

Towards contextual evidence of empowerment in a development NGO

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Tiina Kontinen, PhD, Senior Lecturer,
Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä, Finland



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ



Background

- Need for evidence of empowerment
 - Need to show, need to know...
- Presentation of an **ongoing** research project
 - Focus on the presentation of the methodological approach
- *”Empowering leadership in a global NGO. Towards new monitoring methods to support social change”* (2012-2013)
 - a) Academic research on contextualised understandings of empowerment
 - **b) Organizational development -> towards a practical tool for monitoring empowerment**
 - c) Investigation into distributed leadership in the NGO work aiming at empowerment

World Vision Finland

- WV Finland supports 20 development programmes in Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Part of the WV Global partnership of:
 - 45 000 employees in app 100 countries
- Global goal: "sustainable wellbeing of children, especially the most vulnerable, within families and communities"
 - Educated for life, protected from disease, protected and participating, cared for
- Global models, tools and indicators
 - Child Wellbeing Outcomes and Targets



Joint research project: towards contextualised monitoring of empowerment

- WV Finland's underlying assumption:
 - "Empowerment leads to sustained wellbeing of children"
- WV Finland's challenge:
 - How to identify empowerment?
- Contexts
 - Institutional context of development co-operation
 - ***Organizational context of WV***
 - Local contexts in different countries and communities

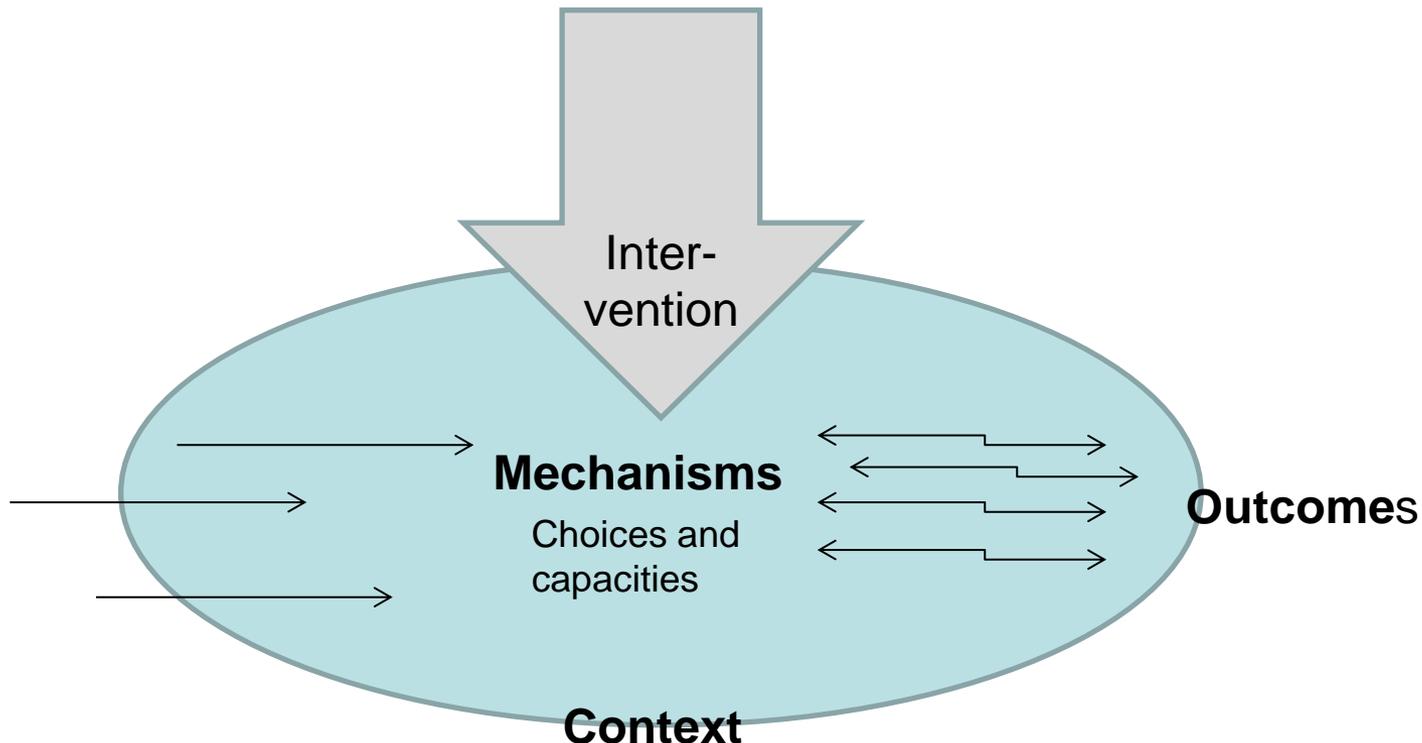
"You just can feel the empowerment!"



