

# FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL

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IDRC Grant / Subvention du CRDI: 109114-001-Building an advocacy platform for gender-sensitive civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems

# Data2X – Final Technical Report

## (i) Cover Page

<b>Project Title:</b>	Building an Advocacy Platform for Gender-Sensitive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems
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<b>Research Institution:</b> <b>Address:</b>	Data2X, housed at United Nations Foundation, Inc. 1750 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20006 USA
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**Disclaimer:** The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC or its Board of Governors.

## (ii) Executive Summary

For several years leading up to this grant, Data2X and the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (CoE) at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) worked together informally to ensure that Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems are designed to take account of the incentives and barriers girls and women face and to ensure that girls and women are represented in the resulting data. This project was designed to build on the early work, and specifically to build out an advocacy and communications platform to amplify existing research and support the CoE to reach its target audiences.

Data2X's mission is to improve the quality, availability, and use of gender data in order to make a practical difference in the lives of women and girls worldwide. Birth, marriage, divorce and death registration, and identification, are key enablers of access to rights and services and thus critical to achieving gender equality. Strengthening CRVS systems to ensure they capture accurate data on women and girls—and using that data to inform policy making—is thus an important way to deliver on Data2X's mission.

There were two key objectives and related outcomes of this grant. First, high level advocacy convenings were held to increase the prominence of the gender and CRVS agenda amongst high-level data, policy, and donor audiences (with an outcome to increase the number of data, policy, and donor champions). Second, communications materials were produced for policy, technical, and advocacy communities connected to CRVS (with an outcome to provide easy-to-reference materials for these audiences). As outlined in sections iv) and section v), the activities and outputs completed under this grant were positively contributing to these outcomes.

The rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 resulted in the cancelling of a number of the high-level advocacy convenings planned as part of the grant activities, including events at which communications materials were scheduled to launch. After identifying possible options that could be undertaken to achieve the grant outcomes, and after many conversations to discuss these options, Data2X and the CoE came to a joint agreement to end the grant early.

The challenges of collecting accurate and disaggregated health data have been amplified by this pandemic, in particular death and cause of death data. As such, the importance of strengthening and investing in CRVS systems is an even more urgent issue. Recognizing this, to build on the early outcomes achieved through this grant, a number of suggestions for future advocacy and communications work are included in section ix) that could be taken forward to continue building the gender and CRVS agenda.

### (iii) The research problem

As illustrated in the short videos produced under this grant, without robust CRVS systems, women and girls can “fall through the cracks” and key events in their lives can go unregistered in official systems. If not registered, individuals may lose access to public services and fundamental rights (from school, healthcare, voting, inheritance, to child support and pensions). When girls and women have been undercounted, they remain invisible in data and locked out of so many life opportunities. Further, governments “govern in the dark” without complete data. More comprehensive data from CRVS systems is essential for enabling evidence-based policymaking that is more equitable, just, and responsive to everyone—especially to the needs of girls and women.

One critical part of this broader problem is the general under-investment in CRVS systems. The rationale for this grant was to clearly articulate the value proposition for quality, gender-sensitive CRVS systems. As part of this grant, Data2X has demonstrated the value of gender-sensitive CRVS systems to a far-reaching audience of data producers, users, funders, and other stakeholders. Data2X has brought these different groups together to collaborate on and rally around a global agenda for gender-sensitive CRVS systems and provide both technical and advocacy communities with a body of communications materials to draw on to further the CRVS-Gender agenda.

