



**JOINT WORKSHOP BY KENYATTA UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY
OF NAIROBI WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT HUBS:
REFLECTIONS ON METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO
RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
MAY, 19TH-21ST, 2021**

**Excerpts from Kinangop Evaluation of Impact of Gender Integration on Agriculture (EIGIA)
Study**

Community's understanding of empowerment:

This section presents the Kinangop community's understanding of the word "empowerment". This question was posed to both men and women to seek their understanding and perception of the concept of empowerment for both men and women. They were requested to state:

- i. Meaning of empowerment
- ii. Indicators of empowerment,
- iii. Factors that contributed to this empowerment or disempowerment

i. Meaning of empowerment-Female perspectives

Some of the responses to the question on what they understood by the word empowerment included: "kwihota" or "kuhotithio" in the Kikuyu language as captured below:

....it is when I had planned something and God helps to me to accomplish it...that is when I can say I am empowered...female respondent, Bidii FGD

.....when making decisions it is when you want something and being able to accomplish it and succeeding in it... being empowered is having capital. Like you may want to do something and you don't have capital....so someone who has capital and is able to do something and accomplish it is empowered...female respondent, Judea FGD

....If we go back to the Bible, it talks about a virtuous woman, a woman who works with her own hands, such that in case of anything and the husband left her, she would still be able to run her household, raise her children...female respondent-Murungaru

.... that is a clever woman because even if she is given the land, she must be wise to manage the farm or even the cows because men don't like that constant reminder that you bought the land, or you bought that cow. He can even decide to sell it or to dispose it if you keep reminding him. You can only say; "and we bought a cow", but if you say that three times, he can decide to sell. So, we must have that wisdom as women so that he feels it is his property. Do not nag him. We have been given land and if you repeat it three times that the cabbage on that piece of land is mine, another day you will not plant... oral testimony from a 70-year-old female, Githabai

.... what comes to mind is a woman being able to deliberate on issues that will make others move forward. That even when she is talking, everybody is able to understand her point and what she is proposing will add value to you.... female oral testimony

.... it is being there for my family, and as a helper to my husband. Because he is the head and I am the neck. When he tells me something, I obey. We also talk, exchange ideas and I find this is a good thing...we can also say that a woman is empowered when you have been asked to undertake a task, like I want these chickens taken care of, then I tell him it is ok, then if I had little money, I add mine. You see now in that we support each other...female respondent, oral testimony, Upperhill group FFBS

... a woman who is empowered is someone who has capital and is able to do something and accomplish it.... Because a woman in a home is the one who holds the family. If she is empowered, even the children and husband will be happy. But if a woman doesn't have money, that family will not be at peace. If she has nothing, she is doing with her hands she has a lot of problems. Because women see and do many things and they are very visionary. Even a dog and a cat in that family will be fed because of the woman. So if a woman is empowered, that family is well fed. Even where she stays it looks good. If there needs some input in the neighborhood, she is able to do...female respondent...Judea FGD

From a male perspective on their understood of an empowered woman:

.... a woman who listens to her husband at home is one who is empowered. It's a woman who listens to what is being said in her home...Male respondent, Umoja Dairy FGD

... she is very empowered. Like now we came here, and she went elsewhere, I can't bother asking how much money she made. Whatever she brings and says I sold this much; I don't bother with the little details. She has the freedom...Male respondent-Rucegeci FGD

... the word empowerment as we have been trained here, we have benefitted from what we have been trained by the trainers who have come around...and we have been trained on the best method of planting potatoes, garden peas...we have planted garden peas...and we have been abled...that word 'ability' has moved. Because when it comes to planting, personally that is what I have followed and I have planted in accordance with what I was taught...male respondent

...when it comes to what you have been trained about something, you are then able to plant it appropriately...having that wisdom of being able to forge forward is being empowered...male respondent.

