

The power of data-driven feminist movements

White paper: July 2021

Summary

The critical role that feminist and girls' and women's rights movements¹ play in the promotion of gender equality is increasingly well documented. Moreover, there is increasing recognition that when advocates are equipped with data, and the skills to effectively use them, their efforts to influence decision makers are likely to be more credible and result in more evidence-based decision-making. However feminist organizations frequently face constraints in resourcing (funding and personnel) and capacity needed to undertake data-driven advocacy. In many places, there is also a growing pushback on a 'gender agenda' and a shrinking civil society space overall. This combined with underinvestment in collecting and sharing timely, quality gender data collectively limit opportunities for feminist movements to influence decision makers with data.

Equal Measures 2030 works to address a number of these issues both directly through its programming and indirectly through its partnerships, advocacy, and communications with donors, UN actors, governments, and others. This paper delves into the evidence behind this approach and, in doing so, seeks to establish a shared understanding and set of recommendations on this topic for the Equal Measures 2030 partnership.

1. Why does Equal Measures 2030 support data-driven feminist movements?

As Equal Measures 2030, we share a belief in the power of girls and women and their collective action towards equality. We also share a belief in the power of data. Good data can help expose injustice, ignite change and drive accountability for gender equality. But it can only do so when it is effectively used by advocates – especially from feminist organizations and movements – supported by champions from government, business, media, academia, faith-based groups, and beyond. As advocates working in partnership at the local, national, regional, and global levels, we collectively aim to make the case for the importance and power of data-driven advocacy by feminist organizations and movements.

Feminist organizations drive change for gender equality

A 2016 study from the OECD on funding to feminist groups found that “few of the normative advances on women's rights would have been possible without the advocacy of women's rights

¹ This paper uses the umbrella term 'feminist' to refer to organizations, advocates, and movements whose primary mission is toward the achievement of gender equality and the fulfillment of the rights of girls and women in all their diversity. We recognize that some organizations with this mission would not use 'feminist' to describe themselves and that some organizations that use 'feminist' to describe themselves do work inclusive of and also beyond this definition.

organizations and movements to raise public awareness, pressure governments for change, and hold governments to account for implementation of laws and policies.”ⁱ Similarly, AWID has long argued that sustainable change can only be achieved by mobilizing the collective power of women to lead and act.ⁱⁱ And a World Bank report found that collective action increases [women’s] ability to hold their governments accountable and to ‘claim resources through bottom-up pressure’.ⁱⁱⁱ

These assertions are backed by growing empirical research. In a study covering 70 countries across four decades, feminist mobilization was found to be the most important factor in ensuring meaningful, enduring action on violence against women at the national level – more important than a country’s wealth, the presence of left-wing parties or the number of women in politics.^{iv} New research using a dataset on feminist mobilisation in 126 countries between 1975-2015 found a “clear link between feminist advocacy and laws on women’s rights in the economic sphere”, including expanded economic rights for women and government action on sexual harassment.^v The same research found an association between domestic feminist mobilisation and the numbers of women elected to office.^{vi} A separate analysis of women’s rights organizations in 50 African countries found that governments were more likely to take action, and faster, on adopting gender quotas when influenced by coalitions of domestic women’s rights organizations – a correlation which holds even controlling for international aid, involvement of international women’s movements, and whether countries recently experienced armed conflict.^{vii}

Research suggests that feminist movements are effective in promoting gender equality because:

They bring a depth of knowledge and expertise on gender equality issues and draw attention to the specific rights and needs of their constituencies within discriminatory structures.^{viii}

Their autonomy and exclusive focus on gender equality enables them to analyse gendered structures and norms across a broad range of thematic issues, even those that are framed as more ‘urgent’ than gender equality.^{ix} This also allows them to build solidarity with other movements like climate change, pacifism, and labour rights.

They raise the voices and priorities of those who have often been excluded from decision-making tables.^x

They apply “bottom-up” pressure, shining a spotlight on where governments are falling behind on their commitments to gender equality.^{xi}

They have been successful in working transnationally to influence the creation of a range of international human rights frameworks that can be leveraged by feminists around the world to apply “top-down” pressure on governments.^{xii}

Quality data deepen our understanding of gender inequality

As recognition of the power of feminist movements has increased so too has the importance of quality data² and evidence to understand and advance the issues that many gender equality advocates care

² For purposes of this paper and in relation to data’s usefulness to feminist organizations and movements, a basic definition would include data which are relevant to gender equality, consistent, timely, disaggregated to the greatest extent possible, and gathered and presented in ways that minimise conscious and unconscious bias.

about. The topic of data, especially disaggregated data, and their importance to the ‘leave no one behind’ agenda is increasingly raised in global development-focused events. The creation of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data in 2015 and its Leave No One Behind Collaborative is just one manifestation of momentum on this issue.

