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# Multi-dimensional indicators of child growth

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“Multi-dimensional indicators of child growth”  
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# Why?

- > Growth standards are **universal** – ignoring people's **diverse** realities;
- > **Anthropometric indicators** (weight and height) are applied as ends – **not means towards an end**.



# Current situation

- › Persistent high levels of **malnutrition and mortality - inequality**;
  - SDGs intend further reduction, and might benefit from a different model to conceptualise growth and the causes of malnutrition.



THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) ARE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL GLOBAL ANTI-POVERTY PUSH IN HISTORY. LET'S STEP UP ACTION TO THE 2015 MDG TARGET DATE AND BEYOND.

**MDG4**



REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

**17,000 FEWER**

**CHILDREN DIE EACH DAY** THAN IN 1990

**LET'S STEP UP**

**6 MILLION+ CHILDREN STILL DIE**

BEFORE THEIR FIFTH BIRTHDAY EACH YEAR



# SDGs – 2015 - 2030

1 NO POVERTY



2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



15 LIFE ON LAND



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





# A capability approach to child growth

- > Focus on opportunities and agency: address **inequalities – social justice – ethics**;
- > Multi-dimensionality, therefore **tailor-made counselling advices** – child/maternal/parental agency



# Amartya Sen

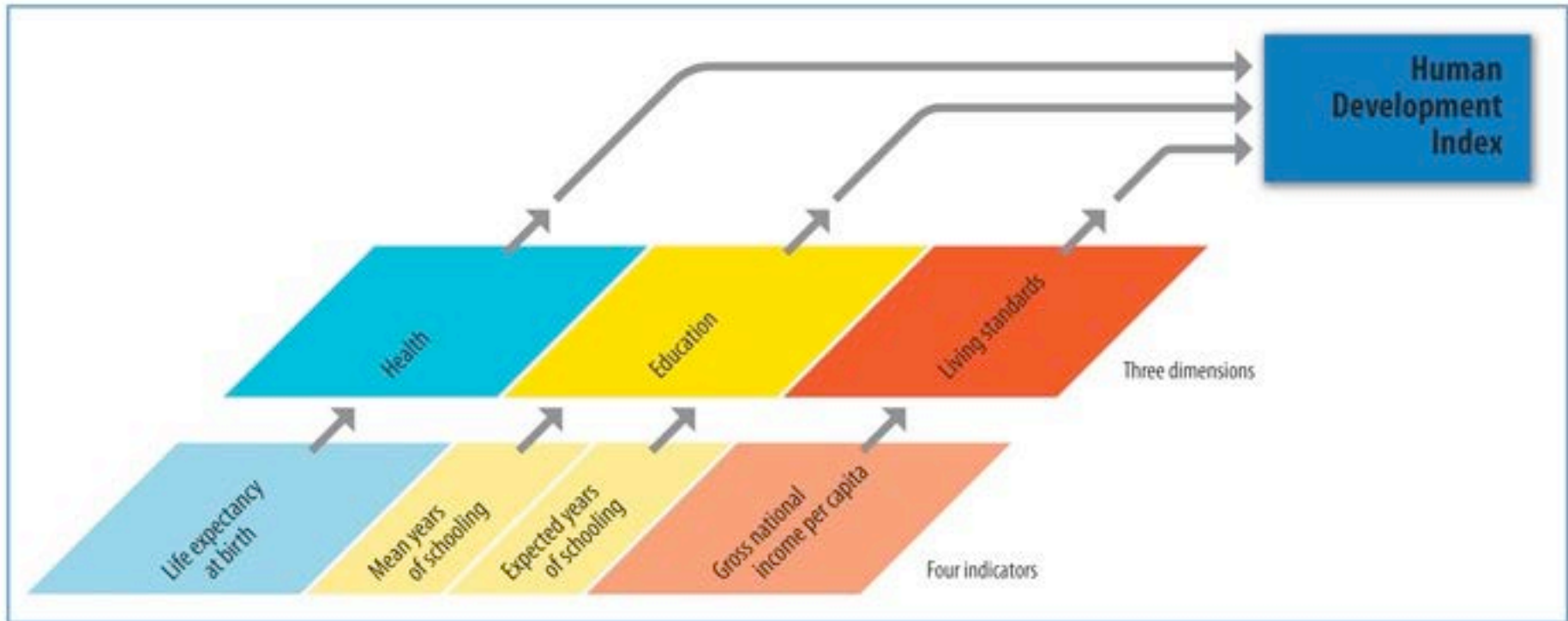
- > Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 for his contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory and for his interest in the **problems of society's poorest members.**