Further, opinion was sought on the respondent's understanding of who an empowered man is. Their sentiments as captured showed that empowerment to them is a mesh of many factors which included:

....it is to show that in his home he is present. If people join groups he is a member, that he heads most matters than a woman...male respondent, Kioneki FGD

...I understand a man being empowered means he is the head of all things or a leader in different areas such as work, home in livelihood and other areas, because he is the one who knows what to do...male respondent, Kioneki FGD

.... A man, needs to have a sharper mind than a woman, if you are called a man, your work it to sieve good things and bad things. Those that are bad you help until they are good. That's why he is called a man (muthuri)... is to be the head of most matters, it's like being a controller of how things are done, he is on to and there is no one above him. For me, an empowered man is one who is higher than a woman...male respondent, Kioneki FGD

....the way I understand that issue, they cannot live together while enjoying the same power at home, one must have more power than the other; and you have heard me telling that man, 'Yes, you have placed money here and you have argued...after arguing, the one who has more power will have their rule/take being

followed...because the wife has said that she wants a goat and you as the man want a cow, now you have the authority to go against your wife's wishes... It means the man has the final say in every matter male respondent, Kioneki FGD

.... an empowered man is one who can budget for his income...in terms of sharing the money, the man in the home should be able to determine what money goes to school fees because we have children in school, this other one will go to the farm, this other one will go into buying fertilizer ie that money should be shared out depending on the needs...you see even my wife will see that the money has done some good work so she will have no ill feelings because the money has been spent appropriately....male respondent, umoja dairy FGD

...a responsible person and can manage his household...female respondent, Judea FGD

ii. Indicators of empowerment

Having shared their understanding on their perception on the meaning of empowerment, respondents were asked to state the indicators of empowerment for both men and women. Some of the mentioned indicators of empowerment for women included, ability to dress well, how one looks like, good character, freedom to do something as a woman, involvement in decision making by her husband, ability to plan together with her husband, planning for income together, among others.

Further discussion on indicators of empowerment for men revealed that a majority of the respondents equated an empowered man to one whose children have been educated, one whose home has been managed well, one whose wife obeys him, one who plans for his finances well, one who does not oppress his wife, giving the wife an opportunity to air her views, having property and that the more property one has the more self-reliant he is.

Male perspectives:

...Yes, you can say that if you have property that is tangible and everybody can see it, you are self-reliant. In fact, the more property you own the more we can say you are self-reliant...if someone has cows, goats, poultry or even land.....If someone has nothing and he shabbily dressed...You will just look at someone's face and detect by her look whether she is empowered (If someone is jovial and economically able even to contribute to the group) ... male respondent

..... empowerment as we have learnt in gender, there are women who are so oppressed by men financially and also the jobs that we do at home. There are also men who are oppressed. So, it is both parties agreeing

on what to do without oppressing each other so that there is peace at home.... Male respondent, ...Rucegechi Male FGD

...when it comes to decision making, a woman should be given an opportunity to air her views since the man's mind cannot run the family alone. So, it is good to give the wife a chance to talk. After she has spoken, then the man can now give his views. Because views are different. So, we must sit down and look at our needs and what we need to do and how much income we have. So even needs are different. And there are needs that should be prioritized. And both should give each time to express themselves...male respondent, Rucegechi male FGD

.... when it comes to income, in a home there must be a time when the two sit together and look at their needs together. Then, plan on how they will use the money. Then look at the needs of the woman and what she needs. And also look at the man's needs. In that home there are also children who have needs. Also consider their needs and allocate that money. So it is good to consult and involve the two in planning so that there is harmony in that family.male respondent, Rucegechi male FGD

Female perspectives

To women, indicators of empowerment included; the looks, dressing, character, self-reliance, self-sustenance, freedom, among others.

.... By the look of her home and even the way the person dresses, you can tell this person is able...female oral testimony, Upperhill.

