Delivering Research in a Pandemic
SVRI Annual Report 2020/2021
Acknowledgements

We’re indebted to all stakeholders within the SVRI family who, through their support, belief and patience, saw us emerge stronger from an extremely difficult year.

To our funding partners – Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Sida, the Oak Foundation, and Population Council – thank you for making our programmes and presence possible and for your sustained commitment to unearthing new and critical research about violence against women and violence against children. We extend sincere gratitude for the latitude and flexibility shown during the year, and for supporting our efforts to pivot during the pandemic, while still delivering on our strategic objectives.

To our many partners across the globe who reminded us of the potential of the digital sphere and affirmed our belief that connections can take many forms: you continue to demonstrate the importance of collaboration and of the link between research, policy and action, and reminding us that none of us are working alone, even as many of us work in isolation through various lockdowns and movement restrictions.

To the 6 500 plus members of SVRI, thank you for your support, insights, questions and recommendations during 2020/2021. Thank you for staying connected, promoting your work and advocating for improving the lives of those experiencing violence.
Beginning a new decade with a global pandemic that shook our economic and social systems to the core, underscored a key tenet of SVRI’s work – the need for research.

Our early global and national responses to the pandemic were dynamic, responding jerkily and with a great deal of caution to sporadic bits of information, assumptions at best, guesses at worst. The speed at which laboratories, universities and governments scrambled to collate data on the virus to inform the response was impressive and revealing.

At SVRI, we are acutely aware that research is essential for a comprehensive, sustainable and efficient response to any societal issue. This drives our commitment to support research in understanding the drivers of gendered violence and the contexts within which they flourish. Only through these methods can we help identify ways to bring about sustained social change to end violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC).

Observing issues of equity play out as COVID-19 vaccines became available, was a reminder that low and middle-income countries (LMICs) continue to struggle for equal access to resources and a seat at the table. This mirrors what we have come to know at SVRI and what informs our strategic direction – that research investments in LMICs are small in comparison to the investments made in higher income countries.

I’m proud of the way the SVRI navigated the COVID-19 crisis. We quickly adapted to working remotely while remaining steadfast to delivering quality work and services to our members and partners. We supported our members to pivot their research and related activities online and encouraged them to write and publish their research and thought-leadership pieces. With global and national anecdotal information that gender-based violence cases increased during the lockdown, it remained essential that the voice of the sector was heard, both within the context of the pandemic and without.

I’m pleased to bring you this Annual Report of our reflections and achievements during 2020/2021. It remains incredible what has been achieved across the oceans, often just with a strong Wi-Fi connection and an attentive, kind ear.

As we look back on an extraordinary year, our sights remain firmly set on the future.

Elizabeth Dartnall
Executive Director, SVRI
SNAPSHOT
The year in review

- 25+ grantees from 11 countries trained and supported through SVRI workshop series and events.
- 40 blogs published, with 11 available in multiple languages.
- 8 sub-grants for research projects in LMICs.
- $988,563 committed to on-granting.
- 6,500+ SVRI members across the world.

We have also:
- Carved out a unique place in the funding ecosystem to encourage innovation.
- Provided feminist spaces for researchers in the field to share, learn and connect.
- Developed new institutional policies to strengthen SVRI governance structures.
- Developed a resource communications and mobilisation strategy.
- Begun a process to develop a strategy on violence against children and child sexual abuse.
WHO WE ARE

With over 6 500 members SVRI is the world’s largest network on research on violence against women and violence against children.

Since 2003, we’ve supported research for change. We are entirely committed to the belief that increased robust data is the foundation both for a more effective and coherent response to survivors of violence and efforts to bring about the necessary systemic change to prevent – and ultimately end – violence against women and violence against children.

We are governed by a board who play a central role in managing our strategic direction, risk, and progress towards sustainability. Our work is also guided by a Leadership Council who provide strategic technical guidance and who act as ambassadors for the SVRI internationally.

Whilst we are based in Pretoria, South Africa, we work across all global regions with a focus on low- and middle-income countries.

Our work for the year has been to deliver on four strategic goals and outcomes

**Influence change**
More resources mobilised and used effectively for research on violence against women and violence against children and evidence-based practice in low- and middle-income countries.

