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Forum themes and what we learnt

- **Social change**: Global movements are bringing more attention and voice to issues of sexual abuse, harassment, rape, and sexism. We learnt that to unite activism and research we must harness advocacy efforts in thoughtful, creative and ethical ways to promote evidence-based solutions to ending violence against women (VAW) and girls.

- **Leave no one behind**: It is essential that our research consider the impact of VAW and interventions on various vulnerable groups. Data show that women with disabilities, LGBTQI individuals, and sex workers experience disproportionally high levels of sexual violence. Intersectional work is essential for the field. We need to deepen our understanding on which components of interventions are effective and for whom.
• **Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:** Eliminating VAW and VAC are important SDG targets and there is increasing recognition that many other SDGs cannot be achieved without addressing VAW and VAC. There is a need for improved measurement of VAW and VAC, increasing intersectional and multi-sectoral work, and engaging policymakers in these efforts from the beginning to improve local ownership and responsibility of the data and programming.

• **Linkages between VAC and VAW:** There is increasing understanding of the intersections between VAW and VAC. We must build relationships between the fields to create synergy in research and programming to address the multiple linkages. Various presentations shared insights into promising approaches to addressing violence in childhood and core principles for doing so. Adapting existing effective VAW interventions to address VAC issues may be effective but requires careful consideration.

• **Methods and measures:** Grounding all VAW and VAC work in ethical practice is essential including implementing safety measures for both participants and researchers. Practice-based learning offers important insights into intervention evaluations. More critical reflection on intervention outcome measures are needed to record new VAW cases as well as VAW reduction and cessation.

• **Scaling up of interventions:** We need to understand what makes interventions effective (and ineffective), what they cost, and who they work for. Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP) provided 6 key insights and a checklist for planning, values, training, and fidelity aspects of adaptation and scale up.

• **Changing social norms and shifting gender inequalities:** We know that violence is preventable, and we know that we can reduce violence over relatively short periods of time. Changing harmful social norms rooted in gender inequality and authoritarian patriarchal norms and power structures is an essential component of successful VAW prevention work. We have a handful of interventions which have been found effective in reducing violence. Engaging both men and women within a feminist framework is necessary. Interventions need to start early and extend over the life course. Interventions need to have a sustained implementation period – once off or rapid, intensive but short-term interventions are unlikely to be effective. It may be more effective to engage with families rather than only couples in highly patriarchal societies. Improving dialogue between community members and key influencers can shift harmful norms. Building respect for women and promoting shared decision-making are essential elements of promising programmes.

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• **Addressing gender inequality through economic empowerment:** Evidence from several countries, including in humanitarian crises, shows that cash transfers can reduce various forms of intimate partner violence; it is essential that these programmes include a gender transformative component. Some evaluations showed increases in VAW depending on women’s income levels; therefore, safety of interventions is a key concern that needs to be well integrated and monitored in all interventions to ensure they do no harm. The mechanisms of change are still not well understood.

• **New technologies:** Building on platforms such as mobile phones in safe and effective ways are a new frontier for VAW and VAC work. There are still many advantages and disadvantages to using mobile technology and it seems that they work well for response work, but there is no evidence yet establishing their effectiveness on preventing violence. There is increasing research to understand online violence and abuse against women and children and how activists are targeted on social media.

### Key messages

- We know more about the size of the problem and risk factors for VAW than ever before.
- We know that violence is preventable.
- We know that it does not take generations to achieve this, but evidence-based programs implemented within 12-18 months can have significant effects.
- We are deepening our understanding on which components of interventions are effective and for whom.
- We are learning more about scaling up and what it costs to do so.
- We know that engaging children and young people in research and programme development is essential, but we must do more to amplify children’s voices so that their ideas and opinions can contribute to research and programme agendas and results that will improve the lives of other children and young people.
What next?
We need to:

- Shore up political support for the research
- Remain true to our feminist roots
- Advocate for more and more longer term, flexible and core funding
- Identify and address hierarchies of knowledge and whose knowledge counts
- Drive research forward on key priorities
- Reach out to more sectors and explore new partnerships and integrative programming
- Put kindness at the heart of all we do
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Thank you

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Stay Connected

No one person, one organisation, one sector can end VAW and VAC. Long term, sustainable, cost effective solutions can only be found by working together, bringing together diverse voices and building on existing evidence, knowledge and information.

Visit www.svri.org to access the full Forum report and presentations from the 2019 Forum.

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The TIME is NOW!

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“Great work, SVRI! Thank you very much for this experience, for the topics addressed, for the networking events and for the chosen city and venue! I was so lucky to be part of this. I have already started to share some of the things I have learned and some of the resources that were shared there.” SVRI Forum 2019 delegate

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