## Components of the Human Development Index

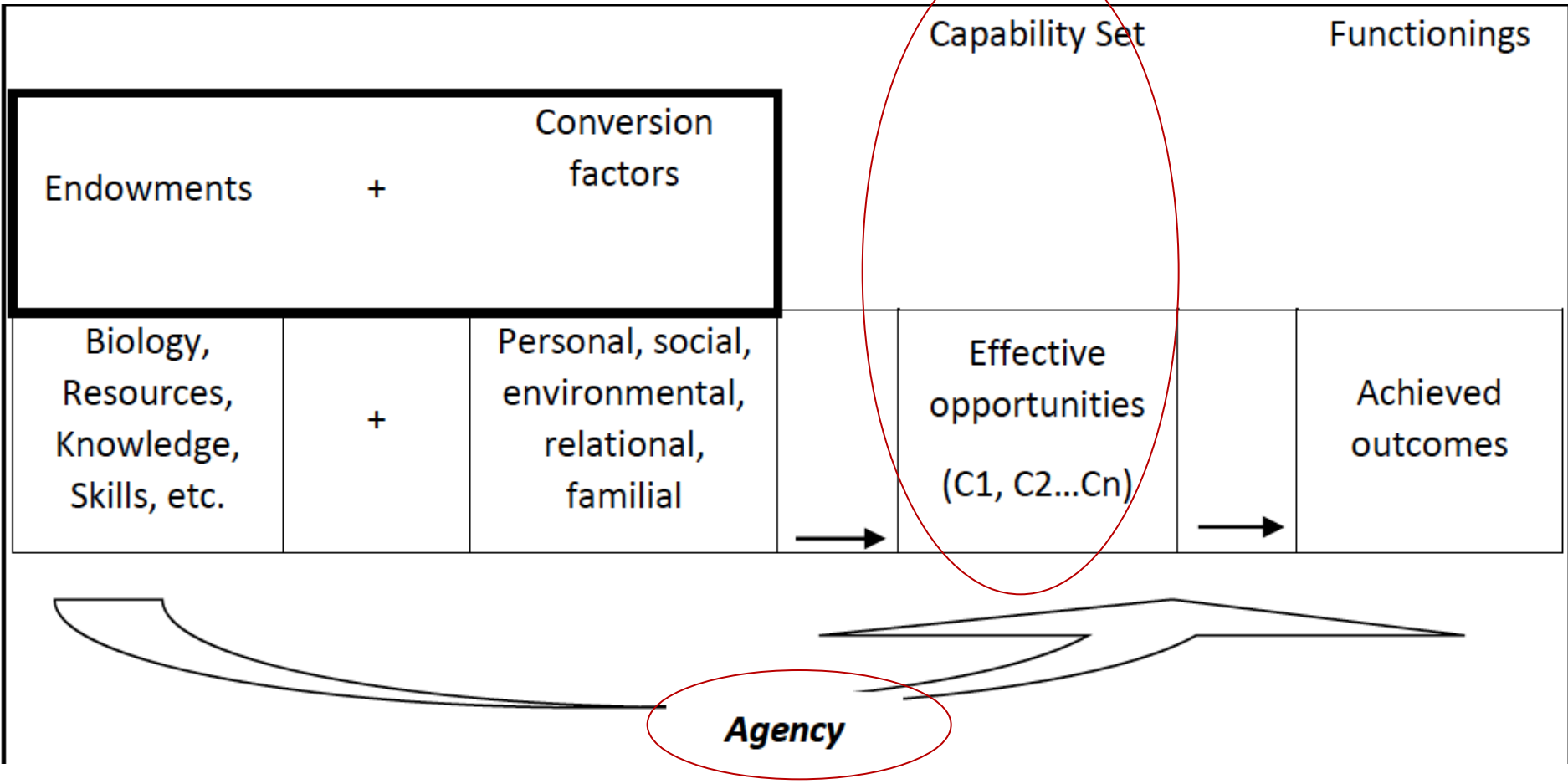
The HDI—three dimensions and four indicators



Note: The indicators presented in this figure follow the new methodology, as defined in box 1.2.