We see this trend echoed amongst some feminist organizations and advocates, who value both their own deep qualitative evidence gathered over years of action as well as quantitative data to help shine light on the broader context for gender equality. La Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, an EM2030 partner in Colombia, stated that “having data from official sources allows women in the territories to identify the wide range of issues affecting women and girls.” La Ruta shared that, prior to a regional data-driven advocacy workshop, advocates were less aware of acute mental health issues faced by young women in Colombia, including high rates of suicide. Understanding these data broadened the focus of their advocacy beyond sexual violence and femicide to other issues disproportionately affecting women.^{xiii}

High-quality, quantitative data in particular can help advocates complement anecdotal or individual-focused understanding of discrimination and inequality to one which is more systematic and systemic. In doing so, and with the right gender data,³ it becomes possible to consider the complex, intersecting and multifaceted dimensions of gender inequality and discrimination at the structural level. A frequently-cited example of this is the

story of Christine Mann Darden, a Black woman working as a computer at NASA in the 1960s whose concerns about the lack of promotion for women, and particularly Black women, were ignored until she gained access to and shared a set of statistics to demonstrate that discrimination was systemic.^{xiv} Ann Oakley, a sociologist working on maternal mortality in the US, put this aptly by explaining how without quantitative data “it is difficult to distinguish between personal experience and collective oppression.”^{xv}

This experience of the power of quantitative data to complement, support, and add credibility to qualitative or anecdotal evidence is shared by EM2030 partners. EM2030 partner GROOTS Kenya hosted a workshop on data-driven advocacy and noted that many participants ‘feared that the push towards data might mean that women and their daily lived realities might get lost in the numbers’. However, they found that by the end of the training, women involved had significantly increased their ‘understanding, confidence, and capacity’ to use data and valued it more highly.^{xvi}

Quality data make advocacy more credible, compelling and likely to be effective.

While some decision makers targeted by feminist movements are influenced by case studies or stories alone, others are more likely to be convinced of the importance of an issue through data. Quality data can make an advocacy position more rigorous by proving that an issue is not a one-off but part of a consistent pattern worthy of attention. Other data can be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of

“Previously, our advocacy was really driven by qualitative evidence. Yes, of course I still think that’s very important. But the training has given us new skills: the ability to use quantitative evidence too, to complement the stories we tell with data. (...) It’s enabled us to shine a spotlight on women’s issues in the communities where we work, to convince candidates and civil servants to pay attention.

– Dunia Ester León Fajardo, Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, Colombia, 2019

³ Equal Measures 2030 aligns its definition of ‘gender data’ to that used by the UN Statistics Division and partner Data2X: gender data are ‘collected and presented by sex as a primary and overall classification, reflects gender issues, is based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives, and is developed through collection methods that take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender bias in the data.’

proposed solutions and tracking data can be used to hold governments to account for action on policies or laws. Though the impact of data-driven advocacy is under-researched, there is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that data in the hands of advocates improves the likelihood of their advocacy achieving its goals.

In Brazil, advocates called on local authorities to publish data on rates of sexual harassment and violence against women on public transportation. Once the data were finally published, it was picked up by the media, generating enough coverage that the authorities running the Metro launched a helpline and campaign against violence and sexual harassment on public transportation.^{xvii}

Similarly, in Kenya, a project run by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) focused on training advocates to better understand government budgeting and use this analysis in their advocacy. Equipped with the skills from the training, the advocates were successful in influencing an 8% increase in local health budgets in Kenya’s Busia, Narok, and Samburu counties.^{xviii}

The experiences of Equal Measures 2030’s national partners also demonstrate the power data can bring to advocacy. In 2018, GROOTS Kenya trained grassroots advocates to collect data on registrants to group ranches – the mechanism through which land is governed and benefits for landowners can be accessed – and discovered that only 9% of members were women in Laikipia North county. Using this data, GROOTS successfully lobbied ranch chairs and local leaders to address this disparity and worked with local government to raise awareness of the land rights afforded to women under the Community Land Act. They also used this data to influence women to register themselves and, as a result, four women have now been elected to the leadership of ranches in the county where they can promote and protect their land rights and those of other women in the area.

