

# The Power of Data

Priya Nanda

International Center for Research on Women

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# Beyond Visibility: Credibility

- Gender equality finally on the world’s radar screen
- “Numbers talk”: continued investment requires demonstrated success
- Well-evaluated programs with gender dimension are rare---esp in economic sector
- Measure of program effectiveness necessary for prioritizing replication and scale-up

Progressive donors and  
Governments recognize  
that we need to invest  
in women and girls'  
programs

Need to bring others on  
board; what is returns on  
investment; what is most  
strategic to invest in to bring  
about social change

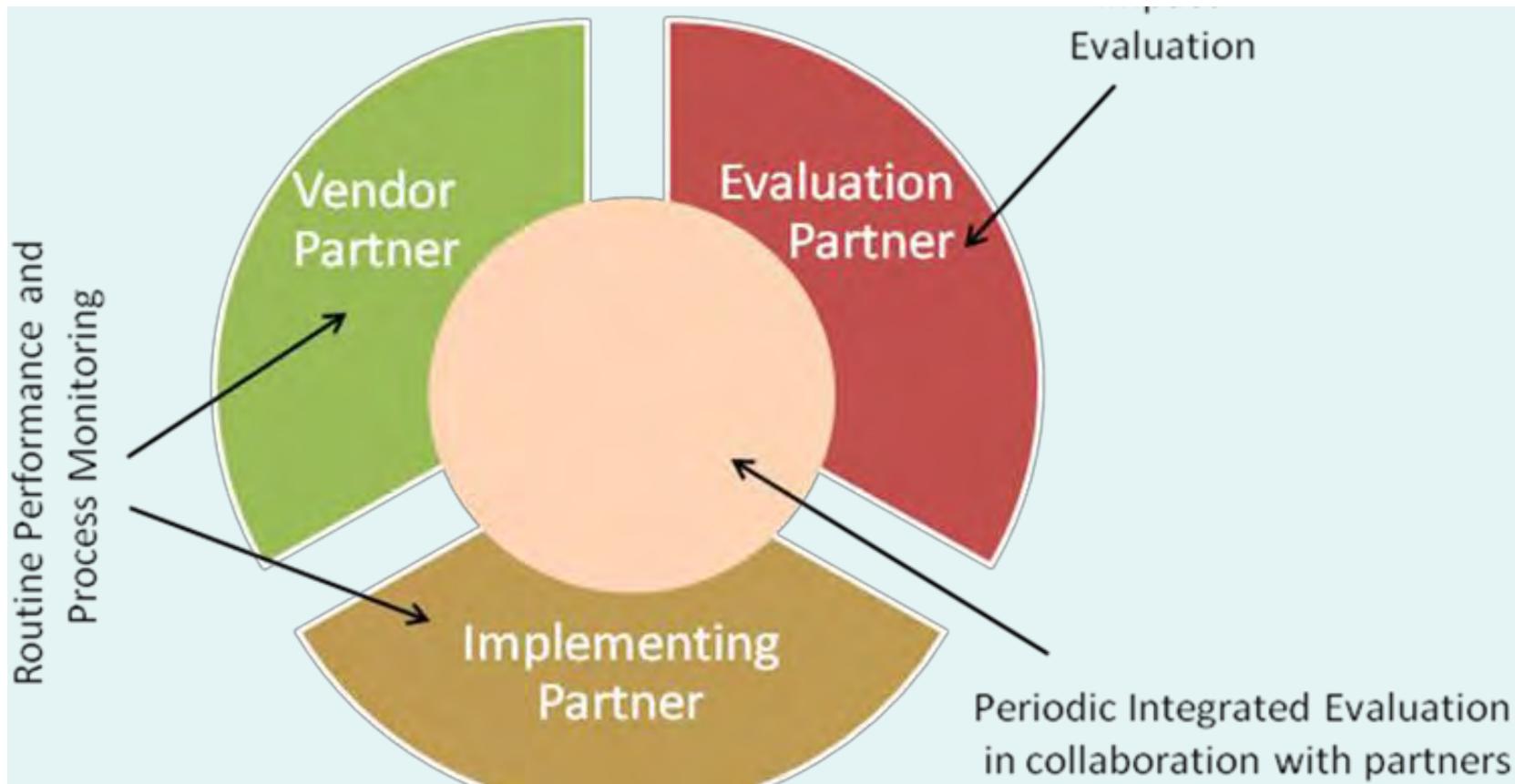
# New Partners

- Policymakers—US Congress, GOI
- Advocates/Collations—Girls Not Brides, CFR
- Corporations –Gap Inc.
- Grassroots/feminists organization—CREA, jagori, Lawyers Collective
- New donors—AWJS, Oak Foundation,
- Multi partner Commitments—CGI
- Media-CNN, VOA, TOI, NPR etc

# Our Guiding Principles

- Collaboration between partners
- Ownership on the Theory of Change
- Development and standardization of robust indicators
- Triangulation of data
- Strategic guidance on programs' conceptual frame and measurement
- Adaptive and iterative approach

# Strategic and Evaluation Role



# The Indicators Trap

- Time frame
- Standards
- Comparability
- Contextualization
- Translating impact into value

# Challenges: Programs

- Donors/policy makers emphasis on the importance of measuring change in short funding time frames
- Implementers encounter shifts in gender relations but grappling with the what and how of defining and measuring empowerment
- Lack of effective theory of change that can measure what you can possibly do in that time frame and is a pathway to change

## Challenges: Definitions

- Economic empowerment is about making markets work for women (at the policy level) and empowering women to compete in markets (at the agency level)
- Process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic choices acquire such an ability (Kabeer)
- Not everyone acknowledges that empowerment cannot be easily defined let alone measured (Kabeer)

# Challenges--Frameworks

- Causal (logical frameworks)
- Contribution (outcome mapping, participatory approaches)
- Using both, Gender analysis frameworks are less understood and applied
- Most frameworks bound by three year grants where little can be assessed in terms of measuring change in gender relations
- Lack an opportunity to be reflexive-question one's assumptions around the theory of change