..... The way her home is and the way one does things. Your character and the way you carry yourself; you are independent, you don't just sit back and wait for someone else to support you. You are self-reliant and you don't rely on anyone for support; you can work and sustain yourself....female respondent, Judea FGD

..... If a woman has freedom do what she wants and she is organized in her home and she can be able to lead even a group.... female respondent, Bidii FGD

..... when a woman is empowered, you will find that they are not even able to plant vegetables for their family; they are dependent.... Female oral testimony

Owing to the various responses given by the respondents regarding the meaning of the word empowerment, probing was then done along the WEAI indicators which to some extent brought out a much better understanding of the word empowerment. These indicators included: ability to input into decision making,

autonomy in income, attitude towards gender-based violence, among others. Some of the responses are as captured below:

.... an empowered woman is one who is able to participate and propose on the way forward and the husband listens to her. I mean she is able to make decisions that will contribute to the development of her household...she is also able to share her income and they are able to plan their household's projects with her husband and they are living well.... female respondent, oral testimony

....An empowered woman is one whom when you check out her home, you find that she has kept it in order/well; you find that she has cows; when she decides to plant or farm in her shamba, you find that she has done that in the right way; when its harvest time, if it's a home that has both a husband and a wife, when they are selling lorry full of cabbage, even the wife is also selling the same as that...that is an empowered woman having been able to do that kind of job.....one whose farm has a good harvest and produces plenty of food... Umoja Dairy FGD (FFBS)

.... A woman who is not empowered means she cannot express herself, she is oppressed and has been denied justice.....we cannot say that she is empowered since she has been denied the freedom to express herself.... And even if she had money, she is not able to use it...female respondent, OT Evergreen group

iii. Factors contributing to empowerment

.... I think empowerment has been brought about by women being taught and they have also accepted to work...female respondent, OT evergreen

.... I think this is because the country has also grown and developed. Which is a good thing. And if we use this wisely without appearing like we want to control our husbands; this empowerment can be very good.... male respondent, Rucegeci FGD

.... empowerment starts from home because there is no way a woman will be able to develop herself without her husband's support because even if I am taught and I have nowhere to implement what I have learnt; it will be useless. So if I want to do something, I am told it will not be done here in my house, do you know there is no way I will do it; so empowerment to me I don't associate it with a group because even if they give what sought of support and my husband is not supportive it will not go far. So to me my husband is my source of support....female respondent, Judea FGD

..... it is brought by having a good relationship between husband and wife and being in good terms....i also think it is a gift that is God given, education and attending groups like this.

... I think this is because the country has also grown and developed. Which is a good thing. And if we use this wisely without appearing like we want to control our husbands, this empowerment can be very good...**female OT**, Ndothua Group

....Now, even if in the past I was still able to live that way, we have again attended many trainings and have learnt and agreed that this is a good thing and we have been trained and told that this is the way you are supposed to live and that for a home to stand firm, things are supposed to be done this and that way; so, you cannot go get trained and then come back home and bring fights....**male oral testimony**, Githabai

.... I think for there to be change, such projects have really helped and many people have agreed to join groups. Then number 2 is Church. It is very important. It has opened people's eyes. No. 3 is situation driven. Like now the times we are living are very different. People are exposed to the media which is educating people and has contributed to this change. Such that no one is oppressing each other and people know their rights.....**Male respondent-Rucegeci FGD**

iv. Factors that contribute to disempowerment

....The biggest contributor is laziness because even if you are trained and you are lazy, you may not yield anything. The other thing is poverty. Poverty can really drag you behind because you may be wanting to do something but the level of poverty may not allow you....**female respondent**, OT, Kioneki

...there is also, inability to make decisions contributes to disempowerment. Because her knowledge does not count when it comes to decision making; she is not able to express herself and even if she gave her opinion it will not be embraced by her husband...**female respondent**, OT Murata.

.... there are homes where the man makes the decisions and he cannot be questioned, the woman's voice is suppressed. But for a woman who is empowered, she is given an opportunity to talk and listened to. If her issues are not a priority, they agree on what will be addressed first depending on the available money. So, an empowered woman is giving an opportunity to express herself...**male respondent-Rucegeci FGD**