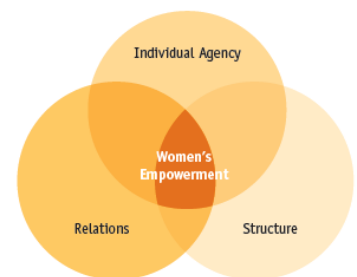




WE-MEASR: A Tool to Measure Women's Empowerment in Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health Programs

Globally, CARE's health programs prioritize addressing gender inequity and investing in women's empowerment in order to achieve sustainable improvements in health, as well as to ensure that women realize their full human rights. To strengthen and standardize the measurement of women's empowerment in our programs, CARE has developed a new, multidimensional quantitative survey tool. The tool – called **WE-MEASR (Women's Empowerment – Multidimensional Evaluation of Agency, Social Capital & Relations)** – is designed for use with women and consists of 20 short scales that measure women's empowerment in domains critical to sexual, reproductive and maternal health. The scales are aligned with CARE's theoretical framework for women's empowerment, which outlines three overarching domains of change essential to ensuring meaningful empowerment of women: Individual Agency, Relations, and Structure. Programs can utilize the entire set of **WE-MEASR** scales or select a sub-set of scales that measure the specific dimensions of empowerment that their program is designed to influence.



Tool Development: In developing the measures, CARE built on and adapted existing validated measures, including the *Gender Equitable Men (GEM)* scale, the *Sexual Relationship Power Scale (SRPS)*, the *Demographic and Health Survey Women's Empowerment Modules* and the *Adapted Social Capital Assessment Tool (ASCAT)*. Because so many of CARE's projects aim to achieve women's empowerment by enabling collectivization and catalyzing collective action, we prioritized the inclusion of a set of items to measure structural and cognitive social capital, including membership in and help from community groups, social cohesion and collective efficacy. We also developed new measures where we found gaps, including a set of self-efficacy measures that explore how women's confidence to enact health-promoting behaviors (e.g., use of family planning) is mediated by gender roles and gendered power dynamics in the household.

The items in the tool were tested and refined through two rounds of cognitive interviewing, including interviews with women in rural Malawi. The final measures were then field tested through interviews with 641 married women in Malawi in both patrilineal and matrilineal communities. Data from field tests were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis, and then further refined. CARE is now using various adaptations of WE-MEASR in program evaluations in several countries to assess how well the scales work in other contexts and to explore associations between programming, empowerment and health behavior outcomes.

1 Pulerwitz, J., & Barker, G. (2008). Measuring attitudes toward gender norms among young men in Brazil: Development and psychometric evaluation of the GEM scale. *Men and Masculinities*, 10, 322-338.

2 Pulerwitz, J., Gortmaker, S.L., & DeJong, W. (2000). Measuring relationship power in HIV/STD research. *Sex Roles*, 42 (7&8), 637-660.

3 MEASURE DHS & ICF Macro. (2008). *Demographic and health survey (DHS)*. Calverton, MD: Author.

4 DeSilva, M.J., Harpham, T., Tuan, T., Bartolini, R., et al. (2006). Psychometric and cognitive validation of a social capital measurement tool in Peru and Vietnam. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62 (4), 941-953.

Domain	Scales	# of Items	Alpha	Mean	SD	Range
Agency	Rejection of Intimate Partner Violence* ¹	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	0-1
	Belief in Women's Right to Refuse Sex ¹	3	α .59	2.13	.99	0-3
	Support for Traditional Gender Roles (Male Dominance) ²	7	α .69	3.46	.84	1-5
	Belief in Women's Health Rights Sub-scale	2	α .71	2.91	1.37	1-5
	SE to Discuss and Use Family Planning	4	α .60	4.30	.73	1-5
	SE to Refuse Sex	5	α .79	2.76	1.17	1-5
	SE to Go to the Health Facility	5	α .70	4.27	.75	1-5
	SE to Attend Community Meetings	4	α .72	3.79	.97	1-5
	SE to Speak out in Community Meetings	3	α .74	3.35	1.21	1-5
	SE to Ask Husband to Help with Household Duties	4	α .80	3.76	1.08	1-5
Social Capital	Ownership of Household Assets/Resources*	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	0-5
	Contribution to Household Resources	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0-3
	Social Cohesion ^{3,4,5}	11	α .82	3.64	.76	1-5
	Community Support in Times of Crisis: When Pregnant and Bleeding	4	α .80	3.76	1.12	1-5
	Community Support in Times of Crisis: If Beaten by Husband	5	α .80	3.94	.95	1-5
	Collective Efficacy	4	α .76	3.73	1.02	1-5
	Participation in Collective Action ³	5	α .59	1.79	1.32	0-5
Relations	Women's Participation in Household Decision-making ^{1,6}	15	a. .79	1.58	.23	1-2
	Interspousal Communication ⁷	5	α .77	3.58	.91	1-5
	Female Mobility ^{1,7}	8	α .59	2.94	.16	1-3

*Indices, no alpha reliability reported

Scale Items Adapted From:

¹ MEASURE DHS & ICF Macro. (2008). *Demographic and health survey (DHS)*. Calverton, MD: Author.

² Pulerwitz, J., & Barker, G. (2008). Measuring attitudes toward gender norms among young men in Brazil: Development and psychometric evaluation of the GEM scale. *Men and Masculinities, 10*, 322-338.

³ DeSilva, M.J., Harpham, T., Tuan, T., Bartolini, R., et al. (2006). Psychometric and cognitive validation of a social capital measurement tool in Peru and Vietnam. *Social Science and Medicine, 62* (4), 941-953.

⁴ Lippman, S.A., Donini, A., Díaz, J., Chinaglia, M., Reingold, A. & Kerrigan, D. (2010). Social-environmental factors and protective sexual behavior among sex workers: The Encontros intervention in Brazil. *American Journal of Public Health, 100* (S1), S216-S223.

⁵ Kuhlmann, A.S., Galavotti, C., Hastings, P.H., Narayanan, P., Saggurti, N. Investing in communities: Evaluating the added value of community mobilization on HIV prevention outcomes among female sex workers (FSWs) in India. *AIDS and Behavior*, published on line October 2013. DOI 10.1007/s10461-013-0626-6.

⁶ Pulerwitz, J., Gortmaker, S.L., & DeJong, W. (2000). Measuring relationship power in HIV/STD research. *Sex Roles, 42* (7&8), 637-660.

⁷ ICRC. (2011). *Towards improved economic and sexual reproductive health outcomes for adolescent girls (TESFA)*. Baseline survey. Washington, DC: Author.

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