We are just getting started...

To quote Judith Vorst’s, *Alexander* - 2020 has been a ‘terrible, horrible, no good, very bad’ – year. And who knows what 2021 has in store for us. However, rather than focus on the terrible and the horrible, we wanted to end the year off highlighting the learnings and positive developments during this year, to share and celebrate some of the many wins and successes of 2020.

First and foremost, we must celebrate the rolling out of vaccines in high income countries, and those of us in low- and middle-income countries remain hopeful that sometime soon the vaccine will reach us too – because we are all in this together.

### A year of solidarity, support and creativity

The VAW and VAC fields have shown immense solidarity and creativity during this time. UNTF for example, worked closely with their grantees asking what was needed during this time; we at the SVRI held our beloved annual grantees training virtually learning lots in the process – read about what we learnt [here](#). Amber Peterman and Megan O’Donnell, from the Centre for Global Development regularly [briefed](#) us on research done on the impact of the pandemic on the lives of women and girls highlighting where the research gaps lie, and the importance of actionable
research. And multiple agencies have collated important materials and resources for the field such as guidance for collecting VAWG data (here and here), conducting research safely and ethically during the COVID19 pandemic (e.g., here and here), and pivoting VAWG prevention work within COVID19 precautions. Building on evidence, WHO and UN Women have developed an implementation package for policymakers and practitioners to develop evidence-based, ethical, and effective VAW programming. We have been inspired and impressed by the MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium, transforming the way we think of online mobilisation and learning. We were proud to be part of the symposium advisory committee and to take part in this historic event, sharing the spirit of Ubuntu.

**Leaning in-to independence**

2020 has been SVRI’s first full year as an independent NGO – and what a ride it has been! A new NGO needs strong advisors in finance, governance, and strategy. The SVRI has been enormously lucky to have just that. We have taken time to establish these structures – for more information click here. To our Board – thank you – you are the best! To ensure we have the human resources and technical skills to implement the new strategic plan, the SVRI team has grown exponentially. In 2020, Liz and Morma formally welcomed Lizle Loots and Angelica Pino to the team, alongside our growing team of incredible core technical specialists – Anik Gevers and Julienne Corboz.

**Supporting priority driven innovative research**

Linking to actionable research, the SVRI, with support from Sida and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, put out a new annual funding call for research proposals on VAW and VAC in low- and middle-income countries. The Knowledge for Action to End Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children grant received a record 329 applications from all regions of the world. Grants to support innovative research ranging between $40 000 to $200 000 over a two-year period will be awarded in March 2021. We look forward to welcoming new researchers to the SVRI family.
Creating a shared vision for the future

Decolonising and democratising research is a central theme for 2020 and beyond. The SVRI, Equality Institute and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund have, through a participatory process, been working to shape the Global Shared Research Agenda for violence against women and girls (VAWG). Using a crowd sourcing model, the field is identifying where major research gaps lie and what major questions need to be addressed to advance the field, ensuring voices from low- and middle-income countries, from indigenous populations, from groups often not invited to such conversations are now driving these important discussions. With support from Sida and Wellspring, the SVRI with our partners will further unpack the global agenda regionally in East Asia Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. The SVRI, WHO and UNICEF-Innocenti are also co-leading a participatory priority setting process to develop a shared research agenda on the intersections between VAC and VAW.

Ethical and meaningful partnerships

Ethical partnerships for research between practitioners, activists and researchers are essential for ensuring research undertaken is relevant, ethical, cost effective, and actionable. Together with Raising Voices, the SVRI co-produced a guide for the field: Learning together - A guide for feminist practice in violence against women and girls research collaborations. This guide emphasises the importance of acknowledging power in these relationships and how co-creating feminist research will build better programmes. In terms of ethical partnerships, the move of the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities GBV Hub to the SVRI has also been a wonderful opportunity for bringing VAW and faith researchers closer together that will benefit the field, and, we hope, women and children around the globe.

Creating spaces and opportunities to learn, share and connect
We have also held a number of webinars and produced tools and resources for the field including materials on researching VAW during COVID - SVRI Knowledge Exchange: Pivoting to remote research on violence against women during COVID-19, asking our grantees on how they are adapting to COVID and what they need - SVRI Knowledge Exchange: Adjusting to COVID, and thinking about how to engage the private sector on VAW efforts - SVRI Knowledge Exchange: Engaging the private sector to prevent and address violence against women. Our blog site has been an immense hit – with many wonderful blogs on multiple topics being published throughout the year – thank you to all our bloggers – during times like these blogs are important sources of cutting-edge information and learning emerging from ongoing research and programming. All our blogs are peer reviewed so readers can be reassured of their quality and rigour; we hope to grow this platform as a reliable and trusted source of information and is one way that we are elevating practice-based knowledge and diverse voices.

**Plans for 2021...**

2021 will see the production of several important resources for the field including documenting who is funding research on VAW and VAC in low- and middle-income countries and highlight gaps and inequities where they exist. In a similar vein, we will continue to use participatory methods to set research agendas on various topics ensuring we disrupt “business-as-usual” to bring new, fresh and diverse voices into these important conversations and processes. We are also embarking on a series of activities around ethics and research, including ethics of funding VAW research, and challenges of implementing existing research guides in resource poor settings. Watch out for a series of publications and events on the findings from the innovative research being funded through the SVRI Research Grant and the SVRI WBG Development Marketplace Award. We are also going to engage in an exploratory process to review our work related to VAC and childhood sexual abuse and, through various participatory consultative processes, to define our specific role and contributions to the field and identify ways in which to strengthen our work in this area.

Importantly – and loyal to our feminist principles - we will continue to share, disseminate, and create safe spaces for brave conversations and networking opportunities. Look out for our brand-new knowledge hub replacing the current website during 2021. Next year will also be the launch of SVRI Forum site and call for abstracts – we cannot wait to see you all face to face in Mexico, 19-24 September 2022. All going well!
A big thank you to all our partners, members, colleagues. Thank you all for your collegiality, your kindness, your generosity during this difficult and complex year. Together we have endured, and together we will continue to do the work to advance knowledge and end violence against women and children. Keep reaching out, keep listening, keep learning, keep sharing.

In solidarity and happy holidays,

The SVRI Team

Violence against women and violence against children are global issues that require coordinated evidence-based responses and prevention programmes

Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)

The SVRI is the world’s largest network on research on violence against women and violence against children, providing a space where global role players in the field connect with one another, share and promote their research, work to influence policies and practice, particularly in low and middle income countries.

SVRI Strategic Plan 2020-2024.