“Policymakers in Indonesia will consider and accept advocacy if advocates come with strong arguments, and these arguments must be supported by statistics. For example, when we met with the President of the Republic of Indonesia in April 2018, he only believed the argument with statistical data. We presented the President with data to support the argument for the importance of policymaking on the prevention of child marriage. The data we raise are on the impact of child marriage on dropout rates, maternal mortality, and poverty. **Data is so important to help us ensure that it doesn’t seem like we are talking nonsense in front of policymakers (...) so we use the quantitative data to open the door, to start the conversation.** We also use statistical data that is reinforced with qualitative data from victims of child marriage.”

– Misiyah, KAPAL Perempuan, Indonesia, 2019

Quality data strengthen decision-making and accountability on gender equality issues

Data are as important for decision-making itself as for the feminist movements trying to influence it. Activities to support ‘evidence-based policymaking’ have become increasingly popular in recent years based on the logical premise that policy decisions based on evidence are likely to result in better outcomes.^{xx} Without data, it is acknowledged that policymakers may be “flying blind... trying to make policy decisions in the dark,”^{xx} including on whether a policy is working and what changes might be needed. Equal Measures 2030’s own survey of policymakers in five countries in 2017 raised concerns about whether policymakers are equipped with and sufficiently using the basic information required to drive action towards the ambitious gender equality targets across the SDGs.^{xxi} For this reason, ensuring policymakers have access to and are using “good quality, verifiable evidence on progress” was recognised as central to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals framework.^{xxii}

There is also growing recognition of the importance of collecting and using data by policymakers. For instance, as a consequence of national feminist advocacy following the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, the government of Uruguay enacted new legislation and a national plan on equal opportunity and rights, including recognising the need to quantify women’s unpaid work. Pioneering data efforts, first in just one metropolitan area and then nationally in 2007, gave impetus to ongoing advocacy on this theme and eventually a new national care policy and plan arose to address the ‘care deficit’ and its links to low female labour force participation rates in Uruguay.^{xxiii}

“The Ministry of Education of [our country] had declined the existence of a problem with girls’ education in the country... I led [analysis that showed] a steady decrease (by 2%) of girls’ enrolment to primary school for the past 10 years. It was a kind of ‘Aha!’ moment, and as a result **they accepted the facts, and launched and supported girls’ education projects, which significantly increased attention to this problem.**”

– Advocate Survey Respondent, 2017

The above provides a snapshot of the growing evidence base showing that equipping feminist movements with data strengthens their ability to drive policymaker action on gender equality when it might otherwise be deprioritised. Data are critical for feminist movements’ work across the advocacy cycle: it allows them to identify the issues on which action is most needed, to show the scope of the challenge, to demonstrate the efficacy of possible solutions, and to make the case for change to those with the power to influence policies, laws, and budgets.

2. Challenges faced by data-driven feminist movements

Despite the emerging evidence above showing its efficacy, girls’ and women’s rights and feminist organizations around the world face persistent obstacles in accessing and using data to drive their advocacy. Many of these are core, existential challenges, including limited funding and the modalities through which it is provided, a shrinking civil society space, pushback on the ‘gender agenda’ and continuing violence and threats of violence against women human rights defenders. Each of these shapes the daily realities of feminist organizations around the world.

While a full assessment of these broader challenges is beyond this paper – and can be found in other critical research from Htun, Bhattacharjya, Weldon, AWID, and others – we choose two that most directly relate to EM2030’s mission: firstly, the amount and nature of funding and, secondly, a shrinking civil society space. This section then continues with a focus on two further challenges specifically related to the use of data by feminist organizations for advocacy.

Limited funding and the modalities of funding

The fact that feminist and girls’ and women’s rights organizations struggle with both limited funding and challenging funding modalities is increasingly well documented. A 2020 study by AWID found that only 0.2% of official development assistance (ODA) reaches women’s rights organizations meaning that of nearly \$50 billion USD in aid for gender equality in 2018, more than 99% remained within development agencies, governments, or in large international non-governmental organizations.^{xxiv} Smaller organizations often miss out on funding from large donors because they do not have the staff or language skills to access or complete forms that are frequently complex with short application windows.^{xxv} There is also a challenge when donors set funding thresholds too high for a small or medium-sized organization, who would struggle to absorb the large levels of funding on offer, or when donors require upfront spending that is then ‘reimbursed’, creating cash flow challenges for small

organizations with limited reserves.^{xxvi} Women’s Funds like MamaCash see and feel these challenges: between 2016-18 they received nearly 5,500 applications for support from feminist groups and were able to fund just 3% of those eligible due to limited funding.^{xxvii}

