

WE-MEASR: A New Tool for Measuring Women's Empowerment in Health Programs



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Christina Wegs, Christine Galavotti,
Ben Schwartz, Noor Tirmizi, Ann DiGirolamo

WE-MEASR (*Women's Empowerment – Multidimensional Evaluation of Agency, Social Capital and Relations*)

- Why create standard, validated measures?
- Tool development and validation process
- Overview of the WE-MEASR Scales
- How to use? Guidance and an example
- Next steps

Our Goal

- Enable CARE to more systematically measure empowerment outcomes, compare outcomes across programs, and further explore relationship between empowerment and health behaviors/health outcomes.

WE – MEASR at a glance

- 23 short, validated scales to measure key dimensions of Women's Empowerment
- Program “mix and match” scales to measure key WE outcomes aligned with the program's theory of change
- Designed for use with women and in health programs
- Several scales could be used across sectors (e.g. Participation in Decision-making, Social Capital measures)

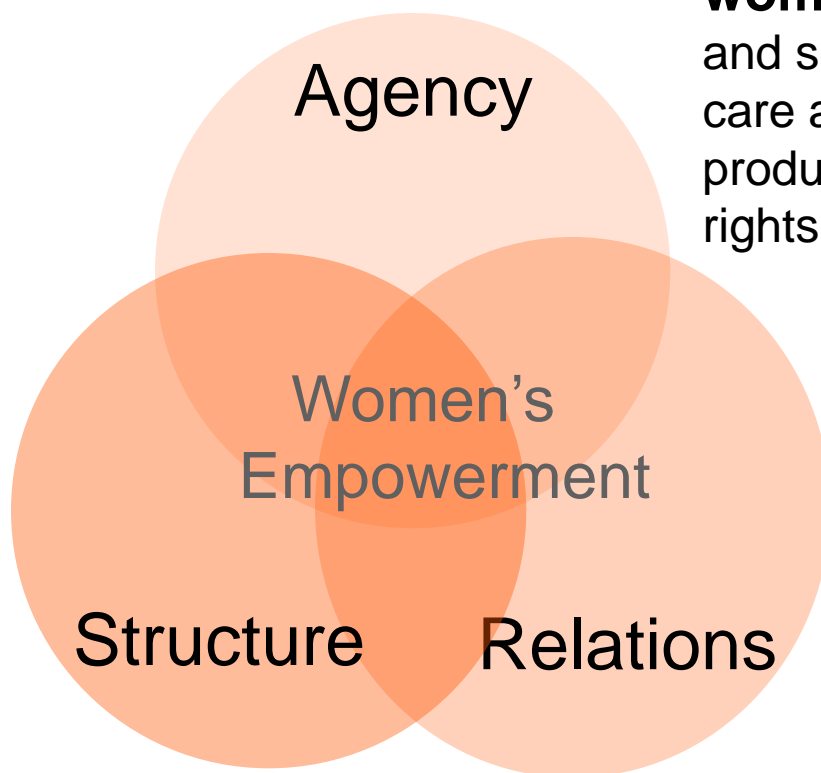
Why develop shared, validated measurement tools for women's empowerment?

- Women's Empowerment = challenging to measure
- Validated tools help ensure reliable measurement
- Shared tools = enable comparison of outcomes and sharing of learning (“apples with apples”)
- Enables measurement at program level
- Reduces work: we don't have to reinvent the wheel!

Contribution to shared “CARE Toolkit” for Measuring WE/GE

CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework

Structure: Conditions that enable women to exercise choice, power and control over their lives:
social,
legal,
economic,
cultural



Agency: Skills and assets of women: Internalized beliefs, skills and self-efficacy, access to health care and education, ownership of productive resources, knowledge of rights

Relations: Relational dynamics that mediate women's choices:
household power dynamics; social networks;

Why develop a multidimensional tool?