Source: HDRO.







# What does the CA add?

- › It makes “people’s opportunities” and “agency” explicit in the causal chain;
- › It allows a multi-dimensional outcome of growth;
- › Growth as the human right to the capability to be growing well.



# How to identify various dimensions of child growth?

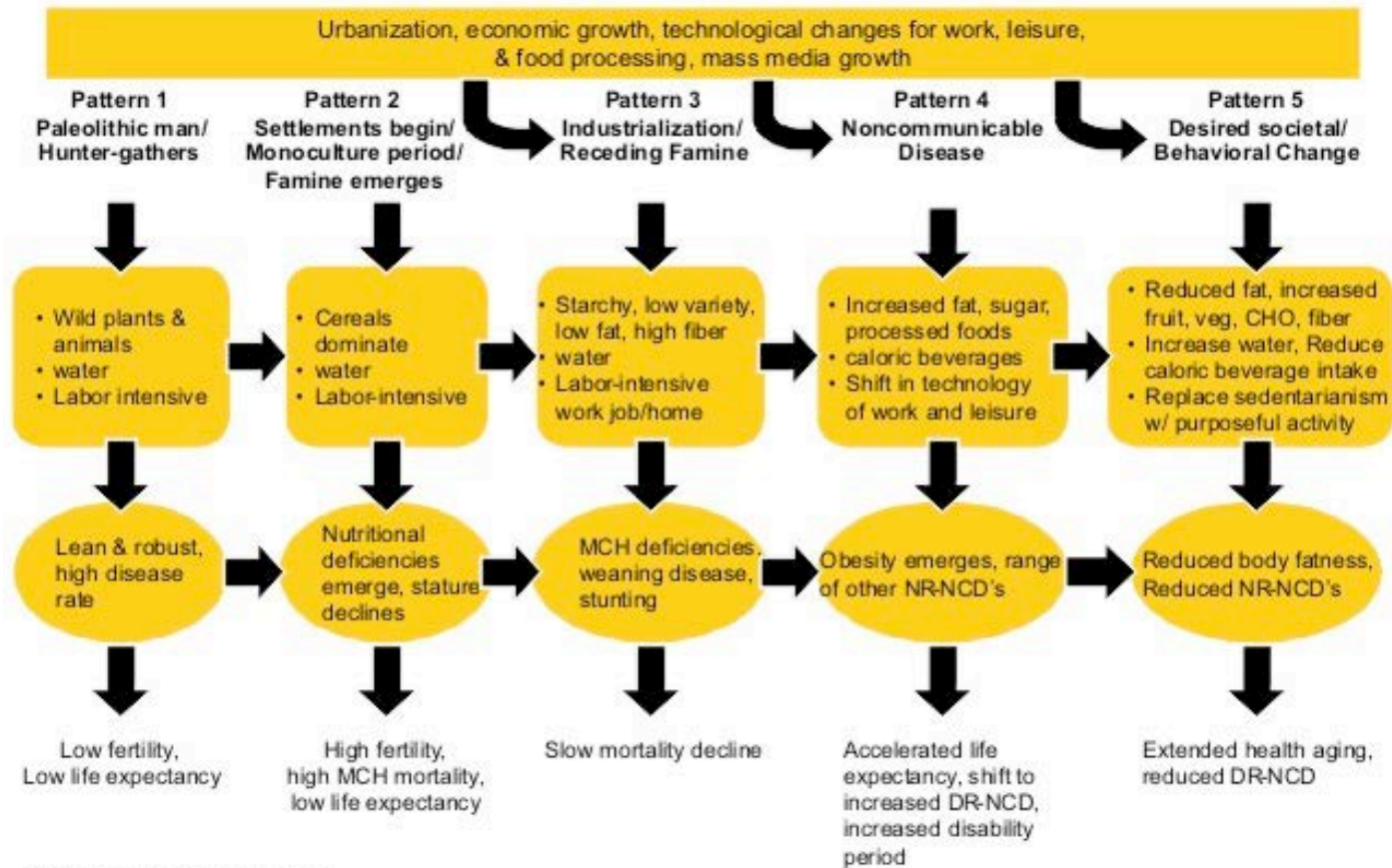
- › Convention of the Rights of the Child
- › Nutrition transition theory
- › Parent-offspring conflict theory
- › Life history theory

