this research is around the complicated gender relations and the resultant effect on empowerment. There is, actually, no surprise that gender relations affect empowerment, that is the basis of the GAD approach, but what is interesting is the lack of research thus far on women's familial hierarchies and this idea that the disempowerment of men may increase the disempowerment of women. These two aspects were the types of contextual understandings I had hoped would come out of this research when talking with people who have spent so much time working in the field.

I am excited to see what future research is done on these domains and where it will lead empowerment programming.

Conclusion

The definition and conceptualization of empowerment continues to evolve as more research and programming is undertaken. As practitioners and policy makers improve their understanding of the complexities of women's lives and communities' desires and needs, empowerment programs will become more effective and have greater impact on women's and girls' lives. Education development programs could benefit from taking into account not only the different complexities of women's lived experiences, but also the different aspects of the conceptual framework of empowerment. Through continuing to improve our understanding and conceptualizations of empowerment we will make strides in improving women's and girls' lives around the world.

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Appendix A: Empowerment Questionnaire

Instructions:

1. Carefully read each statement on this questionnaire.
2. Rate how important each statement is to your idea and understanding of empowerment by checking one box for each statement.
3. There are four sections of questions relating to: agency, changing power relations, increased capabilities, structural level concepts and a final section of demographic questions.
4. Feel free to make comments, suggestions, points of clarification, etc on any of these items in the space for comments at the end of each section.

In a few sentences, please write your personal or institutional (please indicate which) definition of empowerment.

Section A	Agency			
How important are each of these elements to women's and girls' empowerment?	Not at all important	Somewhat Important	Important	Critical
5. Women's and girls' awareness of lack of empowerment				
6. Awareness of inequalities				
7. Understanding of personal rights				
8. Understanding of self				
9. Critical reflection				
10. Self-confidence				
11. Positive future aspirations				
12. Ability to conceive of possible life choices				

13. Belief in personal ability to transform society				
14. Women and girls as active agents in their own well-being				
15. Ability to problem solve				
16. Self-reliance				
17. Desire to act as leaders				
18. Pursuit of civic engagement opportunities (i.e. voting, attending community meetings, etc)				
19. Understanding of how to make decisions				
20. High expectations for achievement				
Do you have comments on any items in this section? If so, please elaborate:				

Section B	Changing Power Relations			
How important are each of these elements to women's and girls' empowerment?	Not at all important	Somewhat Important	Important	Critical
1. Men to the advocacy of female empowerment				
2. Boys to the advocacy of female empowerment				
3. Change in gendered patterns of domestic labor				
4. Ability to recognize social norms that create inequality between men and women				
5. Negotiation in marriage relations and decisions				

6. Ability to be heard within the family				
7. Change in net equity of domestic labor				
8. Decision making ability within the family				
9. Change towards joint decision making in the family				
10. Fostering cooperation between men and women to change social structures				
11. Family in increasing access to resources				
12. Community in increasing access to resources				
13. Cooperation between caregivers and community members to increasing access to resources				
14. Change in gendered distribution of resources				
15. Change in resource distribution towards increased family well-being				
16. Ability to exercise power with others; take collective action. (For example, women's associations engaged in political action or girls clubs providing social support in challenging gender norms)				
17. Peer or adult support				
Do you have comments on any items in this section? If so, please elaborate:				

Section C	Increased Capabilities			
How important are each of these elements to women's and girls' empowerment?	Not at all important	Somewhat Important	Important	Critical

1. Ability to make decisions about one's future				
2. Ability to make choices that go against cultural and social expectations				
3. Ability to make choices that influence cultural and social expectations				
4. Ability to make strategic life choices				
5. Ability to articulate one's decisions or choices				
6. Ability to actualize one's decisions or choices				
7. Enhanced capacity for self-determination (i.e. one's ability to determine one's own social, economic and cultural development)				
8. Ability to move freely				
9. Ability to organize and mobilize				
10. Ability to voice opinions				
11. Ability to be heard in schools and public forums (such as community meetings)				
12. Decision making ability in community affairs				
13. Ability to access to household resources (land, water, food, clothing)				
14. Ability to access social spaces				
15. Ability to access non-familial social networks				
Do you have comments on any items in this section? If so, please elaborate:				

