

Strategies and Pathways of Empowerment: *Issues and Framing of the EGM*

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Sarah Cook
Director, UNRISD

Research for Social Change



UNRISD
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Background and context

- EGM (Sept. 2012) →
- Priority theme of 51st session of Commission for Social Development (Feb. 2013):
 - *Promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all*
- EGM Sept. 2013→
 - Concrete recommendations for presentation to Member States

EGM 2012 Definition

- No one agreed definition
- Empowerment as an iterative **process** requiring
 - An enabling environment
 - human rights, expanded choices, institutions, attitudes, values...
 - ‘empowered participation’ in decision-making
 - At local, national and global levels
 - Often mediated through civil society organisations
 - From group specific to holistic
 - Empowerment of women vs people-centred development?
 - Key elements:
 - agency, structure, behaviour, values

Outcomes?

- Effective participation by members of society, as individuals and groups, in decisions about their lives, that is conditioned by a supportive enabling environment, **and leads to the solution of economic and social problems confronting them**
- Outcomes – changes in behavior, social relations and institutions necessary for socially sustainable development... (concept note)
- Indicators? Evidence?

Key points from CSocD 2013 High-Level Panel discussion on priority theme

- Empowerment of people requires actions along multiple fronts, including:
 - political commitment;
 - common objectives;
 - inclusive policies that are coherent and integrated across sectors;
 - a strong, just and non-discriminatory legal framework;
 - appropriate institutional arrangements that facilitate civic engagement and broad-based participation;
 - aspiration and determination of vulnerable groups and individuals to improve their well-being.

Concrete measures to creating an environment conducive to people's empowerment involve:

- further strengthening of **social policies** to address specific needs of disadvantaged social groups;
- adoption of **people-centred development** as a core objective of social and sustainable development;
- formulation of policies and programmes to improve **access and opportunities** for all;
- building or strengthening the **institutions for participation** and engagement of citizens to be more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable;
- ensuring **access to justice** and legal instruments to reduce/eliminate poverty and inequality;
- strengthening of **human capacities** through inclusive labour markets, social protection, education, health, and ICTs.

Issues & principles

- Human rights, citizenship, non-discrimination
- Institutions and policies, enabling environment
- Knowledge and information
- Ability to make claims, claim rights or entitlements
- Access to justice, remedy, redress
- Meaningful participation
- Measurable outcomes and indicators

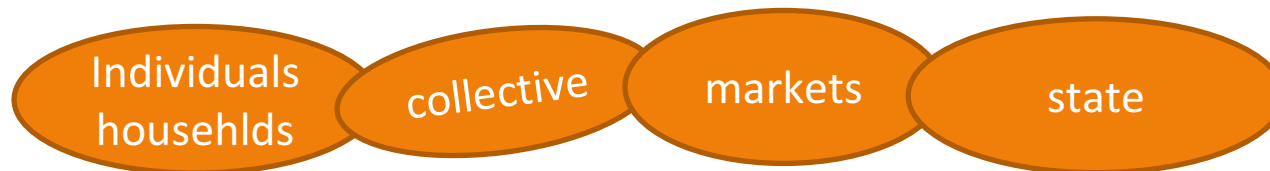
Expected outcomes of EGM?

- Challenges, 'good' (bad) practices, lessons learned...
- Concrete strategies, experiences in relation to empowerment of different social groups
- Identification of (widely/universally applicable) empowerment strategies and indicators
- Monitoring frameworks and social impact assessments
- Implications for design / implementation of post 2015 goals
- New issues / gaps for consideration, research
- Recommendations

Structure

Enabling Environment → overcome structures of constraints / change power relations

Strategies and programmes
Actors and Institutions



Resources, capabilities, opportunities...

Resources, capabilities, opportunities

| Individual capabilities / resources | Collective capabilities / resources | Policy and institutional framework |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Strategies / interventions that work

| | Individual | Collective | Policy |
|-----------------|------------|------------|--------|
| Women and girls | | | |
| Youth | | | |
| Disabled | | | |
| Minorities | | | |
| Migrants | | | |
| Elderly | | | |

Reflections and challenges

- Empowerment as a process of change → what does it take to create (social, policy) change?
 - History, complexity, mobilisation, resources...
 - Context, political-economy, actors, relations
 - Agenda setting and claims-making: What issues get put on to agendas, who makes claims for what on behalf of whom (eg of care)
 - When and how do 'policy moments' arrive / how can they be made use of?
 - State / institutional capacities – services, frontline workers
 - Easy wins vs going the last mile

Key recommendations from SG Reports on promoting empowerment

- Governments should establish or strengthen institutions that facilitate *civic engagement* and broad-based participation of all citizens and communities in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of socioeconomic policies;
- Appropriate public sector policies should be adopted to encourage both public and private investment in social and economic infrastructure;
- *Universal access to basic social protection* and social services is an important instrument for empowering people: Governments should consider establishing a national social protection floor consistent with national priorities and circumstances;
- *Strategies to empower* women, youth, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other marginalized groups should be addressed in the mainstream development agenda;
- Governments and their development partners should forge *public-private partnerships*;
- Educational systems and policies should provide adequate and practical opportunities to all, in particular young people;

Continued..

- Governments should promote the *legal empowerment* of the poor by ensuring pro-poor property rights and labour protections;
- Successful empowerment strategies, including those targeting various social groups, must be created within — or adapted to — *specific national or local contexts*;
- Appropriate measures should be taken to broaden basic rights and to develop effective policy frameworks for empowerment through interventions and programmes that promote inclusive and participatory growth.
- Enhanced efforts should be made to address the *root causes* of poverty, inequality and social exclusion, rather than the social consequences of economic or political processes, and the *social drivers of structural change*, in order to progress towards inclusive and sustainable development;
- More concerted efforts are required to boost smallholder productivity;
- In formulating the *post-2015 development agenda*, inequality, social inclusion, empowerment and participation, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social protection should be given priority attention.