# Categories of capabilities for children

- › life and physical health;
- › love and care;
- › mental well-being;
- › bodily integrity and safety;
- › social relations;
- › participation;
- › education;
- › freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation
- › shelter and environment
- › leisure activities;
- › respect;
- › religion and identity;
- › time autonomy;
- › mobility

# Nutrition transition

Figure 2. Stages of the Nutrition Transition



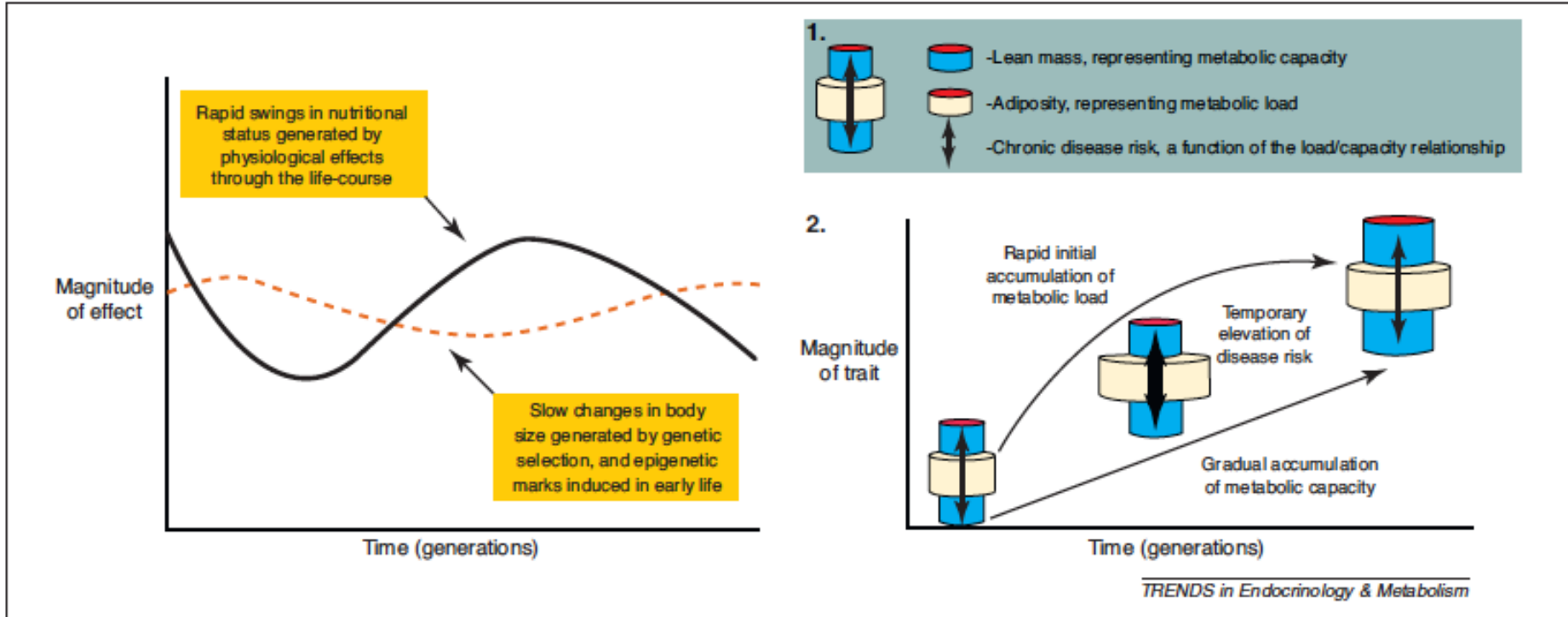
Source: Popkin 2002 revised 2006.