### iv) Progress towards milestones

#### 1. High-level advocacy convenings

	Per Workplan	Comments as of August 7, 2020
Objective	To increase the prominence of the CRVS-Gender agenda amongst high-level data, policy, and donor audiences.	Data2X made strides towards increasing the prominence of the CRVS-Gender policy agenda, as detailed below.
Outcome	An increase in the number of high-level data, policy, and donor champions for gender-sensitive CRVS systems who support calls to action.	COVID-19 disrupted our momentum on this outcome. These convenings were planned to be iterative, with the learnings from each to contribute to further narrowing target audiences (high-level data, policy, and donor audiences) and garnering support of specific calls to action.
Outputs	<p>Three convenings will be held to highlight the CRVS-Gender agenda to high-level data, policy, and donor audiences at key moments.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Women Deliver (Vancouver, June 2019)</li><li>• The Commission on the Status of Women (NYC, March 2020) – <i>cancelled</i></li></ul>	<p>We held a successful side event during the Women Deliver conference in June 2019. Our side events planned for CSW and the World Bank Spring Meetings were cancelled as a result of COVID-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Women Deliver (Vancouver, June 2019)</u> This Side Event took place on June 4 with over 75 attendees. Speakers included: Jean Lebel, IDRC; Tanjina Mirza, Plan International Canada; Esther Nasikye,</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring Meetings of World Bank and IMF (Washington D.C., April 2020) - <i>cancelled</i></li> </ul>	<p>World Vision Uganda; Shaida Badiee, Open Data Watch; Philip Setel, Vital Strategies; and Emily Courey Pryor, Data2X. As the only event at Women Deliver on CRVS, this event brought the conversations from the first international conference on Gender and CRVS Conference (Ottawa, February 2018) to this gender equality policy conference and community for the first time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Commission on the Status of Women (NYC, March 2020)</u> Concept note developed (and speakers confirmed for planned event) for a donor, gender equality policy, and civil society audience (which can be a resource for future events). First animated video was still launched to coincide with this event.</li> <li>• <u>Spring Meetings of World Bank (Washington D.C., April 2020)</u> Early concept discussed for event to reach donor audience, which was to be linked with release of the second animated video.</li> </ul>
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## 2. Technical CRVS community convenings

	Per Workplan	Comments as of August 7, 2020
Objective	Test advocacy messages and communications materials with the technical community.	Data2X participated in the Ottawa Conference in February, including delivery of advocacy workshop and presentations in the plenary discussions, networking, and participation in the CRVS financing roundtable. This provided an opportunity to test advocacy and communications messages that were intended to inform the subsequent advocacy convenings and communications products.
Outcome	Elicit feedback on content of messages, overall goals, as well as communications channels and strategies	Key feedback from conference participants in Ottawa was helpful in informing the planning for the CSW and Spring Meetings convenings. A key message that emerged from this early work was the importance of demonstrating how CRVS data makes a difference for gender equality, which will be important for future advocacy efforts.

		<p>Considerations for future work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many identified (global, regional, and national) advocacy moments being cancelled or postponed. At the same time, COVID-19 has revealed the importance of strong CRVS systems, so creative ways to engage in advocacy efforts will be important.</li> </ul>
Outputs	<p>Read-outs from meetings and networking</p> <p><i>Activities:</i> Participate in February 2020 CRVS meetings in Ottawa</p>	<p>The summary notes from the Ottawa conference, workshop, financing roundtable, and networking fed into planning for the CSW side event that was planned for early March, prior to the event being cancelled.</p> <p>Additional outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Advocacy Sarah Boyd and Data2X consultant Jenny Lah participated in the conference, facilitated an advocacy workshop, and presented on a panel discussion with conference participants.</li> <li>Handout on developing an advocacy strategy for conference participants was developed and disseminated.</li> <li>Handout for conference participants on key advocacy moments in 2020-21 (pre-COVID-19) was developed and disseminated.</li> <li>We contributed to shaping the key advocacy actions and recommendations in the conference outcome document.</li> </ul> <p>Additional activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data2X participated in the Financing for CRVS roundtable held alongside the conference.</li> <li>To prepare for the advocacy workshop, Data2X undertook interviews with practitioners to help identify key messages and advocacy approaches for the technical workshop.</li> </ul>

