



## EXPLORING THE GLOBAL COVERAGE, CREDIBILITY AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY DATA AND CITIZEN-GENERATED DATA ON GENDER ISSUES

*DataShift Global Gender Thematic Forum*

### INTRODUCTION

Most global data about girls and women is incomplete, or is subject to inherent gender biases that reflect traditional societal gender roles. There is a need for a “gender data revolution” – a wholesale shift in how data collection and use accurately depict girls’ and women’s lives and realities (Data2X, December 2016).

It will not be possible to close these gaps using traditional sources of data alone, such as government census surveys and administrative sources – new and innovative data sources will need to be leveraged too. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embody integrated and cross-cutting sets of targets and indicators. This includes SDG 5 which specifically focuses on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Given this integration, and the highly ambitious nature of the SDGs, new innovative approaches that harness data through multi-stakeholder partnerships are required.

DataShift is helping civil society produce and analyse data, especially citizen-generated data (CGD)<sup>1</sup>, to drive sustainable development. It does this by building capacity, powering campaigns and improving the monitoring of government, resulting in better accountability, policies and services. In recent months many DataShift activities have had a specific gender focus, given the aforementioned gaps in gender data and the possibilities around using CGD to help fill them.

<sup>1</sup> Citizen-generated data is produced by people and organisations to monitor or campaign for change on the issues that affect them. As it is actively offered up by people, citizen-generated data can be seen as a direct representation of their perspectives, and as such is a valuable alternative to governments datasets.

This has involved convening a series of national dialogues on the state of gender data in each of the DataShift pilot countries (Kenya, Argentina, Nepal and Tanzania), with a view to identifying the challenges and opportunities around using citizen-generated data as part of an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach to facilitating engagement, spurring action and monitoring progress on SDG 5.

In order to share and build upon the diverse experiences and ideas that emerged from the national dialogues, DataShift convened a Global Gender Thematic Forum in December 2016, bringing together a small group of gender data practitioners from these countries, along with a number of other international experts, digital literacy to empowerment of women, to statistics, and 'mutually reinforcing'. The event sought to take an in-depth look at the possibilities and barriers for improving the coherence of civil society data and CGD on gender, exploring in particular issues of credibility via topics such as methodological rigour and responsible data use, with a view to identifying practical steps to overcoming such challenges.

Through the lens of the SDGs, it also tried to assess the complementarity of these sources of data along with how it can trigger action, both internally amongst civil society organisations and projects, as well as with other stakeholders producing and using gender data, such as governments.

## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DATASHIFT NATIONAL DIALOGUES ON GENDER DATA**

### **Nepal**

It is estimated that the government only has the sufficient data and capacity to effectively measure 20% of the indicators for SDGs 5. Yet little cooperation between relevant government actors and civil society on this agenda so far. Furthermore, more needs to be understood about how/whether data is actually informing policy-making. Nevertheless, civil society and other non-governmental stakeholders do continue to produce significant amounts of gender data, especially on groups often 'left behind' by official statistics, therefore it is imperative these are leveraged in a coordinated manner, rather than starting from scratch. Thus a suggested focus is creating a strong coalition of civil society actors to work together on this agenda and collectively start to develop and formalise their relationship with government. In the meantime, opportunities for shadow reporting on gender equality should be pursued. Yet further effort is required to demonstrate the utility of CGD on gender issues to civil society and government actors alike.

## Kenya

Gender data is among the data gaps that CGD could help fill in, but government officials are concerned about issues such as persistence, methodological rigour and coverage. From the community engagements and gender citizen-generated data in Lanet Umoja, we have learned that gender-related issues targeted by SDG 5 resonate quite well with people's every day circumstances at the community level. Community assessments also show that some targets were more relevant than others, and the community is more interested in working with indicators they could do something about. In Lanet Umoja for example, target 5.3 on "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation" was less of a priority because the issues it seeks to address are nearly non-existent in the community. While 5.a on 4 "undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance..." was considered higher priority.