# Parent-offspring conflict theory



Source: Kall et al. Trends in Ecology & Evolution; Volume 25, Issue 8, p442–449, August 2010

# Life history theory



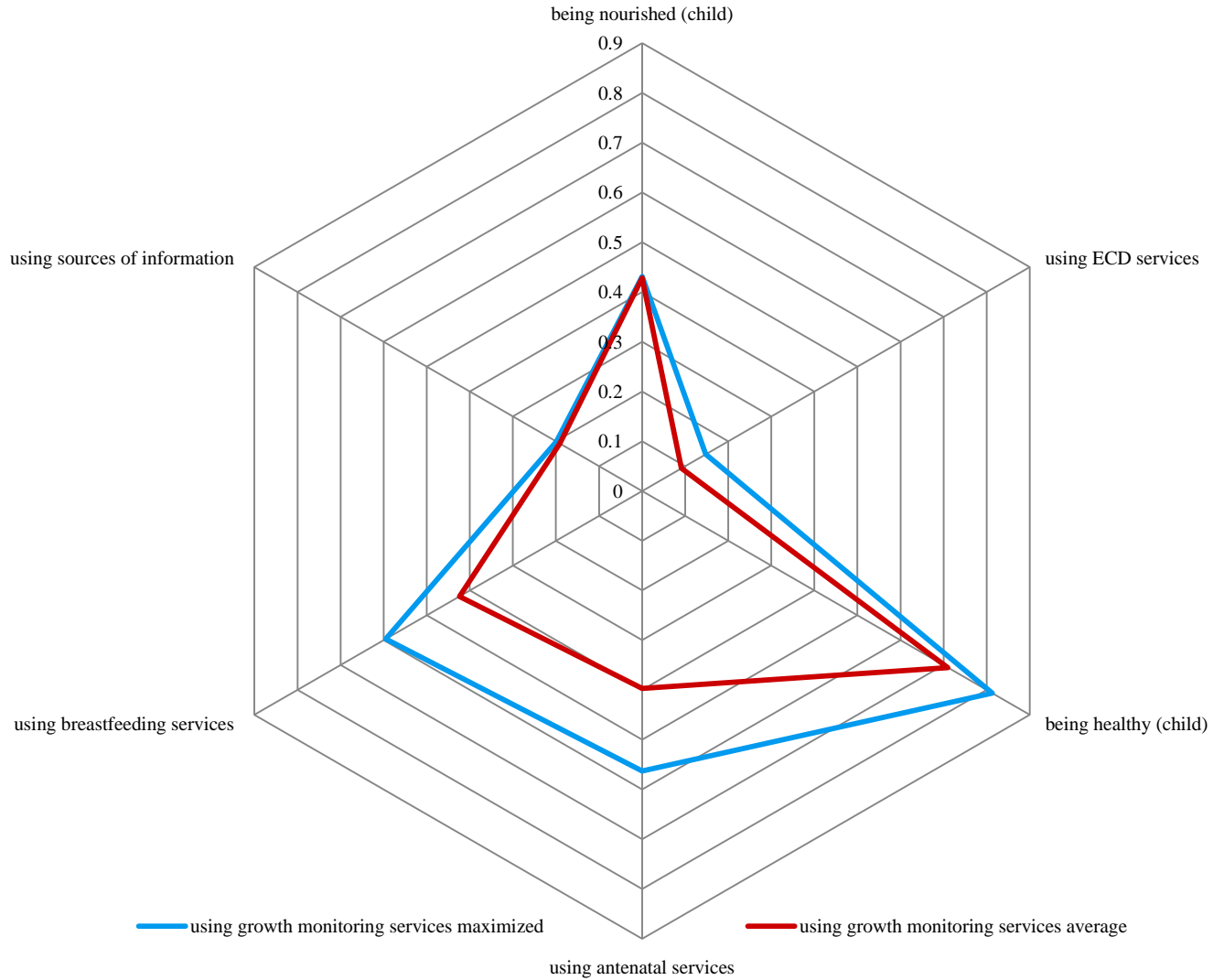
# Analytical framework

Resources	Conversion factors	Capabilities	Functionings
<i>Child level</i>			
Food	Sex Ethnicity	Being able to be fed	Growing well physically
Safe environment	Culture Religion	Being able to play	Being playful
<i>Household level</i>			
Income	Education	Being able to provide care	Providing care
Parental skills	Infrastructure		
Availability of child care services	Mobility	Being able to provide shelter	Providing shelter
Safe environment	Ethnicity Culture Religion	Being able to provide healthy food	Providing a healthy environment
<i>Societal level</i>			
Data	Laws	Being able to provide social protection programs	Providing tailored projects to the disadvantaged communities
Infrastructure	Public policies		
Child-focused budgeting	Urban/rural	Being able to	Providing health