Inspired by: Realistic evaluation

(Pawson & Tilley 1997)

What works, for whom and in what context?

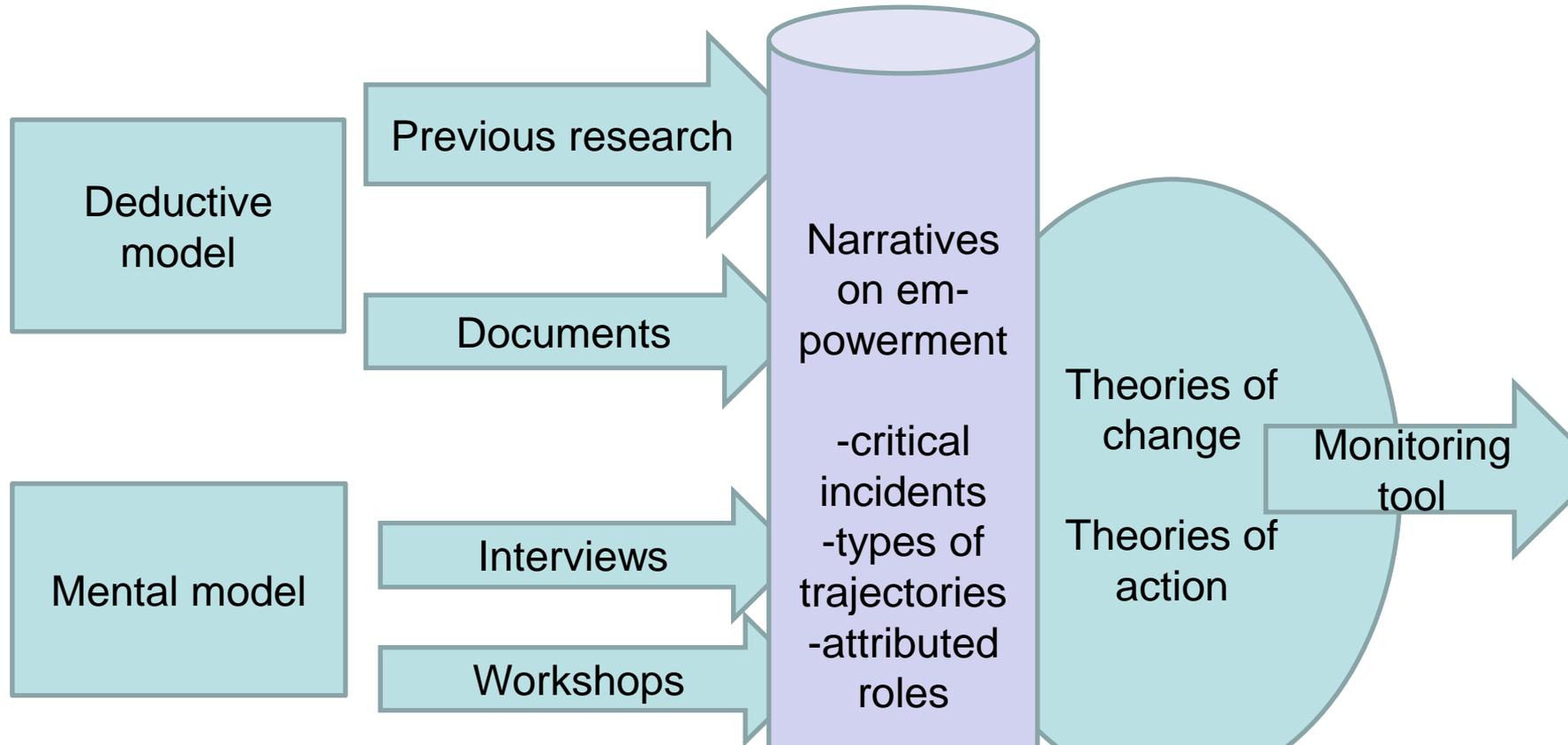


- What are the program theories of empowerment in WV?
- How does WV understand and perceive causal mechanisms generating empowerment?
- What are the mechanisms that WV aims at trigger in the intervention contexts?



