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# MISSING DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY DATA

## A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Agency and Empowerment

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This document contains a modified version of the survey questions proposed in the paper *A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Empowerment* (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007) prepared for the May 2007 Workshop on Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data. The paper recommended that these questions – or a refinement of them – might be considered a ‘module’ that could be added to nationally representative individual or household surveys. To capture the four elements of empowerment identified in the paper’s conceptual framework – control, choice, change and community – the following indicators are proposed:

- Indicator 1- ‘Power Over/Control’: *Control over personal decisions*
- Indicator 2- ‘Power To/Choice’: *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*
- Indicator 3 - ‘Power From Within/Change’: *Changing aspects in one’s life [Individual Level]*
- Indicator 4- ‘Power With/ Community’: *Changing aspects in one’s life [Communal Level]*
- Indicator 5- Additionally a ‘ladder question’ assessing overall empowerment is suggested.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim, Solava and Sabina Alkire (2007), *A proposal for internationally comparable indicators of agency and empowerment*, OPHI working paper no. 4. Available at: [http://www.ophi.org.uk/pubs/Ibrahim\\_Alkire\\_Empowerment\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ophi.org.uk/pubs/Ibrahim_Alkire_Empowerment_FINAL.pdf) and in December (2007) *Oxford Development Studies* (35:4, p. 379-403).

## EMPOWERMENT (Ask of respondent)

Indicator 1- 'Power Over/Control': *Control over personal decisions*

<p><b>EMP1.</b> In general, how much control do you feel you have in making personal decisions that affect your daily activities (such as dropping off the children at school, buying bread, cooking, washing up, etc.)?</p> <p>1. Control over all decisions 2. Control over most decisions 3. Control over some decisions 4. No control over any decision 99 Don't know/No answer</p>
<b>EMP1</b>

Indicator 2- 'Power To/Choice': *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*:

The researcher should decide what domains are of interest. For each domain selected, questions are asked to establish who takes decisions with respect to that domain, if the respondent could if he or she wanted to, and about the motivation underlying their *action* in that domain. The decision-making and autonomy questions should be preceded by at least one objective question on that domain (or a module – e.g., on consumption for the domains of major/minor household expenditures). Here we give examples of objective questions and domains we have used in our surveys but the choice should depend on the context of the survey and research questions being asked. See OPHI's 'Technical Notes on the Empowerment Module' for further details.

Note that the first time the autonomy questions are asked, they should be preceded by the following instruction.

People often have several reasons for doing something. In each module in this survey, we will ask you why you do certain activities. For example, you might do something because of outside circumstances, to obtain a benefit or avoid punishment, or to please others, or because you truly value this. There is no right or wrong answer and often you may have several reasons for acting as you do.

EXAMPLE OF MINOR HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

<p><b>EMP2.</b> How much does your household spend on food in a normal week?</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>EMP2.</b> What routine expenditures did your household make in the last week?</p>		<p><b>EMP3.</b> When decisions are made regarding minor household purchases such as food or other daily items, who is it that normally makes the decision?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You</li> <li>2. You and your spouse or partner</li> <li>3. You along with someone else (not your spouse/partner)</li> </ol> <p><b>Alternatives 1 to 3 go to EMP5_1 for respondents who work; or EMP5_2 for respondents who do not.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Your spouse/partner</li> <li>5. Other (Neither you nor your spouse/partner)</li> <li>6. The community / social organisation / neighbourhood board</li> </ol> <p><b>EMP4.</b> If you wanted to, would you be able to participate in these decisions?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>		<p><b>EMP5.</b> I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding how you make minor household purchases such as food or other daily items. <b>Show Card</b></p>					
					<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Don't know/No answer</b>
		<p>a. I can't make minor household purchases differently to how I do them.</p>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>	
		<p>b. I make minor household purchases because my spouse, another person, society, social organisations or my community insist that I make them.</p>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>	
<b>EMP1</b>	<b>EMP2</b>	<b>EMP3</b>	<b>EMP4</b>	<p>c. I make minor household purchases according to what others expect of me or to obtain their approval. If I didn't, they might blame me.</p>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>
				<p>d. I make minor household purchases according to what I personally consider important.</p>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>

Indicator 2- 'Power To/Choice': *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*: EXAMPLE OF WORK/TASKS UNDERTAKEN IN HOME