Even when funding opportunities are designed to suit small women’s rights organizations, much of it is structured as restricted, non-flexible grants with a relatively short project cycle, particularly for advocacy outcomes (1-2 years). These parameters give organizations few opportunities to adapt and learn when the external environment changes or to fund core staff and running costs. Funding of any amount can also come with significant reporting and due diligence requirements, and small organizations often lack internal capacity and systems to manage these labour-intensive processes compared to larger international NGOs. The challenge is recognised by donors themselves: a gender specialist at a DAC donor agency stated in an interview with GENDERNET “there has been a change towards stricter monitoring and evaluation requirements and strong financial control. Now we have more money managed by less people”.^{xxviii} Linked to this, some donors view smaller groups in the Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a greater risk to fund than larger organizations.^{xxix} Even amongst those donors and INGOs that do grant or sub-grant to feminist organizations, these heavy requirements end up perpetuating and reinforcing the systemic barriers that smaller feminist organizations face within the funding ecosystem, thus increasing the gap between those who have access (“elites”) and those who do not.

Restricted and/or shrinking civil society space

The increasing backlash against civic space in general, and progressive gender policies in particular, is a significant threat to the work of feminist advocates.^{xxx} In June 2021, Civicus reported that only 3.4% of the world’s population lives in countries with open civic space.^{xxxi} Civic space has been closing year on year, and fully 87 per cent of the world’s population now live in countries rated as ‘closed’, ‘repressed’, or ‘obstructed’.^{xxxii} Research from Action Aid in 2018 also points to trends of closing civic space around the world with a range of restrictions on freedoms of assembly, expression and association, harassment and killing of human rights defenders, and criminalisation of dissent through expansive anti-terrorism laws.^{xxxiii} As a result, the ability of CSOs to register, operate, and access funds is declining rapidly.^{xxxiv}

The broader constraints on civil society are felt acutely by feminist organizations and movements, who already face discrimination, gender-based violence, barriers to political participation, additional care burdens in the home, and in some contexts even constraints on their ability to leave their homes or move freely in public. Backsliding on women’s rights and the introduction of regressive laws on sexual reproductive health and rights have been “banner” policies for right-wing governments in countries ranging from Brazil^{xxxv} to Poland^{xxxvi} as part of a fear-based movement against the ‘gender ideology’ or ‘gender agenda’. According to research by the Institute of Development Studies in 2018, crackdowns on civic space are often accompanied by a “heavy-handed mixture of stigmatisation and delegitimation, selective application of rules and restrictions, and violence and impunity for violence against civic actors and groups”, particularly for organizations pushing more ‘liberal’ or rights-based agenda.^{xxxvii}

Trust in and perceived relevance of gender data (by and for governments and feminist movements)

Beyond funding and civic space concerns, feminist organizations and advocates face other obstacles to using data in their work. Two key related challenges are both trust in and perceived relevance of available gender data, both to advocates themselves and to their advocacy targets (governments, decision makers). Quantitative or qualitative, data are always only showing a partial view of an issue,

are heavily influenced by the way in which they are collected, analysed, and presented, and need to be situated within a specific context in order to understand their implications. These considerations can cause both governments and feminist movements to distrust some data and favour others, which can impact each actor’s view on the data used by the other. Ultimately this stems from foundational differences what types of knowledge and evidence are most valued by different actors.

For instance, in 2018 the government of Tanzania amended its 2015 Statistics Act to ban the dissemination of any statistical information that may “invalidate, distort, or discredit official statistics”.^{xxxviii} This followed the publication of an annual survey into political attitudes by a local research group, which showed that public approval ratings of the administration had fallen significantly.^{xxxix} Though the government eventually responded to domestic and international pressure to repeal the legislation, this period significantly restricted the ability of civil society to collect and use non-official data or to question any official statistics – a clear restriction of civic space and indication of which data are valued and trusted by the government.^{xl}

Amongst feminist organizations, there can be a distrust of government-collected data seen to represent a narrow view of an issue,^{xli} to have been gathered in a way that marginalises some groups,^{xlii} and/or to have been altered or presented to make a government look good to donors and voters. In a 2018 survey of gender equality advocates by EM2030, almost 85 per cent reported official data on gender equality to be ‘somewhat’ or ‘mostly’ incomplete. Particularly important for many feminist groups is storytelling and lived experience as evidence, and they often value qualitative information that can show the lives and voices of people directly impacted by inequalities and oppression. Quantitative data, by comparison, can be seen as reductive,^{xliii} faceless, and associated with capitalist and colonial systems aimed at monetising or marginalising individuals.^{xliv}

