Goal: To build the world’s first comprehensive suite of data to track country performance on respect for the human rights of women and girls.

Impact: Our comprehensive analysis will highlight gender discrimination across human rights and add authority and leverage to the advocacy work of human rights professionals.

Background: The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and has been ratified by 189 states. However, there has never been any comprehensive effort to systematically measure the progress of countries on their commitments to CEDAW. The Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) wants to fill this gap.

The problem: When something is not measured, it tends to be overlooked and undervalued: the violation of women’s rights is a global pandemic. For CEDAW to have a powerful impact, we need a way to impartially evaluate what’s really happening with women’s rights in each state.

Without better tools, human rights advocates have to rely on government data to track progress on women’s rights. These data are not comprehensive, and often do not assess how well governments themselves are meeting their obligations to eliminate discrimination against women.

The vision: HRMI exists to provide data that can change the world. In the short time since our founding, we have created new metrics and published data on five economic and social rights for more than 120 countries and on seven civil and political rights for 19 countries (set to double in 2020). We aim to measure country progress on all human rights covered by international human rights law.

Our solution: As HRMI has successfully done in other areas of human rights, we will collaborate with human rights experts to produce the world’s first comprehensive suite of women’s rights indicators. Unlike existing analysis, our indicators will cover all areas listed in CEDAW, producing a much better overall picture of the degree to which women’s rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled worldwide. We will draw on existing sources of information and gather new data using our innovative multi-lingual expert survey.

Our co-design approach: Our first step will be to host a co-design workshop bringing together human rights measurement experts and practitioners from inter-governmental and civil society organisations. We will brainstorm ideas, build on existing tools, prototype different methodologies, and form a team that has the passion and capacity for seeing this work through to completion.

Good data can fuel change: Is gender a factor in executions in Saudi Arabia or Nigeria? Which countries have the biggest gender pay gap or worst rate of sexual violence? If human rights advocates can know these things for sure, they can make better arguments to their governments for meaningful change for women and girls.

Learn more: All our human rights analysis produced so far is available, free, on our data site. To discover more about HRMI, please feel free to explore our website, and follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Youtube.

Join us: To explore how your funding contribution can help create this powerful tool to support women’s rights advocacy around the world, please contact anne-marie.brook@motu.org.nz or call +64 21 118 8236.