- Empowerment is complex and multi-dimensional *process*
- Empowerment = interrelated, interdependent spheres
- Measuring change in one domain of a woman's life may not tell us much about empowerment - women may be “empowered” in one dimension but not in other others

Example: Women's participation in VLSA may contribute to empowerment in more than one way

-Access to financial resources

- Build confidence/skills*
- Challenge internalized beliefs about role/value of women*
- Increased social support from other women*
- Increased mobility/freedom of movement*
- Expanded social networks*

**Intra-spousal
Communication**

**Decision-
making power**

**-Access to financial
resources**

- Build confidence/skills*
- Challenge internalized beliefs about role/value of women*
- Increased social support from other women*
- Increased mobility/freedom of movement*
- Expanded social networks*

**Ownership
and control of
productive
resources**

Tool Development Process

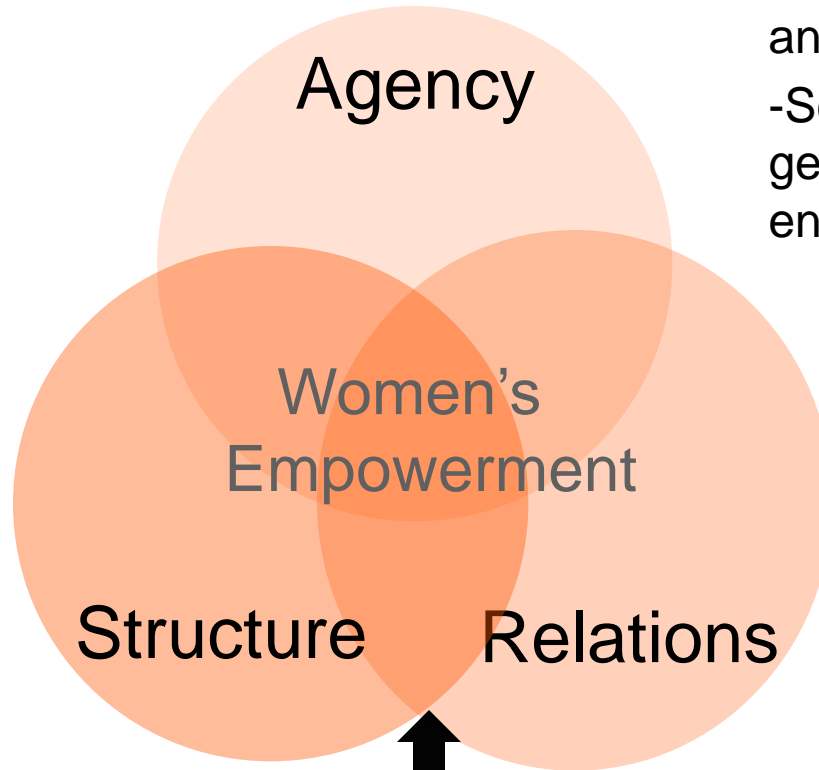
- Review Key Frameworks for Measuring Women's Empowerment
- Define key domains of change (focus: SRMH and nutrition)
- Compile key validated tools and scales
- Adapt measures + create new measures (self-efficacy)
- Cognitive Testing and tool revision
- Field testing in Malawi: 600+ married women
- Scale validation

Field testing in
Malawi: 600
married women

WE- MEASR

Structure:

Ownership of productive assets



Agency:

- Beliefs about Gender and Women's Right to Bodily Integrity and to seek healthcare
- Self-efficacy (for negotiating gender/gendered power relations to enact key health behaviors)

Relations:

- Participation in Household Decision-making
- Inter-spousal Communication
- Freedom of Mobility

Social Capital:

Cognitive social capital: Social Cohesion, Social Support, Collective Efficacy

Structural Social Capital: Participation in Community Groups, Help from Community, Collective Action

Tool Validation in Malawi

- Survey = WE-MEASR Scales + Demographics and Health Outcomes (DHS)
- May 2012: Cognitive Interviews
- June 2012: Interviews with 640 women (married/living in union)
- 300+ women in Mazengera Traditional Authority, Lilongwe
- 300+ women in Ganya Traditional Authority, Ntcheu
- Two contexts: Patrilineal and Matrilineal communities
- Currently analyzing data/validating measures



Anatomy of a Scale:

