

# The role of livestock in enhancing the empowerment of rural women



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# Presentation overview

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- Women's empowerment: why and what
- Women's empowerment and livestock
- WELI tool to assess changes in empowerment of women in livestock
- Rethinking empowerment through experiences from the ground

# Women's empowerment: a means and an end



The infographic features a blue background with a white and red header. On the left is a red female symbol with an equals sign. On the right is an illustration of a diverse group of people. The main title 'SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY' is in large red letters, with the subtitle 'The goal of SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' in blue. A red arrow labeled 'WHAT?' points to the six goals. Each goal is represented by a red circle with an icon and a white text box. The icons include: 1. A scale of justice. 2. A hand holding a family. 3. A couple under a wedding arch. 4. A person in a wheelchair with a house. 5. A woman with a family tree. 6. A person at a desk with a laptop and documents.

## SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

The goal of SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

### WHAT?

- 1** End discrimination against all women and girls
- 2** Eliminate violence against all women and girls
- 3** Eliminate all harmful practices such as child marriage
- 4** Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work
- 5** Ensure women's participation and leadership in decision-making
- 6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

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# Defining 'women's empowerment'

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Capability of women for **self-determination**:  
to take control over their own circumstances and to realize their  
aspirations in order to live a life they have reason to value

(Annas, 2003; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1990)





Agnes: “I feel empowered when I can take decisions about the cattle I raise and can decide how to use the income from the cattle”

(Price at al 2018)

# Why women's empowerment in livestock development?

## Livestock key for women's empowerment

- Women are the majority of poor livestock keepers (FAO 2011)
  - Livestock and products as source of income (Randolph 2007)
- Livestock more easily controlled by women than other assets (Galiè et al 2015)
- Livestock as a mobile bank (Njuki and Sanginga 2013)



However....

Women have limited control  
over livestock resources (Kristjanson 2014)

Commercialization: women lose  
control over livestock products  
(Tavener et al 2019)

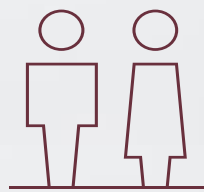
Livestock entrenched in long-  
standing gender norms (Price et al 2018)



**Gender-responsive  
livestock development for  
women's empowerment**







GENDER

Women's empowerment  
for livestock



Livestock for  
women's empowerment

How can we learn about the ways in which  
livestock can enhance women's  
empowerment?

# The Women's Empowerment in Livestock Index (WELI)

A standardized measure to assess the empowerment of women  
in the livestock sector (Galiè et al 2018)





## **WELI data**

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### **level empowerment of:**

- a given woman
- a man in the same household
- women in a community

And...

- what activities affect E. over time

# Food for thought

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1. Individual path to self-determination VS standard measure
2. Complexity of empowerment VS 'one index number'
3. Absolute value of index n. VS change for 1 person over time
4. Empowerment woman VS man

# Rethinking Empowerment: Power Through

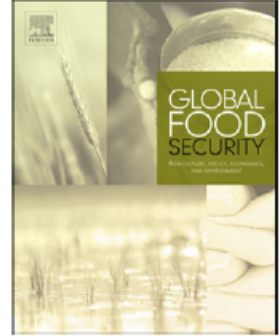


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## Power through: A new concept in the empowerment discourse

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### 1. Introduction

Women's empowerment describes the capability of women for self-determination: to take control over their own circumstances and to realize their aspirations in order to live a life they have reason to value (Annas, 2003; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1990). The emphasis is on 'agency'