## Challenges-Complex Indicators

Given the high levels of aggregation at which many econometric studies were carried out, they provide little insight into factors, such as the kinds of employment or levels of education, are most likely to be conducive to women's empowerment in different contexts.

Nor do the studies describe what kinds of policy regimes and patterns of growth are most likely to generate these enabling opportunity structures.

# Challenges in Measurement

- Multi-dimensional concepts
- Context specific
- Varies by perspective, timing
- Not very different from measurement of poverty!
- To design measures that capture women's actual experience of change-presence of conflict may not indicate failure
- Binaries

# Not Just Data but Conceptual Analytics

- Different understanding of the diverse pathways of change
- Different understanding on what's important to measure
- Different understanding on how to assess methodological rigor in what you measure

Adapted from Katherine Hay IDRC Dec 2011

# Feminist Principles

- Whether a program is working or whether it is meeting its' objectives means a need to define:
  - What 'working' is meant to look like
  - Who decided what success looks like and are there different and competing definitions and criteria of success held by groups of stakeholders with more and less power
- Change not as linear and or increasing or systematic
- Empowerment may be met with resistance and change may be static or get worse
- Need to measure as close to possible reality and not assumptions

# Recognizing Complexities

- As Andrea Cornwall and Jenny Edwards put it, *‘Mainstream empowerment narratives tend to neglect relationships, focusing on individual women’s trajectories of self-improvement or on the bigger picture of society-wide economic change. But women’s lived experiences of empowerment cannot be understood adequately by approaches that atomise women, abstracting them from the social and intimate relations that constrain and make possible their empowerment or disempowerment’.*

# Validating Results

- Women's self reported data not treated as objective
- Validity arose from multiple points of view and multiple sites of examination
- Credibility-prolonged engagement in the field and persistent observation and triangulation of data
- 'Hard' data provided testimony to women's self reported data

# Key Points



- Data is critical--
  - Need to better understand the individual paths women traverse, unique challenges and unique wins and make measurement more aligned with reality
  - Need to conceptualize and contextualize data
  - Need to develop an understanding of these complexities amongst our partners
  - Need to be strategic about what additional evidence we need