**Build evidence**
An increase in innovation tested by strong research designs for improved responses to and prevention of violence against women and violence against children.

**Promote partnerships**
A co-operative and nurturing field where knowledge is shared and people collaborate and support each other.

**Strengthen capacity**
An increase in the number of researchers from low- and middle-income countries leading rigorous, impactful and innovative research on violence against women and violence against children in low- and middle-income countries.
Over the past eight years, we’ve provided over $7.2 million to fund 68 research programs in 36 countries.
The COVID-19 global health crisis impacted the functioning of the SVRI during the reporting period at both operational and programmatic levels.

While our strategic planning meeting in April 2021 was held face to face following strict health guidelines, the team worked largely remotely. This practice, while presenting some natural challenges, helped the team discover more innovative ways of working. It proved to be a highly effective way of including guests from our wide global network for whom attendance otherwise might not have been possible.

At a programmatic level, the impact was particularly acute among the 2019 and 2020 grantees cohorts, who had to suspend and/or postpone many of their activities and in many cases pivot to online research. The planned face to face launch meeting and the capacity strengthening workshop was successfully hosted online.

Our grantees appreciated our efforts to prepare them for working online.

During the reporting period, we disseminated resources and information on adapting research to Covid-19. This included remote research methodologies and tools, ethical research, vicarious trauma in research, research uptake, and relevant courses on research methods.

As a result of travel restrictions, the hugely popular 2021 SVRI Forum which sees hundreds of different stakeholders addressing VAW/VAC around the world come together, was postponed to 2022.
BUILDING EVIDENCE
Strengthening the response to and prevention of VAW and VAC

Although we know research is essential for understanding the drivers of violence, and the specific contexts within which they flourish, research investments in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are small in comparison to in higher income countries.

This, along with our commitment to decolonising knowledge, propels our support and funding of innovative research in LMICs and encouraging debate in the field.

We’re proud of the establishment of the SVRI Research Grant, where researchers in LMICs can apply for two-year grants between $40,000 and $200,000. After receiving 330 high-quality proposals from all over the world, and going through three levels of peer review, eight projects across Brazil, the Philippines, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, Lebanon and Turkey, Nepal, Jordan, Mali, and Zimbabwe will be funded for research work until 2023.

The diversity of the projects – from understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on domestic violence in Brazil to exploring the nature of online intimate partner violence in teens in Nepal – are set to contribute new, exciting, and critical knowledge to the VAC and VAW global discourse.

It’s good to talk: maintaining platforms for knowledge exchange

To discuss and disseminate new knowledge and innovations in the field, the SVRI hosted a number of meetings and webinars in 2020 and 2021. Partners at these meetings and webinars included (but are not limited to) Tearfund, University of Stellenbosch, African Women’s Development Fund, The World Bank Group, Promundo, and Sida.

Discussion topics, which were informed and suggested by SVRI grantees, board and Leadership Council members, ranged from the importance of involving the private sector in VAW and VAC efforts, body-focused mental health approaches to VAW, applying feminist principles to GBV data, collaborations for research on VAW, to ethical considerations in working with men and boys.

8 projects across the globe will receive sub-grants to investigate diverse aspects of VAW/VAC
Although the Covid–19 pandemic necessitated that planned face-to-face trainings be moved online, this did not dampen excitement and levels of participation among researchers.

The move to online training was new territory for both the SVRI team and members and required a fair amount of preparation and internal capacity-building. Grantees were also given the opportunity to give input into training workshop content in alignment with our commitment to participatory, co-created, knowledge and skills exchange.

Training workshops focused on ethics, methods, storytelling, and science pitch writing. In addition to maintaining regular contact with grantees, support and guidance was also given to grantees to blog about their current research projects.

Building on the success on our online training during the lockdown, concrete steps have been taken for SVRI to develop an online training platform to ensure important training on research on VAW and VAC is more widely available.

25+ plus grantees from 11 countries trained and supported through SVRI workshop series and events.
2020 saw the ramping up of our communication platforms intended to amplify, debate and disseminate new knowledge and innovations in the field.

We launched a new Knowledge Exchange Series: a portal housing a number of COVID-related and non-COVID related think pieces. Our SVRI Blog continues to be a popular research uptake platform, receiving 40 contributions during the reporting period, while our SVRI Help Desk provides on demand technical guidance to researchers, practitioners and policy makers in the field. SVRI’s new Knowledge Hub will be launched later in 2021.