“I think the government is quite good at churning out reports which show that they are doing a lot to achieve the SDGs. Our role will be to challenge those government reports and show that all said in those reports is not true (...) At the State level, local administrators are under pressure to fudge statistics. They need to show progress, success (...) We’ve seen data sets from some States where apparently every pregnant woman in the village has perfect blood pressure, 120 over 80. Advocates need the data skills to challenge the official story when necessary, and to speak up when official reports don’t correspond with what we see in the villages”

– Spokesperson, SAHAJ, India, 2019

Feminist advocates with whom EM2030 work have often raised concerns about gaps in existing gender data⁴ that hide relevant issues and/or groups important to their advocacy. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of advocates responding to EM2030’s 2018 survey stated that insufficient disaggregation was a challenge with existing gender data.^{xlv} Addressing the intersecting inequalities and discrimination faced by girls and women requires sub-national disaggregated data – particularly important for advocacy in countries with decentralised policymaking and implementation – as well as data disaggregated by multiple characteristics such as sex, age, ethnicity, race, income, disability, gender identity, and many more. However, in many countries data on these population groups aren’t collected. There is often a lack of consensus on concepts and definitions as well as challenges in cost-effective data collection on smaller population groups.

In many countries, gaps in official data are due both to capacity and budget constraints in formal data collection systems as well as a lack of political will to prioritise gathering, disaggregating, analysing, and sharing gender data. On key issues that disproportionately affect girls and women like informal

⁴ For more on Equal Measures 2030’s analysis on data gaps, please see the associated white paper (forthcoming).

employment and unpaid care work, data remain sparse.^{xvii} In some countries, approaches to data collection simply reflect and reinforce existing cultural and patriarchal norms, for example when data on contraceptive use are gathered only for married women or when births to adolescent girls under 15 years old are not reported. Roughly 23 per cent of the official SDG indicators have a gender component to them but less than half are ‘ready to measure’ with regularly available, high-quality data across many countries.^{xviii} Civil society can play a key role in advocating for more gender data, identifying hidden and marginalised groups, and defining ways to gather and share better disaggregated data.

Capacity constraints in using data for advocacy amongst feminist organizations

Even when relevant data do exist, Equal Measures 2030’s experience is that many feminist organizations and advocates face resource and capacity gaps restricting them from effectively using them. A 2021 study by AWID found that the average annual budget of feminist organizations from the global south who approached Global Fund for Women was just \$30,000 a year.^{xix} With low and unpredictable funding, it can be difficult for feminist organizations to recruit and retain paid staff, including those with data skills and expertise. EM2030’s partners have also highlighted the impact of funding constraints on organizations’ abilities to take advantage of data-related courses and trainings.

Other barriers relate to knowing which data exist and how to access them (see more in the forthcoming EM2030 gender data gaps white paper). For instance, official data on a given issue may not be accessible to the public or may only be available in formats that are difficult to use. Some of these sources of data may simply be unknown to feminist organizations: when asked what would help them to use data and evidence more effectively to promote gender equality, 70 per cent of the advocates we surveyed in 2018 said that they need greater knowledge of existing data and where to find them. One partner advocate who has worked with EM2030 said that there are “a lot of portals and online repositories of data that are available in countries” but that grassroots groups can struggle with capacity to “know where to look for them”.^{xx}

Even where relevant data are available and accessible on a priority issue, our work with feminist organizations suggests that, due in part to the funding and staffing constraints mentioned above, the level of experience and comfort with data varies widely. Some organizations have honed skills for collecting and analysing grassroots-level data over many years, some have only ever used data for monitoring and evaluation, whilst others lack basic quantitative data analysis skills. This has highlighted a spectrum of learning needs, including building trust in data and systems, data literacy, finding and advocating on data gaps, identifying compelling facts to support a campaign, and communicating data to different audiences, to name a few. A needs assessment survey carried out by Equal Measures 2030 with women’s rights organizations in 2017 found that grassroots organizations were least confident in data skills such as “managing and cleaning large data sets and turning raw data into statistics” and “creating a statistical table, chart, or graph based on data.”

Feminist organizations and advocates face significant challenges in using data to drive their advocacy. Some of these are unique to those working specially to use data and some are shared across the feminist movement amongst all organizations raising their voices for change.

3. Recommendations

This white paper outlines evidence and arguments at the nexus of data and advocacy by feminists. Reflecting that narrow focus, the recommendations that follow centre on actions that stakeholders can take to uphold and support the power and importance of data-driven feminist movements to motivate and accelerate the achievement of gender equality.