### 3. Communications for policy and champion audiences

	Per Workplan	Comments as of July 24, 2020
Objective	To provide both the technical and advocacy communities connected to CRVS with a body of communications materials to draw on to further the CRVS-Gender agenda.	Fortunately, these activities were not impacted by COVID-19. We developed an infographic, two animated videos, and two editorial pieces to help illustrate the importance of CRVS systems for achieving gender equality. (More details below.)
Outcome	Policy, technical, and champion audiences have easy-to-reference material on gender-sensitive CRVS systems.	All communications outputs are easily accessible on Data2X and IDRC websites and are being shared regularly on Data2X's social media channels. Unfortunately, strategically getting these materials into the hands of champions would have been an outcome of the events that had to be cancelled. As such, we have been exploring additional creative ways to ensure this still happens.
Outputs	<p>A range of suitable communications collateral will be produced for various audiences/stakeholders on why gender-sensitive CRVS systems matter and how to achieve them.</p> <p><i>Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animated video</li> <li>• Media partnership</li> <li>• Other communications activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Unlocking Equality” infographic launched at Women Deliver side event</li> <li>• Animated video: “Boundless Potential,” originally planned to launch at CSW side event, but due to cancellation was launched in the first piece of our Devex editorial partnership: “Q&amp;A with Irina Dincu: Why CRVS systems are critical for gender equality.”</li> <li>• Follow-up animated video: “Better Data for a Better World,” originally envisioned to launch at WB Spring Meetings side event. Due to that meeting cancellation, this was launched in the second Devex piece: “The case for data: How CRVS systems can help improve gender equality.”</li> </ul>

## v) Synthesis of research results and development outcomes

The two main objectives and outcomes of this grant were:

### 1. High-level advocacy convenings

- **Objective:** To increase the prominence of the CRVS-Gender agenda amongst high-level data, policy, and donor audiences.
- **Outcome:** An increase in the number of high-level data, policy, and donor champions for gender-sensitive CRVS systems who support calls to action.

## 2. Communications for Policy and Champion Audiences

- **Objective:** To provide both the technical and advocacy communities connected to CRVS with a body of communications materials to draw on to further the CRVS-Gender agenda.
- **Outcome:** Policy, technical, and champion audiences have easy-to-reference material on gender-sensitive CRVS systems.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in Data2X being unable to complete all planned activities and outputs that were designed to achieve these outcomes. However, the completed activities (as outlined in section iv) have made practical contributions towards having more public, easy-to-reference materials on gender-sensitive CRVS systems that can be used to reach policy, technical, and champion audiences. These resources were created with the intention to be “evergreen,” to ensure they can be used in future advocacy efforts and events, including by other advocates. While a number of the key events were cancelled, there is now a greater range of materials to build on and to use in reaching high-level data, policy, and donor audiences and champions.

### *The role of other organizations and donors*

The role of Open Data Watch (ODW) was particularly important during this grant period. A significant amount of planned advocacy and communications materials were planned with ODW and aimed to build on the research they were completing with the IDRC CoE on Gender and CRVS. Along with UNFPA, ODW were a core organizer alongside the COE of the Gender and CRVS Conference in Ottawa in February 2020. Any future work to influence policy and investment in CRVS systems will be strengthened through consultation and coordination with ODW and the CoE.

## vi) Methodology

Not applicable. This project did not involve scientific research or analytical techniques.

## vii) Project outputs and dissemination

- [Leaving No One Behind: CRVS, Gender and the SDGs brief](#) published February 2019. (Created prior to grant—not funded by IDRC.)
  - Published to Data2X website Resource Center
  - Promoted in Data2X March 2019 e-newsletter
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account
- Data2X side event at Women Deliver 2019, “From Cradle to Grave: How Civil Registration and Gender Data Impact the Rights of Women and Girls,” held June 4, 2019.
  - Promoted in two Data2X e-newsletter mailings
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account
  - Promoted via [UN Foundation blog post](#), “5 key takeaways from Women Deliver 2019”
- [Unlocking Equality infographic](#) published June 2019.
  - Launched at Women Deliver side event and shared at IDRC booth at Women Deliver
  - Published to Data2X website Resource Center
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account