The government of Kenya has enacted various laws and formulated a number of policies in a bid to achieve gender equality and safeguard the rights of women and girls. This has elevated gender as core to the achievement of sustainable development. The main challenge however, remains limited enforcement of these laws and policies to ensure they realise the ambitions of women and girls. In practice therefore, women and girls continue to suffer from various forms of discrimination and violations. There's also an emerging narrative around the "forgotten boy child" with increasing calls for gender initiatives to target boys and men.

While the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics still expresses doubts around the legitimacy and utility of CGD, there is an increased political will to engage with civil society. However, the absence of a framework and limited resources to experiment with newer, often less quantitative forms of data continues to hamper progress. Furthermore, civic space within Kenya is shrinking, making it harder to hold the government to account. Locating and working with champions in government therefore remains key. Furthermore, transparency and rigour around the collection and use of data by civil society and CGD projects is therefore of great importance, in order to build its credibility with all stakeholders. However, notable success has been achieved at the community level in localising the SDGs, including specific targets related to gender equality, along with others which are directly affected by gender dynamics, such as WASH and economic empowerment. This has included expanding the scope of some of the SDG 5 targets to make them more aligned with local realities and priorities.

## **Argentina**

Gender data remains patchy on many sub-issues, and often closed even when it is available. For example, pre-2015 there was no official data on femicide - a void civil society has since attempted to fill, including through CGD projects like Argentina Cuenta La Violencia Machista. In this sense, just the process of data collection has itself been transformational. However lack of buy-in from organisations working on gender issues remains a challenge with regards to the CGD for SDGs agenda, including some civil society organisations who do not see how the SDGs can support their efforts, despite its various gender-related goals and targets. Localising the agenda is therefore likely to be an important activity for addressing this challenge. Furthermore, other campaigns related to gender like #NiUnaMenos and #NOSOTRAS PARAMOS are making some headway with regards to gaining mainstream media attention and influencing public opinion, however they still do not appear to be utilising data, and CGD in particular, to its full extent. Given the size and reach of these movements, however, there is therefore a huge opportunity for civil society to use data from citizens to bolster its advocacy with government on gender-related issues.

## **Tanzania**

On the whole, women in Tanzania remain fairly excluded from the decision-making process, with representation in government low at all levels. Furthermore, civic space is shrinking fast, including new laws on who is legally able to produce statistics. DataShift is working at two levels to address these issues; 1) training youth accountability advocates to use data for SDG-related campaigning which aim to hold the government to account for its promises here, including on gender-related issues; and 2) working directly with the National Bureau of Statistics to develop a guide that will help civil society organisations (CSOs) in Tanzania to produce data that could be used as official statistics, and which complies with government legal and policy regulations. Previous reports show that local communities may misinterpret CGD initiatives, expecting them to deliver public services. Government officials saw more potential for CGD initiatives in accommodating government needs, such as complement sample surveys, than in criticising its shortcomings. Lack of representativity and methodological rigour remain among the main challenges in mainstreaming CGD within official datasets.

There should be more effort in gender data collection and organised comparative analysis of nationally appropriate gender information and definitions to ensure universal comparability and uniformity. In addition, progressive ways of obtaining data through participatory and transparent methods and systems must be pursued with special attention to recognising synergies from all actors. Efforts should also be made to ensure institutional transformation, by giving gender a lot more attention in order to marshal political, financial and cultural resources during implementation, monitoring and mainstreaming of SDG 5 and the other SDGs. Good practices and case studies for gender data indicators and collection should be shared and encouraged across the board.

## IMPROVING THE COHERENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY DATA AND CGD ON GENDER ACROSS COUNTRIES

DataShift's activities within its four pilot countries, as well as at the international level, have repeatedly revealed that increasing the coherence of these data sources both within and between countries will be a key factor in addressing issues around credibility, complementarity and ultimately how usable they are for decision-makers. The question of how to improve this coherence, therefore, was something explored during the Forum. Barriers and related opportunities identified by participants included:

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### BARRIERS

- DataShift research is showing that partnerships, both within the civil society sector and amongst different stakeholder groups, especially those involving statistics agencies and government departments, are the foundation upon which improvements to the quality of gender data can be made. But there is **insufficient dialogue and collaboration between governments, civil society and communities on the way gender data is collected and used** (coherence within countries).
- Activities in DataShift pilot countries are revealing that gender-related CGD is particularly useful when in the form of qualitative stories which bring voices of citizens to the fore and explain experiences in ways numbers alone will never be able to. Yet there is still a **lack of awareness of value of CGD and the particularly beneficial role it can play in illuminating gender-inequalities**, among both governments and civil society.

