Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI)
Better data: Working together to advance human rights

Currently the world doesn't have a simple transparent way to monitor the extent to which people are treated with dignity in different countries. To fill this gap the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) is working to produce a free easy-to-access database of thematic measures of Human Rights for countries.

This will allow NGOs, IGOs, National Human Rights Institutes, governments, and members of the public or citizen sector groups to see the big picture more easily and assist them in promoting change.

Doesn't data like this already exist?

No. International bodies such as the UN encourage monitoring but do not produce quantitative measures of human rights compliance themselves. And existing measures are piecemeal and of varying quality.

HRMI will build on existing and previous efforts, and produce a suite of thematic human rights metrics that are simple, transparent, accurate, accessible and independent of governments.

For more detail on our methodology please see overleaf.

We are currently working to identify approximately 12 countries for inclusion in the pilot. Selection is based on opt-in voluntary participation by human rights researchers. Country selection will be finalized by mid-2017.

This is a unique collaborative venture

Key contributors include:

Human Rights Researchers – To create our new Civil and Political Rights measures, researchers working for human rights NGOs around the world will complete a HRMI-administered online questionnaire at regular intervals. This will enable conversion of the qualitative on-the-ground information that researchers have into quantitative measures.

Measurement Experts – The HRMI team includes some of the world's most experienced experts in the field, including the prize-winning authors of the best existing measures of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the SERF measures) and the most widely used existing measures of Civil and Political Rights.

Future users of the data – HRMI's goal is to co-design human rights measures that meet the needs of future users of the data.
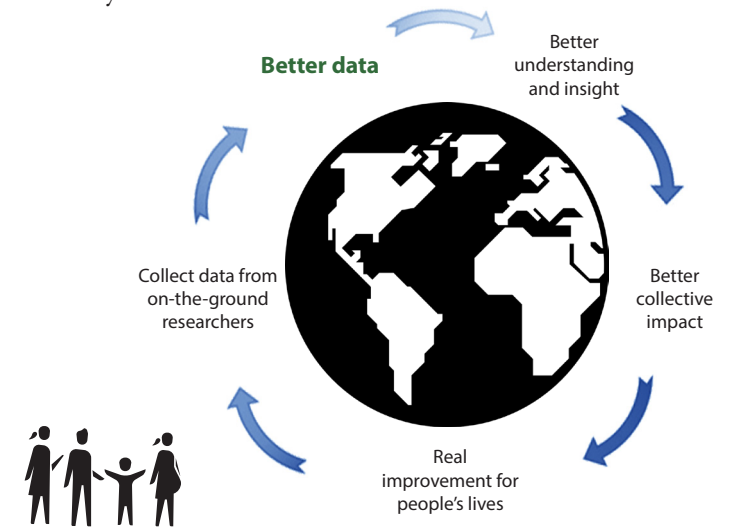
Supporters – Our supporters include donors and organisations who are contributing professional expertise pro bono.

We are currently seeking new partners who would like to help support our pilot phase.

Thank you to our current supporters:

Together, our goal is to help facilitate a step-change for the better in the lives of billions of people

Our aim is to produce a suite of metrics that become the global go-to measures of human rights. But this is not an end in itself. We will work with users to ensure that HRMI data is used appropriately for informed advocacy (in-country and international), development assistance, advice, policy design, education and research, and to help direct capital flows more ethically.

By enabling a more rigorous and evidence-based approach, we believe we can help facilitate more effective and collaborative solutions to complex global human rights challenges. For further information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact Anne-Marie.Brook@motu.org.nz

Pilot phase metrics & quick methodology guide

In seeking to create a complete picture of human rights, we are not starting from scratch. Wherever possible we are building off existing efforts, and utilizing existing sources of internationally-comparable data, e.g. in the area of Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs). But there is a big data gap in the area of Civil and Political Rights (CPRs) where no satisfactory data exist. In this area we are developing a new methodology, based on an expert-opinion questionnaire approach, for a pilot group of countries.

New HRMI CPR metrics
- Right to freedom from execution
- Right to freedom from torture
- Right to freedom from arbitrary arrest
- Right to freedom from disappearance
- Right to opinion and expression
- Right to assembly and association
- Right to participate in government

CPR Methodology

Our expert opinion survey methodology will provide an overview-level understanding of the frequency, distribution, perpetrators and victims in each of these thematic areas. By sourcing information directly from people whose job it is to monitor events on-the-ground in each country, these measures will be accurate, easily understood and independent of governments.

HRMI ESCR metrics
- Right to Food
- Right to Education
- Right to Health
- Right to Housing
- Right to Work

ESCR Methodology

These metrics – the rights components of the SERF Index – have already been developed by the Economic and Social Rights Empowerment Initiative, and have received very positive reviews from the human rights community. Our goal during the pilot phase is to develop better data visualization tools, and to facilitate their growing use by NGOs and other users.

Our goal is to release our new CPR metrics in late 2017 or early 2018.

Beyond the pilot phase we will work with our partners to expand our country coverage. We would also like to expand our metrics to more directly illustrate the rights of specific groups (women, children, LGBT, refugees, etc).

HRMI Key Activities:

- Working with researchers to develop an excellent data collection tool
- Design and computation of new measures
- Dissemination

Key elements of what HRMI will produce:

Database
- Performance measures for each thematic area by country

Interactive data visualization
- Tools to quickly explore rights realization by country or theme

Action & Research Library
- Examples of third-party campaigns using HRMI
- Library of research articles using HRMI

Technical library
- Methodology
- Stories from the field illustrating methodological points
- Independent reviews

How can you work with us?

Data-collection projects like this are resource-intensive. We are currently seeking human rights experts who would like to explore inclusion of their country in our pilot study. We are also seeking funding to support the development of our data visualization tools, an effective website, and to cover our limited overhead costs. To discuss either of these, please contact anne-marie.brook@motu.org.nz.