Section D	Structural Factors			
How important are each of these elements to women's and girls' empowerment?	Not at all important	Somewhat Important	Important	Critical
1. Existence of job opportunities				
2. Opportunity to act as leaders				
3. Opportunity for civic engagement				
4. Structural access to resources and social networks				
5. Changing policies to benefit women and girls at the local, regional and national levels				
6. Enacting existing policies to benefit women and girls				
7. Protection under the law				
8. Laws that allow women and girls to claim their rights				
9. Systemic changes in societal institutions				
10. Changing practices at the family level to benefit women and girls				
11. Changing practices at the community level to benefit women and girls				
12. Critical awareness of wider social structures and norms				
13. Finding locally situated mechanisms of empowerment				
14. Finding locally relevant indicators of empowerment				
Do you have comments on any items in this section? If so, please elaborate:				

Additional Comments
Are there other statements, concepts or ideas that you think are important to understanding empowerment which have not been included on this questionnaire? If so, please elaborate:

Demographic Information
Sex
Age
Organization Name
Position Title
Number of Years in Current Position
Where in the world do you work (or have done the most work)?

Thank You!

http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/565344/Conceptualizing-Empowerment-in-International-Development-Education-Survey

Appendix B: Consent Information Sheet and E-mail

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking part in my doctoral dissertation research on conceptualizing empowerment in international development education. I am asking for your input on this questionnaire due to your work and expertise in international development.

The purpose of this exercise is to learn how professionals in the field of international development are defining and conceptualizing women's and girls' 'empowerment' in international development education programs. You will be asked to rate the level of importance, from *not at all* to *critical*, of statements taken from the literature of key elements of women's and girls' empowerment. **I expect this survey to take you no more than 15 minutes to complete.**

If you decide to participate, please complete the accompanying questionnaire. Your completion of this questionnaire is implied consent. No benefits accrue to you for answering the questionnaire, but your responses will be used to bring some conceptual clarity as to how empowerment is conceived by individuals and organizations working in this field.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me at any time if you have questions or comments at hege0012@umn.edu or 001-612-423-1254 .

There is also an electronic version of the questionnaire for your convenience. Here is the link: http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/565344/Conceptualizing-Empowerment-in-International-Development-Education-Survey

Thank you again for your time and participation.

Sincerely yours,

Raya Hegeman-Davis
PhD Candidate, Educational Policy and Administration
330 Wulling Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 5455

Conceptualizing Empowerment in International Development Education
Pre-notice Letter

Date

Dear xxx,

Greetings, my name is Raya Hegeman-Davis. I am working to complete a PhD in International Development Education with a focus on women's and girls' empowerment at the University of Minnesota. I am asking for your input in my doctoral dissertation research due to your expertise in issues of gender and empowerment in development settings. Would you have time to take part in a brief interview? The interview would consist of you looking through a questionnaire and then discussing your thoughts and comments with me. I have attached the questionnaire for your perusal. I know you are extremely busy and I appreciate your time and assistance with my research.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me at any time if you have questions or comments at hege0012@umn.edu or 001-612-423-1254.

Thank you again for your time and participation.

Sincerely yours,

Raya Hegeman-Davis
PhD Candidate, Educational Policy and Administration
330 Wulling Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

1. Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me. I really appreciate it. I would like to start with your overall thoughts or comments on the questionnaire. Is there anything that stood out for you?

2. What is the definition of empowerment that you use in your work?

3. Please tell me about women's or girls' empowerment in the country context in which you work.

4. What would you rank as the most important pieces necessary for empowerment?

5. Let's go through the questionnaire and you can tell me about the items that you feel most strongly about.

Thank you so much for your time and input!

Appendix D: Interviewee Biographic Information

Sarah - worked with a development organization based within the Continental United States. She was Global Director of Girls' Education for her organization. She was Global Director for 6 months at the time of the interview, but had been with her organization for 7 years. She primarily worked in: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

Megan – was Senior Vice President and the director of the Gender Equality center for a large development organization based in the continental United States. Megan had been Senior VP for one year at the time of the interview, but has been working in the field of gender equity for 30 years and is a well known name in the field.

Peggy – was a project director for a large international NGO who was from and was based in Kenya. She had been working in girls' education and empowerment work for four years at the time of the interview.

Loraine – was a project director for a large international NGO who was from and worked for a country office in Tanzania. She had been working in girls' education for three years at the time of the interview.