**Fingers crossed: Our next SVRI Forum! SVRI Forum 2022**

**Date:** 19 - 23 September 2022  
**Location:** Cancún, Mexico  
**Local co-host:** Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias, National Autonomous University of Mexico (CRIM UNAM)  
**No. of regional partnerships established:** 10
INFLUENCING CHANGE
Resource mobilisation, resource utilisation and research uptake

We’ve made good progress on the development of a toolkit to actively engage with funders on ethical approaches to funding. This toolkit is intended to promote good practice for funding research on violence against women and violence against children in LMICs.

*The development of a toolkit to inform ethical approaches to funders supporting VAW and VAC work is set to be a game-changer. It will promote good funding practices, map funding patterns and highlight inequities.*

As part of this toolkit, and to support and guide funding flows and the best use of research resources, we are:

› Tracking funding patterns for VAW research in low and middle income countries.
› Developing guidance for ethical and sustainable funding for VAW research in the field.
› Developing a Global Shared Research Agenda (GSRA) that harnesses multiple and diverse voices in the field, including over 500+ researchers, practitioners, funders and activists.
› Supporting Regional Research Agendas for Latin America and the Caribbean and East Asia Pacific.
› Facilitating a participatory process to identify Research Priorities for the Intersections of Violence against Children and Violence against Women.

Ensuring research is used to inform policy and practice is integral to our work. We’ve been working closely with communication partners to produce communication materials on the impact of the SVRI/WB grant making. This is to ensure the research we fund reaches those who can implement the findings.

We’ve also shared research results with regional World Bank teams, with the aim of improving research uptake and sharing promising practices with key policy makers at regional level.

*The early results are promising. The evaluation was still ongoing in February 2021, but, with an award from the Humanitarian Innovation Fund in 2021, Physicians for Human Rights hope to see use of the app being scaled up, and piloted in other countries.*

Grantee, Kenya
The SVRI JLI Faith and GBV Hub
The Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI) and GBV Hub was launched in 2014 to advance the evidence base and capacity for research on faith and gender-based violence. In 2021, the Hub secretariat moved from Tearfund to the SVRI and was rebranded as the SVRI JLI Faith and GBV Hub. As a platform to share research findings and strengthen the capacity of those in the field of Faith and GBV, The Hub provides an opportunity for advocacy. A new Leadership Council for the Hub was also established in 2021.

In addition to contributing to webinars convened by Oxfam, Sida and Action Aid, among others, we also contributed to a joint submission for the Special Rapporteur on VAW for consideration in the drafting of the thematic report on rape. SVRI gave input alongside Together for Girls, the Coalition for Adolescent Girls, End Violence Lab, Girls Not Brides, Plan International, and the UN Girls’ Education Initiative. SVRI sits on several national and global advisory boards. During the year, we engaged with 18 global and national advisory groups.

We are currently engaged in a process to strengthen and expand our VAC and CSA work. This process has included a review of our past and current VAC and CSA-focused work and will continue with a series of consultations – including discussion boards, live dialogues via Zoom, and a questionnaire – with stakeholders working to address VAC, CSA, and VAW across the globe. The insights from these consultations will inform our strategy going forward to ensure that it is grounded in what those in the field have identified as needs, opportunities, and concerns.
SVRI has instituted more stringent internal systems to ensure the organisation runs smoothly, effectively, ethically and makes the best use of financial and non-financial resources.

The organisation’s operations are governed by a comprehensive finance and policy manual covering employment, fraud, bribery and corruption as well as financial matters, reserves, and foreign exchange management. During 2020/2021, SVRI began strengthening and expanding its IT policy and procurement policy and is in the process of developing a social media policy and child protection policy.

In addition to being governed by a 4-member Board, the SVRI is supported strategically by a Leadership Council comprised of international experts in the field who help guide our work.
SVRI Core Team

Elizabeth Dartnall
Executive Director
Liz is SVRI's first Executive Director. A health specialist with over 20 years' research and policy-making experience on health systems, mental health, violence against women. She has managed the SVRI since 2006. Having worked in government and research positions in several countries, Liz has a deep understanding of using research to inform policy and practice.