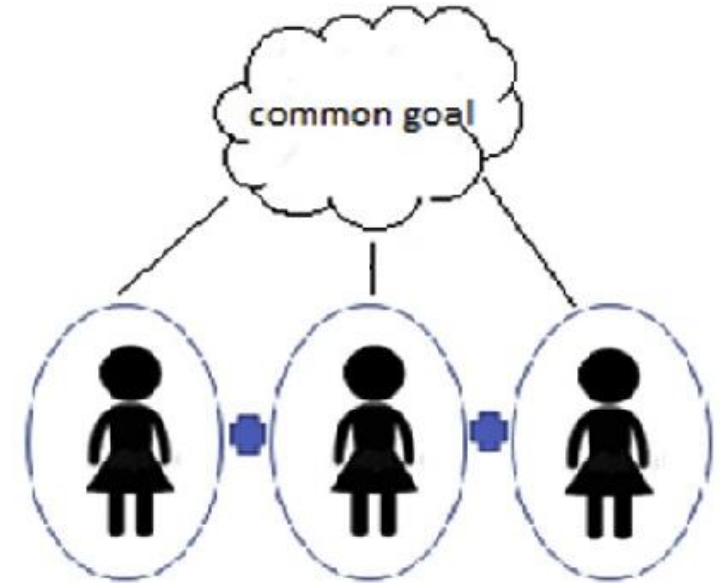
Social norms clearly play a role in determining 'the possible' when it comes to the choices women may decide to make and to enact. Social norms lie outside the immediate control (or agency) of individuals and can greatly influence individual choice. Stewart, 2013 argues that no one can experience complete autonomy: alongside political and economic constraints, their choices are heavily influenced by underlying