Molly – was the country office director for a large international NGO and was also from Bangladesh. She had been working for her current organization for two years and three months at the time of the interview.

Ana – was the National Program Coordinator for a large multi-national organization. She was from and was based in Ghana. She had been working in her current position for one and a half years at the time of the interview.

Jim – worked for a large international NGO and was based in the United States. He had primarily worked in Africa and had been in his current position for seven months at the time of the interview.

Penny – was a Senior Education Research Analyst at a large international NGO based in the United States. She had primarily worked in West Africa (Guinea, Senegal, Mali), but also North Africa (Morocco, Egypt) and Haiti (and elsewhere). She had been in her current position for ten years at the time of the interview.

Peter – was the Chief of Party - Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) Program, Afghanistan for a large international NGO. He had been in his current position for two years at the time of the interview. He was not Afghani.

Hooper – was a Senior Education Scientist for a large international NGO based in the United States. He had worked in over 30 countries, but most extensively in South Africa, Swaziland, Namibia, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Georgia, and Egypt. He had been in his current position for 23 years.

Adele – was a Senior Technical Advisor for a large international NGO based in the United States. Adele primarily worked in Africa.

Angela – was a senior associate at a large international NGO. She worked primarily in MENA, the U.S., SSA countries. She had been in her current position for one year, though she had worked in international development for the past 35 years.

Seamus – was Chief of Party for a large international NGO in Afghanistan.

Frank – was a Program Coordinator for a large international NGO in Cambodia. He had been in his current position for three years.

Julie – was President and CEO of her own small consulting firm. She had worked all over the world for more than 20 years.

Lydia – was the Organization Founder of a local education development organization. She was from and worked in Afghanistan and had been in her position for four years.

Ellen – was Chief of Party in Jordan for a large international NGO. She had been in her current position for three years, but had also worked in other regions of the world including: Long term assignments (1.5 -3 years): United States, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Jordan, Japan, Afghanistan. Short term: Namibia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Burundi, Uganda, Ghana.

Amy – was Director, GIRL Project of a large international NGO. She had been in her position for one year and was working in DC. She had done the most work in Russia, Central Asia and Latin America.

Mark – worked for a large international NGO in his home country of Tanzania.

Mohammed - was the Project Manager – Adolescent Livelihoods in Bangladesh. He was Bangladeshi and had worked primarily in Bangladesh or South Asia. He had been in his current position for one year.

Itzel - was Grants Manager for a large international NGO in Afghanistan. She was Afghani and had only worked in Afghanistan. She had been in her position for two years.

Appendix E: IRB Exemption Letter

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

Study Number: 1104E98512

Principal Investigator: Raya Hegeman-Davis

Title(s):
Conceptualizing Empowerment in International Development Education

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This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota RSPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

The study number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Research that involves observation can be approved under this category without obtaining consent.

SURVEY OR INTERVIEW RESEARCH APPROVED AS EXEMPT UNDER THIS CATEGORY IS LIMITED TO ADULT SUBJECTS.

This exemption is valid for five years from the date of this correspondence and will be filed inactive at that time. You will receive a notification prior to inactivation. If this research will extend beyond five years, you must submit a new application to the IRB before the study?s expiration date.

Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at(612) 626-5654.

You may go to the View Completed section of eResearch Central at http://eresearch.umn.edu/ to view further details on your study.

The IRB wishes you success with this research.

We have created a short survey that will only take a couple of minutes to complete. The questions are basibut will give us guidance on what areas are showing improvement and what areas we need to focus on:
https://umsurvey.umn.edu/index.php?sid=94693&lang=um

Appendix F: Data Analysis Results

Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	9	28.1	28.1	28.1
	Female	23	71.9	71.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	1	3.1	4.5	4.5
	26	1	3.1	4.5	9.1
	27	1	3.1	4.5	13.6
	30	2	6.3	9.1	22.7
	32	1	3.1	4.5	27.3
	35	1	3.1	4.5	31.8
	37	3	9.4	13.6	45.5
	39	1	3.1	4.5	50.0
	45	1	3.1	4.5	54.5
	47	1	3.1	4.5	59.1
	48	1	3.1	4.5	63.6
	51	1	3.1	4.5	68.2
	54	2	6.3	9.1	77.3
	57	1	3.1	4.5	81.8
	58	1	3.1	4.5	86.4
	60	2	6.3	9.1	95.5
	64	1	3.1	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	68.8	100.0	
Missing	System	10	31.3		
Total		32	100.0		