Morma Moremi
Administration and Knowledge Manager
Morma is a Social Worker by training and holds a Master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Johannesburg.

Angelica Pino
Grants Manager and Capacity Strengthening Specialist
Angelica Pino is a feminist lawyer with extensive experience in gender-based violence and gender equality. Originally from Chile, she holds an LLB from the University of Chile and an LLM from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Lizle Loots
Partnerships Specialist
Lizle has over 12 years’ experience in the development sector working on violence against women and girls. She holds two Psychology degrees and a Master’s degree in Sociology from the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

Julienne Corboz
Technical Specialist
Julienne is an independent consultant specialising in gender, the prevention of violence against women and children, and women, peace and security. She obtained her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Melbourne and has more than 18 years’ experience supporting and leading research, evaluation and capacity building projects in a range of settings, including in South Asia, South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and Northern Africa, and Latin America.

Aník Gevers
Technical Specialist
Currently, Aník’s work focuses on capacity strengthening, research translation, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for multi-sectoral prevention programming around the globe including in southern and eastern Africa, east Asia and the Pacific, and Arab States. She has a PhD from the University of Cape Town, Master’s degree from the University of Missouri-St Louis, and Bachelor’s degree from Grinnell College in Iowa.

Ayesha Mago
Technical Specialist
Ayesha has worked for over two decades, mostly in India, as a feminist researcher, activist and trainer focusing extensively on the rights of women, children and adolescents in the context of violence, discrimination, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and access to justice. Her work has included comprehensive research, analysis and writing on laws and legal. Ayesha holds a master’s degree from Columbia University in New York and is a trained mediator accredited by the Bar Council of England and the Law Society.

Nicole Gonzalez
Technical Specialist
Nicole is passionate about achieving effective gender-based violence prevention, women’s empowerment, and gender equity internationally. She holds a Master in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is continuing her work in the prevention of violence against women and children with SVRI.
The SVRI is guided by a Leadership Council of experts on violence against women and violence against children research and practice.

**Dr Chi-Chi Undie**  
*(Co-chair)*  
Dr Chi-Chi Undie is an Associate in the Reproductive Health Program of the Population Council and provides strategic oversight to the Africa Regional SGBV Network.

**Alessandra C Guedes**  
*(Co-chair)*  
Alessandra Guedes is the Manager for Gender and Development Research at UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti, based in Florence, Italy.

**Dr Claudia Garcia-Moreno**  
*(SVRI Forum Chair)*  
Dr Garcia-Moreno is a physician from Mexico with a Master’s degree in community medicine from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

**Professor Rachel K Jewkes**  
Professor Rachel Jewkes, an A1-rated scientist, is the Executive Scientist for Research Strategy in the Office of the SAMRC President.

**Elizabeth Dartnall**  
Elizabeth Dartnall is SVRI’s Executive Director.

**Professor Heidi Stöckl**  
Heidi Stöckl is a Professor of Social Epidemiology and Director of the Gender Violence & Health Centre at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

**Tesmerelna Atsbeha**  
Tesmerelna Atsbeha is a senior program officer on the Women’s Rights team at Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

**Professor Kumudu Wijewardena**  
Professor Emeritus Kumudu Wijewardena is a former co-chairperson of the Gender Equity and Equality Standing Committee of the Universities Grant Commission of Sri Lanka.

**Joanna Włodarczyk**  
Joanna Włodarczyk is a researcher at the Empowering Children Foundation in Poland and the local leader for Central and Eastern Europe in the field of violence against children.

**Juan C Rivillas**  
Juan Carlos Rivillas is a health services and economics researcher interested in social epidemiology, health financing policies, health services research, gender analysis, access to medicines and primary data collection in humanitarian settings.
Our board provides overall oversight, as legally mandated in South Africa.

**Dr Chi-Chi Undie**
Dr Chi-Chi Undie is Chairperson of the SVRI Board.

**Nomsa Mokhele**
Nomsa Mokhele is a Chartered Accountant and Managing Director of Molemo Business Solutions.

**Craig Harding**
Craig Harding is a Chartered Accountant and co-director of Insurance Studio Consulting.

**Elizabeth Dartnall**
Liz is SVRI’s Executive Director.

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Report written and edited by
Lisa Anne Julien
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