

Empowered Worldviews Technical Brief: Assessing the role of behaviour-change programming on mindsets and livelihoods in Zambia

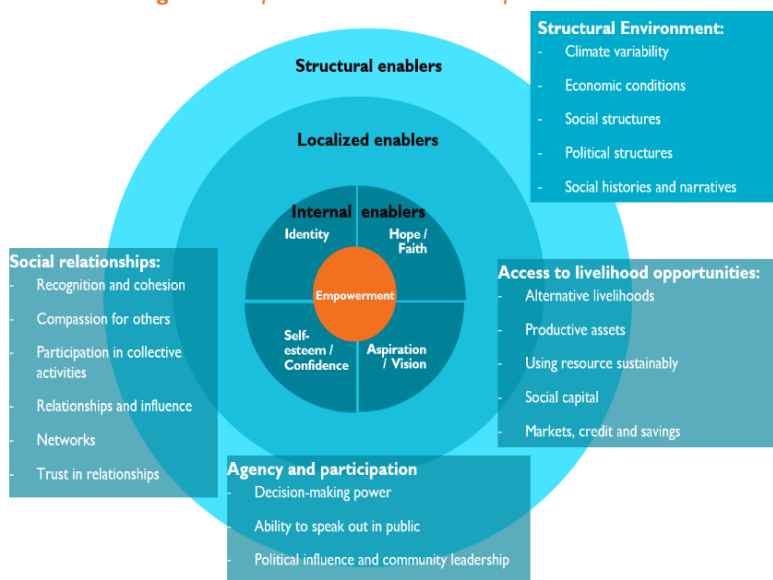
By Amanda Lenhardt (ODI), Vidya Diwakar (ODI), Joseph Simbaya (Institute of Social and Economic Research) and Emmanuel Tumusiime (World Vision US).¹

We partnered with World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization, to conduct an evaluation of its faith-based, behaviour change approach for economic wellbeing. The approach, called Empowered Worldview (EWV), seeks to address dependency mindsets and to promote economic empowerment among people living in poverty. This research project is intended to improve knowledge of the programme’s efficacy which has been limited up until now by a lack of established measures to estimate impacts of this type of behavioural change programming. The project also seeks to contribute to understandings of the psychosocial determinants of poverty and the role of faith and faith-based models in economic development.

The research team reviewed literature on psychosocial dimensions of poverty, religiosity, faith and their relationship to economic wellbeing. A conceptual framework was developed outlining the potential pathways of change and outcome measures of EWV as an illustrative faith-based intervention in livelihoods programming. The framework was empirically tested in Zambia on World Vision’s THRIVE (Transforming Household Resilience in Vulnerable Environments) programme. THRIVE includes EWV as well as interventions promoting savings and access to finance, improved natural resource management, farming as a business, and disaster risk reduction and management.

Figure 1 Empowered Worldview Conceptual Framework

The **conceptual framework** illustrates that a person’s worldview and empowerment can be enabled at three levels: internal, localized, and structural (Figure 1). The EWV intervention addresses these enablers through workshops that integrate messages on participants’ values and mindsets to understand identity, vision, compassion, relationships, and faith. EWV also seeks to assist participants in investing for and in their own well-being and that of their families.



The study in Zambia tested whether the EWV intervention had a positive effect on these dimensions and relationships with livelihoods outcomes, including subjective well-being, child well-being, income changes, and resilience.

Mixed methods and data: A convergent mixed methods approach was used, involving separate analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data followed by a converged analysis comparing the results. The data is a random sample of 426 THRIVE participants that had not received EWV training, 617 respondents who had received EWV training (and other THRIVE interventions), and 658 respondents who are non-THRIVE participants from comparison communities. Qualitative data includes nine focus group discussions and 83 in-depth life history interviews. Survey items defining an “empowered worldview” were used to construct an index of empowerment.

