Dr. Sabina Alkire
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Alkire obtained her Bachelors at the University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign in Sociology/Premed. After a time of volunteer work in South Asia, she studied Theology in the University of Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, completing a one-year Diploma (with a distinction in Islam), then an MPhil in Christian Ethics (with a thesis on the Concept of Poverty in the World Bank, as compared to the Social Encyclicals), then an MSc in Economics for Development (with a thesis on Measuring Capabilities of Amartya Sen), then a DPhil in Economics (later published as Valuing Freedoms. The thesis was co-supervised by John Finnis and drew on Finnis' New Natural Law Theory to specify the concept of capabilities from Amartya Sen's work, with field work on projects of income generation for poor and destitute women in Pakistan).

At the World Bank Alkire worked on a project advised by Professor Amartya Sen on Culture and Poverty – looking at how to tailor poverty projects to cultural and spiritual values. She served as Research Writer on the Commission on Human Security co-chaired by Amartya Sen, which articulated the need to protect human lives from critical and pervasive threats – which arise from poverty as well as from war and conflict. She then joined the Global Equity Initiative at Harvard

which Sen advised, and obtained support from the World Bank to study domain-specific measures of women's agency in India. During this period she was also ordained as deacon and then worker-priest in the Anglican Church (UK), and served as founding Secretary of the Human Development and Capability Association, which takes forward Amartya Sen's and Martha Nussbaum's capability approach across disciplines and countries, mainly driven by junior scholars in universities and social movements.

In 2007 the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) was launched in the University of Oxford by Alkire with co-Founder John Hammock (former President of Oxfam America, Womens World Banking, and the Famine Centre at Tufts University). Alkire, with James Foster (renown economics and author of the most highly-cited paper on monetary poverty measurement) proposed a new methodology to measure multidimensional poverty, and better capture the experience of poverty as poor people articulate it. With post-docs in OPHI, Alkire developed the empirical methodologies to apply this work and with Maria Emma Santos, post-doc from Argentina, co-designed with UNDP the global Multidimensional Poverty Index that continues to be jointly issued by UNDP and OPHI to this day.

From 2008 Alkire has had the privilege to be associated with the Royal Government of Bhutan's work of measuring Gross National Happiness – an integrated approach to human development that spans health, education, living standards, governance, time use, environment, culture, community, and psychological and spiritual well-being. The official GNH Index of Bhutan officially uses the Alkire Foster measurement methodology, and provides in-depth information on the profile of well-being across a large sample of persons. Alkire had an unexpectedly long stay in Bhutan July 2020 to July 2021, deepening ties there.

In 2009 the government of Mexico became the first country to launch an official permanent statistic of multidimensional poverty; in 2010 Bhutan followed and in 2011, Colombia. In 2013, OPHI launched and became Secretariat of a South-South Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network of policy leaders and statisticians, which now convenes 62 countries and 20 international agencies at high level events at the UN General Assembly and UN Statistics Commission as well as humble phone calls to share stories and challenges. Dozens of countries now officially use a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) based on OPHI's methodology, and report a multidimensional poverty measure against SDG 1 (as indicator 1.2.2). OPHI has had the privilege to accompany many of these countries both in poverty measurement and policy design, with an extra set of work during the pandemic, given the toll that fell upon the impoverished communities during that period.

Naturally, academic research and publication accompany this work, as does teaching both in the University and in summerschools.

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