Measuring of agency for small enterprises

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Introduction

Agency matters for development. In particular, attention has been given to the impact on poverty reduction and local governance (Narayan 2005, World Bank 2011, 2012) as well as to business and market growth (Narayan 2005). This module provides guidance questions and potential indicators to measure three key areas of agency in the context of female entrepreneurs that have been proved to matter in previous work. Although the collaboration among sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and economists in this area is not new, some measures are still at the research stage, as it will be indicated below. The recommendations are based in the review of questionnaires (most of them used in impact evaluations) and select papers analyzing agency measures. The focus is on small and growth-oriented enterprises; that is, on transformational rather than subsistence enterprises (Schoar, 2010).

Agency is defined as the capacity of actors to take purposeful action, a function of both individual and collective assets and capabilities (Narayan 2005, World Bank 2011). Agency is affected by the broader institutional, social and political context of formal and informal rules and norms. Given the focus of this module, we discuss indicators in the following areas:

- Women’s participation in society
- Security and safety

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1 Economists (PRMGE). The authors would like to thank Mahjabeen Haji for research assistance and Matthew Morton for useful comments and suggestions. The authors would like to thank Elena Bardasi for sharing the questionnaire of the impact evaluation linked to the Virtual Business Incubator and Facundo Cuevas, Sarah Haddock, and Sarah Nedolast for sharing the questionnaires linked to the adolescent girl initiative. The views, findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this note are entirely those of the author. They do not necessarily represent the view of the World Bank, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent.
We specifically focus on women’s participation in business and community groups, security in conducting business, and time allocation between household and business activities. These three dimensions can indeed affect women’s ability to grow their business.

Before turning to the specific indicators and good practice questions, it is important to present a few challenges/decisions that evaluators should consider. First, it is important to clarify whether agency will be conceptualized as a means or an end of the intervention; that is, whether the outcomes have instrumental or intrinsic value. For example, if participation in decision making is seen as having intrinsic value, an appropriate measure can be the attendance to meetings or groups. If participation is important because it leads to more access to potential buyers and sellers (instrumental value), the evaluator should instead compare difference in the business outcomes between individuals that participated and individuals that did not participate in meetings. Second, context matters for choosing appropriate measures and designing sound analysis. Social norms, values, beliefs as well as laws and regulations influence individuals’ reactions. For example, when all women acquire certain rights previously denied to them—such as the right to open a bank account—these rights become norms and are no longer valid indicators.

**Indicators**

Table 1 describes the area of interest, the proposed indicators for each, and the survey consulted for identifying good practice questions. The indicators proposed aim at summarizing information obtained by good practice questions at the individual levels.

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See Narayan (2005) for further details.
Table 1. Suggested Agency Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Good-practice Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in society</td>
<td>Several indicators exist such as: &lt;br&gt; Level of participation (# of groups a woman participates in) &lt;br&gt; Frequency of group participation &lt;br&gt; Role in group (leadership position, participant)</td>
<td>Virtual Business Incubator Survey (Tanzania), AGI, Liberia RBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Percentage of time spent on paid/market work &lt;br&gt; Percentage of time spent on house work &lt;br&gt; Percentage of time spent on child care &lt;br&gt; Percentage of time spent on leisure</td>
<td>Virtual Business Incubator Survey (Tanzania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Example of indicators include: “Different types of harassment” index based on number of different types of harassment faced by a woman &lt;br&gt; Frequency of harassment index (based on a scale of zero to nine with a higher score indicating greater frequency of harassment faced)</td>
<td>Golla, Anne Marie et al., 2011. “Understanding and Measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment”, ICRW Publication, Uganda Kassida Enterprise Survey, Virtual Business Incubator (Tanzania)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good practice questions

1. Participation in society

| 1. Is there a [GROUP] in your community? | Yes...1 | 2. Are you an active member of this [GROUP]? | Yes...1 | 3. How much input do you have in making decisions in this [GROUP]? | 4. How long have you been participating in the activities of this group? (Code in | 5. How often do you meet with this group? (Weekly=1 Fortnightly=2 Monthly=3) | 6. What are the benefits of participating in this group? (List up to 3. Answers should be spontaneous. Do not read list) | 7. Why are you not a member of this [GROUP]? | |