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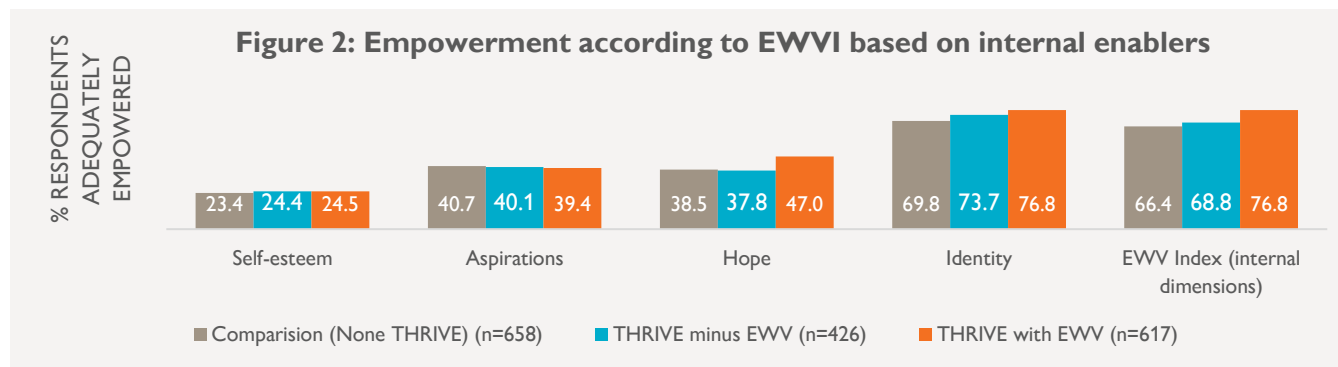
Three hypotheses tested in the study:

1. Households trained in EWV are more likely to have positive mindsets (are empowered) than households not trained in EWV with regards to hope, identity, self-esteem and aspirations of economic/social well-being.
2. EWV interventions positively influence a household's response to livelihood options, agency, and valuable social relationships leading to economic empowerment.
3. EWV interventions have a positive, statistically significant effect on livelihoods (THRIVE) results, including subjective well-being, income change, resilience, and child well-being.

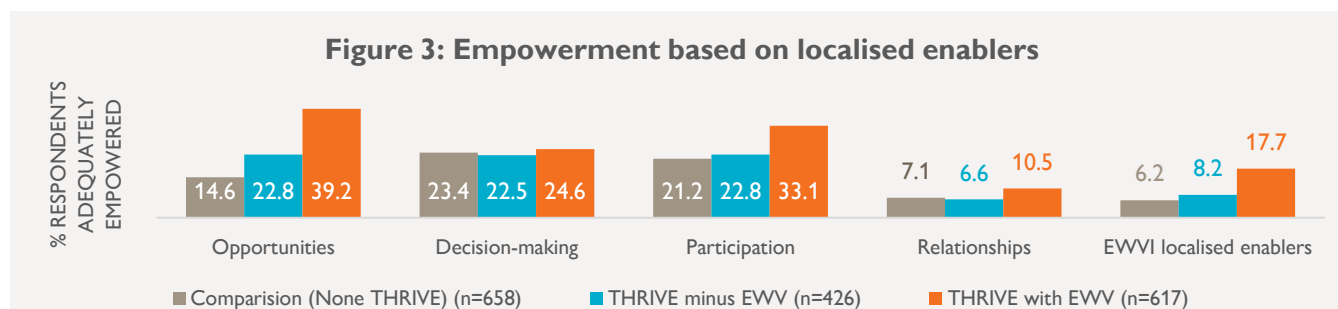
Empirical results from data collected at the midpoint of programme interventions show the three hypotheses tested hold in favour of the efficacy of EWV in the study sites in Zambia.

Hypothesis 1: The percentage of sample respondents who are considered adequately empowered (i.e., with a score of 75% or higher) on internal dimensions is summarized in Figure 2. Results show that 77% of THRIVE respondents who received EWV training passed the 75% adequacy threshold of empowerment, compared to 69% of THRIVE participants who had not received EWV training, and 66% in the non-THRIVE sample. The differences in the proportion of the sample that is empowered across the internal dimension is marginal when comparing EWV-recipients to others, but statistically significant (discernible) at a 90% confidence level. Quantitative results suggest that EWV is associated with higher levels of participants' hopes and identities more than their aspirations and self-esteem.

Improvements in hope were found in both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, while improvements in aspirations and identity were more discernible in the qualitative data. Self-esteem appears to have been less affected by EWV; no perceived improvements and discernible differences were found across groups on this element through either quantitative or qualitative measures.