# Four common definitions of power...

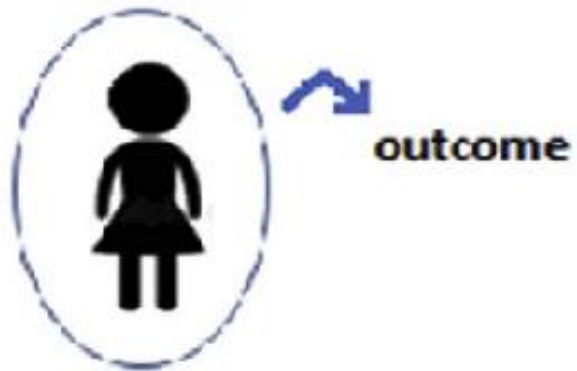
Power within



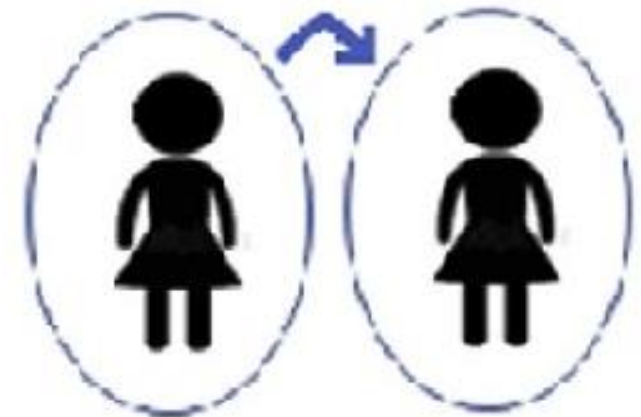
Power with



Power to



Power over

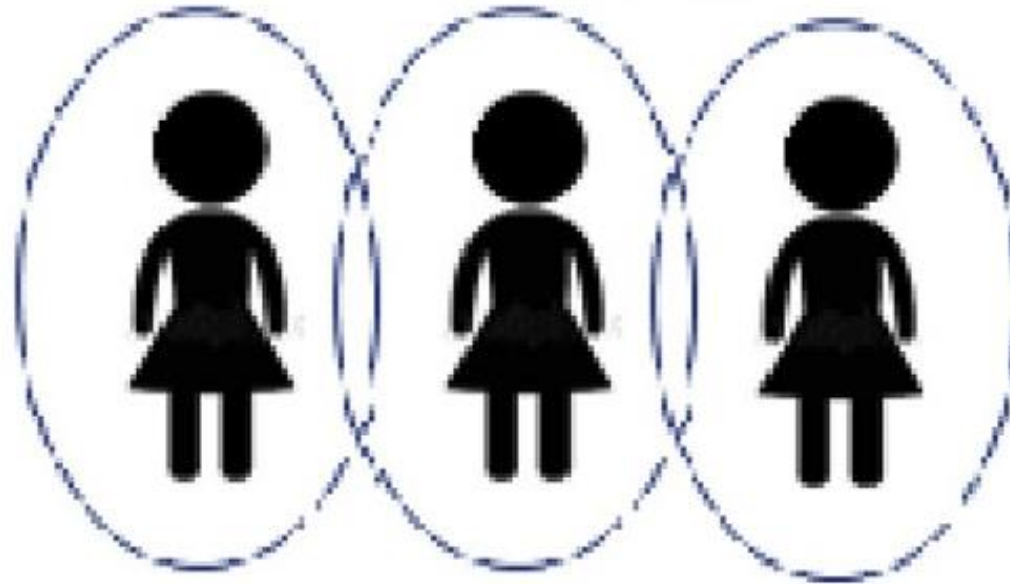




# Power through

relational

involuntary



→ precondition  
for dis/empowerment

# Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

1. the empowerment status of associated others



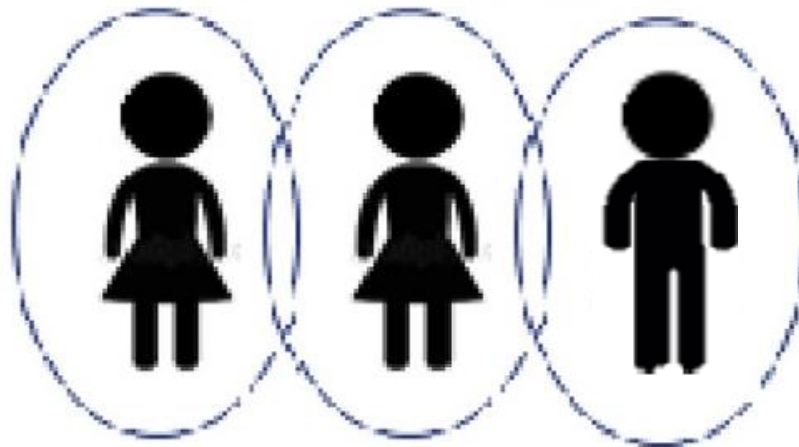
Maha: “when my sister became a teacher, the whole village looked at me with admiration”

# Key message 1

Empowerment of individual women is

partly **involuntary** and

**constituted through** the empowerment of people associated with them



# Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

1. the empowerment status of associated others

2. personal characteristics vis-à-vis gender norms

**“A self-confident but disrespectful wife cannot be an empowered woman”**



## Key message 2

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Empowerment is affected by a complex interplay between **individual characteristics** of empowerment and the compatibility of these characteristics with **locally sanctioned social roles**

## Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

1. the empowerment status of associated others
2. personal characteristics vis-à-vis gender norms

3. normative judgment by community



Fatma: “When I started selling the milk, I started making money and felt empowered. But the village was not happy. My husband left us”



## Key message 3

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An individual is accorded an 'empowered' or 'disempowered' status through the **assessment by community members** of an individual's performance of gender roles vis-à-vis locally valid gender norms



## Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

1. the empowerment status of associated others
2. personal characteristics vis-à-vis gender norms
3. normative judgment by community
4. the gender norms façade

'In my household my husband takes all the decisions.  
I look after the children and cook.  
We look after the goats together.'