Organization Name

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	CARE	4	12.5	13.3	13.3
	RTI	2	6.3	6.7	20.0
	FHI 360	5	15.6	16.7	36.7
	Creative Associates	6	18.8	20.0	56.7
	Room to Read	3	9.4	10.0	66.7

	UN Women	2	6.3	6.7	73.3
	IRD	1	3.1	3.3	76.7
	Save the Children	2	6.3	6.7	83.3
	CID Consulting	1	3.1	3.3	86.7
	Schubert Inc	1	3.1	3.3	90.0
	American University in Cairo	2	6.3	6.7	96.7
	Modern Organization for Development of Education	1	3.1	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.3		
Total		32	100.0		

Position Title

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		6	18.8	18.8	18.8
	Chairperson	1	3.1	3.1	21.9
	Chf Party	1	3.1	3.1	25.0
	Chief Part	1	3.1	3.1	28.1
	COP	1	3.1	3.1	31.3
	Dir	1	3.1	3.1	34.4
	Founder	1	3.1	3.1	37.5
	Glb Direct	1	3.1	3.1	40.6
	Grnt Mng	1	3.1	3.1	43.8
	Nat Pro Co	1	3.1	3.1	46.9
	Nat Prog Co	1	3.1	3.1	50.0
	PM	2	6.3	6.3	56.3
	Prog Coor	1	3.1	3.1	59.4
	Prog Mang	1	3.1	3.1	62.5
	Prog. Coor	1	3.1	3.1	65.6
	Proj direct	1	3.1	3.1	68.8
	Res Coor	1	3.1	3.1	71.9
	RO	1	3.1	3.1	75.0
	S Ed Re Anyl	1	3.1	3.1	78.1
	S. VP	1	3.1	3.1	81.3
	Sen Ass	1	3.1	3.1	84.4
	SR PO	1	3.1	3.1	87.5
	Sr. Ed Sci	1	3.1	3.1	90.6
	Sr. Pro Dir	1	3.1	3.1	93.8
	Tech Advis	1	3.1	3.1	96.9
	Tech Prog Mg	1	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Years in Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.5	1	3.1	3.7	3.7
	.8	1	3.1	3.7	7.4
	.8	1	3.1	3.7	11.1
	1.0	4	12.5	14.8	25.9
	1.5	1	3.1	3.7	29.6
	2.0	2	6.3	7.4	37.0
	2.3	1	3.1	3.7	40.7
	3.0	3	9.4	11.1	51.9
	3.1	1	3.1	3.7	55.6
	3.5	1	3.1	3.7	59.3
	4.0	2	6.3	7.4	66.7
	5.0	2	6.3	7.4	74.1
	7.5	1	3.1	3.7	77.8
	8.5	1	3.1	3.7	81.5
	9.0	1	3.1	3.7	85.2
	10.0	1	3.1	3.7	88.9
	13.0	1	3.1	3.7	92.6
	17.0	1	3.1	3.7	96.3
	23.0	1	3.1	3.7	100.0
	Total	27	84.4	100.0	
Missing	System	5	15.6		
Total		32	100.0		

Where Work in the World

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	AF ME AS	1	3.1	3.1	9.4
	Afghan	4	12.5	12.5	21.9
	AfgLib	1	3.1	3.1	25.0
	Afr	1	3.1	3.1	28.1
	Africa	1	3.1	3.1	31.3
	Banglad	3	9.4	9.4	40.6
	Camb	1	3.1	3.1	43.8
	Cambodia	2	6.3	6.3	50.0
	Egypt	4	12.5	12.5	62.5
	Ghana	1	3.1	3.1	65.6
	Jordan	1	3.1	3.1	68.8
	Kenya	1	3.1	3.1	71.9

	LAC	1	3.1	3.1	75.0
	MENA	1	3.1	3.1	78.1
	NA Haiti	1	3.1	3.1	81.3
	RusCALA	1	3.1	3.1	84.4
	SAsia	1	3.1	3.1	87.5
	Serb Afg	1	3.1	3.1	90.6
	SSA	1	3.1	3.1	93.8
	Tanz	1	3.1	3.1	96.9
	Tanzania	1	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Women's and Girls' awareness of lack of empowerment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	8	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Important	8	25.0	25.0	50.0
	Critical	16	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Awareness of Inequalities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	13	40.6	40.6	53.1
	Critical	15	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Understanding of Personal Rights