For further recommendations on related themes such as civic space and feminist funding, we point readers to the work of organizations like [AWID](#), [MamaCash](#), and [FRIDA Young Feminist Fund](#), as well as the blueprint for Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition 6 on Feminist Movements and Leadership.¹ More detailed recommendations to strengthen gender data in particular can be found in the forthcoming EM2030 gender data gaps white paper.

Feminist and girls' and women's rights organizations and advocates can:

- Advocate for better resourcing of gender data collection, use, and sharing by governments and donors to address issues such as inadequate disaggregation, more transparent and timely sharing, and measuring politically, culturally, or technically challenging issues such as care work, time use, gender budgets and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Create cross-sector coalitions of feminist organisations, or advocate within existing ones, to support gender data use and related advocacy
- Lead or participate in capacity development activities on using and accessing gender data for advocacy and promote skill sharing and communities of practice across broader feminist networks
- Scope and analyse gender data, existing and new information gaps, and the gender data ecosystem to inform priority advocacy actions and themes
- Actively advocate and communicate using a variety of data and evidence from a wide range of sources and including quantitative, qualitative, official, and non-official based on relevance and fitness for purpose
- Strengthen their own research and monitoring systems to generate and share data and evidence, especially on issues and for groups that are missing in existing official data
- Seek and strengthen partnerships with official statisticians at all government levels, other data producers, researchers, academic organizations, and fellow feminist organizations to interrogate, collect, collate, and query existing gender data and to develop approaches that capture emerging issues

Donors and philanthropy can:

- Collaborate with and invest in feminist organizations and movements, especially through direct, core, flexible, and sustainable funding that can be used (in part) to help organizations and movements embed long-term data and advocacy skills and capacity.
- Remove barriers that prevent small- and medium-sized feminist organizations from accessing funding, including adopting trust-based, flexible, and long-term funding models
- Support capacity development, learning, and the creation of communities of practice to enable feminist organizations and movements to build and share skills in gathering and using data
- Support systemic investment in national statistics systems and improving the design of ongoing censuses, surveys and administrative data collection, to increase the supply of relevant intersectional, disaggregated gender data for advocacy
- Invest in strengthening connections between feminist organizations and movements, statistics officials, other data producers, researchers and academic institutions
- Publish their own disaggregated data on funding flows and activities in order to promote transparency and accountability

Governments and decision-makers can:

- Remove de facto and de jure barriers to feminist organising and advocacy
- Prioritise investment in national statistics offices and other data partners to gather, analyse, use, and share gender data as a foundational strategy to help achieve gender equality and SDG5

- Make available and actively share more granular and disaggregated government data sets with civil society in accessible and machine-readable formats
- Create meaningful space and seats in gender data and gender equality-related decision-making processes for civil society and feminist organizations as well as more broadly in public policy reviews and consultations
- Work in partnership with feminist organizations and movements to track progress on international agendas like the SDGs in order to understand progress and gaps.
- Where gender data gaps exist, consider partnerships with feminist organizations that have gathered complementary data and evidence on key issues for gender equality

About Equal Measures 2030

Equal Measures 2030 is a collaboration of national, regional and global leaders from feminist networks, civil society, international development and the private sector. We connect data and evidence with advocacy and action on gender equality, to transform the lives of women and girls and realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.) We believe that data can expose inequality and injustice, motivate change and drive accountability.

This paper was authored by Amanda Austin, Martha Flynn, and Hellen Apila. It is part of a series on three key advocacy themes for Equal Measures 2030: gender data gaps (forthcoming), feminist and women’s leadership and representation (forthcoming), and data-driven feminist movements.

The authors are grateful for insights and inputs from across the Equal Measures 2030 Secretariat: Nadia Ahidjo, Ibrahima Beye, Cecilia Garcia, Alison Holder, Coretta Jonah, Aarushi Khanna, Saran Koly, Alison Livingstone, Charlotte Minvielle, Albert Motivans, Anuja Patel, David Stewart, and Paula Trujillo. We also thank the Equal Measures 2030 partners and particularly those organizations that have shared their stories of success and challenges with data-driven advocacy: ARROW, ASOGEN, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CLADEM, Data 2X, FAWE, FEMNET, GROOTS Kenya, IPBF, KAPAL Perempuan, KPMG, ONE Campaign, Plan International, Réseau Siggil Jigéen, la Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, SAHAJ, Tableau, and Women Deliver. Errors and omissions are the fault of the authors alone.

Endnotes

ⁱ OECD. *Donor support to southern women’s rights organizations* (Paris: OECD DAC Network On Gender Equality (Gendernet), 2016) <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organizations.pdf>, 5.