Participation in Household Decision-making

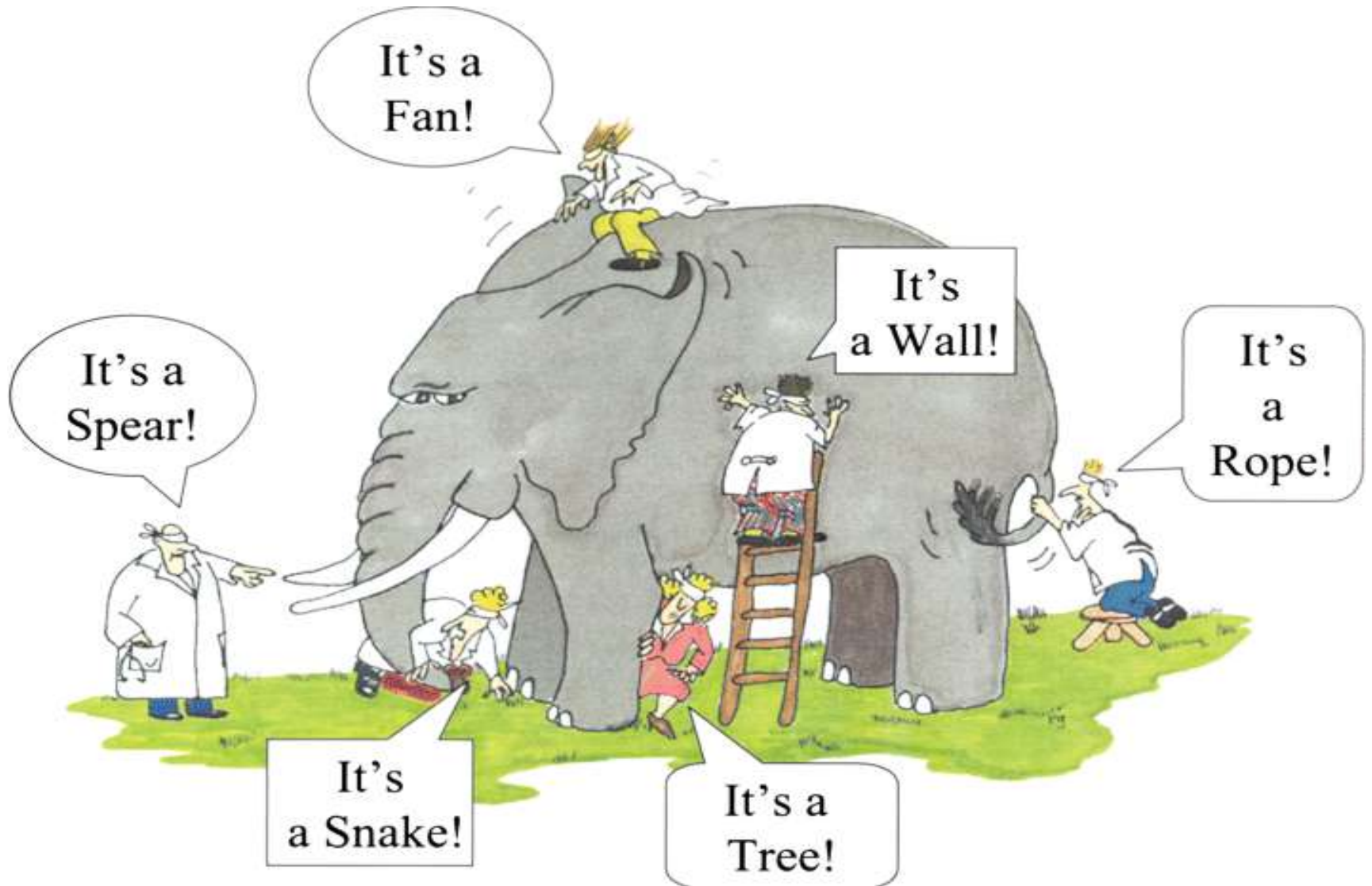
This measure can help us explore:

- Power dynamics between men and women : women's negotiating power in the household
- Women's ability to influence a range of key decisions that affect her life/her families' life
- Restrictions on, access to and control of power and resources that enable women to make key decisions about their bodies and their sexuality, their own health and their childrens' health
- HH: often women's primary sphere of influence

Anatomy of a Scale:

Participation in Household Decision-making

- Multiple items to measure complex, multidimensional constructs like decision-making power
 - A few items might tell us about influence over a small set of decisions, but may not tell us much about decision-making power and influence in general
 - A few items might measure women's decision-making only where it is normative for women to have influence...
 - Asking about decision-making across a range of different types of decisions = more likely to tell us something meaningful about *decision-making power*



Scale Validation: Key Steps

- Frequencies:
 - We want a distribution of responses
- Reliability Analysis: inter-item correlation
 - An alpha score (.6 or above) means that items in the scale “hang together” to measure a construct
- Factor Analysis: “principal component analysis”
 - Statistical way to see whether set of items are hanging together in ways we would expect
 - Items naturally cluster together to reveal an “underlying dimension”