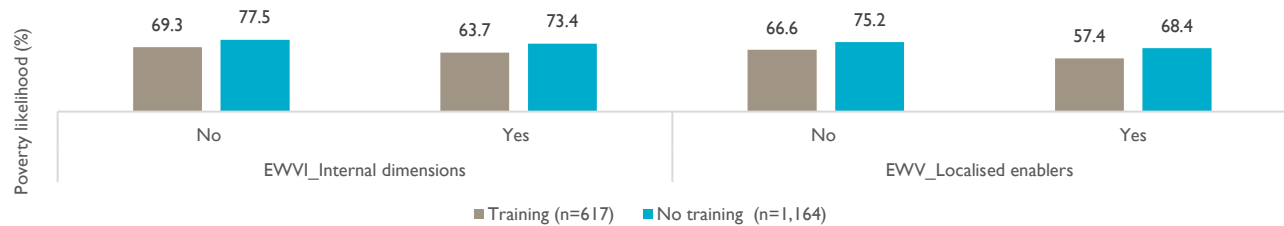


Hypothesis 2: Figure 3 shows a statistically significant difference in the proportion of EWV trained respondents per subsample who reported being adequately empowered on the dimensions of participation in collective activities and access to opportunities. Social relationships appear to be weak in sampled communities and only slightly affected by the EWV intervention.



Hypothesis 3 (Figure 4 and Table 1): Figure 4 shows that the likelihood of living in poverty was lower when individuals had received training compared to when they had not. Additionally, it was even lower for individuals who had both received training and felt empowered on the internal dimension and localised enablers.

Figure 4: Poverty probability by empowerment and EWW training



The analysis also revealed statistically significant positive associations between the EWW intervention and higher-level well-being outcomes, including participants’ subjective well-being and perceived change in income.

EWW appears to have the largest impact on the very poor who have some productive assets to build on, and no impact on non-poor smallholder farmers and the extremely poor. Qualitative findings reveal that poor and non-poor respondents who received EWW did not change well-being levels. In contrast, most respondents in the very poor category who received EWW moved to the poor category. Examples of respondent reflections covering EWW behavioural dimensions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Examples of behavioural change and wellbeing outcomes attributed to the EWW programme

| EWW behavioural dimension | Respondent observations |
|---------------------------|---|
| Hope | “I am more hopeful about my life and I know that my life will be better. Better still, I want to secure my children’s future by educating them and also transmitting agricultural knowledge to them so that they too do not suffer in future.” – Male respondent, married with 5 children. Started gardening as a business using EWW training. Moved from very poor to poor over the intervention period. |
| Aspiration/Vision | “I want to build houses, buy a car, and have workers at my farm. I want my well-being to improve, I will do that by creating job opportunities for people who will help me at my farm. Not only that, I don’t want to continue having challenges with transport.” – Female respondent, married with 4 children. Applied lessons on farming as a business to improve yields and marketing. Since EWW she and her husband built their house. Moved from poor to non-poor over the intervention period. |
| Identity | “I never felt I belonged to my community because my standard of living was not good. Most of my friends were living in houses with iron roofs but mine had grass and their way of living was way better than ours. I started having a sense of belonging after the knowledge I got from the [EWW] workshop on how to improve my farming skills and have a better life for me and my family.” – Female respondent, married with 4 children. Applied lesson on farming methods, budgeting and saving. Moved from very poor to poor. |
| Self-esteem/confidence | “I feel more confident that I will accomplish all what I have set to do in future. I know I will manage to achieve what I have planned to because I have the knowledge on how to go about it.” – Male respondent, married with 12 children. Applied lessons on conservation farming and joined a cooperative. Moved from non-poor to resilient. |

Key Learning highlights:

- The EWW framework showing the causal pathways of behavioural change programming on higher-level livelihood and well-being outcomes may contribute to improvements in designing similar programmes.
- Empirical results, though limited to intervention sites in Zambia, confirm hypothesised positive association between a faith-based behaviour change program and increases in material and subjective well-being.
- Leveraging research instruments from multiple disciplines and applying a fully integrated mixed methods approach, presented opportunities to more comprehensively measure or identify less tangible change expected in this area.