3 For examples of how indexes have been created for a few measures of participation, please see: Giné, Xavier, and Mansuri, Ghazala. 2011, “Together We Will - Experimental Evidence on Female Voting Behavior in Pakistan,” World Bank Working Paper 5692.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 2 next group</th>
<th>No... 2 next question 4</th>
<th>? (&gt;&gt;next group) Code 1</th>
<th>months)</th>
<th>Quarterly=4 Semi-annually=5 Annually=6</th>
<th>aloud) Examples listed in Code 2</th>
<th>PJ?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-help group, non-credit related</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal trade, business, or professional associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micro-finance group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal savings or loan group</td>
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<td>Drama, music, dance, or sport club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward or village committee</td>
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<td>Political party or other political group</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO (volunteer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group for women</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Tanzania VBI, Liberia RBI, and IFPRI, Questionnaire modules for the Women’s empowerment in agriculture index

| Code 1 | No input | 1 | Input into very few decisions | 2 | Input into some decisions | 3 | Input into most decisions | 4 | Input into all decisions | 5 |

| Code 2 | Finance (saving or credit) | 1 | Information or advice | 2 | Networking – for own business | 3 | Networking – to find work | 4 | Networking – other reasons | 5 |
|        | Friendship | 6 | Status or prestige | 7 | To pass the time; | 8 | To feel useful | 9 | To act on one’s own convictions | 10 |

| Code 3 | No interest | 1 | No time | 2 | Unable to raise entrance fee | 3 | Unable to raise reoccurring fees | 4 | Groups meeting location not convenient | 5 | Family dispute/Unable to join | 6 | Not allowed because of sex | 7 | Not allowed because of other reason | 8 | Other, specific | 9 |
2. Time

Please trace out the activities of the female respondent only on a typical weekday from the time she wakes up for a 24 hour period. Start by asking when the woman wakes up in the morning and then ask about her routine/schedule. The last time slot filled in should be when the household member is sleeping, although a respondent need not use all 10 time slots. Please see below for Activity, Household, and Paid Work Codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housework (Fill in additional code)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking after others’ daily needs (feeding, bathing, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after own daily needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid work (Fill in additional code)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media entertainment (TV, radio, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after children’s studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, Specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of house work:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after kids, siblings, or the elderly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetching water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agricultural unpaid work in household</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other housework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of paid work:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agricultural wage work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own enterprise of respondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise of another household member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other paid work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tanzania VBI
3. Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Now I am going to ask you about other types of harassment that women like you may face when trying to run their businesses.</th>
<th>Could you tell us if you have experienced this in the last 12 months?</th>
<th>Have you experienced this more than 5 times in the last 12 months?</th>
<th>Could you tell us what best describes the identity of the person who did this. See List c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes=1</td>
<td>No=2</td>
<td>Next item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to shut down business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats made to customers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouting, scolding, making a nuisance in or near enterprise premises</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vandalism of premises or merchandise</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confiscation of property or merchandise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theft of property or merchandise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fondling or inappropriate touching</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pushing or shoving</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beating</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We realize that female entrepreneurs are also at risk of being asked for sex in return for help with their business

Out of every 10 women, how many do you think receive these kinds of requests at least once in 12 months?

Out of every 10 women asked, how many do you think agree to sex in these situations?

Why do you suppose this happens? Code up to 3. Do not read options aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you suppose this happens? Code up to 3. Do not read options aloud.</th>
<th>Specifying for Other:..........................................................</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get quick cash for the business=1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To avoid harassment=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To maintain occupancy of premises=3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To purchase inputs for business=4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pay off debt=5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel good about self, more attractive=6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, Specify=7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of every 10 women, how many do you think offer sex - without being asked - in return for help with the business?

Now, I am going to ask you a very personal question. Please note that I am not asking about your own behavior but rather about requests for sex coming from outside. In the past 12 months were you asked for sex to support your business by anyone who was not your spouse/partner? Yes=1, No=2 |

In the past 12 months, would you say that this has happened once, a few times, or many times? Once=1, Few times=2, Many times=3

Before the past 12 months, would you say that this has happened once, a few times, or many times? Once=1, Few times=2, Many times=3

Source: Tanzania VBI, Uganda Kassida Enterprise Survey
References


Golla, Anne Marie et al., 2011."Understanding and Measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment", ICRW Publication, Uganda Kassida Enterprise Survey, Virtual Business Incubator (Tanzania)

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Concordance of survey and experience sampling measures,” SOEP - The German Socio-Economic Panel Study at DIW Berlin