ⁱⁱ AWID. *Women Moving Mountains: Collective Impact of the Dutch MDG3 Fund* (Toronto: AWID, 2013) <https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Women%20Moving%20Mountains.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alice Evans and Divya Nambiar. *Collective Action and Women’s Agency : A Background Paper* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2013) <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21032>.

^{iv} Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon. “The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence Against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005” *American Political Science Review* 106 (2013) 3 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000226>: 548-569.

^v S Laurel Weldon et al. *Working Paper: Handmaidens or Heroes? Feminist Mobilization as a Force for Economic Justice* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 2020) <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/politics/FeministMovement/Working%20Paper%202.pdf>.

^{vi} S Laurel Weldon et al. *Working Paper: When and How Does Transnational Feminist Promote Gender Justice? New Measures and Exploratory Findings*, (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 2020) <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/politics/FeministMovement/Working%20Paper%203.pdf>: 4.

^{vii} Alice J Kang and Aili Mari Trip. “Coalitions Matter: Citizenship, Women, and Quota Adoption in Africa” *Perspective on Politics* 16 (2018) 1 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592717002225>: 73-91.

^{viii} Htun and Weldon, *Civic Origins Policy Change*, 553.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Jacquie True. *Ending Violence against Women in Asia: International Norm Diffusion and Global Opportunity Structures for Policy Change* (Switzerland: UNRISD, 2016) [https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpPublications\)/0AE05C2AE73E998DC1257FD10051838E?OpenDocument](https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/0AE05C2AE73E998DC1257FD10051838E?OpenDocument)

^{xi} Evans and Nambiar, *Collective Action Women’s Agency*.