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### OPPORTUNITIES

- DataShift's work with the national statistics office (NSO) of Tanzania is showing that progress can be made here, even in environments where civic space is being closed. The SDG 'Follow-up and Review' process, which all governments have committed to engaging in, provides both a **mandate and opportunity for collaboration with civil society on a specific framework of gender-related targets and indicators**. This includes current efforts governments are undertaking to 'domesticate' the SDGs agenda, according to national priorities.
- The approaches and experiences of DataShift and its partner organisations working to leverage CGD for driving progress on gender-issues is being promoted in international fora such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD). This is not only **demonstrating the value of CGD in this agenda to a wide, multi-stakeholder audience, it is also showing which specific issues it can be most useful to help measure, as well as the methods for doing so**. By engaging with these platforms, therefore, others actors can both help to raise awareness on the value of gender-CGD and improve their own systems for producing and using it.

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## BARRIERS

- **Insufficient existing standards or platforms for aggregating different sources of gender-related civil society data and CGD** (coherence within and between countries). This is in turn linked to a **perceived lack of credibility** around this data source.
- **Lack of CSO capacity** to ensure their data collection and use methodologies are sufficiently rigorous to produce credible and interoperable data, in a way that is sustainable over time. Specific issues include:
  - Using data responsibly and securely
  - Quality and reliability of data (including in the eyes of government)
  - How to analyse, present and communicate the data
  - How to then use the data as part of gender-related campaigns and advocacy activities, including leveraging the media

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Leveraging examples such as the DataShift-NSO collaboration in Tanzania will be of great help to efforts to do something similar in other places. This would also **provide a clear opportunity to explore standards on specific issues, including gender**. Furthermore, various new platforms to coordinate the generation and aggregation of gender data to support action on SDG 5 are currently underway.<sup>2</sup>
- DataShift, along with other partners such as the Engine Room are **curating and producing resources and training opportunities to help CSOs build capacity on data**, via platforms like the Learning Zone, including a specific online course on using CGD for campaigning (coming soon). DataShift is also **aggregating and sharing good practices on data production and use**, including on gender issues in particular, via its Community of practitioners platform. Furthermore, the GPSDD is **working with donors to help leverage resources**, including via its own Data Innovation Fund, that can support civil society and other actors to build their capacities and experiment with methods that make data more credible, useful and complementary across locations.

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## ENTRY POINTS FOR SDG 5 MONITORING

DataShift's national level dialogues on gender data revealed that while knowledge of the SDGs and Goal 5 in particular remains fairly limited amongst CSOs, the majority of actors engaged were in agreement that the framework provides a useful guiding structure for governments and other stakeholders to work in a focused, collaborative way on reducing gender inequality and empowering women and girls.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. SDG Tracker for Girls and Women (Plan International, Data2X, BMGF, IWHC, Women Deliver, ONE, KPMG, FEMNET, ARROW); Making Every Woman and Girl Count (UN Women-led); Gender Data Portal (BMGF, World Bank, Data2X, IMF, UNSD, UN Women)

One of the main objectives of the Forum was therefore to identify the SDG targets (and, where possible, indicators) where civil society data and CGD could have the biggest impact whilst keeping the feasibility of actually collecting and using this data in mind. Therefore building on participants experiences, the group was able to identify three targets which could particularly benefit from CGD initiatives:

### **5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres<sup>3</sup>**

SDG 5.2 target seemed to resonate particularly strongly at the community level, even when organisations were not aware of the wider SDGs framework. Participants identified many stakeholders involved in this target, from direct actors such as spouses and children, to indirect involvement of media and cultural factors that encourage violence against women. Several challenges were highlighted, such as underreporting of abuse, lack of support of official authorities and safety issues.