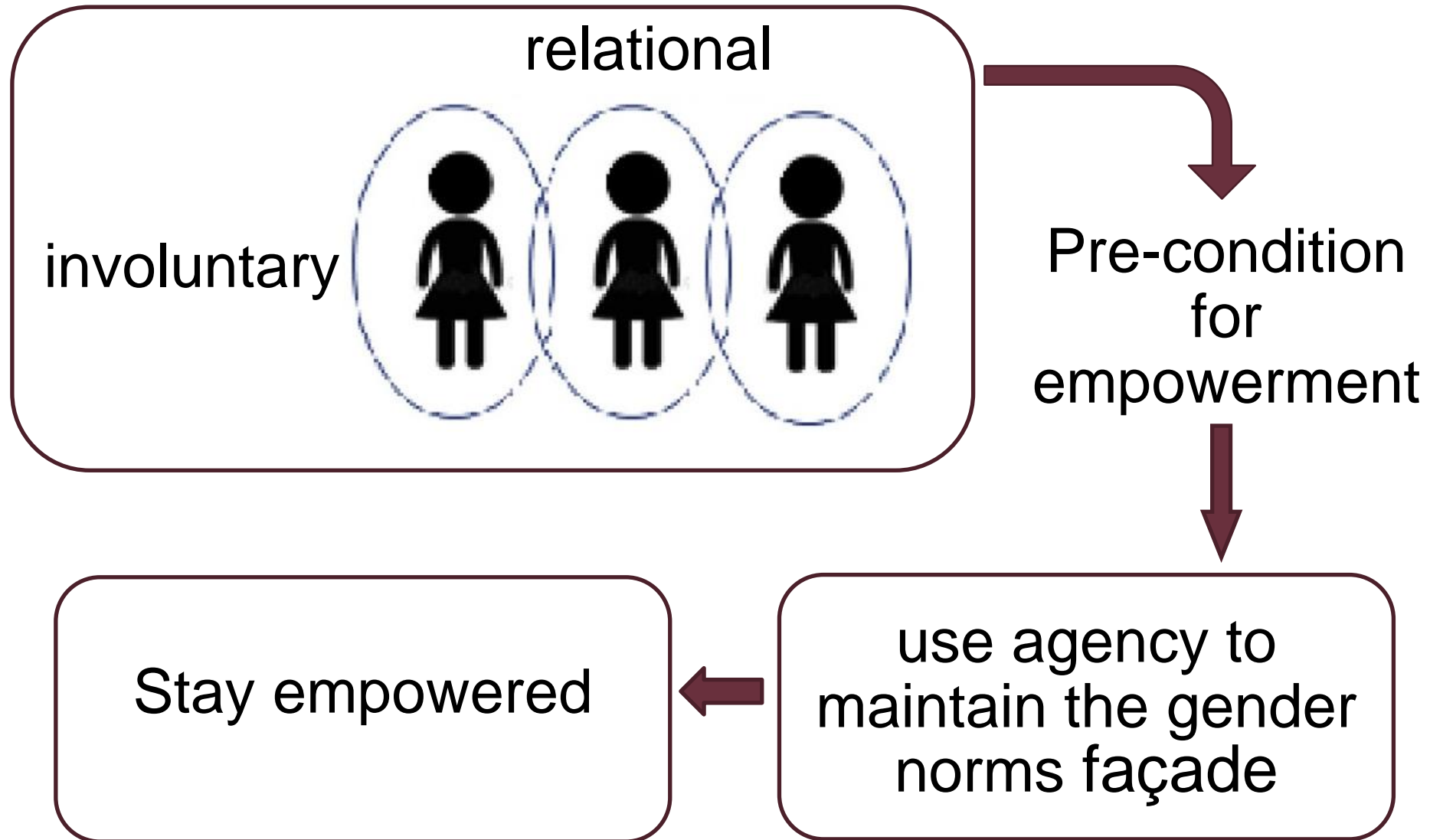


## Key message 4

Interview participants **describe gender dynamics** in their own household  
using **stereotypical, local gender norms**.

Actual daily performance of roles and responsibilities may be very different.

# From Power Through to Empowerment



## Concluding remarks

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1. Livestock offers key opportunities to empower women.
2. Women's empowerment needs to be situated within gender dynamics/norms
3. Empowerment IS NOT a zero-sum game: 'individual empowerment' is mediated by the 'empowerment of significant others'
4. 'Individual empowerment' is affected by personal characteristics and local norms
5. Empowerment depends on how individuals, hhs, community interpret change
6. Gender norms façade leveraged strategically to support women's empowerment
7. Empowering women purposefully remains critical. Empowering men as a means to empower women simply will not work.