Program theories of empowerment

(Funnell & Rogers 2011)



Finland (5 Workshops, 10 interviews)
Kenya / Uganda (1 workshop, 16 interviews)
India / Sri Lanka (1 workshop, 9 interviews)
Peru (1 workshop, 7 Interviews)



Preliminary observations

- Multiple programme theories
- Gaps in the assumed mechanisms
 - individual vs. community
 - inner strength vs. change in power relations
 - indigenous process vs. process triggered by intentional intervention
- Challenges in combining different types of evidence
 - measurable indicators vs. narratives

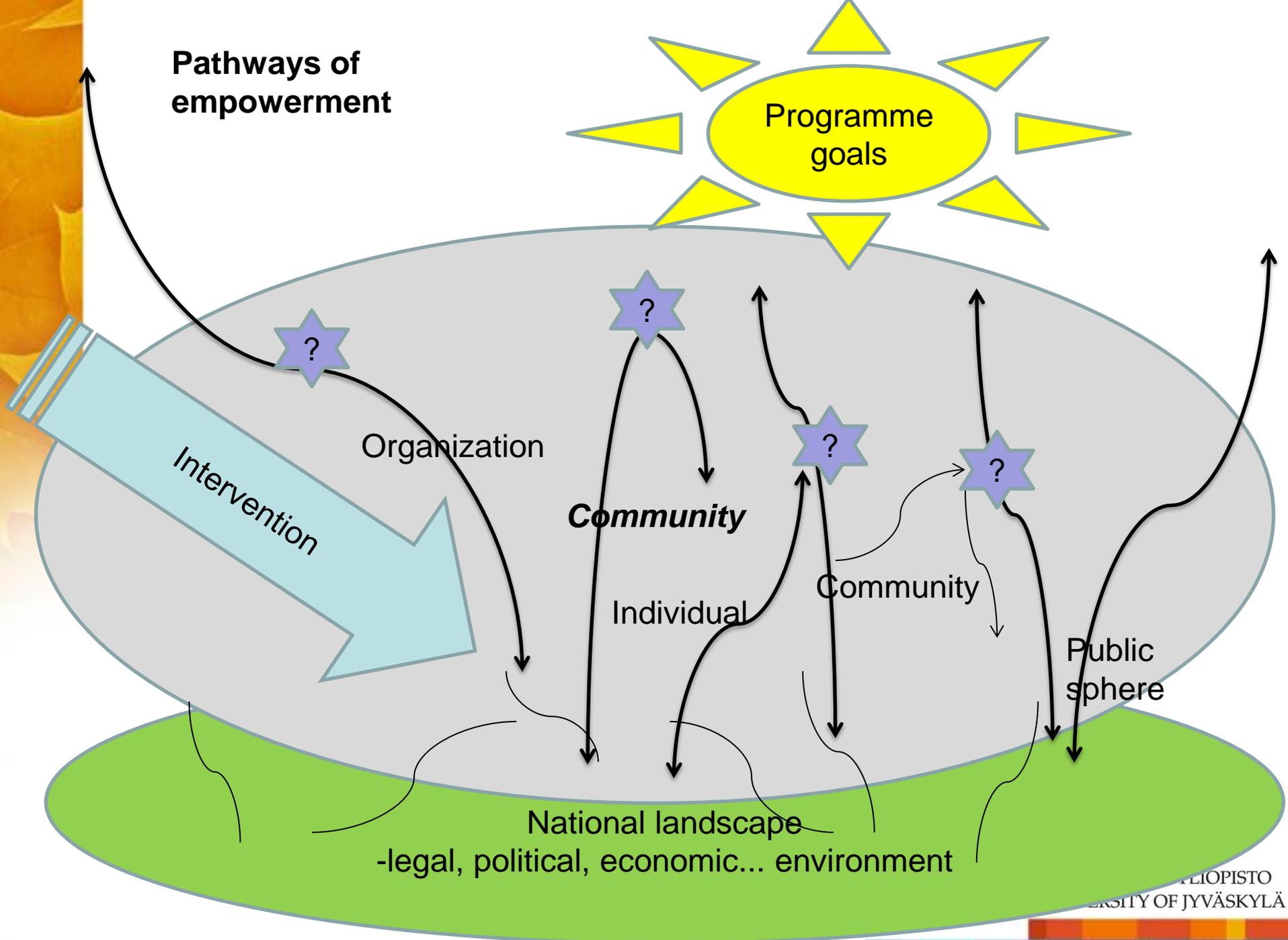


Towards a quick and easy contextualised tool?

- Tool for Finnish project coordinators and inspiration for joint discussion between Finnish and partner country coordinators
- Something else than matrices and indicators

It should be very easy...people change in the field, and if we think they would use this as well. You know, they have already so many tools and requirements, so this should be very easy to use.

If this is a tool for our normal monitoring trip, it should be very light. It might be that we have half an hour to use it, sometimes no time at all, and you just have to reflect by yourself in the evenings.



It is a new way of thinking ... I mean this is a beautiful one, when you get that right, I am quite sure we will somehow reach the sustainability and then pause, that's it !

-Indian workshop participant-



Challenges

- ❏ Lack of knowledge of the actual mechanism in the contexts
- ❏ How to combine the contextual paths with logframes and indicators?
- ❏ How to encourage monitoring of sideways, deadends?
- ❏ When the evidence is enough?
- ❏ Good enough monitoring with limited resources



Literature

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