On the other hand, CGD presents high potential to support efforts to combat gender-based violence. Women could use innovative platforms to anonymously report violence cases, and participants discussed the impact of a 'one-stop' app providing information about women's shelters, free legal advice and channels to report abuse against oneself and others. CGD could also mobilise civil society to organise campaigns related to this topic, such as the Argentinean movement #NiUnaMenos.

### **5.4: Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work<sup>4</sup>**

This was identified because it is a topic which is consistently lacking in official statistics yet citizens, working with civil society organisations and CGD projects, are ideally placed to fill this data gap. Women contribute to economies in myriad ways, and not all of those are measured by traditional methods. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder efforts led by the likes of Data2x with partners such as the ILO and the World Bank are already underway to pilot new ways for measuring this issue, providing one entry point for civil society organisations to test how CGD can be part of this process in a complementary manner with other data sources.

Specific challenges around using CGD to monitor this issue that require further attention included: improving definitions and understanding (at the community level in particular) about what constitutes unpaid work, which is linked to challenges around cultural norms and assumptions; and how to deal with under-reporting and issues around who in the household has access to technology actually provide information. It was agreed that many of these issues, however, can be most effectively addressed in coordination with government actors. Similarly, therefore, efforts to integrate CGD on this topic into NSO-led SDG reporting processes is an approach that merits further exploration.

<sup>3</sup> Full target and proposed indicators available here: <http://indicators.report/targets/5-2/>

<sup>4</sup> Full target and proposed indicators available here: <http://indicators.report/targets/5-4/>

## 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights<sup>5</sup>

This was identified because while most governments have some data on this topic, with regards to spending on public services and education, hearing the experiences directly from citizens about both access to these services, as well as their quality, can provide huge opportunities for verifying how accurate government figures on this topic are, or to better ascertain the effectiveness of the services they provide. A huge number of different stakeholders were identified as being likely to have useful information on this issue, ranging from health workers and teachers to local campaigners and students, which also lends itself to using crowdsourcing-type CGD approaches. However this also points to the difficulties around triangulating large amounts of information coming from different sources, especially when including other types of data collected by civil society organisations and development agencies which would not be considered as CGD.

Other challenges identified included regressive laws and cultural differences which can make coherence with official statistics and using the data to campaign on the topic very difficult, along with obtaining the data from citizens in the first place, often related to issues around stigma and intimidation. Therefore in countries where governments are unwilling to cooperate on these issues, coordinated civil society shadow monitoring efforts can play an important role. CGD and civil society can also provide support to women in a direct way, e.g. gathering data of alternative reproductive health providers or where women can get free contraception methods. However these activities will likely be hard to organise and potentially dangerous for both the organisers of the projects and the citizens providing the data. Policies and practices on data security and privacy will therefore be of primary importance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER-RELATED CSOs AND CGD TARGETS

- Community engagement approaches must be developed flexibly, in order to be adapted to specific and changing local contexts
- Engage with your government - this is one way to make the data you produce more reputable, as well as identify which specific gaps in gender data the government needs help filling
- Reports and campaign materials drawing on gender-related CGD that aim to influence governments should be short and user-friendly, utilising tools like infographics and checklists
- Be ready to adapt SDG 5 and its related targets too
- Identify whether you are aiming for the priority issue you want to use CGD to better understand to be integrated into official SDG reporting, or whether shadow reporting is more appropriate. Keeping the ultimate destination where the data will be used in mind is crucial when deciding which CGD methodologies to use. As mentioned above, for instance, Target 5.4 (unpaid work) may lend itself better to integration with government data, whereas shadow reporting on 5.6 (SRHR) may make more sense
- Don't be constrained by the official SDG indicators. Collecting and presenting CGD on these indicators is important, especially if integration with official statistics is identified as a viable destination, however CGD on some gender-issues lends itself better to alternative indicators identified by other stakeholders

<sup>5</sup> Full target and proposed indicators available here: <http://indicators.report/targets/5-6/>

## POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS FOR DATASHIFT

### At the national level

- Continue to help CSOs experiment with and enhance the ways they generate and use gender-related CGD, especially on the aforementioned priority areas. This includes efforts to help improve basic data literacy, as a prerequisite for meaningful engagement on this agenda.
- Undertake a deep-dive pilot with a small number of organisations working closely on issues related to Targets 5.4 and 5.6 to further explore how CGD could be leveraged to spur action and track progress.
- Support the creation or consolidation of networks of gender CGD practitioners, in order to enable the sharing of good practice and collaboration, including advocacy. This can thus support greater coordination amongst CSOs and help to reduce duplication.
- Continuing to work directly with NSOs - like in Tanzania, and drawing upon the lessons and successes here - to address negative attitudes and/or legislation on CGD.
- Support the engagement of national actors in global initiatives and platforms related to this topic, given the strong appetite for collaborating beyond the country level expressed by Forum participants.
- Provide practical examples of successful CGD use on gender issues, as a key factor for achieving buy-in and replication from all stakeholders (including those beyond the national level)

### At the global level

- Funnel what is being learned and success stories of gender CGD-informing policy at the national level or where it has directly impacted women and girls' lives into international platforms like the GPSDD, those involving Data2x, and Equal Measure 2030, with a view to seeing their replication in other locations (e.g. the CSO guide for producing statistics being created in collaboration with the Tanzanian NSO).
- Exploring new partnerships with other stakeholders who can accelerate progress on using CGD for driving progress on SDG 5, e.g. government champions, tech firms like Ushahidi, or programmes within international institutions like UN Women. Similarly, exploring how to create guidelines for CGD on specific, priority gender issues in order to help improve the quality and complementarity of this data.
- Identify how qualitative CGD on gender can be incorporated into global platforms and other high level spaces, in order to spread the stories this CGD tells and raise awareness.
- Focus future efforts on Targets 5.4 and 5.6, and in particular explore how to integrate CGD approaches into existing international efforts that are piloting new ways of measuring these specific issues. Focus on exploring ways to use CGD for data disaggregation by gender, given that this is an issue most NSOs have acknowledged they will struggle to do with existing capacities and resources.

- Support efforts to collectively explore complementary (secondary) indicators, providing the depth and detail that the internationally agreed (primary) indicators will likely miss Advocate for additional resources, including funding, to be made available for gender-related CGD projects at the national level.

#### Linking up with other CIVICUS initiatives

- Innovation for Change (I4C): a global project which includes supporting CSOs develop new technologies, such as an application for South African domestic care workers. I4C has regional hubs which could be leveraged for allocating resources.
- MobLab: Digital advocacy tools for CSOs, including an online campaign builder, to help organisations create clear plans for how to use the CGD they produce.
- Making gender the focus of a scaled up DataShift Community Challenge, to foster collaboration, experimentation, and innovation on CGD in this area.
- Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD): For coordinating SDG 5 shadow-monitoring efforts and joint-advocacy using gender CGD at the national level in particular.
- Leave No One Behind partnership: To use as a vehicle for further discussions about how CGD can support the disaggregation of official data by gender, help to identify existing programmes that CGD projects could piggyback on, or support the selection of specific areas to focus on in order to fill national-level data gaps.

***The DataShift team will be discussing these options with partners and other participants at the UN Commission on the Status of Women 2017 this month, with a view to deciding upon a clear path for taking its work on this agenda forward. As ever, comments, ideas and questions are always welcome. Therefore please send an email to [datashift@civicus.org](mailto:datashift@civicus.org) to get in touch.***

Join the **DataShift** Community of civil society organisations, campaigners and citizen-generated data and technology practitioners by signing up at [www.thedatashift.org](http://www.thedatashift.org) and follow us on Twitter [@SDGDatashift](https://twitter.com/SDGDatashift)

**DataShift** is an initiative of **CIVICUS**, in partnership with **Wingu**, **The Engine Room** and the **Open Institute**. We are part of a growing global community of campaigners, researchers and technology experts that is using citizen-generated data to create change.