Agency Freedom

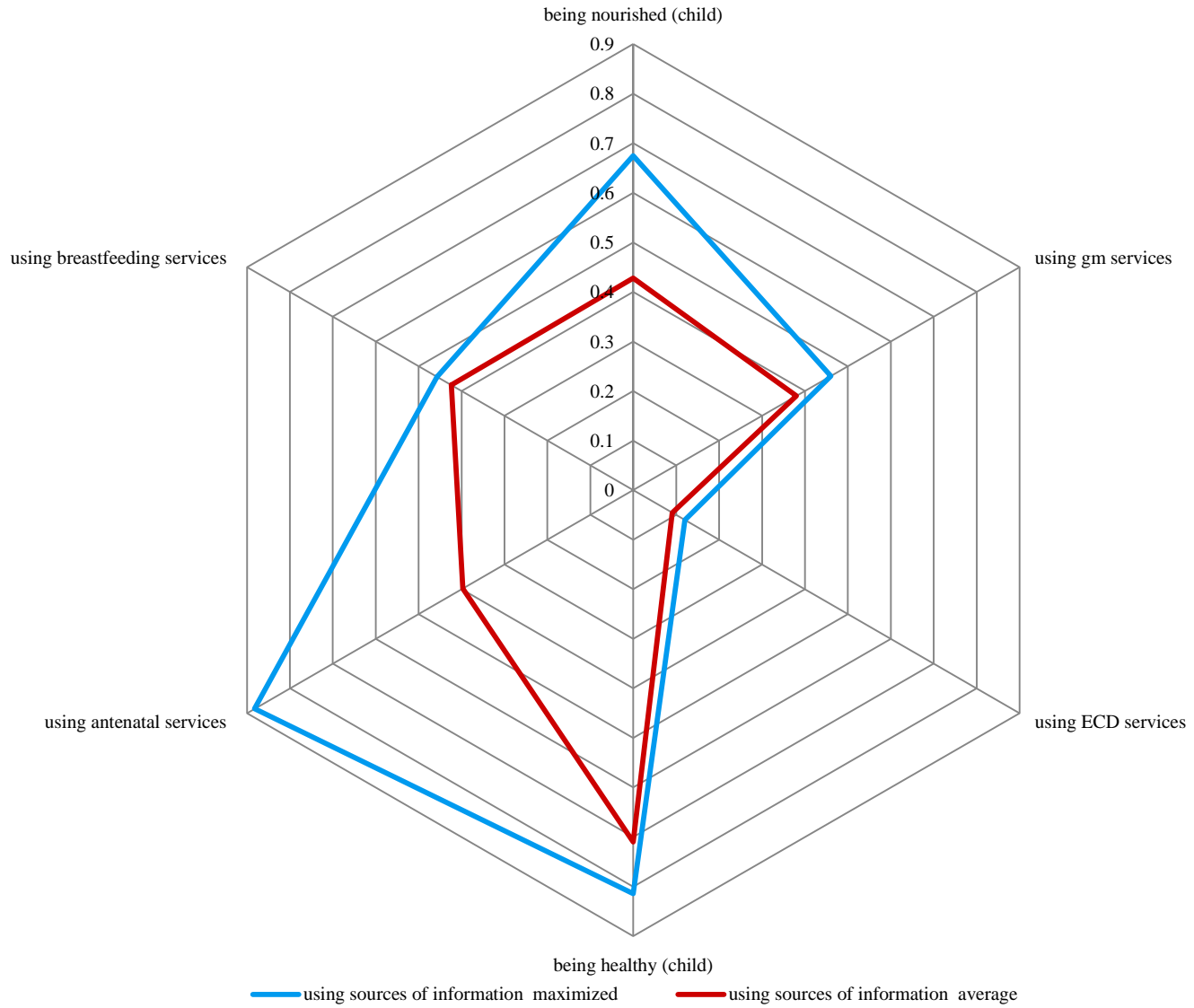


# impact of using growth monitoring services on other functionings



Unpublished results

# impact of using sources of information on other functionings



Unpublished results



# Impact on

- › Measurements
- › Counselling
- › Interventions
- › Prevention
  
- › Child malnutrition
- › Child mortality
  
- › Long-term health outcomes



# In conclusion:

- > A Capability Approach to Child Growth requires shifting our current biomedical thinking;
- > The framework needs to be applied/ tested;
- > Needs to be further developed in consultation with experts from different disciplines and international organisations such as WHO/UNICEF.



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# Thank you!

## Symposium 144/98 at ICN.

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