- [Boundless Potential video](#) published March 2020.
  - Published to Data2X website Resource Center
  - Embedded in sponsored content Q&A piece on Devex
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account
  - Paid social media promotion via Devex
  - Shared via Devex e-blast sent to 10,000 recipients
- [Sponsored content piece on Devex \(Q&A with Irina Dincu\)](#) published March 2020.
  - Promoted via Data2X website Press Room
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account
  - Paid social media promotion via Devex
  - Featured on Devex “Focus on: Gender” page
- [Better Data for a Better World video](#) published April 2020.
  - Published to Data2X website Resource Center
  - Embedded in sponsored content piece on Devex
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account
  - Paid social media promotion via Devex
  - Shared via Devex e-blast sent to 10,000 recipients
- [Sponsored content piece on Devex](#) published April 2020.
  - Promoted via Data2X website Press Room
  - Promoted via Data2X Twitter account
  - Paid social media promotion via Devex

#### **Key outputs unable to be delivered**

- Side event with panel of speakers at the Commission on the Status of Women (NYC, March 2020) – *event was cancelled*
- Side event at the Spring Meetings of World Bank and IMF (Washington D.C., April 2020) – *event was cancelled*

#### **viii) Problems and challenges**

The key challenge encountered during this grant period was impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 resulted in the cancelling of a number of the high-level advocacy convenings planned as part of the grant activities, including events that communications materials were being launched at. After identifying possible options that could be undertaken to achieve the grant outcomes, and after many conversations to discuss these options, Data2X and the CoE came to a joint agreement to end the grant early.

## ix) Administrative Reflections and Recommendations

Data2X is grateful to IDRC colleagues for their collaborative, flexible, and practical approach to working together. We jointly assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project and, in candid conversations, determined that continuing activities in the current climate—with limited staff capacity and with the grant end date looming—might not be practical or productive. It was a difficult decision; however, it is important to us that we be careful stewards of IDRC funds. As such, we are confident that this is the right decision, and we appreciate the support of our IDRC colleagues.

### ***Future options for advocacy and communications work to build the CRVS-Gender agenda***

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the cancellation of many global, regional, and national advocacy opportunities. At the same time, COVID-19 has revealed the importance of strong CRVS systems and the need for further investment. As such, a number of possible advocacy and communications activities are outlined below that could be considered by IDRC or others in the future to continue advancing the CRVS-Gender agenda.

- **Translation of videos into Spanish.** *Boundless Potential* and *Better Data for a Better World* videos could be translated into Spanish to make the messaging accessible to a wider audience.
- **Policy briefs:** A series of briefs could be developed to reach key audiences of donors, government policymakers, and civil society. These briefs could draw on and distill key messages from IDRC and ODW's Gender and CRVS research briefs, as well as key outcomes from the Ottawa conference. These could be shared at future convenings and key country, regional, or global advocacy moments.
- **Policy briefs on new topics in gender and CRVS.** During the course of this grant, a number of new topics have emerged as important for advocacy towards donors and policymakers. These topics include: the intersection of COVID-19, CRVS, and Gender (including gender bias in death data); CRVS and social norms; gender, CRVS, and sexual and reproductive health and rights; and financing CRVS systems to advance gender equality. Interviews and background research could be undertaken to inform policy briefs on these topics, and key messages could be used to inform blogs, infographics, and/or messages for social media.
- **Virtual events:** Given the uncertainty around in-person events in 2020 and into 2021, virtual events could be used to explore regional cooperation and advocate on CRVS commitments (including at UNESCAP and UNECA Ministerial Meetings).
- **Advocacy in gender equality community:** The Generation Equality Forum, now planned for 2021, may provide an opportunity to continue to use communications materials and advance advocacy messages that were planned at the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2020 to target donor, gender equality policy, and civil society communities.