<p><b>EMP6.</b> When decisions are made regarding what kind of job you will do (or tasks, if you don't work away from home), who is it that normally makes the decision?</p> <p>1. You 2. You and your spouse or partner 3. You and someone else (not your spouse/partner)</p> <p><b>Alternatives 1 to 3 go to EMP8_1 for respondents who work; or EMP2_2 for respondents who do not.</b></p> <p>4. Your spouse/partner 5. Other (neither spouse/partner nor you) 6. The community/social organisation/neighbourhood board</p>	
<b>EMP6</b>	
<p><b>EMP7.</b> If you wanted to, would you be able to make these decisions alone?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>	
<b>EMP7</b>	

**EMP8\_1 ONLY INTERVIEWEES WHO WORK ANSWER**

<b>EMP8_1</b> I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding why you do the job you do. <b>Show Card</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Don't know/No answer</b>
a. I do this job only because I need the money.	1	2	3	4	99
b. I do this job because my spouse/partner, other people, society, social organisations or my community insist that I do.	1	2	3	4	99
c. I do this job because others expect it of me or to obtain their approval. If I didn't, they might blame me. .	1	2	3	4	99
d. I do this job because I personally consider it important.	1	2	3	4	99

**EMP8\_2 ONLY INTERVIEWEES WHO DON'T WORK ANSWER**

EMP8_2 I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding the tasks you carry out in your home. <b>Show Card</b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/No answer
a. I do the household tasks only because they're necessary.	1	2	3	4	99
b. I do the household tasks because my spouse/partner, other people, society, social organisations or my community insist that I do.	1	2	3	4	99
c. I do the household tasks because others expect it of me or to obtain their approval. If I didn't, they might blame me.	1	2	3	4	99
d. I do the household tasks because I personally consider it important.	1	2	3	4	99

Indicator 2- 'Power To/Choice': *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*: EXAMPLE OF A SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEM

<p><b>EMP9.</b> Where would you go if you had a serious health problem?*</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General surgery (Municipal or SNSS)</li> <li>2. Rural emergency centre (Municipal or SNSS)</li> <li>3. Specialised practitioner from the SNSS (External hospital surgery)</li> <li>4. SAPU (Emergency Primary Attention Service)</li> <li>5. Private surgery, medical centre, clinic or hospital</li> <li>6. Establishment from the armed or security forces</li> <li>7. Social assistance society</li> <li>8. Other. Specify. _____</li> <li>9. Don't do anything</li> <li>99. Don't know/No answer</li> </ol>	
<b>EMP9</b>	

\*This is an objective question from the Chilean CASEN survey which preceded the decision-making and autonomy questions on health in OPHI's Chile survey.

<p><b>EMP10.</b> If you have a serious health problem, who normally decides what to do about it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You</li> <li>2. You and your spouse or partner</li> <li>3. You along with someone else (not your spouse/partner)</li> </ol> <p><b>Alternatives 1 to 3 go to EMP12_1 for respondents who work; or EMP12_2 for respondents who do not.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Your spouse/partner</li> <li>5. Other (Neither you nor your spouse/partner)</li> <li>6. The community / social organisation / neighbourhood board</li> </ol>	
<b>EMP10</b>	
<p><b>EMP11.</b> If you wanted to, would you be able to make these decisions alone?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>	
<b>EMP11</b>	

<b>EMP12.</b> I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding how you would resolve a serious health problem.. <b>Show Card</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Don't know / No answer</b>
a. I can't face a serious health problem of my own differently from how I do.	1	2	3	4	99
b. If I have a serious health problem, I do what my spouse or some other person, society or social organisations insist that I do.	1	2	3	4	99
c. If I have a serious health problem, I act according to what other people expect of me or to get their approval. If I didn't, they might blame me.	1	2	3	4	99
d. If I have a serious health problem, I do what I personally consider is important.	1	2	3	4	99

Indicator 2- 'Power To/Choice': *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*: EXAMPLE OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

<p><b>EMP13.</b> Do you practice any religion?</p> <p>1. Yes → <b>EMP13e Which?</b> Specify</p> <p>2. No → Go to <b>EMP15</b></p> <p><b>EMP14.</b> How important is religion in your life?</p> <p>1. Very important 2. Somewhat important 3. Not very important 4. Not at all important 99 DK/NA</p>			<p><b>EMP15.</b> Who normally makes decisions regarding whether to practice a religion and how to practice it?</p> <p>1. You 2. You and your spouse or partner 3. You along with someone else (not your spouse/partner)</p> <p><b>Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 go to EMP17_1 if practices a religion; EMP17_2 if does not.</b></p> <p>4. Your spouse/partner 5. Other (Neither you nor your spouse/partner) 6. The community / social organisation / neighbourhood board</p> <p><b>EMP16.</b> If you wanted to, would you be able to make these decisions alone?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>		<p><b>EMP17_1</b> I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding why you practice a religion. <b>Show Card</b></p>				
					<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Don't know/No answer</b>
					1	2	3	4	99
					1	2	3	4	99
<b>EMP13</b>	<b>EMP13e</b>	<b>EMP14</b>	<b>EMP15</b>	<b>EMP16</b>	1	2	3	4	99
					1	2	3	4	99