Anatomy of a Scale:

Participation in Household Decision-making

- Result:
 - High alpha = .79
 - 15 items = robust scale that covers decisions across a wide range of domains (incl. household economics/assets, daily life, power/domination in intimate relationships)
 - Range of “high stakes” and “low stakes” decisions, might be sensitive enough to measure changes in empowerment over time.
 - Wide enough range of types of decisions to capture contextual variation so that same scale can be used across many settings

Anatomy of a Scale:

Participation in Household Decision-making- Economic Decision-making Subscale

- Result:
 - High alpha = .71
 - 6 items
 - Alternative scale that measures women's participation in and influence over economic decision-making
 - Focused on one domain of decision-making
 - More reliable than a single question asking about economic decision-making

WE-MEASR Scales : Agency

Domain	Scale Name	# of items
Attitudes and Beliefs about Gender and Women's Rights	Tolerance of Intimate Partner Violence	5
	Belief in Women's Right to Refuse Sex	3
	Acceptance of Male Dominance	8
	Belief in Women's Health Rights	2
Self-Efficacy (SE)	SE to Discuss and Use Family Planning	4
	SE to Refuse Sex	5
	SE to Go to the Health Facility	5
	SE to Participate in Community Meetings	7
	SE to Speak out in Community meetings	3
	SE to Exclusively Breastfeed	4
	SE to Ask for Help with Child Care	4
	SE to Ask Husband's Help with HH Duties	4

WE-MEASR Scales : Structure & Social Capital

Domain	Scale Name	# of items
Ownership/Contribution to Household Assets	Ownership of Productive Assets	5
	Contribution to Household Resources	1
Social Cohesion	Social Cohesion	12
Community Support in Times of Crisis	If a woman is bleeding during pregnancy	4
	If a husband beats his wife	5
	If a woman has difficulty breastfeeding	4
	If household has no food	4
Collective Efficacy	Collective Efficacy	4
Participation in Community/Help from Community	Participation in Community Groups	1 (Index)
	Help from Groups in Community	1 (Index)
	Help from People in Community	1 (Index)
Participation in Collective Action	Participation in Collective Action	5

WE-MEASR Scales : Relations

Domain	Scale Name	# of items
Decision-making power	Participation in Household Decision-making	15
	<i>Sub-scale: Participation in Economic Decision-making</i>	6
Inter-spousal Communication	Inter-spousal Communication	5
Female Mobility	Female Mobility	8

A scale that wasn't reliable...

Perceived community norms:

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about what most people in your community think. Do most people in your community agree that...

...women have the same rights as men to work and study outside of their home?

...a man is the one who decides when to have sex with his wife?

...a man should have the final say about decisions in his home?

- Other teams have also struggled to measure this (PCTF)
- PPLA WE/GE Measurement Group discussing collectively investing in tool development to fill this gap

Guiding principles: Using WE-MEASR

- You don't have to use all the scales
- Chose scales aligned with your theory of change
 - What aspects of WE does your program aim to influence? What interventions will enable the WE change you want to see? How will you measure changes in WE?
- Use whole scales (vs. selecting a few questions from scales ☹)
- Scales designed and validated for women won't always be reliable in use with men

Family Planning Results Initiative in Kenya

Community-Level Activities

- SAA Dialogue in Community & In groups
- Community Theatre
- Role Models
- Opinion Leaders
- Increase FP quality/access

Implementation evaluation

Change at Individual/Household Level

- *More gender-equitable beliefs
- *SE for refusing sex, using FP
- *Increased intra-spousal communication
- *More equitable HH decision-making
- *FP KAP

Qualitative: in-depth exploration of change process in couples

Health and Rights Outcomes

- Increased acceptance and use of FP (Less unmet need)
- More women can exercise their right to bodily integrity and reproductive self-determination

Next steps

- Complete analysis for construct validity
- Share scales and short “guidance manual” – summer 2013
- Validation tests in Bangladesh and Peru (FY 2014)
- Test sub-set of scales for reliability with men (using data from RI in Kenya and Ethiopia)
 - Beliefs about Gender and Women’s Rights (4 scales)
 - Inter-spousal Communication (1 scale)
 - Participation in Household Decision-making (2 scales)

Thanks to....

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- For more information, contact Christina Wegs (cwegs@care.org), Christine Galavotti (cgalavotti@care.org) or Ben Schwartz (bschwartz@care.org)