

1. DEFINITION OF EMPOWERMENT

The word *empowerment* consists of the word *power* with the prefix *em*, which together means drawing out and demonstrating the potential power within us.

Put simply, it means giving people hopes and dreams, offering them encouragement, and prompting them to generate within themselves the wonderful potential strength to live that everyone essentially has. It is the act of enlivening people, drawing out their power, forming bonds, and developing networks of empathy. By becoming aware of the magnificent power that lies within individuals, organizations, or communities, developing such strengths, communicating and sharing these sentiments, and having them resonate among us, it becomes possible to nurture new ways to work together. In a sense, it is an extremely creative type of power. It is a type of power that triggers the imagination, spreads, and strikes the true essence of colleagues and organizations like a pulse.

The word empowerment is used in various fields, and in fact has different definitions depending on the area in which it is used. To introduce some of them, in education it is defined as intrinsic motivation, experiences of success, a sense of competency, the development of strengths, and self-respect. In the field of social development, it is defined as respect for mankind, belief in the potential capacity of all people, and activities aimed at creating a fair and equal world where those potential abilities can be demonstrated. As to the area of business, it is creative decision-making from the delegation of authority and expanded responsibility. In social welfare, empowerment is defined as the process that a person undergoes to gain greater control over the decision-making and activities that influence a person's well-being.

2. PRINCIPLES OF EMPOWERMENT

There are eight principles for empowerment:

- (1) A person chooses his or her own objectives.
- (2) The person takes initiative and the authority to make decisions
- (3) The person considers his or her issues and the ways through which to resolve them.
- (4) Successes and failures are analyzed as opportunities to learn and build capacities.
- (5) Inner elements within the person and their supporters are discovered and fortified to change behaviors.
- (6) The person is prompted to participate in the process of resolving issues to boost their sense of responsibility.
- (7) Improvements are made to networks for supporting the process of resolving issues and their resources.
- (8) Motivation is boosted toward improving conditions for the person (such as the achievement of his or her objectives or their well-being).

In other words, the principles for empowerment are based on the individual. It is therefore the role of supporters—experts, superiors at work, or colleagues—to prompt an individual to generate power that oozes from within them and to improve their surroundings

to enable that to happen. The individuals that we refer to here include people who are centrally involved, both people and organizations. Supporters mean people or organizations that offer them support.

These principles for empowerment apply not only to individuals but to all people and organizations (Anme, 2007). It is also essential to improve conditions when promoting empowerment in groups of people and organizations such as companies to have their individuals select their objectives and actively participate in taking initiative, the authority to make decisions, and lead the process of considering steps to resolve issues.

3. TYPES OF EMPOWERMENT

There are three types of empowerment: self-empowerment, peer empowerment, and community empowerment. Self-empowerment means bringing out one's own capacities. Examples of this might include the use of a certain method for building motivation or to absorb oneself in a favorite pastime to relieve stress. Peer empowerment is to draw out individual capacities through peers, such as by dining together or talking with one another. Community empowerment is the leveraging of communities, organizations, the workplace, or their systems to invigorate such groups. Examples of community empowerment include activities undertaken by the entire community to organize something together such as an event or a local festival. The combined use and leveraging of these different types of empowerment are essential in order to realize something that is both sustainable and effective, and are called synergy model for empowerment (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Synergy model for empowerment (Anme, 2008).

4. PREREQUISITES FOR EMPOWERMENT

There are three prerequisite conditions for all three types of empowerment: self, peer, and community. They are:

- (1) Hope: The presence of a visible goal that leads to hope.
- (2) Faith: An individual's ability to believe that they have the capacity to head toward their goal. Self-efficacy and group efficacy (a sense that it is possible for an individual or a group to take approaches toward external matters).
- (3) Meaning: The ability to find meaning in aiming for and working toward a goal.

What is necessary is that all three of these prerequisites are in place (Anme, 2008).

For example, let's say that a cancer has been detected in your body. You might get upset and ask, "Why me?" or deny that such a thing could happen to you. Or perhaps you would be overwhelmed with shock and fall into a state of depression or start praying to the gods to save you. But once you've settled down from the initial impact, you'll probably face reality and take some sort of action to try to resolve the issue. What is necessary in order to do that? First you need to have hope that you will recover. Next, you need to have faith that you have the strength and ability to endure treatment and recover. And by believing that such efforts have meaning, you'll be able to inspire yourself.

The same applies to peer or community empowerment. How do you cope when faced with a major crisis? You will probably establish a goal for opening up the future, have faith in your own capacities, give meaning to the efforts for moving forward a step at a time, and attempt to overcome the situation.

It is not limited to crisis situations. Whether it's daily life or work routines, people fall into a powerless state if they lose these three elements. A powerless state is a condition in which you entertain negative thoughts such as the belief that you are unable to do anything or conviction that there is no meaning to your existence. Social ignorance can be a knife that significantly cuts into the meaning of hope, a sense of efficacy, or the act of making an effort. A state of social ignorance where a person is ignored despite the presence of people around them is strongly associated with a worsening in the person's physical condition. There has also been a report that a powerless situation due to abuse or domestic violence can damage the nervous system.

5. LINKING EMPOWERMENT BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, PEERS, AND THE COMMUNITY

There are three criteria to link self-, peer, and community empowerment that are necessary for its promotion:

- (1) A sense of pride in oneself
- (2) The ability to enjoy differences
- (3) Believing in the capacities of groups