**EMP17\_2 Answer only if the interviewee declares they DON'T practice a religion, EMP13=2**

<b>EMP17_2</b> I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding why don't you practice any religion. <b>Show Card</b>					
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Don't know/No answer</b>
a. I can't practice a religion.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>
b. I don't practice a religion because my spouse, another person, society, social organisations or my community insist that I do not.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>
c. I don't practice a religion because it's what others expect of me or to obtain their approval. If I did, they might blame me.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>
d. I don't practice a religion because I personally consider it important not to.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>

Indicator 2- 'Power To/Choice': *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*: EXAMPLE OF PREVENTING CRIME\*

<p><b>EMP18.</b> Who usually makes decisions about how to prevent crime at home (for example, theft)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You</li> <li>2. You and your spouse or partner</li> <li>3. You along with someone else (not your spouse/partner)</li> </ol> <p><b>Alternatives 1 to 3 go to EMP20_1 for respondents who work; or 20_2 for respondents who do not.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. My spouse/partner</li> <li>5. Other (Neither you nor your spouse/partner)</li> <li>6. The community/social organisation/neighbourhood board</li> </ol> <p><b>EMP19.</b> If you wanted to participate these decisions, would you be able to?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>		
	<b>EMP18</b>	<b>EMP19</b>
1		

**EMP20.** I will now ask you to express your level of disagreement or agreement with the following statements, where 1 is greatly disagree with the statement and 4 is strongly agree, regarding what actions you take to protect your household's security.

**SHOW CARD**

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Don't know/No answer</b>
a. I cannot do anything to prevent or reduce the risk of crime differently to what I already do.	1	2	3	4	99
b. To prevent or reduce the risk of crime I do what my spouse, another person, society, social organisations or my community insist that I do.	1	2	3	4	99
c. To prevent or reduce the risk of crime I do what others expect of me or what will obtain their approval. If I didn't, they might blame me.	1	2	3	4	99
d. To prevent or reduce the risk of crime I do what I personally consider important.	1	2	3	4	99

**\*NOTE THE DECISION-MAKING AND AUTONOMY QUESTIONS ON CRIME PREVENTION CAN BE PLACED FOLLOWING OPHI'S PHYSICAL SAFETY MODULE.**



Indicator 3 -‘Power From Within/Change’: *Changing aspects in one’s life [Individual Level]*

<p><b>EMP21.</b> Would you like to change anything in your life at this point in time?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No → Go to <b>E23</b> 99. Don't know</p> <p><b>EMP22.</b> At this point in time, what three thing(s) would you most like to change in your life?</p> <p>1. 2. 3.</p>			<p><b>EMP23.</b> Who do you think will contribute most to any change in your own life?</p> <p>1. You 2. Your family 3. Your community 4. The local government 5. The central government 6. Other 99. Don't know</p>		
<b>EMP21</b>		<b>EMP22</b>		<b>EMP23</b>	

Indicator 4- ‘Power With/ Community’: *Changing aspects in one’s life [Communal Level]*

<p><b>EMP24.</b> Do you feel that people like yourself can generally change things in your community if they want to? <b>Read out alternatives</b></p> <p>1. Yes, very easily 2. Yes, fairly easily 3. Yes, but with a little difficulty 4. Yes, but with a great deal of difficulty 5. No, not at all 6. Other 99. Don't know</p>	
<b>EMP24</b>	

Indicator 5- Additionally a 'ladder question' assessing overall empowerment is recommended.

**EMP25.** Imagine a ten step ladder, where on the bottom, the first step, stand people who are completely without free choice and control over the way their lives turn out, and on the highest step, the tenth, stand those with the most free choice and control over their lives. In this context, we ask you to answer the following questions:

- a. On which step are you today?
- b. On which step are most of your neighbours today?
- c. On which step were you five years ago?

**SHOW CARD**

<b>EMP25_a</b>	<b>EMP25_b</b>	<b>EMP25_c</b>