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	53.1
	Critical	15	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Understanding of Self

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Important	11	34.4	34.4	43.8

	Critical	18	56.3	56.3	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Critical Reflection

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	17	53.1	53.1	65.6
	Critical	11	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Self-Confidence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	13	40.6	40.6	46.9
	Critical	17	53.1	53.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Positive Future Aspirations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	6	18.8	18.8	18.8
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	62.5
	Critical	12	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to Concieve of Possible Life Choices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	56.3
	Critical	14	43.8	43.8	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Belief in Personal Ability to Transform Society

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1

	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	21.9	25.0
	Important	15	46.9	46.9	71.9
	Critical	9	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Women and Girls as Active Agents in Own Well Being

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	10	31.3	31.3	37.5
	Critical	20	62.5	62.5	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to Problem Solve

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	13	40.6	40.6	53.1
	Critical	15	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Self-Reliance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	21.9	21.9
	Important	12	37.5	37.5	59.4
	Critical	13	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Desire to Act as Leaders

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Somewhat Important	15	46.9	46.9	53.1
	Important	10	31.3	31.3	84.4
	Critical	5	15.6	15.6	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Pursuit of Civic Engagement Opportunities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Somewhat Important	8	25.0	25.0	28.1
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	71.9
	Critical	9	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Understanding of How to Make Decisions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	17	53.1	53.1	59.4
	Critical	13	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

High Expectations for Achievement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Somewhat Important	12	37.5	38.7	41.9
	Important	9	28.1	29.0	71.0
	Critical	9	28.1	29.0	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Men to the Advocacy of Female Empowerment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	16.1	16.1
	Important	12	37.5	38.7	54.8
	Critical	14	43.8	45.2	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Boys to the Advocacy of Female Empowerment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	22.6	22.6
	Important	14	43.8	45.2	67.7
	Critical	10	31.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Change in Gendered Patterns of Domestic Labor

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Somewhat Important	10	31.3	32.3	35.5
	Important	11	34.4	35.5	71.0
	Critical	9	28.1	29.0	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Recognize Social Norms that Create Inequality Between Men and Women

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.5	6.5
	Important	14	43.8	45.2	51.6
	Critical	15	46.9	48.4	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Negotiation in Marriage Relations and Decisions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	17	53.1	53.1	59.4
	Critical	13	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to be Heard Within the Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	17	53.1	53.1	53.1

	Critical	15	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Change in Net Equity of Domestic Labor

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	21.9	25.0
	Important	15	46.9	46.9	71.9
	Critical	9	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Decision Making Ability Within the Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	17	53.1	53.1	59.4
	Critical	13	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Change Towards Joint Decision Making in the Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Important	20	62.5	62.5	65.6
	Critical	11	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Fostering Cooperation Between Men and Women to Change Social Structures

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	17	53.1	53.1	53.1
	Critical	15	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Family in Increasing Access to Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	8	25.0	26.7	26.7

	Important	15	46.9	50.0	76.7
	Critical	7	21.9	23.3	100.0
	Total	30	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.3		
Total		32	100.0		

Community in Increasing Access to Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	23.3	23.3
	Important	13	40.6	43.3	66.7
	Critical	10	31.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	30	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.3		
Total		32	100.0		

Cooperation Between Caregivers and Community Members to Increasing Access to Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	11	34.4	35.5	35.5
	Important	14	43.8	45.2	80.6
	Critical	6	18.8	19.4	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Change in Gendered Distribution of Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.9	12.9
	Important	10	31.3	32.3	45.2
	Critical	17	53.1	54.8	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Change in Resource Distribution Towards Increased Family Well-being

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.2	3.2

	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.7	12.9
	Important	15	46.9	48.4	61.3
	Critical	12	37.5	38.7	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Exercise Power with Others; Take Collective Action

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	46.9
	Critical	17	53.1	53.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Peer or Adult Support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	15	46.9	48.4	48.4
	Critical	16	50.0	51.6	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Abiliy to Make Decisions about One's Future

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	11	34.4	34.4	40.6
	Critical	19	59.4	59.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to Make Choices that go Against Cultural and Socail Expectations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	13.3	13.3
	Important	13	40.6	43.3	56.7
	Critical	13	40.6	43.3	100.0
	Total	30	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.3		

Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Make Choices that Influence Cultural and Social Expectations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	16.1	16.1
	Important	14	43.8	45.2	61.3
	Critical	12	37.5	38.7	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Make Strategic Life Choices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.5	6.5
	Important	11	34.4	35.5	41.9
	Critical	18	56.3	58.1	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Articulate One's Decisions or Choices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	15.6	18.8
	Important	11	34.4	34.4	53.1
	Critical	15	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to Actualize One's Decisions or Choices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.5	9.7
	Important	14	43.8	45.2	54.8
	Critical	14	43.8	45.2	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		

Total		32	100.0		

Enhanced Capacity for Self-determination

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.9	12.9
	Important	14	43.8	45.2	58.1
	Critical	13	40.6	41.9	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Move Freely

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	16.1	16.1
	Important	12	37.5	38.7	54.8
	Critical	14	43.8	45.2	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Organize and Mobilize

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	16.1	16.1
	Important	18	56.3	58.1	74.2
	Critical	8	25.0	25.8	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Voice Opinions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	19	59.4	59.4	65.6
	Critical	11	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to be Heard in Schools and Public Forums

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	17	53.1	53.1	65.6
	Critical	11	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Decision Making Ability in Community Affairs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.9	12.9
	Important	18	56.3	58.1	71.0
	Critical	9	28.1	29.0	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Ability to Access Household Resources (Land, Food, Water)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Somewhat Important	1	3.1	3.1	9.4
	Important	9	28.1	28.1	37.5
	Critical	20	62.5	62.5	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to Access Social Spaces

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	12	37.5	37.5	50.0
	Critical	16	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Ability to Access Non-familial Social Networks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1

	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	15.6	18.8
	Important	10	31.3	31.3	50.0
	Critical	16	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Existence of Job Opportunities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	6	18.8	18.8	18.8
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	62.5
	Critical	12	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Opportunity to Act as Leaders

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Somewhat Important	5	15.6	15.6	18.8
	Important	12	37.5	37.5	56.3
	Critical	14	43.8	43.8	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Opportunity for Civic Engagement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.7	12.9
	Important	15	46.9	48.4	61.3
	Critical	12	37.5	38.7	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Structural Access to Resources and Social Networks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.4	12.5
	Important	8	25.0	25.0	37.5
	Critical	20	62.5	62.5	100.0

	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Changing Policies to Benefit Women and Girls at Local, Regional and National Levels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	2	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Important	13	40.6	40.6	46.9
	Critical	17	53.1	53.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Enacting Existing Policies to Benefit Women and Girls

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.7	9.7
	Important	8	25.0	25.8	35.5
	Critical	20	62.5	64.5	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Protection Under the Law

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	4	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Important	11	34.4	34.4	46.9
	Critical	17	53.1	53.1	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Laws that Allow Women and Girls to Claim Their Rights

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Important	10	31.3	31.3	40.6
	Critical	19	59.4	59.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Systemic Changes in Societal Institutions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Important	13	40.6	40.6	50.0
	Critical	16	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Changing Practices at the Family Level to Benefit Women and Girls

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Important	18	56.3	58.1	58.1
	Critical	13	40.6	41.9	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Changing Practices at the Community Level to Benefit Women and Girls

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	3	9.4	9.7	9.7
	Important	13	40.6	41.9	51.6
	Critical	15	46.9	48.4	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Critical Awareness of Wider Social Structures and Norms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	21.9	21.9
	Important	14	43.8	43.8	65.6
	Critical	11	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Finding Locally Situated Mechanisms of Empowerment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	1	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Important	16	50.0	51.6	54.8
	Critical	14	43.8	45.2	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		

Total		32	100.0		

Finding Locally Relevant Indicators of Empowerment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Important	7	21.9	22.6	22.6
	Important	13	40.6	41.9	64.5
	Critical	11	34.4	35.5	100.0
	Total	31	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.1		
Total		32	100.0		

Average responses by response option

	Critical	Important	Somewhat	Not
Agency	13.1875	12.75	5.6875	0.3125
PR	12.29412	14.705882	4.117647059	0.176471
Capabilities	13.93333	13.533333	3.6	0.333333
Structural	15.07143	12.714286	3.571428571	0.214286