- ^{xii} Manjima Bhattacharjya. *A Tale of Two Movements: How women's rights became human rights* (UK: Institute for Development Studies, 2013) https://socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/case-studies/Human%20rights%20case%20study_0.pdf; 1.
- ^{xiii} La Ruta Pacifica. *Equal Measures 2030 National Advocacy: National Partner Year 1 Annual Report*. (Unpublished: Internal EM2030 Report, 2020).
- ^{xiv} Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein. *Data Feminism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020); 6-7.
- ^{xv} *Ibid.*, 50.
- ^{xvi} GROOTS Kenya. *Feedback on Year 1 EM2030 Data-Driven Advocacy Trainings* (Unpublished: Internal EM2030 Report, 2018).
- ^{xvii} Equal Measures 2030. *Verbatim Responses to 2018 Advocates Survey* (Unpublished: Internal EM2030 Report, 2017).
- ^{xviii} Population Reference Bureau, *2019 Annual Report* (Washington DC: PRB, 2019) <https://www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/prb-annual-report-2019.pdf>; 3.
- ^{xix} Christopher Scott, "Measuring up to the measurement problem: The role of statistics in evidence-based policymaking" in: *Proceedings of the 2005 CBMS Network meeting* (London: Paris 21, 2005) <https://paris21.org/sites/default/files/1509.pdf>.
- ^{xx} Lorainne Eden and M. Fernanda Wagstaff. "Evidence-based policymaking and the wicked problem of SDG 5 Gender Equality" *Journal of International Business Policy* 4 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-020-00054-w>; 28-57.
- ^{xxi} Equal Measures 2030. *Policymakers and gender equality: What they know and how they know it*, (London: Equal Measures 2030, 2017). <https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/products/policymaker-report/>
- ^{xxii} Steve MacFeely. "Measuring the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators: An Unprecedented Statistical Challenge" *Journal of Official Statistics* 36 (2020) 2 <https://content.sciendo.com/downloadpdf/journals/jos/36/2/article-p361.pdf>; 361-378.
- ^{xxiii} Mayra Buvinic and Nina Rabinovitch Blecker. *Uruguay's national care policy: A virtuous cycle in data, advocacy and policy*, (New York: UN Foundation-Data 2X, 2017). https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/UruguayCaseStudy_OECDCCR2017.pdf.
- ^{xxiv} AWID. *High Hopes & High Expectations: Recommendations to the Equality Fund*, (Toronto: AWID, 2020) https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/equality_fund_english.pdf.
- ^{xxv} AWID and Mama Cash. *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change: How Bilateral and Multilateral Funders Can Resource Feminist Movements*, (Toronto: AWID, 2020) https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/movingmoremoney_finalfinalfinal.pdf.
- ^{xxvi} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxvii} Mama Cash. *Resourcing Feminist Activism: What We've Learning from Mama Cash's Grant Applications 2016 to 2018*, (Amsterdam: Mama Cash, 2019) https://www.mamacash.org/media/publications/mama_cash_loi_data_infographic.pdf.
- ^{xxviii} Open Democracy. "Donors thinking big: beyond gender equality funds", *Open Democracy*, November 21, 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/donor-funding-beyond-gender-equality-funds/>.
- ^{xxix} Liz Ford. "Funding for Women's Rights Organizations Groups in Poor Countries Falls by More than Half", *The Guardian*, September 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/sep/08/funding-womens-rights-groups-poor-countries-falls-awid-forum-brazil>.
- ^{xxx} Conny Roggeband and Andrea Krizsan. *Discussion Paper No.35: Democratic Backsliding and the Backlash Against Women's Rights*, (New York: UN Women, 2020) <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/discussion-paper-democratic-backsliding-and-the-backlash-against-womens-rights-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3604>.
- ^{xxxi} CIVICUS. *Civics Monitor: Civic Space in Numbers* (Johannesburg: CIVICUS, 2020) <https://monitor.civics.org/quickfacts/>. Accessed 6 August 2021.
- ^{xxxii} *Ibid.* Accessed 19 May 2021.
- ^{xxxiii} Action Aid. *Attacks on Civic and Democratic Space: Strategies and Lessons from ActionAid's Response* (Johannesburg: Action Aid, 2018) https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/attacks_on_civil_and_democratic_space_online.pdf.
- ^{xxxiv} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxxv} IWHC. *Brazil's New President is a Threat to Women's Right* (New York: IWHC, 2018) <https://iwhc.org/press-releases/brazils-new-president-threat-womens-rights/>.
- ^{xxxvi} Roggeband and Krizsan, *Backlash Women's Rights*.
- ^{xxxvii} Naomi Hossain et al. *What Does Closing Civic Space Mean for Development? A Literature Review and Proposed Conceptual Framework* (Brighton: Institute for Development Studies, 2018) <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/what-does-closing-civic-space-mean-for-development-a-literature-review-and-proposed-conceptual-framework-2/>.
- ^{xxxviii} Government of Tanzania. *Bill Supplement: ISSN 0856-034X* (Dodoma: 8th June, 2018) <http://parliament.go.tz/polis/uploads/bills/1532415595-THE%20WRITTEN%20LAWS,%202018.pdf>.
- ^{xxxix} Equal Measures 2030 and Achieve SDG 5 Coalition. *Mapping of Gender and Data Landscape in Tanzania* (Unpublished: Internal EM2030 Report, 2018).
- ^{xl} Amnesty International. *The Price We Pay: Targeted for Dissent by the Tanzania State* (London: Amnesty International, 2019) <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR5603012019ENGLISH.pdf>.
- ^{xli} Debra J Liebowitz and Susanne Zwingel, "Gender Equality Oversimplified: Using CEDAW to Counter the Measurement Obsession", *International Studies Review*. 16, 362-389, 2014, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2511378>. Accessed 7 August 2021.
- ^{xlii} International Women's Development Agency, "Household-level measurement masks gender inequality across three dimensions of poverty", Economic Commission for Europe, Conference of European Statisticians Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality: SDGs 1 and 10, Working Paper 8, December 2019, https://www.individualdeprivationmeasure.org/wp-content/uploads/8_Intern_Women_DevAgency-1.pdf. Accessed 11 August 2021.
- ^{xliiii} Liebowitz and Zwingel, *Gender Equality Oversimplified*, 363.
- ^{xliiii} D'Ignazio and Klein, *Data Feminism*, 12.
- ^{xliv} Equal Measures 2030. *Data Driving Change: Introducing the SDG Gender Index* (Washington DC: Equal Measures 2030, 2018) https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/EM2030_2018_Global_Report.pdf
- ^{xlvi} Data2x, *Measuring Women's Work* (New York: Data2x, 2019) <https://data2x.org/what-we-do/we-strengthen-the-production-and-use-of-gender-data/we-partner-with-data-producers-to-improve-established-data-systems/measuring-womens-work/>.
- ^{xlvii} Data2x and Open Data Watch. *Ready to Measure: Phase II* (New York: Data2x, 2017) <https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Ready-to-Measure-Phase-II.pdf>.
- ^{xlviii} Tenzin Dolker, *Where is the Money for Feminist Organizing? Data Snapshots and a Call to Action* (Toronto: AWID, 2021) https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/awid_research_witm_brief_eng.pdf.
- ^{xlix} Equal Measures 2030, 2017. *Stakeholder Interviews for 2017 Needs Assessment*. Internal EM2030 Report. Unpublished.
- ^l Generation Equality Forum Global Action Plan, 2021. <https://forumgenerationegalite.fr/en/generation-equality-forum/global-acceleration-plan-gender-equality>